

**“It’s actually not as bad as it seems”:  
Understanding the process of resilience for  
children with a visible difference during the  
secondary school transition.**

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## Abstract

*Secondary school transition* (the move from primary to secondary school in the UK) involves a shift from a known environment (primary school) to an unfamiliar environment, which can result in feelings of anxiety and distress. This thesis explores the importance of *resilience* in that transitional process, and it does so for '*children with a visible difference*', namely: children with a cleft lip and/or palate (cleft). This normative ecological transition, in which a child has to negotiate new roles and relationships, was the setting to examine *resilience as a process*.

The studies were framed in the theoretical context of Bronfenbrenner's (2005) Bioecological Process-Person-Context-Time (PPCT) model, which locates the child at the center of a nested circular structure, and where social interaction within school and home are paramount. Indeed, the social and developmental context of the child - their immediate microsystems, including the home (family), and school (peers), which are embedded in a broader mesosystem - was central to the analysis.

The research questions were: (i) During the school transition, what protective mechanisms underlie the resilience process? (where, when and under what circumstances do these operate)? (ii) What processes are involved in the enactment of resilience among children with a cleft starting secondary school (Can we recognise or name these steps or links during this process)? And (iii) how does the social context in which the child is immersed shape the resilience process during the secondary school transition year? A longitudinal mixed-method qualitative design was employed, which included three core studies. (Study 1) a key informant interview study with experienced professionals working with children with or without a visible difference in healthcare, education and policy. (Study 2), a group school transition study with children and parents interviewed at different time points during the first term at secondary school, and (Study 3) two case studies of children, who were shadowed in their first year of secondary school.

Data collection methods included family interviews, online interviews with the children, a focused ethnography with teacher and peer interviews, and vlogging (video blogging). The key informant study identified everyday common-sense interpretations of resilience as an individual reaction to adversity, the role of navigation and reflection, which was in contrast to the range of qualitative findings which conceptualises resilience as a process that facilitates autonomy and independent action in the child through effective

communication. In short, resilience is a child's ability to access these resources (which can only be achieved when the social context is adequately maintained) and to use them to good effect. The main implications of this work are that professionals need to be trained to (i) move away from individualising and representing resilience, such as perpetuating the belief that resilience is something that the child possesses either through inheritance or training and (ii) to ensure that microsystems and the communication within them that facilitate resilience, are aligned, monitored and maintained.

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**Declaration**

I declare that this thesis is my own work and has not been submitted for the award of a higher degree elsewhere.

Signed: [Redacted]

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

### 1.1 Overview

*Resilience* is often viewed as an important and essential quality that a child needs to develop as it is often thought of as a key element when considering emotional, educational, health, and economic outcomes. However, this raises some important questions: What is resilience? What form does it take? How can it be identified? How may it be understood? How is it acquired and under what circumstances? And through what particular processes does it occur?

This chapter is a prelude to the thesis, aiming to provide a background about this research, and an overview of the context for the work and its theoretical foundations. The research was conceived and carried out with a view to understanding more about resilience, specifically how this works for children starting secondary school with a cleft lip and/or palate<sup>1</sup> (I will use the term cleft throughout this thesis). The research was concerned with children that have a visible difference, specifically a cleft. Previous research has highlighted some of the challenges experienced by these children at school, for example, negative social interactions, a lack of support from teachers and the presence of additional conditions, such as hearing or sight concerns (Chapadoes, 2009; Stock & Ridley, 2017).

This thesis aimed to understand what the process of resilience was, as it contemporaneously unfolded over the course of the academic secondary transition school year. With this in mind, the thesis used a mixed method longitudinal qualitative design to capture and examine the experiences of these children.

### 1.2 Purpose of this Chapter

The purpose of this thesis is to develop an understanding of resilience as a process. It is hoped that this research can provide a clearer understanding of the concept of resilience and how the process operates. Therefore, the central focus for this research is to shine light on the enactment of the resilience process, trying to understand what the steps or links are in

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<sup>1</sup> A Cleft lip can range from a little notch in the coloured part of the lip to a complete separation of the upper lip, which can extend up and into the nose. A Cleft palate is a gap in the roof of the mouth (CLAPA, n.d)

the process of resilience. To examine this, the research will consider the enactment of resilience during secondary school transition periods for children with a cleft in the first year of secondary school.

To understand more about the concept of resilience, the rationale and key aspects of the thesis are discussed. This chapter introduces some of the inconsistencies in the definitions of resilience, based on a detailed review of the literature. Next, this chapter intends to convey the overall tone for the thesis, with an emphasis on the dynamic features of resilience. It will also be helpful to introduce key terminology that will be adopted for example, resilience as a process, protective mechanisms, understanding, development, secondary school transition, and children with a visible difference.

The theoretical underpinnings for this thesis are framed within the Bioecological Process-Person-Context-Time (PPCT) model, conceived by Bronfenbrenner (1979, 2005). This model has been adopted throughout this thesis, acting as a lens through which the child can be seen during their regular ongoing activities and interactions occurring in the school transition phase.

It has been possible to study the secondary school transition phase by adopting a longitudinal design, and looking at the children's experiences at critical time points, for example before starting school, first half-term, and at the end of first school term. This allows for the exploration of the protective mechanisms involved, including where and how they are manifested, and with what effect, emphasising the dynamics of resilience in a specific context.

### **1.3 Thesis Rationale**

What is the nature of resilience? Some academics have suggested it is a personal quality (Block & Block, 1980), or an inherent *invulnerability* (Anthony & Cohler, 1987). More recently it has been seen as a process (Luthar, et al., 2000; Masten, 2001). Early studies of resilience were based on the characteristics that young people living in high-risk situations needed in order to survive, such as being robust, hardy, or being a good communicator (Richardson, 2002; Werner & Smith, 1992). According to O'Dougherty et al. (2006), this was the first of four waves of inquiry into resilience. The second wave investigated the processes that might account for observed correlates of resilience. This wave was focused on potential protective processes (Masten, 2007). Next, the third wave was directed at the changing of

developmental pathways through intervention, and the fourth wave's attention led by epigenetic and neurobiological processes (O'Dougherty et al., 2006). The growth of resilience research created an impetus to understand how and why children cope successfully with difficulties at one point in their life, but react differently to other adversities (Rutter, 1987).

For this thesis, resilience centers on the *second wave* of this inquiry, which aims to understand the underlying processes that influence positive adaptation (Masten, 1990). This second wave has focuses on relationships and systems around the family (O'Dougherty et al., 2006). The relational value of this concept is relevant to this work because the child will engage with others in their new schools, meeting new peers, and teachers. A mixed qualitative approach was used because it provides a platform to develop an understanding of resilience in action, as it unfolds. The starting point for the research was exploring this enactment from the perspective of the child (and their family) across two different settings (which are termed microsystems by Bronfenbrenner, 1979; the home and the school). By using a qualitative research design, the researcher was able to examine resilience in action by following the narrative of the children's journeys into and through the secondary school transition. This also included the parent and teacher's perspective.

## **1.4 Identifying the Key Aspects of the Research**

### ***1.4.1 The Multidimensional Nature of Resilience***

The study of resilience over the past 20 years has highlighted the multidimensional nature of this concept. Research on human resilience originated from studies concerned with the effect of trauma and stress on the functioning of individuals and families in the field of psychiatry (Masten, 2001). The early psychiatric literature from the 70s used the terms, *invulnerable* and *invincible* interchangeably to describe this same quality (Dyer & McGuinness, 1996). The construct known as *ego-resiliency* was developed by Block and Block (1980) and referred to a personal characteristic of an individual. This included a set of traits, equating to the resourcefulness and sturdiness of a person (Luthar et al., 2000). However, there has been some criticism of the trait approach to the study of resilience because it was seen as something innate that needs to be suitably developed (Fleming & Ledogar, 2008). The use of the term *resiliency* was discouraged because it implied a personality trait (Luthar et al., 2000;



Masten, 1999). Furthermore, the trait approach was only specific to certain children and did not account for the growth of the child or how they engage and interact with the environment.

**1.4.1.1 Defining Resilience.** Over the course of its development, resilience has been defined in many different ways:

“Resilience is a term used to describe relative resistance to psychosocial risk experiences.” (Rutter, 1999, p. 119)

“Resilience refers to a dynamic process encompassing positive adaptation within the context significant.” (Luthar et al., 2000, p. 543)

“The capacity of a system to adapt successfully to challenges that threaten the function, viability, or development of survival or future development of the system.” (Masten, 2018, p. 16).

Although there is no agreed or widely accepted definition, two specific criteria were identified by researchers who had conceptualised resilience as a process, (i) that the child must be met by a risk, such as a stressor or adversity, which poses a threat to their well-being or function, and (ii) that the child achieves positive adaptation, indicated by good functioning or competence in the development of the person and/or family (Masten et al., 1990; Masten, 2018).

**1.4.1.2 Development in Resilience Research.** Longitudinal studies that followed individuals and children over time found that even among those exposed to multiple stressors, only a minority developed problematic emotional disturbances (Rutter, 1989; Werner, 1992). The evidence of children thriving despite their negative socioeconomic disadvantages led to an increase in research to understand individual variations in response to adversity (Luthar et al., 2000; Rutter, 2000). These findings steered research towards the exploration of a child’s personal qualities, as researchers acknowledged that resilience might be the result of factors external to the child (Luthar et al., 2000).

This led to the development of the concept of *protective factors*, which were seen as features that might change the effects of a risk, directing it towards a positive outcome (Luthar & Cicchetti, 2000). An example of this for a child means having a positive relationship with at least one adult, such as a parent or teacher (Luthar & Cicchetti, 2000). Researchers in this field expanded this idea to include protective factors in the family, for example studying family cohesion and structure, and protective factors at school, such as good peer relations (Jacelon, 1997; Werner, 1992). Research in the 1980s aimed to name these protective factors that promoted resilience, which were considered to originate outside of the individual. These were seen in the family, the community, the society, the culture and the environment (Fleming & Ledogar, 2008).

To advance our understanding of how these protective factors worked to support the individual, the notion of *protective mechanisms* was conceived (Rutter, 1987). These sought to explain why some individuals maintain self-esteem and self-efficacy when faced with the same adversity, yet some people lose hope and give up (Rutter, 1987). The search was not for a list of factors at different levels, but for processes that protect the individual against the risk. Rutter (1987) referred to this as an *immunisation* to explain that the protection does not mean the individual does not engage with the risk, but that the individual needs to be exposed to part of the risk to develop the protective mechanism. These protective mechanisms are explored in more detail in the section that follows.

**1.4.1.3 Protective Mechanisms.** These mechanisms examined where and how the resilience manifests itself, focusing on the key turning points in individuals' lives, as opposed to personal attributes (Rutter, 1987). Some academics preferred to use the term *protection* rather than using the terms *lack of vulnerability*, or being *invincible* in relation to children because the process was thought to involve a change of life trajectory from risk to adaptation (Masten, 1999; Rutter, 1987). Furthermore, the mechanism was part of the process of resilience, and researchers recognised that a protective factor on its own was not adequate to produce an adaptive outcome (Graber et al., 2015).

According to Rutter (1987), it is possible to identify four mechanisms that protects an individual from risk and therefore may act as predictors in protective processes for the child; Firstly, reducing the risk impact, refers to a mechanism which tries to alter the risk or the exposure by reducing involvement in risky aspects of a situation. The second group of

mechanisms Rutter (1987) identified as those that lessen the negative chain reactions that can follow exposure to a risk. The third group of mechanisms refer to the protective value of having a positive sense of self, and experiences which can help with the promotion of self-esteem and self-efficacy, and fourth, creating opportunities to change their current developmental trajectory. The final mechanism Rutter (1987) proposed as the opening up of opportunities, which can act as the turning points in people's lives that change a developmental course (Rutter, 1987). This meant that the effective functioning and engagement of a child with a type of protective mechanism, when faced with a risk, forms part of the resilience process affecting the outcome. Therefore, if the risk trajectory is altered, the outcome changes.

Researchers also began to show that the process of resilience was specific to a given context or domain (Fleming & Ledogar, 2008). Thus, the process of resilience focused on the relational interactions of an individual with the context during an adversity, which resulted in positive adaptation (Luthar, 2003). For this thesis, resilience will be conceptualised as a process with an emphasis on the enactment of resilience as it unfolds for children with a cleft starting secondary school. This means examining where and how these protective mechanisms can be seen, and how they are manifested for these children as part of the resilience process. The next section briefly discusses part of Bronfenbrenner's PPCT model, focusing on the context. A more detailed and systematic explanation of Bronfenbrenner's PPCT model will be discussed in chapter 3, p. 32.

#### ***1.4.2 Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological PPCT Model***

The core theoretical perspective used in this thesis is Bronfenbrenner's (2001) theory of human development, more specifically, the Bioecological Person-Process-Context-Time (PPCT) model (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). Originally, Bronfenbrenner posited ecological systems as a set of nested structures, separate inside each other with the *developing person* (the child) placed at the innermost structure (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). In the figure below, the ecological system illustrates four environmental 'nested structures', namely, the microsystem, the mesosystem, the exosystem, and the macrosystem.

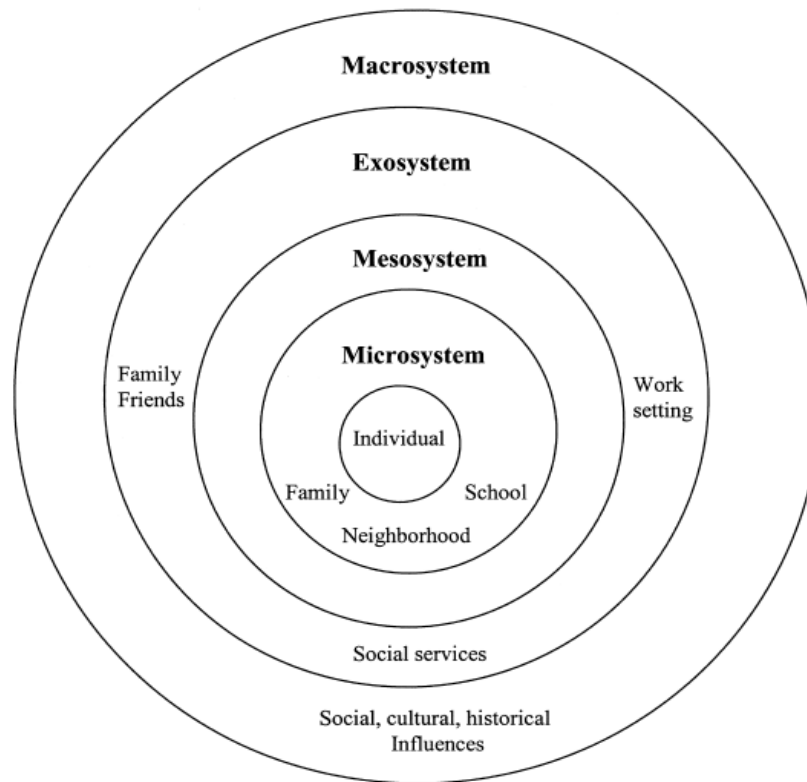


Figure 1: A visual depiction of Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory (Swanson et al., 2003)

The first of these systems was called the *microsystem* and consists of the child and their immediate environment (the home and school). Next, there is the *mesosystem*, which includes the relations between two or more settings in which the child is actively involved, for example, at home and school (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2013). Thirdly, is the *exosystem* – this system concerns how the developing child is indirectly affected by events occurring in settings in which they were not present, for example, a change to a parent's workplace. Lastly, the *macrosystem*, named as the child's belief system or ideology, which was influenced by how the other systems function (Bronfenbrenner, 1977).

Relevant to this thesis was the attention Bronfenbrenner gave to the normative changes experienced by individuals in their roles and environments. This was termed an *ecological transition* (Bronfenbrenner, 1978). An example of this was starting secondary school, when the child moves from a known environment to a new one. The impact of these transitions not only affected the child, but also played a role in the system of which the child

was part, such as the family. According to Bronfenbrenner (1979), these ecological transitions may result in either a consequence or a motive for developmental processes for the child. This will be discussed in detail in chapter three (p. 32).

### **1.4.3 The Secondary School Transition**

Starting secondary school is a time when children's feelings of anxiety and worry persist because of concerns about bullying, getting lost, peer relations and workload concerns (Zeedyk et al., 2003). The transition process characterises both a step up and a step down in terms of socially reflected maturity, which has been termed a *transfer paradox* (Hallican & Hallican, 1992). This means that in Year 6, the children were seen to be at the topmost end of the school and when they start secondary school, they experience a shift to the lowermost part of the year groups.

Gilligan (2000) termed the secondary school transition a *developmental pathway*, focusing on resilience in at-risk young people and children. This *pathway* can be altered at any point due to the nature of the school experience, which may enhance the potential for resilience or detract from it (Gilligan, 2000). Gilligan (2000) defined this altered pathway as a *turning point* in the child's life. Rutter (1999) discussed this notion of turning points as part of the protective mechanisms in the resilience process. He referred to these as *opening up opportunities*, which means that when an opportunity has been provided, such as a teenage training course for single adolescent mothers, which is protective, it may alter the continuation of the adverse experience. This opportunity or turning point acts as the mediator, supplying a protective effect during adverse experiences (Rutter, 1999).

According to a recent systematic literature review (Jindal-Snape et al., 2019) about primary-secondary school transitions, the successful adaptability of the child was found to be important to the child's well-being and was relevant to achievement in all subjects during this time. Therefore, this *ecological transition* of starting at secondary school (Bronfenbrenner, 1986) sets the scene for exploring how the underlying protective processes work when the child engages and interacts with the new school microsystem during this transitional phase.

### **1.4.4 Children with a Cleft Lip and Palate**

A *cleft* was recognised as an abnormality that occurs during the sixth to 13<sup>th</sup> week of pregnancy when the facial features begin fusing together (Yu et al., 2009). According to the

Cleft Lip and Palate Association (CLAPA), around one in 700 babies are born with a cleft around the world. This means that in the UK, around 1200 babies are born with a cleft each year. The cleft lip occurs on the upper lip, varying in size and location, for example, the cleft can be unilateral, appearing on one side of the lip or it can be bilateral, occurring on both sides (Chapados, 2009). For children with a palatal cleft, which appears in the center of the mouth, this can affect speech and facial appearance (Chapados, 2009). Children with a cleft have several surgical interventions and can often have up to three courses of orthodontic treatment during the first 20 years of their life (Sharif et al., 2013).

According to Rumsey and Harcourt (2007), a visible difference, either present at birth or obtained later in life can have psychological consequences for a child and adolescent. Regardless of how the visible difference was acquired, the negative feeling towards body image and psychological impact on the individual are profound (Rumsey & Harcourt, 2003). It can be considered a risk factor for the child or adolescent because of the issues and challenges these children face. In particular, the most recurrent difficulty faced by children and adolescents with a visible difference relates to their negative self-perception and struggle with social interactions (Rumsey & Harcourt, 2007). This is relevant to this thesis because of the developmental phase in late childhood and early adolescence which leads to an increased focus on appearance and shape, and for many young people the link between outward appearance and perceptions of self are particularly strong at this time (Rumsey & Harcourt, 2007). This is discussed in more detail in the literature review, Chapter 2, p. 26.

#### ***1.4.5 The Role of Key Informants***

Key informants played an important role throughout the research project. At the start of this endeavour, I conducted a key informant study with particular practitioners, who were recruited because of their extensive experience and expertise in working with children and families. Their knowledge of working with children and examples of resilience were a starting point which followed through to the next two transition school studies. It provided a richer and deeper level of understanding of the meaning of resilience than the literature, and how this relates to children with a visible difference (discussed in further detail in Chapter 4, pp. 49, 50 and in Chapter 5, p. 63).

From the school transition studies, the children who participated were also seen as key informants in this thesis. This includes the six children from the group study and the two

children from the case study. With the children taking part as active informants, they were very much involved in the research process (Larsson et al., 2018). This participatory approach afforded me an opportunity to engage with each child informant, gaining an understanding of their views and experiences of their school transition. The children's expertise was seen as important because of their first-hand experiences of starting secondary school, as a young person with a visible difference. These children's view and experiences were valued and prioritised in this thesis, in addition to the views of the adult key informants in Chapter 4.

#### 1.4 Research Questions

In this section, this research questions are named and discussed together with the methodology (1.4.1) and the structure of the thesis (1.4.2).

1. How do Key Informants (professionals) think about resilience for children (with/without a visible difference)?
  - (i) How resilience is viewed and what meanings do they attach to resilience?
  - (ii) What emphasis do they give to *process* in their understanding of resilience?
  - (iii) What role does it play for children with a visible difference?
2. During the school transition, what protective mechanisms were underlying the resilience process (where, when and under what circumstances do these operate)?
3. What processes are involved in the enactment of resilience among children with a cleft starting secondary school (can we recognise or name these steps or links during this process)?
4. How does the social context in which the child engages with shape the resilience process during the secondary school transition year?

### ***1.4.1 Research Questions (RQ) and Methodology***

The current thesis adopted a mixed method qualitative design and was carried out in three distinct studies. The first study was the Key Informant research (addressing RQ 1), which began as three lines of enquiry about resilience. This analysis set the scene for the next two studies, considering the definitions of resilience, looking at resilience as a process, and the earlier literature findings.

The second study was longitudinal and investigated the experiences of a group of six children (with a cleft) starting secondary school (addressing RQ 2 & 3). This included the families of the children, specifically the parents, who were involved in the data collection at the start and end of the first school term. Central to this research was the child and their views from before they started secondary school to their reflective descriptions at the end of the first term. The data was collected at four time points during the first school term and integrated with family interviews, online interviews, and vlogging (video blogging).

Next, the final study involved two case studies, and used a focused ethnographic approach to follow two other children in Year 7 (with a cleft) and their families, as they continued their school year from October 2017 to the following June 2018 (addressing RQ 3 & 4). This too was longitudinal and included dyadic interviews with the children's teachers and peers at different time points during the school year.

### ***1.4.2 Thesis Structure***

Following this introductory chapter, the thesis is structured to provide a detailed account of the complex research process I engaged with in order to investigate the research questions outlined above. The remaining chapters are organised as follows: *Chapter two* contextualises the study in the relevant literature, with detailed attention given to the conceptualising of resilience as a process, the secondary school transition and elements related to children with a visible difference. *Chapter three* provides the theoretical underpinnings for this thesis, presenting a succinct illustration of Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological theory and the development of the PPCT model.

*Chapter four* is an account of the research methodology and methods used. In *Chapter five*, the first study, the Key Informant research provided some insight into the inconsistencies in the definitions of resilience. *Chapter six*, includes a detailed study of the experiences of the secondary school transition for six children with a cleft and their families.



In *Chapter seven*, there is the case study of two families. To conclude, *Chapter eight* is a detailed discussion of the analyses from the thesis findings, the implications for future work concerned with the enactment of resilience and what this means for children that look different in schools and education. This final chapter ends with the concluding reflection for the thesis.

### 1.5 First Reflections

From early in the PhD, I was encouraged to make reflective notes about the learning process. At first, this was dedicated to the data collection stage because of the reflective field notes that were made from the interviews and the participants interviewed. This type of reflexive 'diary' formed an important part of the ethnographic observations during the case study and was useful to develop the understandings of the experiences of these children. Throughout this thesis, there are *reflection boxes* framing parts of the narrative, and forming an integral part of the analysis for chapters six and seven – these writings supported my own understanding of this qualitative thesis and the processes involved.

#### ***Reflection 1***

What is resilience? Can we identify resilience when we *see it*? How does it look? Is it only a trait within a person? These were some of the questions I had at the start of this PhD.

Trying to work out what was meant by resilience for children in school became the focus.

This is partly a keen interest of mine, and a need to understand if children can use or acquire this notion of resilience to better position themselves in school.

Working as a teacher with children in primary schools in South Africa, one of the trendy terms applied to students was *resilience*. This was used to imply that certain students were able to overcome obstacles, regardless of their circumstances. It tended to be placed on students who were always trying their best, showing a type of positive attitude to their learning. It was defined in education as a personal quality that someone had and most children struggling with a difficult circumstance at home but managing well at school were labelled with this. However, I felt that it would be beneficial to learn more about this term and understand how this may or may not affect a child's wellbeing and their learning. I also find it frustrating to use labels for any children.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

### 2.1 Introduction

The study of *resilience* has expanded over the past decade. This literature review aims to present a clear and succinct outline of the definitions and concepts that have been used in the wider study of resilience. This will include an historical overview of resilience, which underpins the sections that follow. The next section explores conceptualisations and definitions of resilience with a specific focus on resilience as a process and the rationale for adopting this position in the thesis. Following this, the literature on secondary school transitions will be discussed, and this will explore why this is a helpful context for the study of resilience as a process. Towards the end of this chapter, a review on children born with a cleft is given, exploring the nature of this visible difference and other medical conditions associated with this. In the next chapter, the theoretical framework of Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological Process-Person-Context-Time (PPCT) model is explained (see Chapter three, p. 32).

### 2.2 Resilience

#### 2.2.1 Historical Context

The word *resilience* has roots in the Latin verb, *resilire* meaning to 'jump back' or 'to recoil' (Merriam-Webster Collegiate Dictionary, 2020). This term has been adopted by many academic disciplines, and concerns how well complex systems anticipate, adapt, recover, and learn in the context of major threats, surprises, and disasters, such as in the economic and political sphere. Resilience is defined by the material sciences as the ability of a material to resume its original shape after being spent (Goldstein & Brooks, 2013).

In the field of psychology, the study of resilience over time has highlighted the multidimensional nature of this concept. Early in the 1940s, investigations of schizophrenia, poverty, and response to trauma all predated work on resilience (Cicchetti & Garmezy, 1993). This meant that there was a gradual shift from identifying the negative outcomes of certain behaviours, to identifying the positive outcomes. According to Werner and Smith (1992), mental health professionals tended to focus on the negative effects of biological and

psychosocial risk factors by reconstructing the life histories of individuals with persistent behaviour disorders or serious emotional problems.

The study of resilience has developed and evolved over the past 20 years (Goldstein & Brooks, 2013), and the precursors of resilience research aimed to examine the importance of resilience for the study of normal developmental processes, and for promoting better developmental outcomes in children at risk (Masten et al., 1990). The question of how children (for example, children whose mothers were schizophrenics) adapted and thrived despite their high-risk environment became the focus for future studies (Luthar et al., 2000). Questions of individual differences in children's successful adaptation in the face of adversity were the beginnings of psychological research exploring childhood resilience. In the 1990s, research continued to attend to these children. However, the issue of finding an agreed definition of the term resilience remained highly problematic for psychologists and clinicians. In the next section, the review looks at the changing definitions and shifts in how resilience has been conceptualised and defined.

### ***2.2.2 Conceptualising Resilience***

**2.2.2.1 Background.** A key difficulty that has beset the resilience literature concerns the lack of agreement about how to define and conceptualise resilience, and associated with this is a lack of consensus on the terminology used in the resilience literature. For example, *resiliency* is the term used to denote an individual's trait, but *resilience* is used when referring to the process of resilience (Dyer & McGuinness, 1996; Egeland, Carlson & Sroufe, 1993; Luthar et al., 2000). Mostly, the disagreement within the literature ensues because there is no clear or widely agreed definition for the concept of resilience. The dissatisfaction with the use of a deficit model in the study of adaptive behaviours in the 1950s led to a focus on assets in individuals and systems. Educators propelling educational thinking valued the focus on assets, and the beginnings of an understanding of the positive outcomes linked to resilience (Howard, Dryden & Johnson, 1999). Connor and Davidson (2003), defined resilience as the personal qualities that enable an individual to thrive in the face of adversity developing a quantitative measure for resilience. The early psychiatric literature from the 1970s used the terms *invulnerable* and *invincible* interchangeably to describe this same personal quality (Dyer & McGuinness, 1996).

Research that concentrated on childhood adversities over time led to the identification of how the contribution of systems including families, groups, and communities supported people in coping with adversity (Herrman et al., 2011; Rutter, 1993; Werner & Smith, 1992). An example of this was a 40-year longitudinal study of children from birth to adulthood on the Hawaiian island of Kauai, by Werner and Smith (1992). The sample was exposed to poverty, prenatal stress, parental psychopathology, and family discord. A team of mental health workers, pediatricians, public health nurses, and social workers, monitored and assessed their development at various ages, up to the age of forty (Werner, 1995). Caregivers from this study classified their infants and toddlers as resilient because they were seen as being active, affectionate, cuddly, good-natured, and easy to manage. Findings suggested that almost a third of these children became competent, caring adults. At the final stage of assessment, aged 40, the individuals identified as resilient were all employed, and had no prior convictions. Similar evaluations from a critical appraisal of the construct resilience supported these results, and in particular noted the importance of close relations with supportive adults, effective schools, and the connections with adults in the wider community (Luthar et al., 2000).

**2.2.2.2 Definitions of Resilience.** Earlier research focused on specific strengths or assets, such as an individual's cognitive functioning, which helped people to successfully overcome an adversity (Herrman et al., 2011). This initial trait-based perspective meant that only children born *with resilience* would be successful when faced with an adversity. In accordance with this, Wagnild and Young (1993) noted that resilience was a personality characteristic of the individual, which promoted adaptation and regulated stress. However, other researchers in this field (Luthar et al., 2000; Masten, 2000; Rutter, 1987) felt that conceptualising resilience as a trait was limiting, because it inferred that this concept was only accessible to certain children. Masten (2007) and O'Dougherty et al. (2013) viewed this as the *first wave* of the resilience inquiry, where researchers identified the characteristics of the child, the family, relationships or the environment that correlate to produce a positive outcome, indicating resilience.

At a similar time, in the 1990s Garmezy's (1993) research about children living in poverty found that there were personal characteristics of the child, which helped the child overcome their negative conditions. These were termed *protective factors* and were considered

relevant to the child's adaptation and development processes, for example, problem solving, the close attachment to a caring adult, and good external support, such as associations with a school or church. In addition to this, other studies discovered different protective factors that children who were thriving displayed during an adversity, including an easy temperament (Jacelon, 1997), sociability (Luthar & Zigler, 1991) autonomy and communication skills (Werner & Smith, 1982). Following this, findings from longitudinal research identified a number of these factors, and started asking why and how these individuals engaged with them (Masten et al., 1990; Rutter, 1987; Werner, 1992).

This led to a focus on *protective mechanisms* and *processes* – which formed the second wave of resilience inquiry (O'Dougherty et al., 2013; Richardson, 2002; Rutter, 1987). The next part of this chapter will further define the key terms that will be used in this thesis with an emphasis on the second wave of inquiry viewing resilience as a process. Two common threads that emerged from the literature on resilience include the presence of a risk and positive adaptation following the risk (Fletcher & Sarkar, 2013). The understanding of *risk* in relation to resilience is explored first.

**2.2.2.3 Risk.** O'Dougherty et al. (2013) defined risk as, "... an elevated probability of an undesirable outcome" (p. 17). Risk is often compared to the terms, *adversity*, and *stress*, which are both related to a threat or negative experience (Fleming & Ledogar, 2008; O'Dougherty et al., 2013). Masten et al. (1990) noted that the concept of resilience grew directly out of risk research. When thinking about a risk factor, it was seen as either an event, characteristic or condition that made a negative outcome more likely (Carbonell et al., 2002, p. 394). If there are a number of risk factors, the risk became cumulative. It is important to note that children can be faced with more than one risk factor; for example, family conflicts can include several risk factors such as divorce and sibling discord. Therefore, it is important to acknowledge that risks do not occur in isolation (Rutter, 1990). According to Werner (1990), the risk factors can be biological, environmental, and psychosocial threats that increase the possibility that a maladaptive outcome will occur. An example of this for children starting secondary school may include peer rejection, bullying, feeling alone, family discord or unemployment for the parent or caregiver.

Furthermore, for this thesis, one of the risk factors for the children starting school was their visible difference (cleft). Research has highlighted how children with a cleft have

incurred a number of psychosocial challenges, including those related to social interaction (Rumsey & Harcourt, 2007). This risk is cumulative because of their visible difference, since children with a cleft may require ongoing medical procedures and may have concerns, such as stress, anxiety, or school absences (Stock & Ridley, 2017). The psychological literature on the child living with a visible difference will be discussed in more detail in section 2.4 of this review.

It is notable that *risk* is highly changeable over time, and needs to be seen in relation to protective factors, because if the circumstances change, the risk alters (Rutter, 1987). As risk is viewed as cumulative, protective factors in a child's life are also seen this way. According to Howard et al. (1999), the more protective factors present for the child, the higher the possibility that resilience is manifested. In the next section, protective factors are discussed.

**2.2.2.4 A Protective Factor.** Protective factors were seen as providing the child with a resource to alter the impact of the risk exposure, thereby changing the outcome of the experience (Murray, 2003). Masten and Reed (2002) defined a *protective factor* as, "...the qualities of persons or contexts that predict better outcomes under high-risk conditions; in effect, they are assets that matter when risk or adversity is high" (p. 77). Further research and interest into protective factors led to an increase in research concerning the child's social environment, including the importance of family, organisation and structure, attachment to the parents, and the child's environmental protective factors (Prince-Embury, 2014). Some other protective factors include positive school experiences, good peer interactions, and positive relationships with other adults, such as teachers (Brooks, 1994; Jacelon, 1997; Rutter, 1987; Werner & Smith, 1982). Studies of resilience in children and adults in the late 1980s (Egeland et al., 1993; Werner, 1990) ensued, and the understanding of how these protective factors worked to negotiate a risk drew further attention to the underlying processes (Luthar et al., 2006; Masten et al., 1990). Understanding the role of the processes involved in people's responses to risk could help with the development of therapies and intervention programs aiming to support children facing risky situations (Garmezy, 1985; Rutter, 1985). In the next section, the protective mechanisms are discussed in relation to resilience as a process.

**2.2.2.5 Protective Mechanisms.** Rutter (1987) defined protective mechanisms as part of a process, which protects people against psychological risks associated with adversity. This idea of protective mechanisms developed because of previous risk research, and the identification of protective factors from longitudinal studies (Rutter, 1985; Werner & Smith, 1992). According to Rutter (1987), resilience was also "...concerned with individual variations in response to risk" (p. 317). He proposed the following mechanisms which underlie the resilience process, which allow the individual to negotiate the risk; Firstly, reducing the risk impact that a person is exposed to, which means that for a child the compilation of risks can be lessened to help manage more successfully. An example of this is parental supervision or monitoring of the child's activities limiting exposure to risks in peer group or community (Rutter, 1999). However, parents are not the only adults in a child's life during secondary school. Other adults to keep in mind would be teachers, school staff, mentors, older siblings, who can also lighten the load by taking a task away, or assisting in some way.

Secondly, Rutter (1987) suggested that there is a chain of reactions following an adverse event, for example when a parent loses their job, and the impact of this event on the parent and other family members. If the reaction to the event was reduced (for example the parent keenly starts looking for another job soon after), then the chain will be reinforced.

The third protective mechanism, according to Rutter (1987) was the establishment and maintenance of self-esteem and self-efficacy. Rutter (1999) reflected on the relevance of self-efficacy in decision taking, which is influenced by planning and experiences in the home and at school. This protective mechanism meant that children felt in control of day-to-day events, planning and this affected their self-esteem and self-efficacy. According to Masten et al. (1990), self-efficacy acts as a protection from a risk, because it increases because of how an individual understands their experiences. This means that when a child feels more prepared when entering a difficult situation, their understanding and mastery of this experience increases the child's self efficacy, which can support them in the negotiation of the risk.

The fourth mechanism proposed by Rutter (1987, 1989) was the provision of new experiences that provide a pause to the adversity, which results in new opportunities. An example of this was found in Elder's (1986) longitudinal research about army experiences,



indicating how older recruits joining the armed forces had some advantages because of the opportunities created.

Akin to Rutter's mechanisms, Gilligan, (2000) (whose area of focus was on young people in need) expanded on these protective mechanisms, suggesting *five key areas*, which need to be addressed in order to understand resilience in young people and children who are at risk. First, he proposed the lessening of problems in the child's life. Second was the notion of turning points, for example following a favourable experience, which alters the individual's trajectory of development. A third protective mechanism was the provision of a secure base such as secure attachments with parents and siblings. A fourth protective mechanism was an increase in self-esteem through positive experiences, and finally, improved self-efficacy. This fourth mechanism meant that the child is involved in planning and preparing for changes – this would include the involvement in the planning for the transition to secondary school (Gilligan, 2000).

Continuing on, in the late 1990's the attention to the processes for individuals that facilitate adaptation became the focus for resilience studies. Other research proposed that this process was influenced by protective factors (Dyer & McGinness, 1996; Werner, 1995). Masten and Reed (2002) referred to these mechanisms as *protective processes*. Masten and Reed (2002) suggested that these processes display how protective factors work, resulting in good outcomes. What we do know from previous research (Masten et al., 1990) is that children without a caregiving adult may have difficulties in adapting, for example they may experience low self-esteem, or appear uninterested in interacting with the world or learning. Masten et al. (1990) also recognised the need to unpack these protective processes, which meant looking towards the capacities that humans have for development. Rutter's (1987) protective mechanisms together with Gilligan's extension on the five areas that protect individuals against risk are relevant to our understanding of how we view resilience as a process.

There is a need to understand the enactment of resilience as a process as it unfolds so that the research in this area can be used to develop intervention strategies and/or programs for children who are faced with adversity. There are a number of applications of seeing resilience as a process, which would be of interest to psychologists and clinicians. Rutter (1993) recognised that the key turning points (protective mechanism) in people's lives when faced with a risk might be redirected into a more adaptive path if a clinician could somehow redirect the child at a key moment in the process. The applied benefits of

identifying a resilient process that can be applied to different populations would be useful so that cultures and settings can be considered by psychologists, and form part of improved interventions, and child development can continue to grow and flourish in multiple arenas (Jacelon, 1997; Waller, 2001).

### ***2.2.3 Resilience as a Process***

The shift in the research and thinking about resilience as a single quality to a process occurred during the second wave of the resilience inquiry (O'Dougherty et al., 2006). Earlier studies started to refer to a process of resilience as interactive, however there was no clear understanding of how this process was seen (Egeland et al., 1993; Masten, Best & Garmezy, 1990). For this thesis, a process is referred to as a series of actions or steps that an individual takes in order to achieve a result (Cambridge Dictionary, 2020). When I was considering the process of resilience, the relevance of the social context in which the research was conducted, and the need to understand the perspective of the child was very important (Howard et al., 1999). Both help to clarify and explicate the experience of resilience as a process for the child. Furthermore, there is some acknowledgement that a longitudinal research design is helpful for researchers planning to study resilience (Luthar et al., 2000; Rutter, 2012). Also, if the researcher aims to explore the emergence of resilience as a process, it is advisable to explore the different systems that the child interacts with (Luthar et al., 2006).

One important development in the literature on resilience came from Masten (2001), who proposed that normative processes explain much of the resilience observed across a wide variety of situations. Indeed, Masten (2001) suggested that resilience was not an extraordinary process experienced by the few, but it was part of everyday occurrences. Masten (2001) saw resilience as *ordinary magic*, occurring during the day-to-day experiences of children's lives. Masten and Reed (2002) concluded that one of the most striking findings from research on resilience was the recovery power of children arising from ordinary processes. The basic human protective systems operate without rare or special qualities but from the children themselves, from relationships in the family, the community and the school and other cultural traditions (Masten & Reed, 2002). Agreeing with this notion, Rutter (1999) emphasised that, "...the phenomenon of resilience requires attention to a

range of possible psychological outcomes and not just a focus on an unusually positive one or on super-normal functioning” (p. 120).

It was evident that whilst resilience was viewed as a process, albeit a common one by some psychologists in the field (Masten et al., 1990; Rutter, 1987), the enactment of this process was unclear. The exposure to certain risk factors and the interaction between the risk and protective factors clearly play a role in this resilience process. Even though the existing literature post 2000 defines resilience as a process (Luthar et al., 2000; Masten, 2011, 2018), there continues to be a lack of agreement regarding the nature of this process.

Thinking about how the study of resilience has expanded and its current location within psychology and education, it is clear that being able to view this process as steps or links that move towards a positive outcome is important. This process will help us to see how resilience contemporaneously unfolds over time. Furthermore, for children who look different and are starting secondary school, this understanding of resilience as a process would be helpful. Children may be more or less resilient at various points in their lives depending on the interaction and accumulations of individual and environmental factors (Howard et al., 1999). This is why studying this process as children transition from one school setting to another provides an opportunity to identify how these protective processes are working and consider how the child engages with the social context.

Next, the review will examine the academic literature concerning the secondary school transition, and how this process can result in both negative and positive experiences for the child. It will also be discussed in relation to the resilience literature and with particular reference to children who have a visible difference.

## **2.3. Secondary School Transition**

### ***2.3.1 Background***

The secondary school transition occurs for children who have completed their final year of primary school in the UK (Year 6), and will be starting at their new school for Year 7. The academic school year in England commences in September, with some schools starting at the end of August. Whilst in other parts of the UK, such as Scotland, the school year begins in early August. During this academic year, the children will be turning eleven. The UK’s primary school system is designed so that children attend their local primary

school, nearest in proximity to their home. Some children start their school careers in the nursery adjacent to the primary school, continuing until the end of Year 6. For many children, the primary school ethos and environment is very familiar to the children and the day-to-day routine is structured accordingly, providing for nurturing relationships with their teachers and peers, who also live nearby (Robinson, 2014).

During the secondary school transition, the primary school setting these children knew so well alters because the new environment of the secondary school is unknown and unfamiliar. Research in this area shows that for many children with a low self-esteem, the transition is a period of potential threat (Jindal-Snape & Miller, 2008). This relates to the issue of discontinuity in the child's learning from primary to secondary (Jindal-Snape et al., 2019), which not only occurs in the curriculum, but in the need for them to become familiar with the new physical location and geography of the school, and how the new learning environment is organised (Graham & Hill, 2003). The psychological literature concerning that impact of the school transition on the developing child will be discussed next.

### ***2.3.2 The Impact of the Secondary School Transition***

The secondary school transition year is considered one of the most challenging in a student's educational careers, and success in navigating this time can affect the child's academic ability, their sense of well-being and mental health (Zeedyk et al., 2003). Recently a systematic literature review by Jindal-Snape et al. (2019) examined more than 40 primary-secondary transition studies over the course of the past 10 years. Twenty-three of these studies occurred in the UK. The aim of this review was to provide insight into the impact of transitions and the factors that support or hinder a successful transition from primary to secondary school. From the review findings, one of the key elements highlighted was the discussion about the child's ecosystem (Jindal Snape et al., 2019). This review explained how conducting researching of the transition process was not straightforward, due to the multiple ecological systems surrounding a child, including the school, and the home (Jindal-Snape et al., 2019).

Bronfenbrenner (1979) posited the ecological systems theory. This theory, briefly outlined in the introduction chapter (p. 6) underpins this thesis, placing the child at the center of the ecological system in the microsystem. Bronfenbrenner conceptualised the systems surrounding the developing child in terms of proximal and distal systems ranging

from those nearest to the child, such as the parents to the most remote, such as national policy. Chapter three (see p. 34) will focus on Bronfenbrenner's theory, although it is worth mentioning here that the ecosystems have a role to play during the school transition.

Furthermore, the findings from the studies in the recent review (Jindal-Snape et al., 2019) noted that there were certain factors acting as barriers to the child within their ecosystem. These included the student and teacher relationship which affected academic achievement, engagement and behaviour, the inconsistencies between primary and secondary school teacher practices, students' school belongingness, and finally mental health functioning in primary school, as well as the effectiveness of passing this information to secondary schools (Jindal-Snape et al., 2019).

An earlier report (Evangelou et al., 2008) looked at what makes a successful transition from primary to secondary. The findings from this report (Evangelou et al., 2008) were the result of a questionnaire completed by Year 6 children and their parents about the school transition. Their concerns were centered on the experiences of bullying, their worries about the new schoolwork and meeting different teachers for a range of subjects, and concerns about making new friends. Similar findings reported by Zeedyk et al. (2003), commenting on children's concern about getting lost, bullying, and the relationships with peers. Zeedyk et al. (2003) also highlighted how the parents were worried about bullying and peer relations.

It is evident that the secondary school transition is a period of adjustment for children and can be a challenging time for some children. Previous research (West et al., 2008; Zeedyk et al, 2003) has shown how this transition matters to students because of the impact of the transition experiences on future learning and well-being. However, it is also relevant to the thesis that we consider what a successful school transition looks like because this will frame the outcomes for children that are adapting to their new environment.

### ***2.3.3 A Successful Secondary School Transition***

West et al. (2008) conducted a longitudinal quantitative study in the 1990s in Scotland investigating the impact of transitional experiences on educational and other outcomes. The first survey occurred in 1994 in 135 primary schools for the children (aged 11) moving to Year 7. There were two follow ups; firstly, in 43 secondary schools (age 13 and 15) and at post-secondary level after leaving school (age 18) in 2002/3. In this study

(West et al., 2008), there was some difficulty for some of the children in coping at the start of the secondary school, with concerns focusing on navigating the formal (school) and informal (peer) systems. Students with lower ability, lower self esteem and who were unprepared for secondary were vulnerable to weaker school and peer transitions (West et al., 2008).

According to Jindal-Snape et al. (2019) in their recent review, a successful school transition meant that the students have displayed some of the following characteristics: emotional intelligence, problem solving skills, confidence and engagement, and forming good relationships with peers, family and teachers (Jindal-Snape et al., 2019). Similarly, the previous report completed earlier by Evangelou et al. (2008) discovered the following five key aspects for the child that leads to a successful secondary transition; these were developing new friendships and improving children's self-esteem and confidence, settling in to school life without cause for concern from their parents, displaying an interest in school and school work, becoming familiar with new routines and school organisation with ease, and experiencing curriculum continuity.

It is important to note that the review by Jindal-Snape et al. (2019) focused on how the student's experience of the secondary school transition was felt because there were both positive and negative experiences. Both experiences were aligned with the students' relationships with peers, their relationships with teachers, the physical environment of the school, the academic progress and the student's engagement and motivation with regards to their new school (Jindal-Snape, 2019).

Moreover, there is little longitudinal research to explain or understand the direction of the relationship between these positive or negative experiences and educational and well-being outcomes (Jindal-Snape et al., 2019). According to Evangelou's et al. (2008) transition research, a successful secondary school transition was related to the management of the process. This means that at the start the parents received their first choice and few appeals were made. Following this, the development of new friendships and improved confidence for the children were seen as important. Next, the parents were not concerned about how their child was settling in, and the children started to show an increased interest in school and schoolwork. Lastly, a successful transition meant that the children found getting used to their new routines easy, and were at ease with organising their schoolwork (Evangelou et al., 2008).

### ***2.3.4 Looking at Resilience with School Transitions***

Previous research (Luthar et al., 2000; Werner, 1997) has found that the opening up of opportunities such as military service, or educational programs is beneficial for individuals experiencing life transitions. Other researchers (Masten & Cicchetti, 2016; Rutter, 2006) termed these opportunities, ‘turning points’ because they have the potential to effect change over the long term. This notion of a turning point supports the qualitative, longitudinal design of this thesis, since there was the opportunity to research the transition to secondary school, and the process of resilience as it occurred. It was important to recognise that these turning points were perceived events and not objective because they are part of the process of interpreting and making sense of an event for the individual that makes it relevant (Hass et al., 2014), and therefore suitable for qualitative enquiry.

According to Bronfenbrenner (1979) the ecological research on school transitions, especially for those who have an applied focus, should be steered by three important principles. First, they should adopt a theoretical and practical ecological framework; secondly, they should be aware of the social context within which the research is carried out; and thirdly, they should take account of children’s understanding of the key concepts which may well differ from those of the adult researchers (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). These principles were key in understanding the literature and formulating the research for this thesis - in particular, accounting for the children’s understanding. It is important to turn our focus to the next section looking at children with a visible difference and how this will be explored during the school transition process.

## **2.4 Children with a Visible Difference**

### ***2.4.1 Background***

A visible difference can result from a congenital anomaly manifested at birth, for example, a cleft lip, or it is evident over time, and refers to a visible difference of the face, neck, hands, or other parts of the body that can be seen by others (Rumsey & Harcourt, 2007). Also, it can be an acquired difference caused by trauma or a genetic predisposition revealed later in life (Rumsey & Harcourt, 2007). Regardless of how the visible difference was acquired, it can be considered a risk factor for the child or adolescent because of the

issues and challenges these children face. This is because a visible difference may conjure negative reactions from others (Thompson & Kent, 2001), and can sometimes contribute to lowered self-perceptions and difficult social interactions (Rumsey & Harcourt, 2004). In this thesis, the focus for the research was on children with a cleft. Next, this specific visible different will be discussed.

#### ***2.4.2. Cleft Lip and Palate***

The term *cleft lip* is used to define a notch, an opening, or separation in the upper lip, and an opening or separation in the roof of the mouth describes a *cleft palate* (National Deaf Children's Society, 2020). The cleft lip with or without a cleft palate is the most common craniofacial anomaly affecting around 1 in 700 live births worldwide (Candotto et al., 2019). The cleft is classified differently based on the embryologic development (Candotto et al., 2019). Between the sixth and ninth weeks of pregnancy, the roof of the mouth (palate) is formed - when the tissue at the roof of the mouth does not fuse together, the cleft occurs (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2020). Furthermore, the cleft lip is identified as a malformation, which means that it is a morphologic defect in an organ forming an intrinsically abnormal process (Venkatesh, 2009). The cause of a cleft is not fully known, but thought to be caused by a combination of different genetic and environmental factors, for example the cleft was inherited from a family member or it was something that happened when the baby started growing in the womb (Candotto et al., 2019).

**2.4.2.1 Treatment for a Cleft Lip and Palate.** According to Perko (1986), a successful operation on a cleft palate did not occur until 1816. It is thought that cleft palates were secondary to other conditions, but also because without anesthetic this operation was extremely painful and difficult (Perko, 1986). However, the surgical procedure to correct a cleft plate is more common nowadays. For most children with a cleft, a multidisciplinary team of care from birth to adulthood is needed (Medina et al., 2015). Children born with a cleft lip and/or palate may experience problems in the following areas: feeding, growth and development, ear infections and hearing, and speech development (Kellogg & Danelz, 2019). Therefore, the initial surgery to close the opening between the nose and the mouth and/or to create a palate that works well and prevents food from leaking occurs from 6 months of



age with the baby needing to remain in hospital for two to three days (NHS Foundation Trust, 2019).

In addition to this primary surgical closure of the lip and palate, many children will require secondary surgical procedures involving the lip, nose, palate, and jaws that usually are staged from infancy through adulthood (Medina et al., 2015). One of these surgeries is known as an Alveolar bone grafting and is usually done when the child is aged between 8-10 years old. This procedure involves the doctor using part of the bone from the hip to repair the cleft in the gums and supports the permanent teeth as they come through (Kellogg & Danelz, 2019).

**2.4.2.2 Other Conditions Associated with a Cleft Lip and Palate.** Some of the associated conditions resulting from a cleft may affect a child's hearing and speech, which may occur intermittently or become permanent (Medina et al., 2015). A common type of deafness in children with a cleft palate is *glue ear*. This means that sound cannot pass effectively through the outer and middle ear to the inner ear (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2020). This was applicable to one of the participants in the group transition study, Rebecca who wore hearing aids to support her hearing.

The eyesight for some of these children can also be affected, with three of the participants from the transition studies wearing prescription glasses. In particular, in this thesis one of the girl's from the group transition study was also born with nystagmus<sup>2</sup>, which varies from person to person, but her vision was affected because of this (Royal National Institute of Blind People, 2020). Also, associated with the cleft are certain syndromes, such as Pierre Robin Sequence (PRS)<sup>3</sup> and Stickler Syndrome<sup>4</sup>. One of the participants in the case study for this thesis had a diagnosis of Van der Woude<sup>5</sup>. The Van der Woude syndrome affects people differently (CLAPA, 2015), although most children with the syndrome are typically developing in their growth and intelligence (Seattle Children's, 1995).

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<sup>2</sup> A condition where there is constant movement of the eyes, which cannot be controlled. (RNIB, 2014)

<sup>3</sup> PRS babies can be born with small chins and may experience breathing difficulties. The cleft palate occurs because the tongue is not located in the mouth correctly when the baby is developing. (Healthtalk, 2019)

<sup>4</sup> A genetic condition normally passed on from parent to child. It reduces the amount of collagen and connective tissues, which supports the organs and bones. (Healthtalk, 2019)

<sup>5</sup> A genetic disorder which features lower lip pits combined with a cleft lip (with or without the palate), or cleft alone. (CLAPA, 2015)

A cleft of the lip or palate is an opening in the upper lip or the roof of the mouth (Kellogg & Danelz, 2019). This affects how a child looks because of the gap that exists at the front of the lip and how the result of the surgeries, which may make the lip appear thinner, cause some scarring and can make the nose look irregular (CLAPA, 2015). For a palate repair, a plastic surgeon is required to close the cleft in the layers of the mouth and repair the muscles of the soft palate for speech (Kellogg & Danelz, 2019). In the table below, the classifications for the different types of clefts of the human face are provided.

**Table 1**

*Cleft Classification and Descriptions*

<u>Condition (classification)</u>	<u>Description</u>
Cleft lip only (CLO)	Ranges from a little notch in the coloured part of the lip to a complete separation of the upper lip, which can extend up and into the nose.
Unilateral (one sided) cleft lip OR Bilateral (both sides) cleft lip	This can either occur on one side of the lip or on both.
Cleft palate only (CPO)	A gap in the roof of the mouth. The back of the palate (towards the throat) is called the soft palate, and the front (towards the lips) is called the hard palate. A cleft can affect the soft palate or both the soft and hard palate.
Bilateral cleft lip and palate	Both sides of the lip are extended up into the nose and there is a gap in the roof of the mouth.

**2.4.2.3. Children Starting Secondary School with a Cleft.** One of the most recurrent difficulties faced by children and adolescents with a visible difference relates to their negative self-perception and struggle with social interaction (Rumsey & Harcourt, 2007). Visible differences are relevant to health and well-being because of the psychosocial challenges faced by these individuals (Sharratt et al., 2019). Examples of these include social anxiety, depression, and social avoidance (Rumsey et al., 2003), which may induce negative reactions from others (Thompson & Kent, 2001).

A previous study (Feragen et al., 2010) investigating the role of friendships and social acceptance between perceptions of appearance and emotional distress, with adolescents (aged 16) with a visible cleft (n=196) compared with adolescents with a non-visible cleft (n=93) and a comparison group (n=1832) found that strengthening social experiences might support the prevention and treating appearance-related concerns for children with a visible difference. The developmental changes in late childhood and adolescence lead to an increased focus on appearance and shape, and for many young people the link between outward appearance and perceptions of self are particularly strong at this time (Rumsey & Harcourt, 2007).

More recently, Stock and Ridley (2017) conducted a qualitative investigation to understand how educational experiences for young people born with a cleft might be improved. Ten young people (aged 10-16 years) and their parents took part in semi-structured telephone interviews. The findings showed that the educational experiences of the young people were influenced by the following; negative social interactions, cleft-related treatments, the presence of an additional condition, and a lack of appropriate support from teachers (Stock & Ridley, 2018).

From the review of the transition and visible differences literature, it has highlighted the importance of the school experience for the child's engagement with the context, and how this is affected because of how they look and how they feel. This thesis explores the perspectives of a group of children during two transitional school studies and their experiences with a key focus on the process of resilience.

## 2.5 Overview of the Research Questions

The following research questions are proposed, which focus on the enactment of the resilience process and how children with a visible difference experience this during the school transition:

1. How do professional Key Informants think about resilience for children (with/without a visible difference)?
  - (i) How resilience is viewed and what meanings do they attach to resilience?
  - (ii) What emphasis do they give to *process* in their understanding of resilience?
  - (iii) What role does it play for children with a visible difference?
  
2. During the school transition, what protective mechanisms were underlying the resilience process? It would be interesting to know where, when and under what circumstances these operate.
  
3. What processes are involved in the development of resilience among children with a cleft starting secondary school (can we recognise or name these steps or links during this process)?
  
4. How does the social context in which the child engages with shape the process of resilience during the secondary school transition year?

## **Chapter 3:** **Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological Theory**

### **3.1 Overview**

For this thesis, Bronfenbrenner's bioecological theory was employed, and more specifically the Process-Person-Context-Time (PPCT) model. This model was conceived as an evolving theoretical system for the scientific study of human development over time, locating the child at the center of the system (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). In this chapter, the historical context of this theory will be explained. Next, Bronfenbrenner's theory, including his development of the bioecological PPCT model will be discussed, and each element of this model will be outlined. This includes the process, the person, the context, and time. His focus on proximal processes is also relevant to this thesis, and will be defined and considered.

### **3.2 Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Theory of Human Development**

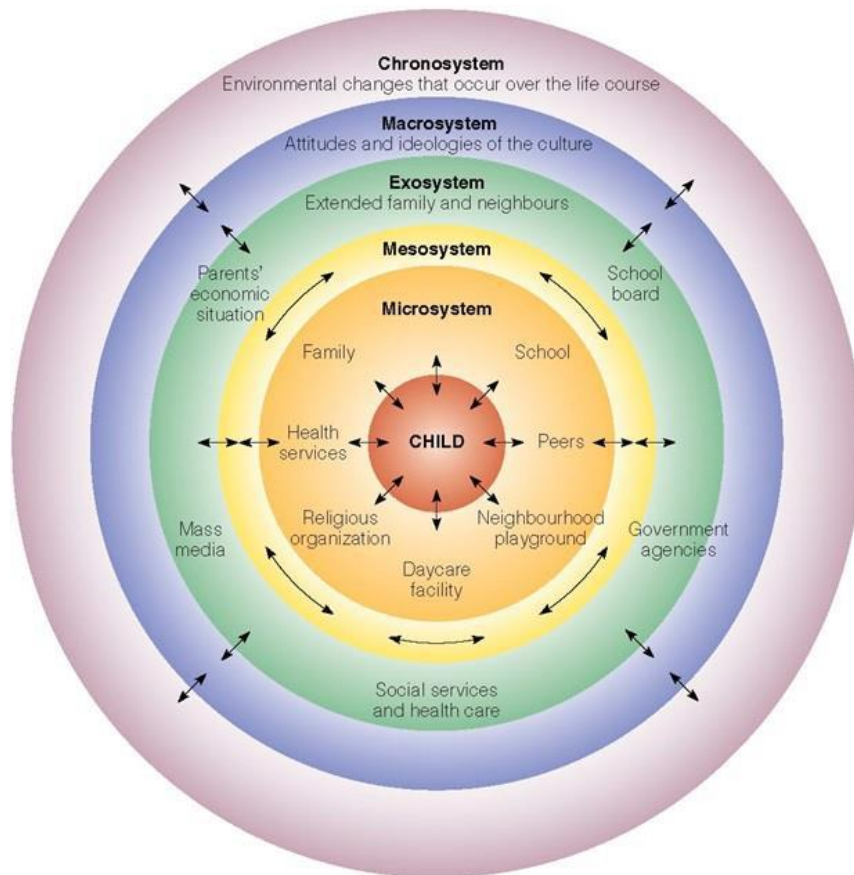
#### ***3.2.1 Historical Context***

In 1979, Urie Bronfenbrenner, a developmental psychologist introduced a new theoretical perspective for research in human development. This theoretical perspective looked at, "the developing person, the environment, and in particular the evolving interaction between these two" (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 3). According to Bronfenbrenner (2005), individuals' actions can influence the ecology they live in, which may improve or impair the course of their own development. Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological theory focuses on a person-in-context perspective, which highlights the interaction between the individual and the environment. In an ecological environment, the development of the person occurs by the regular interactions among people, maintained over the course of reciprocal relations between them and their environment (Bronfenbrenner, 1977).

It is helpful to consider briefly what an ecological perspective means. McLaren and Hawe (2005) suggest that an ecological perspective "...encompasses context in the broadest sense of the word, to include physical, social, cultural, and historical aspects of contexts...as well as attributes and behaviours of persons within" (p. 9). An ecological perspective

provides a framework within which to examine multifaceted interactions between persons and environments (Steinberg, 2001).

Bronfenbrenner (1979) posited that this ecological environment was a set of nested structures, each inside the next, similar to a set of Russian dolls. He proposed that human development occurs through experiences between the individual and the nested structures or settings of the developing person (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 3) In the figure below, a visual image of this ecological system is depicted, illustrating the different systems around the child.



*Figure 2* A visual depiction of Bronfenbrenner's ecological system of the developing child (Evans, 2020).

According to Bronfenbrenner (1979), the structure of the ecological environment extended beyond the immediate setting which directly affected the developing person, including the objects to which the person responds and their interactions with others. The

nested systems metaphor encapsulates the nature of these links and the consequences of their influence on the developing person. At the center of these systems are the developing child and their immediate settings, for example, the home, the school, and the neighborhood. These were referred to by Bronfenbrenner as *microsystems*, and will be discussed first, before explaining each of the other systems, namely, the *mesosystem*, *exosystem*, *macrosystem*, and *chronosystem*.

**3.2.1.1 The Microsystem.** Bronfenbrenner (1979) used the term microsystem to refer to the complexity of the interrelations between the child and others in their immediate setting. The microsystem includes all of the child's immediate social and physical environments. The child develops within the microsystem, and in relation to the people, objects, and events that they encounter in their immediate situations, for example the home or classroom. Bronfenbrenner (1979) proposed that the young child becomes aware of the relations between events and people in the setting that do not from the outset involve his or her active participation. Furthermore, Bronfenbrenner (1977) defined a *setting*, "as a place with particular physical features in which the participants engage in particular activities in particular roles (e.g. daughter, parent, teacher) for particular periods of time" (p. 514).

For the next system, *the mesosystem*, Bronfenbrenner (1979) considered how these immediate settings were linked, arguing that the relations between microsystems may influence development, for example, a child learning to write in school may need help at home, and not only rely on what they have been taught at school. The mesosystem will be discussed in more detail next.

**3.2.1.2 The Mesosystem.** According to Bronfenbrenner (1977), this system encompasses the interrelations among key settings containing the developing person at a particular point in their life. Bronfenbrenner (1977) explained that, "in sum, stated succinctly, a *mesosystem* is a system of microsystems" (p. 515). Mesosystems are formed whenever a child enters a new setting (such as starting secondary school). The mesosystem, identified by Bronfenbrenner (1979) is where the child transfers the skills learned in their microsystems, for example, the child learns how to play a new sport at school and returns home to play this with their sibling or parent. These learned skills and competences function in the mesosystem where the interconnections are made between each microsystem (Knight,

2013). It is important to note that Bronfenbrenner (1979) encouraged scholars to look at development across settings, as opposed to focusing on a single context, in order to understand these interrelations.

Looking at the third set of nested structures, *the exosystem*, this includes the events that occur in settings where the child is not present, such as a parent's workplace. At the early stage of his theoretical conception, Bronfenbrenner (1979) added that *within* any given setting, such as homes or schools, any culture or subculture, there are similarities, whilst *between* cultures or settings, there are differences. This system is called *the exosystem*.

**3.2.1.3 The Exosystem.** Bronfenbrenner (1977) proposed that the exosystem is the third circle of the ecological model, and refers to a setting in which the child does not take part, but the child can be influenced by events happening in this system. According to Bronfenbrenner (1977), the exosystem was an addition to the mesosystem. This means that it contains, "...other specific structures, both formal and informal, that do not themselves contain the developing person, but impinge on or encompass the immediate settings in which that person is found, and thereby influence, delimit, or even determine what goes on" (Bronfenbrenner, 1977, p. 515). What is important is that the developing child is not situated in this system, but is still influenced indirectly (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). For example, in the case of school transitions, the development of policies for schools occurs in the exosystem such as an attendance policy for the pupils designed by school governors. The child was not present during the development of the policy, but it will influence the child's attendance record at their school. Other parts of the exosystem that relate to the school transition are staff changes and the types of extra-curricular activities offered at the school, which are all located in the exosystem.

**3.2.1.4 The Macrosystem.** This nested structure forms the outer circle of Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological system. The *macrosystem* refers to how the institutional systems of a culture influence the other ecological settings (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Bronfenbrenner (1977) explained that the macrosystem was, "...the overarching institutional patterns of the culture or subculture, such as the economic, social, educational, legal, and political systems, of which micro-, meso-, and exo- systems are the concrete manifestations" (p. 515). Thus, the macrosystem can influence other systems such as the family



microsystem, beliefs, culture and customs, for example, in the case of the school transition, this could include the national standards, the national curriculum of the schooling system, which is directed by government. Also it encompasses social organisation, for example the age when children are expected to start secondary school.

The next part of the ecological model that Bronfenbrenner acknowledged was not part of the four nested layers, but it stood for a time-based dimension – the *chronosystem* (Bronfenbrenner, 1986).

**3.2.1.5 The Chronosystem.** According to Bronfenbrenner (1986), the term *chronosystem* was proposed as part of the model, “...that makes possible examining the influence on the person’s development of changes (and continuities) over time in the environments in which the person is living” (p. 724). The chronosystem signifies the passage of time in an individual’s life, in interaction with processes of change, represented by the interaction of the systems. It can be conceptualized as the life transitions of an individual (Tobbell & O’Donnell, 2013a). An example of this would be one particular cohort starting secondary school who will have different staff, curriculum, teachers, and examinations to another cohort, which would make it helpful to consider the cohort in relation to the chronosystem.

### 3.3 The Evolving Theory

Since Bronfenbrenner’s (1974) early writings about the ecological theory, the focus of his theory has evolved, partly due to certain concerns he had about the development of ecological research: the first was his discontent with how the research was carried out, and the second was that there were promising pathways being ignored. Bronfenbrenner developed an emergent new model, which first appeared in print in 1986, which aimed to contextualise how the layers within the systems interact. This iteration of his theory typifies Bronfenbrenner’s self-reflection, and his frequent re-assessment of his theoretical definitions (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998). Bronfenbrenner noted that his views on the theory had changed (Tudge et al., 2009). He acknowledged that the original theory focused primarily on the aspects of the context, and that he had not considered the role that the person plays in their own development (Bronfenbrenner, 1989). Bronfenbrenner therefore extended his theory, and rather than focus on the environment, he considered the biopsychological

features of the ‘developing person’ and the ‘engines of development’, which were termed *proximal processes* (Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994).

The attachment of the prefix *bio* to Bronfenbrenner’s ecological theory emphasised the attention that the theory pays to the characteristics of the person (not the operation of biological systems *within* the organism), which he regarded as biologically based, and which can influence proximal processes and the developmental outcome of the person (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998). Bronfenbrenner’s bioecological theory of human development provides a coherent model of the complex environments and the processes in which each child is situated (Bronfenbrenner, 2001). In the section below, this model will be explored in more detail, with reference to the defining elements, which are the Process, Person, Context, and Time (PPCT).

### **3.4 The Bioecological PPCT Model**

Bronfenbrenner (2005) defined the bioecological model as *evolving* because it had undergone a process of development over time in his writing and thinking. The model aimed to address two different developmental processes, each taking place over time (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). Firstly, the model can be used to define “the phenomenon under investigation—continuity and change in the biopsychological characteristics of human beings” (p. 795). The model also affords the researcher the opportunity to develop the scientific tools, both theory and corresponding research design, for assessing continuity and change (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). Neither should be carried out independently of the other, as they are the joint product of converging ideas (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006).

In the next sections, each element of the PPCT model will be discussed in turn and considered in relation to the developing child.

#### **3.4.1 The Process**

According to Bronfenbrenner and Morris (1998), *process* encompasses particular forms of interaction between organism and environment, which Bronfenbrenner called *proximal processes*. This element of the model explores the interactions between the organism and the environment (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). Proximal processes are seen as the primary

mechanisms for producing human development (Bronfenbrenner, 2005), and they will vary as a function of the developing person, the immediate contexts, and times.

Furthermore, proximal processes are the regular interactions that occur for the child in the immediate environments that are considered effective to the development of the child. Bronfenbrenner paid close attention to the frequency of these interactions over time (Bronfenbrenner, 2001). From Bronfenbrenner and Morris's (2006) perspective, these processes were posited as the primary mechanisms that produce human development. An example of these processes may involve interactions between parent and child, teacher and child, child and peer group (Knight, 2013). These interactions also include the child's engagement with objects and symbols, which invite reciprocal interaction, for example, 'imagination, manipulation, and attention' (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). Bronfenbrenner called these proximal processes the *engines of development* because he suggested that by engaging in these regular interactions, the child makes sense of their world and begins to understand their role in it (Tudge et al., 2009). It was thought that these processes were important because of how they influence development in their form, power, content, and direction, and can vary systematically, as a joint feature of the developing person (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006).

Furthermore, proximal processes are distinguished in terms of two major kinds of developmental outcomes, which they produce (Bronfenbrenner & Evans, 2000). The first of these was competence, which was seen as the demonstrated acquisition and development of knowledge, skills, or abilities. These competencies can direct the developing child's behaviour within situations and developmental domains (Bronfenbrenner & Evans, 2000). The second outcome is dysfunction, which was seen as the recurrent manifestation of difficulties in the child controlling and integrating their behaviour in different situations and areas of development (Bronfenbrenner & Evans, 2000).

Bronfenbrenner and Evans (2000) noted that *exposure* between the developing person and the proximal process with which the person engages with varies because of the duration, frequency, timing, intensity, and interruption, thus affecting the outcomes. This means that the interactions of the developing child with the world around them may result in either of these outcomes (either competence or dysfunction) and that these outcomes will be influenced by the exposure. Rosa and Tudge (2013) suggest that Bronfenbrenner saw proximal processes as usually acting in a positive way on developmental outcomes, by

promoting competence or diminishing dysfunctional outcomes, but left unanswered the question of differences between those that promote competence, and those that promote dysfunction.

### **3.4.2 The Person**

According to Bronfenbrenner (2005), the person characteristics affect the power and direction of the proximal processes. The term *person* here refers to the bioecological resources of the individual, such as the abilities, experiences, knowledge, and skills of the developing person, which are required for the effective functioning of proximal processes. According to Bronfenbrenner's PPCT model, the role of the *person* includes three types of person characteristics (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). Firstly, *dispositions* (which he called force characteristics), which set proximal processes in "motion in a particular developmental domain and continue to sustain their operation" (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006, p. 795). The force characteristics ignite the proximal processes, for example, the responses of the child to initiate and engage with others, or display curiosity. Secondly, the *resource* characteristics – these are required for the "effective functioning of proximal processes at a given stage of development: (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006, p. 796). Resources allow the child to engage in proximal processes either by knowledge, skills, and experience or if resources are limited for example by illness or disability, this can disrupt proximal processes. Then thirdly, Bronfenbrenner identified the *demand* characteristic, "that invite or discourages reactions from social environment of a kind that can foster or disrupt the operation of proximal processes" (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998, p. 995).

Thinking about the participants for the transition school studies, who are children with a visible difference, this third characteristic may invite some reactions from others in their new school setting, and the visible difference can be considered a demand characteristic in his model. Furthermore, the person characteristics also include the characteristics of parents, relatives, close friends, teachers, mentors, or others who participate in the life of the developing child on a fairly regular basis over extended periods of time (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). For this thesis, the term *developing child* will be employed throughout the thesis, and in the analysis of the child and the resilience process. Bronfenbrenner's (1977) early writings about the study of human ecology described the person as *growing* as can be seen in the following quotation, "...the scientific study of the progressive, mutual accommodation,

throughout the life span, between a growing human organism and the changing immediate environments...” (p. 514). In this writing in the 1970s he focused on the changing environment, but kept the growing person at the center of the systems. Two years on from this writing, Bronfenbrenner referred to the developing person, when he said “...the developing person is viewed not merely as a tabula rasa on which the environment makes its impact, but as a growing, dynamic entity that progressively moves into and restructures the milieu in which it resides” (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 21). Here he is recognising the agency of the child, not as a passive recipient of influences from the environment. This view of the child as active participants in their own development has been adapted throughout this thesis.

Bronfenbrenner hypothesised that the power of proximal processes (the interaction between an organism and the environment) varied depending on characteristics of the individual and the environment, as well as the developmental outcome (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). This means that in order to understand the developing child in this way, Bronfenbrenner and Morris (1998) argued for a deeper understanding of the context (specifically for the purposes of this thesis, the child’s family and school) because this is an important part of the child’s ecological environment.

### ***3.4.3 The Context***

The third part of the PPCT model considers the *context* of an individual’s development. This includes the microsystems, mesosystems, exosystems macrosystems and chronosystems (Bronfenbrenner, 1986) and were discussed in the subsection above (see from 3.2.1.1). Relevant to this thesis were the child’s microsystems, including the home, and the school (peers) because these settings were most important to the child during the school transition. Bronfenbrenner’s ecological theory premised that “...development is a function of forces emanating from multiple settings and from the relations among these settings” (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006, p. 817). Therefore, Bronfenbrenner and Morris (2006) suggested that to understand the context we must consider the process.

### ***3.4.4 Time***

The final element of Bronfenbrenner’s PPCT model is *time*. This aspect of the model accounts for changes over time that relate to both the developing child and the environment

(Knight, 2013). This means that time plays a role at all stages of the bioecological model. According to Bronfenbrenner (2005), the time element from the PPCT model includes three elements of time. Firstly, *microtime*, which looks at the continuity versus discontinuity within ongoing episodes of proximal processes; next, *mesotime*, which identifies the periodicity of these episodes, such as days and weeks; then *macrotime*, which focuses on the changing expectations and events in the larger society (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). An example of microtime during the school transition would relate to the regularity of extra-curricular activities and the child's attendance of these sessions. For mesotime, this looks at the tendency of these interactions to occur regularly, such as the school clubs.

**3.5 Ecological Transitions.** Bronfenbrenner (1977) emphasised the role of ecological transitions in shaping the course and content of human development, explaining that these transitions provide a context for developmental research because they periodically occur in a person's life. The family was one of Bronfenbrenner's (1986) core interests, which resulted in further growths to his theory. Bronfenbrenner (1986) explored the emergence of ecological transitions and identified two types of transitions; firstly, the *normative transition* – this includes school entry, puberty, entering the work force, marriage etc., and secondly, the *non-normative transition* – this refers to a death, a severe illness in the family, divorce, moving, winning the lottery (Bronfenbrenner, 1986). Therefore, the secondary school transition can be viewed as a normative transition in Bronfenbrenner's theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1986).

These transitions create a capacity for a setting, such as the school or home to function effectively as a context for human development, depending on the existence and nature of social interconnections between the settings. Furthermore, many of these transitions, such as the arrival of a younger sibling, or a promotion at work might involve a shift in roles and alter how a person feels, thinks, and acts (Bronfenbrenner, 1986). Thinking about the school transition, for some children, this adaptation to starting at secondary school is a normal part of life, and clearly some children are able to adjust to the notion of a transition with ease. For others, this type of change develops into a fear that prevents the continuity of their development and learning (Knight, 2013). Bronfenbrenner and Morris (2006) suggested that successful adaptation forms part of the inherent legacies provided by the child's history, and understanding of experiences associated with emotional responses to situations.

The study of educational transitions is particularly well suited to research, which makes use of a bioecological approach. An example of this was Tobbell and O'Donnell's (2013b) research on postgraduate transitions, where they chose to make use of the ecological model because of its suitability for studying the changes that occur in different contexts. They acknowledged how this model allows for the study of multiple levels of influence on the person's experiences and identity. Tobbell and O'Donnell (2013b) noted that Bronfenbrenner's theory emphasised the reciprocity of human activity, suggesting that, "the individual develops or changes in response to his or her action with and upon the new educational context" (p. 127). Therefore, this was very encouraging for my own decision to employ and engage with Bronfenbrenner's PPCT theory to study secondary school transition.

According to one of Bronfenbrenner's (1979) early writings about the ecology of human development:

...the capacity of a setting-such as the home, school or workplace-to function effectively as a context for development is seen to depend on the existence and nature of social interconnections between settings, including joint participants, communication, the existence of information in each setting about the other. (p. 6)

This awareness lends itself to further enquiry about what a child entering a new setting knows about the new place, such as secondary school, or if the child was provided with information about the new setting before entry. Bronfenbrenner (1979) refers to the shifts or changes in roles or settings, as *ecological transitions*, which happen throughout one's life.

Furthermore, these transitions look at the relations between the individual and other individuals and the relations between the relevant settings (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). For Bronfenbrenner (1979), the ecological transition was a joint function of biological changes and altered environmental circumstances, and this represented, "the process of mutual accommodation between the organism and its surroundings that is the primary focus" (p. 27), which he called the ecology of human development. With the application of Bronfenbrenner's theory in this thesis, the child is viewed at the center of the systems and the transition process allows us to examine how the child develops over time, and how the child moves between their immediate microsystems, in particular the home, school, and peer group.

### 3.6 Theory Limitations

In one of Bronfenbrenner's (2005) later writings, he used the term child to encompass the entire time from infancy through to young adulthood. However, when he referred to the development of the child, he described the types of activities that a younger child would do, such as learning to read and playing with toys, whereas during adolescence, the young person begins to strive for independence both as an individual and as a member of peer group (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). There is no further distinction made by Bronfenbrenner concerning the definition of the term child or how he saw developmental phases in childhood, and it would be helpful to gain an understanding of the meaning of the 'child in early adolescence' from the viewpoint of Bronfenbrenner's theory. It would add to the notion of a developing child shifting toward adolescence and adulthood because the 'person' element became a key part of the PPCT model.

Another part of the theory to consider was the 'person' in this model because it is used in two ways. Firstly, it is seen an influence on the process (of resilience during the school transition) and secondly, as an outcome or a product of the process (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). Other writers (Rosa & Tudge, 2013) have noted the emphasis Bronfenbrenner placed on the role of the person in the model appears twice; first as a component of the model and as an effect on the development, and as a developmental outcome. This meant that using Bronfenbrenner's theory as a lens for this thesis, I viewed the child at the center of the microsystems looking outwards, and then methodologically I considered how we understand the outcome of the underlying processes.

### 3.7 Conclusions

In conclusion, Bronfenbrenner's theory was chosen for this research because the elements of the PPCT model are helpful in examining holistically how the developing child engages and interacts within the different settings over the course of the school term. Bronfenbrenner (1979) noted that no child lives in an isolated vacuum. It is particularly important to consider the social context and how the child engages with their settings, if one is to understand the nature of the child's experience of school transition. We have seen how Bronfenbrenner's theory is particularly well suited as a theoretical underpinning for researching school transitions, because we can locate the child at the center of this theory



and follow them over time as they move from one setting to another. By adopting Bronfenbrenner's PPCT model, we understand that to study a transition we need a longitudinal design in order to recognise the value of time points in the resilience process. I am mindful of the need to keep a clear focus on the underlying processes occurring for the child during this significant changeable event. Bronfenbrenner (1979) suggests we start from the child and look outwards.

From an ecological perspective, a successful school transition means that children's roles will change and develop over time and that these children will need to adapt to their new setting (Knight, 2013). Furthermore, it was important to this thesis is that Bronfenbrenner's bioecological PPCT model was used to explore and understand the functioning of the proximal processes, which impact on a child's school transition.

## Chapter 4: Methodology

### 4.1 Overview

The review of the literature and Bronfenbrenner's bioecological theory in the previous three chapters identified the main strands for this thesis. Firstly, I considered the multidimensional nature of the concept of resilience, shedding some light on some of the inconsistencies in definitions, whilst acknowledging developments in the literature concerning how resilience has been conceptualised, particularly with regard to viewing resilience as a process and the use of longitudinal designs. Chapter 2 provided a detailed discussion of the literature on resilience and school transition, and what this experience means for a child with a cleft starting secondary school. Then, the third chapter focused on the expansion of Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory and his conceptualisations of the developing child.

The current chapter discusses the epistemological approach underpinning the research, which takes a critical realist approach. It explores methodological considerations, which were influential to me as a doctoral student when I was considering how to understand the enactment of resilience as a process, particularly for children with a cleft who were starting secondary school.

### 4.2 Purpose of the Chapter

This chapter starts with presenting the argument for using a qualitative approach. Next, the conceptual, theoretical, and epistemological views that have steered this research are discussed. Following this, the research design for each study is outlined in this chapter, as well as the ethical considerations specific to the thesis. This includes discussing the qualitative approaches that were used for the data collection and the methods of analysis.

### 4.3 The Argument for adopting a Qualitative Approach

In order to explore the dynamics of resilience as an unfolding process for children during the secondary school transition, it was necessary to consider using a longitudinal design, to *capture* these moments and experiences as they happened. The qualitative approach is an iterative process in which the researchers study things in their natural settings,

attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

A key consideration in deliberating over the choice of methods for this thesis was the theoretical underpinning of the research, and the decision to adopt Bronfenbrenner's PPCT model as a lens to view the child in their microsystems. The mixed qualitative methods were particularly suitable for me as a researcher who was using Bronfenbrenner's theory, because they allowed a very rich and detailed understanding of the naturalistic settings in which the child was living in and engaging with. Adopting Bronfenbrenner's bioecological lens was a good fit with employing a qualitative approach, and the choice of case studies, an ethnographic observation, snapshot interviews, and reflective diaries provided a very comprehensive and holistic overview of the children's and families' experiences of school transition. By choosing to use a qualitative approach, I was able to follow the child's narratives over time, and include the analysis of other key people in their lives, such as teachers, parents, and the children's peers. I was able to gain a detailed understanding of the experiences and processes occurring for the children. The choice of qualitative methods was important because it promoted and employed a deeper understanding of social phenomena and their dynamics (Attride-Stirling, 2001).

Kalof et al. (2008) suggested that qualitative research centers on understanding processes, experiences, and the meanings people assign to things. Qualitative methods are often concerned with garnering an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon or are focused on meaning, which are often focused on the how and why of a particular issue, process, situation, subculture, scene or set of social interactions (Dworkin, 2012). This aligns with the research questions of this thesis, as they are focused on developing an understanding of the enactment of resilience process for children with a cleft.

#### **4.4 Ontological, Theoretical and Epistemological View**

Choosing an area of research is often steered by the need to gain more knowledge and understanding of a particular concept or process. According to Willig (2008), the researcher should be clear about the objectives of their research and how they aim to achieve this. Within this thesis, my decisions were influenced by my beliefs about what this knowledge represents. The next two subsections identify and discuss the ontological and epistemological views, which I adopted for this thesis.

#### ***4.4.1 Ontological position***

Ontology is defined as, “a concept concerned with the existence of, and relationship between, different aspects of society such as social actors, cultural norms and social structures” (Jupp, 2006, p. 300). Furthermore, ontology is concerned with questions relating to the kinds of things that exist within society (Jupp, 2006). Forming an ontological stance means that there are assumptions made about the kind and nature of reality and what exists (Richards, 2003).

Part of the focus for this research was to understand the multidimensional nature of resilience and the enactment of resilience including the processes involved, during the transition phase from primary to secondary school. It is recognised that this process and the experiences are distinctive to the individual child and family because of a range of other aspects, for example, different schools, different needs, siblings, different peers, etc. As a researcher, I also believed that the experiences of each child have been influenced by their perceptions and ideas, which have been shaped through interactions with members of their family and the systems that they engaged with, for example, previous primary school, the teachers, their peers, and siblings.

Tobbell (2014) noted that Wenger’s community of practice theory (1998) could be helpful in understanding school transitions. The process of school transitions involves social interactions of the individual with the other members of the community, and attention needs to be given to this as an emergent ontological feature. In essence, “...transition is the process of learning ‘to be’ in the new community” (Tobbell, 2014, p. 2). This is relevant to the assumptions made within the thesis, and emphasises the need to explore communication and social interactions in the study of resilience.

For the thesis, the research approach was influenced by my choice to adopt qualitative methods that were designed to understand the unfolding nature of a process, and the need to study experiences of the school transition over a series of time points. In response to the interactions of the child in different contexts it was important to consider the basic assumptions about relational ontology. According to Slife (2004) the strong relational perspective considers all things, which includes all practices. The outside of the person is as important as the inside, and the qualities, properties and identities are not only dependent on what is inherent, but on how they are related to each other. When thinking

about the school transition process, I was not just thinking about the child entering a new environment, and the personal qualities that they bring with them. I also recognised that the relations between entities are ontologically more fundamental than the entities themselves. A relational ontology assumes that, when considering the members of a school community, we are always and already community; our very nature is shared through practices and our very constitution is mutual (Slife, 2004).

Furthermore, Tobbell (2014) suggested that education is not something that can be done ‘to’ students. Instead, it requires collaboration; it can only be done ‘with’ students. Coyne (2011) noted that as human beings we are in a process of discovery and revealing, but with very little chance of ‘knowing it all’. Therefore, my view of the developing child starting secondary school needed to consider the day to day experiences of the children, and the meanings of these experiences, that are dependent upon, rather than independent of, their contexts. The focus on processes, non-static language, and contextual relations are a key part of my thinking as an active researcher during this time.

#### ***4.4.2 Epistemology and Theory***

Epistemology refers to the assumptions that are made about the relationship and interaction between the researcher’s knowledge and the role of the participants. According to Crotty (1998), epistemology is a mode of viewing the world and making sense of it. This thesis adopts a *critical realist* outlook, which assumes that, while a reality exists independent of the observer; we cannot know that reality with certainty (Lyons & Coyle, 2007). Critical realism is concerned with the nature of causation, agency, structure, and relations, and the implicit or explicit ontologies we are operating with (Archer et al., 2016). The epistemology held by the researcher determined that a qualitative research design was appropriate to provide meaningful contextualisation and clarity to the research questions because it aimed to develop a detailed understanding of the experiences for these children, taking into account the processes and social structures, such as school, that they engaged with daily.

Qualitative research helped to delve more deeply into the children’s lives, the settings, and the subcultures, to try and generate a subjective understanding of their experiences (Baker & Edwards, 2012). Adopting a critical realist perspective will examine not only how these children experience, perceive and give meaning to their school lives, but will also situate them in the wider social context. Bronfenbrenner (1979) suggested that a

research method should account for the child's shifting reality, saying "...in terms of research method, the child's evolving construction of reality cannot be observed directly; it can only be inferred from patterns of activity as these are expressed in both verbal and non-verbal behaviour, particularly in the activities, roles, and relations in which the person engages" (p. 11).

In seeking to understand the process of resilience for children with a cleft who were starting their first year of secondary school, adopting a mixed-methods qualitative approach allowed for the breath and range of enquiry to be expanded over the two studies (group and case studies), and varied qualitative methods were used to pursue different research questions. The mixed-methods qualitative approach formed the foundation for the thesis, and was a good fit with the bioecological PPCT model, which allowed me to address the research questions.

My approach to data analysis involved both inductive and deductive reasoning. At some points, there was some inductive analysis evident. This meant that the reasoning began with data, which was examined in light of my research questions. Patterns in this data are discerned and labeled. Then the approach links these patterns to existing theory. Sometimes this is referred to as a 'bottom up' approach (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). However, the framework was also more deductive at times, fitting my ideas back into Bronfenbrenner's PPCT model, therefore including both an inductive approach, but with some deductive analytic work. This deductive approach to the analysis employed a framework comprising of themes for the coding process (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The analysis was a recursive process that involved moving back and forth between the data analysis and the literature (Azungah, 2018).

Furthermore, qualitative research is sensitive to detail and the research setting (Bryman & Bell, 2015). It "studies, documents, analyses, and interprets how human beings construct and attach meanings to their experiences" (Patton, 2015, p. 13). As a qualitative researcher, I will show how this qualitative line of enquiry helped me to understand how these children with a cleft experienced the school transition to secondary school and identify the processes involved in resilience during this transition.

## 4.5 Research Design

This research design for this thesis was steered by the resilience literature, because of the ambiguities about this term and the lack of agreement over the concept of resilience and its meaning (see Chapter 2, p. 15). The starting point for the methodology for this thesis was to explore how to identify the dynamics of the resilience process during the secondary school transition. This led to the development of the first study, the Key Informant study (Chapter 5, p. 61). This study was designed to understand how professionals from varied fields, including education, academia, and health considered the concept of *resilience* in relation to children who look different.

Following the Key Informant study, I employed longitudinal qualitative methods, which were developed in accordance with my growing understanding of the contemporaneous nature of the study of resilience process, and the experiences of the secondary school transition for the child and their family. The first of these studies includes a group of six children (and their families), who were ‘shadowed’ during the course of the first school term (Chapter 6, p. 96). The second study used a focused ethnography for the two case studies of children (and their families), as they embarked on their school year, until the end of the academic school year (Chapter 7, p. 214). In the next few sections, a brief overview of the qualitative approaches used will be discussed.

### 4.5.1 Key Informant Study

A key informant interview is a research approach often used by ethnographers (Gilchrist, 1999). This is because the informants are chosen because of their position in a culture (Gilchrist, 1999) and their specialist knowledge in a research area. For this study, this meant that the key informants all had experience and knowledge of working with children, and their parents and families in a healthcare or educational setting. The decision to use the key informant interviews was made in order to gain an understanding of how the key informants understood the meaning and process of resilience for children, and more specifically for children with a visible difference. This proposed method of data collection, known as *key informant interviewing* requires identifying key informants who have special knowledge, status or communication skills, who are willing to teach the researcher (Gilchrist, 1999).

**4.5.1.1 Participants and Procedure.** Semi-structured interviews were conducted with six key informants to address the research question. Only one of these interviews was conducted via Skype. The other five interviews were conducted face-to-face. The interview questions were informed by the literature, and aimed to explore how informants thought about resilience, their conceptualisations and definitions, and also to pay attention to their choice of terminology such as resilience, coping and competence. These informants all had experience of working with children with visible differences, as well as children with no visible difference and with children of different ages. A thematic analysis (TA) was used to analysis the data. This study is discussed in detail in the next chapter (Chapter 5, p. 61).

#### ***4.5.2 School Transition Studies***

Following the first study, two school transition studies were planned and carried out. Both of these studies included the recruitment of children with a cleft starting secondary school and their families. These studies were focused on understanding the processes involved in the enactment of resilience among children with a cleft starting secondary school. This was mapped onto Bronfenbrenner's bioecological theory, placing the child at the center of this model.

The intention was to trail a group of children as they started secondary school and continue to accompany them through the academic year. Both studies included interviews with the family and the child at the beginning of the school year and at the end of the research study. There were also set times for online snapshot interviews with the children during the course of this time. The research designs also included an invitation for the children to create a digital diary in the form of a video blog, called *vlogging* for the group study.

For the case studies, I conducted interviews with the child, and a nominated peer, and with the child and a teacher during the visits to their schools. In the table below, an overview of these two school transition studies is given to clarify how the data was collected, the duration of these studies and the participants involved. A detailed examination of this information is provided in the study chapters 6 and 7 (see pp. 95 and 214).



**Table 2***Brief Overview of the School Transition Studies*

	<u>Group study</u>	<u>Case studies</u>
Data collection	1. Initial family interviews 2. Online snapshot interviews 3. Vlogging 4. Concluding family interviews	1. Initial family interviews 2. Online snapshot interviews 3. Focused ethnography (school observations, teacher and peer interviews) 4. Concluding family interviews
Duration of research study	6 months (August 2018 – January 2019)	9 months (October 2017 – June 2018)
Participants	6 families 5 girls, 1 boy	2 families 1 girl, 1 boy

**4.5.2.1 Recruitment Issues.** At the conception of this study, the target was to recruit up to 14 children with a cleft and their families to take part in a year long (from September 2017 to June 2018) study. Together with my supervisor, I developed a professional relationship with the Cleft Lip and Palate Association (CLAPA) team, who knew of more than 150 children on their database that would be starting secondary school in September 2017. The study was advertised through CLAPA. This meant that CLAPA placed an advert online, and were provided with an invitation, which was sent out to all the children starting secondary school on CLAPA's database via email. This recruitment started in the middle of May 2017. The reason for this timing was thought out because Year 6 children complete their SATS in early May and it felt that this would be a more relaxed and suitable time when the children and their families could consider being part of a research study.

Unfortunately, the recruitment was very slow. It was only at the end of September when two families consented to participate and the initial family interviews were conducted

in October. This meant that their views and experiences of starting secondary school were collected in October, some 8 weeks after the start of the school term for these two families involved in the case studies. The two families had to be reflective when thinking about this time. Because of the difficulty in recruiting, my studies had to be re-designed, and I have reflected on this in the box below.

### ***Reflection 2***

Thinking back on this time, it was a difficult stage of the research process because the initial plan and consideration about this longitudinal design, which was well thought out could not take place in the way I had originally planned. It may have been slightly ambitious to recruit this many families for a year-long study, but with access to more than 100 families with children starting secondary school with a cleft, this was conceived as a realistic possibility by the charity and researcher. It was also an indication of how hard it is to recruit families for a year-long study, and consequently this kind of study is very rare. Perhaps children in early adolescence frequently do not wish to discuss their appearance or spend a year with a researcher.

On the other hand, working with these two children and their families throughout the academic year provided new opportunities, which I had not originally envisaged, such as the chance to visit their schools and observe them at home. In psychological research, the sample size per se is not the only consideration, but rather the researcher needs to consider the inclusion of a particular case. Such a case, often for theoretical reasons can turn out to be central to the analysis. Whilst the recruitment was a little delayed, and started a little later than planned in October, I was still able to accompany these two children for the rest of the academic year, contemporaneously.

The case studies also afforded unexpected benefits, which would not have been possible with a larger sample, I was able to design and include a focused ethnographic study for both children. This ethnographic work allowed for some very valuable space to closely observe and interact with the children and families who participated in these two case studies, and in particular to visit each child for three days in their respective schools. This was not part of the original design but became a possibility in the case study work with these two children and their families.

**4.5.2.2 Study Design Redesign.** With the development of the case study, the researcher employed a focused ethnographic approach to develop an in-depth look at these children's transition year. This meant that the researcher had the opportunity to observe these two children in their immediate settings - at school, at home, and with their peers during the transition year from October 2017 to June 2018.

Furthermore, this study aimed to answer the research question exploring how the social context shapes resilience during the transition year. The quality of the data that was gathered served to answer the research questions within the theoretical frameworks and design of the study (Baker & Edwards, 2012). However, because the case study was not able to document the very start of the school year and the beginning stages of the school transition contemporaneously, as the transition unfolded from the first week of the new school year, this meant that the focus of the next study had to include this. It was clear that we needed the group level study to accompany the children as they started secondary school, from the first week. This meant returning to the original research design, and recruiting a group of children with a cleft starting secondary school, who would then become part of the group level study.

**4.5.2.3 School Group Study Design (Study 2).** With careful thought and consideration to the resilience literature, and the Key Informant study, it was decided that the beginning phase of the school transition needed to be captured from the child's point of view. To understand the processes involved in the enactment of resilience among children with a cleft starting secondary school, I therefore wanted to pay particular attention to the start of the new school term. At the first time point the children were faced with the initial changes to their routines, to their travel, their peers, their teachers. It seemed to me that the start of the school term could afford a vantage point for seeing the protective mechanisms of the resilience process, and how they might work (or not). For Bronfenbrenner (1986), a transition is a time when the microsystems were meeting and forming new mesosystems (see p. 43 for an explanation of why transitions were seen as important by Bronfenbrenner).

When re-designing the group school study with my supervisory team, the length of the study was reduced, in order to encourage more families to join. We thought that some families had been discouraged from participating because of concerns about making a commitment of a full academic year. We had good reason to think that the lack of response

during the first recruitment phase may have occurred because of the length of time that families needed to commit to the study, across a full school year, because of feedback from CLAPA and their outreach workers.

The group study therefore focused on the period of time before the child started at their secondary school and followed the child and family until the end of the first term (August to December 2018). This led to some changes to the initial research recruitment timeframe. As before, I worked closely with CLAPA, and started recruiting earlier (March 2018). This included an advert about the research in the monthly CLAPA newsletter and an advert sent out through CLAPA's database. Six children with a cleft who were starting secondary school in September and their families were recruited for this research. This included five girls and one boy, all aged 11 at the start of the school academic year (September 2018). Details of this sample group are discussed in length in Chapter 6 (p. 95).

**4.5.2.4 Procedure.** Four time points were identified as key interval moments to try and understand the children's experiences of the school transition year. For the group study, there were four time points for data collection. *Time point one* occurred before the participants had started at their new secondary school (an *interview with the family and the child*). These semi-structured interviews were conducted in August or early September with the participants and provided a good opportunity for the researcher to meet the whole family and discuss the research. *Time points two and three* were known as *snapshot interviews with the child* and occurred at four different stages over the course of the term (from September to December 2018). These were considered important times to identify and capture the experiences of the child and were aligned with the school term breaks. These snapshot interviews were conducted online with the child participants and were conducted as live real time synchronous interviews between the child and researcher.

In addition, children were invited to record their vlogs (video blogging). The vlogs were devised as digital diaries that the children could create at any time during the study. They were short video recordings, which acted as a personal diary of events or key moments that the child was happy to share about their school day and transition experiences with the researcher. *Time point four* was the follow up interview with the family and the child at the end of the first school term (January 2018). Further details about each time point and the methods used are presented in the research chapter 6.

**4.5.2.5 Case Study Design (Study 3).** The case studies employed a similar design to the group school study. There were specific time points over the course of the academic school year where the data was collected. This was based on the research aims of exploring how the secondary school transition could be studied contemporaneously as it unfolds, in order to understand more about the protective mechanisms involved, including where and how they manifest themselves and with what effect.

This case study design used a *focused ethnography* method for the second time point in the design. Ethnography for qualitative researchers (according to Goffman, 1989) is a method that provides a closer look at the phenomenon being studied. In essence, this form of qualitative methods offers researchers the opportunity to have direct close contact with those being examined (Silverman, 2009). According to Knoblauch (2005), Goffman (1952) and Festinger (1964) used a focused ethnographic approach for research in the early 1950s and 1960s. It was employed to focus on the life of a small group of society and was viewed as a mini ethnography with a specific research question in mind (Knoblauch, 2005; Wall, 2015). The focused ethnography typically looks at a distinct problem in a specific context and will be conducted within a sub-cultural group rather than with a cultural group that differs from that of the researcher (Mayan, 2009; Wall, 2015). During the focused ethnography, the cultural elements including ideas, beliefs, values, knowledge and social observations are questioned.

For the case studies, a focused ethnographic approach was used because of the qualitative design of the research, which included a short-term visit to each of the case study participant's schools. As an educator, I have some background knowledge of the schools teaching system. The visit to the schools also included interviews with the teachers and the peers. Furthermore, I acted as an observer during this time at the school, which differed to a conventional ethnography in which the role is participatory and the duration in the field is longer (Knoblauch, 2008). For this focused ethnography, the two case study participants did not know each other, but I focused on the specific research question and the shared experiences, and worked from the assumption that the participants share a cultural perspective (secondary school transition) (Wall, 2015). Further discussion of the focused ethnography is given in Chapter 7, p. 214.

**4.5.2.6 Participants and Procedure.** As discussed in the previous subsection (see 4.5.2.1 Recruitment Issues), the research design was reassembled because of recruitment issues, resulting in the opportunity to conduct the case studies. There were two children and their families who were shadowed as they experienced their school transition year (October 2017- July 2018). The children were 11 years old at the start of the study (a girl and a boy). A detailed section of their demographic details are provided in the research chapter 7 (p. 214). There were three time points for the data collection. *Time point one* included the initial interview with the child and their family (October 2017). There were also two online snapshot interviews with each child during this time point.

Next, *time point two* included the focused ethnography. Detailed field notes were collected during this time and two dyadic interviews were conducted at school with the children. The school interviews included the child and a chosen teacher, as well as an interview with the child and a peer. It was designed so that this part of the research would occur in February 2018, after or before the school half term break. It also gave each child some time to get to know their teachers and meet new friends at their school.

### ***Reflection 3***

For the one of the participants, this time point was moved to April, when the visit to the school took place. This was because the participant had injured his arm and his attendance at school was inconsistent due to hospital visits and the pain from his accident. I established communication with the school and kept in constant communication with his mother, looking at when the most suitable days were to carry out the observation. Over the Easter holidays, the participant was feeling better and felt ready to engage with this part of the study. There was a need to be pragmatic and flexible when conducting research with children and families because of unforeseen events or experiences occurring.

This systemic nature of the research meant that it was important to include all of the immediate environments (or microsystems) that the child engaged with because it was relevant to understand how the child perceived and experienced these events and activities relating to the school transition. In addition to this, the interviews with the teacher and the peers meant that it was possible to include key people who were important to the child's microsystems. The interviews occurred at the school and were considerate of time restraints,

and were designed to fit in to the school timetable and not disrupt key lessons or assemblies, etc.

The interview schedules were designed with my supervisors, and myself and were supported by the school transition and resilience literature. There was a focus on protective processes, such as the sense of having a secure base experienced through belonging and meaning (Gilligan, 2000; Rutter, 1987). The interview format made use of open-ended questions that were designed to elicit rich data in the form of personal experiences. The interviews were dyadic, and the child was present with their interview with their friend, and with their teacher. This was very important – since this is research with – rather than about – the child, and they were introducing their teacher and friends to the researcher, who they knew by this point in the research process.

## **4.6 Data Analysis**

### ***4.6.1 Thematic Analysis***

This analysis of the data employed the use of thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The reason for choosing this method was based on the theoretical and methodological flexibility offered (Boyatzis, 1998, Braun & Clarke, 2006). The decision to employ this method was made during the initial phase of this research, before the first key informant study. Braun and Clarke (2006) describe this method as accessible, providing core skills that are useful for conducting many forms of qualitative analysis. The flexibility of this method provides for a range of theoretical and epistemological approaches (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This was useful to the researcher because of the complexity of the longitudinal research design and the use of Bronfenbrenner's PPCT model (Bronfenbrenner, 2005).

Thematic Analysis is a form of data analysis where the researcher organises data into themes based on, “whether it captures something important in relation to the overall research question” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 82). In my research, the process of analysis began with the verbatim transcriptions of the field notes and recordings from the observations and semi-structured interview. The process of Thematic Analysis begins with rigorous reading and closely examining the transcripts of interviews with families to identify and make note of patterns and potential themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The data from each transcript was coded and analysed by the researcher and then clustered into themes. The

initial set of identified themes was refined for further clustering and organizing into relevant categories based on the researcher's interests, as well as data-driven categories. This is discussed in further detail in the study Chapters 5, 6 and 7.

#### ***4.6.2 Utilising a Combination of Different Qualitative Methods***

From the school transition studies, different qualitative methods were used to gather data. These included online snapshot child-only interviews, family interviews, a focused ethnography and vlogging (each method is discussed in detail in Chapter 6 and 7). Employing a combination of qualitative methods in these studies occurred in the context of my decision to use a longitudinal research design. The design focused on the identification of specific time points (linked to the academic school year calendar), and the involvement of the participants and their family was always a priority for my research. Using mixed qualitative methods was considered necessary from the beginning of the research design because of the quality of data that we aimed to produce.

The data that was gathered from the combination of methods also paid attention to the context in which it occurred. As an example, the data from the family interviews included the interactions between the parents and the children, whereas the vlogging data provided a more personal perspective of the child's school experiences. The quality of data produced from each method aimed to elicit different temporal realities, which was important to allowing me to capture the unfolding nature of the resilience process during the school transition.

For the data analysis, each time point for the school transition studies was analysed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) six steps of thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is not specific to a particular theoretical framework and is used as a tool that offers nuanced and interpretative analysis of qualitative data (Braun et al., 2016). It provided a flexible structure for the active process of analysis which was developed in accordance with the research questions, the literature, and consideration of Bronfenbrenner's PPCT model (2005). This considered the model's four elements – Person, Process, Context and Time (as discussed in Chapter 3, p. 37). Furthermore, I kept reflective field notes after conducting the interviews and observations, which supported the reflective boxes that were employed during the analysis in Chapter 6 and 7, and which also helped me to think about the data analysis.



### ***4.6.3 Strategies Employed when Working with the Data***

The strategies used when working with the large amount of data focused on the flexibility that thematic analysis offers a researcher (Braun et al., 2016). The approach was 'data-driven' at first, guided by the developing analysis. However, a more deductive approach was taken when thinking about the PPCT elements from Bronfenbrenner's theory, and so the analytic process was also informed by theory (Braun et al., 2016). NVivo was not used to analyse the data because of the need to retain control over the analysis rather than delegate this to a computerised system. It was important to me as the researcher and my supervisory team that we analysed the data from the meanings in the text, focusing on the transcriptions only.

Therefore, for each time point, the data was collated from the different qualitative methods, for example, online interviews and vlogging. These data were then transcribed verbatim, read and re-read by the researcher and her supervisors. Then the coding line by line was conducted consistently across the data set, until all the data for that time point was coded. At each time point, there were ongoing discussions with my supervisory team and reflections made from the field notes. It was important to critically engage with the data, looking for ideas and concepts that would help to address the research questions (Braun et al., 2016).

The next step was to identify the themes by clustering the codes to recognise patterns. In the case of the focused ethnography data, which had been collected in the school and home settings for the two children and families in the case studies, the observation notes were treated as part of the data collection for that time point. Inclusion of these field notes added to the analysis, and helped me in addressing the fourth research question: How does the social context in which the child engages with shape the resilience process during the secondary school transition year? Each qualitative method used is discussed in more detail in the Chapters 6 and 7.

### ***4.6.4 Reflexivity***

My ability to be reflexive as a researcher was important for the analysis of the school transition studies. It is important to be reflexive as a qualitative researcher, because of how this practice helps the researcher to explain their reasoning when thinking about the themes, and reflect on how our perceptions might affect the research project. I have used reflexivity

as part of the analysis throughout both of the school transition studies. During the data collection and in particular, the analysis, reflexivity was fitting to this research because it helped me as a researcher to examine my effect on the research setting and observe others (Tracy, 2010). Reflexivity was part of the process of thinking critically during the different phases of the research. This tool was used as a type of diary to explore and understand how my role as the researcher shaped the narrative of the thesis.

## **4.7 Ethical considerations**

### ***4.7.1 Recording and the Storage of Data***

The transcriptions from the interviews do not include any original names - all participants were given a pseudonym and any identifying information was removed, so it should not be possible to identify the participants in this thesis. All digital recordings were downloaded onto a password-protected computer to continue with data transcription. The researcher ensured that the data was secured and that only herself and her supervisors had access to the raw data. All data and back-up copies were anonymised and will be stored for a period of five years in discrete folders on a password protected computer or on the Kingston University secure server. Pseudonyms will be used for participants and those mentioned in interviews in the thesis and resulting publications. After the PhD has been completed, these voice recordings will be destroyed after five years.

### ***4.7.2 Working with Families***

Voluntary participation was ensured by asking for written consent from the parents and teachers, and verbal assent from the participating children in both transition studies. When working with families it is important to build a rapport from the beginning to ensure continuity and retention. From the start this was very important to me as a researcher. All parents of the participants had the opportunity to read the information pack before deciding whether or not to participate, and I was able to answer any questions which the families had before they consented to participate. Additionally, all participants were able to withdraw, or stop at any time without giving a reason.

There was a small risk that a child could be upset during some of the parts of the research, for example if they recall an upsetting incident during the interview. I was very

careful to explain to the children at the start of the interviews that we could stop or pause the online snapshot interviews at any time if they wanted to until and if the participant wished to continue. Participants (and parents) were informed before the interviews that they can pause or stop at any time if they request this during the interview process. Having previous experience of working in education as a teacher, I was well placed to lead these small group interviews with skill and sensitivity. A more detailed discussion of ethics can be found in the study chapters, 5, 6 and 7.

#### ***4.7.2 Online interviewing***

The children who participated in the school transition studies were 11 years old. This meant that for the online interviewing, the parents were involved in the organisation of these interviews, providing a suitable time and day to the researcher. Some of the children had access to their own mobile devices for the interviews and others used their parents' devices. All parents and children were made aware of safety online and were given the researcher's contact information for the interviews (James & Busher, 2009). This supported the study design because it was age appropriate, the children had access to devices and it was minimal demand to the participant's time because they were at their home, and did not need to travel to meet with the doctoral researcher.

## Chapter 5: A Key Informant Study Examining the Meaning and Understanding of Resilience for Children

### 5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter detailed the methodology and methods that were used to acquire the data and analysis for each study. This chapter will present the findings for the key informant study, exploring how the informants viewed resilience, with an emphasis on their understanding of resilience as a process. Following this, the informants were asked about their understanding of some of the key terminology from the resilience literature, and the role or importance of resilience for a child with a visible difference. These issues will be discussed in detail.

### 5.2 Study Rationale

The ideas for this study came from my reflections on the lack of agreement over the construct of resilience, which besets the resilience literature. I identified a need for further clarification of the term 'resilience' particularly concerning the ways in which it is defined and conceptualised and the key terminology used by researchers (including risk, protective factors). I could also see a need to explore terms associated with this concept, such as, *competency*, *coping*, and *adaptation*. For this reason, this qualitative study used key informant interviews in order to gain an understanding, from the informant's perspective, of the meaning and process of resilience for children. The key informant's expertise was most relevant because of their professional experience. It was intended that for some of the key informants, their extensive experience of working with children who have faced an adversity would provide further understanding and insights about the concept of resilience.

### 5.3 Literature Review

#### 5.3.1 Resilience

The beginnings of the term *resilience* grew from a hope that there was a means for individuals to overcome an adverse experience, and develop an ability to enhance one's resistance to stress and adversity (Rutter, 1993). The researchers in this field became

interested in the variations concerning how well children adapt to adversity, even siblings from the same family (Luthar et al., 2000). At its starting point, the concept of resilience was directed towards the recognition that there was huge heterogeneity in people's responses to all manner of environmental adversities.

As discussed in the literature review (p. 19), Rutter (1987) identified four processes that he termed *protective mechanisms* that can encourage resilience. They include reducing the risk impact that the person is exposed to. Secondly, reducing the negative chain reactions following negative events. Thirdly, promoting self-esteem and self-efficacy through achievement, and finally, creating new opportunities, and positive relationships that provide the necessary resources or improved direction in life. Another prominent researcher in the field of resilience was Ann Masten, who presented the notion of 'ordinary magic' (2001). According to Masten et al. (1990), resilience research stemmed from risk research, exploring how children overcame adversities.

To explore how the resilience literature expanded, some of the key terminology together with the associated terms will be discussed next. This includes the terms risk (adversity), protective factors, competence, coping, and adaptation.

### ***5.3.2 Resilience Terminology***

Firstly, it is helpful to consider the meaning of the term risk, as it is used in the literature. Risk was defined in the literature review as an elevated probability of an undesirable outcome (see p. 17). It is viewed as cumulative, as are protective factors in a child's life (Howard et al., 1999). Consequently, this suggests that children may be more or less resilient at various points in their lives depending on the interaction and accumulations of individual and environmental factors (Howard et al., 1999). The term *adversity* is simultaneously used with risk and was defined by O'Dougherty et al. (2013) as, "...experiences that threaten adaptation or development" (p. 17).

As noted in chapter 2, positive adaptation and adversity are used as pivotal concepts in the definition of resilience, and researchers commonly use these terms in relation to resilience (Fletcher & Sarkar, 2013). One of the debates in the resilience literature has looked at the criteria of this adaptation with most investigators suggesting that individuals maintain or regain normative levels of functioning despite the adversity (Masten & Reed, 2002). Several qualities were thought to relate to resilience in childhood. Some of these were

hardiness, problem solving skills, intelligence and an easy-going temperament (termed *protective factors* by Garmezy, 1990; Werner & Smith, 1992). Protective factors equip children to make adaptive, personal responses to challenges and to access resources that assist healthy and normal development (Masten, 2000). Other protective factors such as family functioning, community structures (such as attending church) are located in the child's environment can also be seen as effectively promoting competence (Barbarin, 1993).

*Competence* was defined by O'Dougherty et al. (2013) as an assessment of, "...how well the child has met, and continues to meet, the expectations explicitly or implicitly set in the society for children as they grow up" (p. 18). Werner and Smith's (1992) Kauai study that followed a group of children from birth over a 40-year period, found that at ages 10 and 18, a resilient subgroup was identified based on good competence. Masten and Reed (2002) advised that we should invest in interventions that the promote competence as part of a resilience intervention, for example, understanding how to promote the capacity for academic achievement, or how good citizenship develops.

Resilience and coping are sometimes used interchangeably, but there is reason to suggest these are distinctly different constructs (Fletcher & Sarkar, 2013). According to Pearlin and Schooler (1978), "coping refers to behaviour that protects people from being psychologically harmed by problematic social experience..." (p. 2). In thinking about coping, the use of an effective strategy is often described (Major et al., 1998), for example, finding a quiet space to feel calm when faced with a stressful situation. Furthermore, coping is referred to as a strategy used, whereas resilience is appraised after a stressful encounter (Fletcher & Sarkar, 2013). This means that an individual or child might seek out a strategy to employ when faced with a stressor.

Having looked at the terms associated with resilience, the next subsection briefly reviews the literature concerning children starting secondary school with a visible difference.

### ***5.3.3 Starting Secondary School for Children with a Visible Difference***

According to Thompson and Kent (2001), there is a tendency of others to avoid or discriminate against people with a visible difference. The reasoning for this may vary across cultures and time, and may be more applicable to initial encounters than subsequent ones (Thompson & Kent, 2001). Starting secondary school for many children means that there are new encounters with other peers and staff alike. The transition to secondary school is

often stressful and can affect short and long-term psychological functioning (West et al., 2008).

Recently, Stock and Ridley (2017) found that children with a cleft aged 10-16 years experienced concerns related to their peer interactions in their educational settings. Furthermore, these children described a sense of feeling different to other children and were struggling with these interactions. Adolescence is recognised as a time that social interactions change significantly, alongside other complex physiological developments (Pachucki et al., 2015). Previous research has highlighted some of the mixed educational experiences of young people who were born with a cleft, with some achieving less than unaffected peers and others fairing similarly to their siblings without a cleft (Snyder & Pope, 2010; Stock & Ridley, 2017). It was important to consider what past research had found, because the focus group for this thesis was about children who look different and their school transition experiences. In the next section, the study research questions are given.

#### **5.4 Study Research Questions**

The study's main research questions were to find out from key informants how they thought about resilience for children (with or without a visible difference), with a focus on the following three questions:

- (i) What meanings do the informants attach to resilience?
- (ii) What emphasis do the informants give to process in their understanding of resilience?
- (iii) What role does resilience play for children with a visible difference?

#### **5.5 Method**

##### ***5.5.1 Participants***

Specialists in the field of education, health, and resilience research were recruited, who had worked with families and children who had experienced adversities and children who had a visible difference. Several invitations to participate were emailed to specific professionals within the educational, health and the psychology sector and certain charitable organisations. Informants were chosen by virtue of their professional knowledge and

experience of working with children who have lived through adversity, and people who had knowledge of the resilience literature. There were six participants recruited, who met the stated criteria. This also included those who described themselves as having knowledge in the area of visible differences, resilience, and working with children.

***Reflection 4***

The intention was to include a key informant who had a visible difference, for example, Katie Piper (an acid attack survivor and campaigner), but she was unable to participate. Another candidate who I sought to recruit was the CEO of a charity that helps people with a visible difference. This person was also not able to participate, but one of their colleagues who had experience in education and had worked very closely with children experiencing adversities become one of the informants.

A deliberately small sample was recruited to allow detailed engagement with perceptions, understandings, and experiences. For qualitative research with an idiographic focus, a sample of six is appropriate for the analytic approach to use in the study (Braun & Clarke, 2016). All participants were given a pseudonym. Five of the participants were female and one was male. Their mean age was 48 years. All the participants described themselves as White, with one participant identifying as being from Irish descent and the others identified as British. Two were Clinical Psychologists, having worked with children and parents of children with facial disfigurements or visible differences and two of the participants had substantial experience in an educational background, working with families and children, and providing guidance for policy making. One of the participants was a resilience-training consultant engaging with schools and other services for children, and the other participant was a parent of a child with a visible difference, who worked in the healthcare and charity sector. All participants had acquired a degree level of education and had worked, or still were working with children and families, in either an educative, health-orientated practice or consultancy roles. In Table 3 below, the demographic details for the informants are provided.



**Table 3**

*Table Presenting the Demographic Details of the Informants*

Key Informant	Age	Race & ethnicity	Profession (sector)	Education
1 Jill	57	White British	Policy advisor (education)	Postgraduate
2 Roger	58	White British	Psychologist	Postgraduate
3 Natalie	49	White Irish	Psychologist	Postgraduate
4 Charlotte	47	White British	CEO (Parent)	Postgraduate
5 Helen	32	White British	Training consultant (charity sector)	Degree
6 Rebecca	48	White British	Headteacher (education)	Degree

### **5.5.2 Materials**

The interview schedule consisted of open-ended questions, asking participants about their professional and personal experience of working in this field of expertise. It was based on questions arising from the literature review on childhood resilience and resilience as a process. The interview questions were designed so that the interviewee would use their knowledge and expertise to define what of the term resilience meant to them. This was relevant to the research study, as the literature had created ambiguities around this.

The structure of the interview schedule followed a format, which facilitated open ended answers that elicit rich data in the form of personal experience. Informants were encouraged to use examples when describing their experiences, and in keeping with their role as key informants The interview began with descriptive questions that invited the informant to describe their experiences followed by structural questions that focused the responses towards the research aims, and finally contrast questions, which further clarified the responses (Gilchrist, 1992).

### **5.5.3 Procedure**

The data were generated through five face-to-face individual semi-structured interviews and one was conducted via Skype. This synchronous online nature of skype

interviews was valuable to this research thesis as the researcher was able to conduct the informant interview, in a manner that was comparable to the face to face interviews (Janghorban et al., 2014). The researcher conducted all six interviews, which lasted 30-55 minutes. The face-to-face interviews occurred at the informant's place of work on a date and time that was convenient to them. Three of these interviews were in central London and two were south of London. Roger's interview was conducted via Skype due to his work schedule. In the table below, details about each informant interview and the length of their interview is provided.

**Table 4**

*Table of Interviews Conducted with Each Informant*

Key Informant	Type of interview conducted	Length of interview
1 Jill	Face-to-face	54:00
2 Roger	Skype	43:00
3 Natalie	Face-to-face	41:00
4 Charlotte	Face-to-face	41:00
5 Helen	Face-to-face	51:00
6 Rebecca	Face-to-face	31:00

The data that was generated from the interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed. Each interview was recorded and transcribed verbatim. The interview data was stored on the audio files of the recorded interviews, and the transcriptions of those interviews are found in the appendix section (see Appendix G, p. 355). All of the data and back-up copies were anonymised and will be stored for a period of five years in discrete folders on a password protected computer and on the Kingston University secure server. Pseudonyms were used for participants and those mentioned in interviews in the thesis and resulting publications.

In qualitative data collection it is often difficult to secure anonymity, however, confidentiality will be prioritised. This means that in the interview transcripts any potentially identifying information will not be recorded. If there are any doubts whether sufficient steps

have been taken to protect a person's confidentiality, the participant would be consulted to check the transcript and to offer advice or their preference for how they would like their confidentiality to be protected.

## **5.6 Analytic Strategy**

The interview transcriptions were analysed using a thematic analysis, which is a process of grouping ideas into thematic categories that relate to the research objective. As discussed in the methodology chapter, thematic analysis is a qualitative method used for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Therefore, I grouped together the key informant responses from the interviews to analyse the perspectives on the relevant topic and draws comparisons (Patton, 1990). Furthermore, this analytic strategy aims to draw upon the questions derived from the objectives of the study as well as views expressed by the respondents themselves and the recurring experiences reported in the data (Pope et al., 2000).

Next, I was able to annotate the transcripts with codes, and support these codes with short text descriptors (Pope et al., 2000), enabling me to examine similarities and differences across the data corpus, and identify the overarching themes. These themes were identified in the analysis using an inductive, constant, and comparative process, and verified by my supervisors. This form of analysis has developed because of the epistemological position and theoretical underpinnings within the research (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The outcome was a set of qualitative data in the form of statements categorised in themes that can later be used for further research.

As noted in the previous chapter, the adoption of a critical realist perspective, means that this study continues to view the construction of reality through and within the human knowledge and discourse (Fletcher, 2017), and that my role as the researcher is important in the analysis, in order to provide further understanding of the phenomena.

## 5.7 Results

### 5.7.1 Overview

The thematic analysis conducted with the entire data corpus of all six key informant interviews produced four themes, which concerned the meaning of resilience. All six participants drew on detailed examples, which demonstrated insight and required reflexivity from the informants. The knowledge expressed by the key informants was similar to that drawn from parts of the literature, for example, the defining of the concept *resilience* and the understanding of what a protective factor was. The informants also expressed their views about the research objectives from their own personal and professional experiences of working with children and families.

The four main themes resulting from the thematic analysis were:

(1) *The descriptors of resilience explained through experiences and reflections*, which considered the key informants' views concerning the responses that individuals and children have during adverse events, and reflects on their understanding of the links between experience and resilience.

(2) *The shaping of the resilience process for the child*, concerns modeling resilience in the family, noticeably the informants' views of the role of parents and caregivers. The subthemes included the informants thinking about resilience as part of a learned behaviour versus resilience as a natural occurrence, and their views on the efficacy of protective factors for the child.

(3) *How resilience presents itself*, this explores how the participants thought that resilience is seen and experienced at different ages and their views on the lived experiences of the young person. This third theme evolved as the understanding of resilience began to present itself from the informants' viewpoints.

(4) *What resilience looks like for a child with a visible difference*, focused on the key informants' views concerning the development of protective mechanisms that a child might learn or have experience from primary school onwards, and this theme also looked at how the key informants suggested that children with a visible difference view themselves.

The overview of the themes and subthemes is presented in the next table, 5.

**Table 5**

*Table Presenting an Overview of the Themes and Subthemes*

Themes	Subthemes
1. The descriptors of resilience explained through experiences and reflections	1. Responses and reactions to an adversity 2. Reflecting on experiences and resilience
2. The shaping of the resilience process for the child	1. Modeling resilience in the family 2. Resilience as a learned behaviour versus resilience as a natural occurrence 3. The nature and understanding of protection
3. How resilience presents itself	1. The child's age and lived experience in the expression of resilience 2. Application of a resilient discourse in the manifestation of resilience
4. What resilience looks like for a child with a visible difference	1. Developing protective mechanisms when you have a visible difference 2. How the child views their visible difference

Each of these themes will be discussed in more detail next.

**5.7.2 Theme 1. The Descriptors of Resilience Explained Through Experiences and Reflections.** This first theme developed from the interview data where the informants spoke about their individual understandings of the term resilience and the open and receptive manner of certain children and individuals they had known or worked with. In addition to this, the key informants developed a type of reflective lens, as they retrospectively considered some 'stand out' examples of children who they considered

‘resilient’, which they had met in their professional working life. These examples that they chose aimed to capture the meaning of resilience for the key informants, demonstrating how resilience was viewed (as a process and/or a trait). As the key informants molded and defined their own understanding of the term resilience, and reflected on this, the informants demonstrated some shared thinking considering the reactions of children and young people, and their engagement in different contexts, and these ideas are explained in the subthemes that follow.

**5.7.2.1 Responses and Reactions to an Adversity.** For some of the key informants, resilience was explained as a positive response during or after an adverse event, which was sometimes illustrated by an individual or child remaining calm during the experience and displaying a sense of control and balance. This is explained in the first subtheme called, ‘*Responses and reactions to an adversity*’.

In this first quotation below, Jill referred to the notion of resilience as another type of ‘catchphrase’, similar to ‘nutrition’, for example, trying to convey its worth, and thinking about an individual and their response to a critical situation. Jill regarded resilience as a form of composure within individual when faced with an adversity, and the ability to remain calm, yet active (indicated by the participles ‘thinking’ and ‘moving’) during this time.

I think it really is, um, something that sounds nice like nutrition, something we all need and I think it’s something to do with being able to keep calm and keep thinking and keep moving and not fall to pieces when you’re in a crisis. (Jill, Policy maker)

For Roger, in the next data excerpt, an individual’s form of well-being is determined by their ability to maintain a sense of control, and resilience may be seen as a temporary device that helps one to remain in control, and regain a sense of balance, similar to a see-saw. He also indicated that the return to this controlled feeling within an individual is part of resilience and it is the maintenance of the balance, which shows this:

...sometimes we get really euphoric and we bounce around quite happily, and other times lots of stuff gets on top of us and so the see-saw starts going over to its side and this to me as a psychologist is the central point about a support [ ] because I

think that one is in a good state of mental well-being if one is in balance, you and I have different balances as does the rest of the planet and the key word there is control. So the individual feels that they are in control of their functioning, their behaviour, their emotions etc. so what resilience means to me is providing the or having the temporary mechanisms that whenever something happens that is out of the ordinary when you don't have control it keeps that see-saw balanced. (Roger, Clinical Psychologist)

In connection with this, the term resilience was also conceptualised by one key informant as a form of recovery in which an individual was able to return to how they were and how they felt before the adverse event (like a reset switch). This is similar to Roger's self-righting mechanism or seesaw. Natalie noted in the next quotation that during a difficult time, the individual also exhibits the ability to do this quickly and assuredly:

I think it is about bouncing back isn't it so if something bad happens or something difficult happens that people just kind of recover quite quickly from it, they have a way of thinking about it that you know is comfortable for them, they don't get hung up on it, they don't perhaps take things too personally, they don't get too catastrophic about it. (Natalie, Clinical Psychologist)

Natalie also indicated that resilience is about remaining calm and not becoming overwhelmed by the adversity. This is in agreement with the ability to stay calm and composed during an adversity that both Roger and Jill expressed in their understanding of resilience.

The notion of '*bouncing back*' when faced with an adverse event and recovering quickly features in parts of the literature (Dyer & McGinness, 1996). This was recognised by another key informant, Helen, who also felt that resilience was not only about returning to how life was before the adversity, but that the resilience occurred when the individual or the child were able to arrive in a better place than where they were before:

...it's kind of more about, we shouldn't limit children to bouncing back if... where they started from... its more about bouncing upwards or bouncing forwards, so it

takes the limit off it, which for me, it's kind of a, I like that, takes in that idea of adversity and vulnerability and actually, you know, that young people can be positive to kind of experiences and things that happen to us. The experiences we take and we can come out of it stronger, taking that with you as will. (Helen, Schools advisor)

In the quotation below, Charlotte's thoughts about resilience and how children's prior experiences shape future experiences were evident. She explained by reflecting on the example of a child having an operation, and then having to have another operation, and how a child may be able to recall how they felt when they start to get better. In this way the child is able to focus on the longer-term relief from being in pain, rather than the shorter term pain of the operation. Charlotte is addressing the idea that a child will process their experiences in order to manage their current operation:

So I think that resilience is knowledge, it's probably a prior experience of some level of suffering that enables you then to rationalize future suffering so you might say, 'once upon a time I had this operation to sort something out, you know that afterwards it wasn't very nice, but you remember that two weeks after that you feel a lot better, so when you have the next operation you are able to go in and use some knowledge to go pain, yes, then longer term no pain so worthwhile to suffer. So I think resilience in a child is probably an unconscious rationalization of a process, um, I think resilience is also a belief in the people and the scenario around you that whatever you're going through will be worthwhile in the end. (Charlotte, CEO)

It is also interesting that Charlotte recognised a child might need time to understand initial experiences, such as an operation, which may support other experiences, so that the child develops a belief in a worthwhile outcome.

The thinking and thoughts expressed by the participants within this subtheme about resilience focus on how resilience occurs because of how they believed that the individual or child reacts to an adversity and then their reflections on the nature of the person's well-being after the event.



**5.7.2.2 Reflecting on Experiences and Resilience.** This subtheme further explores the key informants' understanding of what resilience means, and how resilience can be recognised. This emerged as the informants continued to discuss their thoughts and expressed their understandings about the experiences of young people who they considered resilient. This subtheme is called, '*Reflecting on experiences and resilience*', because of how the informants viewed resilience through the lens of the experiences of the child. Using this lens, some informants explained how they saw resilience, providing examples to try explaining their understanding of resilience. In the next quotation, Jill expressed how the process of an individual's experiences is affected:

I think people have to have time to process experiences, to work through the emotional impact of an experience and figure out like if something really bad happens to you that ends up being your story line, your narrative, your identity and people have to have a plastic enough identity to do that, that is also firm enough to be who they are, so I don't think there's anything simple about it. (Jill, Policy Advisor)

Jill highlighted the relevance of time in allowing people to think about experiences and how each experience, created a possible opportunity for the individual to decide how to use it, depending on the individual. Jill seems to be using a metaphor of modeling clay or play dough here.

Furthermore, in the quotation below, Jill continued to talk about how a child subtly developed a manner of managing something, for example injections. Jill explained that this might be because the child started practicing on her own teddy. As Jill states that this was something that just happened somewhere, and because of this the child was not as scared of needles:

...I don't think there's anything simple about it. I think it's a very subtle, say you had a kid who used to be really scared of needles and you think how did you get over it and you ask them to tell you about it. And maybe the kid started giving injections to a teddy bear, it just something somewhere along. (Jill, Policy Advisor)

From Jill's perspective, a child may acquire their own understanding of how to manage a scary situation, such as injections by practicing this on a teddy bear. Jill suggested that this might be subtle, occurring without the child realising it.

In the next quotation, Natalie reflected on how children with a visible difference chose to respond to comments about how they looked. Some reflected on this, as something they just get on with, whereas others had acquired some useful responses to what people said to them:

So we do routine checks and screens and a lot of the people at the time will say 'we're doing okay, you know we're just ticking along', um and we see that that does seem to transfer a lot to some of the young people where they just take it in their stride a little bit more, and um, they might say, 'oh, you know people do look at me you know I don't care' they're not bothered or some of them might have kind of have really good little come backs for people who might make unkind comments or curiosity about appearance is a big thing, but some people might say well of course I'm going to be curious, everybody is curious, and I don't mind that, this is the way I answer the questions. (Natalie, Clinical Psychologist)

Similarly, in the quotation below Helen referred to a video she had watched, where a child had tried to explain their understanding of resilience. This provided a curious description of resilience as something that keeps reoccurring, springing back from an adversity, even though parts of it fell out. In the next quotation, she recalled how the child had a piece of mud that kept on being squashed, and even though some of the mud came out of their hand, some remained in the hand:

And there's one boy he struggles all the way through the video to define resilience and then the very last bit is like him finally managing to articulate what he means and he's kind of saying you know it's like, actually what he was trying to talk about it's that, you know you have a bit of mud in your hand and you kind of squish it and squish it, but actually it comes out a bit and that was sort of his kind of idea and I think, generally young people at that age have the idea of bouncing, bouncing back or um being helped to cope. (Helen, Consultant)

This is an intriguing example in which Helen recalled a child that used this analogy to explain what resilience means. Helen reflected on this in terms of the child thinking about it as bouncing back, as some of the mud still remained in the child's hand even after being squished. The fluidity and movement is interesting here and will become important later in the thesis.

This first theme looked at how the informants defined and thought about resilience in terms of experience and reflection. In the second theme, the informants share their views of how this concept of resilience is molded, considering the role of the family.

**5.7.3 Theme 2. The Shaping of the Resilience Process for the Child.** This theme explores how the participants agreed that the role of the parents was important for the child during adverse experiences. There were three subordinate themes; '*Modelling resilience in the family*', which focuses on the key informants' reflections about how the child has the opportunity to model the parent, regarded as important to the child's guidance and support in difficult situations. However, there were dissimilar views about the function of other individuals in the child's life such as doctors, teachers, and friends in terms of their role in the process. Then, the second subtheme called '*Resilience as a learned behaviour versus resilience as a natural occurrence*' looks at the informants' perspectives of resilience as an element, which is learned or part of the environment that the individual engages with.

The third subtheme is titled, '*The nature and understanding of protective factors*', and looks at the key informants' views on the value of protective factors, which was threaded through all the informant interviews. However, there were some differing views about the contexts and the interactions in which the protective factors play a role. These will be discussed.

**5.7.2.1 Modeling Resilience in the Family.** It was evident in some of the key informant interviews that the participants believed that the parent or carer is in a unique position to model the approach that a child learns during and after a crisis. Interestingly, the key informants were undecided regarding how the behaviour was learned, for example, from observations, as an innate form of learning or by trying to normalise the behaviour. In the quotation below, Roger described the idea that resilience was something we learn from our parents' reactions to a situation:

So if a bomb goes off, then the nuclear family will be looked at by the child and how mum and dad react because that is how we learn anything, and resilience isn't anything different. (Roger, Clinical Psychologist)

In the quotation above, Roger explained how he thought that a child learns about resilience by observing their parent's reactions to the crisis. Jill also acknowledged this although her views concerning the nature of how it is learned were somewhat different. Jill felt that it may be something inherent or that it may be learned physically by acting it out. In the next quotation, Jill discussed how she thought the child can witness resilience by observing their parents' or teachers' reactions to difficult situations:

Say that you see your parents being very upset by something and they show you how to be upset and not fall to pieces, but they wouldn't show you verbally, I think it would be, um, like you'd acquire it with mother's milk and you can't say whether that's inbred or um, learnt, it's a very tricky thing. So I think people learn from examples say when something goes really badly wrong and somebody else stays calm and says, 'My God this is bad, I think I need to sit down for five minutes, you know what let's get a cup of tea', and if a child is exposed to that kind of, in school you might call it the soft curriculum where teachers really don't need to be perfect, where teachers need to say you know I find this stuff really hard, I actually need to get help or take a break or put some music on, whatever it is and I think that that kind of modeling is really useful because it means something. Again, I don't think you learn it intellectually, I would think you learn it physically but there's a vibe that goes with that and it's that you don't have to be superman here, I just have to be ok. (Jill, Policy Maker)

Jill noted the notion that an individual's well-being need only be seen as 'okay'. She states that it might help to demonstrate the imperfections so that the child realized that it is acceptable to make mistakes, and problems may occur in life. Jill thinks of this as physical behaviour, as something that is tangible, that it is not necessarily learned and you do not need to be a superhero to be 'all right'.

**5.7.2.2 Resilience as a Learned Behaviour Versus Resilience as a Natural Occurrence.** The previous subtheme focused on how the key informants considered the role of the parent or the carer in shaping resilience, and how their reactions to a crisis may influence the shaping of the process of resilience. In the current subtheme, the idea of learning how to be resilient is the central focus, as there was a divided sense of where resilience comes from and how the child sees it. This meant that some of the key informants viewed resilience as something that was learned from someone (mostly a parent) or the result of a reoccurring experience, and something that had become part of one's daily interactions, as a natural occurrence. This subtheme is called, '*Resilience as a learned behaviour versus resilience as a natural occurrence*'.

Both Natalie and Rebecca suggested that resilience may be learned from the parent, although, it could also be a strength within the child, as something that is already there. There was also the notion that resilience is an everyday occurrence, a norm, just simply part of the ordinary. It was evident that these participants were comfortable to hold dualistic views – of two different learning processes – which could both occur in the same family, discussed in the quotations below:

I don't have the evidence base to say it's necessarily the case but I think some of it is learnt, if the parent is more comfortable with it, then the child is more comfortable with it. But I certainly have had some parents over the years that have said 'I really struggle with it but my kid is brilliant, they're an inspiration because they just completely take it in their stride'. So for some it obviously comes very naturally to them. (Natalie, Clinical Psychologist)

I think to some degree it is, um, even when you do see little kids say 3 or 4 years old, some of them are just sturdy, robust kids, will shrug things off and some really aren't. So I think to some extent it is inherent, but I think you can learn those skills as well. (Rebecca, Headteacher)

On the other hand, Charlotte believed that the influence of the peers was important in strengthening resilience. This placed emphasis on the learned behavior signaled in this

subtheme. The influence of the peers, from Charlotte's perspective, occurred because of the negative comments received by the child and how the child then learns to react to these. She explained this in the quotation below:

I think peers influence resilience by teasing, so if you lack the resilience then you get picked on and I don't think that anybody else, except the parent of course would have an impact on resilience. I don't think teachers would because I think resilience is something that you're dealing with again and again and again and a teacher isn't going to be that person in that place at that time. So I think it's the places and the people who you are again and again and again with, for example your parents and peers. If you're in the playground every-day and people pick on you, ultimately you'll build resilience or you'll have a real problem. (Charlotte, CEO)

Furthermore, Charlotte felt that resilience was part of the daily context, such as the playground, and the people within that context that the child engages with day to day. In the quotation above she noted the significance of the repetitive nature of actions and behaviours. Similar to Natalie and Rebecca, she noted that resilience is determined by the child's decision to negotiate difficult situations, such as bullying, and building resilience over time when a problem arises.

In the next quotation, Natalie used an example of how a child handled a difficult situation, which arose from their visible difference, and this for Natalie was indicative of resilience in this child:

Um, you see I've got examples of a resilient child and I use this example when I'm talking to other children who are struggling, um, I'm not sure how it fits into the process of it but he's just a resilient child. And um, he was on his estate and people were commenting on, well teasing him for the shape of his head, which a lot of children that I work with have and they kind of shy away or avoid but he didn't, you know, and he just turned to this guy and said 'So what? You know I've got this condition and I've had loads of operations on it, wasn't very easy, and now you're teasing about it, you know what do you want to tease me about that for?' Um, which was very resilient response you know. That's the difference between taking it very

personally you know, this is how my head is shaped and it's always going to be like this and he really externalized it, he was like you know this is your problem, and what is this problem I don't understand why you've got a problem with this. Um, so that was a very good example for me of a resilient child. (Natalie, Clinical Psychologist)

This was a poignant example, in which Natalie described a child's response to a negative comment made to them about their head shape. The child decided to externalize the comment, directing it back at the individual who had said it and that it was their problem to manage. This was a description of a child, who had taken ownership of their difference and accepted it. It was how a resilient child looked to Natalie, and the child having something to say and externalizing this was key for Natalie.

**5.7.2.3 *The Nature and Understanding of Protection.*** In the literature review (see p. 19), the identification of certain protective mechanisms was discussed, for example, reducing the risk impact that a person is exposed to (Rutter, 1987). It was relevant to this study to understand more about how the key informants thought that the protective factors function because of how they work as protective mechanisms and how the child engages with them in different contexts. This subtheme concerns the informants' views about the nature of protective factors, and their role in resilience, named, '*The nature and understanding of protection*'.

In the quotation below, Helen described her thoughts about protective factors that surround the child, as part of a person's sense of belonging. She questioned if the protective factor is what makes a person feel as if they belong, or could it be another factor, for example, the belief in hope, or having something to look forward to for the future:

...it's kind of like what is the protective factor around this, and then it's the sense of belonging somewhere else so it's a feeling of belonging within the community, a faith or whatever you have. But is it the belonging part that is partly a protective factor or is it another protective factor, the ability to have aspirations for the future, believing in something good. (Helen, Schools Advisor)

Charlotte suggested that the best protective factor was the attitude of the parent because there are times when the parent will protect their child from danger, but in other moments the parent needs to let the child experience some adversity so that the child understands what this is, and how it feels. Therefore, the child will decide to take a different course of action the next time he or she is faced with an adversity. She explained this in the next quotation:

I really think that the biggest risk factor is the attitude of a parent and the best protective factor would be the attitude of the parent. And the attitude of the parent may be to protect at moments when there's danger but you know stopping your child from falling off a wall does not make them resilient. Them falling off a wall and realizing it hurts makes them think about it and be more resilient in the future.

(Charlotte, CEO)

In the next quotation Natalie also mentions the family, although Natalie described the key protective factors as being open communication within the family that needs to develop so that the child also has that opportunity to enquire and talk about their curiosities:

I think one of the greatest protective factors are a family who adapt to it quite well, who demonstrate you know how to deal with curiosity, who speak openly and comfortably about it when they're in the home, um who lovingly accept the child for all the wonderful things they are with this as part of it but that it doesn't define them, um, I think that in terms of protective factors, that's really important. (Natalie, Clinical Psychologist)

The role of protection forms part of the resilience literature from the identification of the protective factors to the exploration of protective mechanisms. For some of the informants, the notion of protection came from those around the child, particularly the family and the sense of belonging, which was seen as important to Helen.

**5.7.3 Theme 3. How Resilience Presents Itself.** The literature suggests that resilience presents itself in different contexts in which the child interacts and engages (Ungar,



2008). Luthar and Cicchetti (2000) refer to resilience as relative, rather than fixed, depending on the context. This idea of resilience as relative was particularly evident for some informants in terms of the age of the child and the lived experience of the child and individual or parent. Therefore, the first subtheme is called, '*The child's age and lived experience in the manifestation of resilience*'.

### ***5.7.3.1 The Child's Age and Lived Experience in the Expression of Resilience.***

The key informants' regarded the role of age as salient in thinking about a resilient child. Younger children, as termed by the informants (age not specified) were regarded as accepting things more readily. Then, with older children, it was thought that resilience would be easy to see, however it was also thought that older children might exhibit a negative thought process, which may hinder the expression of resilience. Furthermore, there was some concern that older children may engage with social pressures, for example online peers, which may also inhibit how resilience is seen.

Some of the informants suggested that the negative past experiences for some children may influence an individual's thinking. Whilst older children were seen as more experienced and able to think in more complex ways, they were also accumulating negative experiences and were more at risk of developing negative thinking styles compared to younger children. From Natalie's quotation below, she discusses the life experiences of older children and the ability to process thoughts at different levels, yet she also noted that these experiences could be negative in their nature, and that a negative thought process could create further problems:

I think with younger children they can be more accepting of things and more in the moment, um, older children have the capacity to think about things on a multitude of different levels, um, which can be positive but if they have a negative thinking style then they can also be quite negative, um, and would cause them to get quite stuck, feel overwhelmed, unable to cope with things. So I don't think that it necessarily follows that they get better as they get older. And also you've got your culmination of life experiences as well so if you've had a number of negative life experiences I think that kind of diminishes that sense of control in situations, um, or

the other way around so I don't think it is necessarily linear. (Natalie, Clinical Psychologist)

Similarly, in the quotation below, Rebecca acknowledged that the child's resilience might not show, as the child grows older. Instead, it may be the consequence of certain other pressures, which exist for the older child, such as peer pressure. Moreover, she suggests that the child might not have had previous experience of learning how to manage difficult situations:

I think you would naturally say probably children who get older are more resilient, but actually sometimes you can see them not being as resilient because we put more pressures on them so if I'm thinking of an educational setting you may if you don't work at it quite a lot of children get less resilient maybe about exams and things like that because we're putting that pressure on them um, but I think they're more able to perhaps understand maybe what resilience looks like or is if you, you know keep talking about it and is something in school you do talk about to try and label resilience and what that might look like different stages of children but I think young children can be resilient, they may not go along saying, 'I'm a very resilient person' but you can see that they have been very different things that maybe some children have coped with and actually other children wouldn't. (Rebecca, Headteacher)

In the next quotation Roger shared a vivid account of a child and his mother he had worked with after a tragic experience, of being the victims of an acid attack, and in particular how they both reflected on this differently. The mother was worried about her son's future and what this experience might mean for him in the long-term, as opposed to her child who was concerned with the present day:

I think for a child the focus is very short term. It was very interesting watching a mum and son, they both had acid thrown at them in the same experience, and how the mother is already thinking long term and the son is simply trying to get through the day. I think that's quite a good way of putting it that actually, ...whereas there will be a lot of common stuff in terms of anger, shock, well let's start with shock,

and then there's anger and fear and all the rest of it, but the child at that stage is not going to be worried about that. The child is simply going 'This hurts and can you stop it hurting please?', whereas mum has already worrying about her son who's never going to find a job, who's never going to find a wife, as such... Whereas, here it's different. I think you have to look at it in terms of person, sense and place and tap into what is important to that individual to actually enable them to make a successful mental outcome and this is part of that resilient process... And the one thing I have noticed that with children is that they think short term, day to day concerns, whereas the adult is thinking six months from now and how that individual is going to be. (Roger, Clinical Psychologist)

This was an important consideration, as Roger addressed the notion that children do not interpret their adverse concerns and worries in terms of a long-term measure. The immediate worry was current and short term, whereas Roger viewed the mother's perspective of this incident as a long-term problem because of her child's future and her own past experiences. She knew what her son might need to contend with in the future and was concerned about this. This is interesting when thinking about the age of the young person and the lived experience, since it relates to the measure of time, and the relevance that key informants placed on the child having had prior experiences to manage new experiences.

#### ***5.7.3.2 Application of a Resilient Discourse in the Manifestation of Resilience.***

There was another salient element that some of the key informants referred to when thinking about how resilience presents itself. Some of the informants drew awareness to the importance of the language, which young people used and how this applied in different contexts. The emergence and development of a possible resilient discourse was formulated as the key informants considered how young people used and delivered their words. This led to the third subtheme called, '*Application of a resilient discourse in the manifestation of resilience*'.

This second subtheme formed because of how the informants' felt that adults and young people communicate using body language and dialogue in their expression of resilience. The subtheme considers the forms of communication that people use when they are dealing with an adverse event. From what the key informants noticed, this discourse

included the manner in which young people talk about worries and the possible need to openly discuss a situation in which they cannot manage.

In the quotation below, Natalie, for example, described the need for people need to feel validated. Interestingly, Natalie refers to adults who may not be resilient, which can be problematic because it will be more difficult for their children to then be resilient:

...it's important that people feel validated and we should be saying 'well, how can we think about this differently? How can we work on this together?' Yes, I think that children and the reality is we have a lot of very unresilient adults out there and so we don't really understand the role so that when they had difficult situations they had stumble and fall, so I think if we want to have resilient children then we need to know more about how do we go about that. (Natalie, Clinical Psychologist)

Helen referred to self-talk as a form of communication when dealing with a situation, and having the knowledge that there is someone else who will be able to help if you needed it. This next quotation recognises the idea of using the resources that are available to a young person to help them during a crisis, and in developing a type of 'self talk', which necessitates the child recognising the need to ask for help. For Helen, it was not about managing the adversity on your own, but rather knowing that someone may be able to help, and having the opportunity to talk about it. This idea of fluidity and movement expressed here was interesting:

I think that when we talk about adversity some people only think, ever think about it on a very serious level, but I think the important thing is that ability to have known that things can go wrong but that you can deal with them, you can cope with them that's ok but you can say 'I know that I can't cope with this, but I know I've got my mum that I can go to for help or my teacher', it's not necessarily about dealing with it on your own but also about navigating your way to resources that can help and I think that often is people knowing that that's okay. (Helen, Schools Advisor)

In the quotations below, both Rebecca and Jill talked about the emotions expressed by the adults and how the child will closely observe their use of body language, and their ability to

manage any situation calmly. Rebecca considered how young people could become less resilient because of certain pressures from within the media. She also illustrated the possible use of a non-verbal means of communicating something. She referred to the application of body language that might describe a type of emotion. In the quotation below Jill talks about the role of authenticity and the role it plays:

...I think you know the pressure of social media, television and all of those things can make people less resilient rather than more. Um, so I think yeah maybe being in a stable environment and they know what's coming, but also dealing with some sort of adults maybe showing them and observing adults and in different situations and not panicking not showing them, I suppose its body language you can think of somebody that has a certain body language and doesn't rise to getting a different type of emotion really, that's if you can try and see it. Seems to be linked to the earlier theme of reacting calmly...(Rebecca)

I feel that quite strongly that it has something to do with having lots of authentic opportunities to express the true emotions that situations arose and it's got something to do with not pretending, not pretending you're not upset when you are, you're not pretending, but the grown ups and the child are able to be sort of live to the reality but they don't lose sight of the bigger picture. There's something about the emotion, reality and movement so you're not stuck in a hole. (Jill, Policy Maker)

This subtheme expressed how resilience presents itself in terms of a resilient discourse, with the nature and understanding of this discourse encircled within the communication that young people receive and observe from adults and with themselves.

**5.7.4 Theme 4. What Resilience Looks Like for a Child with a Visible Difference.** For a child who has a visible difference, the negative feeling towards body image and psychological impact on the individual are profound (Rumsey & Harcourt, 2003). It can be considered a risk factor for the child or adolescent because of the issues and challenges these children face. In particular, the most recurrent difficulty faced by children and adolescents with a visible difference relates to their negative self-perception and struggle

with social interactions (Rumsey & Harcourt, 2007). This theme examines how the key informants perceived resilience as a process for a child with a visible difference. The first subtheme called, '*Developing protective mechanisms when you have a visible difference*', developed as some of the informants discussed their views about this. The next subtheme is called, '*How the child views their visible difference*'.

#### ***5.7.4.1 Developing protective mechanisms when you have a visible difference.***

This subtheme looks at key informant's reflections on how some young people with a visible difference have developed certain protective mechanisms for individual situations. The subtheme also considers how protective mechanisms are developed within an experience, and how this protective mechanism develops. Therefore, this subtheme is called, '*developing protective mechanisms when you have a visible difference*'.

In the next quotation, Natalie described how some of the young people she has worked with have tried to manage other people staring at them:

Um, through the course of my work, I mean sometimes I work with young people who say I go to the supermarket and everybody stares and um, and when I'm working with them I'll say well some other children instead of hiding away they'll turn around and give a great big smile. I had one little girl over the years who said she started doing that and it was great because people are really taken aback. Um, and one got really cheeky and said 'do you want to take a picture?'...um, so that's the kind of example through being taught I suppose and shown other ways that they've developed to be a bit more resilient and then they kind of start to build their own momentum with that as well and they start to feel stronger in those situations, um, and they have a solution to that problem. It's about giving them the tools, isn't it and then those tools belong to them and they can use them in their own way and adapt them in their own way, um and they have confidence that they can deal with that situation. (Natalie, Clinical Psychologist)

Natalie's provided this example of how a child learned to use a type of protective mechanism, for example, staring back and asking a question, and then, Natalie explained how a child might learn how to develop their own confidence from using these mechanisms.

In her view the use of a protective mechanism appears like a tool, and in using the tool, the child becomes more confident. Here, the element of resilience resides within the context that they are engaging in. This relates to the agency of the children, who can adapt the advice they are given and make it their own.

Another viewpoint expressed by Charlotte in the quotation below, about children and protective mechanisms, suggested that a child will not be able to develop any type of resilience if they are not exposed to a problem. The protection and over-protection is interesting here because a parent may feel powerless to protect their child, but the adversity which the child experiences then leads to resilience in the child because the parent is alongside them for whole duration. This idea of sometimes not protecting children is expressed by Charlotte in the next quotation:

I don't think you can create resilience in a child by protecting them, particularly. I think you obviously as a parent, so when Chris was going through his operation when he was say 8 and it was all very serious and all going very wrong the resilience he developed was from knowing I was there and talking him through it but I couldn't protect him from any of it, nothing could stop it happening to him, but his resilience was developed because he knew that you were there and with him and that you were saying that at some point this is going to get better. So if you think about the parents that overprotect their children, these children have zero resilience because they've never had any problems come to them, that they've had to deal with.  
(Charlotte, parent)

Charlotte felt that resilience would develop from what was happening around the child, for example the parent being there and reassuring their child, but that certain situations have to be encountered, and the child will need to learn how to manage this. In the second subtheme, the informants considered how the child might see their visible difference.

**5.7.4.2 How the Child Views their Visible Difference.** This second subtheme drawn from the key informants' views about children who have a visible difference concerns how they try to understand their 'different' appearance. It looks at the relevance of providing an open and enquiring way to ask questions and discusses the nature of the child's visible

difference, when thinking about resilience. Furthermore, it looks at the child's understanding of how they are seen by others, which is important to them. The subtheme is called, '*How the child views their visible difference*'.

Jill felt that children needed to understand and be aware of the present and know that what they are experiencing is taking place. She talks about the reality of a child who looks different in the next quotation:

I think something that is always important in resilience is reality, the reality, what's really happening here. And I think one of the things that's least helpful to children about the reality, don't try to mess about with reality so if a kid says they're staring at me, why are they staring at me? You can't change the subject, so if the adults are able to be real and calm and curious. I wonder why they do stare, just explore it together and it takes quite a lot of confidence, I don't mind not knowing, confidence, um, placid curiosity on the part of adults and siblings to stay in a difficult situation with emotional warmth and curiosity but I don't know if that would be different from someone who maybe has diabetes which is not visual but it has quite a behavioural content and you'd be quite poorly if you don't get it right. I did read once there's no easy way to predict that a child with diabetes will manage their self-care, not to do with intelligence and some kids think it's worthier making the effort and some kids do. (Jill, Policy Maker)

In this next quotation, Natalie talks about the how an individual with a noticeable visible difference cannot hide from this, and that they have to learn how to manage this when they are in public. She also mentions that there may be other complexities for an individual that has a difference, which is not overtly noticeable. These include betrayal, dealing with unkind behaviour in the peer group and with unpleasant material in social media:

The people who have a very visible difference that cannot be disguised, first of all there's no escape from it but in a way that means they have to adapt to it, they're forced to adapt to it. My understanding from some of the literature that I've seen and also working with other services ...that have a visible difference that is hidden, they can hide away, they run into difficulties about trust 'who do I disclose this to?



When do I disclose? There are stories about betrayals – they told a friend and then they put it all over facebook, so there’s a whole other set of complexities there that I don’t have to work with, um so the children that I work with, um, it’s on their face and it’s on their head, its visible right from day one, it’s difficult there’s no escape from it, um and, but as a result I think they cope a little bit better because they have too. (Natalie, Clinical Psychologist)

It was intriguing to think about the young person who has the challenge of disclosing their slight visible difference (a visible difference that is not as noticeable to others) because they will need to think about who they chose to disclose this with, and if there are repercussions, as Natalie has suggested there may be, then how do they respond to that.

In the quotation below, Roger explained how he believes that how a child with a visible difference views itself in private (mirror), and then how they view themselves in public:

I don’t think the process of looking in the mirror is important, it’s how the rest of the world actually view you that’s important. And I think that applies to a child setting as well. (Roger, Clinical Psychologist)

Roger reinforced this external notion that the visible difference is not necessarily about how one feels about one’s own reflection, but that it was about how other people looked at you.

## 5.8 Discussion

The key informant study aimed to investigate the meaning and process of resilience in children from the perspective of adult key informants with considerable expertise in working with children, including children with a visible difference. The findings suggest that the key informants experienced some challenges in defining the meaning of resilience. For the key informants the expression of resilience for a child was seen as part of a *process* combined with resilience as a *quality* within a child. The informants also highlighted the importance of the child modelling the behaviour of the primary caregiver, the parent, and in particular the reaction and the response of the parent during an adversity was seen as

important in, influencing the child's understanding of the adverse situation, and how to respond to it.

### ***5.8.1 Key Findings***

In this discussion, the study's findings will be outlined, with a focus on how the reflections of the key informants had shed some light on understanding what resilience means, and in particular I will discuss the key findings including the modeling role of the parent, especially a parent dealing calmly with adversity, the availability of resources in the form of protective factors, the notion of a child having another level of resilience, and reflections on a child experiencing more than one adversity. Furthermore, the authenticity of the child's situation and what is happening around them at any given time and how they communicate this were also seen as important. Moreover, the employment of different types of communication, both verbal and non-verbal, that adults and children develop, when expressing resilience was highlighted. The ambiguities about the varied definitions of what resilience means raised in previous resilience research (Egeland et al., 1993; Luthar et al., 2000) has served as part of the motivation for this study.

**5.8.1.1 Defining Resilience.** In defining what resilience means, the key informants referred to the careful use of their own professional and personal reflections. The indication of this was evident in the first two main themes, as the informants highlighted and expressed their understanding of and views concerning the relevance of the role of the family. Similar views concerning the importance of the family have been found in the literature (Howard & Johnson, 2000; Masten, 2018; Walsh, 2003). Most relevant to the informants was the modelling behaviour of the parent or the caregiver during an adversity and how the child viewed and perceived their parents' responses. This highlighted the perceived influence of the microsystem (the individual and the home), which is the main setting for proximal processes in Bronfenbrenner's (1986) theory.

Furthermore, the study's findings demonstrated variability among the informants when thinking about the definition of resilience and how it is recognised. Once again, the key informants' representations resembled the literature's varying views on this. This is an ongoing debate within the resilience literature, as resilience is defined in terms of a trait,

inherent within a child, as a personal quality or it is seen as part of a process (Egeland et al., 1993; Jacelon, 1997; Luthar et al., 2006; Rutter, 1993).

**5.8.1.2 Resilience and a Sense of Calm.** The authenticity of how a child responds to an adversity was recognized as important in some of the key informants' descriptive examples of what they considered a resilient child (Dent & Cameron, 2003). This formed part of the first theme, in the subtheme called 'Responses and reactions to an adversity'. The notion of a young child able to regulate their emotions by remaining calm during a crisis was viewed by one of the informants as demonstrating resilient behaviour.

In addition to this, the second theme ('The shaping and process of resilience for the child') was sub-divided into the notion of resilience as part of a learned behaviour (trait) versus resilience as part of a process. Some informants thought that resilience was formed and understood as both a trait and a process, considering the process as a subtle part of everyday life. Curiously, this closely parallels the understanding that Masten (2001) expressed about the resilience process 'ordinary magic'. This outlook offers a more positive position on human development and adaptation because it means that resilience is represented as attainable and not a condition that can only be met through an extraordinary process (Masten, 2001).

**5.8.1.3 Resilience and Protective Factors.** The informants also considered how these factors were utilised and understood. Moreover, some of the key informants noted that the protective factors need to be specific to the child and the context that the child is in, for example, if a child is faced with a hospitalisation. 'Therefore, from the informants' viewpoints, a protective factor may be the result of the child's understanding of their visit to the hospital, as explained by the parent or caregiver, and the knowledge of what will happen during this time. Contrary to this, one of the informants noted that less protection for the child might result in more resilience, and they took into consideration the notion of how some children are 'bubble wrapped' (Malone, 2007; O'Neill & Fleer, 2015), thus resulting in the child having to build their own resilience when faced with an adversity.

**5.8.1.4 Added Resilience.** Some of the key informants suggested that the more adversities a child faces, the greater the need for the child to develop an added resilience.

One of the key informants defined this as another ‘level’ of resilience. There were various levels of resilience identified by Kimhi (2016), who wrote of individual, community, and national resilience. These levels may be particularly important to children with health issues, children who have spent time in hospitals and have needed to develop another level resilience (similar to an inoculation). It then raises the question whether children with a visible difference need an ‘added resilience’, and whether the children who had this ‘added’ resilience could cope just as well in another adversity or transition (a school transition, moving house, divorce).

**5.8.1.5 Resilience, Communication and Experience.** One of the most intriguing subthemes that developed from the views of some informants was the development of a *resilient discourse* in the expression of resilience (Theme 3), that is, the role of language in the process of talking about and fostering resilience. The examples provided by the informants focused on the validation of words and questions used by adults when talking to children who are facing adversity, such as bullying, and the ability of some children to use self-talk to recognise the reality of their situation and not pretend it is something else. Burnett and McCrindle (1999) found that positive statements given to children have more impact on self-talk and self-esteem than negative statements, although the child felt more hurt by negative statements made by peers than by adults.

Also worth noting were the views that some key informants expressed about the significance of lived experiences and the age of a child, and how younger children were thought to express resilient behaviour in their response to an adversity, whereas the older child may be hindered by their thinking process. This was part of the subtheme called, ‘The child’s age, and lived experience in the expression of resilience’. Therefore, for example, a five-year-old child may be just as resilient as an adolescent who is fifteen years old, depending on the child’s own lived experience (Masten & Barnes, 2018), because the older child’s thinking and development could be negatively driven due to past experiences or social peer pressures.

### ***5.8.2 Limitations and Future Research***

This research has provided a valuable analysis recognising the need for further longitudinal research to engage in how the resilience processes are expressed within the

different contexts that the child engages with, and the identification of protective mechanisms. However, there were some limitations to the study.

Firstly, the time scale for recruitment of the informants was lengthier than anticipated because of the emphasis that was placed on the informants experience of working with children and their understanding of resilience. This extended the time and halted the analysis, which fed into the initial planning stages for the next study. Originally, the researcher had tried to recruit an informant with a visible difference because of his or her own personal experiences and perspectives. However, the six participants that were involved in the study had worked with children had sound knowledge in their field of work, and in their views of resilience. Another issue arising from this sample group was that the researcher needed to consider the heterogeneity of the sample and how far their very different cultural backgrounds may have impacted on the views expressed. This was considered in terms of how the interview schedule was arranged and directly related to addressing the research questions.

This research contributes to our understanding of the meaning of resilience for children by:

- Considering the development of a resilient discourse in the expression of the resilient process for the child starting secondary school
- Recognising the role of others (not primary caregiver) in the child's school transition and their influence on the resilience processes
- Creating an awareness of the notion of children with a visible difference having an added resilience (another level of resilience)

## **5.9 Conclusion of Chapter 5**

The key informant study set out to understand the meaning and process of resilience in children from the perspective of adult key informants with considerable expertise in working with children, with a focus on visible differences. The contributions, according to the key informants view noted the emphasis placed on the contexts in which children engage with and the modeling behavior of others around them. Going into the next study, it was clear from the key informants view that they did not agree on what resilience was, but that parents and intervention from peers and other people seemed important. As I started to

design the next study, the child's voice was at the forefront of this, as were these ideas of fluidity and the navigation of resources.

## **Chapter 6:**

### **A Longitudinal Child and Family Group School Transition Study Exploring the Process of Resilience for Children with a Cleft**

#### **6.1 Introduction**

The focus of this study was the initial experiences of the secondary school transition for children with a cleft, and their families during the first school term. In this chapter, a mixed method qualitative study about the school transition with six families is presented, as part of the thesis with an aim to understand more about the enactment of the resilience process for children who look different. All six children and their parents were actively involved in this study from the middle of August 2018 until January 2019. Their involvement included family interviews, online snapshot interviews, and video blog entries from the children.

#### **6.2 Literature Review**

##### ***6.2.1 The School Transition and Resilience***

The move from primary to secondary school frames the setting for this study, and is identified as a normative ecological transition in which a child is challenged to negotiate new roles and settings (Bronfenbrenner, 1986; Seidman & French, 2004). The transition from primary to secondary school is particularly important for the current study because it presents a different setting for the child in which opportunities develop, and a range of new experiences occur that can be viewed as life changing (Jindal-Snape & Miller, 2008). The decision to study the process of resilience during school transitions was made because it allowed me to consider this particular context, and understand how children with a visible difference adapt during this period of change and adversity (Jindal-Snape & Miller, 2008). Starting at secondary school is a normative process, and it was a useful vantage point to observe the enactment of this process across the range of microsystems occupied by the

developing child (see Chapter 2, pp. 22-26 for a more detailed discussion of school transitions).

### ***6.2.2 The Process of Resilience***

In the first two chapters of this thesis (the introduction and literature review), I have highlighted the definitions of resilience, discussed how resilience is conceptualised and considered the protective mechanisms (Gilligan, 2000; Rutter, 1987). This subsection is aimed at reminding the reader that these were part of the second wave of the resilience enquiry and are seen as relevant to our understanding of resilience as a process (O'Dougherty et al., 2013). Despite some of the disagreement about the terminology used in the resilience literature, these mechanisms were recognised as part of the underlying processes that showed how the protective factors were working optimally for the individual during an adversity. The role of protective mechanisms is relevant to this study and the thesis because of how it is considered in the enactment of the resilience process. The notion of protection and processes in understanding resilience also featured in the findings from the Key Informants.

### ***6.2.3 Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological PPCT Model***

Bronfenbrenner (1978) defined the microsystem as a collection of activities, social roles and person interactions experienced by the developing person in a given face-to-face setting. These immediate and engaging interactions that take place for the child during the school transition are part of Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological PPCT model (2005). This model acknowledges the value of these close interactions for the developing child in the microsystems. According to the PPCT model of development (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006), the *proximal processes* are the reciprocal interactions between the child and the persons, objects and symbols in their immediate environment, which enhance positive development. In this study, an exploration of these proximal processes occurring for the child will be considered. This is because of their function as the 'engines of development' for the developing child (according to Bronfenbrenner, 2005). Furthermore, the bioecological model considers the immediate microsystems in which the developing child spends time and the relations with others in the same settings (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006).

#### ***6.2.4 Secondary School Transition and Children with a Cleft***

The secondary school transition for children is seen as a time of change, as one of the most difficult in a child's educational career (Zeedyk et al., 2003). In earlier research the impact of the transition from primary to secondary school has led to anxiety disorders in adolescence (Fontaine et al., 2017). The primary-secondary transition has been recognised as important for psychological well-being in adolescence and adulthood (West et al., 2010). Recently, Longaretti (2020) aimed to understand how young people conceptualise resilience and the elements that contribute to managing the transition from primary to secondary school. This qualitative approach included 16 students who were interviewed over an 18-month period at three times (end of Year 6, first and final school terms of Year 7). One of the main findings from this study was the sense of belonging student's felt, and the social acceptance and friendships that dominated the school transition experience (Longaretti, 2020). This sense of belonging at school was described as, "...the quality of the social relationships within a student's experience of school" (Longaretti, 2020, p. 32). There is little known about the experiences and significance of children who look different and their feelings about belonging and the role of friendship in shaping the transition from primary to secondary school. However, a recent qualitative study about the educational experiences for young people with a cleft by Stock and Ridley (2017) found that their social interactions were negatively influenced and there was a lack of suitable support from teachers (see Chapter 2, p. 30).

#### ***6.2.5 Study Research Aims***

The aim of this study was to explore processes that are involved in the enactment of resilience among children with a cleft starting secondary school. Following this, the research will aim to understand more about the protective mechanisms (conceived by Rutter, 1987), and the development of proximal processes (Bronfenbrenner, 2005) as was discussed in Chapter 2, p 20, and Chapter 3, p 38. Understanding how these processes are seen will help us to recognise or identify the steps or links that contemporaneously occur during the resilience process.

### **6.3 Method**



### ***6.3.1 Design***

A longitudinal mixed method qualitative design allowed for the in-depth study of participants' experiences captured at the start and during the first secondary school term, when the children were starting Year 7. Resilience processes occur in different contexts (Luthar et al., 2006; Rutter, 2012) and have been described during reflective experiences (Werner & Smith, 1992). Therefore, the longitudinal nature of the design was employed to capture the interactions that occurred for the child within and between the different microsystems including the home (family), and the school (peers and school clubs).

### ***6.3.2 Participants***

This study included 6 participants (1 boy, 5 girls), aged 11-12 years (average age: 11 years 1 month) starting secondary school in Year 7 in September 2018 (which was the time of the school transition), all born with a cleft. In the table 6 below, the demographic details of the children are provided. Each of the children were given a pseudonym to ensure confidentiality. Four of these children were starting at a mixed comprehensive secondary schools. One child (Nathan) was starting at an all-boys comprehensive, and Sophie was attending a mixed grammar school. They were all English speaking and eleven years of age at the start of the study. Lucy was an adopted child who was born in China. The table also provides the different descriptions of the children's clefts. Four of these children were born with a unilateral cleft lip, which affects both sides of the mouth. There were other conditions that the children had which were related to the cleft, for example three of the children wore glasses to support their eyesight, Poppy also experienced Nystagmus, and Rebecca wore a hearing aid - both associated conditions of the cleft. Please refer to the section about the cleft in Chapter 2 (p. 28) for further details on these conditions.

**Table 6***Table Identifying Participant's Demographic Details*

Child	Age	Race/ethnicity	Secondary school	Cleft description	Other conditions
Bella	11	White, British	Comprehensive*, mixed	Bilateral cleft lip and palate	High prescription due to poor eyesight
Lucy	11	Chinese	Comprehensive*, mixed	Unilateral cleft lip and Alveola	Wears glasses
Poppy	11	White, British	Comprehensive*, mixed	Cleft of hard and soft palate	Nystagmus
Nathan	11	White, British	Comprehensive*, all boys	Unilateral cleft lip and palate	
Rebecca	11	White, British	Comprehensive*, mixed	Unilateral cleft lip and cleft soft palate	Slight hearing loss (uses hearing aids)
Sophie	11	White, British	Grammar**, mixed	Unilateral cleft lip and palate (hard and soft)	

Note:

\* A comprehensive secondary school accepts all children and is not based on academic or other achievements (Department of Education, n.d).

\*\* A grammar secondary school is attended by children, who have completed a test based on their academic ability and can be run by the local authority (Department of Education, n.d).

In the next table, the demographic details for the parents are shown. The pseudonyms for the parents were given in accordance with the child for example, Bella's parents are Becky and Barry, all beginning with the letter 'B'. There were some similarities between the parents; firstly, in terms of their race/ethnicity, and they were all white, British,

and English was their first language. All sets of parents were married and in employment during the research. Five of these parents were in the field of education, more specifically as teachers. Bella's father was her step-parent (Barry), and Lucy's parents (Linda and Luke) adopted her. The average age for the parents was 46 years. Four of the families had one other sibling; all of the siblings were brothers with only one of these younger than the child in the study (Sophie).

**Table 7**

*Table Identifying Demographic Details from Participant's Parents*

Parents	Age	Occupation	Language	Race/ethnicity	Marital status	Siblings
Becky	28	Management	English	White, British	Married	None
Barry (stepfather)	30	Retail				
Linda	52	Education	English	White, British	Married	None
Luke	51	Education				
Pam	48	Education	English	White, British	Married	Brother, aged 14
Paul	48	Education				
Natalie	50	Education	English	White, British	Married	Brother, aged 13
Neil		Not given				
Rachel	45	Professional	English	White, British	Married	Brother, aged 15
Rob	49	Professional				
Sally	53	Professional	English	White, British	Married	Brother, aged 9
Simon	55	Professional				

As illustrated in the above table, the children and their parents were recruited as part of the study. The recruitment of these families is discussed in the next section.

### 6.3.2 Recruitment

Together with my supervisor, we developed a professional working relationship with some of the staff from CLAPA. The initial recruitment for this research began in April 2018 and continued until June 2018. Originally, seven families made contact with me during this time. These families had viewed the advert in the monthly CLAPA newsletter and received an email about the research. CLAPA accessed their database of families for those children who were starting secondary school, and sent through an email invite, then the interested families made direct contact with me.

I provided each interested family with an *invitation to participate* in the research (see Appendix H, p. 426). Once the child and their family decided to participate in the research, a detailed research pack was sent to each family. This included a *content form* of the research (see Appendix K, p. 431), to provide families with an overall view of the research plan. Also included were a *demographic form* (see Appendix M, p. 438), and the *participant selection and involvement form* (see Appendix J, p. 430). This form explained what the child and the family's anticipation were in the research and what their involvement meant. Next, this pack included the *interview questions* for the first family interview (see Appendix P, p. 447) and the *consent form* (see Appendix L, p. 432).

Six families were recruited. The rationale for this amount is purposeful to qualitative research, and is appropriate for data required for the PhD and any subsequent publications. Using a small number of participants allowed me, as the qualitative researcher to draw insights that may be transferable to similar contexts, not intending to make generalisations or test hypotheses on a larger sample (Smith & Dunworth, 2003). Furthermore, with guidance from my supervisors, I made an interpretative judgement that this amount of families was related to the purpose and aims of the analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2019). These children were selected based on their association with CLAPA. The inclusion criteria noted that there was a child in the family born with a cleft, who lived in the south of England who was otherwise typically developing. Exclusion criteria were children and families who were currently in counselling or therapy for issues relating to the child's well being or schooling. Since the research was qualitative, it was crucial that the inclusion criteria for this sample group were purposeful, seeking to answer the research question adequately (Marshall, 1996).

**Reflection 5**

During the first year of my PhD studies, it was thought that 10-14 families would be the ideal sample size for this study. After some consultation with my supervisors, looking at previous qualitative focused literature and research, and discussing this with CLAPA an effort was made to recruit these families. This was advertised with the support of CLAPA. I had also visited the young people's council that CLAPA held to talk with them about this research and ask about the studies requirements and how they would feel about being involved. They were reassuring and supportive of this research. However, the recruitment was challenging and I had not acquired any interest until half way through September 2017. This was from CLAPA's social media Facebook page and led to recruiting participants for the case study (Chapter 7). The following year, we started recruitment earlier, in March 2018 and I started receiving interest in this study from families in April 2018.

Furthermore, other sampling included online social media groups run by CLAPA. I was in also in contact with the regional area CLAPA contacts to explain the study so that they could also advertise in their areas. This contained detailed information about the study and what the participation in the study would entail, and key ethical information concerning confidentiality and their right to withdraw. It also required that the family have access to a computer or device that could be accessed to conduct the interviews.

**6.3.3 Materials and procedure**

There were four time points when the data was collected between August 2018 and January 2019 (see Table 8 below). These time points were the framework for the longitudinal design of the study. The data collected from the children was analysed as part of each time point, and their parents were included for the first and last time point. This meant that the interviews were structured to occur at specific times over the course of the first school term, taking into consideration the period of time before the start of the school term, which was needed in order to understand how the families were feeling at this step. I was also mindful of the academic timetable as the backdrop to these time points and considered dates.

**Table 8***Time Points Showing the Participants and the Data Sources*

Time point	Participants	Data source
1		
August-September (Prior to school starting)	Children and parent/s	Initial family interviews
2		
September – October (First 6 weeks of the school autumn term)	Children only	Online interviews (snapshots) Vlogs (eight entries)
3		
November – December (Next 6 weeks of the school autumn term)	Children only	Online interviews (snapshots) Vlogs (five entries)
4		
January 2019 (Start of the second school term)	Children and parent/s	Final family interviews

The data collected at each time point will be discussed next.

**6.3.3.1 Time Point One.** Time point interviews with the child and their family occurred mostly in August 2018, before school started. All time point one interviews were conducted between the 13<sup>th</sup> August and the 1<sup>st</sup> September, so that all six families were recruited before this date. This was to ensure that the family interviews were completed before the child's first day at school. The data from time point one included a family interview with the child and their parents. Five of these semi-structured interviews with the whole family (for both time point 1 and 4) occurred via Skype and one interview was face-to-face at the participant's parent's home (as illustrated on the next table 9). Time point one

interviews lasted an average of 36 minutes (ranging from 26 minutes to 44 minutes). In the next table, the type and length for each family interview is provided.

**Table 9**

An Overview of Time Point One's First Family Interviews

Family	Type of interview	Length
1 Bella (child) Becky (mother)	Skype	35 min
2 Lucy (child) Linda (mother), Luke (father)	Skype	44 min
3 Nathan (child) Natalie (mother), Neil (father)	Skype	29 min
4 Poppy (child) Pam (mother), Paul (father)	Face-to-face	40 min
5 Rebecca (child) Rachel (mother), Rob (father)	Skype	37 min
6 Sophie (child) Sally (mother)	Skype	38 min

The interview schedule (see Appendix P, p. 441) was used flexibly to guide the interviews, and comprised of 17 broad open-ended questions. Firstly, it provided some background to the family starting with questions about family life. Then it looked at how the child and the parents were feeling about the start of secondary school. Examples of questions were: 'How are you feeling about starting at your new secondary school?', 'What type of discussions have you had as a family regarding the start at secondary school?'. Next, it included the experiences of primary school and what this meant for a child with a cleft. An example of this type of question was: 'When you were in primary school, did your friends or anyone else ask you about your cleft?'. These questions were designed to find out about the child and family's feelings and perceptions about starting secondary school.

The key topics that this schedule explored were the feelings of the anticipated school start, the changes to routines, the brief introductions already encountered at the new setting, the changes to their peer group and making of new friends, as some primary school friends will not continue with them to their new school.

***Reflection 6***

Results from the Key Informant study highlighted the relevance of modelling calm behaviour, and the role of the parent/s for children who were faced with a change or an adversity. It was important to include the parent/s throughout this study to understand more about their role and how resilient processes were perceived, because of the modelled behaviour for the children. The interview schedule was designed to understand the child's experiences as they started school and how the immediate microsystems formed part of this experience. This ecological inquiry, tried to trail the child at these 4 time points, to identify and recognise the child's viewpoint and their experiences right across the school transition.

**6.3.3.2 Time Point Two.** The second time point occurred between the first two to six weeks after the school term had begun (10<sup>th</sup> September – 5<sup>th</sup> October 2018). The data from both time points two and three included online snapshot interviews (via Facebook Messenger or WhatsApp) with the child only. The semi-structured interview schedules were created to encompass a range of topics, including interactions with peers, daily experiences in their new school setting, communications with teachers, perceptions of expected achievements, cleft-related experiences, available resources within the new setting and views about primary and secondary school changes.

In addition, four of the children created video blogs about their day-to-day experiences at school called, *vlogs* (video blogs: short verbal diary entries recorded on personal devices). The children recorded these vlogs at different times during this time point, depending on when the children decided to record a brief entry about their daily lives, about something that mattered to them. These vlogs were about school, life at home, and other interests they chose to discuss. In the section below the snapshot interviews and vlogs will each be explained in more detail.



**6.3.3.2.1 Snapshot Interviews.** During this time point from September to October 2018, there were two online snapshot interviews conducted with each child. After the initial family interviews, I contacted the parents of the children to organise dates for the upcoming online interviews. These were termed *snapshot interviews* as they were designed to momentarily capture the day-to-day experiences of the child over the school term. The first of these took place after the first two weeks of school starting. Each child completed this phase and then 4 weeks on from this time, the second online interviews occurred. As documented in chapter 4 (p. 63), these interviews were relevant to working with children of this age because of their easy access to an online device. This placed minimal demands on their time during this transition, as the children were busy with the school day, homework deadlines, after school activities and life at home.

The online interview schedule was emailed to the parent and child a week ahead of the interview. On the day of the online interviews, I had arranged a time to carry out the interview with the child using their parent's or their own device or via Facebook messenger or WhatsApp, and started the interview when the child was ready at the arranged time. In the next table, the child and month of each online interview is shown. The average time for these interviews during this time point was 44 minutes. In the next Table 10, after the vlog section, details concerning each child's interview and vlog entry is shown and the length of these.

**6.3.3.2.2 Vlogs.** There were four children (Bella, Lucy, Nathan and Rebecca), who recorded their own video blogs (vlogs) at different times, decided by them during this time point. These vlogs were used to talk about their day-to-day experiences, as a type of digital diary. There was no interview schedule and the children were prompted to discuss any parts of school life that they would like to talk about. A consent form was provided for this part of the study for the parents to sign and a letter for the children to explain this further (see Appendix L, p. 429). In the letter, I asked the children to vlog about their day, their routines, friends, and school clubs. Four of the children created eight vlog entries altogether. Bella and Lucy completed two vlog entries, whereas Rebecca was able to do one and Nathan compiled three entries during this time point. The vlogs supported the research, as they provided an extended outlook of the child's view of their experiences during this time, and the children were agentic in choosing issues and events that mattered to them.

From the analysis, the vlogs were relevant to the snapshot interviews because they mirrored some of the children's feelings concerning their ordinary day-to-day life, and experiences of being a child with a cleft in school. In the table below, the month of entry, and length for the vlog entries is shown for each child. The average length of these vlogs was 1 min, 78 seconds and the transcriptions for these vlogs can be found in the appendices section (p. 456).

***Reflection 7***

Two of the children were not able to create vlog entries – Poppy and Sophie. Poppy's father explained to me that Poppy had tried, but felt uncomfortable recording herself. For Sophie, her mother, Sally said that she had completed some of these, but was unable to upload them to the researcher's link to a password-protected folder in dropbox. I offered to send Sophie a USB memory stick to upload the entries on, but Sally felt it would still not work. This was unfortunate as the other vlog entries were informal and relaxed showing the children in their home setting casually chatting about their day. Sometimes this included the ongoing demands of homework, or the challenges of being organised before going to school. In later entries, the children spoke about their schools and how they were feeling about their school. However, I understood and respected Poppy and Sophie's situation as they decided not to actively participate in this part of the study.

In the table below, the date and length for each online interview and vlog entry is shown for each participant.

**Table 10***Data Entries for Time Point Two with the Children Only*

Data collected (online interviews and vlogs)	When (month, year)	Length of interviews and vlogs
Bella		
Interview 1	September 2018	41:00
Interview 2	October 2018	43:32
Vlog entry 1	September 2018	01:45
Vlog entry 2	October 2018	02:05
Lucy		
Interview 1	September 2018	56:00
Interview 2	October 2018	54:00
Vlog entry 1	October 2018	02:36
Vlog entry 2	October 2018	01:50
Nathan		
Interview 1	September 2018	45:00
Interview 2	October 2018	40:00
Vlog entry 1	September 2018	01:06
Vlog entry 2	October 2018	01:28
Vlog entry 3	October 2018	01:39
Poppy		
Interview 1	September 2018	41:00
Interview 2	October 2018	38:00
Rebecca		
Interview 1	September 2018	35:00
Interview 2	October 2018	41:00
Vlog entry 1	September 2018	03:21
Sophie		
Interview 1	September 2018	39:00
Interview 2	October 2018	49:00

**6.3.3.3 Time Point Three.** The third time point (November – December 2018) combined the time after the half term break, leading to the Christmas school holiday. The data was collected from the 6th November to the 15<sup>th</sup> December. There were six online snapshot interviews from all six children in November and then six more from each child in December. These were conducted in accordance with the interviews run in time point two. The average length of these interviews was 39 minutes and the topics from the interview schedule focussed on the school day, the peer groups, the interactions with teachers, the times at school that are not curriculum based, such as, lunchtime, the school clubs, routine changes to and back from school and how the children were feeling about their school. In addition to this, the children were asked to continue vlogging as and when they could. There were five of these entries. Three of the children provided one vlog entry, and Nathan provided two, one in November and one in December. The average length of these vlog entries was 1 minute, 16 seconds for this time point. This data together with the online interviews is shown in Table 11 below.

**Table 11***Data Entries for Time Point Three with the Children Only*

Data collected (online interviews and vlogs)	When (month, year)	Length of interviews and vlogs
Bella		
Interview 3	November 2018	46:47
Interview 4	December 2018	41:51
Vlog entry 3	October 2018	02:34
Lucy		
Interview 3	November 2018	46:21
Interview 4	December 2018	41:18
Vlog entry 3	November 2018	02:12
Nathan		
Interview 3	November 2018	36:10
Interview 4	December 2018	40:21
Vlog entry 4	November 2018	01:07
Vlog entry 5	December 2018	01:30
Poppy		
Interview 3	November 2018	42:24
Interview 4	December 2018	26:06
Rebecca		
Interview 3	November 2018	34:00
Interview 4	December 2018	45:00
Vlog entry 2	November 2018	02:33
Sophie		
Interview 3	November 2018	43:38
Interview 4	December 2018	26:00

**6.3.3.4 Time Point Four.** The final time point occurred in January 2019, which was a family interview with the participant and their parents (see table 12 below). These semi-structured interviews were also conducted either at the children's parents home face-to-face or via Skype. Similar to the first family interview, I sent the families the consent form to be signed and the interview schedule ahead of the interview. All six families agreed to participate in the final interview and were then able to arrange a time and date to conduct the interviews. Three of the families were able to meet face to face for this interview and the other three families elected to use Skype for the interview.

The interview schedule (see Appendix R, p. 448) for this time point was reflective, as the questions were designed to look back at the very start of the school transition and talk about how the child had felt over the course of the school term. This included the topics that have been the focus throughout the study, including routine changes, peer groups, interactions with teachers, the school environment, the school clubs and other extra curricular activities and how the children had addressed any experiences about their cleft. The average family interview was 45 minutes (ranging from 31 minutes to 1 hour and five minutes) and all interviews happened in January 2019 (see Appendix U, p. 456 interview transcripts).

**Table 12***Overview of Time Point Four's Final Family Interviews*

Final family interviews	Participants	When (month, year)	Type and length of interview
Interview 1	Bella (child) Mother (Becky)	January, 2019	Face to Face 47:06
Interview 2	Lucy (child) Mother (Linda) Father (Luke)	January, 2019	Face to Face 01:05:00
Interview 3	Poppy (child) Mother (Pam) Father (Paul)	January, 2019	Face to face 43:35
Interview 4	Nathan (child) Mother (Natalie) Father (Neil)	January, 2019	Skype 30:32
Interview 5	Rebecca (child) Mother (Rachel) Father (Rob)	January, 2019	Skype 38:39
Interview 6	Sophie (child) Mother (Sally)	January, 2019	Skype 31: 17

***Reflection 8***

For these interviews, I was able to meet three of the families face-to-face in their homes. For the first time point, there was not enough time to arrange for some of family interviews to be face-to-face, and the families elected to access Skype, which worked well. However, it was interesting to meet some of these children face-to-face and to be able to talk a little more informally about the research study. I had hoped to meet all the families face-to-face for this interview, but two of the families were more comfortable and said

they found the Skype interviews suitable and the other family's location was too far for me to travel.

#### **6.4 Analytic strategy**

Qualitative research strives to describe, explore and understand the experiences of individuals, and can provide rich descriptions and possibly explanations of people's meaning and how they experience particular events (Lyons & Coyle, 2016; Smith & Dunworth, 2003). In this study, the qualitative approach was idiographic, seeking to examine the individual children in detail in order to understand their experiences. Consideration was also given to the epistemological stance of this research, adopting a critical realist outlook which recognises that, while a reality exists independent of the researcher, the researcher cannot know that reality with certainty (Lyons & Coyle, 2016). Therefore, the study used reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) to analyse the data gathered during the four time points. More detail about TA was discussed in the methodology chapter (see p. 61).

Each theme identified was embedded within the PPCT model (Bronfenbrenner, 2005), looking at the process-person-context and time elements and proximal processes. Next, the subthemes began to be categorised, leading to further analysis and application of theory and understanding. The interviews emphasis was on understanding how the child (and the family) experienced and adapted to the new microsystems (including the school learning environment and peer group), during this ecological normative transition over the course of time.

As a research student, I followed standard procedure during the carrying out of the research away from the University. This meant that I informed my supervisors when and where each interview was conducted. Then, I informed the family on arrival that I would be corresponding with my supervisors as soon as I left their home to confirm the completion of the interview. The supervisors had the address and contact numbers for each of the participant's family and were aware of the length of the interviews.

#### **6.5 Results and Discussion**

The TA was conducted with the entire data corpus including data from all six children at the four different time points during the first term of secondary school. Recently, Braun and Clarke (2019), noticed that the themes in reflexive TA are not entities that exist in



isolation from one another, the themes are part of the broader story, and have meaning in relation to other themes. This was evident through the time points of this analysis, as the themes were threaded through the PPCT model's elements. The analysis is underpinned by Bronfenbrenner's model, addressing the process, person, context and time throughout the analysis, with particular attention given to the regular interactions that occurred between the developing children and their environment (termed proximal processes). Each time point will be discussed in turn.

### ***6.5.1 Time Point One***

The TA for this time point included the interview data from the initial dyadic interview with the family and the participants. This data collection occurred in August 2018 before the start of school. The thematic analysis identified four main themes from this time point:

- (1) *Manifold nature of emotions experienced before the secondary school transition,*
- (2) *First encounters with the child's new microsystem,*
- (3) *Routine changes and adjustments before the school transition (initial micro-communications),*
- (4) *Experiences during primary school as a child with a cleft.*

An overview of the themes and subthemes from time point one is illustrated in Table 13, below.

**Table 13***Themes and Subthemes from Time Point One*

Themes	Subthemes
1. Manifold nature of emotions experienced before the secondary school transition	1.1 Initial cautious feelings of excitement for the parent and the child starting secondary school 1.2 Ambivalence felt by the child and the parent about the school transition 1.3 Feelings of reassurance felt by the parent prior to the school transition
2. First encounters with the child's new microsystem	2.1 Relevance of transition sessions 2.2 Trying to find a way in a new environment 2.3 A parent's sense of preparedness for their child starting school
3. Routine changes and adjustments before the school transition	
4. Primary school experiences for children with a cleft	4.1 Lack of understanding and knowledge of what a cleft is 4.2 Missed school days and activities 4.3 History of hearing and speech barriers

Next, a more detailed analysis of these themes is discussed.

**6.5.2.1 Theme 1: Manifold Nature of Emotions Experienced before the Secondary School Transition.** This first theme addresses the feelings experienced by the children and their parents about the start of the secondary school transition. The theme highlights the mixed feelings of these developing children in their home microsystem, as they think about the forthcoming changes to the new school setting, theme began by looking at the child, and their views of what was happening around them. This was situated within

the process and person components of the PPCT model, which stresses the need to start with the interactions between the active child and their environments and the regularity of proximal processes that exist. In terms of the person, the proximal processes look at how the individual's characteristics influence these processes, such as their age and gender, and how these influence activities and interactions (Erikson & Ghazinour, 2018). The process considers how often these activities and interactions take place with other relevant persons.

The thematic analysis identified a shift between feelings of excitement and nervousness for the children and their parents, which stemmed from thoughts of independence and opportunity. These feelings were alongside concerns about meeting new people and leaving friends from primary school behind. Therefore, the theme is called, *'Manifold nature of emotions experienced before the secondary school transition'*.

The children's regular daily interactions in primary school were changing and the context for these proximal processes would be different in their new secondary school. Three subthemes explaining this theme developed. Firstly, the, *'Initial cautious feelings of excitement for the parent and the child starting secondary school'*, next the *'Ambivalence felt by the child and the parent about the school transition'*, and the *'Feelings of reassurance felt by the parent prior to the school transition'* were identified and each will be explored in turn.

***6.5.1.1.1 Initial Cautious Feelings of Excitement for the Parent and the Child starting secondary school.*** This subtheme was concerned with the early cautionary feelings of excitement that participants experienced before the start of school and the reasons that both parents and children gave for this. The reasons for the excitement expressed by the children ranged from an interest in new school activities, to a feeling of 'moving up' and anticipating new experiences. For example, in the following quotations, Poppy explained her vested interest in knowing what the school play was, as she was positively anticipating this, whereas Bella and Sophie expressed thoughts of excitement towards the school experience and the move from primary to secondary, labelling it as *moving up* or as a *step up*:

I was excited about finding out about the play. (Poppy)

I was excited that I was moving up a year, it would be a new experience. (Bella)

I'm really excited to start school, it's a great school and I'm really excited to start, It's definitely going to be a step up, it's going to be really good once I get into it. (Sophie)

Sophie repeatedly expressed how excited she felt about starting school. She linked this her new school, feeling that it was a step up for her. Sophie's past school experiences were formed within an independent preparatory school.

For some of the parents, this was a shared experience of excitement with their child, starting secondary school, as it involved opportunity and challenges. In the next quotation, Linda explained her excitement for her daughter, Lucy, about the opportunities she was going to have, adding that Lucy was also ready for the work level and other subjects:

I mean as secondary school teachers, we're excited for the opportunities she's going to have. We think she's ready for that level of work and the new subjects and the new challenges. We're quite excited but we still have concerns, obviously, but you know. (Linda, Lucy's mother)

It was curious that Linda, an experienced secondary school teacher, still voiced a slight concern towards the end of her thoughts, not fully disclosing exactly what her concerns were at this time for Lucy, but conveying some doubt about the transition. However, she also suggested that Lucy was ready for this experience in terms of the work, new subjects and challenges. In addition to this, Lucy's father, Luke, explained how the transition was also a change for him and his wife, due to the associated changes to their current routine. Luke explained this in his thoughts about the routine changes in the next quotation:

I think for me the feelings are a bit like Lucy. For Lucy, she's excited for the new opportunities, but a bit nervous at the same time (mum agreeing: 'yes'). For us, it's a big transition as well, sort of change of routines and everything like that, so it's about adjusting all of those for the whole family, I think. (Luke, Lucy's father)

The quotation above shows how the changes that occur in one system (routine) react and interact with each other. This links to Bronfenbrenner (1979) theory, which places Lucy at the center of these nested systems (microsystems), so that she was continuously affected, one way or another, by changes that occur in the environments that surround her.

Therefore, the whole family were experiencing these anticipating changes to their routines and daily schedules during the transition. These family interviews allowed me the opportunity to see how the whole family was transitioning, not just the child.

One of the other parents, Rob exuded positivity and excitement for the whole family when talking about Rebecca starting secondary school. He focused on how he felt Rebecca would manage very well and that she was prepared for this change:

I think great, I think she'll cope with it really well and I think she's ready for it, so it will be a big change for her, exciting for all of us, we just need to find our way through it, I think. (Rob, Rebecca's father)

Rob indicated the need for everyone to find their way through the transition, referring to a sense of direction, suggesting that it was going to a collective effort with the inclusive use of 'we' and 'us'. Again, the notion of *being ready* for school was expressed by Rob, echoing Linda's earlier thoughts. There was a sense that both parents felt their children needed to acquire a form of readiness, to be prepared for this new challenge, starting secondary school.

These initial excited feelings expressed were the starting point for the manifold emotions experienced by both the parent and the child before the secondary school transition. Essentially this was the hub, where everything began for the child, thinking about their new school and the changes they would experience.

A reliance and emphasis were placed on this microsystem of the family unit, according to Bronfenbrenner because it is where the child develops and grows, depending on the encouraging and nurturing relationships that exist within it (Rosa & Tudge, 2013). Furthermore, as an ecologically based study, the development of these anticipatory feelings of excitement and nervousness were part of the child's views about starting in their new school microsystem, which is where new proximal processes for the children would occur. In contrast to the first subtheme, there were also some uncertain emotions expressed, as the families continued to discuss this transition, and these are the focus of the next subtheme.

#### ***6.5.1.1.2 Ambivalence Felt by the Child and the Parent about the School***

***Transition.*** This subtheme revealed certain concerns expressed by some of the parents and the children, highlighting the ambivalence which they felt about the school transition. For the children, there were shared thoughts about this, describing their uncertainties about making new friends, the discomfort of being in a new setting, and reflections on how different life was going to be from primary school. In contrast to this, the parents' ambivalence was about the routine changes and decisions that affected the family as a whole. Therefore, this subtheme identifies the differences between the parents and the children's concerns, highlighting how the child is directly influenced because they are engaging in the new school microsystem more often, whereas the parents are a part of the experience, during the family transition. This was evident in the quotation below from Sophie's mother, Sally, who explained that the school transition meant that the family had to move house:

It's been big decision for the family, that's why we are moving house so it's been a big decision to choose this school because it's not viable to do living here so, we are moving to accommodate it and stuff, but it's one of the top school's in the country. (Sally, Sophie's mother)

Sally clearly described this move as an important decision for the family, detailing how it could not have worked otherwise. Furthermore, she justified this move, crediting Sophie's new school as one of the top in the country. However, for Sophie, her uncertainties about starting secondary school were about not knowing anybody. In the next quotation, she felt nervous about the isolated position of not knowing anybody and was not sure if it would be easy to make new friends:

I'm a bit nervous because I don't know anyone going, like I know people briefly who I recognise, but I don't know anyone so it's a bit nervous because I'm not sure, about how easy it will be to make friends. (Sophie)

This was comparable to the responses from both Nathan and Bella, as they addressed the notion of not knowing other people at their new school and not being known, and how

dissimilar this was from their primary school. In Nathan's quotation below, he provided an example of how he pictured this change in terms of walking down the school corridor and not being able to greet another person. In his dialogue, he addresses this as familiarity versus unfamiliarity between the two school settings:

It's much bigger and in primary school, like you usually like know everyone a bit earlier like you know who people are when you see them, you say hello, but in secondary school when you see them in the corridor you don't say hello because you don't know who they are. (Nathan)

For Bella, there were some apprehensions expressed in her thoughts about how she felt about starting secondary school. There was a sense that Bella was expressing ownership of her primary school, not fully accepting the new school yet. The proximal processes established at primary school for Bella were strong, as she placed further emphasis on the amount of time she had spent at primary school and how she felt determined in that environment. In the next quotation, she fondly recalled her primary school experiences and the familiarity of this setting:

...quite upsetting because of all my memories and everything there, I felt quite happy and determined there, I knew everybody because I spent like five days a week there and I knew my teacher quite well. (Bella)

On the other hand, a different aspect of uncertainty was articulated by Nathan's mother, as this appeared to be a gentle reminder that starting secondary school for Nathan would be important for him to work hard and stay focused. It conveyed a sense of forewarning for Nathan even though she felt he would be a good boy. Natalie addressed this cautionary concern in the next quotation:

I suppose we just wanted to make sure that he was taking it seriously and going to work hard, and you know be a good boy and that kind of thing. (Natalie, Nathan's mother)

The nature of this shift of emotions found in these first two subthemes identified the differing roles of the children and the parent, because the children were encountering this transition first hand and the caregiver (parent) was observing their child during this encounter. Therefore, the children were focused on aspects of secondary school life that may be different from primary school, particularly friendships. The anticipatory loss of some interactions was evident for the children, given that the data from this time point was collected before the children had spent time in their new schools. Already, this ecological transition had created change for the children, resulting in an array of mixed emotions. For some of the parents, this planned change was highlighted as an opportunity, as they addressed the milieu of the work and new challenges.

Although these parents approached the transition in a similar fashion to their child, excited and nervous, there were also the parents who had encountered the transition before with an older sibling. This led to the development of the third subtheme titled, *Feelings of reassurance felt by the parent prior to the school transition*. This subtheme developed because certain parents (Nathan's, Poppy's and Rebecca's) felt less concerned about this transition having had an older child experience this before.

#### ***6.5.1.1.3 Feelings of Reassurance Felt by the Parent Prior to the School***

***Transition.*** In the final part of this theme, this subtheme focuses on the emotions of some of the parents, who exhibited a more confident outlook about the school transition process. This resulted from the previous experiences of these families, who had already lived through secondary school transition with an older child. For Nathan's mother, Natalie, she related it quite simply to the older sibling who was doing well at the school and that they were happy with the school:

I suppose it's easier when it's number two child, we're happy with the school and Noah (older brother) is doing well there. (Natalie, Nathan's mother)

Poppy's mother, Pam, expressed a similar thought, as they had experienced the transition before with the older sibling. Pam also felt that it was helpful to Poppy as she anticipated their son's presence would be supportive to Poppy:



I think what's really helped us all is that Peter is there. So, Peter is in Year 10 and so most of our uncertainties probably happened with him, so we know a lot more now. (Pam, Poppy's mother)

Rebecca's also had an older sibling, although her father felt a different type of reassurance. He felt that Rebecca was good in social situations and would be able to meet new people easily. He expressed this in the quotation below:

Rebecca is really good at getting to know new people. She'll be in a group of people her age and she'll know all the people within half an hour, she'll know all the names and know who she gets on with, she's very good at that bit.

(Rob, Rebecca's father)

This subtheme confirmed how some of the parents felt more equipped with the transition because of their prior experiences. This meant that for some of these parents they were already involved with this new microsystem, engaging with the school regularly, developing the proximal processes because of it.

There was an interesting thread of similar emotions expressed by some of the parents and the children about starting secondary school throughout this theme, for example, excitement. Then, there were some reasons that differed between the parents and the children. The parents talked about the new opportunities that their children would be engaging with and the relevance of the child's education, whereas the children were thinking about making friends and the idea of reaching another level in their learning or a sense of achievement in starting at secondary school.

### ***Reflection 9***

It was intriguing that during the course of the interviews the notion of time played a type of side-line role, yet its relevance was felt in how the questions were answered. By this I mean that the immediacy of time was particularly important to the children. However, the parents viewed the transition from a wider angle, aware of what might happen in the first weeks of school, as they answered the questions. There was a sense though that the

parents were still able to understand how their children felt in their moment, thinking about starting secondary school, feeling nervous and excited with them. This difference in perceptions of time was interesting, as the key focus of concerns was perceived differently by the parents and the children, resulted in differing outlooks on their expectations of secondary school. This shorter term versus longer term perspective continues through the whole analysis and was quite apparent in the next theme about the families' first encounters with their school. Also, it is relevant to Bronfenbrenner's PPCT model, describing the moment-to-moment regular exchanges that take place as compared to the events that occur over longer periods of time in the chronosystem. This made me think about the notion of how person-environment interactions are shaped against the historical time in which they occur.

**6.5.2.2 Theme 2. First Encounters with the Secondary School.** First introductions with the school left impressions for both the children and the parents. This main theme is about these initial encounters that occurred for the children and the parents, as they engaged in a new part of their microsystem, starting at a secondary school.

According to Bronfenbrenner (1979), the stronger and richer the links are between the microsystems of the child, which he termed the mesosystem (such as the links between the home and the school,) the more advantageous it is for the child's development at the centre of these systems. These first encounters, are explored in the next two subthemes, titled '*Relevance of transition sessions*' and '*Trying to find a way in a new environment*'. This revealed some of the elements of secondary school that were new and inviting for the children such as the content of the lessons, meeting new people, and the more casual encounters at lunch times, although there was also the idea of some uncertainty for the children in finding their way around their new school. However, for some of the parents, there was some contact with the school prior to their child starting, and for others the older sibling's school transition had helped. This gave these parents a sense of preparedness before the start of secondary school and is discussed in the third subtheme, which is called, '*A parent's sense of preparedness for their child starting school*'.

**6.5.2.2.1. Relevance of Transition Sessions.** This first subtheme developed from the children's reflections about their induction sessions at their new schools. These induction

sessions occurred when the child was still in Year 6 at their previous primary school, and where they were invited to spend some time at the new school, for an induction or taster session. These sessions encouraged a sense of enthusiasm for their new school for some of the children, as they enjoyed certain lessons and started to feel more comfortable within that environment.

These transition sessions have been advocated for in UK primary and secondary schools to deliver smoother transitions (Jingle-Snape & Foggie, 2008). In both quotations below, Poppy and Rebecca recalled part of their Science lesson at their new secondary school, and they had both taken part in practical experiments during their transition sessions:

The Science lesson we had, we made these paper things and then we timed it to see how long it took to go to the ground. (Poppy)

In Science I got to spray this chemical into a Bunsen burner...yeah, it was fun. (Rebecca)

In addition to this, Sophie's response about her induction sessions focused on how enjoyable this was because she felt that it had helped her familiarise herself with the school and some of the teachers. In the next quotation, she recalled:

There was a big group of children and you were stuck with some of the different teachers, and they were really enjoyable and I got to know the school a lot better. (Sophie)

Nestled amongst the participants' recollections of their transition sessions were some personal descriptions about what they did at lunchtime, which was an important part of the day. Both Lucy and Rebecca fondly described this time in the next quotations:

I quite liked just going out after we had lunch and just sitting in the shade and just talking. (Lucy)

...that was quite good fun, because I got to know a lot of people. (Rebecca)

For Rebecca, the informality and lack of structure allowed more casual encounters, and seemingly more choice. This was also where the development of the proximal processes can be initiated and developed (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006), and Lucy and Rebecca both appreciated the casual interactions, which will form part of the daily school life.

In particular, Nathan's robust description of his school transition session focused on the variety of activities he had encountered, including lessons, sport, and food. In his quotation, he expressed his enjoyment of all of these:

I played football on the tennis court, um, we did like a kind of fake maths lesson, then we played football in PE, like a taster PE, then we did like music or something, I can't remember the last one. Oh, we had a really nice pizza and chips for lunch. (Nathan)

For all the participants, these induction sessions provided an intriguing glimpse into some subjects and helped some children feel more familiar with the teacher's faces. This 'small dose' of the new school, which was just one school day, resonates in Rutter's (1987) findings from previous research, in which he discussed the concept of 'inoculation' against a stress, for example, the school transition. It is clear that some subtle exposure to this, such as the induction sessions should provide support to the child for when they need to adapt fully to this new environment.

Even though these transition sessions were helpful to the participants, there were some cautionary thoughts from some of the children, which were about finding their way around the school and the jumble of cautious feelings felt from this. The children's views of this were evident, manifesting as part of the second subtheme, entitled, '*Trying to find a way in a new environment*'.

**6.5.2.2.2 *Trying to Find a Way in a New Environment.*** This subtheme explores the feelings of concern that some of the children felt after their initial introduction to their schools. It addressed how these children felt less familiar with certain aspects of their new microsystem, mostly directed towards finding their way around the school. This unfamiliarity

was expressed as feelings of hesitation and a lack of belonging at this early phase of their school transition.

According to Lucey and Reay (2000) the child's identities expressed during the school transition are culminated around anxieties and excitement, with one particular concern regarding the fear of getting lost. This was relevant to some of the children views in the current study too. For example, in the quotation below, Bella expressed some of her uncertainties which included not knowing other people, the repeated use of the word 'new' in her description and trying to find her way around:

Because it's a new school and I didn't know many people, and it's a new experience and I have to learn where to go and everything. (Bella)

Furthermore, Lucey and Reay (2000) referred to the spaces 'in-between' the secondary school classes, such as corridors, playgrounds, stairways which the children need to negotiate as they move around the school. These informal spaces created a sense of worry and concern for some children. Bella confirmed this notion of worry about her school, as everything to her was new, wherever she went in the new school campus. Lucy and Rebecca also shared in this thinking about their own struggles and concerns about finding their way around school. Lucy simply noted that it was not easy to find her way around and Rebecca felt uncertain because of how the space was laid out:

I found it quite difficult to find my way around. (Lucy)

I'm a little uncertain because it's quite spread out over a wide area, but, um, apparently, everybody is really helpful so I should be alright. (Rebecca)

Interestingly, Rebecca also felt that there would be someone to help her, so she would be okay finding her way. Rebecca's acknowledgement of others helping her was understated, yet reassuring for her.

In the third subtheme about the first encounters with the child's new microsystem, the parents were also part of this introduction. Their role was supportive, helping their child to prepare for this transition. This is examined in the next subtheme.

**6.5.2.2.3 Parents' Sense of Preparedness for their Child Starting School.** The parent's first engagements with the schools were different from the child. The key focus was on the parent preparing their child for the transition and this subtheme captured the surplus of activities that occurred within the interactions in the mesosystem. During this preparation time, the parent utilised certain actions to familiarise their child with the school. As proposed by Gilligan (2000), these supportive actions can be seen as forming part of the protective mechanisms in key areas (see Chapter 2, pp. 19-20), identified as part of the resilience process. Some of the parents sought to reduce the stockpile of concerns for their child. For some parents, this meant that they put some initiatives in place before their child started secondary school, lessening some uncertainties for the child and developing their support system. This is revealed throughout this theme.

Firstly, for Rebecca's mother, Rachel, this sense of preparedness started in the application process because she had to appeal their original school application, as she felt Rebecca should attend a different school to her older sibling because of her hearing difficulties. In the quotation below, it was evident that this decision, and the parental engagement with the application process, had supported Rebecca's needs and Rachel expressed an excitement about this:

I'm really pleased because we managed to get her into her secondary school on appeal because it wasn't the school that she originally was going to, but we managed to appeal against the decision because it's actually out of catchment, um, I'm really pleased we managed to get her in because I think it will be a really good school for her. (Rachel, Rebecca's mother)

The importance of appealing an application, because of Rebecca's needs, was pleasing to her mother. Rebecca continued to engage with new parts of her microsystem, as she also spent some time at the secondary school over the summer holiday taking part in a coding club, which allowed her to familiarise herself with the layout of the school building. The links within this microsystem were constantly growing for Rebecca, who was already engaging with the mesosystem. Rachel explained the significance of Rebecca's participation in the coding club that occurred during the summer school holidays in the next quotation:

We have been there a few times because in the holidays there's been a coding club that's been run there and that Rebecca has gone too, so there are bits of the building she actually knows quite well. (Rachel, Rebecca's mum)

Next, a different type of initiative was implemented by Lucy's father, Luke who decided to make contact with the secondary school before Lucy started in September, to enquire about her form class, suggesting that it would be helpful for Lucy to have one of her friends with her. Again, this demonstrated the relevance of connecting the links within the microsystem, strengthening the mesosystem and initiating the start of proximal processes for the parents and the school. This also supported Lucy, as Luke explains in the next quotation:

One thing we did do as part of our discussions is, I emailed the school and actually said you know Lucy has made a good friend, would it be possible for that friend to be in her form? and the school came back and said 'yeah, let's do that', so they arranged that her friend will be in her class, her form from September. (Luke, Lucy's father)

Further acknowledgment of the importance of friendship developments for Lucy were also expressed by her mother, Linda, because Lucy was able to start at her new school having made some friends in advance:

...pleased that she has gone to Guides and made friends in advance, that was good. So, we are glad she has that continuity. (Linda, Lucy's mother)

Unlike some of the parents, Sophie's mother, Sally, explained how Sophie had chosen her secondary school, adding how Sophie's had acquired certain achievements to attend her chosen school. Sally did not explain if this was strategic on Sophie's part to ensure she went to this school or if it was, she had the skills and abilities to help her acquire this place:

I suppose the bit of difference is that Sophie's been at an independent school, and so

she's kind of chosen the school she wants to go to in terms of her senior school...  
 Sophie got an academic scholarship, a dance scholarship, an all-rounder and a choral scholarship for ... (school name). (Sally, Sophie's mother)

As discussed in the first main theme, Sophie's family were moving home to be closer to the chosen school as this was Sophie's decision. In this example, Sally supported Sophie's decision and was proud of her daughter's achievements. The achievements were an indication of Sophie's interest in attending this school, and both she and her mother had prepared for this.

In theme two, the initial introductions of the child to their intended secondary school were facilitated by the transition days. However, this introduction created some uncertainties for the children about finding their way around and making friends. The ambivalence expressed by some of the children during this early part of the transition was entwined within both of the first two main themes. Transitions days facilitated links between the microsystems for the children, and created other links for some of the parents, who had made contact with the schools prior to the start of school. The parents were happy about engaging with the schools so that certain measures could be put in place to support their child, reducing the stockpile of uncertainties expressed by the children, which included making friends and getting lost.

Let us now consider the third main theme, as the changes to the daily routines for all of the participants were seen as being impacted by the transition. This was focused on their traveling routines and thoughts concerned with independence.

### **6.5.2.3 Theme 3: Routine Changes and Adjustments Before the School**

**Transition.** Before the start of secondary school, the parents and the children had thought about and discussed some of the changes that would occur. Two of the main changes for all the children and their parents were centered on traveling to and from school and the homework demands of secondary school. For some of the parents, these routine changes, (which resulted in changes in the home and school microsystems and links between them, in the mesosystem) were viewed as providing the children with independence. The families shared how they had spent time planning for these changes. These notions of independence expressed in this theme link to the exosystem, and relate to the cultural notions of 'growing



up', displaying an independence away from parents. These views are normative expectations of children 'moving up' to secondary school at this age (Zeedyk et al., 2003).

Parents have been seen to promote independence in their secondary school aged children, and this corresponds to increased feelings of gaining freedom and autonomy from adult regulation for children starting secondary school (Lucey & Reay, 2000). In this theme, it was noticeable that the parents aimed to increase the responsibilities given to the children. For example, Becky (Bella's mother) expressed in the next quotation how she gave Bella the opportunity to walk to places on her own, developing the independence she believed would support Bella before secondary school began:

You know you feel quite vulnerable when you go into a new setting, you know having to get there on time and that, so we spent quite a bit of time working on giving you independence walking places...". (Becky, Bella's mother)

A different element expressed by Lucy's father was about the homework demands, which Lucy would have to face. In the next quotation, Luke explained how the routine after school would be more demanding for Lucy because she would need to complete her homework immediately. There was urgency to this, and he voiced how big a change this would be for Lucy, referring to it as a shock to the system:

...we're just trying to prepare her, it's going to be more routine I think isn't it? This whole idea of coming home and getting the homework started straight away may be a bit of a shock to the system, I think. (Luke, Lucy's father)

Sally (Sophie's mother), who was also in the process of moving house, so that the family would be closer to Sophie's new school, used a detailed description in the next quotation to explain what their new routine would involve, engaging with Sophie during the interview to highlight how things for Sophie will change:

I will be spending a lot of time driving and so um part of the logistics challenge is the fact that Sophie will use the school bus and so we need to live close enough so that Sophie can walk to the school bus and she gets home to let herself into the

house if I'm stuck in traffic or something like that, so it's going to be a lot more independence for you, isn't it? (*directed question to Sophie*), compared to what you are used to. A big step of growing up, I suppose, um, where Sophie has had a little bit of bubble is because of the location of her primary school, she's been driven to school every day backwards and forwards, whereas with a local school, she would have walked to and back from school already, but she's not done that so, this is going to be a little bit of a change. (Sally, Sophie's mother)

Sally was explicit in the naming of Sophie's independence, which she is giving to her daughter, and explaining how Sophie's life outside of the 'bubble' of primary school would change. This was another expression of the mesosystem links between the home and school, which impacted on the travel routes that start to play an important role in the child's daily school routine.

Thoughts about routine changes were also shared by some of the other children, yet their expression of this was a simple recognition of it. Nathan and Lucy quotations acknowledged this:

Oh, yes I have to wake up earlier and I get to walk there by myself. (Nathan)

...probably routine changes, moving from class to class and waking up earlier.  
(Lucy)

The dyadic interactions that occurred during the interviews between some of the children and their parents about their new travel plans were intriguing to observe, with Rebecca's parents focused on the preparation of the travel plans, practicing the cycling route to and back from school, whereas Lucy's parents expressed their interest about the bus journey and how different this would be for Lucy compared to the car trips with her parents or grandparents. In both excerpts below, this was evident:

Rebecca: Yeah, I'm still going on my bike to school, but it will be a bit of a longer journey, but I don't mind the journey because at one point you pass quite a nice river

Rob (father): We practiced the route once or twice

Rachel (mother): Yes, we've done it a few times.

Even though this new journey for Rebecca would be longer, she recalled the river that was on her route, which she enjoyed cycling past. Both Rob and Rachel added their support to this new route too.

By contrast, Lucy's family described a very different scenario for travelling to school, thinking about the other people on the bus and how this was going to be a new experience for Lucy. The notion that Lucy would use a different transport mode, which might generate a new set of social norms, was described in the parent's exchange shown in the next excerpt:

Linda (mother): And going on the bus with new people, that will be interesting

Luke (father): Yes, it's on a public bus so we've been talking about that as up until now she's been ferried by her parents or grandparents, by car.

The changes to the routines for the children that were mentioned in the interviews were direct adjustments to their daily routine in terms of waking up earlier, using a different form of transport to school, and the possible shift to their homework demands. Due to these changes, some of the parents had provided planned practice runs to assist their children with the varying new travel adjustments.

Throughout this analysis, the child and the parents' views have been expressed in their interactions and thoughts about the secondary school transition. There was a blend of uncertainty and excitement for the children and parents, whilst the parents were also thinking about developing a sense of independence for new routines, and increasing the responsibilities for the child. A high level of importance was placed on being prepared by some of the parents.

According to Ungar, Ghazinour and Richter, (2013) resilient processes are more likely to occur when individuals and groups were successful at using the resources that will support them psychologically and physically. The parental involvement in preparing their children for certain parts of the school transition indicates this, with some parents making contact with the schools, assisting their child with established friendships, and other parents appealing their school application to ensure that they were able to secure their preferred

choice of place for their child, the attendance to holiday clubs for familiarisation, and practising new travel routes.

These were direct parental interventions in the mesosystem. However, there was another element about these children and their family, which formed part of the understanding of the child's previous school experiences. This was the children's cleft, which is the focus for the last main theme.

**6.5.2.4 Theme 4. Primary School Experiences for Children with a Cleft.** For each participant there were variations in the type of cleft they were born with, and the perceived impact this had on their past experiences. This highlights the person characteristics that Bronfenbrenner (2005) described and how these personal characteristics may influence the interactions. For example, some of the children and their parents referred to other areas of their face (for example, their nose and mouth), and senses (particularly sight and hearing) that were affected by the cleft. Previous research (Feragen et al., 2010) showed how the visible cleft versus the non-visible cleft for adolescence resulted in positive perceptions of friendships for boys. Moreover, this reiterates the variation of the impact of a visible difference on a child's life, as per their gender and condition.

This fourth theme is about the children's past experiences of living with their cleft, and what this meant during their primary school experience. This was an important to the current part of study because it explained how the children managed and explained their cleft to others, and what types of experiences these children had encountered prior to the secondary school transition. Furthermore, it highlighted some difficulties that were connected to their cleft, including the number of medical appointments and some missed school days for the children and how they felt about this. This theme is called, *'Primary school experiences for children with a cleft'*, as it addressed the nature of the children's experiences in primary school, in regards to their visible difference, namely their cleft.

One of the focal discussions with the children and their parents about the cleft was the lack of understanding exhibited by others about what this visible difference – this encompasses the first subtheme, called *'Lack of understanding and knowledge of what a cleft is'*, and the second subtheme looks at the missed experiences for these children at school because of their cleft, entitled, *'Missed school days and activities'*. Forming the third subtheme, the family's

recalled experiences of living with a cleft and what this meant for their own hearing and speech – this subtheme is called, *'History of hearing and speech barriers'*.

**6.5.2.4.1 Lack of Understanding and Knowledge of What a Cleft is.** One interesting result from the detailed TA was the very different ways in which the children felt they tried to explain what their cleft was to others. Most of the participants seemed able to explain what the cleft was when other children asked them, and they felt confident doing this. This was evident in both Rebecca and Sophie's quotations:

... as I had a little trouble speaking occasionally, but I kind a told them and then they started asking questions about it...I was usually quite happy to answer them because it was a new thing for them. (Rebecca)

I didn't really tell anyone unless they asked, so I don't find it offensive if people say 'oh, why is your lip or nose a bit squished?', because yes that is there, it's not going to be offensive to me because I know that it's there and to them I would just say something along the lines of, 'oh, I was born without half of my lip all the way back and then there was nothing separating my nose and my mouth', and I feel like that's quite a simple way so that they can know and understand it a bit better rather than trying to do it in great detail. (Sophie)

In order for Sophie to have a simple statement prepared if someone asked her, it was clear that she had given some thought to this, and that she had rehearsed what to say in response to unsolicited questions and comments.

For Lucy, the memory of an experience at school with another child who commented on the size of her nose was recalled. This next excerpt between Lucy and her mother illustrated the dyadic nature of their exchange, as mother and daughter co-constructing the story:

Lucy: Um, a boy in class said my nose was big because I had had it stretched

Linda (mother): Yeah, he said your nose was a different shape, didn't he?

Lucy: Yeah

Linda (mother): Because you've got slightly bigger nostrils, haven't you?

Lucy: Yeah

Linda (mother): You didn't like it, I can remember you came home sad that day, you weren't happy. But that was the only time I think that she's ever come home upset

Lucy: Yeah.

On the other hand, Bella felt that there was a lack of understanding about her cleft because other children kept enquiring about it. This repeated enquiry into what the cleft was resulted in frustration for Bella, as she expressed in the next quotation:

...they kind a still stare at me a bit and I'm just like you can ask me about it, and I would like it if you would ask me this question, instead of just saying 'oh, what's that on your face?'. (Bella)

This provided Bella with reason to deliver an assembly in primary school, which she initiated and planned with the support of her head teacher, as described in the quotation below:

...yeah I had to cause everyone was crowding around me and said, 'what's that on your face?' and I still kind a get that, but not as much, um, and basically I thought I'm going to ask my Headteacher if I can do an assembly about cleft and cleft lips, and she said 'yes' and we did it and we gave around bottles from what I used to drink from. Um, everyone was kind of interested and after that by the end of primary they didn't really ask me, which was kind of nice... (Bella)

As a result of the assembly, Bella could draw a line under all the questioning as this had allowed her to address her cleft in the way she chose and planned. It had offered some respite to the unsolicited questions.

In contrast, Nathan's explanation of his cleft had to be retold every year at school, and he could not understand why the children kept asking questions about this:

...well, I thought they did because in year 1 they asked me what it was and I told

them what it was, a year went by, then in year 2 they asked me, and in year 3 they asked me, and in year 4 they asked me, and in year 5 they asked me, then in Year 6 they asked me, so on the last day they said ‘what’s that on your nose?’ I told you already. (Nathan)

Clearly, this was frustrating for Nathan, as he sounded exasperated as he recalled the final year of primary school. The children’s descriptions of explaining about their cleft were a reflection of their past experiences. However, more of the children felt that they were happy to explain what their cleft meant and what it was to others.

#### ***Reflection 10***

I easily recall and remember the conversations I had with each child and their family about their cleft. They were all open and honest about discussing their visible difference and were keen for others to acknowledge their cleft. For some of the children, it felt as if there were years of frustration attempting to explain what a cleft was to other children, even though there was no noted impact on making friends or completing school work at this time. They were typically developing children, needing to explain part of their face that they were born with, yet it felt as if their peers were either not listening to their explanation or they just kept asking unsolicited questions. For Bella, this resulted in designing a school assembly, which proved a useful idea. It gave her a sense of control over how she managed and explained what her cleft was.

Another notable feature of the children’s accounts of living with their cleft were the absences from school and other activities they incurred because of medical appointments and operations. This is discussed in the next subtheme.

***6.5.2.1.2 Missed School Days and Activities.*** All of the participants and their parents were able to recall missed school days and missing out on certain activities because of medical appointments relating to their cleft. Most of these were related to the bone graft<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> An alveolar bone graft fills the cleft of the alveolus with bone, to support the release of adult teeth. (NHS, 2020)

surgery, which often occurs between the ages of 10-11 for a child with a cleft in the UK (Wahaj et al., 2016). In addition to this, there were some other regular medical appointments for oral and auditory needs, so that medical institutions such as hospitals and clinics formed other links as part of the children's mesosystem. In the next excerpt, Poppy and her mother discussed how she felt about her bone graft surgery because it happened at a time when she was involved in a netball tournament:

Poppy: It was a bit annoying when I had my bone graft in November

Pam (mother): Yes, she's just had her surgery in November

Poppy: Cause I'm very active and they had just started an early morning Netball because we were doing it for the Netball tournament in January or February

Paul (father): You couldn't do it, could you?

Poppy: I couldn't do it, for like 6 weeks

Pam (mother): Yeah, that was the really hard one because up until then her surgeries had been well, I think when she was 5 or 6 and she was younger and it was more on us, but this time around it was definitely on her, she was feeling it herself, yeah so that was a hard one.

Poppy's mother, Pam observed that this last surgery was harder on Poppy because of her age and the timing of it. More specifically, the phrase that Pam used, 'on her' conveys a feeling of the weight of this responsibility, which the parents no longer carried alone, since Poppy was old enough to be involved in the decision-making and understand more about the procedure.

In the next quotation, Paul confirmed what Pam had said, describing how the consultant addressed Poppy directly, ensuring that Poppy was fully aware of the operation she would be having. These are relevant changes of responsibility that are occurring in the chronosystem for Poppy, and the quotations show the parents reflecting on the changes she has experienced over time. This was expressed in Paul's quotation below:

We really noticed in the consultation before the operation he was talking to Poppy, not to us, we really noticed a big difference because we probably hadn't seen him for a good two or three years before. (Paul, Poppy's father)



For Bella, the bone graft surgery was frustrating because she missed school, even though she was able to recognise the idea of being ‘home schooled’ as part of her school experience, for some of this time:

I’ve had my bone graft, which meant I missed a bit of school, which was annoying but I asked if I could actually have a bit of homework or school work to do so then I didn’t feel like a missed out on stuff and I could still kind of be involved in school but actually be kind a home schooled for a few days. (Bella)

This too was similar for Nathan because of the sport he had missed. He recalled the most recent surgery for his bone graft because he was not allowed to play football for a few weeks:

...only when I had my bone-graft, that’s the only thing because I couldn’t play football for like six weeks, that was annoying. (Nathan)

Being able to play football was important to Nathan. However, for his mother, Natalie, in the next quotation, she remembered an earlier stage, when Nathan had only just started primary school and had to have his palate repaired:

...he had to have a palate repair when he had just started in Reception class, which was slightly unfortunate as I think he’d been back one week or something and then he had to go and have an operation but it wasn’t really a big deal. I think he missed, maybe a week of school then and after that he was just in school the whole time until like this recent one in January, February when he had to be off for about three weeks. (Natalie, Nathan’s mother)

In this next excerpt between Poppy and her father (Paul), Poppy referred to herself as *disappearing* from school when she had medical appointments. Her dad continued the questioning asking if her friends knew where she was going during these appointments, but Poppy maintained that she plainly disappeared:

Paul (father): You have had a reasonable amount of medical appointments, haven't you Poppy, so you had to explain missing some school

Poppy: Yeah, I just disappear

Paul (father): Yeah, but don't your friends say where are you going?

Poppy: At break if I go, I just disappear

Paul (father): Okay

Pam (mother): Yeah, so they're very caring and um I think I did overhear a conversation that they've not noticed your scar before.

This interaction between Poppy and her father was part of a disclosure for Poppy, as she termed her missed appointments as a type of disappearing act that she does in school. Her father questioned her about this and her friend's knowledge of this, but she responded in the same manner. It was an intriguing term for Poppy to use, because she did not discuss what she was going to miss in school, such as lessons, or lunchtime, but rather this notion that she becomes invisible and there was no mention of her friends being aware of this.

### ***Reflection 11***

It was fascinating to observe this interaction between Poppy and her father. Poppy was quite insistent about her 'disappearing' act, even though her father could not quite understand how this occurred. It was as if her father was suddenly discovering something new about his daughter, but he could not work out why this happened. At the end of the exchange, Pam, her mother simply redirected the conversation, not probing further into Poppy's use of the 'disappearance', as if it was not something new to her. As this was one of the face-to-face interviews that I conducted, I can distinctly recall Paul's curious and slightly concerned look as he questioned Poppy about this, but Poppy seemed relaxed and quite matter of fact. Her mother, too, did not shift in her emotional response, referring to the care of the school and how she had overheard a conversation about the invisibility of Poppy's cleft scar. This made me wonder if her mother felt that Poppy used this term to refer to her missed school times before and that it was not necessarily about Poppy feeling invisible. It reminded me of a magic act that Poppy decides to use when she needs to go

for her medical appointments. What is curious about this scenario is that Poppy would have had numerous appointments, needing to disappear from school often, yet she does not acknowledge this. However, I still question why Poppy did not talk about missing her friends or any other part of school as other participants had.

For Sophie, her experiences of missing school because of medical appointments resulted in a problem for her when she went on a school trip. This was due to her past medical records that had not been changed. In the next quotation, she vividly explained how this felt for her:

...and then this year somehow still on my record was that I can't damage my face, whereas that was more after my surgery, so I wasn't allowed on a trip. Well, I was on the trip and then after lunch there was these hills and they were all allowed to roll down them, but I wasn't because from 4 years ago it was still on my record that I couldn't hurt anything on my face because of recent surgery, but it wasn't true, and that slightly annoyed me because I was like 'how is that still there?' like how, then everyone realized and was asking me, 'oh why did you leave that on your record? which was quite annoying, that was the most annoying thing because I didn't see a reason why. (Sophie)

Sophie still felt frustrated recalling this experience and could not rationalise why this had happened. She was feeling annoyed by it. There was a sense of injustice and unfairness evoked for Sophie from this memory.

During the course of this theme, there were varied feelings described about missing school. Some of the parents and children expressed feelings of annoyance that they had missed their schooling for example, Bella, Nathan and Natalie. There were also feelings of uncertainty expressed by Poppy and utter frustration from Sophie. In terms of academic progress, there were no comments made about this. However, for most of the children, the feelings of annoyance and frustration developed because they needed to address questions about their cleft from their peers, and because they had missed out on certain activities and sports during that time. This formed a regular part of the children and parents lives because they were born with a cleft and needed the ongoing medical care.

**6.5.2.1.3 History of Hearing and Speech Barriers.** This subtheme includes reflections from both the parents and the children concerning the child's health profile, and medical history, and includes their reflections concerning both hearing and speech issues associated with the cleft. Even though there were additional conditions that these children self-identified as having for example speech impediments and hearing concerns, some of these were part of their early childhood and not a barrier to their learning at this stage, according to their parents. In the next quotation, Bella's mother, Becky mentioned the differences between each person's cleft, talking about her initial concerns about other children being able to understand Bella's speech, but that this was not an issue:

I think it varies so much anyway with cleft to cleft, but that was something we were always worried that children wouldn't understand her, um but yeah, she's done really, really well. She likes talking so it's worked out. (Becky, Bella's mother)

Poppy remembered the speech therapy as something fun, a game she used to enjoy playing, and for Nathan, he recalled part of the vocal exercises he had to do. In both of these quotations, there was a relaxed feeling about the therapy:

I did, when I was younger, but I didn't see it as speech therapy it was more like playing games. (Poppy)

...yeah, it's like Bob bounces blue ball at the beach...something like that, I can't remember it. (Nathan)

In the same way, Sophie and Lucy attended speech therapy with Sophie sensing that her speech was much better by the age of 7, compared to Lucy who still felt that she struggled with certain letters. This was demonstrated in the next quotations:

I had problems with my speech and I did have speech therapy, but I would say by the age of 7, I was completely fine. (Sophie)

I had to go to a speech therapist, its better now, but I still have trouble saying ‘r’ and ‘w’. (Lucy)

Only Rebecca was affected with certain hearing issues, which led to her wearing hearing aids from an early age. In the quotation below, Rachel described how Rebecca’s hearing was also affected by the change in seasons:

...as a result of the cleft palate, um, it’s one of those ones where Rebecca was wearing two hearing aids from about the age of 3, and now we find that during summer it tends to clear up, um, and in fact actually, we had a whole year when she wasn’t wearing any hearing aid, um, but it can still recur.

(Rachel, Rebecca’s mother)

Rachel also mentioned that Rebecca’s hearing issue was not identified early enough. In the next quotation, she referred to this:

...Rebecca was slow to start talking because it was before we realized there was a hearing loss, um various things but audiology basically lost us for about 18 months and we didn’t, it didn’t get picked up when it should have done, so it took them a while before they issued her with hearing aids, um and so there was a need to catch up on the speech from that, yeah speech and language she got signed off a good few years ago now. (Rachel, Rebecca’s mother)

Furthermore, Rachel and Rob, in the below excerpt expressed how Rebecca’s primary school had supported her with her hearing concerns and also provided help with a radio aid:

Rob (father): ... and I think, one of things we have done is worked well with the school, when Rebecca’s hearing has not been good, she didn’t like the noisy environment, so we managed to get a couple of quiet tables and find ways of coping and that sort of thing and they worked really well with us on that

Rachel (mother): Yeah, they’ve worked also very well because she’s used a radio aid in class quite a lot of the time and they’ve been very good with that.

***Reflection 12***

This seemed very important to Rob and Rachel, as they spoke positively about Rebecca's primary school support experiences. It was quite a contrast to the earlier quotation from Rachel when she spoke about Rebecca not receiving early intervention to help with her hearing. Both Rob and Rachel were expressive about Rebecca's care and school experiences. As an observer to their interactions, I felt they tried to provide Rebecca with a sense of confidence, recognising her natural social abilities and ensuring that her needs were met. It also felt that the late diagnosis of Rebecca's hearing issues had provided them with the motivation to ensure this did not happen again. They were focused on what worked best for Rebecca in her primary school classrooms and also in the choice of her secondary school. I recall thinking during the interview that as a family, they had a type of symbiosis that naturally occurred effortlessly - a strong, nurturing microsystem.

As mentioned, the nature of this microsystem in which the child learns to develop an understanding of their immediate environment, responding and interacting closely with their parents is a distinctive part of Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory (1986). It is important to keep in mind how this microsystem acts as a form of protection (see literature review, p. 20) for resilient processes to occur (Gilligan, 2000). This protection was seen as part of the mechanisms that can provide a sense of a secure base for the individual. The secure base was evident in some of the interactions, particularly between Rebecca and her parents and between Lucy and hers. The nature of their interactions clearly demonstrated how the attachments they had were important to them and had been cultivated by a sense of belonging (Gilligan, 2000). Secure attachments supply the child with a reliable 'secure base' that encourages and renders safe the exploration of the world (Bowlby, 1988).

**6.5.2.5 Time Point One Summary.** The initial focus for the family was on the new microsystem that the child would be regularly entering, namely the secondary school. During this time point, there were snippets of the children's first encounters with their new microsystem, and the shared expectations of this anticipated shift. Past primary school experiences were recalled that related to the participants talking about their cleft and the lack of understanding around this. Furthermore, there were missed school activities and days off

school because of medical appointments, resulting from their cleft. This was a time of change and expectation for the children and their family as they prepared for this transition.

Next, we will look at the analysis of time point two, which includes the online snapshot interviews and vlogging from the first few weeks of secondary school.

### ***6.5.2 Time Point Two***

For time point two, the thematic analysis was conducted from the data collected during the first 6 weeks of secondary school. This included the time from September through to October 2018. As discussed in the method section, the online interviews and vlog entries were designed to capture the children's experiences of school, as they occurred during the first half term. The data collected during this time point included two online interviews from all six children and several vlog entries provided by some of the children.

The thematic analysis identified three main themes from this time point:

- (1) *Beginning micro-communications,*
- (2) *Navigating the peer group microsystem,* and
- (3) *Cleft disclosure versus non-disclosure.*

The themes include extracts from the combined data from the 12 online interviews and eight vlog entries. An overview of the themes and subthemes is shown in Table 14, below.

**Table 14***Themes and Subthemes from Time Point Two*

Themes	Subthemes
1. Beginning micro-communications in new microsystems.	1.1 Typology of teachers 1.2 Support within the child's microsystem 1.3 Initial turning points in the school microsystem 1.4 A sense of belonging within new school microsystem 1.5 An awareness of how to manage problems at school
2. Navigating the peer group microsystem	
3. Cleft disclosure versus non-disclosure	

Each theme will be discussed in turn.

**6.5.2.1 Theme 1. Beginning Micro-communications in New Microsystems.** In this theme, it was possible to see how the new proximal processes for the children in the school environment were encouraged during this time, for example, by having the opportunity to participate in new school clubs. The children described a sense of starting to feel part of the new school environment. It was possible to identify some of the relevant elements of the school environment that form part of the transition for children starting Year 7. These included micro-communications (or small-scale communications), forming some of the regular, daily exchanges occurring for the child in the school microsystems. The five subthemes highlighted and explored these micro-communications in more detail. Firstly, the subtheme, '*Typology of teachers*' concerns how the children perceived the different 'types' of teachers, in their early classroom encounters.



Secondly, the subtheme, ‘*Support within the child’s microsystem*’ focuses on the support felt during the transition by some of the children. In subtheme three, ‘*Initial turning points in the school microsystem*’, some of the children expressed great enthusiasm concerning their early participation in their new school clubs, which offered opportunities for regular interactions in their new school microsystem. Following on, this led to the development of the fourth subtheme, ‘*A sense of belonging within the new school microsystem*’, which recognises how the children began to feel more familiar at their new school and were finding their way around easier, providing a sense of belonging. Lastly, the fifth subtheme, called, ‘*An awareness of how to manage problems*’, focused on the protective nature of the connections between the child’s microsystems, and how these connections were used.

**6.5.2.1.1. Typology of Teachers.** Part of the child’s new school microsystem were the daily encounters with different teachers. The children described the teachers in varied ways, with some individual teachers emerging as clear favourites. In some cases, teachers were seen as helpful, supportive, and funny by the children, but at other times some of the children talked about some of the teachers that they did not like. Howard and Johnson (2000), identified pupil-teacher relationships as a protective factor for the child at school, focusing on providing opportunities for all children to achieve and experience authentic success. In addition to this, the important role of the teacher as a significant person for a child formed part of the key informant study findings (see chapter 5, p. 96) with the informants recognising the influence of teacher-child interactions and achievement.

Following on, this theme looks at how the child’s interactions and personal characteristics, for example, likes and dislikes of certain teaching styles influences the proximal processes occurring in this microsystem (Erikson & Ghazinour, 2018). In the first quotation, Rebecca expressed how helpful her teachers had been, explaining how she had felt supported when wearing her hearing aid:

Every teacher is really nice and I have had a few questions since I have started wearing my haha again and they have given suggestions to me if I am struggling...Haha=baha! Which is my bone conducting hearing aid. (Rebecca)

Bella talked about her art teacher who had praised her. She also mentioned some of the other teachers because they were funny and she attributed the humour as being helpful to her learning. This is evident in the next two quotations:

In art my teacher said I was doing well and keep it up. (Bella)

I had my first DT food and my Maths teacher is really funny so it makes learning fun. (Bella)

However, there were also teachers that the children did not like, and they made use of the online interviews to express their aversion towards them. In the next quotation, Lucy commented on the negative mood of one teacher and how the tone of the teacher's voice was unpleasant:

They seem to always be in a bad mood and the tone of their voice sounds cold.  
(Lucy)

In the next quotation, Nathan reflects on the strictness of a supply teacher, noting that this was not the regular teacher, but a cover:

She's a bit too strict...because it wasn't our proper teacher it was a cover teacher. (Nathan)

In Nathan's vlog entries during this time, he referred to the 'strict' nature of the teachers again, referencing his friend who was not wearing the correct uniform. This seemed to bother Nathan, as a type of injustice. Then, he described a section in his school, called a 'bridge' that only teachers can pass over, creating a sense of exclusion to him:

One of my friends nearly got a detention just because his mom bought the wrong colour tie, strict right? Another thing is in the main part of my school there's a bridge that only teachers can go on. (Nathan, vlog entry)

Part of Poppy's aversion to one of her teachers stemmed from the nature of her needs, particularly her eyesight. In the next excerpt, Poppy, explained that the science teacher did not account for her not being able to see, and that she would need to rely on her classmates to help her:

They don't understand that I find things hard to see, so when I told her she just said that the rest of my team should be able to see it. (Poppy)

There was a sense of disregard for Poppy's needs here, and a feeling that the teacher had not recognised the importance of this for Poppy. In this example, Poppy was engaged in an adverse situation in which she was struggling to be part of her team because of her visual impairment. Trying to strengthen these proximal processes during this type of exercise would be challenging for Poppy because of the impairment. Poppy felt that the teacher had been unjust and that this had not helped Poppy in her own development or with her classmates.

**6.5.2.1.2 Support Within the Child's Microsystems.** This subtheme explored the type of support that could be seen within the child's immediate microsystems of the school, home and peer group. The ongoing proximal processes (Bronfenbrenner, 2005) included the child's existing relationships and new more regular encounters, for example, the child reflecting on and processing their regular, stable interactions with their parents, and the importance they attached to these emotional attachments.

The support that the children perceived during this time point were relevant to their day-to-day routines. There were many links between the school and the home, for example, Nathan's comments in the next excerpt are helping him with the preparation for school:

Interviewer: Can you tell me if anything or anyone has made any difference for you during this transition?

Nathan: My family and my tutor

Interviewer: Can you tell me how they've helped?

Nathan: They make sure I've got everything.

Similarly, Sophie noted how her parents had helped her remember the after-school activities, supporting her organisation and planning skills:

Telling me when and where my extra-curricular activities are, helping with organisation. (Sophie)

Rebecca regularly talked to her parents about the school day, suggesting that she enjoyed sharing this part of her day with them, highlighting the relevance of this relationship for Rebecca with her parents:

Interviewer: Do you chat to your mum and dad about school each day?

Rebecca: Yes, they like to know what has happened and I like telling them.

As well as support from her family, Poppy felt that her cat had helped during the transition. Previous literature (Walsh, 2007) has suggested that animals can play an important role for children, acting as a comfort and affection. This was part of Poppy's support during this time point of the transition:

Yes, my family including my cat has been very supportive. (Poppy)

Poppy added that it was her friends being with her that had helped and was glad to have a map to, helping her navigate the school building:

I think being mostly in the same classes as my friends has helped and having a map. (Poppy)

For Lucy, at this stage, she was still trying to manage her time and found that getting to class, finishing homework and catching the bus were worrying for her:

...the biggest challenges this week are getting to classes on time and getting homework finished on time and getting to the bus stop... (Lucy, vlog entry)

Lucy still felt challenged by the rush to reach these places on time. It gives the sense that she is constantly moving, trying to reach somewhere. Her microsystem links have not fully fused at this stage.

Rebecca explained how two of new friends had included her in their friendship group, particularly at informal times such as lunch break, helping her to feel a sense of belonging. This developing role of these friends for Rebecca forms part of the protective mechanisms that are occurring in Rebecca's school microsystem:

Rebecca: Two of my new friends have been making me feel welcome.

Interviewer: Can you tell me how they've done that?

Rebecca: They have let me join in with them at lunch and group work.

And for Bella, in the next excerpt, there were older children who had helped her to feel happy and secure by enquiring after her to check to see if she was okay:

Bella: Some older kids been asking if I'm alright and stuff

Interviewer: Does that help you?

Bella: It makes me feel happy and safe.

On the other hand, Nathan mentioned in one of his vlog entries during this time that he felt he was doing well in dance because of what the teacher had said. The confirmation from the teacher had provided Nathan with a sense of confidence and increased self-esteem (Gilligan, 2000):

I also had dance today which is why I'm wearing my dance kit, then I did really well according to the teacher cause ah we've been learning these routines and I did mine and the teacher said it was very good and if there were grades, that I would get the top one... (Nathan, vlog entry)

In both quotations below, Poppy referred to the support she had received from the SENCO department of the school so that she could access an iPad to support her learning in the classroom. This was important to Poppy and made a positive difference to her school needs:

The SENCO has given me an iPad so I can see the boards better. (Poppy)

The visual impairment guy has made a good difference and the SENCO. (Poppy)

The support received during this time point for the children ranged from meeting new friends who had helped with getting oriented in terms of finding their way around the school, while other students had shown inclusion in their behaviours and gestures. Other support came from the regular proximal processes with parents. These processes provided guidance for the children, for example, the day-to-day conversations about the school day acting as a type of regular ‘check-in’. Furthermore, the support received from the school, particularly the SENCO department was important. The entwining of these microsystems between home and school were beginning to work together, and there were some links developing in the children’s mesosystem.

**6.5.2.1.3 Initial Turning Points in the School Microsystem.** Many of the children’s reflections reflected their enthusiasm for and enjoyment of school clubs. The children had several ideas and expectations concerning the types of clubs they could do before starting Year 7, and it was clear from this subtheme, that the school clubs were seen as fun, interesting and enjoyable for all the children. These new activities and school clubs can be seen as the initial turning points that Rutter (1987) termed ‘opportunities’, acting as a protective mechanism in the resilience process. This is when the child engages in new experiences, learns new skills and starts to feel settled in their new microsystem. This resulted in the subtheme called, *Initial turning points in the school microsystem*. The opportunities and participation in the clubs and activities that were offered by the school for the children promoted this sense of well-being.

Firstly, the aspect of inclusion was addressed. Sophie suggested this in the next quotation, that these activities were open to everyone and there were a variety of options to choose from:

They are open to almost anyone and there is so many different choices and opportunities. (Sophie)

Lucy, Poppy and Rebecca also talked about activities and clubs that they had started. Lucy chose to do a practical club because of the tool usage, which she enjoyed:

...I'm doing practical club you get to use power tools. (Lucy)

I do choir, netball, football, rock school and this week I'm going to start drama.  
(Poppy)

...I am in a string group, a choir and a netball team...they are fun and things I enjoy and everybody is friendly. (Rebecca)

The secondary schools provided these children with opportunities to engage in new activities which had helped towards the establishment of an important connection between the home and the school during this transition phase. Attending the clubs provided a source of enjoyment encouraging some of these children to feel a part of their school. This sense of belonging and having a secure base that the children were starting to feel can be seen as part of the protective processes of the resilience process.

**6.5.2.1.4 A Sense of Belonging Within New School Microsystem.** This subtheme looks at how the children were starting to develop a sense of belonging within their new school microsystem. Longaretti (2020) described school belonging as, “the quality of the social relationships within a students’ experience of school” (p. 32). It is also referred to in the literature as ‘connectedness’ (Bond et al., 2007), and ‘membership’ (Goodenow, 1993) with education researchers agreeing that the need for belonging is important for young people in learning environments (Longaretti, 2020). In this subtheme, belonging was conveyed as a feeling of familiarity by some of the participants. This subtheme considers the geographical ‘spaces’ in the new school that were different and new from primary school, for example, the corridors and stairways used by the children as they moved between classes, the size of the building and new spaces to go and spend time during the lunch break (see also subtheme from time point 1, *Trying to find a way in a new environment*). According to Lucey and Reay (2000) the development of the child’s autonomy during the secondary school transition

is an ongoing process ‘in-between’ the spaces. In the first quotation, Lucy described how she felt around the other students at her school:

Good and feeling tiny against the big people. (Lucy)

Lucy compared how she felt very small against the other students, addressing them as ‘big people’. This notion of size for Lucy, in her school microsystem recognises the spaces of subjectivity documented by Lucey and Reay (2000), and showed how the children were started to acknowledge their size in relation to the new environment within this space.

Both Sophie and Rebecca shared thoughts in the next quotations about how they felt that school was ‘normal’ for them at this stage. Rebecca described this phase as feeling settled, which denotes a type of connectedness and belonging to her school at this time:

I’m settling in well. It’s starting to feel more normal not so new. (Rebecca, snapshot interview)

It feels quite normal now. (Sophie, snapshot interview)

Longaretti (2020) also referred to belonging for students during the transition as ‘relating’ to their peers. The helpful use of a watch for Bella shows how she started to help others, which was important because it supported her learning by ensuring that she knew what the time was and she felt needed. The extract below is taken from part of one of Bella’s vlog entries:

I also got a watch which really... Yeah it really helps because some teachers are really far away like in the hall and then some classes don’t even have clocks, so I’m good, I’m lucky, so I help people. (Bella, vlog entry)

Furthermore, for Sophie, she felt settled with other smart and clever students, who all seemed to excel at different things, which made the school feel more regular and connected for her:

...now it just feels natural that we are all smart and individually good at



certain things. (Sophie)

It was evident that during this time, the landscape and cultures of the schools had started to become more familiar. This feeling of being part of the school and understanding the layout increased the children's sense of belonging. Lucy and Sophie described this time in the next quotations:

On the first week I did a victory dance every time I got to the right lesson on the right time. (Lucy)

Our school has a very college like and campus feeling and now we are the small kids instead of being nearly the oldest. (Sophie)

The children's new school microsystem can be viewed as a place where students valued their learning and considered the entry into secondary school as a 'step up' (as mentioned in time point 1). It also forms part of the macrosystem view about 'growing up' (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). A sense of belonging was conveyed by some of these children because of their connectedness, familiarity and their understanding of the schools' geographical landscape.

**6.5.2.1.5 An Awareness of How to Manage Problems at School.** This subtheme focuses on how the children started to work out how to manage a problem in their microsystems, for example, talking to a family member, or asking a teacher a question. This was relevant to the resilient process, since the child was deciding how and where to access support and what to do about a situation or difficulty they encountered. The examples given by the children ranged from finding someone else to help, such as a parent or tutor, choosing what to do when a problem arose, and thinking about being calm when faced with a problem. This subtheme is therefore called, '*An awareness of how to manage problems at school*'.

Both Poppy and Bella in the next quotations felt that they would discuss their problems with their parents. They developed this link between the microsystems to support their own needs:

I talk to my parents or sometimes I can solve it. (Poppy)

Yes, when I need to, I can talk to my parents. (Bella)

Whereas Lucy, in the next quotation suggested that she would consider asking a teacher to help her and had recently asked a friend when trying to find the next class:

...ask a teacher or try and solve it. (Lucy)

...one of my friends helped me know where the next class was (Lucy)

One of the findings from the Key Informant study was a perception by two of the participants that focused on the regulation of emotions and that part of this resilience process occurs when children tend to remain calm in adverse situations. This idea of staying calm was part of Rebecca's description of how she faces a problem when it arises:

I try to stay calm, get help or find a solution. (Rebecca)

However, when Rebecca explained how she was feeling after the first two weeks of school, she described how it all felt large to her and that the colour coding was helping her to find her way around:

I'm finding school quite... quite big at the moment, it's like split into different sections which are colour coded for each house, so that makes it easier to find my way around, but it's still quite big... (Rebecca, vlog entry)

This next excerpt from Nathan briefly explained how he had experienced an incident at school. Another student had thrown his socks in a hole and he had to walk home without socks. Nathan conveyed a feeling of frustration and loss because of what another student who had done:

Interviewer: And has anyone made school more difficult for you?

Nathan: No, apart from someone who threw my socks in a hole

Interviewer: Oh dear. Can you tell me a little more about this?

Nathan: It was a boy called . . . , but I don't know why he did it, I wasn't there when it happened

Interviewer: Can you tell me how it made you feel?

Nathan: Annoyed! I had to walk home with no socks on.

This was an example of how this event for Nathan at school had left him feeling frustrated, but mostly because he had to walk home without any socks on. It was the physical, uncomfortable annoyance of this outcome that made him feel upset. Nathan was also unclear about why this had happened, questioning it. This example shows us that there are different types of difficulties children have to endure at school, which makes them feel displeased.

**6.5.2.2 Theme 2. Navigating the Peer Group Microsystem.** Another aspect of the school environment that was focused on was the children's peer group microsystem. According to Bronfenbrenner (2005), the peer microsystem was important for the facilitation of proximal processes that influenced the development of the child within the school context. From the start of the new term, the children began meeting new people in the different classes, as they changed lessons through the day. For Sophie and Nathan, the other children at school were new because they did not know anyone from their primary school, whereas some of the other children had to navigate their current primary friendships combined with the making of new friends, and therefore faced the prospect of joining the new and the old peer groups. In the first excerpt Nathan described how he had spent his time with one of his friends from his primary school, and then he spent time with a new friend. It felt similar to a type of juggling act that he was managing:

Nathan: I went to the park to play football with my old friends yesterday

Interviewer: And have you made any new friends?

Nathan: And I went to my new friend's house on Friday with my other friend as well.

At the start of the term, Poppy had remained close to her friends from primary school, yet she had communicated with some of the new students as well. She noted in the next quotation:

Mainly old friends, but I have talked to new people and I have made a few new friends. (Poppy)

However, a few weeks later in Poppy's next online interview, she recalled how she had encountered some peer concerns, and that the school were supportive of her:

I've had some issues with my friends, but the school has been good. (Poppy)

This all happened during the first half term for Poppy, the engagement with an unexpected friendship problem. In the next quotation, Bella felt that she found it difficult to make new friends and thought this was because of her cleft. She also noted that she was remaining close to her friends from primary school. The intrigue of how Bella and her friends have decided to stay close to one another, conveying a sense of 'sticking together' raises the question of why they would need to do this.

It's hard to make new friends because of my cleft, but me and my school friends are sticking together. (Bella)

For Sophie, at this time, she felt that it was important to get to know a variety of people because she did not want to be stuck with one group of friends, it felt as if Sophie was still trying to decide who her friends were and was in direct contrast to Bella in the next quotation:

A group of friends, but I don't just stick to them I like to have a wide range of people to be friends with. (Sophie)

This theme expressed how the children's peer microsystems at their secondary school were infused with new friends from secondary school. It also recognised some differences

between the children in how they thought of their peers and making friends. The next theme will look at how the children talked about their visible differences to new people in the school microsystem.

**6.5.2.3 Theme 3. Cleft Disclosure Versus Non-disclosure.** This theme highlighted some of the experiences that the children had encountered when discussing their cleft with others, including peers and teachers. Some of the children had decided to disclose this information about their cleft to a friend or in some cases, to their class, whereas others had not been asked about their cleft or felt that they did not need to disclose this. This highlights the very heterogeneous range of experiences and responses provided by this group of children.

In the next quotation, Sophie expressed how she felt ‘lucky’ that no one had asked her about her cleft – this was after the first few weeks of starting at her new school, where she knew no other students:

Luckily not, but I’m sure that they see it still but feel afraid to ask. (Sophie)

She also noted that she thought others would be scared to enquire about her cleft, and had felt others looking at her. In the quote above, Sophie seems to feel fortunate because others had not asked about her cleft, yet also felt that her cleft was noticeable. Interestingly, a few weeks following this first expression of not disclosing anything about her cleft, Sophie decided to explain to her class what her cleft was:

...I decided to tell my class mates about it last Friday so that I wouldn’t have a ton of people asking as more people started to realize but no one has said anything since... just because it feels like a weight off my shoulders.  
(Sophie)

She also felt glad that she had vocalized this because she felt ‘lighter’. This expresses how Sophie was feeling almost burdened by her visible difference and needed to talk about it.

For Nathan, in the next quotation, he explained how his friends were not concerned about this disclosure:

My friends Jack and Joe, they weren't very interested (Nathan)

Whereas Rebecca had chosen not to disclose this at this stage because she did not feel it was necessary:

No, not yet as I haven't felt the need too. (Rebecca)

On the other hand, Bella, in the next quotation had mixed thoughts. Firstly, she felt that some people were looking at her and this made her feel frustrated. She also expressed this frustration in the first time point when she decided to present an assembly to the school so that people would stop staring and asking her about it. Next, she described a type of 'positive self-talk' strategy in which she was cheering herself on, expressing a type of determination and forward motion, not to give up:

No one has asked, but a few people have stared... annoyed that I have it and I want to give up being me. But I never give up. I keep believing because this is me and nothing can stop me. (Bella)

A different type of method was employed by Poppy as she was given the opportunity to talk a topic in class about something that makes her different. This occurred at the start of the school term. Poppy chose to disclose about her cleft to her classmates, acknowledging how everyone had accepted this immediately:

I have told my form during a 'what makes me different' exercise but they all accepted it without a second thought. (Poppy)

The impression that Poppy was provided with an opportunity to talk about her cleft as something that makes her different was important and helpful at the start of the school year. Poppy appreciated the opportunity provided by the teacher to talk about each other's differences as a classroom activity.

**6.5.2.4 Summary of Time Point Two.** During this time point we began to see the beginnings of new small-scale communications, called micro-communications for the child in their new school microsystem. These initial communications were seen when the children were making new friends, discovering how to access help from school staff and peers, and becoming familiar with their new school setting. Some of the changes during the transition at this time were seen in the peer microsystems, as some of the children experienced the blending of peer groups and the beginning of new friendships. Often these experiences were occurring in the ‘in-between’ spaces of the school microsystem. Furthermore, the decision to disclose what their cleft was at this time was initiated by some of the children, for example Sophie and Nathan, but others were not keen to do this first. For Poppy, an opportunity was presented to her and she chose to disclose it then. In the next section, the analysis of time point three will be discussed.

### ***6.5.3 Time Point Three***

For time point three, the thematic analysis (TA) continued in the same manner as time point two, conducted over the course of seven weeks during the second half of the first term of secondary school year (end of October, the 30<sup>th</sup> up to the 17<sup>th</sup> December.). The data from this time point included the online snapshot interviews with all six children and video blog entries from some of the children.

The TA identified three main themes from this time point: Firstly, the more regular and consistent continuation of the micro-communications for theme (1) *Continued micro-communications*; Next, the children’s navigation of the school system led to some understanding about accessing resources, detailed in theme (2) *Accessing resources between the microsystems*. Thirdly, the theme explores how the children considered their differences in their new schools, in theme (3) *Reflecting on individual differences in the new school microsystem*. The final theme which includes the children’s perceptions about achievements, called theme (4) *Motivation to achieve*.

An overview of the themes and subthemes are explained in the next table.

**Table 15***Themes and Subthemes from Time Point Three*

Themes	Subthemes
1 Continued micro-communications	1.1 Engagement with the peer microsystem 1.2 Peer microsystem fluctuations 1.3 A Sense of a Secure Base in the Peer Microsystem 1.4 School-home communications
2 Accessing resources between the microsystems	2.1 Access to an adult for support 2.2 Using personal strategies to solve problems 2.3 Access to school clubs and activities
3 Reflecting on individual differences in the new school microsystem	
4 Motivation to achieve	

Each of these themes will be discussed in more detail, next.

**6.5.3.1 Theme 1. Continued Micro-communications.** Following on from the previous time point, this first theme focuses on how the child's peer microsystem became the focal point for this phase. The micro-communications were continuing, particularly the child's proximal processes with their peers. Initially, at the start of this time point the children were thinking about their return to school from the half term break, and the changes between the immediate microsystems (the home, and school), as the child had spent time with their family over the half term. The half term break was a slight shift to the on-going routine of school, and one that the children would be familiar with from primary school. It provided the children with a break, and some space to reflect on school and new friendships. At the forefront of this smaller transition back into secondary school, returning



to school, the children were mostly looking forward to seeing their friends again. The micro-communications between the home, and school where they would see their peers continued to evolve, and this forms the basis of the first subtheme, called, '*Engagement with the peer microsystem*'.

**6.5.3.1.1 Engagement with the Peer Microsystem.** Starting back at school after the half term break, the children were keen to see their friends again. Considering that it had been eight weeks since the start of secondary school and two of these children (Nathan, Sophie) had started school without knowing anyone, the incentive to return to school was because of the '*engagement with their peer microsystem*', the first subtheme.

In the following quotations, Lucy, Nathan and Rebecca shared this notion of engaging with their peers at school and were enthusiastic about this:

I felt excited to see my friends again. (Lucy, snapshot)

A bit tired, but I was looking forward to seeing my friends.  
(Nathan, snapshot)

I was feeling good, kind of excited to be back... because I get to catch up with my friends. (Rebecca, snapshot)

For Poppy, the idea of attending certain lessons was not inviting, but she had engaged with new friends in her microsystem over the half term break and had formed more frequent and stable interactions. She was keen to walk to school with this new group of friends:

Good, but I didn't want to go to some of my lessons. I saw friends over half term and I'm walking to school with a new group of my old school friends.  
(Poppy, snapshot)

Only Bella, in the next quotation felt unsure about returning to school because she had enjoyed being at home. She addressed some uncertainty here, as she was still interested to return to school.

I'm not sure, I wanted to go back but I enjoyed time off too because I like some lessons. (Bella)

Feeling connected again to the home and family microsystem, Bella had to start this smaller transition process after half term. She felt ambivalent because she had enjoyed her home microsystem and spending time with immediate family but wanted to return because of some of the lessons. There was no mention of peers for Bella at this stage.

This subtheme addressed how most of the children were excited to return to school because of their friends. The engagement with this school microsystem, which provided opportunities to reconnect with their peers was becoming important for some of the children. This shows how the children who spent time with the peer group had acted as a type of motivation for school attendance. However, more intriguing is that the nature of this pull towards the peer group also changed during this time, which will become more evident in the next subtheme. At this early stage of the time point, the peer microsystem was stable and acted as a motivator for school attendance.

**6.5.3.1.2 Peer Microsystem Fluctuations.** Over the course of this time point (six weeks towards the end of the first term), the friendships for some of the children began to change. They started to make new friends or drew closer to other friends from their primary school. In particular, Lucy and Sophie shared their experiences of nurturing new friendships. However, the changes to friendship groups for Poppy and Bella were more difficult to navigate and will be discussed in this subtheme, called '*Peer microsystem fluctuations*'.

In the first quotation, Lucy mentioned her new friends she had made in class and how they worked well with each other:

I have made a few new friends in my classes so then we can work together. (Lucy, snapshot)

Whereas, for Sophie, in the next quotation, she felt happy with who she had selected to spend time with. The notion of choice was a constant feature within parts of Sophie's speech, as she regularly referred to this:

...I am happy with who I have chosen to trust and spend time with.

(Sophie, snapshot)

On the other hand, Bella, in the next excerpt described how she felt alone at school because of some of the negative things that her friends had said about her. She also noted that some of the people were fine. There was some intimation of relational bullying in this excerpt, but no specific details given:

Interviewer: And how are your friendships at school going?

Bella: I am kind of on my own

Interviewer: Can you tell me how you feel about that?

Bella: Alright but a bit alone

Interviewer: Can you tell me what happened to your friends?

Bella: They got new friends and have said bad things so I am alone, but some people are okay.

Relational bullying (Wolke et al., 2000) refers to the inappropriate manipulation of peer relationships or friendships that harm others through behaviours such as ‘social exclusion’. In the above excerpt, Bella described herself as being ‘alone’ twice, feeling that sense of exclusion from others, but I was respectful of her wish not to discuss this further.

Nathan also shared in the next quotation how he had initially made a new friend at the beginning of the term, but that this had since changed:

My friends have changed for example I had a friend at the start of Year 7 who is not my friend anymore, he has different interests and does different things at break, he also has other friends. (Nathan, snapshot)

Within the first few weeks of term, Nathan and the ‘friend’ recognised that they had dissimilar interests. For Nathan, this meant a change to his peer group. Furthermore, the other student had other friends to be with at break time.

Poppy experienced a similar adverse encounter with her friends who she knew from primary school, expressing that she had felt excluded. In the below excerpt, she explained how this made her feel upset and how she decided to spend her time with other friends, ~~friends~~ who made her feel included and happier:

Poppy: They started making new friends and leaving me out

Interviewer: Can I ask you how it made you feel?

Poppy: Upset and sad

Interviewer: How did you manage that situation?

Poppy: I moved on. I focused on people who made me happy.

The required shift between friends that Poppy needed to manage during these weeks was challenging for her and she was unable to discuss this in the previous online interview (time point two). It was only at this time when she felt she could talk about it.

In the next quotation, which was recorded in the December online interview, Poppy indicated that she felt a sense of inclusion amongst her friends, and was happier enjoying time with these friends:

They make me laugh and include me...Yes, I like my new routine. I'm happier now that I'm spending time with other friends. (Poppy)

These interactions continued to develop over the course of this time point, as the longitudinal design of this research provided the opportunities to view how these proximal processes were supporting Poppy. It helped her to adjust to the new situation that she had found.

**6.5.3.1.3 A Sense of a Secure Base in the Peer Microsystem.** Having friends in secondary school was considered important to all of the children. What was interesting about this subtheme was the reasoning for this importance, as the children continued to feel a shift in their sense of belonging at school, which coincided with the development of their peer group microsystem. According to Gilligan (2000), feeling a sense of a secure base is facilitated by the sense of belonging, and routine and structure in the child's life. The

provision of this secure base can be seen during this time point from the children's engagement with the peer microsystem. Therefore, this subtheme is called, '*A sense of a secure base in the peer microsystem*'.

Each child expressed their reasoning for choosing particular peer groups, for example, Bella in the first excerpt referred to the term, 'sticking together', and the significance of this because of her own size, being one of the smaller students in school, the notion of a power balance here between the large size of the school and how she viewed herself as small:

Bella: Because you need to stick together

Interviewer: What are you sticking together for?

Bella: Because it is a big place and small people.

Other reasons for having friends at school, according to Lucy and Nathan next quotations included spending time together and the fact that friends can also help:

...yes, so then we hang out together at break and lunch. (Lucy)

...cause they can help you...just hanging out and with homework. (Nathan)

Rebecca felt that the importance of friends during this time had given her the confidence to be who she felt she was. The proximal processes in Rebecca's peer microsystem could be viewed as part of the protective mechanism's (Rutter, 1987), providing her with an increased sense of self-esteem relevant to the resilience process. This self-esteem and worth arising from belonging to the new peer group is explained by Rebecca in the excerpt below:

Rebecca: Yes, I feel without friends I wouldn't have as much confidence as I do

Interviewer: Can you tell me how your friends give you more confidence?

Rebecca: They support me and they let me be me.

Sophie indicated that without friends she would feel apart and isolated and that the experiences of school would be different. In her quotation, she addressed this:

Because if you don't you will feel disconnected and not enjoy school life. (Sophie)

This subtheme was so applicable to the resilience process within this ecological model, as it provided an overview of the individual variation for the children's reasoning about the meaning and value of friendships, although the overall value of having friends at school and not being on their own was key to the successful transition outcomes for most of the children. The children needed to feel connected to their schools, they relied on their friends for help, since they negotiated this transition together with their friends. The link between the child and the peer microsystem which acted as a secure base was dependable and supportive during this transition.

**6.5.3.1.4 School-home Communications.** The data from this subtheme stemmed mostly from the online video blogs (vlogs). One of the initial shared thoughts from these vlogs was the discussion about parts of their school microsystem, particularly teachers and school work. For example, in the first quotation, Nathan expresses his dislike of homework and how he felt sure that the teachers did not plan the homework, they simply just put it there for the children to complete:

One of the not so good things is I got a lot more homework to do and I got to do some after this, most of it doesn't make any sense at all, I'm pretty sure most of the teachers don't even think about the homework when they're putting it on, they just put it on. (Nathan, vlog entry)

However, Nathan conceded that he liked a teacher that was able to lead the class and regulate the children's behaviour:

I've got a few more teachers, two new teachers actually and they're okay and they can keep control of the class which is good. (Nathan, vlog entry)

Similarly, Rebecca characterised the teachers' lessons according to the how she felt about the teachers. The friendlier and funny teachers were seen as providing better lessons:

Both of the teachers are really nice in both of those lessons and also they're really friendly and funny, the worst lesson is still history and geography because the teachers occasionally can be really boring but the lessons can be really fun. (Rebecca, vlog entry)

One of the recurring points for Bella at school was the swearing by other children. During this vlog entry she tried to explain how she was managing this, referring to the word 'coping'. There was a type of self-talk used here, as she also thinks about how she needs to discuss her upcoming operation:

I'm coping with all the swearing and stuff, its kind a hard, but yip, I'm getting there and I'm also going to talk about my operation I'm going to do that on, I was thinking I should. (Bella, vlog entry)

For Rebecca, it was striking how she felt that her school has become smaller. The familiarity that Rebecca felt during this timeframe was subtle providing her with a sense of ease and belonging:

I know my way around a lot more, it's really easy to find my way around so it feels like a really small school. (Rebecca, vlog entry)

The nature of these vlogs was to capture how the children were feeling about their day-to-day school experiences. Evidently, these brief entries provided some glimpses into their continued stories about the links between home and school. The data from the vlogs were able to show how Bella and Rebecca had started to gain confidence in 'finding their way' in their school microsystem, for example, Rebecca finding her way around and Bella managing the unwelcomed experiences of other children that swearing.

**6.5.3.2 Theme 2. Accessing Resources Between the Microsystems.** There were various experiences during this time point when the children had felt challenged, in different ways, for example, the new changes to their travel routine to and from school or the amount

of homework each week that had increased since primary school. As the children were faced with these changes, I noticed how they began to access the resources in the mesosystem, connecting themselves with their immediate microsystems of the home, and school. There are three subthemes to this theme and are drawn from the data with the children as they discussed and described their experiences within the contexts that they engaged with. The first subtheme is called, '*Access to an adult for support*', next, the second subtheme explores the personal strategies that the children used for problem solving, called, '*Accessing personal strategies to solve problems*', and then the role of school clubs and activities that are accessible to the children was relevant, with the third subtheme called, '*Access to school clubs and activities*'. Each subtheme will be discussed in turn.

**6.5.3.2.1 Access to an Adult for Support.** This subtheme looks at how the access to adults for children in their immediate microsystems provided support during the transition. This includes the role of the parent at home, and the teacher at school, particularly the form tutors. Part of this support focused on personal organisation and some of the 'person characteristics' of the children, dealing with the demands of the new microsystem (school) and avoiding punishment from teachers.

In this first excerpt, Lucy recognised how her form tutor had helped her to find her classes, which helped Lucy ensure that she would not be punished for being late:

Interviewer: Has anyone or anything helped you during your start to secondary school?

Lucy: My form tutor

Interviewer: Can you tell me how they've helped you?

Lucy: They helped me get to my classes on time

Interviewer: And that's important to you?

Lucy: Yes, because then I don't get told off.

Lucy placed emphasis on 'time' in parts of her online interviews, again referring to how her parents had assisted with her homework so that it was completed by the deadline:

...they have helped me do my homework on time. (Lucy)



For Nathan, the assistance from his parents with his organisation skills and directing him with his homework demands were helpful to him. He found this useful, as he stated in the next quotation:

...they help me organise myself, also, with homework and reminding me about stuff.  
(Nathan)

Both previous examples referred to how adults had helped Nathan and Lucy with their personal organisation, whereas in the next excerpt Sophie talked about the ‘independence’ she felt she had been given enabling her to be ready and manage the demands of school:

Sophie: A bit of support, but letting me have the independence that I need  
Interviewer: Can you tell me why you think independence during this time is needed?  
Sophie: To be ready for things like having the right stuff at school, being able to manage extra-curricular on my own and to make decisions on things for myself.

This type of support for Sophie, was a form of independence, which was initiated and supported by her parents. She emphasised the need to make decisions on things for herself, and this resonates with the next subtheme in which the children started to think about how they were learning and managing the barriers during this time.

**6.5.3.2.2 Using Personal Strategies to Solve Problems.** This subtheme is concerned with how the children used their own set of strategies to help them manage certain situations at school. This was also linked to the personal organisation, which was discussed in the previous subtheme, and also to the resource characteristics, including experience and skills, which were utilised here by Rebecca to help her in her class and the development of new strategies that Poppy used to help with a friendship concern.

For some of the children, there were certain other encounters that they talked about, for example Rebecca’s seasonal hearing issues, and needing to wear her BAHA (bone anchored hearing aid). Because of Rebecca’s hearing problem, she was moved further forward in class, which helped her with her learning:

If I am struggling in some classes... so they are going to move me forwards so I can hear better. (Rebecca)

For Rebecca this was helpful to her in classes. On the other hand, she encountered a different type of problem when cycling to school. She discussed how other children from another secondary school tried to hinder her ride into school:

J... (School name), the other school in the area, have students who are very mean when I cycle to school. My close friend who I made this year is leaving. (Rebecca)

As a consequence of this problem one of her friends had to leave the school because they did not like this type of hostility. For Rebecca she chose to ignore this and let her mother and father know about it. This led to their support with travelling into school on occasion:

I ignored them. I have told my mum and dad who have told the school, occasionally I cycle in with my mum or dad. (Rebecca)

Poppy in particular had to deal with an unwelcome change in her friendship group with other children whom she had known since primary school:

They started making new friends and leaving me out...I moved on, I focused on people who made me happy. (Poppy)

Poppy acknowledged that she felt she had moved on and now focused on other people who made her feel better.

Both Poppy and Rebecca had to use strategies to manage the situation they were in. Particularly for Poppy, realising that it was necessary for her to move on so that she could feel better, whereas for Rebecca, she needed to include her mother and father so that she was supported during the experience.

**6.5.3.2.3 Access to School Clubs and Activities.** The children enjoyed the participating in activities and after school clubs and were regular attendees. Throughout this time point the children referred to activities and clubs that they were part of. These clubs and activities acted as further support for the children to enjoy and get to know other children.

Lucy: ... I do a club called practical club where you use power tools to make stuff

Interviewer: And how do you feel about that?

Lucy: Happy, my friends do it as well.

Nathan felt a sense of pride and opportunity, described in his next quotation, as he was selected to be in three different teams, as part of his school offered clubs:

Being chosen for the cross-country team, dance group and the rugby team.

(Nathan)

Sophie recalled the sheer delight of the subject content at her dissection club, further promoting an interest for Sophie and her enjoyment of Biology:

I really enjoy dissection club... enjoy learning about animals and our biology.

(Sophie)

In addition to enjoyment and achievement, Rebecca needed to change her travel arrangement to and from school because of a school run club. This was a decision that she made because of the clubs:

I've decided to go to school by bus because of clubs at lunchtime and they're all really fun, I'm also taking a practical club for the same reason. (Rebecca, vlog entry)

In time point two Bella spoke about her interest in starting netball and how excited she had felt about this. However, she was not chosen for the team, dissolving this initial enthusiasm:

I didn't get picked for netball so I am not doing it anymore. (Bella)

For Bella, this was important because it made her feel that she was good at something, something new and it made her feel part of this. She had gained a sense of belonging, and then this was removed. There is a sense that Bella's adaptive path was slightly altered here. However, if the school were able to include everyone who was willing to try, and then alternate players in games, this original enthusiasm that Bella experience could have been restored. There was a feeling of defeat from Bella here because this netball club had been relevant to her school microsystem.

**6.5.3.3 Theme 3: Reflecting on Individual Differences in the New School Microsystem.** Another part of these children's transition was based on how they began to reflect and talk about their clefts and other visible differences. For some of the children, there was some doubt about why other children stared at them and some reflections on why other children would stare at them. For example, in the next quotation, Bella felt that she was stared at by other, but was not sure why, thinking it may be because of her cleft or because of her size:

I think it might be because I'm new or small or maybe my cleft. (Bella)

Bella also spoke about this in one of her vlog entries, as she would like to have the operation to assist her breathing, thinking about her plans for the future:

I have this operation that where they're going to neaten my nose a bit and I'm just going to go with that opportunity because when I'm older I might not be able to breathe as much, as well so I'm just going to do it so I'm better in the future and so then I don't have to worry about it and all that. (Bella, vlog entry)

On the other hand, Lucy felt that other children did not enquire about her visible difference because she felt that they were polite. In the next except, Lucy explained her reasoning for this:

Interviewer: Do your friends know about your cleft? Have they asked you about it?

Lucy: No, I think they know, but don't ask

Interviewer: Can you explain what you mean a little more?

Lucy: Like they are more polite

Interviewer: Polite because they don't ask?

Lucy: Yes, polite.

One of Nathan's reasons for why other children were not enquiring about his cleft was that he felt it was not particularly noticeable to his friends:

I think it will if it was more noticeable. (Nathan)

Rebecca tended to feel more comfortable talking about her hearing problems, than relating this to her cleft to friends at school:

I've started wearing my BA-HA again which is my hearing aid because I was struggling a bit to hear some of my friends, lots of people have asked about it and I have explained, but I haven't explained that it's because of my cleft lip and palate.  
(Rebecca, vlog entry)

There were some mixed reflections here from the children about how they felt other children had felt about their cleft. For Lucy and Bella, they felt stared at, but were unclear about why, with Lucy suggesting that other children did not ask because of their manners. And for Nathan, he felt that his cleft was not identifiable enough so no one had asked him. Whereas Rebecca seemed content to rather focus on her hearing issue, than explain what her cleft was.

**6.5.3.4 Theme 4. Motivation to Achieve.** For most of the children, the value of achievement was important at this early phase of their secondary school career. The types of achievements were diverse, ranging from academic success, to sports, music and dance, but the intent to achieve was evident. This sense of achievement resonates with

Bronfenbrenner's *force* characteristics of the individual (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006), led by motivation.

Nathan mentioned that his parents had felt proud of him in the next quotation, encouraging this recognition of his achievements so far, and was equally proud of this, which he shared in one of his vlog entries:

...it was great to see good grades for effort and progress. They felt very proud of me and pleased at how well I am doing. (Nathan)

I got chosen to be the main player who does all the running around so, which was pretty exciting, I'm also still doing my dance and had the performance a week ago, I think Sunday, yeah, and that was to parents so my parents got to see it and it all went well so we've been rehearsing that a lot lately. (Nathan, vlog entry)

Poppy also acknowledged that she had achieved some recognition in History and received a letter at home about her progress. In the below excerpt she felt that she could continue to make further progress:

Poppy: Over the term I have got 107 achievements points and I have had a letter from my history teacher about my progress

Interviewer: How do you feel about this?

Poppy: I feel proud but I think I can continue making progress next term. (snapshot)

In the next quotation, Rebecca acknowledged that she would keep working hard, looking ahead to the rest of the year because she felt it would be harder. Her motivation stemmed from wanting to do her best:

Yes, as it will get harder over the year and I believe if I try my hardest, I have done my best and that I can only go up trying my best. (Rebecca)

The self-motivation from these children, and in particular Rebecca, displayed how these children felt a sense of control in terms of their academic progress, and that this was part of

the adaptive process during the transition. Sophie also acknowledged her good results, but felt that there was still space to progress further:

Good, still room for improvement but I have very good grades so far.

(Sophie)

On the other hand, Bella was very determined to achieve her goals, which included making new friends. In the next excerpt, she talked about this, and she felt that for her this challenge would be her driving force to keep trying:

Interviewer: And what about achievements? Did you have any goals?

Bella: My handwriting and to make new friends. And I haven't achieved anything yet

Interviewer: How does that make you feel?

Bella: A bit sad but it makes me more determined

Interviewer: What makes you feel more determined

Bella: I love challenging myself.

These force characteristics in the form of motivation for the children to achieve in their school microsystem were important. Another part of this motivation for some of the children was having their parents feel proud of them, highlighting the extension of these links with the child's mesosystem particularly between the school and the home.

**6.5.3.5 Summary of Time Point Three.** The negotiation of the peer group microsystem was purposeful to the children at this time when they returned to school after their half term break. Having a friend at school provided some of the children with a sense of a secure base because they began to feel more confident in the new school setting. The activities during this time showed how the children were making links with the school and engaging with the clubs. The shared communication between the school and home was relevant to the children as they talked about teachers, homework, and activities.

For some of the children, the importance of being able to access help and who to access this from was supported by the schools, specifically from tutors and from the parents

at home. Children's comparisons of size and differences was also explored in this time point as some of the children perceived how others stared at them because of their cleft or were not sure if this was because of their size. For most of the children, academic progress was valued and the need to keep improving was discussed.

#### ***6.5.4 Time Point Four***

For this time point, the thematic analysis occurred at the end of the first school term (January 2019). The data from this time point included the final family interviews with the children and their parents. The TA identified three main themes from this time point:

- (1) *Developed micro-communications,*
- (2) *Navigating the secondary school microsystem,*
- (3) *Ownership of the child's visible difference.*

An overview of the themes and subthemes is explained in the next table.



**Table 16***Themes and Subthemes from Time Point Four*

Themes	Subthemes
1. Developed micro-communications	1.1 Regular conversations between the parents and the child 1.2 Activating family strategies 1.3 Monitoring the communication between microsystems 1.4 Harnessing peer interaction 1.5 Engaging in school microsystem activities
2. Navigating the secondary school microsystem	2.1 Changes experienced from primary to secondary school 2.2 Stand out moments 2.3 Accessing school services 2.4 Positive reflections about starting secondary school
3. Ownership of the child's visible difference	3.1 Managing personal responses to visible differences 3.2 Reflecting on what it means to have a visible difference during the school transition

Next, each theme will be discussed in turn.

**6.5.4.1 Theme 1. Developed Micro-communications.** This theme focused on how the children's interactions forged communications between the microsystems, shaping the 'micro-communications'. The main theme is divided into five further subthemes, which explore how the micro-communications developed for the children, and how links were created in the child's microsystems. The types of communications occurring in the child's

microsystems served to forge connections between the microsystems during the school transition. The developed micro-communications that occurred for the children during the school transition were formulated into five subthemes, creating links between the child's microsystems.

Firstly, the subtheme called, '*Regular conversations between the parents and the child*', highlights the child's couriering information between the home and school; then, the second subtheme is called, '*Activating family strategies*,' shows how the children used the family approaches which they already knew to help them in the school microsystem and with their peers. Next, the third subtheme is called, '*Monitoring communication between the microsystems*,' mostly initiated by the parent, and explores the parental role in tracking the child's couriering skills. Next, the fourth subtheme is called, '*Harnessing peer interactions*,' referring to the interactions between the child and their friends at school, and resulting in new friendship groups and the continuance of friendships from primary school. The final subtheme recognised how the children began to feel part of their school because of the enrichment of school clubs and activities and is called, '*Engaging in school microsystem activities*'. Each subtheme will be analysed in the section below.

**6.5.4.1.1 Regular Conversations Between the Parents and the Child.** Within the family microsystem, both the children and the parents, placed considerable importance on the everyday regular conversations that occurred in the family home. The focus of these conversations concerned an array of varied experiences that some of the children encountered at school. For example, the amount of homework they received each week, the changes in their friendship groups, also navigating new friendships, traveling independently to school, and finding their way around their school. This highlighted the relevance of providing children with a secure base, which is a protective mechanism (Gilligan, 2000; Rutter, 1987), as part of resilience processes. In this instance, the regular conversations supported the new routines for the children, strengthening the family's proximal processes, and helping to reduce apprehensions.

One example of how this protective mechanism operated so as to offer support was for Poppy. Poppy had experienced some problems with one of her friends during the first half term, a friend she had known since primary school. In the next quotation, Pam, Poppy's

mother referred to how, as a family they talked daily to each other, helping to feel part of the experience and support Poppy with her routine:

... well, we chat every day, don't we, she does tell us how her day's gone, um so I think from that point of view we've been able to keep up with things.  
(Pam, Poppy's mother)

This notion of 'keeping up with things' also seems to suggest the feeling of a need for vigilance for any unanticipated difficulties, and reassurance that everything was going well so far (this also links to subtheme 3, '*monitoring the communication between microsystems*').

In the next quotation, Paul, Poppy's father explained how Poppy was given explicit advice from the family microsystem, which she applied in the school microsystem concerning her friendship group. This helped her manage the concerns she had about her friendship group, and helped her parents feel less concerned because they knew what was happening:

... just the fact that she'd made a real effort, on our advice, to shift over to some other friends and it seemed to work, you know she's coming back and saying that she's spending time with these other girls and still is, so the friendship thing was a big deal, so yeah. And I think that Poppy has got through it has meant an awful lot to us because we were worried about it and um, yeah, and so now we're less worried.  
(Paul, Poppy's father)

For Rebecca, talking to her parents was part of a sounding board for her each day. Rachel, Rebecca's mother affirmed in the next quotation how they would have a type of daily debrief with the whole family over tea, to check how things were going. This was helpful to keep up to date with what was happening:

She's actually really good at keeping us up to date with what she's doing, she does well a lot of the time, which is lovely, so we do actually at the end of the day, generally over tea, say well, 'how did your day go and what did you enjoy and what didn't you enjoy?', um, so we keep up to date really well on things like

that. (Rachel, Rebecca's mother)

The idea of 'checking-in' with each other every day, and having the time to do this together displayed a sense of consistency and structure within this family. In the next quotation, Bella described how she would 'check-in' with her mother when faced with a problem that she needs help with:

...if I can, if I can't I'll come home and ask my mum. (Bella)

Bella's reliance on her mother to help and support her was important as she knew where to go for help and had a type of safety net in place to access when needed, providing her with a sense of a secure base. The access to these daily conversations and knowing where to go, and who to go to, were a central part of this theme.

The reflections of these regular day-to-day interactions (proximal processes) between the parent and the child discussing the school day, and how their experiences unfolded began to form an outline in my thinking about the process of resilience. The children's microsystems were starting to connect through day-to-day communication, and vigilance from the parents. This led to my thinking more deeply about how the children and their family had developed a family strategy or ethos about the transition, which is explained in more detail in the next subtheme.

**6.5.4.1.2 Activating Family Strategies.** During the school transition, the children encountered a range of different experiences. This aligned with the previous subtheme, as all of the families in the study began to articulate a family strategy – akin to a family philosophy or family ethos about the transition and importantly how to use or activate it. The recognition of these family strategies by the parents and the children were garnered during this transition to support the children's experiences at school. Therefore, this subtheme is called, '*Activating family strategies*'.

For Becky, Bella's mother, one of the key approaches that she used was about the value and importance of 'trying' and acknowledging that Bella had done this. In the next quotation, this was evident as Becky talks about Bella and her homework, suggesting that it may not be right, but it is important to try.

She's done alright, we've had to tell her sometimes that if you don't know, you don't know, it's okay to hand in homework that's not perfect, as long as you've tried. (Becky)

This was also part of Bella's thoughts, which she suggested when thinking about her first experience after playing rugby at school in this next quotation:

I was kind of like I don't want to do it again, but I want to try.  
(Bella)

Furthermore, Becky talked about how she was glad to hear about Bella's progress from parent's evening, mostly because of Bella's correct attitude and her willingness to keep trying. In the next quotation, Becky expressed this:

...just basically they were saying that she's got the right attitude and even if she struggles or is a bit behind she's got the willingness to try, they said a lot of kids are really bright but just don't bother. (Becky)

The family interactions and feelings of reassurance were evident for Rebecca. Part of this family ethos was preparedness. Before starting secondary school in time point one, this emphasis on being prepared was present in their interview, and it manifested again in this stage. In the next quotation, Rachel explained how Rebecca was preparing for her bone graft operation, and her own role in this:

Rebecca would like to go and have a look at the ward and we'd like to find somebody who's been through the operation so Rebecca can talk to them, Skype them or whatever. (Rachel)

On another point, Rob (father) praises Rebecca in the next quotation for her openness, regularly communicating with them. It was evident that this family placed importance on

preparing for challenges, which encouraged the rehearsing of strategies of who to talk to and when:

I think Rebecca talks a lot when she needs to about when she is interacting with, particularly her friends and when she's trying to do well and things like that so, you're very good at talking that through... (Rob)

Another family that had also exhibited a sense of needing to be prepared at the start of the transition was Lucy and her parents. Lucy had started attending Guides the year before the transition and it was framed as helping her to develop friendships. These friendships had continued into secondary school, joining up the microsystems. However, for Lucy, during the transition, her parents felt that they had taken a type of 'hands off approach', as they had not sensed a need to be overly involved. In the brief except below, they mentioned this:

Father (Luke): Yeah, talk to us and so we weren't seeing much or hearing much that was concerning us, so a hands-off approach

Mother (Mother): Very hands off, yeah

For Linda, her perception was that starting secondary school had provided Lucy with more independence, because she had her own mobile phone and travelled to school independently, on the bus. Linda felt this had given Lucy more autonomy and talked about how she was using this to spend time with other children after school, even catching the bus further down the road:

...she gets more freedom because of that, though, I think it's been good for you to go with older children too, some of them are older than you aren't they, they're Year 8's, and then you catch the bus a little further down the road. It's not sneaky, is it, it's quite inventive because the bus goes through the town, she gets on it further down. (Linda)

The qualitative lens from this part of the time point provided further understanding about how the children were active participants within their microsystems, sharing and developing

different types of family strategies, and applying this to other microsystems. The home and school links developing in some of these families assisting the adaptive processes of the children during the school transition. A further link that was facilitated during this time was the monitoring of what was happening between the home and school microsystems by the parents. This leads to the next subtheme, called, '*Monitoring communication between microsystems*'.

**6.5.4.1.2 Monitoring the Communication Between Microsystems.** The communication between the school and home was important for some of these parents. In this subtheme, this effective communication, between the home and school became a key focus. This subtheme addresses how some of the parents monitored the experiences that their children had during the transition. This monitoring was portrayed as a type of vigilance and care demonstrated by the parents, and these communications were used by the parents to support the links between the home microsystem and the school microsystem.

The significance and importance of the regular parent-child conversations became more evident in this time point. Bella's mother, Becky expressed how she had initiated some conversations with Bella's form tutor via email and that the tutor had responded quickly. This had reassured Becky, as described in the next quotation:

You've had a few hiccups (*looking at Bella*) and I've just emailed to say 'just to clarify this is the situation' and she's emailed almost straight away most days and said, 'call me if you need me and she'll help'. Just think of all the workload they've got, she's been very good. (Becky, Bella's mother)

The communication between Bella's two microsystems, the home, and the school was valuable to Becky providing encouragement and immediate, direct feedback from the form tutor. It also helped Becky to then support Bella by lessening the worry for Bella, and she felt a sense of passing on the reassurance in these micro-communications and mesosystems because of the communication she had with the form tutor. This also emphasises the timeliness linked to the vigilance aspect of monitoring.

One of Poppy's concerns during this first term was a friendship issue as discussed in previous subtheme. For Poppy's parents, this was a difficult experience for everyone, which

Paul talked about during the interview. Both parents had monitored what happened and remained vigilant about the outcome, expressing relief that Poppy had made new friends:

...so, the friendship thing was a big deal, so yeah. And I think that Poppy has got through it has meant an awful lot to us because we were worried about it and um, yeah, and so now we're less worried. (Paul, Poppy's father)

In the next quotation, Poppy's mother, Pam shared how the communication with the SENCO department at the school had supported Poppy. This communicative movement between Poppy's microsystems, in the mesosystem, created opportunities for Poppy to make other friends:

I think when, you know she had a difficult time with some of her friends walking to school and walking back from school, and so I think when we'd spoken to her teacher and the SENCO department and they stepped in and they really helped. (Pam, Poppy's mother)

For Rebecca, the communication between her home and school microsystems was related to her hearing needs. It was important that she was seated at the front of her classes in order to hear the teacher. Rachel, her mother explained how they needed to ensure this information was passed from one department to the other. The example in the quotation below described how important it was for Rebecca's parents to ensure the information was passed on. It also highlights the relevance of how school departments need to develop this better.

In the example below, we can see how Rachel was involved in a direct intervention in the school microsystem, acting in support of Rebecca, to pass information to the SENCO, and followed this up with discussions at parents evening to understand the process by which Rebecca could be assisted in sitting near the front of the class. Her ongoing vigilance and advocacy for Rebecca providing this secure family base and monitoring Rebecca's needs closely:

...we did find that when Rebecca started wearing her hearing aid again in October that the teacher for the deaf advised her to be moved in certain classes



and I passed that on to the SENCO, but she didn't seem to act on it and she was expecting Rebecca to tell the teachers, which was fine once we knew what was expected, so we'd been to this parent's evening and sorted out that actually, it was going to be Rebecca that told them, then she did get moved. (Rachel, Rebecca's mother)

It was curious that the school had placed the responsibility about this need on the child, although Rebecca was not aware of this. It was Rachel, who sutured it together during parent's evening, helping Rebecca to adapt better within her classroom by modelling how to move and communicate between her microsystems.

**6.5.4.1.4 Harnessing Peer Interaction.** As part of one of the child's immediate microsystems, making and maintaining friendships during the school transition was important. In this subtheme, the children all agreed that having a friend at school was noteworthy, and connecting these friendships became important. Some of the children felt this was because it gave them 'someone' to spend time with during the break times, and it encouraged fun activities.

In the next quotations, Bella and Rebecca both talked about how it would feel if they did not have a friend at school, and how they felt that this would result in feeling a sense of neglect and loneliness. This stressed the importance of the informal times during the school day and the spaces for socialising not afforded in class:

...because if you are on your own, it's sad and like you're on your own you don't know what to do, whereas if you're in your group you can like chat and tell everyone how you are feeling, and play games. (Bella)

...if you didn't have that many friends you would struggle like socially and it would be like harder, you'd be more isolated and you wouldn't be able to have as much fun. (Rebecca)

In the next quotation, Lucy also talked about spending time with others during the break, which was good because secondary school was large and she would not want to be on own:

...it's really good because then you have someone to hang out with at break times and lunch times because you just don't want to be on your own because it's quite big. (Lucy)

The meaning of having friends and making friends was apparent for the children because it meant that they were not alone and had someone to spend time with during the breaks in the school day. It was another part of the children becoming more familiar with their school surroundings.

In time point two (4-6 weeks from the start of the school term), Sophie talked about another student who had made some negative comments about her because she was planning to have cosmetic surgery for her lips. This had frustrated Sophie at that time. However, by the end of the first term during this interview, Sophie acknowledged that this situation had changed and she had become good friends with this student. In the next quotation, she explained this:

...now we're good friends, I would say, I think it's just been getting to know each other better. She's in my class and most of her really good friends are in the other class so she spends some time with me, we are quite good friend's now. (Sophie)

This was the recognition of a turning point for Sophie because she accepted that the more regular her communications were with this student, the easier it was for them to get to know each other. As a result of this student not having her other friends in this class, Sophie had been able to spend more time with her, developing the regular interactions over the course of the term, supporting the proximal processes Sophie was developing.

In the next excerpt, Bella and her mother talked about her ongoing friendship concerns and how this affected her routine travel to school. She started to see this as a problem, but with the help of the mother and their receptive communication, Bella acknowledged that the routine change was manageable:

Bella: Probably, yeah, there's always friendship problems with me

Becky (mother): I think yeah, she's had a few days where the girls are just not communicating and stuff or I think one day her friends wouldn't walk with her and they normally walk together

Bella: Yeah, that was another recent one...yeah, I find it hard when last minute I have to walk on my own

Becky (mother): Yeah, her parents, the friends are separated so sometimes she's gets the bus if she's at her dad's, but if she with her mum, then she can walk with Bella. So every now and then she'll suddenly text on the morning and say 'can't walk' and then Bella will say 'ah I'm on my own'

Bella: Yeah, I have stress

Becky (mother): You don't have to stress

Bella: No, but I do stress I get stressed about what could happen

Interviewer: So, what happens then?

Becky (mother): You know exactly where to go, it's just the last-minute change

Bella: Yeah.

### ***Reflection 13***

It was intriguing how Bella equated this situation with a friendship concern because she felt that her friend was not walking with her to school. As the dialogue between Bella and her mum progressed, it was clear that the source of the concern was about Bella's school morning routine changing. Bella did not like the sudden change and her friend, who she typically walked with could not walk with her the one morning. This was because of her friends' circumstances being subject to change when she was staying at her dad's house. However, Bella felt worried because she would have to walk alone to school and that her friend had not let her know sooner about this. There was a sense here that Bella stresses about things easily, even if she has not fully understood the situation, and that her mum was instrumental in helping her manage this concern.

The richness of this dyadic interaction between Becky and Bella demonstrated how Becky reminded Bella about what she can do when there was a sudden change to routine.

There was a sense of Becky trying to unpick the worry, supporting Bella with planning what she needed to do in a situation she found stressful. For Bella, having her mother reinforce this was important to her and the micro-communication happening in the interaction, demonstrating the bi-direction of these proximal processes.

**6.5.4.1.5 Engaging in School Microsystem Activities.** The opportunity to participate in school clubs and activities was welcomed and accessed by the children. These were seen as something novel that the children could spend time doing, and get to know other new people. The children saw it as fun, as they started to form other connections between their homes and school microsystems. In addition to this, some of the children were able to try a variety of clubs and enjoy what they were learning. The purpose of these activities was important because it helped the children to make friends, to feel part of their school. This supported the child's navigation of the transition process. My reflections on the meaning of these activities for the children, resulted in this subtheme called, '*Engaging in school microsystem activities*'.

Poppy and Nathan enthused about their school clubs, recognising their value in terms of the opportunities for socialising, and friends they were making. This was evident when they spoke about it in the quotations below:

...yeah, it's sort of another way to socialise... I've had friends continue it with me, which makes it more fun. (Poppy)

...you get to meet new people, but also, they go to my school, in my class...  
(Nathan)

Attending these school clubs created new opportunities for the children to get to know others, but crucially they were children from the school microsystems, who they would encounter in other contexts at school. Regular attendance at the clubs started to form new proximal processes for the children.

At Rebecca's school, she had been selected to attend an activity and workshop about sport. Rachel, Rebecca's mother, recalled it as a girls' sporting workshop, that aims to

encourage girls to be more involved in sport. Rachel indicated the relevance of the incentive for her daughter, Rebecca in the next quotation:

...she was chosen to with a group of other Year 7's to attend a workshop to encourage girls to do more sport, so it's a sort of sports leadership group so they were trained in how to um, encourage other girls to take up sport, albeit an activity rather than different sports and they're now going to set up a sports club or something. (Rachel, Rebecca's mother)

In addition, Rebecca recalled being chosen to attend another activity to support her in making new friends and another workshop where she enjoyed the type of activity on offer. She explained this in the next quotation:

...I think one of them was making new friends and like, and also there was an activity, a cloning workshop, I was chosen for as something that I might like and you had to learn how the machine worked and how to use it and stuff. (Rebecca)

The access to these school clubs for Lucy was an opportunity for her to get to know new people that she would not be able to get to know during the school day. She expressed this in the next quotation, clarifying with the use of certain words, such as 'different' and 'normal' to differentiate between who she spends time with and where:

...you get to know different people if you go to the clubs, not just the normal people that you hang out with, and you get to know more people in your classes that you didn't know. (Lucy)

One of the key elements that the children discussed was being able to meet other children they had not met yet, and to engage in fun activities in new parts of the school microsystem. The combination of meeting new children, while interacting in an enriched activity, supported the children's adjustment, and helped them to develop new skills, such as, Nathan's dancing, and Rebecca's peer mentoring in their school microsystem. This directly relates to the process in the PPCT model, as the child engages in learning new skills which

invited reciprocal interactions (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). The school microsystem was relevant to this transition because it facilitated peer interaction and friendship formation, both important proximal processes for children's development (Bronfenbrenner, 2005).

**6.5.4.2 Theme 2. Navigating the Secondary School Microsystem.** An integral part of this school transition for the children was concerned with the routine changes and differences, which were a real change from their previous school environment at primary school. This meant that the children needed to understand how this new environment worked, and what the expectations were for their own successful adaptation. This was part of building another important connection within the resilience process during the transition phase, namely the navigation of secondary school.

This navigation also meant the acknowledgement of achievements for the children, and understanding more about the functioning of the school services, when required. I noticed the flow of communication between the home and school during this time. There are four subthemes stemming from this theme; Firstly, this looked at some of the changing experiences that the children recalled when moving from primary to secondary school, entitled, '*Changes experienced from primary to secondary school*', the second subtheme recognises certain moments which were important to them, called, '*Stand Out Moments*'. The third subtheme looks at the how the children were able to use some of the services offered by their school, called '*Accessing school services*', and the fourth subtheme considers the family's reflections about the transition entitled, '*Positive reflections about starting secondary school*'. Each of these will be discussed in turn.

**6.5.4.2.1 Changes Experienced from Primary to Secondary School.** Over the course of this time point, the children and their parents had time to reflect on the differences between primary and secondary school. There were some similarities between the families concerning the increasing independence that the parents felt their children had developed, and some noted differences between primary and secondary school experiences. One of these similarities was the lessened communication between the parent and the school, as expressed by Bella's mother in the quotation below:

...it felt like forever from September to December, I mean it's a place you only visit once or twice, you feel really disjointed, which is good, but particularly when you've got an only child, suddenly it's just different. (Becky, Bella's mother)

Lucy's mother, Linda also spoke about the experience of Lucy traveling on a bus on her own to school. This was the very first day of secondary school and Linda recalled how Lucy had successfully adapted to this new situation, and had to come up with a solution alone because she did not have a bus pass. In the next quotation, we can see how Linda expressed a sense of pride in Lucy for coping with this unanticipated problem of the missing bus pass in such a poised manner:

...there was a mix up with the bus passes and she had to get on the bus and pay for her ticket which she wasn't expecting and she did it, you were confident weren't you even though you've never actually travelled on a bus before on your own. (Linda, Lucy's mother)

Similarly, Rob, Rebecca's father expressed how Rebecca's independence was seen over the course of the term because of her traveling to school on her own. At first, Rebecca had tried the journey to school on her own, but then she needed some support. In the next quotation, Rob explained how providing that support when Rebecca needed it, equipped her with the confidence to continue on her own:

...I think that what also changed for Rebecca the past term is her independence because she cycles in by herself, so initially she tried by herself and then we went with her for a bit and now she's back to going by herself so it's a growth bit for her and a bit of independence. (Rob, Rebecca's father)

This links directly to resilience processes, including the ability to adapt and move between the microsystems. Rebecca experienced a process of 'trial and error', a type of reeling out and in by her parents in order to help her achieve the appropriate level of support that she required for her new routine.

The reflections on independence continued in the next excerpt, where Becky talks about Bella's engagement with her new school, and the game of rugby Bella took part in. Again, there was this sense of trying and doing, part of this family's strategy. Furthermore, Becky felt that because they were playing rugby, they were not being treated carefully as they had been in primary school, alluding to the nurturing nature of primary school compared to the treatment of children who were allowed to play the robust game of rugby, where glasses cannot be worn, Bella had to manage this experience:

Becky (mother): They don't do so much at primary school, it's all ball skills and they don't do sports much, whereas rugby they just throw them straight into it, you know, you have to wear the gum guard

Bella: Take my glasses off

Becky (mother: Yes, take your glasses off, out there in the mud, they're don't, it's suddenly like, they're not um, like primary school kids anymore where it's taught, it's almost like they're mini adults so it's just come on we're getting stuck in and, she wasn't like I don't really want to even though they took her glasses off (laughs), but she can't see a thing, um she still like went at it, kind of you know, you and that other girl both without your glasses.

The analysis of the themes concerning the school transition allowed for some reflection on how the idea of 'independence' continued to evolve at different time points. There was a notion of developing independence for the children as they moved from one school environment to the other. For Sophie, this was expressed in time point one as a 'step up' and her excitement had stemmed from the school that she had chosen to attend. She explained in the next quotation how her new school environment, which was part of her new microsystem, seemed to have an expectation about behaviour that did not need to be labelled, and it was simply adhered to:

...there isn't actually very many boundaries, like you should know, there isn't any rules like that you would have at your old school, if it's like things like behaviour cause it's not like a reinforced thing because you know that it's there.

(Sophie)



Whereas, Sophie's mother, Sally described how she felt that Sophie needed to be more independent than required. Sally wanted Sophie to know that she and her husband were there to support her. In the quotation below, the use of 'mummy' and 'daddy' reflected on how Sally was referencing that younger type of parenting period, when their daughter was reliant on her and Steve, the father:

...over the school transition and I think it's probably reflective of me and Steve (father) parenting in reflecting on Sophie is that we've had a little confusion between us about how much Sophie needs to take for herself and I think she's kind of thought she's had to be very, very independent and wanted to be independent, I think, and we've kind of let her get on with it a lot, but I think that what we're reappraising at the moment is remembering that mummy and daddy are here and we are here to help and we do want to help and I think the three of us need to find more time working at it, so you don't have to be doing everything yourself. (Sally)

Another change that the children reflected on between primary and secondary school, and a key part of the transition was learning to navigate between classes and the change of classrooms. The children spoke about the movement between classes sometimes referring to the busy nature of the corridors when moving from class to class. This was another part of the changes experienced between the school environments. Bella expressed how the movement around the school was busy and she was not able to walk through easily in the next quotation:

...if you have certain lessons then you have to try and barge your way through, not go one by one. (Bella)

Lucy recalled her French teacher letting her class out five minutes early to help them navigate the school corridors more easily between class changes in the next quotation:

...our French teacher is nice as he lets us out 5 minutes before the bell otherwise we get squashed by the older people, because the English and French blocks are always very jam packed. (Lucy)

Both Lucy and Bella used language that evokes a sense of action and response to the situation. Bella's notion of barging through was forceful, indicating a sense of survival, trying to manage through the corridor, whereas Lucy felt that she would need to squeeze between the spaces otherwise she would be squashed by older students.

**6.5.4.2.2 Stand Out Moments.** This subtheme discerned the '*stand out moments*' that the children experienced, and together with their parents reflected on these during the interviews. These *moments* over the course of the first term were reflective of some the achievements attained, and the experiences that were highly valued by the children and parents. Importantly, these moments for the children and their parents were the joy of recognition, and the determination to keep trying, most often occurring in the mesosystem. The worth of these moments presented some shared thoughts about achievement for the children, demonstrating how the bi-directionality of these proximal processes were strengthening the links between the child, the school and the home. It was interesting to see how the children felt part of their new school, and the significance of this was evident in their need to achieve further. One of these moments for Poppy was when she found out that she had attained a role in the school play, stated in the next quotation:

When I found out I got into the school play right at the end of term. (Poppy)

This was something that Poppy was looking forward to at the very start of secondary school, as she enjoyed the Performing Arts. Her mother confirms this in the next quotation feeling that this was important, together with PE because it was energetic and helpful to Poppy:

I think for Poppy the performing arts has helped her and the PE she does, I think that keeps them busy and active. (Pam, Poppy's mother)

Furthermore, Poppy's father, Paul recalled in the next quotation an event that he had attended at Poppy's school in which she had performed a song and said a poem. He keenly remembered this and it was another example of Poppy's enthusiasm for the Arts:

...that was a massive stand out moment for me, thinking about it now, yes, Pam couldn't go, but I took Phillip (older brother) along and we went. It was lovely, she did a poem with a couple of other Year 7 pupils in her class and this is to the whole school, and then she sang in the school '...name' singers, yes it was a real stand out moment for me. (Poppy's father, Paul)

For Rebecca and Poppy, their standout moments were about house points too, and how the drive to acquire these was willing them on. The rank ordering and sense of competition was discussed by both Rebecca and Poppy. It was part of the school experience for their parents too, as was evident in the next two excerpts:

Rob (father): And where are you in your class, in achieving points?

Rebecca: I think I'm about like second, because somebody got 103

Rachel (mother): You got 100, because you got 6 this week

Rebecca: No, I think I'm on 96 at the moment.

Poppy: Yes, with Ms Pie, we set some that I could get to the highest achievement points by the end of the year

Paul (Father): And you're on how many at the moment?

Poppy: I think 100.

According to Sophie, the stand out moment was about being part of a group experience. She explained her enjoyment in the next quotation about taking part in an event, even though it was a competition and she could not compete (only older year groups competed), the experience of taking part had enthralled her:

I would say the House song, so like everyone in each house does a song and then they compete and it's really cool and that, so we don't actually compete but we

do take part. (Sophie)

This was similar to one of Nathan's stand out moments in which he recalled being part of a dance show, also part of the Arts. He performed this in front of his parents, and recalled this excitedly in the next quotation:

...we had a dance showcase thing, there was like a, this thing at school for expressive arts and there was dance and drama and stuff and I performed there and my parents watched it. (Nathan)

Both Nathan and Sophie began to feel part of their school and were excited to be part of this experience, with Nathan at the centre of this microsystem, connecting to the home and activities through his performances.

For Rebecca, her mother, Rachel recalled an experience that Rebecca had had at the early stages of the transition. This had made Rachel feel that Rebecca had made some friends and felt welcomed at her new school. In the next excerpt, Rebecca and Rachel discussed this experience:

Rachel (mother): I think I was happiest when she came back and said she had made some new friends but then there's an occasion when you took a packed lunch in, do you remember? (*asking Rebecca*), you took a packed lunch in and you didn't know where to sit and you got invited by some Year 9s to go and sit with them

Rebecca: Oh yes, I didn't realise that I could have hot dinners so I took in a packed lunch and all of my friends went into the hall to have a hot dinner, so I was sitting by myself and some Year 9's invited me over and they started chatting to me about my teachers and my lessons and that sort of stuff.

In the same way, this highlighted the importance of the informal spaces at school especially during the lunchtimes and break times for the children's school microsystem and friendship initiation and development (Lucey & Reay, 2000), also experienced in time point two. On

the other hand, one of Lucy's proudest moments was when she received the highest mark in her Science test. In the next excerpt, her father encouraged her to recall this:

Lucy: ...I quite liked it when I got my Science test results because I quite like doing science and would like to be a Scientist when I'm older, so I did a science test and I got 42 out of 45 for it.

Luke (father): She's being modest, and what were you?

Lucy: I was the top of the class.

Sally sensed that Sophie had been challenged in terms of discovering where she fitted in academically. Sally stated that Sophie had an awareness of this in her previous school, but had not found her 'fit' at this school yet. She referred to the transition as 'tough' in the next quotation, explaining how it had been difficult because of the academic expectations. However, she was encouraging of Sophie's achievements and felt that Sophie would find her 'niche' soon:

I think she's probably being a bit tough on herself, it's been quite a tough transition, I think she's gone from her prep school where she was comfortably the very top academically to going to a school where everybody is very academically able, that's proving a little bit of an adjustment, isn't it? (*Sophie: yeah*), and knowing where you fit into it, um, so about the reports, we had a little bit of a sticky patch around the exams, I think it was the first batch of exams, a bit more structured, a different approach, but I think that personally we learnt more about what we need to do next time, and I think that in terms of her interims, she got a lovely end of year report, really lovely, even though she hadn't done as well as she may have liked to have done in a couple of the exams, her actual report was glowing, it was a really lovely school report, so I think you know it's not been the easiest of terms, has it? (*Sophie: no*), so we've just got to find her level. (Sally, Sophie's mother)

**Reflection 14**

This was a sincere and honest explanation from Sophie's mum about how she felt that Sophie was doing well, but that she could do better. Sally tended to unravel the concern for Sophie, explaining how she may not have acquired the marks she wanted, then recognised what they learnt from this. Her language was inclusive, suggesting that 'we' know what to do the next time, including herself in Sophie's school experience. Sally also focused on the positive elements of Sophie's report, reinforcing how well Sophie had done, but also acknowledging that there was room to improve. This type of modelling illustrated by Sally reminded me of one of the findings from the Key Informant study, as the informants reflected on the crucial modelling role of the parent for the child who was faced with a worry. In this example, Sophie had not achieved what she expected, and Sally supportively explained this and talked about how they would face the next concern together.

This key element of achievement was important for these children. This was noted in the form of badges, house points, trophies, and awards. All the children had experienced this sense of achievement and shared it with their parents. In the same way of sharing other school experiences, the children were keen to discuss this with their parents, again reiterating this movement of the child between the microsystems, acting as a courier of the news between the microsystems.

**6.5.4.2.3 Accessing School Services.** As already mentioned, children with a cleft may also have other medical conditions related to their eyesight or hearing (see chapter 2, p 28). For some of these children, there was a need to use one of the support services provided at school, depending on their individual requirements. For other children, this support service was not required, as it was not needed. Both scenarios are discussed in this theme looking at the availability of certain services that are relevant to some children during the transition.

According to the children, this service was provided by either a form teacher, or from the SENCO department in the school or an external service from the borough. This shaped part of the child's school microsystem, and was another part of the link, a resource,

that the child would need. In the next excerpt between Becky and Bella, they discuss the support that Bella has received from an older student, who had been mentoring Bella:

Becky (mother): They do, yes, and in fact they have said she can go there. They have like an oasis club there at lunchtime to chat but she's just been assigned a year 10 student to her

Bella: Every Tuesday, mum

Becky (mother): Every Tuesday, what do you do?

Bella: We play games, we talk about stuff

Becky (mother): So, the Year 10's has had training to help them with this

Interviewer: How are you finding your time with the Year 10 student, Bella?

Bella: Um, she's really helpful because she's says I can talk to her about anything.

Interviewer: And how does that make you feel?

Bella: Quite happy, yeah.

As part of Poppy's new school routine, she had to walk to and back from school. With the change in weather, the loss of light in the late afternoons was something Pam and Paul (Poppy's parents) had to consider. This was a changed for the whole family. Pam explained in the next quotation that they had not thought about this. As a result of this, the person, from the borough, who had helped Poppy with her travel plans before school started returned and provided Poppy with some support on her journey home. This was also because of Poppy's eye condition, as she needed to become more familiar with the route when it was darker:

...he came back when it started to get dark and did a different route because she's walking with different friends so, he was very good at that, wasn't he? Yeah, that has been something we've all had to work together with as a family, and we sort of had to get used to that at the end of the day when it is darker and she's done a club and if someone's not walking with her, then we'll go meet her if she wants us to or talk to her as she's walking home. It's definitely something, which we probably didn't really think about because the primary school is just the next road and you always walked

to school with me, didn't you (*looking at Poppy*)? So that's been quite a big adjustment.  
(Pam, Poppy's mother)

Similarly, for Rebecca, with the change in season, she had to wear her hearing aid at school. The teacher at her school noted that Rebecca should also be moved to the front of her classes to support her with her hearing. Again, this type of help for Rebecca was lessening any concerns she may be experiencing in class with her hearing, which is described by Rachel in the next quotation:

...we did find that when Rebecca started wearing her hearing aid again in October that the teacher for the deaf advised her to be moved in certain classes and I passed that on to the SENCO. (Rachel, Rebecca's mother)

For Lucy's parents, they felt that they would not need to disclose any further details about Lucy's cleft, unless Lucy had expressed some concern. In the next excerpt, Luke (Lucy's father) directly asked Lucy about this, which demonstrated an open receptive interaction within the family microsystem:

Luke (father): We would have put down on the paperwork originally about the cleft but it's not the sort of thing that would have been passed on to the teachers as a pastoral need unless we had asked them to, so I think we felt at this stage we didn't really think it was necessary

Linda (mother): Yes, we didn't feel it was necessary

Luke (father): Unless we felt issues, were developing, but do you think you would agree Lucy, you were not telling us of any concerns or problems you were having about your cleft?

Lucy: No.

Similarly, Natalie had not felt the need to disclose further information with the school about Nathan's cleft, unless there was a cause for concern, explained in the next quotation:

...we didn't include that because we didn't feel it was necessary. If anything had



happened, then we would have, but it doesn't affect his learning or anything really. I mean if it had come up then perhaps, we would have gone and seen the school and talk about it then. (Natalie, Nathan's mother)

The children determined the accessing of these services, as both Natalie and Luke noted that their children had not needed any support, but if they had expressed this, they would have contacted the school. This demonstrated the force characteristics that Bronfenbrenner (2005) described when talking about the active child initiating the interactions with other, when required.

**6.5.4.2.4 Positive Reflections About Starting Secondary School.** In this subtheme, the children talk about how they felt about their school, reflecting back on how they were feeling before they started in August. This reflective thinking of how the start of the secondary school transition had been for the children and their families illustrated how these children had started to feel part of their new school microsystem, and had positively adapted to this new environment. For example, Bella's initial thoughts about secondary school had been that it would be unwelcoming for her, and her thinking at that time was that it may be a place where people are excluded. However, at this time she felt quite differently. She was inclined to group people according to where they were at lunch time, voicing this in the next quotation, that her school microsystem was a safe place:

...it's not that scary, I thought it would be people kind of ganging up on people, but it isn't, there's just people, like there's different groups, cause, um some people go up to the library, some people go by the canteen, they don't really talk, and they don't hurt anybody. (Bella)

For Rebecca, there was a sense of letting others know that secondary school was not as bad as it was anticipated to be. She acknowledged the relevance of being involved in clubs and how children's engagement in their school-work will develop into fun lessons in the next quotation:

I'd probably say don't be nervous, its actually not as bad as it seems, and once

you make friends and you start doing clubs and you start getting in to the lessons, it gets really fun. (Rebecca)

In the next quotation, Nathan's expression of how he felt about other children with a cleft starting secondary school was selfless. He described how important it was for others to know that making friends was important and that no one will think they are 'different', using the word, 'weird':

I think it's good because it will help people, the future generation with clefts because I don't want them to go to school, secondary school and not make any friends because they might think they're weird. (Nathan)

Being open and welcoming to others was part of Sophie's thoughts about starting secondary school. In the next quotation, she reflected on how the timing of meeting a new person, and them possibly becoming her friend, could alter and manifest into something meaningful:

I would say go into it with an open mind, um try out doing different things and talk to lots of different people even if you think they may not be good friends of yours, but it could be that in a month or two they're really your close, close friends, but they won't be if you don't talk to them. (Sophie)

The relevance of how time played a role for these children was discussed in this theme, particularly how the children reflected on their experiences. From Bronfenbrenner's PPCT model, time is the fourth element that presents itself as the child grows and develops. The longitudinal qualitative nature of this part of the research recognised the temporality of this transition, and how the relational exchanges were important during this process.

**6.5.4.3 Theme 3. Ownership of the Child's Visible Difference.** During these interviews, the children reflected on the experiences in secondary school, sharing and responding to questions and comments from other children about their visible differences. From time point one, the children had said that they were receptive to talking about their cleft, if asked, however they had not all experienced regular occurrences of needing to

explain this. This was partly due to previous experiences at primary school, as Nathan and Bella explained repeatedly (time point one), as other children had asked questions about their cleft. However, in secondary school, this was different. The children were in a new environment and it was clear from the family interview data that the children were learning how to manage their own responses about their cleft, and importantly choosing how to talk about it.

Understanding more about how these children with a cleft experienced the transition showed how they formed their own responses to others, which is part of the first subtheme, called, '*Managing personal responses to visible differences*', followed by what they thought it meant to have a cleft during the school transition, in the second subtheme, called, '*Reflecting on what it means to have a visible difference during the school transition*'. Each of these subthemes will be discussed next.

**6.5.4.3.1 Managing Personal Responses to Visible Differences.** This subtheme looks at how the children responded to others about their cleft in the school microsystem. Each child had their own response, and all the responses demonstrated how the children were acquiring their own manner of answering. In the first excerpt, Lucy and her parents talked about her response to another child during a PE lesson at school, explaining how she had responded at the time:

Lucy: Jenny, who's in my PE who I don't really like said, 'what's happened here?' (*pointing to her mouth*), and I said to her 'look it up on the internet' (*quiet laugh*)

Luke (father): Did you tell her why, what it was?

Lucy: Um, when I did tell her, she's like 'whatttt?' and I just said just go and look it up on the internet, I couldn't be bothered to explain it

Linda (mother): Would you have explained it if it was one of your friends though, not somebody you didn't like

Lucy: Ah, yes because they would be more knowing about me.

There was a turning point here for Lucy in her response to another child asking about her cleft because she did not want to explain what the cleft was to this other child. Lucy felt that

Jenny was not asking because she wanted to get to know Lucy. This showed how Lucy managed her own response, and how this response was what she decided was the best for her at this time. In time point one, Lucy's mother recalled an experience Lucy had had with another child, commenting on her nose and how this comment had made Lucy feel. In this interview, Lucy had formed her own strategy, as she was able to make choices about what to say, depending on who was asking, without the need to explain what her cleft was.

For Nathan's, his experience of talking about it led to the other student retelling their own story about an incident that had happened to them. He recalled this in the next quotation:

...basically, he asked me what the line was here (*pointing to his top lip*), and then I told him and then it turned into a massive conversation about how he was in Year 4 and how he tripped over and smashed his lip on a bench and cut it open, so yeah. (Nathan)

In the next quotation, Poppy mentioned that someone had asked her about the movement in her eyes and she had explained and moved on with the conversation:

...like one person's asked me why my eyes go back and forth and I've just told them and then just got on with it. (Poppy)

Poppy's parents discussed their links with the Cleft team, who had supported them in talking about Poppy's cleft with others. This links to Poppy's chronosystem, which includes the support from the Cleft team. The expression of using a 'matter of fact' explanation appeared to have worked for Poppy, explained in the excerpt:

Pam (mother): I think that's what the cleft team have always sort of asked us to do, is to make sure that Poppy has a really good response, so everybody knows if they ask and then they just move on

Paul (father): Just make it very matter of fact

Pam (mother): Yeah, she's always done it like that, we have as well.

Nathan's mother felt that this was a good stage to be talking to children with a cleft about their difference because of the school transition. She felt that for Nathan, leaving his primary school where everyone knew him, and entering a new environment when there may be other appearance concerns to consider, this was the exact time to create this conversation. She explained this in the next quotation:

I mean Nathan's never been one to talk about his cleft that much, I think in primary school it was a one form entry school, they all knew each other, they'd sort of grown up with each other, it's really only now where children are going to ask questions about what you look like and what's that, and the time of life there in, 11 and 12, when they're going to start looking at each other and body image and that sort of thing, so I suppose we have been a bit more aware of it coming up in conversation, a bit more, but not hugely. I think the study has made us think that perhaps other children aren't as lucky as Nathan, that perhaps he's so chilled about it, we've been very lucky because the repair is very good, so I would imagine a lot of children and adults may not even notice, I don't know, whereas other children might not have been so fortunate. (Natalie, Nathan's mother)

Furthermore, Nathan in the next quotation talked about how he spoke about his cleft with ease when on a camping trip, which was demonstrated in his colloquial dialogue about this experience:

Nathan: Um, no but when I went camping this weekend, someone asked me about it so yeah

Interviewer: And how did you respond to them asking you about it?

Nathan: Oh, I just told them what it is

Interviewer: And how did they respond to that?

Nathan: They just said 'oh, cool', that is exactly what they said.

There were some variations to how the children talked about their clefts and responded to others when asked about their clefts. As the children spoke about their experiences of responding to other children, it presented as a type of confidence that they had formed, and

were comfortable to talk about their appearance. It was positive and beneficial for some of these children to be able to realise that they could talk about their visible difference and that they were accepting of this.

**6.5.4.3.2 Reflecting on What it Means to Have a Visible Difference During the School Transition.** As the children spoke about what it means to have a visible difference when starting secondary school, they expressed this with comfort and ease about how they looked, even using humour to demonstrate this. Their thoughts were reflective of the demand characteristics noted by Bronfenbrenner (2005), expressing how other children at secondary school might react to their cleft and how they would invite children to ask about this.

In the next quotation, Lucy suggested that other children at school might look at a child with a cleft, but that this was the most anyone would do. Lucy conveyed a calm type feeling when talking about this:

...they would probably look at you a bit, but I think that that's the most that they would do. (Lucy)

Whereas, for Nathan, he felt that his cleft is a fact about him, referring to it as a 'fun fact'. In the quotation below, in Nathan's opinion the cleft was not something that anyone would think strangely about. This time he used the word 'weird' explaining that no one will think this about a child with a cleft because it is simply an enjoyable fact:

Well, about their cleft, no one will think they're weird, it's a fun fact, that's all it is, it's a fun fact about me. (Nathan)

Rebecca felt that having the opportunity to talk more about her cleft as a participant in the current research project encouraged her to feel more confident about talking to her friends about it. The more regular conversations about her visible difference had led Rebecca to feel more confident in confiding in others, and developing proximal processes, supported her discussions. This was evident in the next quotation:

I think it's made me more confident because like originally, I was very nervous to talk to my friends about it, but this has made me feel more confident about telling my friends. (Rebecca)

On the other hand, Poppy in the next quotation felt that she needed to explain more about her cleft, and had the opportunity to do this at the start of term (time point one). However, she expressed that other 'people' may want to explain this further, thinking about other's perceptions:

...I don't really feel the need to, but some people might want to establish that and ensure that everyone knows. (Poppy)

For Sophie, in the next quotation, she described a similar thread to what was expressed in the first time point when some of the participants talked about how they had to keep explaining what their cleft was, and it was easier to talk to everyone about this. Sophie decided to do this:

I did end up talking to everyone about it because there were some people asking me, and I don't mind, but it becomes annoying having to keep explaining, so I just told everyone. (Sophie)

This is a clear indication of Sophie using demand characteristics encouraging others to ask her about her cleft. The idea of other children not knowing and her having to explain repeatedly was more frustrating for her.

### ***Reflection 15***

For me as the interviewer and observer during these interviews, I found the manner in which these children talked about their clefts and the decisions they made when discussing them with others to be confident and relevant to their past few months at their new schools. At the start of this transition process, some of these children were happy to talk to others about their cleft, or explain when asked, but this sense of comfort shifted during

the second and third time point as they needed to navigate other concerns in the school and peer microsystems, such as, friendship changes, homework demands, new routines, etc. To me, the engagement of the children with their environment was facilitated by how they were experiencing and engaging with it.

**6.5.4.4 Summary of Time Point Four.** This was the final time point for this study. The interviews included the parent/s and the child. Most relevant to this phase was the reduced worries that the families felt compared to the first time point, and for some of these children, a sense of belonging was developing in their school microsystem. The need for the children to be agentic in their role was relevant because of the shared experiences between the home, and school, microsystems. The school microsystem was relevant to this transition because it facilitated peer interaction and friendship formation, both important proximal processes for children's development (Bronfenbrenner, 2005).

## **6.6 Conclusion**

The aim of this study was to explore the processes that are involved in the enactment of resilience among children with a cleft starting secondary school. This included the protective mechanisms (Rutter, 1987), and the development of proximal processes (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). Six children and their families were included in this study and were followed through the first term of secondary school from August 2018 to January 2019. The results suggest an overview of three key findings; Firstly, the new proximal processes developing for the children, particularly in their peer group; next the identification of some of the protective mechanisms occurring for the children; and thirdly, there were connections (links) starting to form as the children moved between the microsystems accessing resources. These findings will be discussed next.

### ***6.6.1 Proximal processes***

Proximal processes are the regularly occurring activities that vary because of the individual and the context (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). It was evident from the findings in time point two and three that the children's peer microsystem started to play an important role in the facilitation of new proximal processes at school. One of these proximal processes was linked to the school clubs - the combination of meeting new children while interacting in an



enriched activity supported the children's adjustment, and enabled them to develop new skills such as, Nathan's break dancing and Rebecca's peer mentoring in their school microsystem. This directly relates to the process element in the PPCT model, as the child engages in learning new skills, and inviting reciprocal interactions (Bronfenbrenner, 1999). It was evident that by attending these lunchtime clubs and extra-curricular classes, the child was very active in making new links in the school microsystem. These classes set in motion new proximal processes, provided them with a sense of belonging to the new school microsystem.

Another proximal process that was evident through parts of the time points were the continued micro-communications between the children and their parents. The children talked about their day-to-day exchanges with their parents, recalling events occurring at school and new opportunities that the school afforded them, for example Rebecca was involved in a sports leadership group, Nathan was asked to perform at a showcase event, Poppy was chosen to act in the school play, and Bella tried out for her netball team (Time point 4, see p. 174). These experiences were reflected on and shared between the home and the school by the child. The parent's engagement with their children during this process was evident in how they encouraged their children to participate in new activities, specifically Rachel (Rebecca's mother) with her sporting opportunity and Pam and Paul (Poppy's parents), who were keen to see Poppy perform. These everyday achievements, and key information about school events and activities were couriered home by the children, who acted as a key source of 'current news' and issues from school, joining up their school and home microsystems.

### ***6.6.2 Protective Mechanisms***

One of the initial protective mechanisms seen from the results of this study was the 'reducing of the stockpile of worries' (Rutter, 1987). The parent's role in reducing the stockpile was evident in the first time point, before the children entered the new school microsystem, for example, when Lucy's parents contacted the school to request that she have one of her friends from her guide group in her form tutor class. This was because Lucy was worried about not knowing anyone and her parents felt this would help. Another example, which lessened the stockpile for Sophie was the decision her family made to move home to be closer to the school that she had chosen to attend. Sophie had achieved a

scholarship and decided which school she wanted to attend, but this meant that the whole family needed to move and her mother (Sally) was keen to support this move and give her daughter this opportunity. It also meant uprooting the younger brother and rearranging the parents work schedules to reduce any concern that Sophie had about her school choice. The idea of the transition affect on the family overall because of the change to roles and daily routine patterns has been highlighted by Bronfenbrenner (1986).

Another protective mechanism that became very evident in the analysis for this chapter focused on the peers, and the role of the new peer group in providing the children with a sense of belonging to their new school. This sense of belonging was important to their well-being and motivation to attend school regularly. This also supported the children's sense of a secure base, which is another protective mechanism, (Rutter, 1987) as both Rebecca and Bella felt that their friends were important because their friendships increased their own confidence and provided a source of support at school (Theme 1.1 & 1.3). The literature suggests that this sense of a secure base for the children reassures and renders a safe exploration of the wider world (Bowlby, 1998). The prominent role and significance of *having* a friend in secondary school was evident in the data analysis, and meeting new peers and developing friendships were facilitated at school in the 'in-between spaces' and during the school run clubs.

### ***6.6.3 Emerging Thoughts about the Links in the Resilience Process***

The longitudinal design of this study allowed us to see the child's transition to secondary school as a process, and gain an understanding of how the child played an active role throughout. From the start of this study, the heightened concerns and expectations of the child together with the family were evident before entering the school microsystem. This study has shown how the secondary school transition is a process of change for the whole family and that the child needs to be equipped to negotiate and navigate these new experiences and routines. At the first time point, it was clear that the planning and preparing for these children starting secondary school was a joint approach with their parents. and would be a transition experienced by the whole family. These expectations of this new microsystem highlighted the preparation and plans that some family's made prior to school starting. Secondary school transitions start at the application stage, when the child and their parents begin thinking about which school to attend (Jindal-Snape et al., 2019). This applied

to some of these families placing emphasis on the choice of school, which they wanted, such as Sophie, and the type of school that was needed, for example, Rebecca's parents. Sophie applied for her school because of own school achievements. Whilst, Rebecca's parents felt that the school outside of their allocated borough would be better for their daughter because of her hearing needs. This led to a successful appeal process for Rebecca and her parents.

The children's microsystems were starting to connect through regular communications between the home and school microsystems, often concerning the new peer group. For some of the children, this highlighted how the children and their family had developed a family philosophy or ethos, which was employed during the transition, which seems to vary between families. For example, Becky's mother encouraged a sense of 'trying' with her school work, whereas Lucy's parents took a more 'hands off' approach encouraging Lucy's independence (see subtheme 1.2 *Activating Family Strategies*).

I started to reflect on the ongoing day-to-day interactions (proximal processes) between the parent and the child discussing the school day, and how as their experiences unfolded they formed part of the resilience process. This was because the home and school links were developing for some of these families, with the children playing an active role in the accessing of resources between the microsystems. This was assisting the adaptive processes of the children during the school transition, such as the caregiver-child relationships, the regulation of emotions, and the motivation for learning (Masten, 2000).

Whilst the children continued to engage with the new school microsystem, the parents were also seen as part of these links because of their vigilance and continual monitoring of the child's routines – this could be seen as a type of protection which supported the children when and if they needed this. This increased the children's sense of well-being, highlighting their engagement in the school microsystem and the ongoing communications between the systems.

## **6.7 Limitations**

Since this was a longitudinal qualitative study, which included four time points, there was a large amount of data, which made the analysis time consuming and labour-intensive. However, the design was valuable in using Bronfenbrenner's bioecological PPCT model and was well suited to these real-world situations and experiences (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). Another limit to this study concerned how generalisable the results of the study were,

given that there were six families in the sample. However, this is not the aim of qualitative research, and the rapport built between the families and the researcher was relevant to understanding more about the children's transition experiences in considerable depth and detail.

For future research, the design should consider the delay in time for parts of the online snapshot interviews. The interviews were characterised by very staccato answers from the children, because of the text-based nature of the interviews. The text based replied between interviewer and child participant also added to the fragmentary nature of these data. However, the longitudinal design provided this a longer view of the transition for these children and during the final family interviews, I was able to ask them about any previous questions that were not fully answered, or clarify their responses. It seems, therefore that the snapshot interviews work best in conjunction with other methods.

### **6.8 The Next Study**

The longitudinal design afforded an overview of secondary school transition, which started as a process before the child entered the new school microsystem. It has helped me recognise some of the links which were forming in the mesosystem as part of the resilience process. I began to understand that there was a type of fit occurring for the child between the school and the home, for example, when thinking about the initial expectations experienced at the beginning, then, the more regular communication and proximal processes developing, and the navigation of the school microsystem. The accessing of resources by the children between the home and the school was also important, and acknowledged by the parents through careful monitoring and vigilance over time.

In the next study, I would have the opportunity to take a more detailed look at how the child engages with the social context of the school, including some ethnographic work and meeting peers and teachers. I was also interested to understand more about the sense of movement of the child between the microsystems, and ways in which the children in the case studies access of resources at home and school, in order to develop my ideas about resilience as a process further.

## **Chapter 7:**

### **Two Case Studies Following Children with a Cleft through their Secondary School Transition Year, Exploring the Process of Resilience**

#### **7.1 Introduction**

In the previous chapter, the group school transition study explored the enactment of the resilience process by analysing multiple sources of qualitative data, which documented the experiences of six children and their families over the course of the first school term (August to January). For this chapter, two case study participants were followed for nine months of the school transition year (October to June), in order to understand the children's experiences and interactions in their immediate microsystems, including the school, and the home. Both case study participants were born with a cleft and were joined by their families in parts of the study.

#### **7.2 Background**

In following these two children over the course of nine months during the secondary school transition year, this study used a longitudinal qualitative mixed method design in accordance with the group school transition study, and included a visit to both of their schools using a focused ethnographic approach. Delving into the experiences of these two case studies during this time afforded an opportunity to observe and consider the underlying processes as they happened. Similar to the previous chapter, this research employed time points at different phases of the school year to collect data and continued to adopt Bronfenbrenner's PPCT model, as the theoretical underpinning for the study.

##### ***7.2.1 Resilience***

For these case studies, the focus was on the enactment of the resilience process. I was interested in finding out more about the social contexts which the child engages with, considering how the context may shape the resilience process during the transition year. Previous writings (Masten et al., 2008, Wang & Gordon, 1994) have suggested that effective schools and positive school experiences are relevant in the promotion of resilience. Furthermore, the importance of teachers and other school staff has been seen as important

to high-risk children through the use of nurturing learning skills, and self-regulation of behaviour which support adaptation (Masten et al., 2000).

Bronfenbrenner (1979) noted that children develop in the context of different systems, which he saw as nested systems, which includes the family, and the school microsystem. It was important to have a more detailed understanding of the school context, and therefore, this study employed the use of a focused ethnography to observe these two case study children over two days at their school. This also included an interview with their teachers and their peers. The home microsystem was also included by means of family interviews at the start and end of the study, along with regular snapshot interviews with the child.

### ***7.2.2 Focused ethnography***

Ethnography has its roots in anthropology, which has moulded the understandings and expectations of this method (Reeves et al., 2008). The roots of these anthropological studies of small, rural societies can be traced back to the early 1900s (Reeves et al., 2008). New types of ethnographic research are being designed, which allow qualitative researchers to adapt to changing times, purposes and societies. These methodological adaptations aimed to include different ways of thinking about qualitative research, and were most apt for the ethnographic analysis of complex societies (Knoblauch, 2005). However, definitions of ethnography continue to focus on cultural understandings and descriptions, not the form and amount of data collected (Knoblauch, 2005). Ethnography is concerned with gathering data through participant-observation in a natural setting, for example data from the two secondary schools which the child participates (Ferguson, 2016).

When thinking about *school culture*, Stoll (1998) noted that each school has a different reality or mindset of school life, and is unique because of how it is situated. A school's culture is often shaped by its history, context and the people in it (Gaffney et al., 2004; Stoll, 1998). This means that the school culture for each school needs be considered, thinking about the context, children, staff, values and school structure during the ethnography. By adopting Bronfenbrenner's (1978) perspective, this was helpful to my research, because my thinking led me to seek to understand more about the school microsystems, and the need for direct contact with each participant's school.

### ***7.2.2 Living with a Cleft***

In previous chapters (the literature review, p. 26 and the group study, p. 101), there was a review of the literature about children with a visible difference and how this impacts on starting secondary school. This subsection continues to consider the literature for individuals born with a visible difference. In Thompson and Kent's (2001) review of the psychological research about people dealing and adjusting to disfiguring conditions (including a cleft), they found that there was a lack of longitudinal research in this area. People with a visible disfigurement are often met with negative and intrusive reactions from others (Thompson & Kent, 2001). Rumsey and Harcourt (2003) have considered the different ways used to explain people's experiences of living with a visible difference, suggesting that appearance anxiety is often the result of a perceived stigma from the individual caused by social norms. The experience of school transition results in many new encounters for the child in the new microsystem, and necessitates some adaptations to the new school rules, and learning about new routines and the school culture (Jindal-Snape et al., 2019). It also places emphasis on understanding more about the context that the case study children engage with, and the links between the home and the school that were seen in the group transition study.

### ***7.2.5 Study Research Aims and Questions***

The present study aimed to build on the previous research findings exploring the processes that are involved in the enactment of resilience for two children with a cleft during the secondary school transition year. These case studies include analysing multiple sources of qualitative data from the children, their peers, their teachers and ethnographic data as well as from their families, which helped the researcher to engage with the data and research questions. The research questions for the case studies are:

1. What processes are involved in the enactment of resilience among children with a cleft starting secondary school (can we recognise or name these steps or links during this process)?
2. How does the social context in which the child engages shape resilience during the secondary school transition year?

## 7.3 Method

### 7.3.1 Design

The study employed a longitudinal qualitative mixed method case study design, which included two case studies with three time points for the data collection. This method was devised in accordance with Bronfenbrenner's PPCT model, considering aspects of *time*, which requires a longitudinal study with at least two measurement points (Eriksson & Ghazinour, 2018). The two case studies were considered because they enabled me to explore the differences and similarities between the cases, and facilitated a more detailed understanding of the enactment of resilience for these children. More specifically the focus of the study looked at how the contexts in which the child engaged shaped the process of resilience.

### 7.3.2 Participants

The aim was to recruit families through CLAPA, who were able to advertise and target those families who had a child with a cleft starting secondary school. The child and their family needed to be available to participate in the research for the duration of the academic school year (September 2017 to July 2018). Two families were recruited during September of that year and were involved in the study from October to the following June. Both families were recruited through CLAPA via a social media site. Each child and the members of their family were given pseudonyms during the writing up of this study. The first case study is known as the '*G family*' and all the members in this family were given a pseudonym starting with the letter, 'G'. Likewise, the second case study were known as the '*H family*'.

During the initial telephone contacts with the mothers for each case, the appropriateness of the participants was assessed. This included checking for adherence to inclusion criteria ensuring that the children and families who were not currently in counselling or therapy for issues relating to the child's well being or schooling. Because the research was qualitative, it was crucial that the inclusion criteria for this sample group were purposeful, seeking to answer the research question adequately (Marshall, 1996). An information sheet about the study was given to each case study to inform their decision (see



Appendix I, p. 424). After two weeks, the two families were re-contacted by the researcher, and the first family interview was arranged.

**7.3.2.1 The G Family.** The participating child was the 11-year-old girl called Grace, who had started secondary school and spoke English as her first and only language. This family was of British and Scottish White background, living in Britain. Her mother, Gina, described Grace's cleft lip and palate condition as a cleft of the hard and soft palate and listed up to six operations that Grace had undergone since birth. Other than the cleft lip and palate repairs, Grace had teeth removed to accommodate the bone graft at age eight and a fistula and nose revision (Oronasal fistula<sup>7</sup>) at 9-year's old. Grace's parents were married, her mother defined herself as a 'stay at home mum,' and her father was an engineer. Grace had a younger sister, aged seven, who did not have a cleft and was in primary school.

**7.3.2.2 The H Family.** The participating child was an 11-year-old boy called Hayden, who had started secondary school and spoke English as his first language. Hayden's mother, Helen described Hayden as mixed race, and as having a bilateral cleft lip and palate of the hard and soft palate. Hayden also had Van der Woude Syndrome<sup>8</sup>, which can affect children with a cleft. Helen recounted six surgeries that Hayden had undergone since birth, including a pit repair at three years old and a bone graft at nine years old. Helen, who did not provide details of her occupation on the demographic form, was of White and Black Caribbean ethnicity, whereas Hayden's father was of British background and was retired. They were married and currently residing in Britain. Hayden had an older sister (aged 23) living independently and a younger brother, aged eight living at home, attending primary school. Neither sibling had a cleft or any other facial visible difference.

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<sup>7</sup> Oronasal fistula (ONF) is the commonest complication associated with cleft palate surgery. The main symptoms associated with ONF are nasal regurgitation of food matter and hypernasality of voice (Sadhu, 2009)

<sup>8</sup> Van der Woude syndrome is a condition that affects the development of the face. Affected individuals usually have depressions (pits) near the center of the lower lip, which may appear moist due to the presence of salivary and mucous glands in the pits (MedlinePlus, 2020).

### 7.3.3 Materials and Procedure

The data was collected at three different time points during the academic school calendar, beginning in October 2017. In the table below, the time points and the types of data collected are shown to explain when this happened, and each time point is then discussed in turn.

**Table 17**

*Time Points, Data Collected and Locations for the Case Studies*

Time point	Data collected	Location
1		
October, November December 2017, January 2018	Initial family semi-structured interviews (Skype/face-to-face) Online snapshot interviews with the child only	Family home  Online synchronous (Participant's home)
2		
February, March, April 2018	Focused ethnography: Teacher and child interviews Peer and child interviews Ethnographic field notes	Grace and Hayden's Secondary Schools
3		
May, June, July 2018	Final family interviews (Skype) Online interviews with the child only	Family home Online synchronous (Participant's home)

**7.3.3.1 Time Point One.** Time point one took place during the first few months of the study (October 2017 - January 2018). This included the initial interviews with the two case study families and the two online snapshot interviews with Grace and Hayden. This time point began in October 2017, just after the academic school year had started and was completed in January 2018. This was partly because of the participant recruitment process

for the case studies starting at a later time than planned. Time point 1 was particularly important for the researcher to be able to develop a rapport with the participants (and their families). This was helpful for the next part of the study, since both families assisted the researcher in making contact with each of the participant's schools for the focused ethnography at time point two.

**7.3.3.1.1 Initial Family Interviews.** At the start of this time point, the semi-structured family interviews were conducted with the participants and their families at their homes. The families were each sent a study pack, which included a consent form (see Appendix L, p. 429), and the interview schedule (see Appendix P, p 441). The families had time to discuss any queries they had about the interview before consenting to the study. For Grace and her family, the initial interview occurred via Skype, and was arranged at a suitable time for her and the family. Skype was used because of the location of the family to the researcher, acting as an efficient tool for conducting the interview (Lo Iacono et al., 2016). For Hayden and his family, the interview took place face-to-face, at their family's home.

**7.3.3.1.2 Online Snapshot Interviews.** During the time point there were two online snapshot interviews between the child participants and the researcher. These were conducted online via WhatsApp or Facebook messenger, with the participant's parent aware of the time and date for this interview. Conducting qualitative interviews online meant that the face-to-face contact was absent. This was part of the reason for doing the family interview first so that the researcher had time to meet the participants and their families to establish rapport and to discuss the nature of these online interactions together. James and Busher (2009) noted that for online interviews, the space between participants answers and questions may be delayed or interrupted when conducting these interviews, therefore these interviews were arranged at specific times, and the participants had access to their parent's devices.

**7.3.3.1.3 Interview Schedules.** The interview schedules (see Appendix Q, p. 443) explored the experiences of the child during the school transition, beginning with general questions that introduce the school related questions. Examples of interview questions included:

- How are you feeling about starting at your new secondary school?
- Can you tell me about your primary school experience?

This follows a format which leads to such responses from the child that pave the way for open ended answers that elicit rich data in the form of personal experiences. In the table below, the format for these interviews is provided.

**Table 18**

*Time Point One Interviews*

Case study participants	Type of interview	Length
Grace (child), Gina (mother)	Skype interview	35:00
Grace	Online snapshot interview_1	38:00
Grace	Online snapshot interview_2	32:00
Hayden (child), Helen (mother)	Face-to-face interview	54:00
Hayden	Online snapshot interview_1	24:00
Hayden	Online snapshot interview_2	38:00

**7.3.3.2 Time Point Two.** This involved a *focused ethnography* in which the I visited the participant's two schools and conducted two semi-structured interviews (with the child and their teacher and with the child and a peer) and observed the school day with the participants. Using this type of ethnography was helpful as the observer, to study the participants in their naturalistic settings and situations. I aimed to be exploratory and inductive in the research. Part of the focus for this approach was on the second research question exploring the social context which the child engages with and how this shapes resilience during the secondary school transition year.

In communication with each school, I was assisted with the contact details from Helen and Gina (mothers of the child participants). The contact person for each school was sent a letter explaining what the research was and how the participants were involved. For Grace, this contact was her guidance teacher, Mrs Green and for Hayden, it was his Head of Year. The letter (see Appendix O, p. 440) asked if the researcher could visit the schools at their convenience to observe the participant in class during the normal running of the school day and conduct the interviews. Each interview and the school observation will be explained next.

**Reflection 16**

This study was designed prior to the group study. However, the recruitment process hindered the plans from the initial study, and a case study design was reformulated. This meant that I was able to work very closely with these two participants and their families for up to nine months of the school academic year, getting to know these two families and observe some of their school experiences. The focused ethnography was not originally planned, but it formed an integral part of the case studies, as it afforded me an 'inside view' of the participant's school microsystem and how their day-to-day school routines were experienced. At the end of this data collection phase, the decision to try and recruit more families the following year was made because the research had set out to understand the process of resilience for children with a visible difference, who were starting secondary school. The two case studies provided some understanding of the resilience processes in the second part of the transition school year, but it was still important to capture the very beginnings of the transition to answer the research questions. More detail about this can be found in the methodology chapter (p. 48).

**7.3.3.2.1 School Observation.** The researcher also observed the participants (Hayden and Grace) in some of their lessons. The duration of the observations took place over two days, which included the interviews with the peers and teachers at the school. The focused ethnography was conducted to contribute to a deeper understanding of the process of resilience by observing the interactions of the child in the school context. This was the best option as this type of research design would incorporate the collection and analysis of data and was better able to be evaluated in terms of understanding and theory continuum (Ridder, 2017). Furthermore, in qualitative research, the observation is a data collection procedure and the field notes are the data (Merriam, 2009). Because there were many people in multiple settings, it was not possible to observe all of the activities and interactions that occurred. I focused on the student for most of the time, but I also had the opportunity to observe their peers and teachers. While I was observing I made extensive field notes, based on the recommendations of Taylor and Bogdan (1998) including both descriptive and reflective observations. The descriptive part of the field notes recorded detail about the physical setting, the people involved in the interactions observed, and accounts of the

interactions observed, and some dialogue Please refer to the observation field notes from each case study school for as an overview of this data (see p. 703 for transcription section).

**7.3.3.2.2 Interview with the Teacher and the Participant (child).** During the focused ethnography, the researcher had asked the school contact if the participants could choose a teacher to be interviewed with, to encourage an open comfortable setting for the child and the teacher. Grace chose Mrs Green, her guidance teacher. The length of Grace and her teacher's interview was 34 minutes and occurred during the two days that the researcher spent at Grace's school. However, Hayden was not able to select his first choice of teacher, due to a conflict with teaching times because he had wanted to interview with his Spanish teacher. For Hayden, the interview was completed with an alternative teacher Ms Hill, his Geography, History and RS teacher (learning area called, *Explore*). Unfortunately, Hayden could not attend the full interview because he had to be in class - this was identified on the transcript (see p. 703).

The interview schedule for the teacher and participant was indicative and designed to include questions about the school transition and school life, peer groups and school activities, the experiences of the child at school with a cleft (looking different), and questions about resilience and school life (see Appendix S, p 451). Some examples of these questions were:

- How do you feel about your school?
- Can you tell me about your friends at school?
- Has anyone asked you about your cleft?
- What do you understand about resilience?

In the table below, the demographic details for the teachers are provided.

**Table 19***Teachers Demographic Information*

Case study	Teacher	Teacher demographic details:				
		Gender Age	Ethnic origin	Marital status	Education qualification	Worked in education
Grace	Mrs Green	Female, 49	Scottish	Divorced	PGCE	15 years
Hayden	Ms Hill	Female, 53	Caribbean	Single	PGCE	31 years

**7.3.3.2.3 Interview with the Peer/s and the Participant (child).** For the interview with the participant and their peer/s, the mothers provided the researcher with a contact at each school. The researcher made contact via email sending a letter explaining the research and the child's involvement in it. The schools were asked to contact the peer's parent or guardian to ask for consent. These parents were provided with a consent form to sign (see Appendix L, p. 429).

Grace chose to conduct the interview with two of her friends, Georgia who was a friend from primary school and had known her since nursery school and then Gabby who was a new friend, someone she had met at secondary school. Both children gave verbal assent to participate in the research study. Whilst Hayden chose to interview with his friend, Harry. Hayden knew Harry before starting at secondary school, as their parents knew each other but they did not attend the same primary school. They had started to become friends at secondary school.

The interview schedule for the peer's and the participants was indicative of the questions that were asked in the online snapshot questions to continue with this line of enquiry related to the research questions about the enactment of resilience looks for a child with a visible difference during the school transition. Here are some examples of the questions asked:

- Can you tell me about the move from primary to secondary school?

- Do you think it matters to have friends in school?
- What do you think will happen if you didn't have friends?
- How do you think children are treated when they look different?

This follows a format which leads to such responses from the child that pave the way for open ended answers that elicit rich data in the form of personal experiences. The time point was then analysed accordingly. In the next table, the data sources from the focused ethnography are provided with the length for each interview.

**Table 20**

*Time Point Two Interviews*

Case study	Type of interview	Length
Grace (child) with peers	Face-to face interviews	30:00
Grace with teacher (Mrs Green)	Face-to face interviews	34:00
School observations	Observation notes	
Hayden (child) with peers	Face-to-face interviews	23:00
Hayden with teacher (Ms Hill)	Face-to-face interviews	27:00
School observations	Observation notes	

**7.3.3.3 Time Point Three.** At this time point, the participants had been involved in two more online snapshot interviews with the researcher and the final family interviews were conducted. The family interviews included the participants, Hayden and Grace and their mothers. Both family interviews were conducted via Skype.

**7.3.3.3.1 Final Family Interviews.** Nearing the end of the transition year to secondary school (June 2018), both case study children and their families took part in the final family interview. Similar to the first family interview, the consent form and interview questions were posted and emailed to the families to look at and sign prior to the interview taking



place. The interview schedule (see Appendix R, p. 451) for this was indicative of the initial family interview questions, with a focus on the experiences over the course of the year including peer groups, their cleft, and the transition in general. Examples of these are:

- Can you think back to your very first day or first few weeks when you started in August/September? How do you feel now when you think about that time?’ and
- How important are the friends you’ve made in secondary school to you?
- What about the enormity of the school and moving from room to room with different teachers for each hour? How did you feel about this?

Both of these interviews were conducted via Skype, as this was most convenient to the families.

**7.3.3.3.2 Online Snapshot Interviews.** The same method as used in time point one was applied here for the online snapshot interviews with each child. During these online interviews, the questions were related to their experiences at school, their peers, and life at home (see Appendix Q, p. 443). The data relating to this time point was analysed using thematic analysis. In the table below, the format for these interviews is provided.

**Table 21**

*Time Point Three Interviews*

Case study	Type of interview	Length
Grace (child), Gina (mother)	Skype interview	34:00
Grace	Online snapshot interview	24:00
Hayden (child), Helen (mother)	Skype interview	31:00
Hayden	Online snapshot interview	22:00

## 7.4 Analytic Procedure

In accordance with the school group study, the analytic procedure used thematic analysis and reflection to analyse the data collected. However, this study also employed the use of a focused ethnographic approach to provide an in-depth understanding of the school transition experiences for these two case study participants. Please see Chapter 6 (p. 113) for more detail about the thematic analysis procedure. The themes discussed below therefore include data from family interviews, snapshot interviews with the child, interviews with child and teacher, interviews with child and peers.

## 7.5 Results and Discussion

### 7.5.1 Time Point One

For the case study analysis, a similar procedure was adopted to the group study in chapter 6, where I identified specific time points for the data collection. Time point one includes three different stages of data collection. Firstly, the family interviews which occurred in October 2017 with the child and their mothers, next the first online interviews with the child in November 2017, and then the second online interview in January 2018. This time point happened after the two participants (Grace and Hayden) had started secondary school and were thinking about the school transition with their mothers. A detailed explanation about the data sources for this time point was provided in the method section (see p. 217).

The TA identified two main themes from this time point; Firstly, '*The anticipated shift experienced by the mother and the child adjusting to the new school microsystem*', which was about how the mother and child had felt about the transition and some of the worries that accompanied this new change, then the second main theme is called, '*Varying experiences of a child with a cleft at school*', and looks at how the participants had dealt with some encounters with other children at school during the first few weeks of the initial transition to secondary school. Table 22 below provides an overview of the themes and subthemes for this time point after which each theme will be discussed in turn.

**Table 22***Time Point One's Main Themes and Subthemes*

Themes	Subthemes
1. The anticipated shift experienced by the mother and child adjusting to the new school microsystem	1.1. A sense of connectedness felt at primary school 1.2. Uncertainties about the new unknown school microsystem
2. Varying experiences of a child with a cleft at school	

**7.5.1.1 Theme 1. The Anticipated Shift Experienced by the Mother and Child Adjusting to the New School Microsystem.** From the onset of the case study family interviews, it was apparent that the mothers from both families were active participants in the school transition with their children. This transition was an adjustment for the whole family, in particular, the mother's sense of loss and adjustment during this time. One particular difficulty for both mothers was this sense of loss they experienced during the transition, because their children's primary school experience was over.

In their research about secondary school transitions, Lucey and Reay (2000) suggested that with any sense of loss, there tends to be a process of change. The change for these two case study families was the shift from one known setting (primary school microsystem) to the unknown environment (secondary school microsystem). This movement was not only about the change to their school location, but it involved a shift to their routines, a shift in their peer groups, a shift to new teachers, new school rules and regulations. In the first subtheme the mothers and children reflect on the past experiences of school life, providing some context of their lives prior to starting secondary school. This is called, '*A sense of connectedness felt at primary school*'. The second subtheme is concerned with the anticipated worries about the new microsystem, called, '*Uncertainties about the new unknown school microsystem*'.

**7.5.1.1.1 A Sense of Connectedness Felt at Primary School.** Both mothers expressed positive thoughts about their children's primary school experiences. Gina and Helen felt that their children were familiar with the primary school microsystem because they had attended since nursery school. Grace and Hayden knew everybody at their primary school, and everybody knew them. This subtheme illustrated how these mothers and children were thinking about the connections and experiences from their primary school life, and how the children had been accepted in this environment. The acceptance of their cleft was part of their primary school experience. This relates to the familiarity that comes from 'being known' by a community of people who have known the child and the family since reception. This sense of 'being known' was also connected to a sense of acceptance felt.

In the quotations below, both Gina and Helen recalled how their children had started their school years attending the nursery that was linked to the school and continued at this setting, with everyone knowing each other, providing a sense of safety and familiarity:

Grace had been there from the nursery in school so she, all 13 of them had been there since they were 3 and then she went through the nursery, through primary school, they all knew each other. (Gina, mother)

...because in the primary school he was at, he was there from nursery all the way up so he knew everyone, so it was easy for him... (Helen, mother)

Gina and Helen felt that the time spent in primary school was valuable to Grace and Hayden, placing emphasis on knowing others and the regular attendance at this environment. This was a reminder of the child as an active participant in their environment, which is a key focus area for Bronfenbrenner's (2005) theory.

In the next quotation, Grace noted that she knew everybody, as well as having good friends:

I had close friends, but I also knew everybody. (Grace, mother)

Due to the regular interactions with everyone at primary school, Grace, was very familiar with this environment, which created this sense of 'being known' by the school community,

increased by the length of time Grace spent at the same school. Furthermore, both mothers reflected on past memories of their children's primary school experiences in the early years, when Grace and Hayden were given the opportunity to explain what their cleft was. Interestingly, both children had been involved in designing a leaflet or information sheet, which could explain what a cleft was to the other children in their class.

Gina recalled how the opportunity to take in a baby picture of Grace had created the moment for Grace to share what her cleft was:

...in primary 1, you took in your collage, because you had to take in a baby picture and the children were only 5 and didn't realise there was anything wrong, cause they'd known her from nursery, so they didn't realise until she took her baby pictures in, but you'll probably not remember that. (Gina, mother)

Similarly, this type of 'show and tell' exercise presenting pictures of themselves as babies, had also happened for Hayden. Helen recalled this as a turning point for Hayden at primary school. She felt that this was the moment when the other children could understand why Hayden looked and sounded different, and that the understanding of this led to a better connection for Hayden with the other children:

When, um, in year 1 you know the children were talking about their differences and they had show and tell and he bought, well he had this book that I had made, so I did this for him (*pointing to the book that was on the coffee table*) him so that the children can see how he was born, so that was such a great ice-breaker, for the kids and the teachers as well. After that it was like okay so this was when you were born and its fixed now and that's it, so yeah just showed the picture and that was it, he was accepted straight away when he showed the picture, they did not know too much about it then, but this is how he got it, and it was like okay and this is what made him connect with the rest of the children, being different because at the beginning the speech was you could not understand him too clearly and then he bought this in and it was like 'okay, now we understand'. (Helen, mother)

Helen conveyed her commitment and dedication to creating this book for Hayden, so that it would help explain why he looked and sounded different. Helen clearly thought carefully about her role in easing the pathway for Hayden, compiling this book to allow the whole school community to understand who Hayden was. This was an example of direct intervention here, as Helen joined the microsystems between home and school to increase the connection and acceptance for her son.

***Reflection 17***

During the interview, Gina was able to share this story with Grace about how she had created this collage of pictures about Grace since she was a baby to take to nursery. Gina felt that the other children were not aware of Grace's cleft until they saw the pictures. Hayden's mother created a picture book of Hayden so that it might help Hayden to explain his cleft to others at school, including the children and staff. Helen felt this was helpful to the other children and teachers because they could understand why Hayden looked and sounded different.

She mentioned how he was 'accepted straight away' because of the book. In her opinion, the book provided the other children with an explanation of why Hayden was different, and the children had accepted this. Subsequently, Helen felt that the other children at his primary school began to be attentive and listen more carefully to Hayden when he spoke because his speech was unclear. In the next quotation, Helen described her thoughts about how the other children adapted to accommodate his needs:

What I did notice that they took their time to actually listen when he spoke, so it wasn't always like asking him at the beginning can you repeat, can you repeat can you repeat, it was like okay we get you, so they adapted to suit him, yeah instead of him adapting to suit them. (Helen, mother)

The mothers' views about their children's sense of connectedness to their primary school experience indicated the familiarity felt in this microsystem. In this subtheme, these shared narratives were discussed. Grace and Hayden did not recall the experiences of taking the photo explanations of their cleft to school, but their mothers felt this was important to their

primary school experience because the other children and teachers could see and understand their differences. This theme provided some historical context to these case studies, highlighting how both parents were part of this transition.

Moreover, this main theme identified that sense of connectedness and ‘being known’ in the primary school microsystem that Grace and Hayden both felt. It also indicated a type of loss for the children moving away from this familiar setting, and the interventions the mothers had put in place during this time. For example, the collage and the book were created to support link the school and home microsystems. Both families then went on to discuss the start at secondary school and how they felt about this next step, which is the focus of the next subtheme.

**7.5.1.1.2 *Uncertainties About the New Unknown School Microsystem.*** In a similar manner to the children in the group study (Chapter 6), Grace and Hayden both expressed some uncertainty about the start of the secondary school transition. These uncertainties focused on concerns about getting lost at school, and the amount of new people they would be meeting, as compared to the known environment of primary school. In addition, both mothers further expressed how they were particularly concerned about their child’s visible difference in this new microsystem. Therefore, this subtheme explores these uncertainties from both the child and the mother’s point of views and is called, ‘*Uncertainties about the new unknown school microsystem*’.

In the first quotation, Gina confirmed with Grace about how she a little worried because of the size of the school, explaining how Grace had come from a small primary, where everyone knew her:

...a little bit like Grace, anxious, because of the school that she was at, I mean there were only 13 in her whole class and she was moving up to about 2500, I think. So, Grace had been there from the nursery in school, so she, all 13 of them had been there since they were 3... (Gina, mother)

Gina repeatedly spoke about the larger number of students that Grace would be at school with. She also stressed the temporal element of Grace having attended her previous school

since nursery for most of her life. In the same way, Grace also talked about the size of the school and the amount she had in primary school in the next quotation:

...it's a much bigger school cause my primary school normally had a couple hundred, two hundred. (Grace, family interview)

On a similar note, Helen explicitly shared how she felt this change was significant for Hayden, using the term, 'massive' repeatedly to explain how she thought her son would feel at school. She expressed how this change was something very different to Hayden because he would experience a whole new type of world, voicing a sense of danger to this exposure:

...this for him is a massive change, massive, massive change, the building is massive, everything is different compared to a very, very small school and going into this, almost like going out into the world really, you know and it is so massive... (Helen, mother)

In the next quotation, Hayden recalled feeling lost at school, affirming that he was still adjusting to the size of the school building.

...I mostly got lost in the school building (Hayden, family interview)

This alludes to the spaces 'in-between' the secondary school classrooms, such as the corridors and stairways (Lucey & Reay, 2000). For some students, these spaces can facilitate a sense of autonomy and independence, but at this stage thinking about the beginning of secondary school, Hayden felt lost in the building. Similar feelings were expressed by some of the children in the group study, for example Lucy and Rebecca.

Grace's concerns focused on the number of students at the school, again reiterating what her mother had voiced earlier. She was also concerned about knowing where to go for the next class. This was most relevant to her in the next quotation:

...the main thing is that there are a lot more people and I know what class is next. (Grace, online interview)



Both Hayden and Grace were thinking about the everyday, immediate concerns, identifying the size of the building and the number of students at school. However, for Helen and Gina, their descriptions were about the uncertainty and considerable change to their child's school life. Helen in particular, felt that this change for her son was very significant.

Another uncertainty voiced during this time concerned the children's cleft. There was a definite sense that these mothers felt more concerned about their children starting secondary school because of their clefts. In the next quotation, Gina discussed an incident that Grace had when she started a new dance school – Grace had not experienced this at primary school before:

...they knew about Grace's operations, how she looked and, so, when she started dancing over a year ago there was a few issues over the girls saying 'oh, what's wrong with her face?' and it's the first time she ever came to me and say 'oh the girls were talking about me', so that kind a worried me about going into high school. (Gina, mother)

One of Helen's concerns about Hayden's cleft was that it would be more apparent, and she was clearly contemplating the possibility of bullying at secondary school. In the next quotation, Helen described how she needed to find out about the bullying policy at the school because of her worries:

...my main concern was about him being bullied because you know he's different, the perception of how children react to him being different and my first thing when I went in there was okay what is your policy on bullying because I'm very concerned because he didn't have no issues from primary school which helped with his confidence, so I didn't want there to be issues and not be able to show his full potential because somebody is picking on him or you just don't know, from all accounts zero tolerance... (Helen, mother)

There was a sense of heightened vigilance here from Helen. She was compelled to prevent her son from being bullied, and had made the school aware of this. Again, Helen was linking

the school and home microsystems for Hayden, so that she could ensure the best for him. This was very important to Helen, as she perceived that bullying would limit Hayden's potential and there was no place for this. She continued in the next excerpt, focusing on her role as his mother, and her role in encouraging him to speak up and let the teacher know if something was not right:

...which is what I wanted and I've said to him if something's not right he needs to say because before I'm the one championing him, fighting his little battles, saying you know and I can't go up to the teacher like I could in primary school, so it's totally different, you need to be able to speak and find your voice, if you don't like it, say it to the teacher and he's got a brilliant Head of year, he can go directly to her if he's got any issues. (Helen, mother)

Helen was explicitly acknowledging her inability to operate in the mesosystem, which she saw as being curtailed in secondary school. This places more responsibility on Hayden to join the microsystems, and be the link between the home and school.

***Reflection 18***

Helen was sharing her determined approach for Hayden's well-being at school during the interview. It provided her with an opportunity to discuss how she was trying to enable him to take the lead, because she knew it would be different to primary school. Helen's sentiment was reminiscent of her handing Hayden the baton because he had to take on the next battle and champion this on his own. This was highlighting the links of the child as the courier between the home and school in the mesosystem, connecting to a notion of 'growing up', and becoming more independent.

Gina expressed feeling uncertainty about familiarity and knowing someone else at the start of school. She had contacted the secondary school's head teacher asking if Grace would be able to be in a class with one of the other girls from her primary. She felt this would ease some anxieties. In the next quotation, Gina described this:

... I spoke to the Head teacher and said 'look, is there any way she can get a bit of back up because there were only 4 girls, and if there were any chance one of the girls could be with her in the different classes in case there were any problems, and they've done that, she's got one of the girls, so, yeah, a bit anxious, we'll have to see... (Gina, mother)

At the start of this time point the mothers and children talked openly about the children's cleft and their primary school experiences. For both of these families, it was significant that everyone knew about the visible difference at primary school and there was a real sense of connectedness and 'being known' within their lived community. Furthermore, there was a sense of this environment sustaining a nurturing feeling for the children and the parents.

Then they were faced with the transition. This change was a shift for both families; it was a transition for the parent and the child similarly identified in the group study. The linking between the microsystems was clear to see from the mother's explanations. Both mothers had established a firm link between home and the primary school and it was time for Grace and Hayden to do this at secondary school, for example, Helen clearly outlined that Hayden would need to champion himself at school.

#### **7.5.1.2 Theme 2. Varying Experiences for the Child at School with a Cleft.**

During this time point, Hayden and Grace talked about their cleft and how they had responded to others making comments and enquiring about their facial appearance at school. In addition to this, both children were trying to manage other physical issues, for example, Grace needed to have another operation because of a hole occurring in her palate, whereas, Hayden missed some days at school because of an on-going problem with his hip, arising from the bone graft he needed for his cleft. Therefore, this theme was about how these participants had had varying types of experiences at their new school regarding their cleft. There was also some anticipated worry about the other physical concerns they were experiencing while at school.

Firstly, Grace recalled two separate incidences of other children talking about her cleft at secondary school. In the next quotation, she described how a boy had made some unkind comments to her in class, to which she responded by explaining what her cleft was and the other student stopped making the comments:

...there was a boy in maths, he sat next to me, and he was kind of making fun of me, I don't think he realised. so I kind of explained it to him and then he stopped.  
(Grace, online interview)

She also spoke about a different time when one of her friends enquired about the scar on her lip, thinking it was the result of an accident or an injury:

I was sitting in French and Gillian, one of my friends who sits next to me asked me if I had fallen or something cause she'd noticed my scar there (*points to lip*), and I just told her about it and she didn't realise what it was. (Grace, online interview)

In both experiences, Grace felt confident to explain what her cleft was, even though one of the comments was unpleasant, and was made without the other child knowing what a cleft was. This illustrated some of the challenges experienced by Grace, in addition to her physical health, which included the increased vulnerability to comments and questions in the new peer group. The changing microsystems created some bottlenecks of increased attention from peers who were unfamiliar with the participants, including the boy making unkind comments and the friend enquiring about the scar.

Hayden was very reluctant to discuss his cleft with peers, and in the next short excerpt, he referred to his cleft as a secret, and his preference for not disclosing what his cleft was. He felt that disclosing this information about his cleft would make other students think he was 'weird'. This concern with disclosure of who to tell and when to tell relates to the demand person characteristics of the PPCT model, inviting or discourage reactions from others (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). Hayden decided at this time not to talk about his cleft as he was interacting in this new school context. In this next quotation, from Hayden's first online interview, he discussed this:

Interviewer: Can you tell me if you've talked to anyone at school about your cleft?

Hayden: I really don't tell anyone...It's my secret in school

Interviewer: So, no one has asked you about it or made a comment to you about your mouth in any way?

Hayden: Yes...But ignore them

Interviewer: Can you tell me what they said, that you ignored?

Hayden: Why your lips like that?

Interviewer: And you don't feel you can tell them what it is?

Hayden: Because they might find it weird. (Hayden, online)

Hayden appeared to be uncomfortable talking about his cleft, preferring to ignore the comment, then explained that he was born with a cleft. He also felt that other students might think his cleft was 'weird'. There was a sense here that Hayden did not want to be different; he did not want to be known as the 'kid with the cleft' or the 'kid who was weird' because of his cleft.

However, in the next online interview, two months later (January 2018), Hayden explained that he had disclosed what his cleft was to his friends at school. In the next excerpt, he acknowledged this, and expressed his own feelings of delight in doing this:

Interviewer: When we chatted last time, you had not told anyone at school about your cleft. Have you told anyone now?

Hayden: Yes, and I feel happy about that

Interviewer: Did you talk to one new friend or do all your new friends know?

Hayden: Most of them know

Interviewer: Can I ask what they thought about it?

Hayden: They really didn't mind. (Hayden, online)

Although there was not a specific identifiable turning point that Hayden spoke about, clearly during the period that elapsed between the two online snapshot interviews, he had felt ready to talk about his visible difference with some of his friends. This aligns with my findings in the group study, because the peer microsystem was adjusting throughout the first term, but the children started to feel more secure about their peer groups during time point four, which was in the January of that study, and Hayden similarly seemed to open up more to his peers in January after a term at the new school.

Another part of this theme was concerned with the physical issues (discussed in the data from this time point) that both Grace and Hayden were experiencing. Grace made a brief mention about this in the first online interview in November. She spoke about her visit to the surgeon and the resulting need for an operation.

...I went to see the cleft surgeon and he found a hole and I have to get another operation. (Grace, online)

Further on, during the January online interview, Grace briefly talked about how she was feeling about this impending operation:

Interviewer: Can you tell me how you're feeling about this?

Grace: A little nervous

Interviewer: Do you know when you might have the operation?

Grace: No (Grace, online)

More uncertainty was expressed here, as Grace could not plan for the operation and had to wait on the date for this. Similarly, Hayden was also experiencing a physical concern. He had an on-going worry relating to his hip because of the bone graft he had. During the online interview in January 2018, Hayden discussed how he was not able to walk without a limp and that the school were helping by providing him with a lift pass:

Interviewer: Can you walk okay at school, with all the stairs?

Hayden: No, I limp when I walk but yeah

Interviewer: Can you tell me if the school has helped?

Hayden: Yeah they gave me a lift pass (Hayden, online)

### ***Reflection 19***

Because this time point spans over 4 months from October through to January, there was a noticeable shift for these children, as they both had to encounter physical changes related to their clefts. For Grace, this meant that she needed another operation because

she had a hole in her palate. For Hayden, he had mobility difficulties relating to problems affecting his hip, which was a recurrent issue stemming from his bone graft two years ago. Also, Hayden injured his wrist in a separate incident, which he described as painful and this resulted in another pause in his education. Therefore, these two children were not only managing some comments and enquiries from others about their visible differences, but were also trying to deal with other concerns. The element was starting to play a role in this analysis with Hayden talking more openly about his cleft and Grace sharing with her friends as her operation approaches.

**7.5.1.3 Time Point One Summary.** A sense of loss was a key theme experienced by the mothers in this reflective time point. This was because of the connection they felt for their children had in connection with their primary schools. Attendance at primary school had covered a long period of time, since nursery for both children. In primary school, the mothers were acting as the links between microsystems. The anticipated shift from primary to secondary school was perceived as a significant change – it was a shift in routine, and in their peer groups, and concerns about how they would be received because of their cleft. There were many new proximal processes with new teachers, and new school rules. Following this, Hayden and Grace talked about some of the interactions they had with other peers at school which related to their cleft. Both of the children had received some comments about their visible difference, and responded to these in very different ways.

### ***7.5.2 Time Point Two: Focused Ethnography***

This thematic analysis was conducted with the data corpus collected during the focused ethnography with Grace and Hayden. This also included data from an online snapshot interview with each child. The focused ethnography occurred from February 2017 to April 2017 (school spring term) and comprised 30 hours of observations at the two schools attended by Grace and Hayden, with dyadic interview with teachers and peers, as well as a visit to each child's home. Table 23 below explains when the data was collected and who the participants were for this time point. Pseudonyms were used to protect the participant's identification. For further details regarding the participants, please see the method section of this chapter (see method section, p 217).

**Table 23***Focused Ethnography Showing the Participants involved and Data Sources*

When	Participant/s	Data source
February	Grace and Mrs Green (teacher)	Teacher and child interviews
	Grace with Gabby and Georgia (peers)	Peer/s and child interview
	Researcher and Grace	Observational field notes
April	Hayden and Ms Hill (teacher)	Teacher and child interviews
	Hayden and Harry (peer)	Peer/s and child interview
	Researcher and Hayden	Observational field notes

The TA for this time point identified two main themes: (1) *A sense of movement for the child within the school microsystem*, (2) *Student support in the secondary school microsystem*; and (3) *Micro-communications in the peer group microsystem*. These themes include data from all of these data sources (teacher and child interviews, peer and child interview, observational field notes and online snapshots). Verbatim extracts are clearly labelled so that the data source is identified. An overview of the themes and subthemes from time point two are illustrated in the table below.



**Table 24***Time Point Two Themes and Subthemes*

Main themes	Subthemes
1. A sense of movement for the child within the school microsystem	1.1 Locating the child in the school microsystem 1.2 Student progress as achievement or independence 1.3. Teacher's perspective of resilience in the school microsystem
2. Student support in the secondary school microsystem	
3. Micro-communications in the peer group microsystem	3.1. Varied reasons for making friends at secondary school 3.2. Informal communications for children in the school microsystem with their peers. 3.3. Interactions with peers at school concerning the children's visible difference

Each theme will be discussed in turn.

#### **7.5.2.1 Theme 1. A Sense of Movement for the Child Within the School**

**Microsystem.** Key to this first theme was the sense of movement for the children around the school, which was seen in their interactions with their teachers, peers and other students at school. The sense of movement also encompasses the key transitions in the day and the transfer between classes and teachers, as the child moved through the school day. This time point includes recollections the children had of their new school microsystem from the first term and how they were feeling about their schools at this time (February to April 2018). It also included some of the ethnographic notes that were made on the school's layout, which

provide some of the context of the school microsystems. Also, the theme encompasses the children's (participants and peers) on-going interactions with other students and teaching staff in the school microsystem. Threaded through the subthemes, this sense of movement that occurred not only emphasised the children moving between classes, but also carefully considered how the teachers viewed this notion of movement within Hayden and Grace's school microsystem. This theme is made up of three subthemes, which capture the different types of movements experienced by Grace and Hayden in their new school microsystem.

The first subtheme looks at how the child was positioned in the school microsystem, and is called, '*Locating the child in the school microsystem*'. Next, the second subtheme is called, '*Student progress as achievement or independence*', providing some insight about what it means to do well at school according to the teachers and participants, then the final subtheme is called, '*Teacher's perspective of resilience in the school microsystem*,' which entails the views from the teachers on resilience at school. Each subtheme will be discussed in turn.

**7.5.2.1.1 Locating the Child in the School Microsystem.** This subtheme looks at how the child directed where they needed to go and how to get there within the school microsystem. Both the teachers and the children discussed how the size of the building and the movement around the school meant that there was a required period of adjustment while the children learned to navigate themselves around the school. An example of this was the daily tutor groups and familiarity with the school buildings during the induction sessions.

According to Ms Hill, these tutor groups were created to help students feel part of the school. She suggested that one of the problems for children in secondary school was the change from only having one teacher in primary school to many teachers in secondary school, and she felt there was a danger that students could feel unnoticed or adrift in a much larger space. In the next quotation, she explained this:

...one of the barriers can be feeling that you are one of many and not necessarily noticed, which is why we have small seminar groups so students can feel noticed because especially if you're going from teacher to teacher, whereas before you're used to one teacher and that's it, so that kind of knows you quite intimately, really...  
(Ms Hill, teacher interview)

On a similar note regarding size and feeling noticed, Mrs Green who participated in the interview with Grace felt that the enormity of the school was problematic for some of the children moving up to secondary school. She noticed that the taster sessions which occurred before the children started at secondary school do not provide a full picture of how the school operates, and that when the children do start, it can be quite an adjustment. The geography of the school, and school size both contribute to the movement that occurs between classes, which she explained in the next quotation:

...it's down to the size of the school and some pupils have no issues in primary school and they cannot wait to get up to secondary school. They come in for the two days induction in June and everything's fine because it's new and then the first week in August, it's reality. They come in and there's almost fourteen hundred pupils in trying to go up and down the stairs, not used to stairs and things and so the sheer size of the building, the school, the pupils, the amount of pupils that's in it and the different teachers that's there that's really a problem.  
(Mrs Green, teacher interview)

From this quotation, the sheer number of children all moving around and the familiarity with stairs were concerns, because the new students would come from smaller school microsystems. She conveyed a picture of the children being overwhelmed by the volume of other students and the scale of the school. It was interesting that from this teacher's perspective the induction sessions were not effective in highlighting how the school functioned to the new cohort of children, whereas in the group study (see Chapter 6, pp. 127-129), these taster sessions were seen by the children as very helpful in supporting their first encounters with their new school. In the quotation below, Grace conveys a sense of urgency, alongside a sense of danger and the need for caution to manage these changes between classes:

We walked very quickly to the next class and stay on the left side of the corridor. Everyone walks very quickly. Some students shout and laugh amongst themselves, as they walk to the next class. Grace was almost knocked over as we enter through one of doors to the next corridor. She said that she was fine.

(Observational note, Grace)

Grace, in the next quotation expressed how she had felt concerned about the possibility of someone else falling over at school between classes because of the proximity with others:

...sometimes when they are like in front of you or behind you, like you're scared in case someone falls or something (Grace, teacher interview)

Ms Hill referred to the idea of 'landing' in the quotation below, explaining how a child's transition could be more difficult because of where the child 'lands'. This concept of landing is often associated with flying, and to the notion of a safe landing. However, the use of this word here was about 'chance', almost implying that there was a type of risk for the children in terms of where they 'landed', and how their school experiences were changed because of this. In her view, the chance landing was very influential in the outcome for the child during the transition, with the possibility of good experiences or negative ones hanging in the balance:

...it very much depends on where you land you know I think that if you land with a nice group of students you're going to have a better experience, but if you happen to be with students who are very bullying or very aggressive then you're not going to have such a nice experience... (Ms Hill, teacher interview)

The sense of danger and need for caution during movement between classrooms was echoed by Hayden, who alluded to this notion of being trampled, as he explained how he was allowed to leave school earlier at the end of the day because of his injury. This was the result of a fractured bone in his arm, which happened during this time point. In the below quotation, he described how he was able to avoid the end of school dash to prevent being hurt:

They've given me a lift pass, assigned me a buddy. Allowed me to leave early, so I won't get crushed in the after-school rush. (Hayden, online interview)

Ms Hill referred to the importance of the school structures, for example, making sure that the school was prepared for its students, and creating a type of ‘check-in’ system to support their needs. She recalled this in the next quotation:

I think you know it helps to have good structures in place you know so the school has done lots of preparation, kind of checks in with the student now and again, not all students want to be checked in with, you know there are a lot of students who just think leave me alone, go away, you know so it’s finding or knowing what the particular student wants or needs, it just isn’t, ah, it’s not straightforward... (Ms Hill, teacher interview)

Furthermore, Ms Hill acknowledged that some students would not want to be checked in with. She acknowledged that each student was different and what works for one student may not work for another.

***Reflection 20***

A curious idea was shared by Ms Hill; the school needed to be prepared and that regular check-ins with the students was part of this. However, some students were not interested in talking to anyone about how they were doing. She felt that the idea of a check in for some students would not work. Therefore, this type of intervention put in place for the students may not be necessary for all the students and Ms Hill quickly recognised that it was not a simple solution such as, ‘one size fits all’. This links with Bronfenbrenner’s perspective of children, who are all individuals and not passive recipients of adults’ behaviours. At school, the educational system actively seeks ways or measures to support their students. It seems to me that in primary school, the parent plays a role in monitoring and evaluating this support, but in secondary school that child needs to decide if they need to access further support. Therefore, the school system aims to facilitate the students needs, but the students must make the decision. They need to develop a sense of ownership and self-efficacy about any support, which they need.

***7.5.2.2.2 Student Progress as Achievement or Independence.*** The views about *doing well* in school varied among the children and between the teachers. For example, the

participants and some of their peers were concerned with achievement and attaining good results, whereas others, for example, felt that doing well in school meant completing homework, and trying their best. However, for both of the teachers interviewed for this study, doing well at school was about how the children were coping during this transition. This also included gaining a sense of independence and finding their way, adjusting to their new school microsystem.

This theme is called, '*Student progress as achievement or independence*' because this highlights the differing views among the children and the adults about what it means to do well at school. To construct an understanding of the resilient processes during the transition, the successful adaptation of the child within this microsystem is important (Masten, 2018). Therefore, this subtheme describes how the children considered progress in terms of their results, but the teachers constructed this as acquiring an increased capacity for independence, which they felt the children would need in order to do well.

Hayden's friend, Harry talked about completing homework and measured his success at school against achievement in his GCSE's:

I would say complete your homework and get higher than the expectations and get your GCSE's, that's what I would say. (Harry, peer interview)

For Grace, success was clearly about putting in the effort to do her best in school. She was not specific about marks or achievements, but keen to work hard. This was reminiscent of Bella from the group study, expressing a similar type of ethos. There was a sense that these children were not ranking themselves against a score or an expected level. However, they were not specific about what it meant to try as hard as they could.

I'm just going to try as hard as I can in school. (Grace, peer interview)

On the other hand, Gabby wanted to acquire a good set of results at the start of school, particularly in maths, because she felt that a higher grade would help her to stay focused.

I think it's like if you get a good score like if you got 100% in your maths test, then for me I want to try to keep that up and not like make it drop, so if I get a

good score in the beginning, it kind of pushes me, but if I get a low score and just feel there's no use in me trying. (Gabby, peer interview)

Gabby's point of view was reflective of her motivation to do well. She felt that the attainment of a high-grade implied motivation to keep learning, but a less favourable grade would then result in her not trying.

***Reflection 21***

It was interesting to hear how some of these children, particularly the peers were concerned about their results, and viewed this as a type of motivation for doing well at school. However, Grace was focused on this idea of 'trying' and working hard, which would be transferable employability skills when she is older. These will be helpful skills to her in her later life.

One of the more startling aspects of this theme that struck me as important was that none of the children or adults felt that there were other parts to this sense of doing well, for example, being kind, knowing right from wrong, being happy and safe, having empathy for others. These notions perhaps form part of what might colloquially be termed a moral compass, but this was not part of the school culture about children doing well, or at least not explicitly mentioned during the interviews or observations.

Ms Hill expressed how doing well at school meant that the children needed to know where to fit themselves in the school. She felt that this sense of fitting in would involve independence and growth. The 'growth' was not clarified further, but she felt it was important that a child knew about the possible difficulties they might incur and then be able to manage them. There is a sense of conformity here, suggesting that the child needs to change to fit the environment, even if the environment is not suited to the child.

I think it's finding their place, um yeah knowing how they fit in knowing that life is like this (*demonstrates with hand a bumpy line*) and it's not like that (*demonstrates with hands a straight line*), um and it's also about coming into independence as well, um, it's a growth thing I think. (Ms Hill, teacher interview)

On the other hand, Mrs Green in the next quotation focused on the relationship between herself and the students. She felt that this relationship was important to the child's experiences at school and their progress, and that these relationships with teachers would enable the students to be 'carried' by the school and attain the best possible outcomes:

...hoping to gain trust, respect and then the relationship then carries on you know right on to sixth year or whenever they decide to leave and that way we can do as much as we possibly can. We might not always get it right, but I do expect, and I will say my girls, my girls they keep me right, because I forget a lot yep. But it's also so we're building this relationship up and that's the key thing. (Mrs Green, teacher interview)

As noted, the thematic analysis suggested that perceptions of 'doing well' in secondary school varied between the children and teachers. This teacher aimed to promote the idea of doing well as a sense of independence and growth, building the relationships needed for the student's progress at school, whereas the children focused on their achievement in terms of their results:

The teacher instructed the students to complete a short writing task...The teacher instructed the students to finish their task... (Observational notes from RE class, Grace)

### ***Reflection 22***

During the observations in the classrooms, there was importance placed on completing work in class, for both Grace and Hayden. In all the lessons, the teachers at some point would try to focus the children on their task to ensure it was completed. The teachers were very focused on working within allocated time frames for particular lessons, getting them ready at the end of lessons to move on to the next class. However, I did not hear any of the teachers talk about independence and how the children's completion of their task could be connected with a type of skill they could use in the future.



From the perspective of the teachers during the interviews, doing well in school, in both educational establishments, meant that the children were working towards growth and independence in how they managed their own learning. This notion of students developing independence or having an awareness of becoming independent was not transparent during the in-class observations or around the school, although the classroom observations were a snapshot of the day-to-day happenings of secondary school life for a Year 7 pupil. Also, this may be an implicit belief for the children, as something they would pick up through their school career, rather than a more explicit idea, or something observable.

**7.5.2.1.3 Teacher's Perspective of Resilience in the School Microsystem.** In this subtheme both teachers addressed the term *resilience* as a key part of the children's transition into secondary school. The teacher's perceptions of how a successful school transition would look for a child starting secondary school, included the need for some careful preparation of the child both in the home and at primary school, before starting secondary school. The teachers described their understanding of the term resilience and what this means for the children starting secondary school.

Ms Hill described the importance of preparation, suggesting that preparations for secondary school should start in primary school, and at home with the family. She referred to this as 'preparation for the resilience' that the children needed for secondary school:

I think a lot of preparation from primary school, from family, um being prepared for the resilience that they will need in secondary school, I think that's vital (Ms Hill, teacher interview)

Later in the interview Ms Hill suggested that preparation could help the children to cope with the experiences they would encounter at secondary school, both positive and negative. In the next quotations, Ms Hill talked about the use of mottos or mantras to support the children when they found something problematic:

...that they can cope, for us it's a very big thing, in terms of mottos that students can, yes that they can do things, yes, failures will happen, so it's having that type of

mantra, that it is going to be difficult, it's not going to be easy, but you, so it's that kind of resilience... (Ms Hill, teacher interview)

...it's the sort of resilience where cause they've gone from being top of the primary where they're going to the bottom of secondary where people aren't always nice, you know there's lots of bumps and pushes, you know everyone flooding on the corridor and it's having that kind of maturity, resilience really that's not aimed at them, that having those large groups of people all going in the same direction... (Ms Hill, teacher interview)

Here, in Ms Hill's interview there was this sense of movement happening in secondary school in which the children needed to be prepared, to be vigilant about what was happening around them, and as the youngest students in the school. Ms Hill suggested that one component of resilience was a form of maturity that the children need, similar to 'toughening up' or managing the changes necessary for navigating the school corridors. This was an example of the 'transfer paradox' identified during this time as children move between the two educational microsystems, as the transition process represents both a step up and a step down in terms of socially reflected maturity (Hallinan & Hallinan, 1992).

***Reflection 23***

Having experienced the hustle and bustle of the physical movement around the school, this depiction from Ms Hill was apt. It felt similar to a 'flood' of people suddenly filling the corridors as we tried to get to the next classroom in both of the schools. Even as a taller individual, there was the feeling that someone could knock me over, or I was going to lose Hayden or Grace, as I accompanied each child from class to class. It was not only the amount of people, but also the quick pace of most students moving between the classrooms.

In the next excerpt, Mrs Green felt that resilience was a type of skill that Grace displayed when responding to another student, who had made a comment about her face. This was similar to Rutter's (1987), definition of resilience, highlighting the variance shown

by an individual's response to an adversity. Also, the notion of being able to answer back or speak up was seen as an example akin to confidence:

Interviewer: In general, what kind of skills do you think will help children during their start to secondary school?

Mrs. Green: Resilience

Interviewer: Can you tell me what you mean by resilience?

Mrs. Green: Resilience, Resilience like yeah that's something you did with the boy (*looking at Grace*) that said to you, that was resilient by you answering back.

Replying back though, I think that's one of the main things that a lot of younger kids in primary school are missing when they come up. (teacher interview)

In education, the term resilience is often spoken about in terms of building it and finding it within the student. There was this sense that children needed a certain type of skill (called 'resilience') to cope and manage through secondary school, especially in Year 7 with all the shifts and movements. However, there was no clear identification of what this was or how the child could develop this in primary school. Ms Hill briefly referred to the preparation, which needs to occur, but not quite what this preparation meant.

Mrs Green continued to address resilience in her next expression as she felt that children needed to learn to respond to certain comments made by other children:

...it's building that resilience up, so it's thinking about how you're dealing with these type of situations, and every year you know we feel they need it more and more. (Mrs Green, teacher)

#### ***Reflection 24***

It was curious that Mrs Green did not account for how the children who made the critical comments will change their behaviour because of the responses provided by the children with the visible difference. She did not consider if the use of a known or rehearsed response will result in a positive outcome. In the quote I reported above, Mrs Green refers to a brief encounter that Grace had with another student, but this ability to answer

back may not always happen. Observing the teacher discussing this and reflecting on the group study, it felt that the children who developed their own strategies for how to respond to comments, for example Lucy from the group study and Grace in the case study, benefitted more. They knew that they needed to respond, and they felt confident about how to respond during an encounter with another person who was asking them questions about their appearance. The relevance should be placed on the child knowing how they want to respond and feeling ready to explain to the person asking or making comments, if they chose to do so. A generalised response may not fit every encounter.

**7.5.2.2 Theme 2. Student Support in the Secondary School Microsystem.** In this next main theme, the teachers discussed how their schools promoted student well-being, for example, in the form of small tutor groups and contact points where students could go, if support was needed. Both teachers explained some of the procedures that were in place to help and support the students whilst at secondary school and during the transition. In addition to this, Grace and some of the peers interviewed also mentioned types of support they had experienced during the transition. This will be discussed next.

Firstly, from the teacher's perspective, Ms Hill spoke about intervention meetings that occurred once a week in school to discuss any students who were a concern. This was part of the school's intention to support students:

...if there are students with any particular concerns, then the Year lead will raise them in intervention meetings because we have intervention meetings once a week as members of staff where we discuss students that we are concerned about... (Ms Hill, teacher interview)

On the other hand, Mrs Green explained how their school implemented enhanced transitions, by involving the head-teacher from the primary school and other staff to prioritise any student that may need more support. These support meetings formed the beginning forms of the micro-communications between the secondary and the primary schools, and arranged contact with the professional called the home school link worker. Grace was not part of this type of transition, but Mrs Green briefly talked about this support in the next quotation:

...one thing that we do, do is their transitions in primary school starts just now and for what we call enhanced transitions...right so if there is something wrong with a pupil the teacher and the head-teacher from primary school gives home link the names, so I had to double check to see if you (*looking at Grace*) were involved in an enhanced home link and you weren't...

(Mrs Green, teacher interview)

The importance of the tutor group sessions was emphasised in both of the interviews with the teachers, with Ms Hill referring to tutor groups as a contact point each day for the students to use, in the quotation below:

...also knowing, um, that they have a contact point, um, knowing that there is somebody that they can talk to, so we have quite a select seminar system here so they meet with their seminar tutor it will be a small group of 8-10 students, you know always the same, you know 20 minutes a day. (Ms Hill, teacher interview)

This suggests that the continuity experienced by the on-going occurrences of these sessions daily would align with the proximal processes for the child. These tutor sessions were regular meetings for the child to attend with the same group of children each week to discuss school life. Rosa and Tudge (2013) also noted that proximal processes are promoted in environments that are stable and advantageous to the child.

During the school visit to see Hayden, an assembly was conducted instead of the assigned tutorial session, and I recorded my thoughts about the assembly in the observational notes, with an extract shown below:

Once all the students were seated (the auditorium seats were filled), and some teachers had entered the room and sat in the front row, the safeguarding lead presented her talk. This was about Peer-on-Peer abuse. During this talk she explained that she was 'contextualizing safeguarding', and that this was an ever-increasing problem in schools, which needed to be addressed. (Observational note, Hayden)

It was interesting that the school had chosen to replace their tutor sessions with this assembly. This raised the question about how these tutor sessions were seen by the school, and if other issues or events were prioritised over these sessions, what type of support were they offering? However, the daily tutorials appeared to be a good initiative, and a useful form of support put in place by the school. When I made further enquiries into this, the Head of Year implied that there were other times when the priority had to be given to something else, rather than spend time in tutorials.

Some of the other types of support experienced by the children were identifiable at the start of the academic year. In the next quotation, Grace reflects on the things she had been looking forward to at secondary school, including the variety of subjects and different types of teachers, which she saw as things to look forward to in secondary school:

In primary you sort of look forward to high school because like if you don't like your teacher for example you're only with them for fifty-five minutes not the whole day or the whole year, but then it's also good that you got extra subjects like home Ec. And better P.E and stuff and better equipment because it's a bigger school and stuff.  
(Grace, teacher interview)

In the next quotation, Georgia recalled how she had felt nervous at first when starting secondary school, but having Grace, who she knew from primary school with her, had helped. Furthermore, she shared the car journey to school with school with Grace, and this created a sense of calm for Georgia. It was also intriguing how Georgia noticed the regularity of her routine when the bell rang. Again, this helped Georgia because it felt akin what she already knew:

I was nervous as well for the first couple of days, but then I wasn't like walking to school, I was in the car with Grace and that made it easier and then the bell rang, it was just off to our own classes and it kind a just happened, it was kind a smooth.  
(Georgia, peer interview)

On the other hand, Gabby, who was one of Grace's new friends who she had met in secondary school, remembered feeling afraid at the start of term because she felt that other students would be looking at her. In the next quotation, she described how she made the decision to remain close to the students she knew, suggesting that this was a type of adhesive for her. She found this to be difficult because it was different from what she knew in primary school:

Yeah, I was scared to have people looking at you and all that, so I decided to stick to the people I knew who were in my classes and then we were in French on the first day and that was okay, but I really struggled because it was so different to primary school. (Gabby, peer interview)

Gabby chose to avoid the interactions with new students selecting to remain close to those she knew. This showed Gabby's sense of feeling insecure here, retreating to what she knew, which would have made it difficult for her to engage in proximal processes. This was an illustration of the developmentally disruptive characteristic, which influences individual development, according to Bronfenbrenner and Morris (1998).

There was another element of support that Grace referred to, which was her guidance teacher, Mrs Green. She felt that she was the one person she could go to for help, and that Mrs Green was equipped for this because she had the time to help, which other teachers did not:

...Mrs. Green is the one person to come to, I feel like other teachers are kind of like almost too many children in the classes like almost don't have time. Mrs. Green makes time for us. ... (Grace, teacher interview)

In this comment Grace highlighted the importance of knowing her guidance teacher who was available for her to talk to with, when needed. She noted that curriculum teachers do not have this time. Johnson (2008) found that these everyday interactions have a significant impact on student's wellbeing, and possibly, the school processes of everyday lie at school. Contact with a trusted teacher acts as a protective mechanism for the students to access and Grace acknowledged this.

From this subtheme there were some useful interventions that the teachers referred to, such as the tutorials and enhanced transitions. This theme also includes examples of the children identifying supportive experiences they had had. However, there were small indicators that these supportive interventions, such as the tutor groups for Hayden were not always implemented.

**7.5.2.3 Theme 3. Micro-communications in the Peer Group Microsystem.** The regular interactions that occurred for the participants and their peers in the secondary school microsystem were sometimes clustered around the child's peer microsystem. Using Bronfenbrenner's bioecological perspective, this theme explored how the micro-communications in Grace and Hayden's peer group microsystem highlight the proximal processes operating within the microsystems (Eriksson et al., 2018). In the first subtheme, the children and the teachers discussed these daily peer interactions; how these might change because of the class-to-class changes and the reasons for having friends at secondary school.

The first subtheme looks at the teachers' and children's reflections on the reasons for having friends at secondary school and is called, *'Varied reasons for making friends at secondary school'*. The next subtheme, focuses on communication in the children's peer groups, which are termed micro-communications, the small scale connections, which occurred in the peer group throughout the school-timetabled breaks, including lunchtime. This is called, *'Informal communications for children in the school microsystem with their peers'*. Finally, the last subtheme is called, *'Interactions with peers concerning the children's visible difference'*, and recognises some of the comments and questions faced by the participants because of their cleft.

**7.5.2.3.1 Varied Reasons for Making Friends at Secondary School.** According to the data from this time point, having friends during this transition year was important, but the attributions for the reasons for making friends in secondary school varied, particularly for the children. For example, some of the participants' felt that friends helped with homework, or having friends facilitated them meeting more people in the school microsystem. The teachers, in their divergent roles (Ms Hill was a subject teacher and Mrs Green was a guidance teacher) also talked about the peer groups. In this subtheme the reasons for making friends and what this means to the children was discussed.



For Mrs Green, the shifts between peer groups and the movement of the children in their classes was one of the reasons for the changes to certain peer groups at school. This is where the subtheme begins. In the quotation below, Mrs Green considered how the children were feeling following the initial transition, and she reflects on the size of the school as being stressful for the children. She explained that after the initial transition (first few weeks of school), the children begin thinking about friends and the changes to their peer groups begin:

...it's the sheer size and then being followed by four weeks down the line that I don't have no friends now, my friends have moved to people in other classes and different things and that is very apparent with quite a few of the pupils that came up. (Mrs Green, teacher interview)

Mrs Green also referred to Grace's peer group, sensing that she was with a pleasant group of students and had started her secondary schooling with this group. She also explained how there were multiple changes between peer groups in her school because of the large amount of feeder schools. In this next quotation, Mrs Green talked about how the school is a provider to many primary schools, which can affect the friendships groups:

...the pupils that she came up with are all very nice and the group she's with just now are very nice and but it's what we tend to kind of look for as the first month to two months is if there's any negative, because they all come up and it's all different schools we get like eight or nine feeder primary's... so it's a lot that's coming in and then it's the movement of 'I want to be in this group, or I want to be in that group', and the dynamics can be sometimes quite challenging, but Grace had no, no problem. (Mrs Green, teacher interview)

Furthermore, Mrs Green was aware of Grace's peers and had no concerns about Grace and her peers during this time. Ms Hill, who was one of Hayden's subject teachers, had more than 30 years of experience working in education, indicated that she was not aware of Hayden's peer group because she did not see him that often. She explained this in the next quotation:

I can't say that I have because I don't see that much of him, um, when he sits in my class, he well, it's hard to say if he's in a friendship group because we tell them where to sit anyway and I don't see enough of him outside to say who his friends are. (Ms Hill, teacher interview)

This sense of Hayden's anonymity in class echoes with Grace's sentiments as she questioned the accessibility of the subject teachers, because of the number of children they have to attend to in the classes, in the next quotation:

Mrs. Green is the one person to come to, I feel like other teachers are kind of like almost too many children in the classes like almost don't have time. Mrs. Green makes time for us. (Grace, teacher interview)

Mrs Green was the main support that Grace could rely on. She was available and Grace felt entirely comfortable speaking to her. This resource for Grace increased her capacity to access this in the school microsystem, supporting her needs (Masten, 2018). For Grace, this meant that Mrs Green was important to her.

### ***Reflection 25***

It was curious that Grace felt Mrs Green was available to her to talk to and that Mrs Green knew Grace's friends. In contrast, Ms Hill was not aware of Hayden's peer group and did not know who he socially spent time with. Grace herself felt that the subject teachers were not as accessible because of the constraints to their time. Ms Hill noted that she did not observe Hayden with his peers outside of the class and was not certain about his peers inside the class because of seat allocation. This questions if secondary school subject teachers know the Year 7 cohort? The peer microsystem was important to the children. It also questions how the school staff, as part of the school system can play a role in the resilience process for students. There was no contact with either Head-teacher during this ethnographic data collection, and the children did not talk about them. Therefore, it was not clear which teachers had the most

regular contact with that child. Each child was asked to choose the teacher they would like to be interviewed with, but even this was altered for Hayden because of time constraints.

For Hayden, meeting new people was exciting because it was an opportunity to get to know that person. He expressed this in the next quotation:

...pretty exciting cause you're meeting somebody new that you don't really know about and getting to know that person. (Hayden, peer interview)

Hayden also recognised that it was hard for him to make new friends at times because of his speech concerns. His speech and language issues resulted from his cleft. He identified this in the peer interview indicating that he had experienced this type of concern before, although he was still keen to meet new people, which he described in the next quotation:

Sometimes it's hard to make new friends, like some friends can't understand me clearly and yeah that's mostly difficult. (Hayden, peer interview)

On the other hand, Harry intimated that school might be harder without friends in the next quotation. This line of thought was described in both school studies with the children; the school microsystem is better with friends. He also referred to the support he had received from a teacher helping him make friends, recalling how it had become easier with time. Here, Harry noted how time had helped:

If you didn't have a friend at school, I think it would be hard. I made my first friend because Mrs ... (*teacher*) helped me, but that's because then it was quite hard, I had just started the year, but then it became easier as time went along. (Harry, peer interview)

Grace also expressed how one of her teachers had played an important role in class by introducing everyone so that she was able to make more friends:

...at the start of the year was just kind of Georgia and then Ginny and Gwen because they came to RE with us, and then like French all my classes and stuff and the teachers introduces us to each other and then you make loads more friends too. (Grace, teacher interview)

As noted, Grace recalled the relevant role of teachers creating these moments for children to get to know each other, and Harry expressed this too. However, the staff at both schools sometimes appeared rushed to ensure that the work was complete, and the students were ready to move on to their next class. This was evident from the observation notes in the next quotation:

This rush between class was sometimes felt in the classes, particularly with Religious studies and Art with the teachers focused on students being reminded to complete their work. (observation note)

Some of Hayden's concerns throughout the transition were about completing homework. For him, this was also relevant to having a friend at school. He felt that being a part of a group was beneficial because of the help he had received with his homework.

Yeah, cause you can ask them for help with the answers for homework (laughs), that's what I did for my drama homework, I asked this Year 9 to help me with the homework and I got 9 out of 9 in the drama test. (Hayden, peer interview)

Harry's feelings about having a group of friends were similar to reflections reported by Rebecca in the group study, reiterating that being in a group was good because he knew more students at school, and the group acted as a type of informational support. In the next quotation, Harry expressed his intent to get to know others:

Yeah, it's good to have a group because then you get to know more people. (Harry, peer interview)

On a more cautious note, Georgia voiced her concerns about not making new friends because she was worried about losing her old friends and not being able to trust her new friends. Georgia, compared the importance of making friends to a type of replacement technique, in which one needs to be ready to have a new friend waiting in case you lose an old friend. She was concerned that some friends were not being genuine or honest with her, and were being two-faced behind her back:

Yeah, I think it's good to make the new friends because if you lose the old friends you've got someone new to go to, but if you don't know if they're just using you at the start like let's just be her friends and maybe talk about her behind her back or something like that and that's what scares me, like they could be going home and saying things like mean and then they come back and pretend that they're your friend and be all nice to you, but really they're not, that's what scares me a bit. (Georgia, peer interview)

It was clear that making friends at secondary school was seen as important. Mrs Green in her role as a guidance teacher discussed how these peer groups began to shift in the weeks following the start of the transition. Akin to the previous study with the group of children these case studies indicated that being part of a peer group during the transition year was important. The peer microsystems in a secondary school need to be supported to facilitate the children's micro-communications. Masten (2018) stated that the caregiving adults for children, including different school staff, could play an important role in connecting the child with the resources in the school.

**7.5.2.3.2 Informal Communications for Children in the School Microsystem with their Peers.** One feature of the informal micro-communications were the opportunities afforded by un-timetabled breaks between lessons during the school day for lunchtime and school clubs. These in-between spaces (Lucey & Raey, 2000) were enthusiastically talked about as time that the children could spend with their peers. This subtheme examined how these breaks were important to the children because they created opportunities for the children to talk informally together, and to discuss what had happened in the school day. This highlighted how these regular daily interactions were facilitating the

proximal processes in the peer microsystem, strengthening the friendships and were viewed as a time in the day that the children looked forward to.

The next quotation was taken from the peer interview, in which Grace indicated her thoughts about the contrast between primary and secondary schools at lunchtime. She recalled playing ‘cops and robbers’, but at secondary school, they would sit around the lunch table and talk. There was a clear dissimilarity here between her experiences of primary and secondary school; the moving around in primary with friends compared to the static sense of being that occurred in secondary school. She also alluded to attending a club:

It is good to make new friends, say if you had no friends, you’d be really lonely, cause at lunchtime you’re not like running about and playing cops and robbers or something, you’re sitting at a table and chatting or going to a club. (Grace, peer interview)

***Reflection 26***

It was quite interesting to reflect here on how the children’s movement at primary school differed from the types of movement, which occurred at secondary. The first main theme looked at the continuous shifting that the children were experiencing between classes and teachers. However, there was suddenly a halt to the movement in secondary school, at lunchtime. Another sudden change for a child when they ‘moved up’ from primary school was the focus on sitting and talking, or doing a shared activity club, which contrasts to recollections of primary school when the movement in the form of play was the focus. Again, this was Grace’s perception of how her lunch times had changed, but other children may play outside at secondary school or attend sports clubs regularly.

The lunch times during school were excluded from the ethnographic observations, since both schools requested that I stopped observing across the lunch break. However, Grace and Hayden described this time of their day, when they would spend some time with their peers and how this happened.

In Grace’s interview with her peers, they all spoke enthusiastically about lunchtime at school. Both Grace and Gabby described the importance of finding a table with ample chairs to accommodate their peer group at lunchtime in the quote below:

I'm usually out first and then we check we have enough seats, or we get another table so that we can book that one as well, so like everyone's got a seat at least. (Gabby, peer interview)

We kind of like well whoever's out first then I think there's like 8 people who I mostly hang out with at lunch and one of them just saves a table. (Grace, peer interview)

For Hayden this time was for talking about the lessons from the day, and talking about how everyone was. It resembled a type of check in that Hayden and his friends would do at lunchtime:

Yeah, cause then you can catch up what lessons they have and how were they, yeah. (Hayden, peer interview)

Georgia felt that friends were there for support and to give compliments, which she felt helped with confidence building. This was comparable to Rebecca's sentiments about friendship in the group study:

I think they like also help you go through school, like they just help you and make you feel more confident... (Georgia, peer interview)

Similarly, Gabby recalled in the next quotation recalled how Grace and Georgia had both helped her recently when she had a concern. They had made her laugh:

They've helped me when I've had a problem like recently I was at Grace's birthday and I got quite upset and they came and they helped me through things, like Grace will really help me if I've got a problem and Georgia will also help, they make me laugh. (Gabby, peer interview)

Further opportunities to develop links and connections in the peer

micro-communications occurred at lunchtime during the school-offered clubs. This was another important chance for the children to socialise and enjoy learning new skills. Mrs Green discussed how they would use these clubs to help the students that might not be managing the transition, for example, in the next quotation, she explained how she would try to find an interest for the child and see if there was an available staff member to provide this:

...what we do try and do again is part of the transition if there's someone or group of, wee um first years that maybe are struggling a wee bit then that's when we would go in and say right what do you like? What is it you do? Let's see right okay, science let's do it, oh its music, let's go down to the music department...and so on you know but ideally, it's still pushed in tutor group, as well remember you've got this, but ideally, we expect a lot of the teachers to let them know... (Mrs Green, teacher interview)

For Grace and her friends, one opportunity to meet friends informally was the shared experience as they all enjoyed the cake-decorating club together. They briefly referred to this in the peer interviews in the next excerpt:

Gabby: All of us go to cake decorating on a Wednesday.

I: Cake decorating club?

Grace: Yeah, you get to decorate cakes and stuff. (peer interview)

At Hayden's school, the clubs were mostly run after school, but some teachers ran these clubs during lunch break. Hayden in the next quotation could not recall the name of the club he attended:

Yeah and I do ... can't remember what it's called, but he does athletics and I do something else. (Hayden, peer interview)

Ms Hill ran her club at lunchtime. In the next excerpt, Ms Hill talked about the attendance at these clubs, as it is compulsory for students to attend one:



Ms Hill (Teacher): It would all be after school clubs. Some people run their clubs at lunchtime because I run my club at lunchtime, but generally speaking most people run their clubs after school.

Interviewer: So, who would do a follow up to check on club attendance?

Ms Hill (Teacher): Well, it would be down to the person whose club you're due to be at, so I would need to chase up the list of students I've been given because at the start of the academic year then again in February, they all talk about all the clubs they go on the computers they choose which club they're going to be and then that list goes to the teacher who then follows up. So, I would need to follow up all those who don't turn up to my club.

When asked about Hayden not recalling the club he may attend, Ms Hill suggested that this might be because of his school absences:

Possibly because of the absences and nobody has followed it up. But every student has to be involved in at least one club up to Year 9, has to be in one club. Um, there aren't many lunchtime clubs or break time clubs or anything like that. (Ms Hill, teacher interview)

Ms Hill suggested that no one had checked on Hayden's club attendance, even though students were required to do one club until Year 9. This was also described in the observational notes, which I conducted after the peer interviews were completed - Hayden was not interested in attending after school clubs either:

Hayden's school aims to ensure that all children actively participate in a club at school during lunch or after school. However, Hayden could not recall the club he attended and was not interested in after school clubs because his dad had to collect him from school. He casually talked about his dad needing to collect him at that time and if you attended a club after school, his dad would have to wait in the car. Hayden could not recall the club even though Harry, his friend did.

(Observation note)

Hayden was not able to attend the after-school clubs because he did not want his dad to wait in the car for him. There were elements from Hayden's home microsystem that were influencing his actions in the school microsystem. This was partly because he could not walk home and had to travel to school and because his father was retired and could not collect him later. Therefore, Hayden could not participate in these clubs.

***Reflection 27***

It felt unfortunate that Hayden could not participate in the after-school clubs because he was then limited to the types of clubs available at lunchtime. Although Hayden described his dad needing to collect him after school at a certain time, there was the feeling that this was a burden for Hayden because it influenced part of his school microsystem and micro-communications with his peers.

Also, Ms Hill mentioned Hayden's absences as a reason why he had not regularly been attending these clubs. If a student were consistently absent from school, a more diligent check in would be needed when that child was at school, to help them engage in their schoolwork. However in Hayden's case, this monitoring did not include monitoring the attendance of school clubs, even though they were considered important to all the children, particularly from the previous study (chapter 6).

At Grace's school, the attendance at clubs was optional as noted in the observation notes:

At Grace's school, it was not compulsory to attend a club at lunchtime or after school. Grace and her friends that were interviewed were all involved in clubs.

(Observation note)

Throughout this subtheme, the importance of the micro-communications that occurred in the peer microsystem were emphasised, in particular, the lunch time clubs. At Grace's school, the promotion of providing a club for students with certain interests, such as music, or learning a language, allowed the students to engage better within the school and meet

more people. However, in Hayden's school, it was compulsory for the students to attend a club, yet the students' adherence to this rule was not supervised.

The peer microsystem was a supportive resource from which these children could make new friends, and peer interactions filled part of the informal spaces of the school day. This means that the capacity of the school system to recognise the relevance of these informal times when micro-communication occur is important. These were times when the interactions and shared experiences supported the children with their adaptation within the school microsystem.

***7.5.2.3.3 Interactions with Peers at School Concerning the Children's Visible Difference.*** This subtheme looks at some of the children's interactions with other children in the school microsystem which focused on their cleft. These communications were varied, all taking place at school and based on the data from the interviews during the focused ethnography. This theme looks at some of these interactions that occur with friends in their peer group and some that took place with other students at school. It was important to highlight how the participants were reflecting on these interactions to illustrate how Hayden and Grace felt about these experiences at their new school, and to identify the proximal processes taking place during this time point for the participants.

For example, Hayden had not chosen to explain or talk about his cleft with anyone at school, but he recalled a time when another student had asked him about it. This very small interaction with another student was one of Hayden's reflections. It was also during the peer interview with Hayden's friend, Harry when he learnt about Hayden's cleft. Whereas, for Grace, she decided to share information about her cleft with some of her school friends at a time when she needed support because of an upcoming operation on her cleft. In a different interaction, a student confronted her about her cleft. Grace did not choose this time, but she decided how to respond to the student. These types of interactions will be discussed in turn in the subtheme.

In the next quotation, Hayden cited another student who commented on his cleft. This was a fleeting moment, but it was the experience Hayden recalled at school when someone acknowledged his cleft:

... there was this one guy named ..., he said, "I never realised you had a cleft lip" and I said to him, "How did you know that?", but he didn't say anything. (Hayden, peer interview)

During the interview with Grace and her teacher, Grace talked about an incident she had experienced with another student who had directed some unpleasant comments towards her about her facial features. Grace and Mrs Green discuss this:

Grace: Oh yeah, there was a boy at the start of the year who just said something and then it made me quite upset, and then I just told him about it and he just stopped doing it.

Interviewer: Can you tell me what he said?

Grace: He was just calling me names and stuff

Mrs. Green: Like what? You're allowed to say it.

Grace: Saying that I had a big nose and stuff

Interviewer: Okay, and was he in one of your classes?

Grace: Yeah, he's in all of my classes

Interviewer: Oh, he's in all your classes, okay

Grace: I just told him about it, and he stopped

Interviewer: As soon as you told him, he stopped?

Grace: Yeah. He just stopped. (teacher interview)

With some gentle encouragement from Mrs Green in the above excerpt, Grace recalled the student's comments and how she had challenged him. In the next quotation, Mrs Green goes on to explain how she viewed Grace's management of this situation:

...since I wasn't aware of that what had happened with the boy for a wee while, but she dealt with it amazingly, because generally if someone tells me, I say right this what we can do but you know, and she says, 'no Miss, I've already dealt with it', and I thought excellent, so it was monitored for a wee while and you know, so. (Mrs Green, teacher interview)

Mrs Green's in the above quotation described how she viewed Grace's autonomy in dealing with the situation unassisted, as commendable, and indeed noteworthy given that many children might not feel able to manage dealing with unpleasant remarks alone.

In this next excerpt, Georgia (Grace's friend) referred to another interaction with one of the students in some of her classes. She thought that this girl had a cleft, and that she had had to withstand unpleasant comments from other students about this:

Georgia (peer): There's a wee girl in my maths class and she has a cleft lip and palate, um she's not had as many operations as Grace, but some children call her names, they say things like you look like this, she's got a split in her teeth, possibly from it and they say things like 'you could fit a bus through that,' and I just kind of sit there and ask, 'Why are you doing it?' and, I tell them not to cause they've gone through things, like it's not their fault, yeah, it's what on the inside that matters, it's not what's happening on the outside

Grace: Tell her to come to Mrs Green (*guidance teacher*)

I: Can you tell me Georgia, how she reacts to the comments?

Georgia (peer): She mainly ignores them I think, but it's like I sit behind her in English and that's when usually the boy does it and I just tell him to be quiet cause like it's not nice, but she just ignores it and just kind a turns around and says, 'it's fine, I'm used to it'. I feel like bad for her that people are always calling her names

Grace: It's not good that she says that she's used to it. (peer interview)

Both Grace and Georgia expressed concern for this student. Georgia chose to intervene in these repeated bullying encounters faced by the other student, recalling the girl's response about being used to this type of experience as "it's fine, I'm used to it". Grace gave explicit advice that the student should involve Mrs Green, suggesting that being called names because of her cleft was not a situation that should be tolerated, "its not good that she says she's used to it".

**Reflection 28**

For me, as an observer and interviewer during this interaction, I felt that Georgia's lived experiences of having a friend with a cleft, and her understanding of this condition because of her friendship with Grace, was particularly captivating in this instance. Georgia felt awful about what this other student was experiencing, as much as Grace did. Through her friendship with Grace, Georgia had come to understand what a cleft was and seemed to have developed some empathy for her friend's difficult experiences. Georgia and Grace expressed a sense of compassion and concern for this student.

Georgia talked about the above incident with understanding. Georgia had known Grace since primary school and was aware of Grace's cleft and the operations she had had. There is some discussion of this in the peer interview in the next excerpt:

Georgia (peer): Yeah, I think like knowing Grace from a young age I've like seen pictures, I've got a picture of her from when she was just born so like, it was just Grace, it was just normal

Grace: That's also cause I just trust Georgia so much cause in primary we did a talk about it cause she knew so much about it

Georgia (peer): Yeah, it was a talk about CLAPA, cause it helps people like Grace we did that the whole way through primary school, cause some children are mean about it and call people names, so we raised £107 for CLAPA. (peer interview)

In the quotation above, Grace carefully explained how the sense of trust had built up over time, in knowing that Georgia was a safe person to talk to, and confide in about any issues she might wish to discuss. It is interesting that the mesosystem here of the primary and secondary school continued to support Grace, at a time when she was not sure who would be a safe person in the new school environment.

On a different note, Grace spoke about the support she had received from some of her new friends she had made at secondary school, after telling them about her cleft. Grace explained in the next excerpt how she chose to tell her friends about her cleft when she needed to have her operation. She felt this was the time when she needed support:

I: So, Gabby and Ginny, your newer friends. Did you tell them? Or did they ask you?  
How did that work?

Grace: It was when I was told I needed an operation, I was kind of finding it quite hard to cope. That's when I decided to tell them, so they can help me.

I: Okay, and how did they respond?

Grace: They were just giving me hugs and stuff, and they don't like, we don't like talk about it a lot unless, I want to talk about it. (teacher interview)

From Grace's point of view, she felt that her friends would only talk about her cleft when she chose to talk about it, which was comforting to her. There was a sense that Grace only needed support from her friends about her cleft when she required it. This showed how Grace exhibited some resistance to talking about her cleft to her friends. She took ownership of how she would disclose her visible difference to others. According to Rutter (1999), this relative resistance that some people demonstrate helps to negotiate any future risk. She was able to effectively communicate this and receive support, and it she had developed her own type of support device, similar to a protective mechanism that she could access when needed.

As mentioned at the beginning of this theme, Hayden disclosed about his cleft to his friend during the during the peer interview with his friend, Harry. During the interview it transpired that Harry was unaware of Hayden's cleft. In the next excerpt, the disclosure of Hayden's cleft occurred:

I: Okay, does Harry know you have a cleft?

Harry (peer): No

Hayden: Now he does, that's the magic of facial reconstruction surgery

I: You've had many surgeries, haven't you Hayden?

Hayden: Yeah

I: And, that's also why your speech is not as clear?

Hayden: Yep

I: Harry, did you notice something different about Hayden?

Harry (peer): Yeah, I always saw it

I: Did you know what it was?

Harry (peer): No, I just never wanted to say anything. (peer interview)

In the above excerpt, Hayden mentioned how facial reconstruction was magical because it hid the cleft from Harry, although further on in the dialogue, Harry admits to knowing that he had noticed something different about Hayden but decided not to say anything. Harry clearly felt that he did not want to say anything about Hayden's cleft, and Hayden thought that this was because of the expert 'magical' surgery he had.

*Reflection 29*

Harry knew that there was something different about Hayden, but he decided not to ask about it or make any comment. There was a sense here that Harry was being polite by not enquiring into this. It was similar to what Lucy felt in the group study. She felt that the other students in her school did not ask her about her cleft out of politeness. Whether it was a form of manners, a courtesy to the other student or simply not feeling that this needed to be addressed, both Hayden and Lucy were fine about this type of response.

In thinking about the interactions that children with a visible difference have, Ms Green in the teacher interview was explicit in distancing herself away from any notion of blame for some students that she felt were meeker. She spoke about the possibility of some students being targeted in terms of name-calling and unpleasant remarks. She felt that the body language and how a student manoeuvres them around might create a type of 'victimhood'.

...something about whether a student has some sort of victimhood and that's not to blame them, but some students are kind of much meeker, um much more open to bullying, you know student's pick that up easy from body language and the way students conduct themselves, um so those students are more likely to be possibly targeted... (Ms Hill, teacher interview)

The teacher feeling that some students acquire a type of 'victimhood' in which they are not strong enough to manage as they interact in the school microsystem. The types of interactions that occurred for the participants in the peer microsystem about their cleft were



interesting and varied. Both Hayden and Grace were not always explicit in telling others about their cleft until they needed too. For Grace, this happened because she was having her operation and would miss some school, and for Hayden it was disclosed during the peer interview. Having both received questioning and comments in some of their interactions with students about their cleft, they were able to respond about their condition. There was some resistance from Grace and Hayden to talk about their visible differences at the start of the school year, as both children decided not to disclose their cleft to others at this time. At this starting point, both Grace and Hayden presented with this notion of resistance when talking about their cleft to other children. In Rutter's (1989) expression of resilience, he described how this relative resistance to an adversity for an individual is seen as having an inoculating effect when dealing with a difficult situation. This type of effect makes it easier to manage future adverse experiences (Rutter, 1989).

**7.5.2.4 Time Point Two Summary.** The peer microsystems continued to play a valuable role to both participants, akin to the group study. Hayden and Grace were active links between the home and school microsystems, and the access to teachers and some of the other staff members, such as a form tutor was important to both children. The view of the term 'resilience' from the teacher's interviews was similar to the first wave of resilience enquiry - as a personal quality or a trait that lies within the child. The teachers also promoting the need for secondary school children to develop their independence become socially mature. Once more, this sense that children experience 'time' in the present, although the adults were focused on the long-term occurrences and experiences of their child.

### ***7.5.3 Time Point Three***

This is the final time point for the case studies analysis. The data set for this time point included two stages of data collection; firstly, the final online snapshot interviews, which took place in May 2018 with the child only, and then the final family interview with the participants and their mothers in July 2018. This time point occurred during the school summer term, Hayden and Grace's final term of their first year at secondary school. The method section of this chapter provides a succinct description of the two data collection phases for this time point (see p. 217).

From this time point, the TA identified three main themes; Firstly, the sharing of some school experiences between the school and the home by the child, called, '*Child's shared school experiences encouraging micro-communications at home*', next the '*Positive acknowledgment of the new school microsystem*', which looks at how the participants and their mothers were thinking and feeling about the new school microsystem, and thirdly, the final main theme called, '*Types of strategies used to disclose the cleft condition*', which describes and discusses the participants experiences as a child with a cleft starting secondary school. In table 25, an overview of the main themes and subthemes for this time point are provided and will be discuss in turn in the following section.

**Table 25***Time Point Three's Main Themes and Subthemes*

Themes	Subthemes
1. Child's shared school experiences encouraging micro-communications at home	
2. Positive acknowledgment of the new school microsystem	2.1 Reflecting on the new school microsystem 2.2 Mixed thoughts about the peer microsystem at school
3. Types of strategies used to disclose the cleft condition	

**7.5.3.1 Theme 1. Child's shared school experiences encouraging micro-communications at home.** Over the course of the first year at secondary school, the participants enjoyed taking part in some new activities, having experienced these at their new school. In this theme, the participant's and their mothers talked about some of these positive experiences that the children had shared with their mothers during the year. These form part of the micro-communications occurring for Hayden and Grace between the school and home microsystems. Therefore, this theme shows how the participants continued to act as the courier between the home and school microsystems, sharing the information and developing the micro-communications.

In the first quotation, Gina shared how Grace was part of an after school dance club. Gina explained that Grace might be passing on her skills to the next first years after the summer, really demonstrating how Grace felt equipped to participate fully, becoming socially involved in school life:

...towards the end she got involved in a dance club after school and then she could get involved doing the choreography, she was doing that and they were doing dance

competitions with other schools, I think next year as well she's going to be teaching the first years that come in so that was something that, they've actually been doing that over the summer, they've all been keeping in touch about doing new dances and what music, that's been quite good for her. (Gina, mother)

In the next excerpt Hayden and his mother talked about the cooking he had enjoyed doing at school. Subsequently, Hayden returned home expressing a sense of pride in what he had made at school:

I: Hayden can you remember any stand out moments during the year when you wanted to come home and tell you parents or your sister about?

Hayden: Um, when we did cooking in school, it was really fun and it tasted really good

Helen: oh yes, I remember and you made it all by yourself and he bought it home

Hayden: yeah, it was good. (family interview)

Adding to this, Hayden decided to apply some of the skills he had learnt at school and experiment with the recipes at home, including his mother in this. Helen recalled this in the next quotation:

Yeah, the cooking experience he had really enjoyed because he had come home and said, 'okay, mum let's do this' because he had the recipe and wanted to try the recipes and he would tell me how he got to use the knives at school for the chopping and you know I don't let him use the knives at home to chop, but at school they let him. So each time he comes back his chopping has improved, so yeah he really likes that, he even goes and googles other recipes as well. (Helen, mother)

Another shared communication between the children and their parents addressed the subject progress that the children had made at school. Grace, in the next quotation felt that she was 'doing okay' in the core subjects, such as English and maths, talking more about her enjoyment of other subjects she had not done in primary school:

My English and my maths are okay and then there are other subjects like Home Ec., and Geography, which I didn't have in primary school so there's been some new subjects which is good. (Grace, family interview)

For, Gina, in the next quotation, her sense of pride for her daughter was also about the teacher's comments regarding Grace's conduct, placing valuing on this together with her results:

...how almost every teacher said exactly the same thing in that she's really helpful and is a lovely girl in the class which I think is equally as important as the results she got which is good, so it was nice to hear in high school as well. (Gina, mother)

Helen was also pleased with Hayden's progress, particularly given his absenteeism. She acknowledges this in the next quotation:

It was quite good surprisingly, knowing that he had missed out so much on that first year, he did very well in Spanish and very well in Science as well. (Helen, mother)

This theme indicated that Hayden and Grace were actively participating in their lives and education, considered by Sorin (2005) to be social actors, and viewed as an agentic child. Sorin (2005) noted that the agentic child was less needy and started to become more competent as they grew older. This time point recognised some of the shared communications between the home and school microsystems, facilitated by the child.

### **7.5.3.2 Theme 2. Positive Acknowledgment of the New School Microsystem.**

The analysis of the case study data from time point one, and data from the group study both documented how the children and the parents had some reservations about starting secondary school. For example, there were worries about the changes to routines, the size of the school and getting lost. However, during the final family interview, the participants and their mothers reflected on how the feelings of some uncertainties felt at the start of the year had changed and how they were currently feeling more positive about the new school microsystem. This theme looks at how the child participants were thinking about their

school now, and how some of their initial perceptions had shifted since the start of the school year. There are two subthemes in this theme. Firstly, some reflections about the changes called, '*Reflecting on the new unknown school microsystem*'. The second subtheme looks at how the peer micro-communications were experienced by Hayden and Grace, '*Mixed thoughts about the peer microsystem at school*'.

**7.5.3.2.1 Reflecting on the New School Microsystem.** As the children and mothers reflected on the new school microsystem, they recalled some uncertainties, mostly for the mothers. Hayden and Grace also talked about new, exciting experiences they had enjoyed at school and shared these with their parents at home.

In the first quotation, Gina referred back to Grace's education in primary school and how she was known there, but starting at the new school meant it would be different. However, Gina felt that Grace had made some friends and the transition was simpler than they anticipated:

I think it was probably easier than she thought because she was also anxious about special requests you know people would notice it and say anything to her so we were concerned about that because she started nursery at the primary school so she was there for 10 years, there were only 13 of them in a class and right from three years old there hadn't been any difference, so I think that was the main thing for us, but, um for Grace as well felt just a bit anxious, but she's met loads of friends and she's only had a few issues with some horrible comments, but I think from the start it was a lot easier than we all thought... (Gina, mother)

Helen's explanation of the transition resulted in her remembering how anxious she had felt. She also referred to how Hayden was known at primary school, but that this new setting was unfamiliar, which was worrying to Helen:

I think for me I was a bit anxious to be honest because he was going into a new environment, with new people, you know completely different to his normal routine of primary school where he knew everyone and everyone knew him so for him to go into there I was anxious, you know how they would react to him and how he would be

settling in there with the rest of the other kids at school and the teachers as well, yeah, mostly anxious about the new environment and just in general. (Helen, mother)

Again, Helen noted that she had felt worried about how the other children would react to Hayden and was concerned about this new environment. This was sincere uncertainty shown here by Helen, and her recollection of Hayden's previous school where he was known and his routine was 'normal'. It gave the sense that this new 'alien-type' environment was unsettling for Helen.

***Reflection 30***

I was struck by the idea that the anticipated worry (stemming from the nurturing primary school setting) was worse than the reality of what happened. Could the sense of nurture in primary school create a false illusion as to what secondary school really is? Would it help if primary schools worked more closely with secondary schools to address these expectations and concerns? Is there a way that both schools could work with parents to develop an understanding about how these differences can be addressed, in a more 'joined up' way?

At a later stage in the family interview, Helen expressed how the primary school had been supportive and nurturing in relation to Hayden's learning, and she was not sure how it would be in secondary school, but she noticed that Hayden was making connections with others at his secondary school, and he was managing the transition:

...it felt like at primary school he was being held, like holding his hands and leading him guiding him and in secondary school he literally has to find his own way you know so there's a big difference so I was a bit nervous about that, you know 'would he?' and 'could he?' and it turns out he can, you know he's always had no issue with making new friends and forming new friends, you know and connecting to other people and I suppose it's always the fear of the unknown when you're comfortable in your own little zone, you know the fear of going into somewhere new starting from when you ...is always daunting, but maybe more for me than for him, because he was more looking forward to it than I was. (Helen, mother)

In the above quotation, Helen was questioning how Hayden would face this new uncertainty, the ‘fear of the unknown’, mentioning how he was comfortable in his own zone. This was a repeated thought by Helen as she acknowledged this uncertainty. However, she also realised that she had her own worries, and that Hayden was excited to be starting at secondary school. Both Gina and Helen spoke about the connections and friendships that were made and that the anticipated worry was not as expected.

For Grace thinking back to stand out moments at the start of school led to thoughts about the movement around the new school microsystem and the classroom changes, particularly the different rules for the classes and the teachers:

I: Okay, and if you can think back to that very first day of secondary school, can you recall what really stood out to you in those first few weeks?

Grace: I think it was just moving around and getting used to the teachers

I: Do you remember thinking about new rules or noticing all the new faces?

Grace: Yeah, I remember the rules changing in the different classes and that was something to get used to, cause it was hard to get it all right. (family interview)

Hayden felt that school was not as ‘scary’ as he initially thought, accepting that he had felt a little nervous at the start:

I: Can you think back to the very first day or first few weeks of secondary school and tell me what you remember?

Hayden: It was okay, it wasn’t as scary

I: Do you think you felt a little nervous?

Hayden: A little bit, but not a lot (family interview)

In the next quotation, Gina talks about the new notions of other’s lives and how Grace had started experiencing this with some of her new friends:

I think Grace has already had her eyes open, I think she’s beginning to realise how lucky she is actually, some of her friends have single parents or parents that work and they’re



just kind of left to fend for themselves, um she went to stay at someone's house last week, and I dropped her off, picked her up 28 hours later and the mum hadn't given them anything to eat at all and had just said hello once and that was it so I think so I think she's beginning to realise how lucky she is, then another friend whose confided in her saying that the mum and dad have split up now, they're sharing a one bedroom flat, her and her mum and you know with Grace I'm able to check her messages and its nice to see her saying that it doesn't matter where you live as long as you're happy so it's nice to see that side, but certainly it's opened all our eyes. She went to a birthday party and there was only four of them there and the girl was only 13 and she had taken vodka from her mum's cupboards, so she's no longer allowed to play with that person any longer, so yeah, quite an eye opener. (Gina, mother)

This was a really interesting quotation by Gina because she talks about Grace's experiences with her friends and at their houses, and how she felt that this was a type of 'eye-opener'. Although Gina thought that Grace was starting to see how her family was different and that she as a parent was present and would not leave Grace with her friends alone, there was also a sense here that this was in Gina's words an 'eye-opener' for her too.

**7.5.3.2.2 Mixed Thoughts about the Peer Microsystem at School.** In this subtheme, the participants and mothers discussed the role of friendships and after-school clubs in the peer microsystem. This was particularly important to Grace, as she considered how important her friends at school were, but Hayden also acknowledged how important his friends were at school. Both children differed in their reasoning and had divergent views on school clubs. This identifies some of the individual differences that each developing child had, which Bronfenbrenner and Morris (2006) highlighted in the person element of the PPCT model. In particular, the demand characteristics the invite or discourage reactions from the social environment varied between the children.

Akin to the group school study, Grace enjoyed having her friends because she did not want to be on her own. There was this sense that friends at secondary school meant that you were not alone. In the next quotation, Grace said:

Yeah, really important because if you don't have any friends you'll just be by

yourself. (Grace, family interview)

For Hayden, having friends was relevant to his social skills which is typical of the resource characteristic which is required for effective functioning (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). He briefly noted this during the family interview, in the next quotation:

Helps me improve my social skills. (Hayden, family interview)

In addition to this, Hayden talked about the friends he had made during the year and where he met them. This is an excerpt between his mother and him discussing his new friends at school:

I: Okay, just thinking about your friends, which we have spoken about before,

Can you tell me about any new friends you've made this year?

Helen: He's got friends in his year and older as well, are they the Year 9s?

Hayden: Yeah, Year 9

Helen: Yeah, on all accounts from what we've heard, he's well liked, yeah, yeah, he's well liked

I: Okay, Hayden who do you mostly hang around with during the lunch breaks?

Hayden: The Year 9s, in the library at lunchtime

Helen: Yeah, he goes to the library a lot so that's where he meets them, yeah, they have the same book interests, yeah. (family interview)

Helen repeatedly noted in the above excerpt that Hayden had friends, that they were in a different year group and that he was liked. She also confirmed where he enjoyed spending his lunch breaks, and that these friends had similar interests to Hayden. Hayden did not talk about any friends he had made in his own year group and his mother was happy with the friends he had made in the other year group.

Continuing with the micro-communications in the peer group, both Grace and Hayden also spoke about the school clubs and what this meant for them. In the next quotation, Grace felt that the school clubs were useful because they were an added activity to the end of the day, and she could meet more people:

I think it is important just to have clubs and something extra to do after school and meet more people. (Grace, family interview)

Hayden did not feel the same way about school clubs. He had mixed feelings on attending a club after school. This was discussed in the next excerpt from the family interview:

I: Does this have to do with the types of activities they offered, maybe if they had a cookery class, would that interest you?

Hayden: No, I do not want to stay at school until 4'oclock

I: You don't want to stay after school, can you tell me why?

Hayden: Because I come home and do my homework and that's what I can do

I: Okay, so you feel that going home, and completing your homework is good for you?

Hayden: Yeah, aha

Hayden was not interested in any after school clubs. This was how he had felt about school clubs from the start of the research study.

### ***Reflection 31***

Throughout the course of the research study, Hayden was not interested in attending school clubs. In parts of the online interviews he described having little motivation to attend, and felt happier to return home after school finished. He also mentioned that he did not want to leave his dad to wait for him if he did attend an after school club, because he was collected by car after school. During the peer interview in time point two, he suggested that he enjoyed going home after school to play on his games. It was also in time point two, during the teacher interviews, when Ms Hill discovered that he had not attended a club, which was compulsory at his school. And here in the final interview with his mother, he still feels that he would rather go home and complete his homework. This disengagement with a school club was curious because the other participants in the group study, and Grace had all found the clubs to be fun and social. Still Hayden was not interested in this during this transition year.

His mother, Helen talked about why she thought he was not interested in attending school clubs yet in the next quotation. She reflected on this being his first year and that he was still adjusting to the new school:

I try to encourage him, but he's so set on as soon as the school day is done to head straight on home, maybe it's because it was his first year and he's still adapting to that and he's still trying to find his way, trying to feel settled in so hopefully next year, year 8 now that's he's got a little network of friends at school now, perhaps he might reconsider you know joining one of the clubs. (Helen, mother)

Helen was hoping that Hayden would integrate further during the following school year with the clubs. She felt that he may still need more time to find his way in this new environment, which was similar to the group transition study when some of the children were 'trying to find their way in the new environment'. However, for Hayden this was an ongoing process and according to his mother, he was not yet ready at that time.

### **7.5.3.3 Theme 3. Types of Strategies Used to Disclose the Cleft Condition.**

During this time point, the participants talked about their cleft and how they had decided to disclose this to other peers over the course of the academic school year. Both Hayden and Grace had preferred not to talk about their cleft within their new school microsystem, until they felt they it was necessary. For Hayden, the disclosure of his cleft had occurred during the peer interview with Harry, and for Grace it happened when she had to have an operation on her palate. This theme is concerned with the type of direct and indirect strategies used by the children and how they were feeling when talking about their cleft.

In primary school, both participants felt a sense of belonging and being known (Theme 1, subtheme 1), this meant that everyone knew about their cleft. Starting secondary school was a change because other children may not have known or be aware of what a cleft is, therefore Hayden and Grace had to decide if they wanted to talk to their peers about this or wait to be asked about it. In the first excerpt from the final online interview with Grace, she described feeling worried about other students finding out about her cleft because of how she looked:

Interviewer: Okay, the last time we spoke you said that you were a little nervous about the op, but unsure why. Can you tell me why you felt like this?

Grace: I don't know I guess something just changed in high school

Interviewer: Can you try tell me what you think changed in high school?

Grace: I guess I was scared of people finding... which they did

Interviewer: And you didn't feel this way in primary school?

Grace: No, cause they all knew

Interviewer: What do you think they found?

Grace: The way I looked. (online interview)

This part of the online interview was intriguing because Grace had a visible difference, she looked different because of her cleft, and had received comments from another student at the start of the year about her nose. However, it was only when she was going to be absent from school to have her operation when she felt that others would discover she was different and she would need to explain why she looked different. This meant that everyone will know that she has a cleft. It was in contrast to the subtheme from time point one when the mother's referred to Hayden and Grace 'being known' at primary school and the sense of connectedness they felt. Grace was still questioning her 'fit' in the new school microsystem, wondering if she would be accepted if everyone knew about her cleft. Furthermore, this was showing the connections between the peer and school microsystems, and the feelings of concern about being accepted by her peers at school, describing this discovery of her cleft as 'scary'.

As this interview with Grace continued, she explained in the next excerpt that she was worried about other people making fun of her because of her cleft:

Interviewer: And now that people know, how do you feel?

Grace: I don't know

Interviewer: Do you feel any different? Or are you still scared?

Grace: A little scared.

Interviewer: Can you tell me what makes you feel like that?

Grace: Maybe they make fun of me. (online interview)

Again, Grace was concerned about what other's might be thinking and how they would react to her cleft. She did not want to feel this way and she did not want to be made fun of. There was this notion that Grace had an anticipated worry about what others might think, but had not directly engaged with this, except for the initial comments at the start of the year.

From the family interview, Gina (mother) described in the next quotation how she felt that Grace was extremely cautious in disclosing anything about her cleft condition because she had not told her friends. Gina also felt that Grace had not given her friends the opportunity to process this and was underestimating her new friends at school:

...because she didn't want to tell anybody and when she went for her operation she didn't even want to tell the ones who she'd made friends with, it was like they don't need to know cause to me she was almost trying to distance herself so that nobody knew she had a cleft, you know cause it took her quite a while to tell people, you know her friends, it wasn't something she talked about. You know when she was going for her operation a few of them were asking why she was off and I said well did you not tell them? And she went 'no', they don't need to know that bit. I think she's underestimated her friends because there's about 7 or 8 of them that always meet up at lunch time and I think that if she was the type of child who had been a loner at school and wasn't so friendly then it wouldn't matter if they had told anyone, but Grace likes making friends and her friends have helped her (Gina, mother)

Gina further discussed how Grace did not tell anyone at school about the comments made to her about her nose in maths. In the next quotation, Gina described how they were trying to work out what the best option was for Grace to inform the school about the name calling:

I think that time in your maths class when someone was making comments about her flat nose and how she looked, her face looked funny, that was kind of only a few months into the term and she didn't really say anything about it and she hadn't told any of the teachers. We were all trying to discuss the best way forward and she didn't want to get into any trouble and she didn't want to put attention to herself, but it just so happens that she broke her wrist at her dance show so we ended up having to speak to her

guidance teacher who I then slipped it to and that it had happened, cause the guidance teacher said they won't accept that behaviours and apparently the boy had been moved in the class anyway, it was reassuring for us and probably for Grace as well. (Gina, mother)

By directly intervening here, Gina was still linking the school and home microsystems for Grace, as this example presented an opportunity to address this problem with the guidance teacher. Once this happened, Grace was able to talk more to her guidance teacher, but her mother had formed the initial micro-communication.

***Reflection 32***

I was struck by the thought that when Gina intervened in the school microsystem, and spoke to the guidance teacher at Grace's school, she was also providing her with sense of protection. This was something that Gina was familiar with from primary school, with a parent speaking to a teacher, and an explicit demonstration of her still acting as part of Grace's support system. It also stuck me that Gina needed to feel part of Grace's new school microsystem to protect her, thus ensuring that Grace was well. Gina was part of Grace's protective processes with regards to her cleft and how others reacted to her. She was very aware of this through the study and even as an observer, it was comforting to see how Gina was determined to support Grace with this.

For Hayden, choosing to talk about his cleft was not his preferred method for explaining his condition. He felt more comfortable if someone asked him about it. This was discussed in the family interview in the next excerpt:

I: Hayden, can you describe how you felt when someone new found out about your cleft?

Helen (mother): Were you comfortable to tell them?

Hayden: Yeah, a little

I: Would you rather have someone ask you about it or do you like to be able to tell new people?

Hayden: Yeah, I'd rather they ask, yeah. (family interview)

Helen felt that Hayden did not want to identify with other people who had a similar condition to him. In the next quotation, she explained this:

...because he kind of avoids other people with clefts because even when there's a program about clefts on the television and he's just like 'oh' and shows no interest, which I find very strange, you know you would think you would want to know if that person has the same experiences. (Helen, mother)

Hayden chose not to show interest in others who had a cleft like him and he would rather not disclose about his own cleft with other people. He also incurred an injury during this time to his arm. This resulted in absenteeism from school and support provided by the school. Helen clarified in the next quotation how the school had helped during this time:

When he had his incident which was an accident, his broken arm, it was quite a challenge but, a he got a lot of support from the school, he was assigned a buddy, he was given an elevator pass and they had him finish school before the rest of the kids and having him start before the other kids came in...they gave him a wheelchair to move around and as well a buddy, they were very supportive, very, very supportive, and they were sending his school work, what he had to do online so very, very cooperative with us, yeah. (Helen, mother)

From Helen's explanation above, Hayden had received good support from his school during this time. And in the online interview, which occurred after Hayden's arm was better, he reiterated how he felt about needing help at this stage, which was similar to what he had said in the teacher interview:

Nah, I don't need help. I'm going strong by myself. (Hayden, online interview)

At this time, towards the end of the school academic year, Hayden felt that he was managing on his own.



It was during the final family interviews when Gina and Helen both reflected on their child's involvement in the study and how they had felt. This was relevant to this theme because it showed how they both felt that their involvement in the research was valuable. In the next quotation, Gina felt that it had helped Grace feel confident to talk about her cleft, which was an initial worry at the start of the school year for Gina:

I think probably from when you went to the school (*looking at Grace*), if she hadn't been involved in this I don't think she would have told anybody, I think it's given her more confidence to speak about it, yeah I mean if she hadn't had her operation or been involved in this, I don't think she would have told anybody. (Gina, mother)

I think it's made us feel a bit more aware, cause not much of this type of research is out there for kids his age, you know how transition from primary school to secondary, and for Hayden he started in nursery right up to Year 6 and then transitioning to another totally different world sort of thing, you know how he's able to adapt in that different environment. (Helen, mother)

This theme was a reflection of how both of the child participants in the case studies had felt about other peers finding out about their clefts. They had not needed to explain their cleft often during their primary school experiences, because of the length of time they had spent there and because everyone knew them. Both mothers also played a key role in telling others at primary school about their children's visible difference. There were some subtle signs of confidence from Grace and Hayden starting to talk more openly about this, which was reassuring to both mothers.

**7.5.3.4 Time Point Three Summary.** During this time point the children and their mothers recalled some of the experiences each child had enjoyed at school. The mothers acknowledged the new school microsystems as positive because they felt that their children were feeling more confident about their visible difference, making friends and knowing their way around the school. There was no longer a feeling of the unknown and the heightened anticipation that was experienced before starting school. Rather there was a sense that both children were enjoying their schools and looking forward to the next academic year.

## 7.6 Conclusion

The aim of the two case studies was to explore children's school transition experiences during the first year at secondary school. This focused on the processes that were involved in the enactment of resilience (including the proximal processes and protective mechanisms found in chapter 6), and the engagement of each participant with the social context and how this shaped the process of resilience. In this concluding section of this study, there are three key findings to discuss; Firstly, the process of the school transition for the whole family, particularly from the mothers' viewpoints; next, the continued forming of links during this transition year, which was shaped by the children's engagement with the context; and thirdly, the active role of the children as key messengers between the microsystems.

### *7.6.1 The Process of the School Transition*

One of the findings from this study was a sense of loss which both mothers felt when their children left primary school. Both Hayden and Grace started their early year schooling in their primary school nurseries – they were familiar with this setting, lived nearby and had made friends here. Importantly, for the mother's and the children, everyone from primary school knew about their cleft and they did not need to explain or talk about it. From a study of four mothers of children with disabilities (Ankeny et al., 2009), each were interviewed about their transitional experiences for their children towards college and adulthood. One of the findings from this study was that the transition was an ongoing process and the importance of communication and support from teachers was essential (Ankeny et al., 2009).

The idea of this ongoing process occurring during transition experiences is also expressed by Bronfenbrenner (1986) in his writings on normative ecological transitions. Transitions will impact on the whole microsystem and will result in changing roles in the family. The loss of the parenting role was felt by Gina and Helen as part of this transition process, and their roles which had been stable throughout their children's primary school careers needed to be re-evaluated and redefined. In primary school, the mothers were actively engaging with the primary school microsystem, and acted as the links of communication between the home and school microsystems. However, during the

secondary school transition, the children were becoming more active in their new school microsystems, needing to engage with this context.

### ***7.6.1 Emerging thoughts about the Links Shaping the Context of the School***

#### ***Microsystem***

Similar to the findings from the group transition study, Grace and Hayden were shown to be forming links in the mesosystem. This was seen in time point two and three, with the importance of the informal communications with their peers during the lunch times and in-between classes. Grace and her peers seemed to describe this as a type of ritual that they looked forward to during their school day. Also, the children were able to access resources in the school, for example when Hayden hurt his arm he needed to access a wheelchair to move around the school. His mother also explained how he was given time before and after school to leave earlier to avoid the crowds. The activities surrounding these children and the responsibility for organising such activities was placed with the children, and there was a focus on this notion of growing up and developing a social maturity, conveyed by the teachers. For the teachers, the children were showing an increased independence when accessing resources, and ‘finding their way’ around school.

Furthermore, the regular day-to-day communications at home with their parents about their school work and their interactions with their peer groups, meant that the micro-communications were seen across the time points. This was comparable to the group study with the children sharing experiences and relaying information between the home and school microsystems.

### ***7.6.3 Child as Key Messenger Between the Microsystems***

From the focused ethnography, the movement of the child became more regular because it was seen during the observation and discussed in the teacher and peer interviews. Grace and Hayden were seen as agentic in this process of movement between the microsystems in the mesosystem. In this study we could clearly see the micro-communications in the peer group, and the sense of movement for the child within the school. The move to secondary school is characterised by the need for the developing child to ‘move away’ from the caregiver to claim their developing independence (Williams & Nelson-Gardell, 2012). I could see how the case study participants began to engage more

with the new school microsystem and their peer groups become more important, specifically for Grace. From the ethnography, I noticed how the transition process was reliant on the children's movement within and amongst the microsystems. However, the teachers did not describe the children's movement around the school as it was seen from the data, and were more focused on the independence that the child needs to develop to adjust to the school environment. This was also linked to their ideas on resilience, which were part of the first wave of the resilience enquiry, namely as a trait or characteristic found within the child (O'Dougherty et al., 2013).

### **7.7 Limitations**

The initial recruitment for this study was challenging because of timings and that it meant the design needed to be adjusted to accommodate this. However, with this redesign, the focused ethnographic work took place and this provided a new opportunity to observe these children in their schools and view some of the interactions and day-to-day occurrences for them. It was sometimes difficult collecting data without disrupting the children or their teachers. The constraints of the school timetable meant that Hayden's interview with his teacher was shortened because he needed to be in class. Furthermore, the monitoring and presence as an observer at Hayden's school felt rigid and intense when compared to Grace's, although the schools both followed their own procedures and the safety of the children was of paramount importance.

### **7.8 Final Chapter**

In the final chapter of this thesis, I will provide an overview of the findings from each research question and discuss the process of resilience because of these findings. I also give a detailed evaluation of the thesis and consider the implications for policy and practice for future research.

## Chapter 8: Discussion

### 8.1 Overview

This thesis set out to study resilience as a process for a group of children with a cleft, during the secondary school transition period. In particular, the focus of this thesis was on the enactment of resilience (where and how the protective mechanisms manifested and with what effect) and the experiences of the children within their immediate environments. The research has engaged with the literature on resilience, Bronfenbrenner's bioecological theory, secondary school transitions, and children with a cleft or visible difference of the face. This thesis was designed to include mixed method qualitative approaches, comprising of a key informant study, a longitudinal child and family group school transition study, and two case studies following children through their secondary school transition.

Four key questions propelled this research endeavour:

5. How do Key Informants (professionals) think about resilience for children (with/without a visible difference)?
6. During the school transition, what protective mechanisms were underlying the resilience process (where, when and under what circumstances do these operate)?
7. What processes are involved in the enactment of resilience among children with a cleft starting secondary school (can we recognise or name these steps or links during this process)?
8. How does the social context in which the child engages with shape the resilience process during the secondary school transition year?

### 8.2 Purpose of this Chapter

Firstly, this chapter aims to discuss the four key research questions of the thesis in detail, considering the theoretical, empirical and methodological implications. This will be reported in the following sections; firstly, the findings from the key informant study (chapter 5) will be discussed, in order to explain how these experts understood resilience, particularly as it related to children with or without a visible difference of the face. Next, the findings from the school transition studies will be discussed, in order to explain how the protective mechanisms operated for children starting secondary school, and to introduce a key finding

from this thesis of an *ecological alignment* which I propose is formed because of the child's engagement with the different social contexts.

The final research question, relating to the processes involved in the development of resilience, is presented in accordance with the theoretical perspective of Bronfenbrenner's Process-Person-Context-Time (PPCT) model. I will outline four steps that have been identified in this thesis to capture this process, based on the findings from the school transition studies, thereby aiming to answer the research questions. Subsequently, there will be a discussion about the overall key findings from the thesis, which will afford an overview of the resilience process during secondary school transition.

Following on from this, there is a critical review of the research, which identifies the strengths and the limitations of this study. The chapter concludes with a careful look at the implications and contributions of this thesis for policy and practice, including future directions for this research. Finally, I will reflect on recommendations for the wider implications of this thesis for our understanding of resilience for children with a visible difference during the secondary school transition, and conclude with a final reflective note.

### **8.3 An Overview of the Findings for each Research Question**

#### ***8.3.1 Research question 1: How do Key Informants Think about Resilience for Children with or without a Visible Difference?***

In chapter 5, there were three lines of enquiry, which were explored in the pursuit of a deeper understanding of resilience during the key informant study. The first line of enquiry asked how the informants viewed resilience, and the meanings that they attached to this concept. The key informants emphasised the role of the parents or caregivers in modelling resilience, and they emphasised their view that how the child views and perceives the adult's responses during any adversity is significant. Next, the key informants emphasised the authenticity of how a child responds to an adversity as important. The informants provided examples of children who they considered resilient. Some key informants believed that such children display a sense of calm when faced with adversity. According to Tugade and Fredrickson (2007), individuals who experience more positive emotions are able to self-regulate and bounce back from a stressful situation. The finding from the key informants reflected this idea of the child exhibiting a regulated emotional response to a stressful event.

The second line of enquiry emphasised how the informants thought of, and viewed, resilience as a process. One of the key findings was the importance of effective communication for this process. Some informants suggested that clear communication promotes resilience, specifically the type of words used to convey a message. Other examples included the validation of words used by children (including the types of questions and responses used in different contexts), and a self-talk strategy for children trying to manage bullying.

Key informants described protective factors that were specific to the child and the context, for example, a child faced with a hospitalisation. This meant that the informants were interested in how the protective factors were working for a child who needed to undergo a procedure, such as a lip repair. Henley (2010) suggested the need to consider the context of a situation, and how one person responds to different stressors and situations are part of understanding resilience as a dynamic process. In accordance with this notion, the informants viewed the context and situation where the child experienced the adversity as relevant to how it was understood.

The third line of enquiry looked at how the key informants proposed that resilience works for children with a visible difference. Luthar (2013) and Werner (1989) proposed that fostering resilience at an early age positively influences psychosocial development for children. This was relevant to the group of children who were recruited for this thesis. However, the findings from my thesis went a step further because some of the informants thought that the more adversities a child experiences, the greater the need for the child to develop an *added resilience*, with one of the key informants defining this as another *level of resilience*. This notion of children having to develop this added resilience enhances the current perspectives of resilience research. This perception of layers of resilience, with additive qualities has not been previously noted in the wider literature, which is interesting because it highlights their view of the multi-faceted nature of resilience.

Following this, the informants' reflections on individual differences including the child's age and lived experience were seen as influential on resilience. Some informants felt that an older child may have less resilience because their thinking process may hinder this due to their experiences or social peer pressures, whereas a young child may be more likely to express how they are feeling to a parent or caregiver.

The key informants' views of resilience were fused with their own personal and professional experiences. The informants used examples to describe resilience rather than try to define it. These examples emphasised the interactions, and in particular how the individual responses were seen as protective factors in some contexts. For example, one of the key informants reflected on how a child (living in social housing), who she worked with, reacted to a teasing incident regarding the shape of his head. From Natalie's (key informant) perspective, the child had shown a resilient response by externalising how they felt about the comment towards the other person. This compares to the longitudinal study by Werner and Smith (1992), who found similar findings with a large sample of 505 individuals on the island of Kauai. The study identified how children from different ethnic groups and backgrounds had used a range of external protective factors (for example, affectionate and strong ties with family) when faced with adversity. These protective factors were found in varied contexts and at different ages for the sample group.

### ***8.3.2 Research Question 2: During the School Transition, What Protective Mechanisms were Underlying the Resilience Process?***

One of the main findings from both school studies identified how the school transition process was reliant on the children's movement within and between the microsystems. This movement was seen from three different perspectives: the children, the parent's and the teachers. Firstly, the children were physically moving around the school on a daily basis, with some children recounting this by referring to their own size. For example, Lucy and Bella expressed how they felt 'tiny' when moving between classes. Similarly, in the case transition study, Grace expressed uncertainty about being trampled on because of her smaller stature.

From the parent's perspective, there was a keenness to know about their child's day-to-day school life. This was as a subtle type of monitoring from parents checking in with their children at the end of the school day. For Pam and Becky (parents), it was important for them to talk to their children about school. The parents were relying on their children to communicate their school experiences, whilst trying to monitor the process. This differed to their recollections of being a primary school parent who readily had access to the teachers and felt that everyone knew each other (see case study, theme 1, p. 228). Bronfenbrenner (1986) paid close attention to the transitions between the family and other child settings,



stating that when a "...child entered the new setting, this event can markedly alter attitudes, expectations and patterns of interactions within the family, especially in relation to the child" (p. 734). In the school studies, it was interesting that the role of the parents shifted because they had to rely on their children for school information that was not provided online. For these parents, their child was central to the communication between the home and school microsystems.

The third perspective of this movement was found during the school visits (case studies); this information came from the teachers, who spoke about how the children flooded the corridors between classes with their movement. However, the teachers described this confident movement around the school as an indicator of growing independence for the children. The teachers felt this was part of growing up in secondary school. Lucey and Raey's (2000) secondary school transition research presented this notion of 'growing up' as a dilemma for children because they need to be willing to give up some protection in order to gain some autonomy from adult regulation.

From the start of this thesis, Rutter (1987) introduced us to the concept of protective mechanisms working between and amongst the protective factors to foster resilience. These mechanisms have underlined the process of resilience, acting as the mediators to the risk during turning points (i.e. small incidents or experiences that create opportunities). In the literature, these mechanisms have been identified as; decreasing the problems in a child's life (reducing the stockpile), the establishment of a secure base for a child (i.e. secure attachment to parent), the development of self-esteem through positive experiences (i.e. achievements), and self-efficacy which facilitates the child's involvement in the planning and preparation for changes, and the provision of access to opportunities, for example sporting activities (these were explained in more detail in chapter 2 pp. 18-19), school clubs, after-school events (Gilligan, 2000; Jindal-Snape & Miller, 2008; Rutter, 1987).

In this thesis, some examples of the children developing these protective mechanisms included the positive disclosure of their visible differences, for example, Grace and Bella both received negative comments about their cleft from other children. They were agentic in explaining their cleft to their peers, choosing how to respond to these comments. Another example was the effective negotiation of peer groups. Poppy and Rebecca were involved in the blending of their peer groups, which resulted in some friendship changes, particularly for Poppy. Poppy had to move between her peer group, the school staff, and her

parents trying to navigate some difficult interactions she was having with friends from her previous primary school. This occurred at the start of the secondary transition. She discussed these concerns with her parents who provided her with strategies to help (such as sharing her experiences with her tutor, or speaking to other peers). Together, Poppy's tutor and her parents became part of the secure support base during this time. However, Poppy was responsible for starting the dialogue and relaying the messages between the microsystems of the home and school.

The example outlined above with Poppy showed how she formed a network of interactions. We can see her movement between and within the microsystems during the negotiation of this adverse experience. Topping (2011) noted that children who had been class peers for years in primary school become strangers during the secondary transition. However, this thesis explicated how the child becomes the key link in the process of negotiating, managing and blending the new peer group at secondary school. Therefore, this network of interactions, which Poppy used to good effect, facilitated the navigation of blended peer groups.

Some of the children experienced support from a parent, but during the transition they had to develop new routes of support between the microsystems to effectively engage with the adversity. For these children, these routes were part of the peer group navigation and at times, advice was sought from a different role model (such as a tutor). An example of this was the mentoring from an older student that Bella received when she was trying to make some new friends (see transcript, appendices section p. 703).

When I recognised how the child's movement was important to the communication between the stakeholders or people in the two microsystems, this highlighted the idea of the child as a *courier* or messenger between microsystems. The school studies afforded an overview of how the couriership was working, and it showed where the children regularly engaged with interactions during the school day. Therefore, this thesis found that the children became key messengers, acting as *couriers of information* between the systems, whilst actively participating in the process. Bronfenbrenner and Morris (2006) highlighted how development occurs through processes of reciprocal interaction between the child and its environment and how interactions are effective over extended periods of time. Another example of this couriership in action was the process of receiving and completing homework. The school placed this responsibility for completing homework on the child, and the parents

relied on the child to manage this. This meant that the children were responsible for the navigation of information between microsystems, specifically between the home and school microsystems, placing the child at the core of this process. Another example of this was seen when the children shared knowledge and skills that they had learned, such as, Hayden from the case study, who was learning how to cook from a recipe at school, and sharing this with his mother at home.

During the process of successful engagement in interactions within the microsystems, some of the children were able to facilitate their understanding of these communications. This occurred through the contextualising of the experiences. This presented as self-regulation and a sense of belonging in the new microsystem for the child. These protective mechanisms underlying the resilience process highlighted how some of the children effectively used their couriership skills to engage in the negotiation of risks by sharing information, asking for guidance from an older peer, and thereby developing their own understanding of the new school environment. The role of the developing child was important to the transition period because of their active engagement in these interactions. This engagement with the ecological environment resulted in regular ongoing interactions, and opportunities for new proximal processes within the social context of the new mesosystem. The next section will focus more clearly on these proximal processes, and the child's continued engagement with the social context, which forms the focus of research question three.

***8.3.3 Research question 3: What Processes are Involved in the Enactment of Resilience among Children with a Cleft Starting Secondary School (can we recognise or name these steps or links during this process)?***

From the analysis of the research studies, the key informants provided expert views of resilience and what this means for children. Next, using Bronfenbrenner's PPCT model as a lens, the school transition studies allowed us to see how the child was located at the centre of the school transition process. This was identified from the thematic analysis of the school transition studies (chapters 6 and 7), which collectively afforded an overview and understanding of how the process of resilience can be viewed. The other key finding seen from the school studies was the forming of *alignments*. An alignment refers to the fit between the child and their immediate environments during the school transition process. These

alignments are mentioned briefly in this next section, as they formed part of the resilience process. However, a more detailed explanation of the alignment is discussed in the next section (see p. 308).

In this section this resilience process will be presented as a *series of steps*, which unfold in a sequential manner. There are four steps that will be identified and explained during this process, and which underlie the enactment of resilience for a child with a visible difference starting school. Each step is identified and described in the following section, providing an overview of the process of resilience. Following this, the steps are examined in more detail, in accordance with the research question:

*Step 1 The family preparing for the new microsystem.* It was important to see the school transition from before the start of the term, and the anticipations and preparations in the family microsystem. This step focuses on the heightened anticipation and expectations that both parents and children experienced in relation to this new system, and the fusion of emotions felt by both the children and the parents.

*Step 2 The children entering and negotiating the new microsystem:* During this step, the children were starting to negotiate new experiences during the development of proximal processes. This step also shows how the children encountered certain risks, and what their experiences of these risks entailed including the negative comments made about their appearance and their cleft.

*Step 3 The children navigating in and between microsystems:* During this third step, the children formed interactions with new peers at school, enhancing the links between the home and school microsystems. These links supported the children's sense of belonging to their new microsystem, and the shared experiences between the home and school.

*Step 4 The children shaping the mesosystem:* In this final step, the shaping of the mesosystem is achieved through the relational experiences and interactions of the developing child and their engagement with the environment. Bronfenbrenner's (1979) theory facilitates an understanding of how these relationships were established between two or more settings

in the mesosystem, and this thesis is able to build further on to this by explaining how mesosystems are formed and shaped during school transitions.

A detailed look at each of these four steps in the enactment of resilience for children starting secondary school will be discussed next.

**8.3.3.1 Step 1 The Family Preparing for the New Microsystem.** The longitudinal design of this thesis allowed me, as the researcher to understand some of the preparations in the family microsystem, as they made themselves ready for the secondary school transition. This first step captured these preparations as the parents worked with their children to plan for this transition. Bronfenbrenner (1979) terms this a *normative ecological transition* that involves a change in *role* for the child. This role is about the expectations for behaviour relating to the new school microsystem. As each child prepared to enter the new microsystem, they needed to engage in this setting by developing an understanding of the rules and requirements already established at their new secondary school (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). For Poppy and Nathan, there was a pre-existing inter-setting relationship (Bronfenbrenner, 1986) because of having an older sibling at the school, therefore the expectations from these parents were somewhat established, but the other children and their parents were experiencing some entirely new feelings of anticipation and expectation about this transition.

The schools provided an induction or taster session where the children were given a preview of this new microsystem. This introduced them to this new setting, which lessened some of the worries, for example, the children were concerned about meeting their form tutors and making new friends. The data from Rebecca and Lily in the group study revealed that the children appreciated these brief encounters because they were informal, and they enjoyed meeting some of their tutors and engaging in new activities (for example, science experiments). Previous transition studies (Jindal-Snape & Foggie, 2008; Zeedyk et al., 2003) recommended that these visits could be extended because they can support the children with their worries. This research goes a step further, showing how this first introduction to the new microsystem was important because the child and family were able to lessen their heightened worries and known expectations of the school microsystems. The taster sessions facilitated the development of a link between the child's microsystems. Also, these sessions

provided the children with a sense of familiarity, encouraging feelings of excitement about starting school, and easing fears and concerns about the new school. This was also noted in the family interviews as the parents felt these sessions had reduced initial concerns about the unknown, in relation to starting secondary school for their children.

One important feature of this step was that the parents were seen to initiate contact with the school, liaising in regards to anticipated concerns (see theme 1, p 120). Parents frequently initiated early excursions into the new microsystem. The new school microsystems were receptive to parents' requests and in some instances these settings had hosted courses over the school holidays inviting new student's participation, thus strengthening the child's familiarity with the school grounds and buildings. Both the parents and the school were active in establishing this new point of contact and in working to create opportunities for the child. Creating this link between the home and school lessened the worry for the families and the children (see theme 2, p. 123), which meant that this preparation acted as a protective mechanism for the children, reducing the stockpile of concerns (Rutter, 1987). This was established because of the parent's negotiation with the school about the approaching changes, and the school's willingness to actively participate and respond to the parents' concerns.

The contemporaneous nature of the research provided me with an opportunity to document and understand the expectations and concerns of the children and the families before the start of the new school year. These concerns related to the increased worries because of the many new changes, for example, the physical location of the school, the new travel routines to and from school, the learning environment, and the concerns with new peer relations. An alignment of activity was taking place during this time, as the children started to engage in their day-to-day secondary school experiences. Jindal-Snape and Foggie, (2008) found similar apprehensions in their school transition study, in which the children expressed concern about the new school environment, bullying concerns and worries about making friends. This thesis has confirmed comparable findings, whilst noting that the child's perception of starting school was about the initial experiences, for example finding their way around school and making a new friend. This differed to the parents, who tended to focus more on their child's long-term adaptation to this environment and how they would manage this.

The findings from this thesis would suggest that schools have a role to play in facilitating the induction sessions and harnessing the contact that families made prior to school starting. During this step we can see how the expectations of the family and child were moving together between heightened worries and anticipated opportunities – a manifold of emotions awaiting them in the new microsystem. Therefore, schools and parents need to be aware of how children are focused on these immediate short-term concerns and what to expect from their first few days of school. The family and school can then work together to assist the children at the start of the new term by starting with short-term targets for students and a dedicated settling in period. This would help to align some of the initial expectations for the children and their family.

#### **8.3.3.2 Step 2 The Child Entering and Negotiating the New Microsystem.**

This second step in the resilience process focuses on the developing child in the very first days and weeks of entering the new microsystem of secondary school. The data from the group study and the case studies showed how the children started to engage in new proximal processes within the school microsystem on a day-to-day basis. For example, Nathan was involved in a new dance group at school, helping him to meet new people and make friends, whereas Lucy joined a practical club where she was challenged to use power tools. Bronfenbrenner and Morris, (1998) considered these proximal processes to be the main engines of human development, because of how they were mutually influenced by the characteristics of the developing child and the context, outcome and changes over time. The secondary schools offered these new opportunities, supporting the children's early transition because such opportunities to meet others were very welcome, and facilitated the forming of new relationships in the school microsystem.

Furthermore, there were other proximal processes taking place during the school day. Proximal processes are the regular interactions that occurred for the children in their immediate environments. Bronfenbrenner (2005) emphasised the importance of the regularity of these interactions, and how they functioned for the child on a daily basis. Examples of how these processes worked in the school microsystem for the children included learning new skills, for example baking and cooking, then interacting with new peers during the in-between spaces at school (i.e. lunch, school corridors), and engaging in different activities or sports, and involvement in mentoring schemes with older students.

From the focused ethnography, some of these processes occurred in the classroom between the teacher and the student and during other school times, including school assembly. Therefore, there was a flow through the school day, with a movement between different groups both formal and informal, with many differing proximal processes for the child.

Some of the important proximal processes were at lunch times or in the corridors between lessons when the children were finding their way around the school more easily and making new friends. There are other studies showing the importance of these *in-between spaces*. Lucey and Reay (2011) coined the term 'in between spaces,' to encapsulate the experiences in secondary school which children had, when they were not in class, such as, at break times and between classes. For Rebecca and Sophie this time of negotiation in the microsystem after the first few weeks was conveyed as feeling 'normal again'. The initial heightened sense of nervousness and worry began to settle. However, there were some new uncertainties experienced by some of the children in both transition studies. Examples of these encounters were learning new rules in different classes, adjusting to different teaching styles (including cover teachers) and managing a new workload with increased homework demands. This was similar to a study with Tobell and O'Donnell's (2013) transition research, who found that the variation in teacher behaviours and differing demands in each lesson led to further anxieties for the children at this time.

The findings from both school studies have shown how the roles of the teachers and peers was helpful to the participants when settling into the new school. For Grace and Poppy, there were teachers who created activities to support initial introductions between the children, thereby encouraging new friendships. Furthermore, Poppy was able to explain what her cleft was to her tutor group because of one of these initial activities, whilst for Bella an older student supported her as a mentor, helping her find her way, and checking she knew what do to at lunch times.

When the children entered their new school, the reorganisation of the family systems was seen in some families. Bronfenbrenner (1986) perceived this reorganisation as an event that can change attitudes, expectations, and patterns of interaction within the family. This suggests that the child's new role in this school setting might affect the relations between the family and the child, for example, routine changes that affect travel arrangements and after school care. An alignment of these activities facilitated the child's movement between the microsystems. An example of this came from the group transition study when it became



clear to Poppy's parents that they had not considered the winter months with less daylight for walking back from school. The result of Poppy's eye condition, which was Nystagmus, meant that she struggled in less visible light. Walking home became a worry and her parents arranged for the support worker to practice this with her and had to rearrange their work schedules to assist her. The joint alignment between Poppy, her parents, and the support worker was needed to ensure this activity could be carried out.

**8.3.3.3 Step 3 The Child Navigating in and Between Microsystems.** The third step in the resilience process looks at how the developing child is forming reciprocal interactions with peers at school, enhancing links between the home and school microsystem. The data showed how the children felt a sense of belonging and identity to their new school (see theme 2, p. 191). This means that the children were not going into school each day because they were required to, but they were actively accessing the new microsystems, their peer group and identifying with their new roles (see p. 32, Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

For the participants, navigating the peer group microsystem meant that they had to regularly engage in new interactions with other children. It was also expected that the children should manage the introductions of their primary school friends with their new secondary school friends, creating a blended peer group. Through the lens of Bronfenbrenner's PPCT model, the proximal processes were being fostered or disrupted because of how the person characteristics either invited or discouraged reactions from the social environment. Grace and Lucy experienced encounters in which another student had made a comment about their visible difference. For Grace, her response had been direct and explanatory about what a cleft was, whereas Lucy had decided to provide a website which the student could refer to in order to understand more about having a cleft. Both Lucy and Grace used their own strategies - they choose how to respond to the situation, and their experiences were recalled during the family interviews.

The 'in between spaces' continued to be important in this third step. Some of these children made new friends and used their lunch times and extracurricular activities to get to know their peers. Topping (2011) referred to these peer status changes associated with school transition as being, "a big fish in a little pond" (p. 3). The children's expressed enjoyment about making new friends at school, and the parents' acknowledgement of the

new school setting highlighted the positive experiences their children had shared with them about their school life (see subtheme 6.5.4.2.2, p. 192). This third step is important for the children because the successful navigation of the school and the peer microsystems facilitated an alignment between the home and school. This alignment of communication was self-related because the child began to perceive their school microsystems as playing a key role in their own learning and their sense of belonging within the school.

In this step, the child continues to develop their communications within and between the microsystems, and to form more optimal interactions. Moreover, the child was negotiating how to foster these interactions especially in the peer microsystem, and learning where to access resources from other microsystems, if needed. Furthermore, the child's couriering skills were established supporting the navigation of the systems.

**8.3.3.4 Step 4 The Children Shaping the Mesosystem.** This fourth step encompasses how the child's movement aligned the systems to shape the child's mesosystem. In this step, the child was successfully moving between and among the microsystems, strengthening these links in the mesosystem. Bronfenbrenner (1979) facilitated an understanding of the development of new peer relationships between two or more settings in the mesosystem, but he did not explain how this happened. This thesis has found that the developing child is responsible for this link between the systems acting as the messenger (i.e. courier), moving from one system to the next, receiving information and relaying key information between microsystems. However, this process is complex and its variation means that the dynamic elements that surround the child are changeable.

Towards the end of the first term, the children from the group study spoke about their positive experiences at school reflecting on how these had resulted in achievements and a motivation to keep improving. Some children were able to recall experiences, which had increased their sense of belonging and connectedness to their new school. With the use of time points for the transition studies, I was able to document the children's experiences, seeing the proximal processes unfold over time, and the children moving between different contexts. This sense of belonging enhanced the children's well-being because they began to feel part of the school, fostering their child's courier skills. Therefore, it was important that the children were seen as part of the alignment between the microsystems, facilitating a sense of belonging at school.

Following this, the parents acknowledged the new school microsystem, recognising how their children had to navigate the secondary school experience, which included taking ownership of their visible difference. The families sometimes tried to provide family solutions to problems within the mesosystem (i.e. family ethos) and the children were developing a contextual understanding of the new school microsystem sharing their experiences at home with the family, and looking forward to new opportunities that their schools might offer.

Therefore, the developing child is active in shaping the mesosystem in the fourth step, supporting *alignment* (discussed in detail in the next section 8.3.4) of the microsystems for optimal functioning. With the child learning to engage in the mesosystem, and becoming the key courier between the microsystems, it was possible to see the movement between microsystems, assisted by alignment of activities, expectations and communication between the home and school microsystems. In the next section, the child's engagement in the processes occurring during the school transition is discussed in accordance with the alignment of the microsystems.

#### ***8.3.4 Research question 4: How Does the Social Context in which the Child Engages with Shape the Resilience Process During the Secondary School Transition Year?***

In forming an understanding of the child moving through these steps of the resilience process, one of the central guiding principles was the notion of *alignment*. This alignment stemmed from the analysis of the transition studies in the thesis, and created a backdrop for the child to transition to the new school. This showed how there needs to be an emotional, academic and cultural fit between the child and the two key microsystems of the home and the school. This fit between the developing child and the social context is discussed here in relation to an *ecological alignment* occurring amongst the child's microsystems. Focusing on the enactment of resilience, this thesis paid attention to the child's experiences, recognising their movement between and within the microsystems, since this is where the alignment could be seen most clearly.

A few previous studies have mentioned the term *alignment* or *ecological alignment*. For example, Cook et al. (2017) found that young children were rated as having a positive social adjustment at school entry, when the teachers had corresponded with the previous provider. This was termed an alignment because of the shared information, including general

information about the preschool and specific information about the child. From this research, Cook et al. (2017) proposed that an ecological alignment was part of the procedure in which schools assisted during a school transition, thus supporting the child's entry to early education and school. However, in an earlier study, alignment was described because of the efforts of curriculum and policy level issues to create a smooth transition across settings (LoCasale-Crouch et al., 2008). Furthermore, Goodnough (2010) referred to alignment as a mode of belonging, which involved taking part in the global practices of a community. Following this, Goodnough (2010) stated that the aligning with the practices and discourse of a broader community allows members to direct their energies towards common goals.

From the findings of this thesis, I have added to this idea of an ecological alignment by identifying three forms of alignment that occur during the school transition, which are part of the home and school microsystems. In the next section, I explain what is meant by an ecological alignment, according to the findings, and provide details of how the different forms of alignment worked during the transition to secondary school.

**8.3.4.1 An Ecological Alignment.** In this thesis, by using Bronfenbrenner's theory, the secondary school transition can be seen as an alignment of two microsystems, the home, and the school. Applying Bronfenbrenner's theory, it follows that aligning the practices and dialogue between these microsystems will result in enhanced student learning. I have referred to the term *ecological alignment* to explain the fit between the child and their immediate environments during the school transition process. This fit refers to different *forms* of alignment, which were seen from the transition studies. Three forms of alignment were identified which will be discussed in turn, which include an alignment of expectations, an alignment of activities and an alignment of communication.

*8.3.4.1.1 Alignment of Expectations.* One type of alignment that was identified has been termed an *alignment of expectations*. Prior to the start of the school year, the children and their families talked about their preparation for this next phase and how they were feeling about this new change. The families expressed feeling a manifold of emotions at this time, experiencing both heightened feelings of nervousness and excitement. Drawing on their past primary school experiences, the children were anticipating a number of changes and expectations when starting at a new school. This ranged from traveling to their new school,

finding their way around the school, to making friends and meeting new teachers. The children and families were thinking about how the first few days and weeks in the new school microsystem would be (see theme 1, time point 1, p 115). These expectations about the school stemmed from how different it would be from their school in terms of size, location, rules, different teachers, and peers. There was an expectation of change and adjustment to their routines and even though this provided the children and parents with excitement, it created some worries. Luke (Lucy's father and a teacher) explained how he was feeling similar to his daughter, expressing the same type of mixed emotions about the start of the transition.

For Sophie and Nathan, their concerns focused on not knowing anyone at their new school, and their expectations concerning how they would make new friends were expressed in the first family interviews. Part of this alignment was created before the start of school, as the children engaged in induction sessions. Rebecca, Poppy and Nathan all recalled these sessions with delight providing them with a sense of excited anticipation for starting school (see p. 115). This alignment between the home and school microsystems continues to be seen through the first few weeks of starting school for some of these children because of the preparations made by the families, for example, Rebecca had attended a coding course over the summer holidays at the school, enabling her to familiarise herself with the school grounds. For Lucy, her father requested she was placed in a form class with a peer that she knew from her guides group. This helped Lucy to feel less worried when she started school because she knew someone. For some of these children, the home and school microsystems were aligning because of how the families prepared for the transition by connecting with the schools, who were then receptive, and how some of the schools provided good transition sessions and other opportunities such as summer courses for the children.

*8.3.4.1.2 Alignment of Activity.* A second form of alignment that was identified has been termed an *alignment of activity*. One of the critical features of starting secondary school for children in the UK is the change to their daily routines, particularly their new travel arrangements. From this sample group, the children had to adapt to using the bus, traveling on their own and coordinating with other peers to ensure they arrived at school on time. This alignment of activities occurring for their children's travel arrangements to and from

school was focused around timekeeping and the careful planning of their school days. It also meant liaising with other members of the family and coordinating travel timetables, for example, Rebecca sometimes cycled with her parents for part of the way to school and had to coordinate her morning schedule for this to occur. It was a bustle of activities for these children before the start of their school day, as all of the children talked about how they had to wake up earlier since starting secondary school. For this reason, some of the children needed to start using alarm clocks, while Bella decided she needed a watch, which was suggested by her teacher to support her time keeping skills. This was related to increasing notions of independence for the children. They took on the responsibility of timekeeping, and for ensuring they were prepared and ready for their school day.

Another example of these activities that were identified in the data included moving house for one of the participants, Sophie. Her family decided to move to be closer to Sophie's chosen school and had to manage this change a few weeks before the start of the school. Sophie was not only starting at a new school without knowing anyone, but she had moved house a few weeks before, and had to familiarise herself with the new neighbourhood and the new bus journey to school. This involved the organisation of activities, and coordination with the other members of her family in order to align with the school's timetabling requirements. Sophie's mother reflected on this coordination between herself and Sophie's father in the final interviews (see Appendix U, p. 456). She suggested that it was only at the end of the first term when she realised that they had given Sophie too much responsibility for coordinating her movements, and organising herself at the start. When they realised this, they let her know that they were there for her when she needed them, and did not need to manage everything on her own. Sophie's mother was highlighting the importance of working together with her child to successfully manage the transition of activities. There needed to be a collaborative approach at this time.

This alignment of activity was created because of the changes to the children's routines, which was the direct result of having a new timetable, and the need to arrive at their new school, as well as often travelling to school independently or with family members. This places emphasis on the role of the developing child who needs to be at the center of this alignment between the home and school microsystems. They were given considerable responsibility for many new activities acquiring good time-keeping skills and personal organisation, alongside parental guidance of where or who to ask for help when needed. The

forming of this alignment occurred because of the child having to enter the new school microsystem.

*8.3.4.1.3 Alignment of Communication.* The third form of alignment identified in the school studies was an alignment of communication. There were times when this ecological alignment was enhanced because of the communication between the child and the people in the microsystems at various points of the transition process. Ettekal and Mahoney (2017) suggested that clear communication between activity leaders, parents, and teachers was necessary to foster alignment across settings. Their reasoning for this was because of how the family and the schools were central microsystems, and the coordination between activities and the schools would make it easier to align with the home setting (Ettekal & Mahoney, 2017).

In this thesis, one such example of an alignment of communication was seen in the coordination between Grace's mother and her guidance tutor when Grace injured her arm. Gina (Grace's mother) used this as an opportunity to discuss the negative experience that Grace had with another student who was making unpleasant remarks about her nose. As a result, the teacher started checking-in with Grace more often, because of the information she has received from the home microsystem. Therefore, the communication was effective because of the opportunity presented to Grace's mother for direct microsystem communication with Grace's teacher. This reassured Gina that the teacher knew who she was and that she needed to be aware of her needs.

It was evident that the children were often asked about their cleft or another part of their face because they looked different. The transition into the new microsystem initiated many new proximal processes with 'new' peers and children who lacked knowledge and understanding about their cleft, resulting in unsolicited comments and questions about their visible difference. Some of these questions were negative and others were general inquiries about their faces, for example Nathan was asked if he had hurt his lip from a fall and Poppy was asked why her eyes moved around constantly. They both explained that it was a result of their cleft lip and palate.

***8.3.4.2 To Conclude.*** Identifying these three forms of alignment afforded an understanding of how the child's engagement in the social context worked. When thinking

about a child who is transitioning to secondary school, the idea of an ecological alignment is helpful to understand the fit between the home and school microsystems. In this thesis it was possible to see three ways in which the home and school microsystems aligned before and during the transition to secondary school. These included an alignment of expectations, an alignment of activities and an alignment of communication. In addition, the idea of an ecological alignment fits well within Bronfenbrenner's PPCT model, although it was not a term that he used. Furthermore, an ecological alignment promotes further understanding of the enactment of the resilience process, because of how the child moves through the steps, the alignment provides the backdrop or acts as a guiding principle to the steps of resilience which has not been seen in the resilience literature before.

#### **8.4 An Overview of the Process of *Resilience* from the Findings**

##### ***8.4.1 The Fluidity of the Resilience Process***

The results from my thesis suggest that the process of resilience can be viewed as a sequence of steps, for children starting secondary school, which is facilitated by the alignment of the systems. Resilience is not a concept found within the child; it is part of the process in which the child is actively participating. Looking at resilience as a series of steps revealed how this is a fluctuating process. The idea of an *alignment* for the children and the surrounding environment was useful in understanding how resilience was influenced by the interactions of experiences and relationships.

This thesis suggests that these are steps not conceived as unidirectional. Each individual may take them at different speeds and perhaps return to an earlier step, for example, Poppy's negotiating of her peer group system having to move between the home, school and peer groups. Step one is clearly the very first step that the children take in entering the new school microsystem, but then in the following three steps that follow there is more fluidity, as the children negotiate the new microsystem, and move between the school and home, thus shaping the new mesosystem. Steps may overlap or re-negotiation may happen at different points, which means that the process is changeable. New microsystems may occur, for example a child joining a new school club, or by making a new friend. Rutter (1999) saw resilience as a term used to describe resistance to psychosocial risk experiences. He suggested that resilience should not be seen as a fixed attribute of an



individual (Rutter, 1999). From the findings of the studies, it was evident that resilience was interactive and that the process was adaptable because of its dynamic relational components. It should be noted that there is a need to consider the individual circumstances of the child and the family as this was seen in both school studies.

By adopting the PPCT model, the three forms of alignment were seen as the child moved between the home and the school microsystems. The steps in the process of resilience for the school transition are framed within this model. However, it is worth noting that the nature of the resilience process changes because of its dynamic relational components, which can be viewed through the lens of the PPCT model.

#### ***8.4.2 Resilience in Action***

Resilience is sometimes conceptualised as a quality of an individual, and in particular it is expressed as a feature of the child that can be developed (Block & Block, 1980; Richardson, 2002). From the findings of the transition studies, it was clear that more attention should be directed towards the types of questions we are asking about resilience. We need to reconsider how we talk and think about this concept because it is not helpful to consider resilience as a single quality. It is the processes that the child engages with, and how the child's experiences are nurtured as part of the everyday occurrences that are of interest.

Masten (2001) described the resilience process as *ordinary magic*; the positive adaptation taking place during the day-to-day happenings of the school day, i.e. the child doing well at school, the child feeling a sense of belonging, the child navigating between and amongst the systems. By thinking about resilience as an active part of the processes for positive adaptation, the following questions can be considered: What does it mean to be resilient? What does this mean for a child with a visible difference? What does this mean for the child starting secondary school? This is resilience-in-action! We would say that one can observe resilience in action when a child gets through the year successfully, when they are feeling a sense of belonging to their new school, when they are able to courier between the microsystems, and, they are forming alignments to support their experiences.

Therefore, the process of resilience during the secondary school transition involves the alignment of microsystems, resulting from the navigation of new relationships and re-negotiation of current ones (including between the home and the school, and between old peer groups and new peer groups). In this thesis, the process of resilience was seen because

of how the child engaged with, reacted to, and responded to interactions between the microsystems. To be resilient meant that the child needed to be an active participant during the process, since the movement and engagement in the proximal processes facilitated the child's adaptation within the new school context. Furthermore, it should be noted that the harnessing of resilience does not rest entirely with the child, it is part of the ongoing process in which they interact and engage with others, such as the parents, school staff, and peers. However considerable responsibility is placed on the child for the alignment, which was discussed.

#### ***8.4.3 How do these Findings Contribute to Research Knowledge and Theory?***

In this thesis, resilience is seen as a process, which encompasses the developing child, the environment, and their interactions over the course of time. A key finding from the thesis was the four-steps in the unfolding process of resilience. These have not previously documented in the literature. Applying these steps to the school transition process means that we can provide a framework for children starting school to recognise and use. They would also be of interest to educationalists, teachers and clinicians, as well as parents and support groups. Furthermore, this shows children that resilience is not a single part of who they are as individuals. Rather, this process is part of the environment in which the child lives, and this is affected by the social context. It may help them to consider the resources they have in the home and school, and how their activities, communications, and expectations are the backdrop to fitting into the new school. Also, it helps us to understand how the schools can play a more interactive role in preparing children for this transition process and how this will look during the first few months of Year 7. This is useful as a model for primary to secondary transition outcomes for the child because these settings differ as a joint function of the child, and the school but also those of the ecological systems or environment surrounding the school and the child.

We need to communicate an understanding of the forms of alignment and their functionality to educationalists, academics and clinicians. For example, at the start of the school year, the alignment of expectation between the home and the school should be recognised, so that any transition days are seen as more than a procedure or a taster session for the child at their new school. An understanding of the three forms of alignment may be valuable in understanding how the developing child varies in their interactions and

engagement with the process. The contribution of this is important because it demonstrates where these alignments can occur, and the need to pay attention to the experiences of the children as they moved between and amongst the microsystems. It seems to me that in understanding resilience as a process, there is an opportunity to see this process from the perspective of the child and the family. There is a potential for an increased understanding of a smooth transition, which is likely to benefit the child.

Also in seeing school transition as an alignment of (at least) two systems, we can understand some of the pressures on the child to align the home and school microsystems in their role as courier, and perhaps have a better insight into ecological misalignment. Children are very active in aligning the microsystems. It may be that some children will cope less well with the demands of couriating information, communicating between microsystems or speaking up about difficulties they are encountering. This misalignment may present in the school system because of staff changes during this transition time, or the school's lessened contact with feeder schools. It will heighten the experiences of children who look different because they are met with more unsolicited questions and queries about their appearance. This is why a collaborative approach to understanding children's visible differences through teacher training and providing regular discussion with peers will support an alignment.

Applying Bronfenbrenner's theory to the data from the transition studies explained why some children's protective processes were more effective because of how the elements in one system (such as the home microsystem) changed, creating a reaction in the other systems, the school microsystem. The children situated inside these nested systems were continuously affected by the changes happening in the environments that surrounded them. For example, Hayden's injury during the transition meant he had to arrive earlier for school to avoid the crowds and use a wheelchair around school so that he was on time to arrive at his lessons. One of the core findings was the reliance on the child to successfully align some of these interactions within the ecological systems through an engagement of negotiation, understanding, and experience. It is important to emphasise that this research has added to Bronfenbrenner's theory by identifying how the mesosystems are joined, employing the child as courier, and how useful the idea of ecological alignment is in explaining this link. In one of Bronfenbrenner's earlier papers (1979), he noted that he had "...dealt only with the immediate settings containing the developing person and with the relations between them."

(p. 526). It is hoped, therefore, that this thesis has usefully extended and explained Bronfenbrenner's theory.

## **8.5 Evaluation of the Thesis**

### **8.5.1 The Methodological Contribution of the Thesis**

In the first instance, the contemporary longitudinal nature of this design was purposeful to the study aims. This is because the varied qualitative forms of data that were collected highlighted the children's views, and included the perspectives of the parents and professionals. Employing the use of synchronous online snapshot interviews with each child at different time points through the school term was innovative and accessible to the children in this age group. This meant that the online interviews could take place at convenient times for the child and family. The children were all adept with using the devices and some worked from their parent's mobiles. Furthermore, the methodology facilitated collecting detailed and rich data, and allowed the researcher to gain access to the voice of the child, which was designed to be the core focus of this thesis. Gaining access to these children and families was a privilege, to join them on the journey for up to a year. There is little known about the experiences of children with a cleft starting secondary school, and certainly not with this level of detail and complexity.

One of the challenges with the snapshot online interviews was the time lapse between questions. This meant that when a question was typed and sent, there was a delay in receiving an answer and as an interviewer there were no social cues because it was online, so this 'quiet space' had to be accounted for. In this text-based format, it was noticeable that some of the children's answers were very staccato in their form. However, as a reflective researcher, I noticed this lapse and provided more space between questions to give some of the children time to answer. Furthermore, I used the final family interviews to clarify some of the questions from the online interview, and fill in any gaps in my understanding about what they said. For future research, the online interviews can serve as a useful tool when working with adolescents, but researchers should be aware of the communication that occurs in an online setting, and the staccato and fragmented quality of the text messages that children will type, and consider how the participant will engage during this process.

The family interviews offered an adaptable approach enabling the researcher to build a rapport with the participants and to frame the questions in a manner that reflected the language that they had used. For a more flexible option, the promotion of vlogging was discussed with each family so that the children could describe their experiences as diary entries at a time suitable to their daily routines. The final family interviews were designed to ensure that certain lines of enquiry could be followed from the collected data to ensure clarity and develop a shared understanding of the child's experiences. It was noticeable that not all children engaged with or enjoyed this vlogging, and it was important to respect the views and autonomy of the child.

Creating this school transition study design supported one of the key findings from the thesis by explaining how two microsystems are joined, from the movement and couriering within and between microsystems. This design has produced a rich set of data from participants who have been underrepresented in previous research. It has generated a deeper understanding of the experiences of secondary school transition from the perspective of children (and their families) with a cleft. As one of the first qualitative projects where resilience has been viewed contemporaneously, the designated time points provided the space to develop my understanding of the resilience process. This meant that this research was able to contextualise resilience for a particular group of children who have a visible difference in detail, and to understand the experiences of these children by seeing resilience as an unfolding process.

Bronfenbrenner's systems theory was at the forefront of the methodological planning for the school transition studies. Viewing resilience through Bronfenbrenner's lens helped to make sense of this concept from a systemic perspective; as a process. The application of the PPCT model facilitated an understanding of how the process of resilience works, how microsystems join up, highlighting the child's couriering through that movement. This is discussed further in the next section.

### ***8.5.2 Evaluation of the Theory***

Bronfenbrenner's systems theory recognises that no one part in the system moves in isolation, for example, it is similar to the cog of a wheel where one part affects the functioning as a whole. Each microsystem in which the child engages with forms part of their environment. Bronfenbrenner (1979) said that the microsystem was "... a pattern of

activities, roles, and interpersonal relations experienced by the developing person in a given setting with particular physical and material characteristics” (p. 22). From the bioecological model, Bronfenbrenner and Morris (2006) placed emphasis on the development of proximal processes and their interaction with people, objects and symbols. This ecological approach invited consideration of the combined impact of two or more settings and their elements.

The findings from the transition studies allow a more detailed explication of how the child enters a new microsystem, negotiates the system and joins two microsystems in the mesosystem. Understanding how the child moves within these microsystems helps to explain how the microsystems are part of the processes experienced by the child. The PPCT model provided a conceptual basis for looking at the developing child in different contexts, and a lens through which to understand the process of resilience occurring over time. Understanding the process of resilience will allow educationalists to support and facilitate the child’s experiences during the transition process.

However, it should be noted that it was difficult to apply Bronfenbrenner’s theory to study children’s experiences of school transition because of how the theory is presented. This is because the model presents challenges to the researcher because of how the person is seen as the developmental outcome and is also located inside the model. Discussing the person, Bronfenbrenner and Morris (2006) stated that “...in the bioecological model, the characteristics of the person function both as an indirect producer and as a product of development” (p.996). Conceptualising this meant that the focus was on the child and this lessened the focus on the process. Still, this was not a limit to the findings for this thesis because the methodology was conceived from the viewpoint of a process.

Bronfenbrenner (2005) emphasised the importance of relationships in the bioecological model, yet he does not explain how these interactions influence these relationships in the mesosystems. He noted, “A mesosystem is thus a system of microsystems. It is formed or extended whenever the developing person moves into a new setting” (2005, p. 25). This thesis has seen how the child’s movement and engagement between the microsystems shapes the mesosystem, which was guided by the ecological alignment.

In trying to study the whole world around the child for a school year, or in the group study for many months, inevitably there were experiences that were not seen, which means

that there is nothing to suggest that the thesis captured everything that happened to these children during this time. However, this thesis was able to follow the child at regular time points and employed the use of vlogging, family interviews, and some ethnographic fieldwork to illuminate the child's experiences during the secondary school transition. This was invaluable to the understanding of the child and the family's experiences during the school transition.

#### **8.5.2.1 What has this work added to our Understanding of Bronfenbrenner?**

The application of Bronfenbrenner's theory was useful because it provided a focused view of the child and the study of the child's microsystems. Adopting this theory was particularly helpful to this research endeavour because of how the PPCT model allowed for an understanding of the person alongside the place, context and time. Furthermore, this theory afforded me the opportunity to follow the child between the microsystems, and see how they joined up their school and home lives in the mesosystem. Bronfenbrenner (1979) identified the mesosystem as part of the joining up of the child's microsystems, "A mesosystem comprises the interrelations among major settings containing the developing person at a particular point in his or her life... a mesosystem is a system of microsystems" (Bronfenbrenner, 1977, p. 515). However, this thesis showed *how* these systems were joined by the child acting as courier and by the working of alignment between the systems. Therefore, this research builds on our understanding of microsystems joining up to form mesosystems, and shows how this happens and the important role of the developing child. Moreover, it presents some of the pressures and responsibilities that children encounter because of these systemic responsibilities that are placed on the child, especially children with a visible difference.

Another key finding from the transition studies showed how facilitating strong proximal processes supported resilience. From this research, the proximal processes that were identified were considered an asset, for example trying a new skill at after-school clubs or taking part in enjoyable experiences (i.e. baking at school). However, Bronfenbrenner and Morris (2006) also suggested that the person characteristics constituted a biopsychological liability which may influence the engagement of the individual with proximal processes. Some examples of a liability included, "...genetic defects, low birthweight, physical handicaps, severe and persistent illness..." (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006, p. 812). In

Bronfenbrenner's model, therefore, a disability such as a (cleft) can be thought of as one of these liabilities. The next section will consider the issues associated with studying resilience with children who have a visible difference.

### ***8.5.3 Evaluation of the Sample from the Transition Studies***

The longitudinal design did not provide for a large sample. However, this sample was certainly large enough for such a complex longitudinal study, and is comparable to the sample size of other theses such as Knight (2013). The sample size was adequate, and the families that started with the study remained throughout the duration of the research. This kind of study is unique in its complexity and in combining ethnographic data alongside longitudinal child and family data, and the richness and detail would not have been possible with a larger sample. This meant that each of the children and families took part in both family interviews, participated at each time point, and some of the children were keen vloggers. Coyle (2020) recognises that the aim for some qualitative research "...is to produce findings that apply first and foremost to these participants in this context" (p. 32). This qualitative research was designed to study this particular group of children during the secondary school transition.

For both transition studies, the children and their parents openly shared their experiences and reflected on them in the final family interviews. They were a good, purposeful sample. In the case study, both mothers played an important role in the coordination of the school visits, and assisted the researcher in contacting the school. This was part of the ethnographic field work and was relevant to understanding and observing the movement of the child from the teachers and children's perspectives.

The families who decided to take part in this research were all familiar with CLAPA (Cleft Lip and Palate Association). Some had worked for them, some had fundraised, and some still attended events run by this organisation. They all had a vested interest in this research because their child had a cleft, and they were interested in supporting the study. There were three families from this sample group, who worked in education, as teachers, and they were keen to understand more about this transition for children that looked different. The children were also interested in taking part in the study, actively responding to the questions at each data collection point, and in particular highlighting how they had enjoyed being part of this research, when reflecting on it in the final interviews. There were points



during the research when some of the children had received some unfavourable comments about their face or had been asked about part of their face. This is discussed in the analysis in chapter 6 and 7. In the final family interviews, some of the children expressed how being part of this research gave them an opportunity to talk more about their cleft, and they were looking forward to the next part of their school year.

**8.5.3.1 Limitations with this Sample (data collection).** It was very hard to recruit children and families to this thesis, and find young people willing to make such a big commitment to allow the researcher to join them on their journey across the school transition. Indeed, it took over two years to recruit the families who took part. There were some consequences of the difficulties in recruitment. The initial school transition study was reorganised because there were not enough participants to take part (see chapter 4, p 50). Therefore, the two children and families who volunteered became the participants in the case study. However, this also allowed the researcher time to develop an ethnographic phase, which supported the overall findings of the thesis and gave the researcher an opportunity to use this method.

In terms of this sample, it is not representative of the harder to reach families, the families who may not have similar experiences of the school transition. The findings have been based on the views gathered from these participants who were recruited from various secondary schools in different local authorities. Furthermore, the heterogeneity of the sample was varied as there were more girls than boys that took part and the parents from the families had dissimilar backgrounds differing by occupation, ethnicity, and location, to highlight some of these differences. Other differences between the children were related to their cleft but differed, for example Rebecca had a hearing impairment, Poppy had nystagmus and Hayden had Pierre Robin syndrome when he was born. Therefore, the thesis findings reflect the context of the policy and practice specific to these children and their locality. The researcher makes no attempts to claim that the findings constitute an assumed understanding of the experiences and views of transition from all children with a cleft.

#### ***8.5.4 Evaluation of Reflexivity as Researcher***

From the beginning of this research I was encouraged by my supervisors to use reflective boxes to support my own practise as a researcher to give a rich and detailed

description so that people can understand the transparency, credibility of my analysis and the perspectives of the individuals who participated in the research. Initially, I employed the use of a reflective journal during the data collection points because it was helpful to 'look back' on the interviews and think about how the participants were responding. It was also useful in discussion with my supervisors because of the longitudinal design, we could consider the interview schedule and keep abreast of the current literature readings.

Developing a rapport with each family and the child was key to the research because it resulted in the overall implementation of the study. This research asked a lot from the families and the children who had to participate over the course of the school transition. Starting at a new school with new friends, teachers and routines means that they were living through significant changes, although this research asked these children to go further and participate in the study. The additional demands of being involved in a qualitative study during this transition were high (vlogging, online interviews, family interviews etc.), and it is worth commending them for this. Being able to follow these children for a term and longer for the case studies meant that I could develop my reflective skills and apply this further within the analysis. It also offered the time to gain an improved sensitivity to understand these children's experiences because of their visible difference.

In furthering my own understanding of reflexivity as a researcher, I increased other skills during the online interviews and ethnography. The focused ethnography provided me with an opportunity to become part of the child's school environment, and I had to coordinate between key stakeholders to ensure that this could be carried out at a specific time. My own previous experience of working as a teacher was helpful during this time because of my relevant understanding of how schools function. However, it was curious to be an observer and view the school from the child's perspective. This supported the writings in my reflective boxes in the analysis.

## **8.6 Implications for Policy and Practice**

From this research, there are implications for policy and practice concerning the secondary school transition for children who look different, and the steps in the resilience process.

- The secondary school transition for children with a visible difference should be seen as a bespoke process for each family, and there is a need for the children and families to be actively involved in the transition from primary school. This should be part of the school policy and included in transition pack, in order to initiate a more personalised approach for the learner and not limit this starting process to a set of procedures.
- Schools need to recognise the importance of microsystems in schools such as clubs and societies, which can join to form mesosystems. These microsystems need to be carefully monitored because the key findings from the school studies have shown how the child's movement and engagement between the systems shapes the mesosystems.
- There is a gap in children's knowledge and understanding about what a cleft lip and palate is in the peer group at secondary school. This extends to other visible differences (i.e. skin conditions) which children are not all aware of or understand what they are. This should not be part of a policy that schools use to explain a difference. This needs to be part of the school's action policies to educate others about these differences. The teachers also need to gain an understanding of this.
- Parents and school staff need to be aware of the pressures faced by the children in their couriering roles between the home and the school. Understanding the central role that the child has during this transition process and how they need to negotiate their school day means that primary schools should consider how they are preparing the child for this transition.
- One of the key policy questions arising from this thesis is about the school staff and if they understand the importance of the three forms of alignment. Firstly, the teaching staff should be equipped to recognise how these alignments work with effective teacher training. Furthermore, it should be applied to all school staff (including Heads and Senior Management) because of the need to start thinking

about resilience in a different way, realising that instead of delegating the responsibility of aligning systems to the child, that we have the responsibility of making sure that all these processes are working for the child.

**8.6.1 How can CLAPA use these findings to help the next generation of secondary school children?** Working with this specific group of children was a real highlight of the research because of their interest in the research, and the ability of the qualitative methods to understand their perspectives and experiences. CLAPA were important in the early stages of recruiting and advertising the transition studies, and I wish to thank them for all their assistance with my recruitment. As an organisation, CLAPA is committed to supporting and working with people with a cleft and their families as well as health professionals. This is in line with the Equality Act (2010), which considers disability under the public sector equality duty. This duty functions to achieve certain objectives set out from the Equality Act. When designing policies and delivering services, schools need to reflect and consider the Equality Act, and this needs to be considered in relation to children who look different. There were transition packs and bullying policies in the schools in which I observed. However, school transition packs are created for all the students and do not consider visible differences. Recently, the CLAPA branch in Scotland, created their own secondary school transition pack with the help from a clinical psychologist. It may be possible to add information about resilience as a process to the transition pack, for both the children and teachers to understand more about the steps in the resilience process. It would also be interesting to explain the forms of alignment, including communication, expectations and activities that were seen and how these work to parents and teachers.

At a suitable time in the near future, ensuring that the COVID regulations are adhered to, I will aim to present these findings face-to-face to the children at the Young people's council at CLAPA. This council was created by CLAPA for children aged between 13-18 years to come together every few months to discuss various topics. Presenting this to the council would be beneficial to hear their views on the findings. Furthermore, the young people's council may offer recommendations for the next generation of children starting secondary school, which would be invaluable. It is important to use the findings from this research to continue to empower children's voices, and focus on action research for children who are the experts in this process.

### 8.6.2 Directions for future research

1. **Misalignment:** It would be interesting to understand more about misalignment. What happens when the communication, activities and expectations misalign between microsystems? What are the consequences for the developing child?
2. **Transition research with the teacher:** Studying the process of the school transition from the perspective of the teachers prior to the start of school and how it looks after the first term would provide further understanding about their roles and activities.
3. **Other educational transitions:** This type of research would consider the mid-year transitions that occur for many children when the school year has started. It would also look at the transition from secondary school to college and college to university. It would be interesting to view other transitions at different time points for children of different ages, to see the couriering occurring and the movement between the steps in the resilience process.
4. **Peer relationships in secondary school and the resilience process:** The importance of having a friend in secondary school was talked about by the children. Future research that looks at how these peer relations as an important draw card for new students to engage with their new school microsystem.
5. **Forgotten Year Group:** The more recent events of this past year have seen children having to home-school (due to COVID19). There has a focus on primary school children and the students writing the GCSE's. However, this research shows that the Year 7 cohort needs structure and routine to support and facilitate their learning. This means that this year and the years following this one have become invisible. Future research will need to ensure that these year groups are not forgotten because their experiences during this transition time are important to the alignment of the microsystems, and the resilience process.

### **8.7 A Final Word**

I have a new appreciation for research, researchers, and the study of processes. Undertaking this doctoral has been a very long process in itself. The most interesting and I think most valued part of this thesis was the conceptualising of resilience as a process from the children's experiences and all the perspectives of the participants that took part. This conceptualising could only be seen towards the end of this doctoral journey when the pieces from all the different parts came together and started to join. The linking of ideas and forming of understanding from other's experiences was important to this thesis. Although I am aware of the small sample group that I worked with and the notion of generalisability, I know that it is important for professionals to understand how these processes work and connect to facilitate the children's experiences. I look forward to sharing this work with others in the field and challenging the ideas of some about the process of resilience.

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**Appendix A**  
**Participant Invitation Letter**



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**A qualitative study to explore key informants' understanding of the meaning and process of resilience in children.**

Dear Participant,

I am a doctoral student at Kingston University London and in my research I aim to find out more about the process and meaning of resilience in children. As an initial part of this study, I am seeking to conduct interviews with people whose experience and knowledge would help in further developing understanding of resilience in children faced with adversity.

This research study has received ethical approval from the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at Kingston University London. In this study, I will be interviewing 'key informants,' namely people who have professional expertise, knowledge and/or experience of working with children who have positively adapted when faced with adversity. I am particularly interested in resilience for children who have a visible difference. Also, I am looking to understand the ambiguities within the resilience literature terminology, and gain insight into the meaning of resilience as a process.

Your experience and understanding of children and their lived experiences would make an invaluable contribution. The individual interviews will take place either in person, or using Skype if you prefer and are expected to take approximately 60 minutes.

Please read the attached Participant Information Sheet and let me know if you are willing to participate by contacting:

Katharine Clifford, Research PhD student, at:

On contact, please include the following information:

- Contact information.
- The most suitable times and days of the week for you to be interviewed.

If you have any questions about the research, please do not hesitate to ask me. Alternatively you may wish to contact my supervisor at Kingston University London; Dr Jess Prior by email;

or by phone, , ext. my second supervisor, also at Kingston University London, Professor Adrian Coyle by email; or by phone; , ext. .

If you have any concerns about the research or if at any point you wish to complain about how you have been treated during the research, please contact Professor Simon Morgan Wortham, Acting Dean, Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences by email;

or by mail; Kingston University London, Penrhyn Road, Kingston Upon Thames, United Kingdom.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,  
Katharine Clifford

## Appendix B Participant Information Sheet



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**Project title:** A qualitative study to explore key informants' understanding of the meaning and process of resilience in children

You are invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide to take part, it is important that you understand why the research is being conducted and what it will involve. Please take time to carefully read the following information and please do ask if anything is not clear.

### **What is the purpose of the study?**

The researcher intends to gain further understanding about resilience in children that are faced with an adversity, from the perspective of adult 'key informants' who have particular knowledge and expertise in this area. There is a lack of consensus in the literature about what resilience is, or indeed if it is a process of some kind, and I am hoping this study will help me to understand more about childhood resilience in order to provide the basis for my future doctoral studies. In particular, I am very interested in resilience for children who have a visible difference.

This study aims to explore the meaning and understanding of resilience in children from the perspective of key informants who have been asked to participate because of their specialist knowledge, expertise and/or experience of childhood resilience. I would therefore like to explore the perspectives of key individuals from a range of different professional backgrounds that have experience with working with children who have faced adversity, and learn more about their understanding of resilience

### **Who can take part in this study?**

Educational psychologists

Clinicians

Academics in the field of resilience

Charity support workers

Medical workers

Parents

Other Professionals who have specialist expertise in the field of childhood resilience.

### **Do I have to Participate?**

No. Participation is voluntary. If you wish to volunteer, then in the interview you will be asked a series of questions about your understanding of childhood resilience, your professional knowledge and experience, and we will discuss the ambiguities around this topic. The research will take place at an agreeable venue, depending on what is most convenient to the participants, or by Skype if you prefer. Interviews will take about 60 minutes.

### **What will I have to do?**

If you would like to take part in this study, please contact Katharine Clifford by sending an email to [katharine.clifford@kingston.ac.uk](mailto:katharine.clifford@kingston.ac.uk) including when you are available, your preferred interview day and time.

The researcher will be in contact to arrange a convenient time and format and will send you a



consent form prior to the interview, which you will need to sign and return to the researcher beforehand.

**What are the possible disadvantages or risks of taking part?**

There is a small risk that a participant could be upset during the interview, for example if they recall an upsetting incident. If this happens please tell the interviewer how you are feeling so she can stop the interview or have a break. We will send you the interview guide a week before the interview so please let us know if there are any questions you prefer to leave out, reword etc. This study is an exploratory study into the understanding and meaning of resilience in childhood. If you do not want to answer a question, you have the right to skip the question, withdraw or postpone the study without giving any reason.

**Will my taking part in the study be kept confidential?**

Yes. All of the information you give will be kept confidential so that those reading reports from the research will not know who has contributed to it. All information will be audio-recorded during the interview and will be kept strictly confidential. If you decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and asked to sign a consent form, which the researcher will keep. You will be free to withdraw from the study at any time up until 1<sup>st</sup> December 2016 without giving a reason, by emailing the researcher, Katharine Clifford at the email address below.

Data will be stored securely in accordance with the UK Data Protection Act (1998). If you decide to take part, you will be given a pseudonym. Only the researcher will have access to the identity of the participants. Any potentially identifying information that you give, such as the names of people, institutions or organizations, will not appear in the final research report. The data will be analysed to discern patterns of common views and experiences. If we refer to you in the research report we will use a pseudonym. The analysis will be presented in the form of a PhD dissertation, but we also intend to publish articles from this research in academic journals, at academic conferences, and also to use the data for teaching purposes for undergraduate or postgraduate students.

**Contact details of the researcher at Kingston University London:**

**Principal Investigator:** Katharine Clifford

Contact email:

**Supervisor:** Dr Jess Prior

Contact email:

**Second Supervisor:** Professor Adrian Coyle

Contact email:

**What if there is a problem?**

If you have any questions about the research please do not hesitate to ask me. Alternatively you may wish to contact my supervisors.

If you have any concerns about the research or if at any point you wish to complain about how you have been treated during the research, please contact:

Professor Simon Morgan Wortham  
Acting Dean, Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences  
Kingston University London  
Penrhyn Road, Kingston Upon Thames

United Kingdom

E-mail:

**Post Participation Withdrawal Date**

If you wish to withdraw from the study and decide that you do not want your interview data included after participating in the interview, you may do so up until the post-participation withdrawal date of December 31, 2016.

**Who is organising and funding the research?**

This research is part of a student doctoral thesis and is a self funded PhD.

**Who has reviewed the project?**

This research study has received ethical approval from the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at Kingston University London.

**Thank you for taking the time to read this Information Sheet.**

## Appendix C

### Consent Forms



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- I, the undersigned voluntarily agree to take part in a study exploring the meaning and understanding of resilience in children.
- I have read and understood the Participant Information Sheet provided. I have been given a full explanation by the investigator of the nature, purpose, location and likely duration of the study, and of what I will be expected to do. I have been given the opportunity to ask questions on all aspects of the study and have understood the advice and information given as a result.
- I understand that the interview will be recorded.
- I understand that the data generated through this interview will be transcribed and used in the research study and may also be used in publications after the study has ended.
- I understand that all personal data relating to volunteers is held and processed in the strictest confidence, and in accordance with the UK Data Protection Act (1998). I agree that I will not seek to restrict the use of the results of the study on the understanding that my confidentiality is preserved. I agree that the data I provide can be used for Katharine Clifford's PhD research and in any future related research or teaching projects.
- I understand that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time up until December 31 2016 without needing to justify my decision and without prejudice.

I confirm that I have read and understood the above and freely consent to participating in this study. I have been given adequate time to consider my participation and agree to comply with the instructions and restrictions of the study.

Name of volunteer (BLOCK CAPITALS).....

Signed .....

Date .....

Name of researcher/person taking consent  
(BLOCK CAPITALS) .....

Signed .....

Date .....

## Appendix D

### Background Information Sheet

To begin, I'd like to get some basic information about you (such as your age, education and occupation). The reason that I'd like this information is so that I can show those who read my research report that I managed to obtain the views of a cross-section of people. The information that you give will never be used to identify you in any way because this research is entirely confidential. However, if you don't want to answer some of these questions, please don't feel that you have to.

1. Are you male or female?  
(Tick the appropriate answer)  
Male  Female  Other  (please specify: \_\_\_\_\_)
  
2. How old are you? [    ] years
  
3. How would you describe your ethnic origins?<sup>9</sup>  
(Choose one section from (a) to (e) and then tick the appropriate category to indicate your ethnic group or background)
  - (a) **White**
    - English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British
    - Irish
    - Gypsy or Irish Traveller
    - Any other White background, please write in below \_\_\_\_\_
  
  - (b) **Mixed/multiple ethnic groups**
    - White and Black Caribbean
    - White and Black African
    - White and Asian
    - Any other mixed background, please write in below \_\_\_\_\_
  
  - (c) **Asian or Asian British**
    - Indian
    - Pakistani
    - Bangladeshi
    - Chinese
    - Any other Asian background, please write in below \_\_\_\_\_
  
  - (d) **Black/African/Caribbean/Black British**
    - African
    - Caribbean
    - Any other Black/African/Caribbean background, please write in below \_\_\_\_\_
  
  - (e) **Other ethnic group**
    - Arab
    - Any other ethnic group, please write in below \_\_\_\_\_

---

<sup>9</sup> The format of this question is taken from the 2011 UK census.

- 
4. What is your highest educational qualification?  
*(tick the appropriate answer)*
- None
- GCSE(s)/O-level(s)/CSE(s)/NVQ or SVQ Level 2
- A-level(s)/AS-level(s)/Scottish Higher(s)/NVQ or SVQ Level 3
- Diploma (HND, SRN, NVQ or SVQ Level 4 or 5,etc.)
- Degree
- Postgraduate degree/postgraduate diploma
3. What is your current occupation (or, if you are no longer working, what was your last occupation?)
- 
4. What is your current *legal* marital status?  
*(tick the appropriate answer)*
- Single
- Married
- Civil partnership
- Divorced/separated
- Widowed
5. a) Do you have any children?  
*(tick the appropriate answer)*
- Yes  *(go to part b)*      No  *(Go to Question 6)*
- b) How many children do you have?  
[   ]
6. How religious would you say you are you?  
*(tick the appropriate answer)*
- Very religious
- Quite religious
- Not very religious
- Not at all religious

You have reached the end of this questionnaire. Thank you!

## Appendix E

### Key informant Interview Schedule (Indicative questions)

#### *Key informant experience*

1. Can you tell me about your role as a \_\_\_\_\_?
2. What is your experience of working with children (who are resilient)?

#### *Understanding the meaning and experience of resilience*

3. The term resilience may mean different things to different people. In your opinion, can you tell me what you think resilience is?
4. Where do you think resilience comes from?  
(Prompt: Is it within the child, a result of the environment or from the family support? Or dependent on the child's coping and adapting skills?)
5. Why do you think that a particular child, who experiences adversity, has a different outcome to another child, who is faced with very similar adversity?  
(Prompt: example of two children from the same family that experience divorce)
6. a) Do you think that resilience changes according to the developmental stage of the child? Or is resilience not affected by development?  
b) Are older children more/less resilient than younger children, or is there no difference?
7. Do you think a resilient child is different to a resilient adult?  
If possible, can you provide an example of resilient child?

#### *Relationships*

8. In what role do you think key people play in promoting resilience (the parent, the teachers, etc.), and why?
9. What is the value, if any, of having a role model enhance resilience in children? If so how? (Prompt: What makes you say that?)

#### *Terminology*

10. Do you think resilience differs from adaptability?
11. Do you think resilience differs from coping well? If not, why is it different?
12. Do you think resilience differs from being competent?

13. The resilience literature identifies certain 'protective factors' that promote resilience and certain risk factors that may lead to poor outcomes.
  - a) What do you understand by the term protective factor? Can you provide an example?
  - b) What do you understand by the term risk factor? Can you think of an example?
14. Do you think that the more protective factors that a child has, the more resilient they are? Or not?
15. Defining resilience has created much debate; do you think a child (aged 9-11) would define resilience in a similar manner to an adult? Or not.

*The Process of Resilience*

16. Do you think resilience can be conceptualised as a process? Or not?  
Or do you see it as a characteristic of the child? Or something else entirely?
17. If it is a process – what are your thoughts about the process of resilience?  
(dependent on previous question)
18. Can you think about a child who you worked with (or reflect on your own experience), and describe the process/journey towards becoming resilient?
19. Do you think resilience can be seen during the process (at times of adversity), or can it only be seen later, towards to the end of the journey?  
(Prompt: for example if a child is better after an illness, or gets good grades)

*Questions concerning visible differences*

20. In your opinion, what is the process of becoming resilient, if you have a visible difference?
21. Is resilience different when you are thinking about a child with a visible difference?
22. Are there any particular risk or protective factors for children who have visible difference?
23. Can you think of a child who had a visible difference and tell me about their journey to becoming resilient?

*Concluding comments*

24. Given your expertise and valuable experience in this area of research, are there any other comments you would like to make about children, who are resilient?

**Appendix F**  
**Debrief Sheet**



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Thank you for taking part in this study. A summary of the study's findings will be made available to participants upon request from January 2017. If you would like to receive a summary of the findings after that point, please contact Katharine Clifford at [K1251965@kingston.ac.uk](mailto:K1251965@kingston.ac.uk).

If you wish to withdraw from the study you may do so up until the post-participation withdrawal date of December 31, 2016.

If you have any questions about the research please do not hesitate to ask me. Alternatively you may wish to contact either of my supervisors;

Dr Jess Prior

Professor Adrian Coyle

If you are concerned about any of the issues arising from the interview, the Samaritans are a national charity who will discuss any issue in confidence. They can be contacted 24 hours a day by emailing \_\_\_\_\_ or phoning \_\_\_\_\_. If you have any concerns about the research or if at any point you wish to complain about how you have been treated during the research, please contact:

Professor Simon Morgan Wortham  
Acting Dean, Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences  
Kingston University London  
Penrhyn Road, Kingston Upon Thames

United Kingdom

E-mail:

Once again, many thanks for taking the time to participate in this interview.

Katharine Clifford.  
PhD student. Kingston University



## Appendix G

### Key Informant Study Interview Transcripts

**Interview with Key Informant**     Jane

**Date:**                                     April 2016

**Participants:**                             Interviewer (I)

   Key Informant (Jane)

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*Brief introductions were made before starting the interview, thanking informant for their time to participate.*

I: Can you tell me about your role as a policy adviser?

Jane: I used to be a teacher in a special needs school but we used to take them to a FE college once week and then I worked in a college, main stream FE which is slightly older, so I taught 15 and 16 year olds. Then I got this job in 1998 and I was working with children from playschool through to sixth form and college and that was when I was travelling all over the country. I got to know to know children quite well during that period and working for (...) I got to know the families more. Now I do more policy development, turning research into campaigning. We are a research level organization, we try not to guess, we try not to say things that we can't back up. So we really value people who do research, we think that nothing, nothing is so useful than a bit of research that someone has gone and found out what really going on.

I: That is considerable experience in education. Ok, so your role as an adviser is based heavily on research?

Jane: Yes, it has a lot of continuity and I rely on examples all the time, so I'm always quizzing my colleagues about what's going on. But I don't have the direct personal contact in the same way now. Um. I still use my own case studies from a long time ago cause I know them well so if I'm wanting to reply to a government document, you have to back that up, you absolutely have to back that up.

I: That is good to know. So, what is your experience of working with children who are resilient?

Jane: Um.

I: Or just children in general

Jane: Well, children in general I would say I've got um, 30 years of working with children in general (*both laugh*) of all ages, but until, until, well, the first 12 years would have been working with more teenagers in a school setting but then you'd have long... and here you have intermittent contact with children of all ages. This is a very nice role as I get to see the children turn into adults really, you get to see the children grow up, its lovely.

I: The term resilience may mean different things to different people. In your opinion, can you tell me what you think resilience is?

Jane: Well, I think resilience is, is a very slippery idea. I think it really is, um, something that sounds nice like nutrition, something we all need and I think it something to do with being able to keep calm and keep thinking and keep moving and not fall to pieces when you're in a crisis. I suppose. I think everyone has a tendency to sort of crack up a bit under pressure but the ability to manage your cracking up and stay on the case I would say that that's resilience

I: Okay

Jane: And if you really can't do that and really do crack up and start crying or having to go away or getting enraged or whatever then that's someone who needs to build resilience, might be what I would say to the teachers.

I: So, where do you think resilience comes from

Jane: Well, I suppose it's a mixture of all of those. I do think people are differently endowed with the capacity to manage, a, a shock, so that some people just are like their emotional amplitude, some people have a really wide emotional amplitude who get really hysterically happy and they get really catastrophically distressed, and I think those people are

disadvantaged. Whereas peoples whose amplitude is more moderated, people's who's got maybe more I don't know I might think of it as containment so that you can be 'I'm very upset about this', but you're not wailing, so you can kind of keep the links going in your mind, so that 'I'm very upset about this' and I'm thinking about it and I need to do something. Um. So I think that there's something that might be innate or might be acquired through some kind of familial containing. Say that you see your parents being very upset by something and they show you how to be upset and not fall to pieces, but they wouldn't show you verbally, I think it would be, um, like you'd acquire it with mother's milk and you can't say whether that's inbred or um, learnt, it's a very tricky thing. So I think people learn from examples say when something goes really badly wrong and somebody else stays calm and says 'my God this is bad, I think I need to sit down for five minutes, you know what lets get a cup of tea', and if a child is exposed to that kind of, in school you might call it the soft curriculum where teachers really don't need to be perfect, where teachers need to say you know I find this stuff really hard, I actually need to get help or take a break or put some music on, whatever it is and I think that that kind of modeling is really useful because it means something. Again, I don't think you learn it intellectually, I would think you learn it physically but there's a vibe that goes with that and it that you don't have to be superman here, I just have to be ok. There is a margin of ok-ness and I just need to stay inside the margin of ok-ness and not flop over. It's like staying with the reality, I think actually, yes staying with the reality.

I: Okay, do you think it's a constant?

Jane: Well, its variable but its got margins that you stay within and if you venture beyond the margin. You should only go beyond the margins in the cinema (*both laugh*).

I: Why do you think that a particular child, who experiences some sort of adversity, has a different outcome to another child, who is faced with very similar adversity?

Jane: I suppose it would depend on the ages of the children and if they were really young and very different you'd be more inclined to think it was an inborn predisposition but the older they are the more they will have been exposed to, particular patterns that would differ, of who there friends are, which teachers they happen to have as they went through school,

or, um, I do think I mean I don't know if you're familiar with Brasilton? (KC: No, I'm not). Brasilton is really really interesting and he does very very early infant assessments (KC: ok), for parents who need help. Its worth looking into because different children, these are babies like within the first week and the Brasilton assessment and I've seen it on a training video, maybe a 20 minute training video where the Brasilton assessor goes in and works with the parents with the newborn and they find out the thing that arouse the newborn and the things that settle them so that some children, some newborns that there asleep and you shine a light across their face and some don't notice it and some do, and some of them you make a noise ((demonstrates clapping)), and some of them notice it and some of them don't. Its not because they're deaf that they're not noticing, the baby may make a brief sound and then go back to sleep whereas other children are, infants are more radically aroused with quite small stimuli, then there just harder to manage when there very young because the parents have to be more attuned and more attentive. My niece said with her baby that you really have to get her in the first minute. I feel infants are differently disposed, its like they're differently volatile. I think that is quite organic but I don't understand it fully as its not my department. I do think that, even me and my brother, we're 14 months apart and he's younger than me and he's a really big overweight very hard slabby muscle person who never shows any emotion hardly and if the place was bombed he would still walk around and say well, is everybody out safely? I think we'll all go stand at the road and wait for the firemen. He would be like that and he was the financial manager of a housing association and he, its like nothing ruffles him and I've gradually got better but when I was younger I was much more flappy and I feel that I haven't got any (*points to muscles*). I even went to the homeopath once to ask for pegs to make me a bit stiffer, because I am blown about by events and so I do think people are different but whether the physicality follows the emotional predisposition or the emotional predisposition reflects the physicality I do not know, but people are different, quite profoundly different actually.

I: Do you think that resilience changes according to the developmental stage of the child? Or is resilience not affected by development? And what are your thoughts about older children and resilience?

Jane: Um. ((changes the air conditioner)) I'm getting really warm. Um, I think, I think I have seen children who are very volatile become calmer, um, but I have seen young children who were very calm to start with. So I think perhaps if children have had some quite, one may think of inappropriate modeling from a parent who just 'goes into one', that expression 'just goes into one', so the mum or the dad just 'goes into one. Something happens at school and the teachers are just frightened when that parent's visits. Um, and the child knows how to 'go into one', but a couple of years, I mean I had a boy and I remember him because he knew that he was boiling up and he really didn't like it and we talked about what I called 'spot the signs', so you can decide what the child would like to do when they feel they'll 'go into one'. And he said he would just like to go for a walk around outside on my own and so we did that for the whole year and he used to just give me the sign and I'd say ok, I'll give you 10 minutes and he'd come back and he'd be calm. He'd learnt that but his parents were frightening, so um. And then there was another child who was low ability and her mum was frightening to a lot of teachers but not to me. I always found actually her mum was always talking about the same things, and she was just very angry and loud, but her little girl, who was not a talkative person who was not a vocal person but a gentle person, quite an emotionally responsive person. I remember we did an exercise once of drawing emotions because I thought your life would be so much better if I could read other peoples emotions so I did this with faces to draw anger and draw happy and this sort of thing and this little 5 year old girl with a fly off the handle sort of mum was the best at it, so she was not vocal, she wasn't bookish, she wasn't wildly numerate, you really thought she really below average in every possible sphere and she had a bit of epilepsy and she was absolutely able to read and understand emotions, and I thought she had a lot of resilience. She just knew what was going on with people. And it was sort of disturbing because you have an idea about what it is and then she really counter, contradicts what I thought she was. I thought I have to learn from this person. I actually can't remember their names, that boy was ... who went for the walks and when he was angry it was bad but she was a soft little girl who just knew what was going on with people.

I: Considering their different ages do you think their 'resilience' was within them or learnt?

Jane: Well, I think she was maybe indifferent, maybe we only saw the mum when she was angry, maybe she was good at all types of other social experiences. Her mum may have been very good at being affectionate, very clear about being happy, very clear about being cross, all the nuances. I don't know, I don't know I didn't get to know the mum so I never knew where it came from but if you check out with other teachers they would say no she was always, she was always just the right kid to put next to someone new for instance even as a little kid you put the new kid next to her because she just wasn't an intimidating person, she will be attuned. I don't know if she had any massive adversity to cope with to test the resilience but they were poor, you know it was a single mum with probably not enough to eat or not enough nice stuff to eat. Um. A struggle you feel life is a hell of a struggle for these people and she was always calm and awake and a delight and I thought that was I would have expected like if the ceiling fell in I would have expected her to be concerned about people.

I: Do you think a resilient child is different to a resilient adult?

Jane: Um, I suppose I would expect a resilient adult to be more equipped to take more action but I would think it's a continuum so that a resilient 13 year old would be more proactive than a resilient 5 year old cause the resilient 5 year old might be looking around for a helpful adult which would be the action for the 5 year old, thinking 'I've lost my mummy, I need a grown up', would be a five year old response. Whereas a 13 year olds response would be something like, 'I've lost my mummy I need a phonebox' or something like that so, and then an adult you think ah whatever has gone wrong they're going to really be taking stock looking after themselves, looking after other people and taking appropriate action, I would think and, and making it okay, if that's what resilience means but I think it does.

I: In what role do you think key people play in promoting resilience (the parent, the teachers, etc.), and why?

Jane: Well, I think there the key although you can't overestimate as kids don't spend that much time with any one teacher but I think if there's a whole climate in school of not getting angry I think. Schools where teachers get angry and I actually stopped teaching because we

got a Head who got off on rage and I just thought that I don't want to be in the same building as this woman. Um, so I thought she was exactly the opposite of what you need because when things go wrong you need to say, 'well, what do you think of this?' and a child might be sorry that they've done something really unhelpful but its really good for them to not have that shouted at to figure it out, 'what do you think is going on here, why is Pete so upset, what can we do about this?' If adults are calmly sort of reflecting on the situation and solution seeking. I used to take the kids to France on the minibus and stay in the youth hostel and we had one or two catastrophes like a kid who spent the whole day eating and then spent the whole night being sick (Oh no!). ((Laughter)) Yes, it wasn't good and I kept on thinking we should try and stop him eating, he's just never seen so much food, he's out of his depth here, he's not moderating at all. He was up all night and the staff we just took it in turns and keep it calm and did a load of carpet washing and it was ok but I think that if that Head had been on board I can imagine her screaming at him in such a way that it would not have been helpful, which I think he knew anyway. So, yeah I think its two things = perhaps it modeling, a bit of humor, a bit of calmness, quite practical, staying in contact and then reflecting on it together afterwards, would be useful things that teachers could do. And I'm thinking of a family with a child who would have started off at 4 or 5 when I first knew them with long trips because with this special cranial facial things they have long trips to Great Ormond street from Somerset. For a little kid, they're stressed out, and the thing that they had worked out which I met them at Great Ormond Street and they were having a chat together after the session. So you've got someone with a really severe cleft, a bilateral cleft with teeth in their cheek bones the parents and the thing that they had worked out which I had met them at Great Ormond street and they were they were having a chat together after their various sessions, um, so you have someone with major problems, very damaged hearing and can't swallow, very problematic, it medicalising the caring. Feeding that baby would have been very hard and what the parents were doing that I thought was excellent was they were saying, 'well blimey this has been a terrible day I wouldn't mind not having this day again', they were very real about it and the kid was unhappy and they said, 'so we need to put this behind us now, and get on the train and we'll think about what we're going to do tomorrow. We'll get a nice takeaway when we get home, we'll go to the park or watch a video, making a context that was much more varied. Whereas another family you'd feel that they would obsess about the medical in a way that they'd got just stuck on that and the kid at school

would be hampered by really only having medicalised identity (ok), and I don't know if that would be directly linked to um resilience except that its like you've got all your eggs in one basket then, except that if surgery goes wrong and it has to be repeated or you get an infection right it's a catastrophe, whereas if you think that if surgery goes wrong and you get an infection its just like a bugger and think that we'll have to go through it all again but meanwhile we're okay. So I think that is a quality of family, maybe the way the parents support each other um, I always think doctors should ask children about their pets and their favorite music and pizza toppings, I think doctors should spread the content of the conversation out away from the medical to help model this more sort of heterogeneous quality of life but I don't have the ear of the doctors.

I: What is the value, if any, of having a role model enhance resilience in children? If so how?

Jane: Well, I'd have to say I haven't done the research so I rely on things that I can find out you'd have to do literature search to see what you can find out. Children who've been unexpected resilient like that would be a soft emotive child. I don't know enough on the background of that. I have read stuff about people having relationships with clouds, like a baby looking at the sky, having some type of nurturing relationship with the clouds going by. It seemed almost like that was true of me, like I would be attentive to lovely things in the environment that makes one feel better, as a kid. I don't know about that one. It might be a teddy bear that gives you some kind of tactile constant.

I: Do you think resilience differs from adaptability?

Jane: Yes. I think its got a much more, its got a emotional, its to do with having a feeling like being able to be shocked, like being upset but still dealing with it. Like you're staying in reality. Adaptability sounds more technical somehow and doesn't explicitly incorporate the emotional thing. I think resilience does.

I: Do you think resilience differs from coping well? If not, why is it different?

Jane: I tend to think that that also underplays the importance of having an emotional response to a situation. So you think people who cope well might just be a bit shut down. I



would expect someone who is resilient to cope well but I don't think coping well is giving us a full account of what is going on. I hate the concept of coping well, I think life needs more than coping. I mean if your aim is that this kid is just going to cope, its not enough. I am very anti coping, a criterion for anything and adaptability just sounds like you're just going with the flow.

I: Do you think resilience differs from being competent?

Jane: I think competence doesn't have the shock and difficulty in it. You know when you're teaching kids and you take them over to France and we're all going into a shop to buy a postcard and everyone is going to write on it and send it home. Kids who do that will be competent.

I: The resilience literature identifies certain 'protective factors' that promote resilience and certain risk factors that may lead to poor outcomes. Can you tell me what you understand by the term protective factor?

Jane: I suppose it's the things in your world that would tend to contribute to resilience, um, well I think it would be a certain type of quality, a certain type of relationship with significant others, teachers and friends included so that if you got one or two good carers and five or six good friends those are the protective factors and at the end of the day when you miss the last train home you'll have something up your sleeve. You'll keep calm and figure it out

I: Okay. And what do you understand by the term risk factor? Can you think of an example?

Jane: The opposite really. That you wouldn't have people in place at any level, you might have parents that go off the deep-end, teachers who just don't know who you are and no friends and it would be really hard to keep hold of yourself in rotten times.

I: Do you think that the more protective factors that a child has, the more resilient they are? Or not?

Jane: Um, I don't absolutely know, um, because I think there are children who have a soft illiterate child could be one who you feel for, so I don't know and then you wonder if its

inborn but I still think she's learnt it. She might have learnt it at school and not at home. I'm thinking of other kids, kids who come from, well like lots of fostering and you think that they're going to leave school and stab a few people and go to prison, and kids who have been really badly burnt and was a handful and was on his fourth foster parent but he was indifferent. I didn't know him well enough and he was better than I expected when we did a family day and he was better and I expected at joining in and communicating and being okay, slightly lost the plot. He seemed to have more about him than you would have expected from his case that came through. Heading in the right direction but maybe young for his years so if you, you think these children are so good, but if you saw mainstream 10 year olds you'd realize these children are like 7 year olds. They take a long time to catch up. When they've had a certain type of adversity, I think its very kind of aggression making.

I: Defining resilience has created much debate; do you think a child (aged 9-11) would define resilience in a similar manner to an adult? Or not.

Jane: That's interesting isn't it? Children that are 9 or 10 years old have absolute insight that can blow you away so I wouldn't like to predict anything from a 10-year-old, um and I think adults resilience is a very subtle difficult idea I think, um, and I wouldn't be surprised if a 10 year old had a better handle on it than an adult.

I: Do you think resilience can be conceptualised as a process? Or not? Or do you see it as a characteristic of the child? Or something else entirely?

Jane: I suppose I think its something that manifests in certain situations, um so that if everyone had to have an event, than you would get different responses to them from different children and you would think that child is showing a lot of resilience and that child is not. I think its something that comes forth in certain situation when its something that's really difficult or a shock. Its like when the floor is taken up from under you and how you manage then, how you proceed then. I think it would be over time as well, you would have to come back every three or four days for weeks and weeks to see how things are panning out and a child whose very upset at the beginning might have done really a lot of emotional processing and might be really clued up by week three or four whereas a child that is quite 'light' at the beginning might be quite resisting reality and really getting in a pickle in week 3

or 4. I do think it's a response to a situation over time, but it's a kind of global response so you've got the emotionality, the cognitive and the actions perhaps and maybe also something I don't know so much about, but the narrative of the child, how the child will be making sense of it and all that kind of thing, and I think if you can put all of those things together then you would then get a sense of someone's whole person response over time to a particular adversity, something bad happens, and over a period of time you have to look at all aspects of someone's response, there would be. You know if you were plotting some kind of graph at all points there would be a cluster or a correlation somewhere that I think would suggest resiliency, and a scatter of points in another dimension would maybe be something that you might call catastrophe, its the end of the world. I don't know about 9 year olds.

I: So somewhere along the journey you might see something? At the beginning or more towards the end?

Jane: Well, I think people have to have time to process experiences to work through the emotional impact and of an experience and figure out like if something's really bad happens to you that ends up being your story line, your narrative, your identity and people have to have a plastic enough identify to do that that is also firm enough to be who they are, so I don't think there's anything simple about it. I think it's a very subtle, say you had a kid who used to be really scared of needles and you think how did you get over it and you ask them to tell you about it. And maybe the kid started giving injections to a teddy bear, it just something somewhere along the way someone or something happened so that the kid didn't feel that way anymore. I've got a really good example actually, younger than your age range. A girl who was so badly burned and she cut up her teddy bear as she felt very upset. Her parents were so upset, they thought it was such a vicious thing to do. And the grandmother stayed up and stitched it all back together. But there was no shock or anything like that. They had taken skin on the back of her neck to put on her and they bind them up so they can't move. Go to a burns unit, they've seen it all. So the grandmother stitched this little bear together again and it was immensely healing thing for the child and for the family. So the grandmother was like she just learnt and she must have lived through something, she just stitched it and it was a hugely positive thing in a very quiet way for the family. There was very little talking the family were in a car fire and it was really bad, the child suffered and

there might have been a dead sibling which makes you wonder about the bear and so that child was probably 7. Maybe the grandmother never realized what she was doing, just keeping calm and stitching up the bear.

I: In your opinion, what is the process of becoming resilient, if you have a visible difference?

Jane: Well, I don't know, but I think something that is always important in resilience is reality, the reality, what's really happening here. And I think one of the things that's least helpful to children about the reality, don't try to mess about with reality so if a kid says they're staring at me, why are they staring at me? You can't change the subject, so if the adults are able to be real and calm and curious. I wonder why they do stare, just explore it together and it takes quite a lot of confidence, I don't mind not knowing, confidence, um, placid curiosity on the part of adults and siblings to stay in a difficult situation with emotional warmth and curiosity but I don't know if that would be different from someone who maybe has diabetes which is not visual but it has quite a behavioral content and you'd be quite poorly if you don't get it right. I did read once there's no easy way to predict that a child with diabetes will manage their self-care, not to do with intelligence and some kids think it's worthier making the effort and some kids do. So I don't know, I just don't. I worked so much with children, I'm insufficiently in touch with children who are in the mainstream.

I: Are there any particular risk or protective factors for children who have visible difference?

Jane: It's known that they have fewer friends which makes you more vulnerable to bullying and I would say that it gives you less chance of exploring through so that children that have more friends to just hang out, potentially have an advantage over children that have more friends. So I think cultivating everyone's social skills is very useful.

I: Can you think of a child who had a visible difference and tell me about their journey to becoming resilient?

Jane: There's a boy who I started with in Northern Ireland so I see him quite a lot like for couple of days every two or three years so when he started at infant school at the age of 4 or 5 through to and he had Trich Collins so he had almost no lower jaw and no ears so he was deaf and of course in his whole family they had a really northern Irish accent, we did writing and drawing. His brother, his slightly older brother was able to communicate and I thought that at the age of 5 that his mother was massively overprotective but the school was really good and one of things that the school did and I did a training event with the teachers and I said I feel like there's a real lack of children's story book that will locate a child like this in a story, so I need you all to write a story now and come back and this teacher came back with this story, they were going to do an art class and they were going off into the wood with their clipboards, then it started to rain, then it started to snow and so they had to do two things; they had to get help and they had to keep themselves cheerful so they all used their clipboards to do cartoons and they used their hearing aids and turned it into a transmitter to get help. And the help came and all lived happily ever after. And I thought, actually, I think this kid will be okay in this school, he's got a very resilient teacher. And then when it was time to go to primary school, things were much better. I still couldn't understand a word that this boy said. And I then I went back over again when he was 11, and his mum was with him, and I gave a talk to one of the teachers at secondary school and one of the things you had to let the teachers know that this kid is smart and they mustn't take pity on them. And the mum was there at the back, she said they might have questions that they couldn't answer but she could. I think she was policing me. I only know one other person who has Trich Collins and that was a GP and the mum came to me afterwards and what if they all push him to do O-levels and to want to be a gardener and I assure you he actually ended up doing biology at university, the main problem that arose at secondary school was because of his jaw, eating was very time consuming and he really struggled to take on calories during the day and he really struggled to take on the calories. The decision was made that he would have to have energy drinks every day in class because he needed the calories but I felt that he, his hugely disadvantaged because it made conversation difficult, such a striking appearance, but he was always cared for by imaginative fun parents and a good fun brother and I think the teachers were professional and he did well, he had some terrible surgeries, eventually they used bone distention to increase the size of your jaw so you have a metal box around your head and they tighten the screws every few days to make the jaw bigger, I think

you cut the bone and stretch it, you can grow a lot of bone but you have to be hugely nourished and a miserable, miserable process for a child, a 16 year old to have that and he was able to endure it calmly, and keep working at his A levels. Well, he was endowed with a lovely family and he may well never meet anyone else with Trich Collins still, he may have seen pictures. I don't know, there you go.

*Concluding comments*

I: Given your expertise and valuable experience in this area of research, are there any other comments you would like to make about children, who are resilient?

Jane: I feel that quite strongly that it has something to do with having lots of authentic opportunities to express the true emotions that situations arose and its got something to do with not pretending, not pretending you're not upset when you are, you're not pretending, but the grown ups and the child are able to be sort of live to the reality but they don't lose sight of the bigger picture. There's something about the emotion, reality and movement so you're not stuck in a hole.

**Interview with Key Informant**     Natalie

**Date:**                                     July 2016

**Length of the interview:**

**Participants:**                             Interviewer (I)  
    Key Informant (Natalie)

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*Brief introductions were made before starting the interview, thanking informant for their time to participate in this study.*

I: Can you tell me about your role as a clinical psychologist?

Natalie: So I'm a clinical psychologist in the cranial facial service and now for plastic surgery as well, um, so I predominantly work in the first instance with parents of children who are born with a craniofacial conditions, um, and so in the first instance its about helping parents adjust to the fact that their child looks very different and they've got complex medical conditions that will require treatment and possible surgery at some point, um, and then as young people get older I work more directly with them, so I do some cognitive assessments because some of the children have learning disabilities, um, but I also talk to them about, um, about how they feel about the way they look and dealing with staring how to respond to questions about the way they look, um, in some cases as they get older, in some cases bullying and teasing. So that's very brief my role.

I: So, what is your experience of working with children who are resilient?

Natalie: Um, my experience around that you know I just find that first of all I think sometimes maybe before I came into this work I think that there can be a presumption that everybody ... struggle but actually you find that most families adapt and cope extremely well. Um, and so we do routine checks and screens and a lot of the people at the time will say we're doing okay, you know we're just ticking a long, um and we see that that does seem to transfer a lot to some of the young people where they just take it in their stride a little bit more, and um, they might say 'oh, you know people do look at me you know I don't care' they're not bothered or some of them might have kind of have really good little come backs

for people who might make unkind comments or curiosity about appearance is a big thing but some people might say well of course I'm going to be curious, everybody is curious, and I don't mind that, this is way I answer the question. Um, so there are the examples of people that I would consider to be quite resilient

I: Yes, do you think that is something that comes from the parent in the manner in which they deal with it?

Natalie: Um, I'd say possibly because some of the training that I do we're very much led by xxx (organsiation), um we use a lot of those sort of techniques and strategies and I often talk to parents in those first few years when they're coming to terms with it and they're dealing with and starting, and some parents cope with that very well but some will react quite angrily or hide their child away so I really need to encourage them to think about what message that gives to their child and that their child and their siblings are watching them and how they cope with this difficulty of unwanted attention around ... and um so it comes...parents you're really kind of modeling an approach for the children watching and learning and I encourage them to think of a spiel really. Some parents want to say the condition, some say they're born this way, some say God made them this way, it's a very personal thing, but I encourage them to have a story that rolls off the tongue quite easily so that when they're children are in that position, when they start school, they know this is what mum and dad say. So I don't have the evidence base to say its necessarily the case but I think some of it is learnt, if the parent is more comfortable with it, then the child is more comfortable with it. But I certainly have had some parents over the years that have said 'I really struggle with it but my kid is brilliant, they're an inspiration because they just completely take it in their stride'. So for some it obviously comes very naturally to them.

I: Okay. I'm trying to understand the term 'resilience', as it may mean different things to different people. In your opinion, can you tell me what you think resilience means?

Natalie: Okay, so in my opinion, let me think, I think it is about bouncing back isn't it so if something bad happens or something difficult happens that people just kind of recover quite quickly from it, they have a way of thinking about it that you know is comfortable for them, they don't get hung up on it, they don't perhaps take things to personally, they don't get to



catastrophic about it, um, and we use a resilience questionnaire sometimes you know there's something about using the resources around them as well, so it could be pulling in support from other people, being good at problem solving, thinking about it in a quite constructive way, rather than just getting stuck with it. That would be my idea.

I: And where do you think it comes from? Is it affected by context, or just an individuals coping skills, or something inherent?

Natalie: I think to some degree it is, um, even when you do see little kids say 3 or 4 years old, some of them are just sturdy, robust kids, will shrug things off and some really aren't. So I think to some extent it is inherent but I think you can learn those skills as well.

I: Why do you think that a particular child, who experiences some sort of adversity, has a different outcome to another child, who is faced with very similar adversity? say for example, if two children from the same family that experience divorce they deal with this differently and come out of this time differently.

Natalie: Yes, I think there is something inherent, there's something in that personality, that just by their very makeup, they just are people who will adapt better in those situations. If you take something like divorce then you've got children of different ages, and then depending on your developmental stage, that will have an impact on how you cope with things, um, but I do believe that children just come differently and some are more resilient than others.

I: Do you think that older children more/less resilient than younger children, or is there no difference?

Natalie: Not necessarily would be my view, um, I think with younger children they can be more accepting of things and more in the moment, um, older children have the capacity to think about things on a multitude of different levels, um, which can be positive but if they have a negative thinking style then they can also be quite negative, um, and would cause them to get quite stuck, feel overwhelmed, unable to cope with things. So I don't think that it necessarily flows that they get better as they get older. And also you've got you're

culmination of life experiences as well so if you've had a number of negative life experiences I think that kind of diminishes that sense of control in situations, um, or the other way around so I don't think its necessarily linear.

I: Do you think a resilient child is different to a resilient adult?

Natalie: Um, I think on the whole that if you start off resilient generally you will grow up to be a resilient adult.

I: Do you think you could become resilient maybe depending on the adversity you face?

Natalie: I think, um yes not necessarily through a the adversity. I'm not somebody who thinks that what doesn't kill you makes you stronger, I'm not a believer in that particularly. I'm not saying its completely false but generally adverse experiences um are unhelpful and make people feel downtrodden, um, however I think that if you learn from others I mean as a psychologist naturally I would like to think that we offer people skills and different ways of doing things that they can learn from and then use to move forward, um, but yes a resilient child is different to a resilient adult, depending on the resources they draw on, internally and externally.

I: In what role do you think key people play in promoting resilience (the parent, the teachers, etc.), or do they promote resilience in your opinion?

Natalie: Do they or should they?

I: Well, both (both laugh)

Natalie: They absolutely should, whether they do or not I think is a different matter um, I don't know really, I mean as a small example but it's a personal example. In my son's school, the headteacher, they had a big thing about resilience, it was so very important to be resilient, and I thought well that's great, you know, of course our children should be taught to be resilient, but the headteacher had a way of um, in a joking way undermining himself, um, so he'd stand up in class assemblies, and he'd say, um 'oh there's such a wonderful rugby team

or whatever, but I'm not good at rugby I'm just rubbish', and I just thought you're not teaching resilience there, you're not role-modeling it, um so although there might be a desire to be resilient. I don't think people have, including myself, a good understanding of what resilience is, it's a word that is very popular and they pass it around a lot but I don't think people necessarily understand the construct or what it takes to form a resilient individual so you know I think when a child presents with um, a very, perhaps a very negative thinking style you know 'oh, it was terrible, and you know, I'm being bullied or such a thing has happened', the idea of poor me, um, I think adults can respond to that perhaps in a way is that unhelpful so we just brush off those feelings and minimize saying 'oh don't be silly, it will be fine'.

I: So adults need to consider their role and language?

Natalie: Yes, its important that people feel validated and we should be saying 'well how can we think about this differently? How can we work on this together? Yes, I think that children and the reality is we have a lot of very unresilient adults out there and so we don't really understand the role so that when they had difficult situations they had stumble and fall, so I think if we want to have resilient children then we need to know more about how do we go about that. Um, and it is a lot about the way that people think about things, um the way what resources they've got, you know things they can join, um you know feeling good and strong and confident about themselves and other areas, sometimes its about building self esteem in other areas, so they've got a strong sense of their own identity, something they are good at, um, so I think its an area that everyone wants to do but I think that perhaps we could all use a bit more guidance on how to do it.

I: Do you think resilience differs from adaptability?

Natalie: Oh, its tricky isn't it? Um, I don't know the literature that well. Resilience and adaptability, I mean they're certainly very similar. It is about adapting, isn't it? Its about adapting to difficulties and I think they're very similar.

I: Okay. Do you think resilience differs from coping well? If not, why is it different?

Natalie: Again I would find it quite similar. In my opinion they are both very similar and you'd need to know the literature to fully differentiate it.

I: Do you think resilience differs from being competent?

Natalie: I think being competent is part of being resilient, but not all of it.

I: The resilience literature identifies certain 'protective factors' that promote resilience and certain risk factors that may lead to poor outcomes. Do you think that the more protective factors that a child has, the more resilient they are? Or not?

Natalie: I would think so yes I think that protective factors are very, very important.

I: Okay. Defining resilience has created much debate; do you think a child, aged 9 to 11 would define resilience in a similar manner to an adult? Or not.

Natalie: I don't think they'd be able to define it, would they? Well, I don't know. Let's think, what would they say. They'd use words like strong, brave, um, tough, I'd imagine but I don't know. But I imagine that adults who don't work in it would use similar words. I don't think many have a good understanding of what it is, just that everybody wants it.

I: Do you think resilience can be conceptualised as a process? Or not? Or do you see it as a characteristic of the child? Or something else entirely?

Natalie: I'm almost inclined to say more predominantly as a trait, I think, um, but that's not, it is also a process, it responds to life events, it responds to education and learning and observing others. Um, so I don't know if that answers your question?

I: Okay, so you view resilience as trait based but it is occurring within a process?

Natalie: It is definitely a process because we're constantly cognitively constructing things, aren't we? um so that impacts on our resilience and we're also constantly re-evaluating how we feel about ourselves, um and also the resources we have grow or shrink over the course of time. Sometimes we have loads of friends and then there are stages where we're

supported by families and then at a later stage of life perhaps our parents are older, and not in a position to support us in the same way and whatever we might move to a different area and not have so many friends. So I definitely see it as a process, its constantly changing, I think, whether I'd lean on one or the other, I don't know. Perhaps a trait that goes through a process.

I: Can you think about a child who you worked with or reflect on your own experience, and describe the process or journey towards becoming resilient?

Natalie: Ok, a process that demonstrates that they built resilience? Yes, rather than they started off and they continued on? Um, having a think. Um, you see I've got examples of a resilient child and I use this example when I'm talking to other children who are struggling, um, I'm not sure how it fits into the process of it but he's just a resilient child. And um, he was on his estate and people were commenting on, well teasing him for the shape of his head, which a lot of children that I work with have and they kind a shy away or avoid but he didn't, you know, and he just turned to this guy and said 'so what? You know I've got this condition and I've had loads of operations on it, wasn't very easy, and now you're teasing about it, you know what do you want to tease me about that for?' Um, which was very resilient response you know. That's the difference between taking it very personally you know, this is how my head is shaped and its always going to be like this and he really externalized it, he was like you know this is your problem, and what is this problem I don't understand why you've got a problem with this. Um, so that was a very good example for me of a resilient child.

I: Its almost a resilient response.

Natalie: Yes, yes and where the locus of the problem was its not my problem, its your problem, so that was excellent. Um, through the course of my work, I mean sometimes I work with young people who say I go to the supermarket and everybody stares and um, and when I'm working with them I'll say well some other children instead of hiding away they'll turn around and give a great big smile. I had one little girl over the years who said she started doing that and it was great because people are really taken aback. Um, and one got really cheeky and said 'do you want to take a picture?' (*both laugh*). Um, so that's the kind of

example through being taught I suppose and shown other ways that they've developed to be a bit more resilient and then they kind of start to build their own momentum with that as well and they start to feel stronger in those situations, um, and they have a solution to that problem. Its about giving them the tools, isn't it and then those tools belong to them and they can use them in their own way and adapt them in their own way, um and they have confidence that they can deal with that situation.

I: And then you had that child that just has the tools without being told and he does it, almost automatically?

Natalie: Yes, that's why I tell those children about those children.

I: Okay. Do you think resilience can be seen during the process, or can it only be seen later, towards to the end of the journey?

Natalie: I think during, people try out new things, they try a different way of thinking about it, they've a bit unsure at first, then they gain confidence with it.

I: So you can see this as you're working with the child?

Natalie: Yes, definitely. I worked with a lovely girl last week and she's had lots of staring and bullying and questioning and throughout the course, we were kind of just helping her to explore the problems, to see it from different perspectives and you can kind of see her eyes open as if she's going 'oh, okay', you know you can see the thinking and the changing happening, um, and I was talking to her and this was about the development and when she was younger her response would always be 'I was born this way', and as the children get older that becomes not enough you know because people say well why were you born this way because they ask more. So we were having a discussion about how to revive that story, it needs to be updated now, um and we were exploring different ways that she would feel comfortable responding to that question and you know you could see her saying well I'm happy saying this, ok, but yes this I feel happy about saying this and you could see the kind of the potential and the confidence 'I can do this', you know, um, and, she might go and say that or she might modify it but its that kind of thinking I need to find a solution to this, okay

and you've suggested this and that's not quite right and I'll modify it for my own use, that's it I've got a way, I now know I feel confident, I can do this. Um, so that's a real example of just in that one-hour session you can see the changing happening. I think she'll go out and she'll try it and then she'll come back and talk to me and see if something's worked. Now this is what's happened and then she'll learn from that experience and then build upon it. Um, so you can definitely see that process, can be a slow process, um, but its really exciting to see it. One of the best things about my work.

I: In your opinion, what is the process of becoming resilient, if you have a visible difference?

Natalie: Um, that's a really interesting question. The people who have a very visible difference that cannot be disguised, first of all there's no escape from it but in a way that means they have to adapt to it, they're forced to adapt to it. My understanding from some of the literature that I've seen and also working with other services ...that have a visible difference that is hidden, they can hide away they run into difficulties about trust 'who do I disclose this to? when do I disclose? There are stories about betrayals – they told a friend and then they put it all over facebook, so there's a whole other set of complexities there that I don't have to work with, um so the children that I work with, um, its on their face and its on their head, its visible right from day one, its difficult there's no escape from it, um and, but as a result I think they cope a little bit better because they have too. Um, and remind of the question again (laughs).

I: Do you think being resilient is different for a visibly different looking person/child?

Natalie: I think, yes, I think that possibly would be my answer. I think that there is for parents because I work with parents so a lot of them the mourning of the child that they imagined happens in the parents at first but if um, if somebody acquires something later on, then there is that mourning for that old life that they had and that's something that they have to deal with too. And that adaptation alongside that loss of you know I used to be able to walk down this street and just be invisible and I miss that now because now I walk down this street and everybody staring at me. And, um, I don't know I don't work with young people who are in that ... its often the reverse I work with because they are offered cranial facial surgery which reduces the difference to some degree so they come back to me and they say

‘its great, I’m just like a normal person’, which is a really sad use of words ‘I’m just a like a normal person, I slip below the radar, I just walk down the street and nobody stares at me and they’re jubilant about that so I have the reverse. Um, but I think it would be very hard to walk down the street and for things to be different towards the negative.

I: Are there any particular risk or protective factors for children who have visible difference?

Natalie: I think one of the greatest protective factors, I don’t have the research to back this up but I think one of the greatest protective factors are a family who adapt to it quite well, who demonstrate you know how to deal with curiosity, who speak openly and comfortably about it when they’re in the home, um who lovingly accept the child for all the wonderful things they are with this as part of it but that it doesn’t define them, um, I think that in terms of protective factors, that’s really important.

I: Okay, and schools?

Natalie: Schools are also very important, we have a good experience with schools on the whole. Um, um, schools are generally, I’m talking about primary schools now, generally most of the children that we see go into primary school quite well, they make friends very easily, young children might be curious about the difference but then they ask a question, they get over it and they move on, um so what I hear from a lot of families is that primary schools is generally a good experience the children all know the child with the visible difference so its not a big deal, the transition to secondary school is more difficult because its meeting a whole set of new people and all those questions come up again at a time when somebody is feeling perhaps a little bit more vulnerable. Um, so schools do have a role to play, but they seem to do that quite well, actually.

#### *Concluding comments*

I: Given your expertise and valuable experience in this area of research, are there any other comments you would like to make about children, who are resilient?



Natalie: Um, I think it's a bit of a sad observation I've known a few, quite a few wonderfully resilient young people that got through school really really well, um, well actually, its kind of overlapping a bit with ...disability because some of the children we see have ... disabilities and in a way create their own visible differences, um either through their speech or hearing aids or um, drooling things like that, um, ones who have been really tough and resilient all the way along but then they finish secondary school and there friends head off to university or start relationships – I mean I don't work a lot with this age group because we finish when they're sixteen but the real challenge I think happens when they hit adulthood, um and they're friends are dating and you know starting to have sexual relationships and then they're off to university and just you know being normal adolescents and leading adult lives and that I think is a real stumbling block for a lot of these kids, um, because dating is not easy and um, there might be even difficulties with drooling and things like that which are off putting to potential partners, um, I remember one young man saying 'oh, everyone just wants to be my friend', and he was a lovely friendly guy, I can imagine everyone would want that.

**Interview with Key Informant** Roger

**Date:** June 2016

**Length of interview:**

**Participants:** Interviewer (I)  
Key Informant (Roger)

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*Brief introductions were made before starting the interview, thanking informant for their time to participate*

I: Can you tell me about your role as a Psychologist, your main role?

Roger: Okay, if I wind back four years, I was the Head of psychology for the royal air force, I was an RAF officer, predominantly trauma related within the armed forces. When I left the armed forces I didn't want to do nine to five so I looked at various other roles. I'm on the board as you know for (...), and I provide the () psychosocial rehabilitation predominantly. Through (...) I've become involved with Bangladesh and the acid survivors foundation which deals with people who have acid thrown on their faces, um I do the psychosocial protocol for them, the assessment predominantly of woman and girls, and out of that I am also the UK advisor to the innovation for wellbeing in Bangladesh which is setting up a mental health service, so those would be predominantly in relation to where you're coming from, I think.

I: What is your experience of working with individuals that you would consider resilient?

Roger: Um, I predominantly provide advice on how to rather than one to one therapy and all the rest of it. That said, um I have in Bangladesh quite frequently got involved with the children in the acid foundation in the hospital, and in the wider sphere of focus groups with mental health service, the well being foundation is setting up.

I: Right then, so the term resilience – what does that mean to you?

Roger: I thought about how to answer this and there is a danger as to what becomes academic nonsense, and actually misses the point as to where you're trying to come from. Can I ask you to imagine a see-saw perfectly balanced and when we're just bouncing along

being ourselves, be it Katharine be it Richard, be it whoever, we're sort of floating along like that and we're fine (demonstrates with hands), sometimes we get really euphoric and we bounce around quite happily, and other times lots of stuff gets on top of us and so the see-saw starts going over to its side and this to me as a psychologist is the central point about a support [ ] because I think that one is in a good state of mental well being if one is in balance you and I have different balances as does the rest of the planet and the key word there is control. So the individual feels that they are in control of their functioning, their behavior, their emotions etc. so what resilience means to me is providing the or having the temporary mechanisms that whenever something happens that is out of the ordinary when you don't have control it keeps that see-saw balanced. Does that make sense (*yes, it does*).

I: So, where do you think resilience comes from?

Roger: Okay, I think it comes from three things, in broad terms I think it comes from the genetics, what comes through, the basic trait, then things happen and it depends on where we are in terms of age as an adult or a child, how that individual responds but more importantly how his or her, um mentors which would include parents, school teachers and anyone else they are involved with, how they react. So if a bomb goes off, for want of a better term, then the nuclear family, the child before it reacts to itself will actually first of all look how mum and dad react, providing they're a trusted mentor because that's how we learn anything and you can see from that point of view that resilience is any different, based on honesty and moral conduct or whatever it happens to be.

I: Why do you think that a particular child, who experiences some sort of adversity, has a different outcome to another child, who is faced with very similar adversity?

Roger: Well, that is an example of how it works really. If they are siblings then the genetics are the same, but if you've got two children from completely different families with their mum and dads at the side of the road watching the Queens 90<sup>th</sup> birthday, as we saw last week. Lets assume a bomb had gone off and the children were practically next to each other those two children would react in a different way, why? Because they are genetically different and how they're mum and dad react will be different and I think you could apply that really simple analogy, a horrific one but it explains why nobody on this planet is the same.

I: Do you think that resilience is only present in children or individuals faced with a risk or an adversity?

Roger: Well, even as a baby when you are born it is a hugely traumatic event. From that point of view when is there not a risk in someone's life? (*Okay*) So really from second 1 on the planet, um, the baby is going to be faced with some degree of risk but being born is pretty traumatic event, now quite clearly not everything is an adversity but we all have our own level of resilience from when we're born to when we are adults and learn to make our own decisions. So I think there is risk in everything.

I: Ok, so do you think resilience changes according to the age that the individual or as a child?

Roger: Yes I do for the simple reason that the brain is absorbing from the minute of birth up until for the sake of argument up until the age of 18, it could be argued older but it doesn't really matter but its sort of going up on a graph (demonstrates with hands), what the brain is absorbing, and in my view well when you talk about one of the factors affecting the resilience is awareness, and clearly a 13 year old is going to be more aware of mental well being and mental illness than a 4 year old. And also I think there is that critical stage around age if 6 or 7 where they break away and think about how would mummy and daddy do it and more towards 'how am I going to do it?' that's when they start to develop their own um life experiences.

I: So you would consider a resilient adult different to a resilient child because of what they have learnt?

Roger: I think you have a problem when you're an adult because when you hit the sort of 17, 18, 20 then you're finished being a sponge. Um, so, I think a child is different because a child is learning all the time. An adult has learnt all they are going to do under the normal system, unless something else happens, unless there's a positive introspection promoting mental health awareness which is what we'll come to I hope is one of the prime aspects to me at

least, that coping mechanism, positive for resilience. So I do think a child is different because it hasn't yet reached full brain maturity, and accessed its ability to cope.

I: You did mention this earlier, but how important do you think the key people are (the parent, the teacher) in promoting resilience?

Roger: Yeah, I do. I think it's absolutely fundamental. Because from a child's point of view, um a child is not built, a baby is not born with the capacity to anything other than scream for what it needs, food. So that's all it so until it gets to sort of 7, 8 and then fully at 17, 18 21 bit it uses all the time its looking to those around it to those it trusts for guidance on how to cope with anything good or anything bad. That I think is how we will develop our way of coping

I: Would you say its modeling the behavior?

Roger: Yeah, providing a role model is one way of putting it, um but its its = one thing that worries me and is one of the problems in the western culture, um, is because of the whole stigma associated with any form of mental health there's a lot of parents its changing a bit with the new generation coming through but historically it's the stiff upper lip bit, that's how your taught to get through it and all the I'm sure most of the ... in Europe ...its all about being about to vent your emotions and I think in some ways you know children hearing their mum and dad discussing a traumatic event for example rather than lets wait until the kids have gone to bed and then we'll have a chat about it I think that positively healthy.

I: Do you think resilience differs from adaptability?

Roger: Um, it really is getting into the terminology and the academics that goes with it. I have to say it turns me off...but if we're talking about adaptability as being the ability of an individual to adapt itself to a scenario (yes), then that in its own way is what resilience is doing, but I think adaptability I would equate more with physical challenges and resilience more with mental...social that's how I would do it.

I: Do you think resilience differs from coping well? If not, why is it different?

Roger: Clearly the aim as I said at the outset...resilience means its inspections to provide good coping...so from that point of view I would see resilience as being the attributes that one has to cope well. I think it is a mind set.

I: Do you think resilience differs from being competent?

Roger: Yes, I do in terms of the common use of the term because competence is someone who is able to do their job well, whereas with resilience I come back to the point I made before its about the state of mind attributed to someone coping well. Resilience is the vehicle and the end game is coping well, competence...blah, blah, blah. How you get there and how successful you get there is based on your level of resilience.

I: So, the resilience literature also identifies certain protective factors. These aim to promote resilience (provide examples...religiosity, a mentor) do you agree with these or do you think there are others?

Roger: I believe that a lot of people get a lot of psychological comfort from a religious faith for example, and in my early training as a psychologist I did a lot of work in addictions and a lot of the stuff in there – you're familiar with the 12 step program, and what you're doing is you turning whatever issue you've got over to a higher power and you've also got the confidence that at the end of it all you're sitting at the right hand of the vessel virgins or whatever you believe, so I think people who do have a very strong religious faith, um, who have a slightly lets call it a dramatic event, they do seem to fare better in the longer term, part of that actually might be a slight red herring because if we're talking about something like an addiction or an eating disorder or going through a traumatic event, one of the key factors to me is actually having some peer support, someone around so if you look at it for example after a plane crash they'll all go home and you know continue quietly on the side...people who are religious or who have their mum or their priest or whoever...involving them in ... the individual has the opportunity to vent...emotion out of the way... and in theory get on with their lives. This differs to the person who has no faith, no social setting, who would help... a long winded answer but yes, um also learning a new skill, I mean what I would like to think that resilience does is turns someone to as near normality as possible after whatever has happened, but I do accept that if you've had your legs blown off, you may not be the ...

in the world, um so learning a new skill as a micro factor that would be relevant. Don't get the bit about a personal agency to be honest – what do you mean by that?

I: It refers to the reflective journey that an individual uses to look back at their experience and consider what has happened.

Roger: Ah, yes of course, provided that it is properly facilitated because if you look at something like eating disorders, you're asked to keep a diary when you are referred to an NHS centre which essentially could lead you down a road of depression if you read through that journal or it teaches us to be a liar from day one. So I think providing its properly facilitated, a diary can be useful. Um, what I think is more important is actually having the confidence in their being a positive ...I think that's the key one to me in resilience in that is instilling a sense of positivity, we needed to touch on that when we were talking about the religious bit, and across everything I've been involved with, all the analysis would tell me that if someone has either got an innate positivity or can be given one through cognitive behavior therapy for example. Positivity is key in terms of resilience. Thinking positively about an outcome rather than the doom and gloom, that is getting all the bad stuff out of your system. It could be a resilience trigger.

I: In recognising triggers, do you think that would occur more within an adult or would a child be able to recognize this, possibly at a certain developmental stage?

Roger: I mean if we're talking ages, then from 1-7 or 8years, then no, but after this time that individual is starting to make their own judgment and reacts to certain things differently. So yes I do I think age and development to recognizing the triggers is very important.

I: Do you think that the more protective factors that an individual/child has that the more resilient they are?

Roger: Not necessarily, at all, because you need the mix of the whole across the ...you could meet the most religious child in the world but that may be placed upon them by mum or dad rather than their own beliefs which may not have emerged, so that would be counterproductive...so I don't think it's a question of quantity. I think its more a question of quality and breath

I: Do you think that an individual is resilient prior to the risk, the adversity or is there a point, is there a process of resilience. When does the resilient behavior or the resilience happen? Is it before the adversity occurs or is it during the adversity, that it becomes apparent?

Roger: That's a very interesting question. Um, I think my perspective on that comes back to the child and the 7,8 age because I think when you get to the 7,8 bit , they make their own decisions etcetera, then a child will be more aware of its potential to the triggers and how to cope with an adversity should it happen, so, um I don't think it all suddenly comes to the fall, whether it's a train or a car hurdling towards you or whatever happens. Um, I think its all there, um and it will just automatically come into play when the adversity starts. It's a conscious thought process, and the straight answer to that question is that its always there but like a lot of ...I think its always there.

I: Right, so looking at risk, its described as cumulative in the literature. Do you think that there are multiple risks that the child needs to be exposed to be termed resilient?

Roger: No. If a child or an adult is indeed prepared then they don't need to have a crisis or a risk ... they can climb into their coffins at the age of 110 and...so from that point of view you can't say they are not resilient just because it hasn't been tested.

I: Defining resilience has created much debate; do you think a child (aged 9-11) would define resilience in a similar manner to an adult? Or not.

Roger: From my own point of view, I think that if I went up the road to the primary school and asked any of the older ones what the term resilience means, I would imagine that they'd all say no apart from my son, Ryan who would say yes because he hears me banging on about resilience. But I think if you then explained about how would you react to something or what coping skills would you employ, then actually I think people at the tail end of primary school going to secondary school would. Certainly my kids in a state primary school, in year 6 they do a lot of stuff around that particularly around relationships and risks and generally refer to self confidence which is that resilience we talk about.

I: So it would need to be put into context.



Roger: Yes, the term itself would mean nothing but the context would mean quite a lot. And it would be interesting to see what you come up with when you talk to them.

I: Do you think resilience can be conceptualised as a process? Or not? Or do you see it as a characteristic of the child? Or something else entirely?

Roger: I think it is a process of various reasons I've been getting at. The end game is for the individual either as an individual or within an organization for them to cope with whatever is thrown at them. With the risks, and how you actually get to that point...but in broad terms, yes I think it can be conceptualized as a process, because to me that's exactly what it is.

I: Can you think about a child who you worked with (or reflect on your own experience), and describe the process or journey towards becoming resilient?

Roger: I think I can, yes, um, I definitely think of the children in Bangladesh who have had acid thrown at them, um, normally when they've been the ... with their mother, that's how it works. And from a child's point of view I think because they don't appreciate the ramifications of having their beauty despoiled, um, they don't understand the longer term rationale. I think for a child the focus is very short term. It was very interesting watching a mum and son, they both had acid thrown at them in the same experience, and how the mother is already thinking long term and the son is simply trying to get through the day. I think that's quite a good way of putting it that actually, ...whereas there will be a lot of common stuff in terms of anger, shock, well let's start with shock, and then there's anger and fear and all the rest of it, but the child at that stage is not going to be worried about that. The child is simply going this hurts and can you stop it hurting please, whereas mum has already worrying about her son who's never going to find a job, whose never going to find a wife, as such. So you're talking at completely different levels, at how this experience and I think that's really an important factor when ones applying or trying to support any form of psychosocial rehabilitation which is key to me in terms of providing a good outcome, but really tap in, not only to the individual's innate resilience and I'm actually thinking of people in the developing world have a lot more resilience, um, built in simply because of the dangers they face on a daily basis, you know the snake bites, to contaminated water to an earthquake, to a building falling down, and that happens daily. Whereas, here its different I

think you have to look at it in terms of person, sense and place and tap into what is important to that individual to actually enable them to make a success mental outcome and this is part of that resilient process, whereas a practitioner taps into what is really important, the child that's one and to provide the reassurance that there is still positivity to their thought. And the one thing I have noticed that with children is that they think short term, day to day concerns, whereas the adult is thinking six months from now and how that individual is going to be. So I think it would be lovely to have common process ...and also the need of our expectations for a child.

I: In your opinion, do you think resilience is conceptualized differently when you consider a child or an individual with a visible difference?

Roger: Sorry to poke holes in this but I think to some degree it depends when that visible difference occurs to the individual. I think there's a massive difference to a child who is born with a strawberry birthmark on their face to a 11, 12-year-old girl who suddenly has what they would term as a horrific burn injury which is going to destroy their good looks at a time when they are trying to meet boys or girls or whatever it happens to be, so I think you have to start with where does the individual have that belief that they have the visible difference from. If its at birth, the chances are that because of the way that children behave towards people with a visible difference, um, in the early stages there would be no reaction to them at all... when people start making their own judgments going forward, um, that they start making their own judgments about how they are going to behave, they start forming groups, then that's when the bullying can start and that may be the individual who looks different, or the person who can't play sport or the person is either very poor or very rich. In Keystage 2 this would be fundamental and if someone has got a birthmark, then its incumbent on... involved and the parents would be involved to really hone that individual's self confidence, and resilience dare I say it, might actually enable them to face what is going to happen and what might happen in the future. That's very different from someone who um at the age of 11, 12 suddenly develops something from an accident, I think there is a difference as to how this can be thought of.

I: What do you think it means to be resilience when you are a child with a visible difference?

Roger: The cultural influence would be huge here, really, really huge because if you have got a visible difference or you know a major physical disorder, um, in much of the developing world... job...you know you are going to have to cope a lot on your own. Not quite the same over here. As we like to think we have a more enlightened approach, whether it is or not but that the way we think, so, um I think a child if he or she were asked the question, well here I am in my life, how am I coping with it? If things aren't going well, is it related to the fact that I look different? I don't think resilience would ever enter the child's lexicon at all, it would be question of if they are coping or not and what impact is the visible difference having on their ability to function, to have friends, get on well at school, play football or what ever it happens to be.

I: So in your opinion what is the process of resilience if you have a visible difference?

Roger: Well, if it's a visible difference that's been caused by an accident, start off with that. I think, having been in that scenario, I knew there was a time when I was mentally and physically okay when I went back to doing the same job that I had done before the accident and I think, so that is a really easy measure and I think again. I mean it's a bit like a, well I know you're thinking about visible differences, but its like the girl who has the eating disorder and she's off school for a year, and when she goes back to school, how she copes at that stage will depend very much on their resilience so there's such and such made about them because they have an eating disorder... and would apply that exact terminology to having a visible difference. (ok) And how people react to them and how much of this is because of the visible difference.

I: So the external factors would play quite role?

Roger: A huge role. I don't think the process of looking in the mirror is important, its how the rest of the world actually view you that's important. And I think that applies to a child setting as well. And I think this generation are going through secondary school now is very different to 30 years ago. There are a lot more black kids around now, a lot more Chinese children, a lot more... the so called British white kid.

*Concluding comments*

I: Given your expertise and valuable experience in this area of research, are there any other comments you would like to make about children, who are resilient?

Roger: Well, there's one point that I think is so important is the mentor. And that is why resilience, and this whole package around reducing stigma, and promoting awareness of mental health and I think that is key... we would see a change in how people cope with what is thrown at them or if they would learn that it is quite normal to have nightmares, that's the normal way. If there was more awareness of that then people wouldn't try to hide the fact they they've just burst into tears or they weren't sleeping at night or what ever it happens to be. They would actually make a far better psychological recovery than they do when ... that's absolutely not the way to do it. So that is the huge thing, mental health awareness.

<b><u>Interview with Key Informant</u></b>	Charlotte
<b><u>Date:</u></b>	September 2016
<b><u>Length of interview:</u></b>	
<b><u>Participants:</u></b>	Interviewer (I) Key Informant (Charlotte)

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*Brief introductions were made before starting the interview, thanking informant for their time to participate.*

I: Can you tell me about your role in your organisation?

Charlotte: Yes, so I run three organisations. I'm the chief executive of(...), which is the main national charity for people with (...), um, within that we have a division which is called (...) UK and that is specifically for 5000 people with (...) disorders, ..., um, and then I run a, um, a separate charity, um, which is called the (...) and that is a (...).... which is the fundraising and awareness raising profile.

I: Right, so what is your experience of working with children who are resilient?

Charlotte: Yes, I mean so obviously children who are ill from very early on, I would say children are more resilient if they've been ill from birth then ones who become ill later because they haven't you know, if I look at the difference between Chris and Sam, Chris is much more resilient than Sam because Chris was a very ill as a young child whereas Sam hasn't been that ill because we learnt from Chris. So I would say the resilience I see is in the ones that really have you know from the moment they popped out had problems. Um, I meet um, its funny so we think of them as resilient but they don't think of themselves as resilient so I once had a very lovely conversation with a girl who has a condition called spinal muscular atrophy and she was saying, 'for me, I am just me' and she is very severely disabled, not mentally, she's very sharp but she has a very dwarf like body that can't walk, can't do anything. So she is very, um, you know very severely disabled for everyone else but for her, she said, 'I have a bit of difficulty understanding that I'm disabled because I am just who I am, I've never known anything different', and she said, 'so for me the overriding thing is that I see the heartache for me mum, but its not my heartache'. They're just getting on with it. Yeah, so I think there generally lots of the children, I think to be honest its very influenced

by the parents in parents where middle class educated parents who have children with very severe conditions, the children are you know brighter than you would expect them to be and politer and more worldly wise, and then the children that are you know, are they come from families where maybe the parent is more whinny themselves, then the child is a bit more whinny, so I think the resilience is very much learned, from the environment.

I: The term resilience may mean different things to different people. In your opinion, can you tell me what you think resilience is?

Charlotte: Um, I think, so different levels, I think resilience is the ability to suffer something knowing that whatever you are suffering will be making it better so for example having a vaccination is a level of resilience so, my son has never been concerned about having a vaccination because he has it, he feels the pain but he's very aware that he's having that so that he doesn't get the flu or doesn't get whatever and I have tried to instill resilience in the other two children so we've recently had meningitis vaccinations so I have showed them photos of children who've died from meningitis the stories that have been in the news and said 'look, darling this is why we have these vaccinations', I've showed them photos of children who've had their legs and their arms amputated to say this is why we're having the vaccination but it doesn't make any difference to the two of them. So I think that resilience is knowledge, its probably a prior experience of some level of suffering that enables you then to rationalize future suffering so you might say, 'once upon a time I had this operation to sort something out, you know that afterwards it wasn't very nice but you remember that two weeks after that you feel a lot better, so when you have the next operation you are able to go in and use some knowledge to go pain, yes, then longer term no pain so worthwhile to suffer. So I think resilience in a child is probably an unconscious rationalization of a process, um, I think resilience is also a belief in the people and the scenario around you that whatever you're going through will be worthwhile in the end.

I: So it would be influenced or determined by the environment and the support?

Charlotte: Yeah, I think both, if you're in a nice hospital with kind friendly nurses you think we can get through this to get to the other side. If you're in a hospital where people don't care and if you're you know and if you're with your mum in hospital you can be more

resilient and get through it and know that you'll get to the other side than if you've got no support.

I: So, where do you think resilience comes from

Charlotte: I think it sits within the child and you either nurture it or life nurtures it because they get sick, or, so I think, um, I think its always there but I do think it needs circumstances to blossom it and I do think its early circumstances.

I: Why do you think that a particular child, who experiences some sort of adversity, has a different outcome to another child, who is faced with very similar adversity?

Charlotte: I mean I think that even though children are in the same family they're experience of the family is different, so if you're the oldest child you're experiences are going to be different to being a younger child, um your interpretation of events of love you know so one parent might have accidently said something that one child interpreted one way and one interpreted another but the actual words were the exact same thing that were said but because of the frames of reference that the children have lived through. You know also although they're in the family they're in different schools, they have different teachers, they have different peer influences so I do think that even children who've gone through the death of a parent are going to react differently depending on how much a feel bereaved or felt loved or and how you process it.

I: Do you think that resilience changes according to the developmental stage of the child? Or is resilience not affected by development?

Charlotte: Yes, I think that so I think young children so I think it's a question of whether you're resilience is inherent and you don't remember learning it so if you're ill from birth you just become resilient but no one taught you at two months to be resilient or four months or a year or two years, you just learned it because that's all you remember. I think resilience at an age of say three plus would have to be learned and you know I'm sure children who live in horrendous households learn that resilience as they come into a sort of consciousness of a child and they're ... or abused or not well looked after they will learn that resilience because

they have too, and then I think as an adult or as a teenager lets say the first time somebody breaks your heart its devastating and then the next time its devastating but a little bit less and then the next time you learn possibly to avoid the scenario that would have broken your heart, so I do think you can learn it, but I do think there is the people the people who have grown up with it and its in their DNA and the people who have to learn it because its forced by circumstance.

I: So, do you think that older children more or less resilient than younger children, or is there no difference?

Charlotte: Um, so I think it goes back to, um, so I think if they've had a reason to become resilient from young, they'll be resilient whatever age versus another child who hasn't had that circumstance. I think if they have parents who see life as a half full cup they'll be less resilient, I think if they have parents who mollycoddle them too much, they'll be less resilient. So I think if you haven't had to learn it through circumstance a regular child having a regular life and their level of resilience I think will be entirely impacted by their upbringing and their parental, you know if you see your parent get hurt or something happens to your parent and they whine and complain about it, but they don't go back to the shop and return it or whatever, so I think if you see your parents saying that's not good, I'm going to sort that out and they sort it out, whereas you know not all people are like that, so I think resilience is a very learned characteristic.

I: In what role do you think key people play in promoting resilience (the parent, the teachers, etc.), and why?

Charlotte: So, I'm not sure that much, well lets say that I would probably say that family is the main influence would definitely be the main influence and the parents and possibly the siblings, so I definitely think it helps for the children to see the older child so brave and then less brave and realize ooh, and I think that helps, it definitely impacts on the other siblings to watch how the older one deals with it. I think peers influence resilience by teasing, so if you lack the resilience then you get picked on and I don't think that anybody else would have an impact on resilience. I don't think teachers would because I think resilience is something that you're dealing with again and again and again and a teacher isn't going to be that person in



that place at that time. So I think it is the places and the people who you are again and again and again. If you're were in the playground everyday and people pick on you, ultimately you'll build resilience or you'll have a real problem. If you're at home and you're being picked on, if you're ill all the time so its going on and going on and going on, that's what's building the resilience whereas I think a teacher doesn't have that interaction in life, unless they intervene because you're coming to school with a black eye and they see there's a problem at home but I don't think in a regular teaching job that a teacher would impact on resilience.

I: What is the value, if any, of having a role model to enhance resilience in children?

Charlotte: I think very important as long as they're close and have an identifiable role model, so when we make the films at work, I don't know if you've seen any of our films, I'll send you a link to them. So if we're making a film, um for primary school children we will make the film about a primary school aged child, so that those in the room can identify, um, can identify with the person because I do think you need to be looking at someone else and seeing yourself in them, um, and so I think if I'm saying to one of my children I've had a vaccination, I didn't cry, he doesn't care at all. I'm not the same as them, I'm not a child I'm not their age where they can associate whereas if I say the younger one, your older brother has had this and they're only two and a half years apart she knows him well enough to know that if he can do it, I can do it, so therefore I think that role models have to be very close, so you know, again it comes to, if you think about it in white and black there's no point in having a 20 year old white guy go to a school where there are mostly black pupils to say how well he's done at uni, you need a black guy going to the school with black pupils for the resonance.

I: Do you think resilience differs from adaptability?

Charlotte: Yeah, so I think resilience, so I think, um, I think resilience is something internal and unconscious and adaptability is something conscious and external. So I think you know you make a conscious decision as a child you might not realize it conscious but you're making it to adapt whereas resilience you are or you're not.

I: Do you think resilience differs from coping well?

Charlotte: I think resilience gives you the knowledge or the skill set to cope so I think the resilience once again is the inner characteristic or you know inner strength that then influences how well you do or don't cope in certain situations.

I: Do you think resilience differs from being competent?

Charlotte: um, yes because again I think to be competent you've got to be cognizant, so you've got to know what you are doing and I think children who are resilient have no awareness they are not consciously deciding to be resilient, its just been learned and they are. So I think to be competent in something you've got to have a level of knowledge about it and I think to be resilient you have to have no knowledge but you probably have to have experience and you're using your heuristics to go back and say I've seen this scenario before, how did it all work out right? Okay this is how its going to work out.

I: The literature refers to protective factors that promote resilience, and then risk factors that affect resilience. What do you understand by the term protective factor?

Charlotte: I haven't heard the term. But thinking about it, I don't think you can create resilience in a child by protecting them, particularly. I think you obviously as a parent, so when Chris was going through his operation when he was say 8 and it was all very serious and all going very wrong the resilience he developed was from knowing I was there and talking him through it but I couldn't protect him from any of it, nothing could stop it happening to him, but his resilience was developed because he knew that you were there and with him and that you were saying that at some point this is going to get better. So if you think about the parents that overprotect their children, there children have zero resilience because they've never had any problems come to them, that they've had to deal with. You know we were talking about at dinner recently about letting our children go to school by themselves, you know at 11 and um there were three mums who had three girls and I just had my son. And they were all saying how horrified they were to let their girls go by themselves and then we all recounted a story that had happened to all of us, differently all in different countries when we were about 11, 12 where someone had come up to us who had

been a man who either put their hand down our skirt and the woman were saying how awful is that that this happened to me and I don't want it happening to my daughter, and I said yeah, but why wouldn't you want it to happen to your daughter because actually nothing serious did happen and you learnt from that to be more aware and you learnt that's not okay and you told your mum and your mum called you know the police or whatever it was. So is it nice to have someone shove their hand down their skirt when you're 11 or 12? No, of course not, but actually what would be worse was if you had not understanding or knowledge of any of that and then you were 16 and someone really hurt you. So for me if you overprotect I have to make my son aware of all the issues that there will be on the train but I can't stop those from happening. I can just give him examples. You know we had one of our friends recently coming back on the same train line, someone threw a chemical all over him = now he's a 45 year old man but he didn't know it was going to happen and he couldn't stop it so there are just things that you can't stop them and I feel that him going to school at 11 on the train is teaching him a hell of lot more than the boys that are being dropped at school until they're 14.

I: Right. Do you think that the more protective factors that a child has, the more resilient they are? Although from what you've just said, it may be something that is more supportive to the child or a reassurance.

Charlotte: Yes, you know, I really think that the biggest risk factor is the attitude of a parent and the best protective factor would be the attitude of the parent. And the attitude of the parent may be to protect at moments when there's danger but you know stopping your child from falling off a wall does not make them resilient. Them falling off a wall and realizing it hurts makes them think about it and be more resilient in the future. I think if protective factors the way its discussed means a parent helping you think about it and think through it but not pure protection, because where is the learning going to come from?

I: Defining resilience has created much debate; do you think a child (aged 9 to 11) would define resilience in a similar manner to an adult?

Charlotte: At a guess I would say that at 9 they wouldn't know and at 11, they might say that being resilient means you can put up with stuff. Something like that. I don't think they

would have the subtle psychology language but I think they'd more think about the physical side of it.

I: Do you think resilience can be conceptualised as a process? Or not? Or do you see it as a characteristic of the child? Or something else entirely?

Charlotte: Yes, I do and they either go through it subconsciously or semi-consciously, until they arrive at a age where something has gone wrong and you know so my son is very resilient to all things physical because those are the issues he's had to deal with. Does that then give him resilience if his dad left tomorrow? I don't know whether it crosses that boundary because what he got is a learned physical resilience to do with health. He hasn't got anyone being mean to him. So there was very good example which showed he didn't. so when we were in London, he went to a lovely nursery and a lovely primary school. He went to a state primary, and everyone nice, a nice church school and um, we came here when he was seven and a half and he went to a state school in Dorking and after about three weeks he went to the first birthday party and he came back from the birthday party and he absolutely burst into tears and he was so distressed and distort, probably the most I've ever seen him in his whole life and he was upset because he'd seen the children bully another child. And he had never seen that before and he didn't understand what was going on and what was happening and why the gang were ganging up on this child. And they had made this child cry at the party, so whilst he'd been through loads of stuff medically he'd got to that moment but had never seen people being mean to each other. So I think resilience can be a process, probably learned within in a silo. You know, so someone whose parents are not very nice still might be dead afraid of a vaccination when they're 10 because just if you're parent is mean doesn't mean you've learnt any physical pain. So I think resilience is most definitely a process probably coping with something bad, whether its heartbreak, ambivalence of a parent or exam stress, you know.

I: Do you think resilience can be seen during the process, at times of adversity, or can it only be seen later, towards to the end of the journey? Or is it seen in the next experience or adversity?

Charlotte: it builds up over time. I think I have seen it in my son build, um, you know not in the younger under 5 stage but as he's got older and realized if I do this that will be better and if I do that that will make me feel better and so I think I've definitely observed it building up during the physical adversities.

I: In your opinion, what is the process of becoming resilient, if you have a visible difference?

Charlotte: I think, and I'm thinking of three children, well one is an adult now, where they are very physically deformed in their faces, um and they are clearly hurt by the um the way other treated them but they are not allowing that to define them. So I think resilience in that circumstance does it mean that you don't hurt when people laugh at you or stare at you or take a photo of you in the street? No, but does it mean that you can brush it away and move on? Then yes, so I think um you know I think it can sometime more hurt the siblings. I think if you look like you look, then you don't see any difference, you just look like you look. There was a nice example, um a black woman who was adopted by a white aristocratic family and um brought up in beautiful houses with servants and everything and you know she said that she did not realize that, she could see herself in the mirror, she did not notice it was any different colour until she was about 9. So she's black, they're white and she perceived no difference and there was teacher at the school that basically in a not nice way pointed out that she was black and everyone else was white. So she sort of went home and thought, oh okay so I'm not the same so I think that it was the same with my son and his teeth. He didn't notice his teeth ever. I had to show him his teeth and I remember having that conversation with my other son not so long ago. He did not see any difference. You need to start the dialogue to create understanding.

I: Is resilience different when you are thinking about a child with a visible difference?

Charlotte: No, I don't think so its just an added resilience, so Chris resilience will be physical, and someone else may be emotional for whatever you're dealing with. I think you just need that silo of resilience for whatever you're dealing with, maybe the wicked comments, the stares, the you know you think of people with dwarfism they are stared at all the time and you see this in this film they talk about this. You know the staring does it make them happy? No, but you know they just suck it up and get on with it because they've been taught by the

parents to do that. Now the ones that won't have resilience will be depressed I'm sure because the resilience is not developed and they are unable to just let those comments go.

I: Are there any particular risk or protective factors for children who have visible difference?

Charlotte: I think they just have to have more of everything. They have to have more physical resilience, more emotional resilience, so I think they don't have different resilience, they just need a hell of a lot more of it.

*Concluding comments*

I: Given your expertise and valuable experience in this area of research, are there any other comments you would like to make about children, who are resilient?

Charlotte: I think as well, my learning recently has been you can't assume resilience either and its always transferable from one situation to another. So some are very physically resilient because maybe they've been in hospital and had tubes and you know cannulas all over him, for example my son. And I thought he would not be bothered by them. And then I said to him that we were going to go and see nana because she's recovering from a (...) a few weeks ago and he said okay and I said she's in the hospital but just to be aware she does have lots of tubes in her, and he immediately said I'm not going, I don't want to go, immediately no I don't want to go. So I had assumed his resilience for himself had transferred and he could feel resilient in this situation but it didn't transfer over.

**Interview with Key Informant** Helen

**Date:** May 2016

**Length of interview:**

**Participants:** Interviewer (I)  
Key Informant (Helen)

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*Brief introductions were made before starting the interview, thanking informant for their time to participate*

I: Can you tell me about your role in the organisation?

Helen: Yes, so I am the training consultancy manager, so I have a team of about 15 people who go and deliver our training around the UK. We do it everywhere else and in our office so that is all of our base subject mental health as well as specific resilience course for example we run a course called 'ordinary magic' and we also run larger projects so our resilience academic course, part of the Headstart program which is coming to an end in a couple of areas. Phase 3 is about 10 schools in (...), about 10 schools in (...) but we're also doing it some separate local authorities around the UK as well, so (...) and (...). Sort of run all these projects and manage all the people who are out delivering them and see what they should be doing.

I: Have you worked with this charity for long?

Helen: Just over a year. Not a huge amount of time, but I've worked in this sector for a long time but with this organization, just over a year.

I: What's your experience of working with children who are resilient?

Helen: So most of my experience is working with children really. I worked at connections a long time ago which was probably doesn't exist anymore, an organization that doesn't exist anymore offered advice for young people. So they'd have sort of drop in centers in central locations.

I: So it doesn't exist now?

Helen: It doesn't, unfortunately. No the funding was cut, but it was a great service, I was a personal advisor there, then did a year working as an advocate working for young people who were using mental health procedures, so I would advocate on their behalf...mental health or child protection procedures, those kind of, those sorts of things, and then I worked for the (...) for about 5 years, in their childmind partnerships, so that was delivering anti bullying workshops, peer support workshops, um, cyber-safety and all of that kind of stuff directly in schools, in young offenders institutions, anywhere that there were young children.

I: Okay, great, and the age, varied age range?

Helen: Hugely, yes, so essentially from Reception age and early years and up until 26, really and everything in between. We, my team now focuses, we don't do direct work with young children, we now work with professionals and not so much young people, we have a youth engagement team who work more directly anymore. We work with young people as part of our academic resilience process, because we use focus groups, so we do, um, have some interaction with young people still but we don't do provide direct services for them. For a smaller charity, its easier on the capacity so if you go into the school and train the whole system that works for all the pupils than rather doing a one off workshop and having to go back each year to do it with different year groups, so I think that's where its going.

I: The term resilience may mean different things to different people. So, in your opinion, can you tell me what you think resilience is?

Helen: This is a question that I ask everybody at the beginning of our training sessions. Um, I think there are lots of different ways to describe it. I think one of the ways that we kind of use is the ability to cope with certain things you know that life throws at you but also doing better than expected. Its about adversity coming out of that better than one might have expected. Its those kind of events or things that happen to us in life, having you know the ability to come out of those better than people might have expected you too. I think one of the ways that somebody described it, because how people always answer is to say bouncing back... I sort of taken on that I heard somebody say was, which once which resonates with



me now, it kind of more about, we shouldn't limit children to bouncing back if... where they started from... its more about bouncing upwards or bouncing forwards, so it takes the limit off it, which for me, its kind of a, I like that, takes in that idea of adversity and vulnerability and actually, you know, that young people can be positively to kind of experiences and things that happen to us. The experiences we take and we can come out of it stronger, taking that with you as well.

I: So, where do you think resilience comes from?

Helen: I think its all of those things. I think its that interplay with...hand that we're dealt, what we're born with ... those things that you can't control, kind of triangle that you can't control, its intrinsic that nurture element of how you were brought up, your sense of belonging within a community within a family, what your family situation is about, how you grow up, how you were kind of taught. Your self worth and value but also kind of your sense of right and wrong, and learning, and ability to make mistakes and learn from those in a safe kind of environment and test those kind of boundaries and things, but also that kind of fair point on that triangular if you like is those events, again those events that happen to us that we have no control over so you know be it, bereavement or upheaval, um, moving, family breakdown, whatever, those kind of things. I think it's a real combination of those kind of things that have a huge effect on a young person's resilience, really.

I: Why do you think that a child, who experiences some sort of adversity, has a different outcome to another child, who is faced with very similar adversity?

Helen: I think it probably is just those differences in experience and how people are kind of experience things because even within one family two children can experience things very, very differently. Your sense of belonging within a family, your relationships with caregivers or even siblings can be very different from an older sibling to a younger sibling...divorce or something happens and you have two children have grown up will still be quite different um... depending on being in an only child and then suddenly having another one come along, whether or not you have the same sort of amount of encouragement, the same amount of sort of, love and affection from parents and everything else experiencing things differently but also within that children of school ages, how they both kind of were

supported and if there were any issues in the school system and outside of the family home as well, so you one child has been bullied or targeted in school and one hasn't then that will also have an effect on those kind of things, the sorts of relationships they have, their peer groups would have an effect on how they cope with things, if they had strong role models, be it in school or outside of the family I think its all of those things, even though two children in the same family, it will be very, very different in terms of how they experience life and relationships. I think that it could make a big difference in terms of how people who cope.

I: Do you think that resilience is only present in children who are faced with an adversity or a risk?

Helen: Its difficult to know if it only shows at that time. I think that when we talk about adversity some people only think ever think about it on a very serious level, but I think the important thing is that ability to have known that things can go wrong but that you can deal with them, you can cope with them that's ok but you can say 'I know that I can't cope with this, but I know I've got my mum that I can go to for help or my teacher', its not necessarily about dealing with it on your own but also about navigating your way to resources that can help and I think that often is people knowing that that's okay...people you know that that's okay so you see people who've grown up that are in the 20s going to other people for help because they've never learnt that that's something that works um, issues with attachment in young peoples...in terms of relationships. I think young people do have vulnerable experiences that but that context of adversity is very, very different and actually all young people will deal with adversity on a daily basis, the context of that will be very, very different. So one young person it might be school related pressure based on being very high achieving not being about to cope... anxiety, other might be that they're homeless. Its ot about comparing about that particular child and their context of adversity and knowing that whatever issue it is that there is they can deal with and where they can go to sort of navigate their way around those issues.

I: Do you think that resilience changes according to age of the child?

Helen: Um, I think the theories probably very similar but I think in practice its probably quite different because the more you grow up the more you learn because you learn from making mistakes and testing boundaries safely, and those kind of things I think can only improve and the more things you build up, but then also the more renewal very young only belong within your immediate kind of family circle, or perhaps within your school, but when you get older it might be that you have after school activities and peer groups, different family groups, and those kind of things, so I think that probably changes...and I think the more experiences we have the more we learn from them and the more that you can sort of the more people you can tend to move that out to in terms of people to help, when you're younger its very much, depending on your situation whether in the standard family type situation, it would be your immediate family that are there, immediate caregivers, they would help you to solve problems. Whereas in adolescence it sort of shifts you're focus shifts.

I: Are older children more/less resilient than younger children, or is there no difference?

Helen: I think it depends on the individual, the adversity and the more experiences you have, the more you learn from that and I think the more places you belong and the people you have as trusted adults. I think it probably perhaps does increase in that sort of way, but on the other hand...having just talked myself out of it... might be that actually that omnipotent parent, that if you have a strong relationship as a child maybe its at the same level that just changes perhaps, I don't know. Deep philosophical questions so early on.

I: In what role do you think key people play in promoting resilience (the parent, the teachers, etc.), and why?

Helen: Absolutely massive, I think huge. Its you know, its what we always say, it's a key point that we talk about in training. Its that there is always something that you can do if you're working with or yourself in fact, there is always something that you can do that will help to build their resilience. Hugely important, learning your part of the world, part of the community, part in the society, but also that it builds, those people are very responsible for helping to build your self esteem and sense of self but building aspirations for the future. Helping people feel that they can achieve things. When you wobble, those people will sort of pick you up and take you along but also being able to test boundaries but know that those

people will still be there. Because we find quite often with teachers, but obviously we talk about mental illness based on the context that we're working in that will come up, behavior and all those kind of things and what if pupils are really testing the boundaries with you that a really good thing because they feel safe with you and if they haven't had an opportunity at home to test the boundaries, possibly in foster care, have not had a safe environment to test those boundaries, where they know where they can push this a little bit but that you'll be there afterwards, its that someone who will hold you in unconditional regard, regardless of what you do. Parents are still going to love you afterwards there's something in that. And its really funny when I say that to teachers, it may not feel like that a lot but when those sort of children are pushing you and testing your boundaries that you are firm with those, it's a positive things because they wouldn't do that unless they feel safe and trusted you.

I: What is the value, if any, of having a role model enhance resilience in children? If so, how?

Helen: I think its always a variety of factors in the child's life but I think a positive role model, that idea that one trusted adult holds all of it, its one of the most important things, it's a lot that comes into play with lots of other things. But I think probably the most important one is having that sort of one person, I think you see in young people the issues that can come out, from young people that and learning these issues of self esteem and identity come from not having anyone whose every ag... positive and confident in everything else..highlighting issues and telling you that you're good at things and that you can achieve things but I think sometimes you just need somebody to show you that if you haven't seen it before, how to put that into practice and its hugely important to have that role model.

I: Do you think resilience differs from adaptability?

Helen: Um.. yes, I think so, I think, um for me adaptability is a bit of a it doesn't quite encompass enough, resilience, we can adapt to situations but still perhaps not cope with them very well or cope with them in maladaptive type of ways or perhaps not dealing with things so well. Its not enough positivity within that to encompass everything so, I guess...mental health because that's how we talk about resilience. A young person might self

harm that could be adapting their situation is not necessarily a positive thing so I think its yeah, so I think its different. Resilience is more holistic than just being adaptable.

I: Do you think resilience differs from coping well? If not, why is it different?

Helen: I think coping well is part of resilience, it's an intrinsic part of resilience. You know the ability to cope is part of that but perhaps not in its entirety. Coping is almost part of the process of becoming resilient. If its just about coping it doesn't give enough scope to it. There are always things when we can't cope really, you do have a bereavement in the family...not if you're a child but actually in knowing that you have people who can support you but having that knowledge in the back of your head I will come out of it in the end, you might feel like the worst thing has happened in the entire world. I might have anxiety, I can see that in the future I will feel better and being able to look at that and then in a slightly more positive light I guess, I think its a lot of people kind of talking to young people and children and you know you constantly have to be the best that you can be at the time and I actually think part of resilience is different it's kind of going actually sometimes just being okay is fine. You know today I don't have to be the best, I'm having a bit of a bad day and that's okay, and you know tomorrow I'll be better, and I think that's where it differs. If you can't cope, its okay but you know the things that can help you get back to the place of coping. I think that's the difference.

I: Do you think resilience differs from being competent?

Helen: Yes. I think its really interesting because for me before I started learning about resilience, and then when I started reading around the subject, its one of those things your mind starts picking up on this stuff and it just made so much sense because it kind of pulls in so much and you know all of the work that we talked about, the roles and I used to do self esteem and assertiveness training with young people who'd been really badly bullied, who were sort of suicidal or self harming and its so intrinsically based around that kind of thing, and I think again being competent is just a, I don't know, its just quite a, again, quite a, can't think of the sort of language to describe it. The only way I can sort of describe it being a very thin, not very robust word really and I think it also because then what, what makes you incompetent? It's kind of almost more the flipside of it, what's the opposite of that as

being incompetent and actually what does that look like for a young person and that kind of thing is like I think its about more than that, than just being competent because actually that kind of takes out some of that transformative process around what having resilience or building resilience can do with you and transforming your experiences and allowing you to change and come out of those kind of situations is much bigger and much more kind of affirming I think than just being competent. I suppose.

I: The resilience literature identifies certain 'protective factors' that promote resilience and certain risk factors that may lead to poor outcomes. What do you understand by the term risk factor? Can you think of an example? And are there certain risk factors that need to happen for them to be resilience?

Helen: I think its very context dependent for young people. I think there are you know risk factors within an individual, there are risk factors within a family, there are risk factors within the community, the society, it's a whole you can kind of take it as wide as you'd like. You know so, at an individual level, being bullied at a school would be risk factor for a child but then taking it to a family sort of family living in a deprived situation where a young person doesn't have any feel safe at home, that's a risk factor, a family living within a community that you're unsafe in or that you walk out of the door and its not a nice place to be, that's a risk factor. Take it even wider than that, it can then be depression and that and the mental health issues go up, then it becomes a risk factor for the whole population in general so it kind of, it goes out in ripples I suppose and I think there are its completely dependent on an individual situation, their environment. You know we talked about the ball, the same risk factor can happen to the same children but their context could be very different so you know a bereavement in the family where that's your only care giver and a result of the fact is that you're going to live in a children's home is very different to if you live in a house with three generations of the same family. Its still awful but kind of the actual bereavement, dealing with the grief part is sort of very similar but the circumstances run the risks that are really, really different so I think, yeah, its really hard to say what those risk factors are.

I: Also in the literature, the protective factors are identified. These may include a belief or faith for example. What do you think of these protective factors?

Helen: I think there are loads more, yeah, absolutely I think its really, really broad and I think some of them its kind of unpicking what that means so when the faith one for example a lot of some of the stuff that I've read around those issues, its kind of like what is the protective factor around this, and then it's the sense of belonging somewhere else so it's a feeling of belonging within the community, a faith or whatever you have. But is it the belonging part that is partly a protective factor or is it another protective factor, the ability to have aspirations for the future, believing in something good. The protective factors become a bit multifaceted, what it is that's protective but I think there are loads, I think it's a lot of it is around say learning a new skill a lot of that is taking that a bit wider and then finding out the things you are good at, what you're passionate about, things that you enjoy, having those achievements so for those children who perhaps don't get ...they might just be a really good listener or a really good friend or really good at sport or reading whatever it is, its finding that kind of niche, finding the things that you can be good at that you can feel positive about yourself and I think that being able to predict good outcomes so I think being about to look to the future, those kind of things that sense of belonging, different places is really important. Being able to learn problem solving so if you're not in a safe environment that you know its what we say to schools all the time, do you just keep pupils the answers all the time? Because its not helping or do you give them the opportunity to try and figure out how to find their ways to the answers themselves. Um, but I think there's a kind of resilient framework that we base our resilience on is Angie hart at the university of Brighton, we use her book at schools because its colourful and sets out a lot of things that the children can do but I think it, um for me the thing that I like about it is not necessarily to adapt, its across the board, its that idea of kind of from the basis all the way through you know what the protective factor is giving the young person, and if that can't be at home, it could be at the school, do they have access to be able to find things that they enjoy so part of our academic resilience at schools is the process so getting the schools to think about how the most vulnerable pupils can actually access those sort of things, so a couple of the schools we've worked in for example, you know young carers for young people that are looked after but placed sort of out of borough and county all of those young people have to leave as soon as school finishes and children are picked up by taxis and ferried to the different borough so they can't go to afterschool club. So what's the kind of access for them? How do they test out the things that they need? And all the school's kind of go, 'we need to do more things at

lunch time,' Ah, yes you do. So that's one of the results around what we do is getting them to think around making sure that all young people have access to those kind of things, really.

I: Okay, so there is great discussion around risk and its cumulative nature. Do you think children are more resilient if they are exposed to more risk or does it not necessarily matter?

Helen: I think it doesn't necessarily make them more resilient because I think the resilience is more dependent on the protective factors, almost. I think you know we talk about risk being cumulative all the time, its that kind of idea that, I don't know when we talk about it in training we talk about it as that um what's it called, OH BUCKEROO, when there's only so much that you can sort of pile up on somebody before it all kind of bucks off, and I think you know if you look at rates of, um mental ill health and stuff like that then risk definitely is cumulative and young people who face more than three or four events are three times more likely to have mental health issues so you know its there, you can see that risk has a cumulative effect on these things. I think that in itself it doesn't necessarily make you more or less resilient, I think it's the protective factors that you have to help you deal with and cope with that risk. That would have more of an effect. So you know a young person who is coping with three of those really stressful life events but has nobody in their life to help them through it is unlikely to build their resilience as somebody who at least has even one person looking out for them who will help them out with certain things. Its more the interplay between the protective factors and the risk factors really.

I: Defining resilience has created much debate; do you think a child (aged 9-11) would define resilience in a similar manner to an adult? Or not.

Helen: Um, I think they could do if one helped to explain it a bit. So um like we when we do our academic resilience process and we do um, the focus groups and stuff we do try help them to understand what resilience is and then help them to understand what their school is or isn't doing, help with those kind of protective factors and things, they really understand the context of it.

I: And do you think that they think the same way that we as adults define resilience?



Helen: Yeah, I think the bouncing back is something they consider as resilience that they can resonate with so we've got a great video on life. One of the Headstart events that we ran with young people their lots of young people describing what they think resilience is. Its quite nice as they talk about how they might define what resilience is. And there's one boy he struggles all the way through the video and then the very last bit is like him finally managing to articulate what he means and he's kind of saying you know its like, actually what he was trying to talk about its that, you know you have a bit of mud in your hand and you kind of squish it and squish it but actually it comes out a bit and that was sort of his kind of idea and I think, generally young people at that age have the idea of bouncing, bouncing back or um being helped to cope. They can certainly understand it, often when we talk to professionals and stuff there's a bit of a reluctance to try and explain it to young people, a difficult concept because there's so many different definitions, I think that people shy away from trying to explain it to people whereas actually the good thing about having all those definitions is you find the one that works best for you and how you want to articulate it because the ideas behind most of them are the same, so its kind of you know, just helping young people to understand that and actually they get so much more than what one gives them credit for at that age (*laughs*).

I: Do you think resilience can be conceptualised as a process? Or not? Or do you see it as a characteristic of the child? Or something else entirely?

Helen: I think its definitely a process, um, I think I kind of, I don't know I have issues when its described as just a characteristic because I think that makes it very intrinsic, its like um I don't want to get political but the government had a hit on describing things as grit and character, and to me that very much puts the onus on the child to either have it or not have it, and actually if you're not resilient, that's kind of your fault, it has a slight kind of blame is probably a strong work but I think when you talk about character that's something that's very internal to a child and it doesn't take into account that interplay with you know, all the external factors and things that build resilience and I think if building resilience wasn't a process what would be the point in any of use putting those protective factors onto those young people. You'd just go its too late, you know they had a difficult start in life or even just that first eighteen months and we go, well that young person's got a disorganized

attachment disorder and people go well there's nothing we can do, so we may as well give up. Um, I think that's just yes I think its absolutely a process because you know a young person whose had whatever kind of experiences and stuff there's always something that people can do to help build resilience as a part of that even if they're eighteen, or whatever you can still do things that will help them to do things to become more resilient and I think its really important for people to understand that it is, it's a building process and not just something that is very intrinsic. I think we've moved along from there, I mean if you read all the kind of back resilient story it was very much people thought you had it or you didn't and you were born with it or you're not and I think its really used to think that you either had it or you didn't and you were born with it or you weren't, and I think its really important that we move away from that. You know young people are kind of have enough pressure on themselves to you know kind of feel very, you know this is my fault, I have to cope with these sorts of things, we want to encourage young people to rely on other people and feel comfortable doing that and talk about things, as I think as soon as we start making things feel character driven or and I think things like character and grit is a word that is, also sort of very leaning on the negative rather than sort of its really interesting I've never really looked at something before where language is so important, there's that common language around how people understand these things just a word here or there can make so much difference to the intrinsic meaning of something, that its just huge. Its probably why I go on about it so much, I do apologise (*laughs*).

I: What do you understand about the process of resilience? Or have you known a child that has shown resilience as a process?

Helen: Gosh, probably hundreds of children, um I think its well, I can't focus on one in particular but whenever you work closely with young people so for example when I used to work with young people who had been very, very severely bullied as I said to the point you know that very maladaptive behavior like self harming or even kind of attempting suicide, those young people would sit in a room and talk about it with us and be willing to try all of the activities that we were giving them to try and make things better and back then I would never have thought about that being a type of resilience building activity. Essentially, we were looking at self esteem and those kind of things, but you know all of those young people

there, one of the things that sort of really showed it to me that we used to do joint training with young people and their parents, their caregiver would have to come along on the same day, we'd split them up so the young people were in one group and the parents were in another group because they would often need very different levels of support, they wouldn't all just sit in a room and get a bit of help and cry about their children and then their children would be upstairs kind of learning all of that kind of stuff, um, but actually looking back on it that's a hugely kind of resilient process, is a that one parent or whoever coming along and bringing their child to something showing that that place of that other people are going through the same thing as you and they've all been helped to deal with it too. Um, and that quite often those parents who came along, they were like the school didn't help, this person didn't help, that person didn't help but actually within that family unit well, often it was grandparents sometimes it was social workers, actually bringing looked after children, but those people who brought those kids along were very much that idea of that kind of you know one trusted adult positive relationship that was probably the thing that bought all of those young people through that process to then bring them there on that day to be willing to talk about it, try and seek help and you know kind of open up around it if you like, um, but I guess its when you look back on things, so if you do end up talking to Lisa or anything she'll talk about looking through a different lens and if you look at things through a resilient lens you see those examples everywhere in sort of looking back over practice, looking back over all the jobs that I've done essentially, even young people in I used to do peer mentoring training and stuff, and young people would come and, perhaps sort of have had issues themselves as why they perhaps want to help other people and that kind of thing and its that process again of finding out, well I can use that for something positive. So I can use the experiences that I've had to help other people or to you know, to look at that sort of thing in a different way and you got a when I finally look back over the past 15 years of my career I go, oh god it was basically all about resilience building really without even realizing it or even thinking about it really.

I: Do you think that resilience can be seen during the process (at times of adversity), or can it only be seen later, towards to the end of the journey? do you think there's a point where you look at a child and think 'ah, that child is so resilient'?

Helen: I think there are probably several points. You know it is that thing that with people its that thing of kind of coming out better you expected, I think whenever and if you work with children you'll see how surprised you are by them all the time and the things that they can deal with, the things they cope with, what they can do, I think that's the time when you really see that resilience is you know that kind of you sit back sometimes and go wow, you know, young people surprise us like that all the time, so I think you can definitely see it there and I think also its being reflective and being able to learn from your mistakes, its really difficult skill to have and I think that as an adult in a work environment you know you rarely see people making a mistake and kind of going 'oh great, I can learn from that', it's a really difficult way to think about things. I also think when you see young people kind of facing a knock or it could be getting a bad result, it could be getting kicked out of school it could be, ... okay that's happened, what am I going to do now. You kind of go wow, that's it right there and in front of you and we see it with our young activists all the time so the young people we have this network here at young minds with the majority of them living with some sort of lived experience of mental health issues and stuff and yet you then see them kind of standing up at a conference and talking about it and you know thinking positively about what change I can make and what difference, so I think it is a journey but I think you can see that at different points of that, that its something, whatever happens and that young person being able to reflect on it or you know alright fine you might sort of break down abit or whatever else but actually you still pick yourself up, and you know you carry on or you ask somebody for help, its those different sorts of points along the journey really where I think it really comes out.

I: Do you think a person can be resilient without encountering a risk or adversity?

Helen: I don't think any young people would not have encountered anything, a risk or adversity to be honest. Um, I think just the very nature of learning and growing up means that well we go on about context and adversity all the time but its almost impossible for a young person to grow up with no risk whatsoever cause you know we talk to the different sorts of schools that we train for example have a lot of teachers in independent schools where kids are growing up with a lot of money in a very safe environment with sort of high achievement and they're in their very expensive independent school and stuff and I have

teachers kind of say well, I don't understand why any of our kids are self harming because what issues could they possibly have? Well, loads its just different to a child that's growing up in a council estate just down the road. It might be that they're looked after by a nanny and they don't see their parents very often, it might be that even within that kind of environment there's still pressure to have the things that your friends have, there's still you know social media pressures to look a certain way or behave a certain way or even just transition itself even if you're perfectly happy and you're safe within one school and moving to a school where you're really excited about that's still a difficult process to go through, a change process, so I think its you know all of that stuff is a risk, I think some young people are perhaps kept in a lot more cotton wool than others, um, and so I think sometimes it is that thing of particularly in some families or some school where young people aren't given the opportunity to make mistakes. It would be more difficult if you don't make the mistake because you're going to make a mistake eventually and so it may as well happen when you're kind of young enough to learn and move on from there and learn that process rather than getting into you know going to university and suddenly it happening then. You know at least you see lots of huge rates of self harm and suicide and stuff happening at university with young people where you suddenly have to cope with things on your own cause you know you're in an environment that's really different. Perhaps you haven't had that opportunity before to sort of make mistakes and then learn from them, but I mean no adolescent goes through adolescence without making those mistakes. It just would

#### *Concluding comments*

I: Given your expertise and valuable experience in this area of research, are there any other comments you would like to make about children, who are resilient?

Helen: Um, I think I've kind of talked about it all quite a lot already. Um, I think one of things that we talk about with, its one of the things we talk about when we do training is people see it as quite a big and daunting responsibility and prospect around sort of you know building resilience and the effect that that has on everything else but actually when we break it down into those really small things, that's when people go well I do that anyway, actually that's the stuff that I will teach is that for example we just naturally do, its those tiny little thinking about resilience language and stuff, its those tiny resilient moves that people make

on behalf of the people that they're working with that will create those kind of positive chain reactions and stuff, and that's often the things that people that we talk about resilience with ...will hold onto little things like, um, if I think about some of the schools that we work with and the teachers that we work with, its just the little things like remembering when a child's birthday is or noticing when they've had the hair cut or when they've made an effort to look a certain way or to do whatever it takes half a second out of the day for a teacher to kind of go you know, 'well done', whatever but actually those things make a difference and I think, ya I don't know but I think for me it really is just that importance of that kind of whole approach to the child and not something that is put upon that child as another thing that they should take responsibility for building in themselves and if you can't cope that's your fault because if you're not resilient enough. That's kind of, there's enough pressure on young people.



I: Why do you think that a particular child, who experiences some sort of adversity, has a different outcome to another child, who is faced with very similar adversity? Say for example, if two children from the same family that experience divorce they deal with this differently and come out of this time differently.

Rebecca: I mean I don't know sometimes if resilience shows in behaviors so it could be that it actually has affected them both but ones behavior is withdrawn and ones behavior is more extravert, um I think that can happen, I don't know particularly why um but you can have two children in the family that deal with a tricky situation in very different ways and we've seen that quite a lot where some are quite angry and some appear not to be affected but actually what really you feel as if actually as if they've become withdrawn if you look at it more carefully, if you're thinking 'oh wow, they're coping really well' but maybe that comes out later I don't know um I do again think that maybe there is um an impact on brain development and that kind of thing that maybe you can be more resilient than and just because you're in the same family doesn't mean to say your brain develops in the same way um I don't know.

I: Do you think resilience changes according to the developmental stage of the child? Are older children more or less resilient than younger children?

Rebecca: I think it depends on the situation that you're in really and um because I think you would naturally say probably children who get older are more resilient but actually sometimes you can see them not being as resilient because we put more pressures on them so if I'm thinking of an educational setting you may if you don't work at it quite a lot of children get less resilient maybe about exams and things like that because we're putting that pressure on them um but I think they're more able to perhaps understand maybe what resilience looks like or is if you, you know keep talking about it and is something in school you do talk about to try and label resilience and what that might look like different stages of children but I think young children can be resilient, they may not go along saying 'I'm a very resilient person' but you can see that they have been very different things that maybe some children have coped with and actually other children wouldn't.



I: What do you think makes those children stand out and be resilient? Is it something you can pinpoint? Or something you see at a certain time?

Rebecca: Um I don't know I think some of it might be to do with the environment that they're in like if they're in a calm stable environment and I know that doesn't always happen as well. So you know you could be in a calm stable environment it still impacts you um your emotions um I think you know the pressure of social media, television all of those things can make people less resilient rather than more, um so I think yeah maybe being sort of in a stable environment and they know what's coming but also dealing with not sort of adults maybe showing them and observing adults and in different situations and not panicking not showing there, I suppose its body language as well, isn't it? Maybe you can think of somebody being quite resilience who's got a certain body language and doesn't rise to getting different kinds of emotion maybe really that's if you can try and see it.

I: Okay. Do you think a resilient child is different to a resilient adult?

Rebecca: Um you would like to think so the more resilience you have younger the more you'll keep that and keep building on that but I think again it could still be that you could attack that resilience and depending on what situation you're in but I would like to hope like other things that if you do sort of work around sort of coping skills and that kind of thing as they're younger that would set you up as an adult depending on again the environment and what you still do. I don't think it's a one off fix I think its something you have to build on throughout your life.

I: In what role do you think key people play in promoting resilience (the parent, the teachers, etc.), or do they promote resilience in your opinion?

Rebecca: I think they are very key the parent the teacher in building resilience because you can have as an adult you can react to certain situations or show extreme emotion when actually maybe its better not to, but not to show any I think it is important than even if you have to explain at the child's level or what that is about, um so all those key adults um, teachers, parents, families, friends, um do have an impact on resilience.

I: What do you think is the value, if any of having a role model if any to enhance resilience?

Rebecca: Again I think it is very important um to help because I don't think, I think there may be an element where you are more susceptible to coping in certain situations but I think a lot of it will come from the environment that your in.

KC: Yes

Rebecca: Yes, and what you see and how people react to things and actually if they put you in situations that are going to be more challenging, um that actually that's okay and those kinds of things which I think schools do a lot better now, um sort of talking about its okay not to be able to do everything you know rather than always having to be the best at something

I: In some of my previous interviews with informants that were not in the educational field, the parent was most recognized as important. However, you have direct contact and experience working in schools. Do you think that teachers are that important in this?

Rebecca: I think it is, they are, I mean I do think parents do play a key role but its actually the communicate between the two as well but children see their teachers a lot so they have to play a part in that and I think they can in a different way to parents because they're less emotionally involved, um as well.

I: Yes, thank you.

I: Just turning to the literature a little more now. Do you think resilience differs from adaptability?

Rebecca: Um, I would have said they were two different things, um you can adapt to situations but it still doesn't necessarily mean that you're resilient, but maybe I might think that to adapt is part of being resilient but I think being resilient is more than adapting, um to me it feels like its got more of an emotional part in it as well than just adapting to a situation.

I: Okay. And do you think resilience differs from coping when you're faced with a certain situation

Rebecca: Again I think it may be stronger than just a coping skill, I think you can cope but to be resilient, so actually you've coped and come out the other side of it and it's moved on and it's that you can cope and still feel quite affected by it and so be really resilient I'm going to cope and I'm going to get through this and it's that positive out of it.

I: Yes, okay. Do you think resilience differs from being competent?

Rebecca: Yes, um I would say that they are quite different, being competent I don't know again um being competent at doing something, um again to me it seems something totally different to be competent than to be resilient

I: Okay. The resilience literature identifies certain 'protective factors' that promote resilience and certain risk factors that may lead to poor outcomes. Do you think that the more protective factors that a child has, the more resilient they are? Or not?

Rebecca: I think yes, the more they have the more resilient you can be, um, yes (pause) But then not so protective that they're not actually allowed to experience any difficulty, I think you need to be able to experience certain difficulty to know what being resilient is so in some families, actually teachers could be overcompensating so you never get into that

I: Okay. Defining resilience has created much debate; do you think a child (aged 9-11), thinking of a Year 6, do you think they would be able to define resilience in a similar manner to an adult?

Rebecca: Possibly not, they might copy what an adult said, I don't think if you sat them down and said what is resilience, they'd say exactly the same as me. I think they might say it's a way of coping but I don't think they have an in-depth, they may also know that they feel quite resilient but they still might not be able to define it, but I don't think it would be the same as an adult

I: They do use it quite a bit in school, don't they, when they talk about resilience?

Rebecca: Yes, we do and we do unpick it a bit what does that actually mean but I don't know if you sit them down

I: Okay. Resilience has been conceptualised as a trait and as a process. Do you think resilience can be conceptualised as a process? Or do you see it as a characteristic of the child? Or something else entirely?

Rebecca: I don't know really, I am I think it could be part of your personality but I think it could be part of both because it could as a trait of a person be seen to be more resilient but I think you can still build on that resilience which seems to suggest it's a process then, so you can sort of become more resilient and come out of it, you can learn and I think you can learn how to be more resilient, but I do think some people are better at it than others

I: Okay, so if we think about it as a process what do you think this process is, how does look or occur for the child?

Rebecca: Well I think its well you have to have emotional feelings that go along with resilience and then its about being in a situation when you actually don't feel and you know how it feels to not feel great about something or to be able to cope or to know how to actually do it to move on because then it's a process, but its giving, for example here, we do it in lots of different ways but the children who are in year 6 who are practicing for their SATS test we would talk a lot about their emotions and flipping emotions, negative emotions over to become more positive but that positive process is part of resilience, so becoming more resilient at getting in there to do that test or not worrying so much if you've done your best about the outcome of it, its that kind of thing.

I: You mentioned emotions. Do you think its to do with the emotional regulation of this that will impact on the process of resilience?

Rebecca: I think emotions come into it, I think its about understanding what that emotion is, realizing its normal, as everybody feels different emotions, um and then knowing how to deal with it in an appropriate way and not completely because I think that people who are less resilient sort of tend to let every little thing affect them and don't necessarily learn from

their experience from what they did before so much, so yes if you have good way of dealing with your emotions, then that will help your resilience.

I: Can you think about a child who you worked with and try describe their process or journey towards becoming resilient?

Rebecca: Um, I suppose that the children that spring to mind are the ones where there environment has changes do if I'm thinking of someone extreme, um a lot of it they are particularly resilient because of actually the environment they are living in so it was a parental thing, and actually they've become more resilient from the consistent approach from the school and then as well from changing the home environment

I: In your opinion, what is the process of becoming resilient, if you have a visible difference?

Rebecca: Um, some of that will be linked to their own self-esteem about themselves and how they are and you know we have a provision here for children with moderate to severe learning difficulties so some of those children will have downs syndrome and we have lots of children with glasses and all of that sort of thing, but because that's part of our school, we don't have to deal with sort of um people being unkind and picking that out, however one of the reasons we wanted to do it was is that they're not so concerned about adults that say do have a visible difference, um so you do have to work on it so you have to talk about it with others and make the person whose got it feel that they're just as special as somebody else, and not worrying about what other people say, there are people out there who may say something, but that's not what's important

I: And do you find that the children with down syndrome that they're as resilient when faced with some adversity?

Rebecca: Um, I think you can build resilience in them and I think they have a different process maybe but I think they can be very resilient, but I think there's a vulnerability there because they've got that need, you have to work harder to see if they've got that resilience and again I think its down to family, how the family are with them, how the school environment is with them, how they've been supported as they grow up

I: Okay, and do you think there would be a different or particular risk or protective factors for children who have visible difference?

Rebecca: Um, there's definitely a risk, um lots of younger children don't have that filter so I think they are more vulnerable to building resilience and then how confident they are if they get knocked a bit, they'd need to work harder as the people around them

*Concluding comments*

I: Given your expertise and valuable experience in this area of research, are there any other comments you would like to make about children, who are resilient?

Rebecca: Um, I trying to think, no I think we've mentioned, I mean I do think you know the stable environment they they're in really does help the children and people become more resilient, um but I think it actually is important to face difficulty because we do have families that really want to mollycoddal and protect there children so much they're not allowed to meet anybody that's different or you know comes from a different walk of life that type of thing and then you're not going to build, I don't think as well as somebody else so theirs is a bit of a balance as well as not being over protective

## Appendix H

### Participant and Family Invitation Letter



[www.kingston.ac.uk](http://www.kingston.ac.uk)

Dear participant and family,

**I would like to invite you and your family to participate in my doctoral study. This study will explore the process of resilience in children with a visible difference during the school transition to secondary school.**

Working closely with CLAPA (Cleft Lip and Palate Associate), I will be focusing on children with a visible difference, and in particular children with a cleft lip and palate. This study will aim to explore the experiences of the child's transition from primary to secondary school. One important contribution will be to understand more about children and families who do well in the face of challenging circumstances, and positive adaptation, as well as some of the pathways to risk and adversity. Your participation in the research would be valuable and beneficial to other children experiencing the transition to secondary school, since we plan to use this study to think about designing a leaflet for children in the future who are due to start secondary school.

The study will consist of the following parts and will take place from July/August 2017 – July/August 2018 over the whole academic year:

- Part 1. Initial interview with the family and the child including a resilience questionnaire for the child
- Part 2. Online 'snapshot' interview questions with the child
- Part 3. Digital diary entries by the child (vlogs)
- Part 4. Interview with the child and the teacher/peer
- Part 5. End of year Interview with family and the child, including a resilience questionnaire for the child

Please read the attached **information pack** which includes a participant information sheet and study details, and let me know if you are willing to participate by contacting:  
Katharine Clifford, Research PhD student, at:

On contact, please include the following information:

- Most suitable contact information, i.e. email address or mobile phone number (parent/carer)

- The most suitable times and days of the week for the initial family interview in July/August 2017, and any dates you know you will be away.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Katharine Clifford



## Appendix I

### Participant and Family Information Sheet



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Dear participant and family,

I am a doctoral student at Kingston University London and in my research I am exploring the process and meaning of resilience in children transitioning to secondary school. Working closely with CLAPA (Cleft Lip and Palate Associate), I would like to find some children who have a cleft lip and palate, and their family, and follow their experiences through the transition to secondary school for the whole academic year. This will mean working with your family from the summer of 2017 to summer of 2018.

#### **The study will consist of the following parts:**

- Part 1. Initial interview with the family and the child, including a resilience scale for the child and a demographic family information form,
- Part 2. Regular online 'snapshot' interview questions with the child,
- Part 3. Digital diary to be completed by the child (vlogs), a minimum three vlogs,
- Part 4. Interview with the child and the teacher/peer,
- Part 5. End of year interview with family and the child, including a resilience questionnaire for the child.

**Project title:** A mixed method study to discover the process of resilience in children with a visible difference during school transition.

#### **What is the purpose of the study?**

The purpose of the study is to discover the process of resilience in children transitioning to secondary school. In addition to this the research will explore certain interactions in the child's life that illustrate/create the process of resilience. We hope to find out what steps or stages there are for children in being resilient, and what resilience means to them, not just at school, but at home, and with their friends.

#### **Who has reviewed the study?**

All research at Kingston University is looked at by an independent group of people, called a Research Ethics Committee, to protect your safety, rights, well-being and dignity. This study has been reviewed and given a favorable opinion by \_\_\_\_\_ Research Ethics Committee.

#### **What should I do now?**

Read through the attached appendices (G, H, I, J & K), which are part of the information pack carefully and consider if your family and your child would like to take part. If you do

wish to take part, please email the researcher at the address below. The researcher will then contact you to arrange a time for the initial family interview and forward a consent form for the parent/carer to sign. If you do not wish to take part then you are not required to do anything and we will not contact you again.

**What will happen if I don't want to carry on with the study?**

If after consenting to take part in the study you subsequently change your mind about participating, or wish to withdraw from just some parts of the study. You can withdraw from the study at any time (including during or after the interview itself). Any data collected from you would not be included in the study.

**Contact details of the researcher at Kingston University London:**

**Principal Investigator:** Katharine Clifford

Contact email: [k.clifford@kingston.ac.uk](mailto:k.clifford@kingston.ac.uk)

**Supervisor:** Dr Jess Prior

Contact email: [j.prior@kingston.ac.uk](mailto:j.prior@kingston.ac.uk)

**Second Supervisor:** Professor Adrian Coyle

Contact email: [a.coyle@kingston.ac.uk](mailto:a.coyle@kingston.ac.uk)

**What if there is a problem?**

If you have any questions about the research please do not hesitate to ask me. Alternatively you may wish to contact my supervisors.

If you have any concerns about the research or if at any point you wish to complain about how you have been treated during the research, please contact:

Professor Simon Morgan Wortham

Acting Dean, Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences

Kingston University London

Penrhyn Road, Kingston Upon Thames

United Kingdom

E-mail: [s.morganwortham@kingston.ac.uk](mailto:s.morganwortham@kingston.ac.uk)

**[Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet.](#)**

## Appendix J

### Participant Selection and Involvement

#### Why have I been selected?

You have been selected because of your association with CLAPA, as you have a child starting secondary school in September 2017. Your participation in the research would be valuable and beneficial. In total we are looking for about 14 families, from a wide range of different backgrounds, both boys and girls, who would be willing to join in with this research study. We are looking for children who were born with a cleft lip/palate, and their families who are willing to discuss their experiences, be interviewed, and have a computer, or access to a computer. We are keen to find children and families who are happy to talk about living with a cleft lip/palate, to write and vlog about their experiences, and for us to 'join in' with their first year of secondary school.

#### Do I have to take part?

Your decision to take part in this study is entirely voluntary. Any decision regarding participation will be confidential between you and the research team. You are also free to withdraw from the study at any time. This will not have any effect on your relationship with CLAPA.

#### What does agreeing to take part involve?

Your involvement would be to participate in the different parts of the study. In this section I will explain more about what is involved in each part for the participant's viewpoint, and the time involved.

#### **Part 1.** *An interview with the family and the child, including a resilience questionnaire for the child and a background questionnaire to be completed by the parent/carer*

The family interviews will take place at a convenient time for you and your family, preferably in your home and will last for approximately two hours. The family interview will occur in July/August 2017 at a suitable time and day for the family. I would like to meet the whole family, and find out more about the child, the primary school your child went to, and how the child and whole family are feeling about starting secondary school. I would also like to hear about the child's experiences of living with a cleft lip and palate, and their involvement with CLAPA. With the parent's permission, I would like to conduct a family interview, and record this interview so I can transcribe it and include it in my PhD. I would like to ask you to complete a background questionnaire about you and your family (such as your ages, religiosity, race etc.). This is also an opportunity for you to meet me and ask any other questions about the study that you may have.

#### **Part 2.** *Regular online 'snapshot' interview questions with the child*

These regular online 'snapshot' interviews are designed to create an open dialogue between the researcher and the child about the child's experiences of their school transition. These interviews will take place during certain school weeks between September 2017 and April 2018. Each of these sessions will be a live real time synchronous interview between the child

and the researcher. This means that the child will need to have access to the parent or carer's home computer or mobile phone to answer these questions. The interview questions for each of these sessions will be emailed to the parent or carer, including the child prior to each online 'snapshot' interview. These will take place at the home of the child at a convenient time of the day, and will occur between September 2017 and April 2018. I would like to make a copy of these online interviews to use this data in my PhD.

**Part 3.** *Digital diary entries by the child (vlogs)*

Vlogging is a form of video blogging that will help to discover the ups and downs of varied experiences the child has during this time. These are short 10-minute excerpts that the child can record at any time, and they can use this vlog to openly discuss their school experiences. These are video recordings so the child will need access to a home computer (with a camera) or the parent or carer's mobile phone. The vlogs will act as a personal diary of any events or moments that the child would be happy to share whether, and it is important that the parent or carer's are fully aware of these entries, when they happen and what is being shared. I would like to transcribe the children's words, and use these data in my PhD.

**Part 4.** *Interview with child, teacher/peers*

This part of the study will include an interview with the child and their teacher/peer. It is thought that this part of the study will occur in February 2018 after or before the school half term break. It will give the child some time to get to know their teachers and meet new friends at their new school. This research study hopes to include all the environments that the child interacts in, and so it is relevant to understand how the child feels at this time of the school transition and gain some insight into these experiences from their teacher and their peer. It is hoped that these interviews will occur at the school and will not be longer than two hours. Further details of this part of the study will follow.

**Part 5.** *End of year interview with the family and the child, including a resilience questionnaire for the child*

This is the final part of the study. This will be a family interview with the child and include the resilience questionnaire for the child. This will last for up to 2 hours and take place at the home of the family. The interview schedule for this will be emailed to the parent/carer prior to the interview. This will be a chance to reflect back on the year, and think about the journey through secondary school transition, as well as what it has been like to take part in this study. Further details of this part of the study will follow.

**Inclusion criteria for this study**

The study is interested in a diverse range of children from different backgrounds, ethnic groups, religiosity and gender.

Please only consider participating in this research if you and your family meet the following criteria:

- Starting secondary school in September 2017
- Living in the south of England
- Your child is not currently undergoing or planning to take part in counseling/therapy
- The family will need to have access to a home computer or mobile technology with Internet connection for parts 2 (online 'snapshot' interviews with the researcher) and part 3 (digital diary entries by the child) of the study.

## Appendix K

### Study Content Information Form

Time frame	Method
July/August 2017 ( $\pm 2$ hours)	Initial interview with family and the child Resilience questionnaire for the child
September 2017 (week 1 and week 3) October (half-term break) December (last week of the term) April 2018 (Easter holiday)	*Regular online 'snapshot' interviews between the child and the researcher (30 minutes per interview)
September – December 2017 (Minimum of three 10 minute vlogs but as many as the child chooses dependent on participant)	**Digital diary entries (vlogs)
February 2018 (2 hours)	Interview with teacher and peer/s
June/July 2018 ( $\pm 2$ hours)	End of year interview with family and the child (Resilience questionnaire for the child)

\* Access to a home computer or the parent/carer's mobile phone will be needed for the 'snapshot' interviews and vlogs.

\*\* There is a minimum of 3 blogs requested (10 minutes max), however the child may vlog as often as they would like too.

**Please note:**

All interview schedules from the different parts of the study (except part 3. vlogs) will be emailed to the parent/carer prior to the interview. If there is any question/s that the child or family are not happy to answer, in any of the schedules, these question/s can be changed or removed.

## Appendix L

### Consent forms



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#### Part 1 Family interview

- I, the undersigned voluntarily agree to take part in a study exploring the process of resilience in children with a visible difference during school transitions. I will consent to part 1 of this study; the family interviews, including the resilience questionnaire for the child and the demographic family information sheet.
  
- I have read and understood the Participant and family information sheet provided. I have been given a full explanation by the investigator of the nature, purpose, location and likely duration of the study, and of what I will be expected to do. I have been given the opportunity to ask questions on all aspects of the study and have understood the advice and information given as a result.
  
- I understand that the interview will be recorded.
  
- I understand that the data generated through this interview will be transcribed and used in the research study and may also be used in publications after the study has ended.
  
- I understand that all personal data relating to volunteers is held and processed in the strictest confidence, and in accordance with the UK Data Protection Act (1998). I agree that I will not seek to restrict the use of the results of the study on the understanding that my confidentiality is preserved. I agree that the data I provide can be used for Katharine Clifford's PhD research and in any future related research or teaching projects.
  
- I understand that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time up until August 31, 2018 without needing to justify my decision and without prejudice.

I confirm that I have read and understood the above and freely consent to participating in this study. I have been given adequate time to consider my participation and agree to comply with the instructions and restrictions of the study.

Name of parent/carer (BLOCK CAPITALS) .....

Signed .....

Date .....

Name of researcher/person taking consent  
(BLOCK CAPITALS) .....

Signed .....

Date .....



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## Consent Form Part 2 Online interviews

- I, the undersigned voluntarily agree to take part in a study exploring the process of resilience in children with a visible difference during school transitions. I will consent to part two of this study; the online ‘snapshot’ interviews with the child.
- I have read and understood the Participant and family information sheet provided. I have been given a full explanation by the investigator of the nature, purpose, location and likely duration of the study, and of what I will be expected to do. I have been given the opportunity to ask questions on all aspects of the study and have understood the advice and information given as a result.
- I understand that the interview will be recorded.
- I understand that the data generated through this interview will be transcribed and used in the research study and may also be used in publications after the study has ended.
- I understand that all personal data relating to volunteers is held and processed in the strictest confidence, and in accordance with the UK Data Protection Act (1998). I agree that I will not seek to restrict the use of the results of the study on the understanding that my confidentiality is preserved. I agree that the data I provide can be used for Katharine Clifford’s PhD research and in any future related research or teaching projects.
- I understand that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time up until August 31, 2018 without needing to justify my decision and without prejudice.

I confirm that I have read and understood the above and freely consent to participating in this study. I have been given adequate time to consider my participation and agree to comply with the instructions and restrictions of the study.

Name of parent/carer (BLOCK CAPITALS) .....

Signed .....

Date .....

Name of researcher/person taking consent  
(BLOCK CAPITALS) .....

Signed .....

Date .....

## Consent Form

### Part 3 The digital diary entries

- I, the undersigned voluntarily agree to take part in a study exploring the process of resilience in children with a visible difference during school transitions. I will consent to part three of this study; the digital diary entries by the child.
- I have read and understood the Participant and family information sheet provided. I have been given a full explanation by the investigator of the nature, purpose, location and likely duration of the study, and of what I will be expected to do. I have been given the opportunity to ask questions on all aspects of the study and have understood the advice and information given as a result.
- I understand that the interview will be recorded.
- I understand that the data generated through this interview will be transcribed and used in the research study and may also be used in publications after the study has ended.
- I understand that all personal data relating to volunteers is held and processed in the strictest confidence, and in accordance with the UK Data Protection Act (1998). I agree that I will not seek to restrict the use of the results of the study on the understanding that my confidentiality is preserved. I agree that the data I provide can be used for Katharine Clifford's PhD research and in any future related research or teaching projects.
- I understand that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time up until August 31, 2018 without needing to justify my decision and without prejudice.

I confirm that I have read and understood the above and freely consent to participating in this study. I have been given adequate time to consider my participation and agree to comply with the instructions and restrictions of the study.

Name of parent/carer (BLOCK CAPITALS) .....

Signed .....

Date .....

Name of researcher/person taking consent  
(BLOCK CAPITALS) .....

Signed .....

Date .....



### Consent form for the teacher

- I, the undersigned voluntarily agree to take part in a study exploring the process of resilience in children with a visible difference during school transitions. I will consent to part 4 of this study; the interview with the teacher and the child.
- I have read and understood the Teacher information sheet provided. I have been given a full explanation by the investigator of the nature, purpose, location and likely duration of the study, and of what I will be expected to do. I have been given the opportunity to ask questions on all aspects of the study and have understood the advice and information given as a result. I understand that the interview will be recorded.
- I understand that the data generated through this interview will be transcribed and used in the research study and may also be used in publications after the study has ended.
- I understand that all personal data relating to volunteers is held and processed in the strictest confidence, and in accordance with the UK Data Protection Act (1998). I agree that I will not seek to restrict the use of the results of the study on the understanding that my confidentiality is preserved. I agree that the data I provide can be used for Katharine Clifford's PhD research and in any future related research or teaching projects.
- I understand that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time up until April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2018 without needing to justify my decision and without prejudice.
- Do I have to take part in the study? No.

I confirm that I have read and understood the above and freely consent to participating in this study. I have been given adequate time to consider my participation and agree to comply with the instructions and restrictions of the study.

#### Contact details of the researcher at Kingston University London:

**Principal Investigator:** Katharine Clifford

Contact email:

**Supervisors:**

Dr Jess Prior

Professor Adrian Coyle

Name of teacher (BLOCK CAPITALS) .....

Signed .....

Date .....

Name of researcher taking consent (BLOCK CAPITALS) .....

Signed .....

Date .....



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### Consent Form Part 4 Interviews for child's parent/carer

- I, the undersigned voluntarily agree to take part in a study exploring the process of resilience in children with a visible difference during school transitions. I will consent to part 4 of this study; the interview with the teacher and the interview with their peer/s.
- I have read and understood the Participant and family information sheet provided. I have been given a full explanation by the investigator of the nature, purpose, location and likely duration of the study, and of what I will be expected to do. I have been given the opportunity to ask questions on all aspects of the study and have understood the advice and information given as a result.
- I understand that the interview will be recorded.
- I understand that the data generated through this interview will be transcribed and used in the research study and may also be used in publications after the study has ended.
- I understand that all personal data relating to volunteers is held and processed in the strictest confidence, and in accordance with the UK Data Protection Act (1998). I agree that I will not seek to restrict the use of the results of the study on the understanding that my confidentiality is preserved. I agree that the data I provide can be used for Katharine Clifford's PhD research and in any future related research or teaching projects.
- I understand that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time up until August 31, 2018 without needing to justify my decision and without prejudice.

I confirm that I have read and understood the above and freely consent to participating in this study. I have been given adequate time to consider my participation and agree to comply with the instructions and restrictions of the study.

#### Contact details of the researcher at Kingston University London:

**Principal Investigator:** Katharine Clifford

Contact email: .

#### Supervisor contact details:

Dr Jess Prior

Professor Adrian Coyle

Name of parent/carer (BLOCK CAPITALS) .....

Signed ..... Date .....

Name of researcher/person taking consent .....  
(BLOCK CAPITALS)

Signed ..... Date .....



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### Consent form for the peer's parent/carer

- I, the undersigned voluntarily agree for my child to take part in a study exploring the process of resilience in children with a visible difference during school transitions. I will consent to the participation of my child in part four of this study: The interviews with the peer/s.
- I have read and understood the Parent information sheet provided. I have been given a full explanation by the investigator of the nature, purpose, location and likely duration of the study, and of what I will be expected to do. I have been given the opportunity to ask questions on all aspects of the study and have understood the advice and information given as a result.
- I understand that the interview will be recorded.
- I understand that the data generated through this interview will be transcribed and used in the research study and may also be used in publications after the study has ended.
- I understand that all personal data relating to volunteers is held and processed in the strictest confidence, and in accordance with the UK Data Protection Act (1998). I agree that I will not seek to restrict the use of the results of the study on the understanding that my confidentiality is preserved. I agree that the data I provide can be used for Katharine Clifford's PhD research and in any future related research or teaching projects.
- I understand that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time up until April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2018 without needing to justify my decision and without prejudice.

I confirm that I have read and understood the above and freely consent to participating in this study. I have been given adequate time to consider my participation and agree to comply with the instructions and restrictions of the study.

#### Contact details of the researcher at Kingston University London:

**Principal Investigator:** Katharine Clifford

Contact email:

#### Supervisors:

Dr Jess Prior

Professor Adrian Coyle

Name of parent/carer (BLOCK CAPITALS) .....

Signed .....

Date .....

Name of researcher/person taking consent (BLOCK CAPITALS) .....

Signed .....

Date .....

## Appendix M

### Demographic Information Sheet for the Parent/carer and the Child

**This is about the Parent/Carer, to be used for the study**

Tell us about you: Person 1 What is your age? _____ What is your marital status? _____ What is your gender? _____ What is your occupation? _____
Tell us about you: Person 2 (if applicable) What is your age? _____ What is your marital status? _____ What is your gender? _____ What is your occupation? _____

**How would you describe your race/ethnicity (please tick one box)?**

	Person 1	Person 2
English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British		
Gypsy or Irish traveller		
Any other White background, please describe: .....		
Mixed/multiple ethnic groups		
White and Black Caribbean		
White and Black African		
Any other Mixed ethnic background, please describe: .....		
Asian/Asian British		
Indian		
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		



In the next section, please tell us about any other children in the family:

<p>Child 2</p> <p>Is the child male or female? .....</p> <p>How old is the child?..... Date of birth.....</p> <p>How would you describe their race/ethnicity? .....</p> <p>What is your relationship to the child (please tick)?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parent</li> <li>• Carer</li> <li>• Grandparent</li> <li>• Other (please specify) .....</li> </ul> <p>Child 3</p> <p>Is the child male or female? .....</p> <p>How old is the child?..... Date of birth.....</p> <p>How would you describe their race/ethnicity? .....</p> <p>What is your relationship to the child (please tick)?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parent</li> <li>• Carer</li> <li>• Grandparent</li> <li>• Other (please specify) .....</li> </ul> <p><i>Please continue on the back of the sheet if you have more than 3 children</i></p>
--

**This is about your child 1 (the participant)**

*Thinking about school:*

1. What type of primary school did they attend? state/private.....
2. How many forms/classes were in their year group? .....
3. How many children were in their Year 6 class? .....
4. Have they attended the same primary school since Reception? Yes/No
5. If no, please write how many other schools your child attended during this time

.....

---

**Section only application if Child 1 has an older brother or sister**

*Thinking about your siblings (brothers and/or sisters)*

1. If they have an older sibling, will they be at the same secondary school as the child?  
.....
2. Will your child be familiar with the secondary school because there sibling  
went/goes there? .....

*Thinking about extra-curricular activities:*

1. Did your child participate in any extra-curricular activities at primary school?  
.....

2. Do your child participate in any clubs outside of school?  
.....



## Appendix N

### Debrief form



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London

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Thank you for taking part in this study. A summary of the study's findings will be made available to participants upon request from January 2019. If you would like to receive a summary of the findings after that point, please contact Katharine Clifford at

If you wish to withdraw from the study you may do so up until the post participation withdrawal date of August 31, 2018.

The following organisations may be useful for you if you have any concerns about your child as a result of participating:

**CLAPA** (Cleft Lip and Palate Association)

**Childline:** [www.childline.gov.uk](http://www.childline.gov.uk)

If you have any questions about the research please do not hesitate to ask me. Alternatively you may wish to contact either of my supervisors;

Dr Jess Prior

Professor Adrian Coyle

If you are concerned about any of the issues arising from the interview, the Samaritans are a national charity who will discuss any issue in confidence. They can be contacted 24 hours a day by emailing [samaritans@scsamaritans.org](mailto:samaritans@scsamaritans.org) or phoning [1167771000](tel:1167771000)

If you have any concerns about the research or if at any point you wish to complain about how you have been treated during the research, please contact:

Professor Simon Morgan Wortham  
Acting Dean, Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences  
Kingston University London  
Penrhyn Road, Kingston Upon Thames

United Kingdom

E-mail: [s.morganwortham@kingston.ac.uk](mailto:s.morganwortham@kingston.ac.uk)

Once again, **many thanks** for taking the time to participate in this research.

*Katharine Clifford*  
PhD student. Kingston University

## Appendix O

### Headteacher letter



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Dear Headteacher,

I am a doctoral student at Kingston University London. For my PhD I am conducting a research project exploring resilience in children during their transition to secondary school, and following some children in their first year at secondary school. From your school, ... (*participant*) and their family have been participating in this study. I have also been working closely with CLAPA (Cleft Lip and Palate Associate), because the research includes children that look different. My study will be a very detailed qualitative study of these children and families.

#### **What is required from the school?**

I have asked the children if they would like to invite a teacher of their choice, and a small group of their peer/s to participate in the next part of my research. This will involve an interview with the teacher and the child, and then an interview with the nominated peer/s and the child. Each interview will take no longer than 1 hour, (so 2 hours in total) and will be conducted at the most convenient time for the school. A suitable room will be required for the interviews. With the school's permission, I would like to transcribe these interviews and use the transcripts for the purposes of my PhD, as well as future publications and conferences. An indicative list of interview questions for the child and their teacher, and the child and their peers is included for your information.

Further important information, I am a qualified teacher and fully DBS checked. I understand the time constraints in education and teaching. The participation of your school to this research would be valuable and beneficial to other children experiencing the transition to secondary school, particularly children who have a visible difference, and to our understanding of what it means to be resilient during school transition.

All research at Kingston University is looked at by an independent group of people, called a Research Ethics Committee, to protect your safety, rights, well-being and dignity. This study has been reviewed and given a favorable opinion by Kingston Research Ethics Committee.

#### **What should I do now?**

Read through the letter and consider if you are happy to allow me to conduct this research study in your school. I will also ensure I have the consent of the parent of the peer/s and the teacher, and verbal assent from all of the children. If you have any further questions, please contact the researcher at the following email: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Contact details of the researcher at Kingston University London:**

**Principal Investigator:** Katharine Clifford

Contact email:

**Contact supervisors:**

Dr Jess Prior

Professor Adrian Coyle

Thank you for taking the time to read this. I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Katharine Clifford

## Appendix P

### First Family Interview Schedule

#### You and your family

1. Can you introduce me to your family and tell me about yourself?  
(Prompts: *do you have any siblings? Pets? Any family hobbies?*)
2. How are you feeling about starting at your new secondary school?  
(Prompts: *what are you looking forward to? What are you not looking forward to? Are any of your friends from primary school going to the same school?*)
3. How does your family feel about you starting at a new school soon?  
(*direct question to child first, then parents*)
4. What type of discussions have you had as a family regarding xx start at secondary school?  
(*direct question to parents, then child*)

#### Child directed questions

5. Can you tell me about your primary school experience?  
(Prompts: *your class size, your school size, your teachers (subject teachers?), and Your friends? How long you were at the primary school?*)
6. How did you feel about leaving primary school, and now that you're beginning secondary school?
7. Have you had any transition days at your secondary school?
8. Depending on the answer to question 3: Can you tell me about the transition days, your experience?  
(Prompts: *Were there any stand out moments? Did you meet any new people? What did you think of your new school? Your new uniform? The building? The teachers? Meeting new children?*)
9. Can you think about how things at secondary school might be different to primary school?  
(Prompts: *public transport changes, routing changes (waking up earlier), new friends/ same friends etc.*)

### Visible differences

10. Are you happy to talk to me about your visible difference/cleft lip/cleft lip and palate (*describe condition*)?
11. When you were in primary school, did your friends ask you about your cleft?
12. Can you tell me about your experiences with CLAPA?  
(*Prompts: how involved have you been with CLAPA? Has this helped you? Are you still involved? Do you have any friends from CLAPA?*)
13. Is there anything you don't want me to mention regarding your *cleft*?
14. Dependent on the answer to question 3: Are there any experiences/times that you felt your visible difference affected you?  
(*Prompts: physically (in sport/PE)? Making new friends? In the classroom?*)
15. How has your cleft impacted (if at all) on your life?  
(*Prompts: Have you had any surgeries? Any impact on speech and language/ anything else?*)

### Extra-curricular activities

16. Do you play any sports outside of school?
17. Are you part of any clubs in and out of school?
18. Are you interested in any clubs or sports at your new secondary school?

## Appendix Q

### Online Snapshot Interview Schedule

Regular online ‘snapshot’ interview schedule (indicative questions)

Please note, in this section are included indicative questions that will be asked at 4/5 time points after the child starts secondary school.

#### 1) September (After the first week at school)

##### Settling in/general info:

1. Tell me about your first week...
2. How are you feeling about your new school?
3. How are you settling in?

##### School life:

1. What do you think of your new school?
2. Which lessons/subjects are you enjoying?
3. Are there any lessons/subjects you are not enjoying?
4. How are you finding the work itself? Is it challenging for you? Are you a goal setter? Do you plan on achieving certain results?
5. Are you managing to find your way around the school? Find all of your classes?
6. Are there any teachers who have helped you in some way to settle in?
7. Any teachers who you don't like too much? Why?
8. Did you know anyone in your class from your previous primary school?
9. If so what are they like, were you good friends with them?
10. Is it helpful to have them in your class, or not?

##### Friends and school:

Tell me a bit about your friends?

*(prompt: have any of the people in your new school been especially helpful in helping you to settle in? old friends, new friends, or a teacher)*

##### Visible differences:

1. Has anyone asked you about your cleft lip/palate or cleft lip and palate?
2. Do you feel that anyone has noticed this?
3. Have you told anyone about this?

*(prompt: How did this make you feel? How did the person respond to this?)*

##### Home:

1. How is your new routine? Travelling to school? Do you feel more independent?
2. Do you have support from your parents at home?
3. Maybe “have you seen your older siblings at school” or “what’s it like have an older sibling at your school”?

**After school:**

1. Have you thought about joining any clubs, either lunchtime clubs or after school? If so which ones – what interests you about them?
2. Should this be here or further along the transition?

**Overall:**

1. Is there anything that has been different from what you expected?
2. Is anything better than you had expected?
3. Is there anything that is more difficult than you had expected?
4. Is there anything you wanted to tell me about the first week at school that we haven't talked about?

**Online Interview Snapshot 2 September (Week 3)****General questions:**

1. How have you found your first three weeks at school?
2. How have you settled in since we last talked two weeks ago?

**School life:**

1. Are there any teachers who have helped you in some way to settle in?
2. Any teachers who you don't like too much? Why?
3. What about your lessons
4. Which lessons/subjects are you enjoying?
5. Are there any lessons/subjects you are not enjoying?
6. How are you finding the changes between classes?
7. Are there any similarities or differences to your primary school?
8. If different, can you tell me about these?
9. Are you still feeling challenged with the schoolwork?
10. What about achievements? Have you considered these?
11. Do you enjoy competition? Are you keen to challenge yourself?
12. If you have a problem (in school work or other), how do you try to solve it?

(prompts: rely on yourself, your family or perhaps a friend? Would you ask one of your new teachers?)

**Friends and school:**

1. Do you still see your friends from primary school? (If appropriate)
2. Have any of the people in your new school been especially helpful in helping you to settle in?

(prompts: a teacher, a new friend, and an older sibling?)

3. Has anybody made it harder?
4. Have you developed any new friendships?

**Visible differences:**

1. How are you feeling about your cleft lip/cleft lip and palate
2. Have you since spoken about this to anyone at school?

3. Has anyone asked you about this?  
(prompts: how has this made you feel?)

**After school activities:**

1. Have you decided to join any after school clubs?
2. If applicable, which ones? And what were they like?

**Home:**

1. What about homework? How are you finding this?
2. Are there any changes to your mornings? Evenings? Weekends
3. How has life at home changes since starting secondary school?
4. Are you involved in any sports or extra-curricular activities outside school?
5. Do you chat to your mum and dad about your school experiences? Daily?
6. Do you have talk to your older sibling(s) about school? (If applicable)

**Overall**

1. Is there anything that has been different from what you expected?
  2. Is anything better than you had expected?
  3. Is there anything that is more difficult than you had expected?
  4. Is there anything you wanted to tell me about the first three weeks at school that we haven't talked about?
  5. Since the last time we spoke, is there anything or anyone that has made any difference for you during this transition? Either positive/negative.
- 

**Online Snapshot Interview\_3** (after half term break)

**General questions:**

1. How was your half term break?
2. What was it like coming back to school after half term, now that you have been in school for  $\pm 6$  weeks?
3. Anything you were looking forward to?
4. Anything you were not looking forward to so much?

**School life:**

1. How are about your teachers? How have they been?
2. Has anybody made it harder?
3. What about your lessons
4. Which lessons/subjects are you enjoying? Are they changing? Or still enjoying the same ones?
5. Are there any lessons/subjects you are not enjoying?
6. Have you being going along to any clubs? Or dropped out?
7. How different is life from when you were at primary school?
8. How do you feel about your schoolwork? Your achievements? Have you experienced any problems and how did you solve these?



**Friends and school:**

1. What about your friends at school?
2. How have you been getting on with your friends since we last spoke?

**Home:**

1. What about homework? How are you finding this?
2. Are there any changes to your mornings? Evenings? Weekends
3. How has life at home changes since starting secondary school?
4. Do you chat to your mum and dad about your school day?
5. Do you have any contact with your older sibling(s)
6. Do you feel that you need more support at home with your schoolwork?
7. Are there any other parts of your home life that has played a role at school?

**After school activities:**

Are you involved in any sports or extra-curricular activities outside school?

**Overall:**

1. How do you feel about your own achievements so far?
2. Is there anything that has been different from what you expected?
3. Is anything better than you had expected?
4. Is there anything that is more difficult than you had expected?
5. Have you felt okay during this change/transition from primary to secondary school?
6. Can you tell me how you're feeling about your cleft lip/cleft lip and palate at school?  
(prompts: has anyone asked about this? Do you openly talk about it? Do you feel you need to talk about it?)
7. Is there anything you wanted to tell me about the first six weeks at school that we haven't talked about?

**Online interview Snapshot 4** (before Christmas holidays)**General questions:**

How do you feel about your school now that you have been here for a term – 12 weeks?

**School life:**

1. Have they been helped in any way over this time to settle in to secondary school?  
If so how?
2. What about your lessons
3. Which lessons/subjects are you enjoying?
4. Last time we spoke about your lessons -are still enjoying the same ones?
5. Are there any lessons/subjects you are not enjoying?
6. What about your new teachers?
7. Are there any teachers who you really like and why?
8. Any teachers who you don't like so much? Why?
9. How have you felt about your progress?
10. Have you enjoyed the challenges?

11. What about achievements? Did you think about your goals for this term?
12. Did you achieve any of these?
13. Do you feel that you can achieve more in the next term?

**Friends and school:**

1. What about your friends?
2. Have you noticed any changes in your friendship group?
3. Has there been anybody who has helped you with your first term at secondary school? If so how?
4. How are your friends different now from when you were at school? Or do you have the same friends from primary school still?
5. Do you think your cleft lip/cleft lip and palate has affected any of the experiences you've had at secondary school? (prompts: with finding new friends? Receiving help from teachers?)

**Home:**

What role has your parents played during this time? And your siblings?

**After school activities:**

1. How are you finding ... (club/activity already spoken about previously)?
2. Is there anything outside of school that you have recently started?
3. If yes, can you tell me about this? Has it been a positive experience during your transition to your new school? Have you met any new friends? Will you continue to do this?

**Overall:**

1. How do you feel about your own achievements so far?
2. Is there anything that has been different from what you expected?
3. Is anything better than you had expected?
4. Is there anything that is more difficult than you had expected?
5. Have you felt okay during this change/transition from primary to secondary school?
6. Is there anything you wanted to tell me about the first term at school that we haven't talked about?
7. Looking back at the start of the term, is there anything you would have changed that would have made your start at secondary school better?

## Appendix R

### Final Family Interview Schedule

*Prior to the recorded interview:*

- *Thank the child and their family for involvement in project so far and stress how valuable their participation is and has been*
- *Contextualise this interview by referring back to first family interview and previous contacts.*
- *Remind participants that if they would like to take a break or stop completely, they can inform me of this at any time. Ask if they have any questions before we start*

*Start of recorded interview:*

My plan is that we will spend about an hour or on the interview. Similar to the first interview, I will ask some questions which are very open. There is nothing specific I am looking for, and there are no rights and wrongs. Feel free to take your time when you need to.

#### **School Year (and the transition)**

1. How are you feeling about coming to the end of the first year at secondary school?  
(direct question to child)
  
- 2a. Can you think back to your very first day or first few weeks when you started school in August/September. What stood out to you, during those first few weeks? (direct question to child) (prompts: the buildings/classrooms? New faces? The rules? The change to routine? Was it as expected?)
  
- 2b. Can you tell me about what the start of the school year for ... (child's name) (direct question to parent)?
  
- 3a. Can you tell me about any stand out moments that you had during the year?  
(prompts: experiences/times that you really enjoyed? Something you wanted to share with your mum/dad when you came home from school)
  
- 3b. Can you remember any times when ... (child's name) came home from school and discussed something that had happened at school, which they particularly enjoyed, any stand out moments?  
(Prompts: friends, academic achievements, school trips, a teacher?)

4. Can you remember any discussions you've had as a family during the course of the school year when you've found certain times more challenging/difficult?  
(prompt: before or after the operation/hospitalisation? Any physical challenges i.e. using crutches?)

4a. Depending on the previous question... Was there anyone/anything that helped you during this time? (prompts: someone at home? Or at school?)

4b. Can you describe how they/this helped you?

5. Lets talk about your school work this past year. Can you tell me about your academic progress this year?

(prompt: any subject/s you really enjoyed and did well in? Any new goals/improvements for the next school year?)

(direct to child, then to parent and their feelings about their child's progress)

6. How did you feel about your school report? What stood out to you?

(Prompt: days absent? Special awards/achievements? Future aspirations)

### **School and Friends**

*Researcher:* We have spoken about this at different points in the year. There have been some changes to your friendship groups and some new friendships formed.

7. Can you tell me about the new friends you've made this year?

8. How has your friends/friendship group changed this year compared to the friends that you had in primary school?

9 How important are the friends you've made in secondary school to you?

(prompts: do you see them outside of school? Do they know about your cleft? Do your parents know their parents? Will you be seeing them during the summer holiday?)

### **School visits** (*only for case study*)

10. *Researcher:* From the school visits I had with you at your school, it was clear that the changes between classes and teachers was very different from primary school.

10a. Can you tell me what the most challenging/difficult part of your day-to-day school routine is?

11. What about the enormity of the school and moving from room to room with different teachers for each hour? How did you feel about this?

(Prompts: did you feel safe in your school? More/less rules to follow than primary school? Different teachers throughout the day? Moving from class to class?)

### Visible differences

*Researcher.* In most of our chats (in the interviews and online), we've talked about your cleft lip/palate and some of the experiences you've had at school. Can we talk a little more about this?

12. Can you describe how you felt when someone new from school found out about your cleft?

13. Do you think it makes a difference if other children in your classes know about your cleft? And what about the teachers or other staff – should they know about your condition? Would you like the opportunity to discuss this with your classmates more?

14. For a year 6 child that has a cleft who will be starting secondary school in September this year, what do you think would be important for them to know? (prompts: about school? Friends? What people might say?)

### Context of the research project

15. During the time that we have been working together, you've been thinking and talking quite a bit about your life at school and how others respond to your cleft.

15a. Has that had any effect on how you think about your friendships at school?

15b. In what ways do you think that being involved in this research has had any effect on whether you talk about your cleft or not?  
(response questions: What makes you say that...)

### Year 8

16. How are you feeling about starting Year 8?

*(Prompts: what are you looking forward to? What are you not looking forward to?)*

## Appendix S

### Teacher and the child interview schedule

(Indicative questions)

#### ***Start of recorded interview:***

*My plan is that we will spend about 45 minutes to an hour on the interview. I will ask some questions which are very open. There is nothing specific I am looking for, and there are no rights and wrongs. Feel free to take your time when you need to. I will ask both of you some questions, but feel free to 'chip in' at any point if you have something to add. If you don't want to answer any questions, or if you want to stop the interview or have a break then please just say.*

#### **Starter Questions directed to the child**

Can you introduce your teacher Mr./Mrs. xx to me and explain why you chose this teacher to interview with?

(Prompt: what subject does your teacher teach? Do you have an interest in this subject?)

#### **Questions are directed to the child first, then the teacher**

##### *School transition*

1. Child: How have you settled in at school, Olivia?

(Prompt: how do you think the first 5 months has been? Any stand out moments?)

**Teacher:** Do you have anything to add about how Olivia has settled into secondary school?

2. Child: How do you feel about your school?

(Prompt: Do you enjoy coming to school? What do you enjoy? Anything you don't like too much?)

3. Child: Do you feel you are part of this school?

(Prompt: did anything help you feel a part of this school?)

**Teacher:** What sort of things help children to feel a part of their school?

4. Child: Have there been any challenges during this time? Challenges to the whole school?

To the class? For you, personally?

(Prompt: at certain times in the day/lessons, with other teachers? Children?)

**Teacher:** Do you have anything to add about these that challenges that Olivia has had to deal with?

##### *School lessons*

5. Child: Do you have any support in any of the lessons? If so, can you explain if and how this helps?

6. Child: Tell me about your experiences of learning in the classroom. Do you join in with class discussions? Is doing well at school important to you?

**Teacher:** Do you have anything to add?

*Peer groups and school activities*

7. Child: Can you tell me about your friends at school?

(Prompt: Have you made new ones? Are you happy in a small friendship group or just with one or two friends? How has your peer group developed or changed during this time?)

**Teacher:** Have you noticed any changes in the peer group in his/her peer group?

(Prompt: any new friends, any challenges in class with peers?)

8. Child: Are you involved in any types of activities in school, maybe a club or sport?

**Teacher:** Does the school advocate that the children are encouraged to take part in one of the school activities? What do you think are the benefits for children in taking part in extra curricula activities? Does it matter if they don't want to?

And with regard to transition, do you discuss with the children how feel at this stage (half way through their first year in secondary school)?

*Questions about the child's cleft (and looking different)*

9. Child: Have you ever talked to your teacher about your cleft lip or palate? Did you choose to discuss it? Or not? Is it important to be able to talk to teachers? Or not?

10. Child: Has anyone mentioned your appearance? Would you mind telling me about it? Do you think your appearance has affected how anybody has treated you, or not?

**Teacher:** Do you have anything to add to that?

11. Child: What abilities/skills do you have that have helped cope with the transition?

**Teacher:**

- Has Olivia developed any skills that have helped them settle in?
- More generally, what kinds of skills help children during the start of secondary school?
- Are there any barriers to settling in for some children?

- What about children who look ‘different’ from other children? Are there any barriers? Anything that helps them to settle in? Or makes it harder?

*Home/school link questions*

**Questions for both teacher and child**

- How important is it to meet the parents and the child before starting school?
- What contact have you had (if any) with the parents since xx has started school? Do you think this is necessary for all children to do what?
- *(Prompt: encouraging/discouraging independence?)*
- Do you think there any links between ‘doing well’ at school, and doing well at home?
- Or doing badly at home and difficulties at school?

*Resilience and school life*

12. Child: What do you understand about resilience? Can you give me an example to explain/describe this?

**Teacher:** What do you think about resilience and the child in school?



## Appendix T

### Peer and child interview schedule

(Indicative questions)

#### *Start of recorded interview:*

My plan is that we will spend about 40 minutes to an hour on the interview. I will ask some questions which are very open. There is nothing specific I am looking for, and there are no rights and wrongs. Feel free to take your time when you need to, and 'chip in' at any point. Feel free to stop if you want to, or choose not to answer any questions.

#### **Questions will be directed to the child and peer/s**

1. Child: Can you introduce me to your friend/s and tell me about yourselves?  
(prompt: where and when did you meet - On the first day of secondary school/in a lesson?  
What sort of things do you do together? At break-times? Any classes? Any activities?)

#### *School Transition*

2. Child: Can you tell me about the move from primary to secondary school?  
(prompt: what was it like for you? Was it different to what you expected?  
Peer/s: How did you find it? Anything to add?)

3. Child: Do you think anything helped you during this time?  
The start at secondary school and the months following, until now.  
(Prompt: maybe a teacher/activity/lesson/club? Or your family?)  
Peer/s: How was the time for you? Anything you can think of that helped?

4. Child: Can you tell me about the work that you do in school. Are the expectations the same or different from primary school? Can you think of an example to explain this?  
Peer/s: Is it the same for you or different? The school work expectations.

5. Child: What does it mean to do well in school? (prompt: 'to be doing OK', any success/challenges you'd like to talk about? Homework?)

#### *Making friends and friendship groups - directed to all children (child and peer/s)*

6. Child and peer/s: What is it like making new friends?  
(prompt: do you enjoy making new friends? Or do you find it difficult to make new friends?)

7. Child and peer/s: Do you see your friends from primary school or not?  
Peer/s: are you still in touch with friends from primary school? What do you do together?

8. Child and peer/s: Do you think it matters to have friends in school? What do you think will happen if you didn't have friends?

9. Child: What about friendship groups – do you belong to any groups (including this one – do you meet up as a group? – can you describe any groups you belong to? ?

Peer/s: Would you like to add something about friendship groups?

Both: Does it help to belong to a group – why?

Are there any problems to belonging to a group?

Do you have friends you see on their own, who are not in a group?

*About their friendship (these questions are directed to both the child and the peer/s)*

Child and peer/s:

10. Do you socialize outside of school?

(prompt: visit each other at home?)

11. How often do you see each other during school?

(prompt: any lessons together?)

*Questions about children that look different*

12. Child: Are you happy to talk about your cleft with your friends? Have you talked about this with them?

Peer/s: Did you notice your friend's cleft? Did you ask them about this?

Both: How do you think children are treated when they look different? By others- pupils and teachers?

## Appendix U

### Time point 1: Family Interview Transcripts

#### Transcription (Skype)

**Family interview:** The B family (mother, child, stepdad)

Interviewer: Do you have any family hobbies that you all do together?

Bella: We like baking, um, riding bikes, and running.

I: Okay, did you watch the Great British Bakeoff programs?

Bella: Yeah (laughs)

I: They're quite good (also laughs)

Right, so thinking about before you started secondary school, how were you feeling about starting?

Bella: um, I was feeling quite excited, but then also nervous.

I: Can you tell me why you were feeling nervous?

Bella: Because it's a new school and I didn't know many people, and it's a new experience and I had to learn where to go and everything.

I: Were you feeling nervous about what to expect?

Bella: yes, the unknown, not knowing what to expect.

I: Can you tell me what you were excited about?

Bella: I was excited that I was moving up a year, it would be a new experience and I could um just enjoy it and (pause) ja.

I: Okay, so just thinking about starting school, did you talk about it as a family before you started?

Bella: um, yeah, yeah

Becky (mum): We talked about it quite a lot, didn't we (looks at Bella)?

Bella: yeah

I: Can you tell me what you talked about?

Bella: um...

Becky (mum): It was about the changes, wasn't it?

Bella: yeah

Becky: and the independence from walking to school, wasn't it?

Bella: yeah

I: You talked about the change to your routine then?

Bella and Becky: yeah

I: Can you tell me how your routine has changed, since starting school?

Bella: Um, well

Becky: I don't drive you anymore, do I (question directed at Bella)?

Bella: No, you don't drive me

Becky: what's your new routine?

Bella: Um, I walk or cycle

I: ok, on your own?

Bella: yeah, or I go with a friend because she's so close, I go with her most days

I: Okay, do you have any primary school friends going with you to your new school?

Bella: um, a few but not loads

I: Can you tell me how you feel about that?

Bella: um, yeah I have a few friends that hang around with me, then some just go off separately with other people

I: ok, and so as a family, Becky, were there any other types of discussions you had before Bella started?

Becky (mum): Yeah, it was mainly just like building confidence really, um, and, just building up her confidence even just getting to school by herself, um, and then towards the end of term it was um just like um kind of helping her to be brave in new circumstances. You know you feel quite vulnerable when you go into a new setting, you know having to get there on time and that, so we spent quite a bit of time working on giving you independence walking places, didn't we?

Bella: Yeah

Becky: And, even just stuff like stranger danger there's so much about secondary school

Bella: but I don't ...

Becky: you did, yes, yeah she had done a little bit through school, but also just trying to build her confidence, really, um, knowing that for most kids secondary school is quite overwhelming anyway, and so yeah, I mean her primary school before actually one of the last

things they were learning was resilience through all different types of circumstances. Um, and what did your teacher tell you?

Bella: um

Becky: remember the quote, that you can only be yourself because everybody else is taken

Bella: yeah, yeah, and also in my leavers assembly, um, at the end, the teachers said a poem about each pupil and um my teacher said don't be, um, don't be tricked by her... because inside you she is a determined person.

I: That sounds lovely. So, as we are talking about your primary school, maybe you can tell me a little bit more. Did you attend your primary school from reception?

Bella: Um, yeah I spent 8 years there because I was at nursery

I: ok, and how many classes did they have in each year?

Bella: Um, in my year there was like two classes, there were only two classes from our year group. Before this, there was only one class in each year group.

I: And how many children were there in your class? Your Year 6 class?

Bella: About 30 in each class

I: What about your teachers – can you tell me about them Bella?

Bella: um all my teachers were really friendly and funny in some ways. Um, they helped quite a lot with us and we read a book called Wonder. It was kinda helpful because my teacher said 'is it alright if we read this?' and I said 'yeah, sure'.

I: Have you seen the movie?

Bella: Yeah, its good.

I: Yes, it is.

Bella, can you tell me how you felt about leaving primary school?

Bella: quite upsetting because of all my memories and everything there, I felt quite happy and determined there, I knew everybody because I spent like 5 days a week there and I knew my teacher quite well.

I: Ok, and did you have any types of transition days or taster days at your new secondary school?

Bella: Yeah, I had one taster day and then I had an open evening and morning.

I: Can you tell me about the taster day?

Bella: Um it was good because all of the teachers were nice and friendly and yeah nice, I thought I could trust them

I: ok, so were there any stand out moments – maybe a time during this taster day when something happened and you just thought it was great

Bella: Um, at lunch time when I was outside on the fields, um I think year 7 or something came up to us and was chatting to us and I felt like they knew everything and I thought they were really helpful and they would be helpful when I start there

I: Okay, so it felt comfortable and happy.

Bella: yeah

I: What about the uniform? How do you feel about this?

Bella: um (...) I don't mind it but, it's a bit new because you have to wear a tie and a blazer and a skirt.

I: Does it take longer to get ready in the morning?

Bella: Ja, it does, I have loads of things to put on and I have to put it on at the right time and stuff.

I: And does it change your routine in the morning?

Bella: Yeah, I have to wake up half an hour earlier, I'm usually very tired at that time

I: Ok. So what do you think is different between primary school and secondary school?

Bella: um, its new faces and also that its quite big and I have to learn where everything is, um and especially cause my school has the alphabet so for example in maths I have to go to S13, its very hard to find it because I don't know where exactly the letter is so I keep checking, its kind of hard but it will get easier

I: Is there anyone there to help you find your way around the school?

Bella: Yeah, I know some friends and they kind of know the way and I know some older people from um, other places so they kind a help and say, 'are you okay, are you lost and anything?'

I: Okay. Bella are you happy to talk about your cleft with me?

Bella: Yeah

I: If someone asked you about it, how would you describe it?

Bella: Um, I would kind a explain, um, for example, I was born with the cleft, and um, basically when I born the top part of my mouth was open and I couldn't eat properly and stuff and I had to have loads of operations, um, to fix it and everything.

I: Okay, and have you needed to explain this at primary school?

Bella: um, yeah I had to cause everyone was crowding around me and said, 'what's that on your face?' and I still kind a get that but not as much, um, and basically I thought I'm going to ask my headteacher if I can do an assembly about cleft and cleft lips, and she said 'yes' and we did it and we gave around bottles from what I used to drink from. Um, everyone was kind of interested and after that by the end of primary they didn't really ask me, which was kind nice but also not, its kind of juggle between it.

I: Can you tell me how you felt when everyone started asking you about your cleft?

Bella: I felt quite annoyed because they would just like um, they were just stopping me from playing and stuff, um, but then I felt quite happy because they could learn and they could be interested and be like helpful and stuff.

I: And you said it was a kind of juggle. Can you tell me what you meant by that?

Bella: Um they kind a still stare at me abit and I'm just like you can ask me about it, and I would like it if you would ask me this question, instead of just saying 'oh, what's that on your face?'

I: So its how they say it to you?

Bella: yeah, it is

I: Thanks for sharing that with me.

Can you tell me what experiences you've had in CLAPA?

Bella: Um, I've had quite a few walks and everything and I've been doing a mini mile for CLAPA and I've tried to raise quite a lot of money and then when I do raise a lot of money I feel happy because I'm helping other kids with the same problem as me, get better and everything, so I feel quite good.

I: That sounds great. Can I ask your mum, Becky, were you involved with CLAPA?

Becky (mum): Well, they visited us when Bella was born, um, and then, gosh like she must have been about 6 or 7 and I volunteered for the Sussex branch, which was set up, I'm not really sure what age Bella was really, but it was set up in the last 6 years or so and I took up chairing the branch for a little while, so Bella came to all the events and things I organised, so we were quite heavily involved, really, and we still are really. We've done a few walks and I ran Brighton marathon for them last year, and some other sponsored runs, so yeah, fairly involved really.

I: Okay, great.

Bella, are you part of the young people's council at CLAPA? Have you heard about that?

Bella: Yeah, I just receive the emails.

Becky: she hasn't attended anything yet, as she's at the lower end of that age bracket, but will soon.

I: Okay. Bella were there any times during school when you had surgery and missed out on school or PE or sports?

Bella: um, I've had my bone graft, which meant I missed a bit of school, which was annoying but I asked if I could actually have a bit of homework or school work to do so then I didn't feel like I missed out on stuff and I could still kind of be involved in school but actually be kind a home schooled for a few days.

I: Okay, and in terms of sports, do you play any sports?

Bella: Yeah, I do my bike and running and PE, and um on Thursdays in my school I'm going to start doing netball because my PE teacher said that everyone is really good so we're going to do netball and I think that I'm going to do it.

I: That sounds great.

Can you tell me if you were affected by any speech concerns when you were younger? Did you need to have speech therapy?

Becky (mum): um, when she was small, say between 2 and 4, she had a little bit, but as you can tell her speech is really clear, she's never really struggled with that sort of muffled voice that some cleft children struggle with. So she's been really lucky from that side of things, that although her speech was a little bit delayed, she hasn't had to learn specific sounds or anything at all, um, she's actually got a best friend that she goes to school with, who is exactly the same age but she's a little older

Bella: she's 6 months older, and she only has on one side

Becky: yes, she only has a unilateral cleft, but, um her voice is much more affected so its much harder to understand her

Bella: I understand her, she's not that bad, just a tiny bit

Becky: Yeah, I think it varies so much anyway with cleft to cleft, but that was something we were always worried that children wouldn't understand her, um but yeah, she's done really, really well. She likes talking so its worked out (all laugh)

I: Bella, do you go to school with that friend?

Bella: Yes, we both go to the same school, but she has to get the bus to get there.

I: okay, and do you spend time with her at your new school?



Bella: Um, yeah

Becky: They're just transitioning into their new friendships, I think

Bella: I'm not

Becky: well, a little bit you are. We actually met her through CLAPA when I was still pregnant and her mum had just given birth because they were a few months apart, but her mum was also born with a cleft, so that's been really interesting and really helpful. Both of the girls wear glasses, both of them have clefts and they've both been through primary school together so.

Bella: no, she started in Year 2

Becky: yes, she started in Year 2, didn't she because they moved into the area. In terms of having someone there, that support has been amazing.

Bella: yeah, we also share experiences, so because she had her bone graft first, um, I was like how was it and then she was saying that it doesn't hurt that much, but you won't be able to work but you're allowed to chose which hip you do it on.

I: So its been really helpful to have that other person there?

Bella: Yep, its been very helpful.

I: And you both wear glasses – is this related to the cleft?

Bella: I'm not sure

Becky: They say hearing and eyesight are quite often affected. Like cleft children are quite prone to that, so they've both got quite high prescriptions, and Bella has had quite a few operations for grommets for her hearing. She's just outgrown the last set and now has clear hearing. She's without that now which is good.

I: Okay, Bella - are you part of any clubs outside of school?

Becky: (Bella looks at mum) She's been through quite a few actually. Um, at the moment because of the transition in secondary school, she not in anything because I think she's going to be doing drama, dance and netball at secondary school, but we attend our local church on Sundays and they also have mid-week groups for like youth kids, which is quite like sort of brownies, cubs, that sort of things, its very sociable. She's been bowling with them and...

Bella: I did lazer quest

Becky: yes, you did lazer quest.

I: That's sounds lovely. You attend church – do you have a support group at church or friends there too?

Becky: Yeah, she's got a good cluster of friends, they have a youth group as well, which she's just gone into, which she's thrilled about, aren't you?

Bella: (smiles and nods head).

Becky: So they play games and meet up in the week, basically give them lots of sugar and then send them home (both laugh).

*Interviewee thanks Bella and Becky, briefly explains what will happen next within the study, and asked if they had any questions.*

## Transcription

### Family interview (Skype): The L family

*(Brief introduction before interview questions start)*

I: When do you start at secondary school, Lucy?

Lucy: Mum? (looks at mum)

Mum: three weeks

Lucy: yes, three weeks

I: how are you feeling about starting?

Lucy: um, excited and nervous

I: yes, its something new, isn't it?

L: yeah

I: Lucy, can you tell me a little bit about your parents, before we move on?

L: this is my mum,

Mum: yes, I'm her mum, otherwise known as Lucy's mum, I do have a name (laughs).

L: Linda

I: Okay, yes and your mum is a teacher?

L: Yeah, they're both teachers, and this is my dad

Mum: what do we teach that makes you not so lucky?

Lucy: Maths

I: And do you have any siblings or any pets?

Lucy: We have three cats.

I: What are their names?

Lucy: um, Harvey, Inky and Cally

I: And, do you have any family hobbies, anything you all do together?

Lucy: Ahhh...

Mum: Daddy and Lucy wind each up a lot (all laugh), especially Lucy's constant giggling.

Dad: What do we do Lucy? Pause... You'd think we hadn't talked about these questions, but we did a couple of days ago.

Dad to Lucy: What else do we do together?

Lucy: um (smiles at dad), me and my mum do crafting together, and we like to travel together.

I: Great. I like that too.

Right, so thinking back to the school transition questions. Is there anything you are looking forward to when you start?

Lucy: I'm looking forward to Science and DT, cooking

I: Okay, so some of the subjects?

Lucy: yes

I: And, are any of your friends from primary school going to your school?

Lucy: No

I: okay, so can you tell me then the school you're starting at, is it nearby?

Lucy: Yes

I: So have your primary school friends gone to different schools?

Lucy: Yes, they've gone to other schools

Mum: Her primary school was some way away, it's a long story, it was a very small rural school, and there's only actually 5 girls in her year. 5 boys and 5 girls in year 6 and they've all gone to more local schools to them, they've literally all gone to different schools, except for two of them.

Mum to Lucy: You have got some friends coming, haven't you?

Lucy: Yeah, I go to guides and one of my friends from guides is going to the same school as me.

I: and how do you feel about that?

Lucy: um, pleased

Mum: Yes, you're happy about that, that you'll have a familiar face there?

Lucy: yeah

Mum: there's two or three of them, aren't there (to Lucy)?

Lucy: yeah

I: Can I then direct this next question to your parents, how are you both feeling about Lucy starting at this new school?

Mum: Well, we're glad that she has got some friends that she knows already, pleased that she has gone to guides and make friends in advance, that was good. So we are glad she has that continuity. I mean we're obviously sad that she isn't going to be with her old friends but

with phones she can still be in touch with them if she wants to. I mean as secondary school teachers, we're excited for the opportunities she's going to have. We think she's ready for that level of work and the new subjects and the new challenges. We're quite excited but we still have concerns, obviously, but you know.

Dad: I think for me the feelings are abit like Lucy. For Lucy, she's excited for the new opportunities but a bit nervous at the same time (mum agreeing 'yes'). For us, it's a big transition as well, sort of change of routines and everything like that, so its about adjusting all of those for the whole family, I think

I: Okay, so can you tell me about the types of discussions you've had as a family about starting secondary school – maybe about new routines, new friends, how the school day will be?

Dad: um, bits of everything really, um, its interesting the friends one because we knew that none of her primary school friends were going to come to Ledbury because the school was a good 20 minutes away, you know we've been talking about that for a while it hasn't come as any surprise for Lucy. Um, and I think that decision to join guides last September wasn't because of friends, it just turned out to be very fortuitous because she's been able to make contact with people that live local to Ledbury, so she will have more familiar faces. One thing we did do as part of our discussions is I emailed the school and actually said you know Lucy has made a good friend, would it be possible for that friend to be in her form and the school came back and said 'yeah, lets do that', so they arranged that her friend will be in her class, her form from September.

Mum: yes, they're constantly talking

Dad: yes, as long as it doesn't become a distraction for her, but we'll see (mum laughs). Um, what else? Yes, we've talked about subjects, homework – homework is an interesting one because, (dad addresses Lucy) 'How much homework did you have in Primary?'

Lucy: not much

Dad: not much...we're just trying to prepare her, its going to be more routine I think isn't it, this whole idea of coming home and getting the homework started straight away may be a bit of a shock to the system I think.

Mum: and going on the bus with new people, that will be interesting

Dad: Yes, its on a public bus so we've been talking about that as up until now she's been ferried by her parents or grandparents, by car

I: So that's a bit of change then?

Dad: Yeah

I: Okay, so Lucy can you tell me were you at your primary school from reception?

Lily: No, um, from Year 3

I: I see, so where were you before that?

Lucy: um, I was in Canada

I: Okay, can you remember or perhaps your parents could fill me in, I was just wondering how your start to school was here in England?

Lucy: um, everyone was sort of staring at me, giving me the look that 'she's the new girl'

I: Can you tell me how that felt for you?

Lucy: um, I felt a bit nervous because I didn't know where anything was

I: And can you remember making new friends at that time?

Lucy: Yeah

Mum: it was only a small school, only about 80 children. We talked about this the other day and she agreed that um, to be honest the children are very friendly and they would stare at any new student. You know it wasn't just her.

I: ok, and can you tell me about your teachers at primary school – what were they like?

Lucy: um, they were helpful, they were friendly

I: And how do you expect the teachers to be in your new school?

Lucy: A bit more strict

I: Why do think that is?

Lucy: Because we're older

I: Okay, so now that you've left primary school, how are you feeling about this?

Lucy: it's a bit sad because I won't see my friends anymore

Mum: you can still see them, but its not as much, and you'll make new friends

Lucy: yeah

I: Right, so did you have any transition or taster days at your new secondary school?

Lucy: I've had one transition day and one transition evening

I: okay, can you tell me about the evening?

Lucy: The headteacher just talked about what we were going to be doing in secondary school.

I: okay, and what was it like?

Dad: yes, what else did you do on that evening – what’s the big bit for you (directed at Lucy)?

Lucy: we met our form and our teacher

I: okay, can you tell me abit more about that time – what did you do?

Lucy: um, we just got to know each other and we got to know our form teacher

I: ok, so you meet some other children that are going to be in your form, so maybe you can recognize their faces or learnt some of their names?

Lucy: Yeah

I: So how did that experience make you feel about starting school?

Lucy: yeah, good

I: and on the transition day when you went to the school, can you tell me about that a little?

Lucy: We had a tour of the school, um, and we had lunch at the school as well, and we had lessons at the school to see what the lessons were like

I: And what did you think of the lessons?

Lucy: they were alright

Mum: you liked French

Lucy: yeah

Mum: she was in French immersion in Canada, but I don’t think she told the French teacher that, which is probably going to help.

I: Okay. So Lucy, were there any stand out moments about the school that you just thought ‘wow’ about this school?

Lucy: I was just happy about everything

Mum: what about lunch time? You said you really enjoyed that?

Lucy: Yes, I quite liked just going out after we had lunch and just sitting in the shade and just talking.

I: that sounds lovely. Who were you sitting with?

Lucy: my friend Lily from guides.

I: Okay, and can you tell me anything about the building, the school building?

Lucy: I found it quite difficult to find my way around

Dad: when we were talking about the interview questions, this was one of Lucy’s fears, her worries. Why did you worry about this Lucy?

Lucy: Um, getting lost on your way to class

I: Can you tell me if the taster day helped you to feel better about this?

Lucy: a little

I: Okay, maybe we can chat about that again. Can you tell me how you feel about your new uniform for school?

Lucy: um, I don't like the colour of it, its navy blue

Mum: which is not her colour (laughs)

I: okay, what colour did you have in primary school?

Lucy: I had royal blue

Dad: these are the subtle differences here... (laughs) its all just blue to me

Mum: you like all the bits and pieces of the PE kit and...

Lucy: yeah.

Dad: needless to say, her parents like her uniform

Mum: yeah, you look very smart

I: And what about meeting other children – did you meet any other children on that day?

Lucy: um... not really

Dad: you recognized a few others, didn't you?

Lucy: yeah

Mum: there's some more girls from guides in your form, aren't there?

Lucy: yes

Mum: you know them. There is one boy from your school but you wouldn't class him as a friend (*Lucy nods her head in agreement*), but he's not in her class

I: Okay, so when you think about the differences between primary and secondary school, can you think about what might be the biggest difference, Lucy?

Lucy: um, probably routine changes, moving from class to class and waking up earlier

I: do you have to wake up a lot earlier?

Lucy: um, not a lot

Mum: not a lot earlier, but she needs to get a move on because she's got to catch that bus

Dad: its sort of more of a deadline now, easier than just climbing into a car, half asleep...

I: What time do you need to catch that bus?

Mum: 8:30

I: okay, that's not too bad

Mum: its not, and we live quite close to it



I: Great, we are getting there. Can we talk a little bit more about your cleft. Can you tell me how you would like me to describe your cleft when we talk about it?

Lucy: um

Dad: well, what do you call it?

Lucy: I call it a cleft lip

I: a cleft lip, okay.

Are you happy to talk about your cleft lip?

Lucy: yes

I: can you tell me how you told other children in your school about your cleft lip, when you started in year 3?

Lucy: um...

I: do you remember telling anyone?

Lucy: not really

Dad: what did they say to you when they saw you?

Lucy: what happened?

Dad: that's what they tended to say to her is 'what happened?'

I: okay, and can you tell me how you responded?

Lucy: that I was born with it.

I: and was that a good enough response for them? They didn't ask any other questions?

Lucy: ah... yeah

Dad: we had discussions before she started school to help her practice to see that she was okay to say certain things.

Mum: and you've often said that you were born with a gap in your lip and your lip didn't close up properly and that you've had some operations to fix it

Lucy: yes

Dad: and there again, I think that generally you said that you were born with a gap and you've had it fixed and that's that, really.

Lucy: yeah

Mum: its just the way you were born, yeah?

Lucy: yeah

Dad: I think she's forgotten because its such a small school and things, once those first few weeks are over, its never been discussed or talked about at all, really

Mum: well you were upset once, do you remember that once when somebody said something about your lip, only once I think this happened at school. Can you remember that?

Lucy: yeah, um a boy in class said my nose was big because I had had it stretched

Mum: yeah, he said your nose was a different shape, didn't he?

Lucy: yeah

Mum: because you've got slightly bigger nostrils, haven't you?

Lucy: yeah

Mum: you didn't like it, I can remember you came home sad that day, you weren't happy. But that was the only time I think that she's ever come home upset

Lucy: yeah

I: okay, thanks for sharing that with me.

I: Lucy, you've probably discussed this as a family but can you tell me about the response you might use at secondary school if anyone asks about your cleft?

Lucy: just tell them I was born with it

I: okay, and can you tell me what your experiences like with CLAPA – how involved are you?

Lucy: um, I've been to the CLAPA thing where...

Mum: the transition day

Lucy: the transition day where they were focusing on what to say when somebody asks you about it

Mum: you went on an adventure day, didn't you?

Lucy: yeah

Mum: and we got another one planned for the autumn

Dad: yes, she's had one adventure day in the past, then she had the transition day in July, preparing for year 7, then she's going to another adventure day in September

I: Lucy, how did you find these days with CLAPA – did they help you?

Lucy: yes

I: Can you tell me why you think that?

Lucy: because now I know more of what to say if somebody asks me

I: okay, and do you have any friends from CLAPA?

Lucy: um, not really

Mum: you were friendly with people on the day, but...

Lucy: I was friendly with people on the day, there was someone called ... , but ... (looks at mum)

Mum: not really kept in touch, have you?

Lucy: not really kept in touch, no

I: okay, so is there anything that you don't want me to mention about your cleft lip?

Lucy: um, not really

I: okay, so you're happy to talk about it?

Lucy: yeah

I: Thinking about sports, have you been affected by your cleft lip in terms of what you can do?

Lucy: no

I: You've always participated in PE and all the other activities

Lucy: yes

Mum: except when she actually had surgery, she had to stop for a little bit.

I: Right, yes. And have you missed any school days because of the surgeries?

Lucy: I have missed some school days

Mum: But that was back in Canada. She hasn't had any surgery since we came back to the UK. You've missed a couple of days going to the Birmingham Children's hospital for the cleft appointments. Um, but what's going to be different coming in January, you're going to start... (directed at Lucy)

Lucy: I'm going to have braces

Mum: We have to go to the hospital dentist for that so she will have to go out of school a bit to travel a distance to go, to actually go to the hospital dentist.

I: Right

Mum: What was the one thing you said was a problem with your lip (*asked of Lucy*)?

Lucy: um,

Mum: when you were little

Lucy: I had trouble with my speech

I: okay

Lucy: I had to go to a speech therapist

I: Can you tell me how you feel about talking now?

Lucy: its better now, but I still have trouble saying 'r' and 'w'

Mum: what might be slightly different to bear in mind is that she didn't have her lip repaired until she was 18 months old, which is because we adopted her when she was 15 months old, I think and the lip hadn't been repaired, um, and obviously children with cleft lips in this country, they have them repaired very, very early and we were told, I think that because it was repaired so late, I think that it would have impacted her speech, I think because she'd obviously become very familiar with the lip as it was, whereas perhaps she had picked up some different habits, some sort of speech habits by 18 months old, whereas children who have them repaired as young babies wouldn't have done, that could have made a difference. And it was quite a severe cleft lip.

I: Yes, can you tell me how many surgeries Lucy has had?

Mum: um, four... she's had grommets as well which might be to do with the cleft, she's had the original cleft repair and she's had 2 revision surgeries (dad: 2 revision surgeries, 2 revision)

Dad: and then she had the bone graft surgery to close the gap in her gum

I: And will there be anymore surgeries in the next year?

Dad: no, the last discussion we had with the plastic surgeon is that Lucy will get that decision when her face stops growing around 15, as to whether to wants to have any adjustments to her nose in particular is what Lucy was interested in

Mum: yeah, you could have a nose job (all laugh)

Dad: yeah, basically, but that's another 4 years before she has to start talking about that

Mum: the plastic surgeon said that some people will decide to make adjustments to their nose and some people will decide not to, and its going to be her choice

I: ok, right. That is really interesting, thanks for sharing

So, just thinking a little bit about sports outside of school. You have mentioned guides. Do you play any other sports outside of school?

Lucy: I do swimming and trampolining

I: That sounds exciting – how long have you been doing those?

Lucy: I've been trampolining for 3 years.

I: And are there competitions or do you get medals or levels?

Lucy: I do levels, I don't really do medals or competitions

Mum: its just for fun, really

I: sounds great, and you have your swimming?

Lucy: yes, just swimming lessons.

Mum: we wanted her to be able to swim and she's pretty good now, aren't you?

Lucy: yeah

I: were you in any clubs at primary school?

Lucy: I was in gardening club, yoga club and textiles club

Mum: and forest school?

Dad: yeah, you did forest school as well

Lucy: yeah, forest school too

I: Great, are you interested in doing any clubs at your new secondary school?

Lucy: yes

I: do you have an idea of what you'd like to do?

Lucy: um, there's cooking club and gardening club

I: ok

Mum: and they might get you into a sports club, they might encourage you

Lucy: yeah...nooooo

Mum: if they know you can do trampolining, they might get you into a trampolining class

Dad: its quite interesting, the leisure center where she does trampolining, its attached to the school. It's quite rare for a school to have trampolining facilities but this school does, so she may get involved.

Mum: you could do gymnastics, you might fancy this or maybe some music, you have played some musical instruments, haven't you?

Lucy: yes

I: Right, so just a few more questions about your primary school, before we conclude the interview.

Lucy, was your primary school a state school?

Lucy: um, yes (dad and mum agree)

I: and there was just one class in Year 6?

Lucy: it was a split class, year 5 and 6

I: Ok

Mum: very small school

I: and how many children did you have in your class?

Lucy: we had 24 children

I: And there were 10 year 6's?

Lucy: yes, 10 year 6's

I: and did you receive any awards from clubs or activities that you've been involved in?

Lucy: yeah, I've got certificates for doing a level

Mum: for your swimming and trampolining, and you were house captain for the red house at your school

Lucy: yes

Mum: and your house won

Lucy: yes

I: Well done!

*Some further informal discussion from the Interviewer about the next part of the study and then thanking the family for their input today.*

## Transcription

**Initial Family interview:** The P family - Poppy, mum (Pam), dad (Paul)

*(Brief introduction before interview questions start)*

I: Right, shall we get started...

Poppy, can you tell me a little bit about your family?

Poppy: I have an older brother, called Peter

I: okay and how old is Peter?

Poppy: (looks at mum) is he 14?

Mum: 14, yes

I: Is Peter here?

Mum: He's not, he's out with his friends at the moment

I: And do you have any pets?

Poppy: A cat called Penny

I: very sweet, and do you have any hobbies?

Poppy: um, I enjoy sports – netball, football, swimming, running, gymnastics

I: wow, that's a few then

Mum: yeah, she likes her sport

I: and do you have any family hobbies?

Poppy: we cook together

Mum: yep, Poppy is enjoying her cooking, so we do some cooking together and we do go for walks, don't we?

Poppy smiles.

Mum: and, I suppose our joint family time, a lot happens in the holidays because we're both teachers, Paul and I.

I: So you've started secondary school, Poppy, can you tell me how you were feeling about starting?

Poppy: A week before secondary school I was very nervous, but leading up to it I was quite excited

I: What were you excited about?

Poppy: um, I don't know

Mum: you were quite excited about your uniform, you liked it and were excited about wearing something different

Poppy: I was excited about finding out about the play

Mum: yeah, they do a performing arts play at her school, so she's in that class so they do more drama and music so that was an exciting thing, wasn't it?

Poppy: yeah, they're still trying to work it out

Mum: yeah, they're doing a play this term, a production

I: Great. So did any of your primary school friends start with you at your new school?

Poppy: yeah, 15 of them

I: 15?

Poppy: yeah

I: How do you feel about that?

Poppy: good, yeah

I: have you had a few good friends start with you in your class?

Poppy: yeah

I: Are your friends important to you?

Poppy: yeah

Dad: Poppy, can you give us some more detail about your friends, because they're in the same class too, aren't they?

Poppy: yeah, they're in the same form as me, three of them

I: okay, and how big is your class?

Poppy: there's 28 people

I: Okay, can you tell me about any family discussions you've had about starting secondary school?

Poppy: I can't really remember

Mum: we did, and I think what's really helped us all is that Peter is there. So Peter is in Year 10 and so most of our uncertainties probably happened with him, so we know a lot more now. And its nice for you, isn't it Poppy because he's goes over and says hello everyday

Dad: and some of his friends go over and say hello as well and say 'you're Peter's sister'

Mum: so I think for us, me and Paul, that was a reassurance for us.



I: Can you tell me about the induction or transition day for secondary school that you had?

Poppy: um, we had one transition day and a couple of visits

I: can you tell me what they were like?

Poppy: good, during transition day we had assembly, then we met our tutor and had a lesson and some other things

I: okay, and were there any stand out moments, something you really remember?

Poppy: the science lesson we had, we made these paper things and then we timed it to see how long it took to go to the ground (looking at her dad)

Dad: she's looked at me because I'm a science teacher (laughs)...

I: Can you tell me about the differences from primary to secondary school, Poppy?

Poppy: not really getting up earlier

Mum: no, because we live nearby the primary and secondary school

Poppy: um, like the size of the school is different, and in primary, they normally teach English and maths in the morning, now its all over the place

I: okay, and have you done any PE at your new school yet?

Poppy: yeah

I: and how did that go?

Dad: be honest Poppy (Poppy and dad laugh)

Poppy: um, I've been put in a different group to my friends, but in that group I could catch all the balls and everything

Dad: she was a little bit upset because she wasn't in a group with her friends

Poppy: yeah

Dad: so? (looks at Poppy)

Mum: we're going to see how it goes

Dad: we're thinking of maybe sending an email in, but we'll see

I: Poppy, can you tell me how you would describe your cleft?

Dad: I don't think you've ever been asked it.

Mum: well, if somebody was talking to you, what would you say?

Poppy: I would say my cleft

Mum: yeah, what would you say to them

Poppy: my lip was like that (demonstrates with hands) when I was born and I had to have an operation

Mum: yeah, I think you'd be quite matter of fact

Poppy: yeah, but some people don't know what it means.

Dad: sometimes you said gap

Poppy: yeah

Dad: yeah

Mum: yes, but when we're with your friends I don't think that some of them really realized, have they?

Poppy: no because they've just grown up with me like that

Mum: yes she started in the nursery.

Poppy: I told people about it and they just said 'okay, cool'.

Mum: I think we've tried to be very matter of fact about it ourselves so if anybody asks its just that that is how it is

Dad: You have had a reasonable amount of medical appointments, haven't you Poppy, so you had to explain missing some school

Poppy: yeah I just disappear

Dad: yeah, but don't your friends say where are you going?

Poppy: at break if I go I just disappear

Dad: okay

Mum: yeah, so they're very caring and um I think I did overhear a conversation that they've not noticed your scar before

Poppy: yeah, but that was more to do with my eye than my lip, they did not notice that like the day before my op

I: Okay, so did you feel that you needed to explain what it was in Primary school?

Poppy: I did but people just accepted it straight away without asking questions or anything

I: Okay, and can you tell me about your experiences with CLAPA – have you had any experiences with them?

Poppy: Christmas and summer parties (all laugh)

I: Sounds like fun, can you tell me about these parties?

Poppy: we used to go but now there's just lots of smaller children and at the Christmas party its in a big hall and I remember making paper chains with Peter

Mum: Yeah, Paul (dad) was the treasurer for CLAPA

Dad: south London, yes

Mum: yes, we were quite involved for a while

Dad: Yeah, I took a step back about two or three years ago now, I have actually heard that the branch has fallen abit by the waist side so...

Mum: yeah so we would do the Christmas party

Poppy: yes and also, my Grandad raised some money for them

Mum: yes, my dad has raised a lot of money for them

Dad: yes, for the Sussex branch

Mum: yeah, so we did the Christmas parties and that was good for us and we all went along to that

Dad: Certainly since Poppy was born it was good to be involved with them as we meet other parents and that was good

Mum: it was great from the start because we had a fantastic cleft nurse, called Jane and she's retired now so we would go along, yeah meet up

Dad: it was really um cathartic actually to go along and meet other families and um realize we weren't alone and yeah

Poppy: it was just a party to me

Mum: they always had an entertainer, you loved that

Poppy: yeah

Mum: and party food and when Paul was involved they had lovely summer day outings

Dad: we went to Bockets Farm, and we did one or two things for the older children, we went down to Alice Holt to the Go Ape thing because I've kind of stayed in contact very vaguely with Cherry, the coordinator for the South East and she used to come down for our committee meetings and um she's told me about this residential, but Poppy can't make that one but I'm hoping she might go along to a future residential

Poppy: I told you I didn't really feel like that

Dad: I know that Poppy. Do you want to explain that to Katharine (Interviewer)?

Poppy: I don't really feel that I need to be part like being 'someone who has a cleft' cause I've just grown up being able to talk to my friends about stuff like that...

Poppy: I said to much there, I couldn't breathe (laughs)

Mum: oh, take a breath (all laugh)

I: Okay, that was interesting to hear about your involvement with CLAPA.

Can you tell me if the surgeries you've had have had any affect on missed school or sports that you play?

Poppy: It was a bit annoying when I had my bone graph in November

Mum: yes she's just had her surgery in November

Poppy: cause I'm very active and they had just started an early morning Netball ... because we were doing it for the Netball tournament in January or February, something 'ary'

Dad: you couldn't do it, could you?

Poppy: I couldn't do it, for like 6 weeks

Dad: and you missed a week of school too didn't you?

Mum: two weeks

Dad: was it two weeks you were off?

Poppy: yeah, two weeks

Mum: yeah, that was the really hard one because up until then her surgeries had been well I think when she was 5 or 6 and she was younger and it was more on us but this time around it was definitely on her, she was feeling it herself, yeah so that was a hard one, but I mean, tell Katharine what your class did, they were amazing!

Poppy: oh, yeah a lot of people came around and they bought a present and cards, it was really nice, they had written some nice memories in the card

Mum: yeah, so she was really well supported

I: Okay, and thinking ahead, are there any more operations planned?

Poppy: there's not really any planned but there's some that have been suggested, well there might be some when I'm older

I: Can you tell me how you feel about having more operations?

Poppy: I'd need to know what they're for more and how they will help

Mum: yes, cause I think for this one that she had in November, it had to happen because it had to do with the jaw, sorry the gum but it was really important that the professor who did the operation he actually explained it to Poppy why it was so important

Dad: we really noticed in the consultation before the operation he was talking to Poppy not to us, we really noticed a big difference because we probably hadn't seen him for a good two or three years before

Mum: and you (looking at Poppy) did say, 'well I'm happy with how I am, why do I need to have this operation?' So he did explain that this one was really um necessary because her teeth wouldn't stay in her gum if she didn't have the operation, but future ones would be...

Poppy: he did take about 4 teeth out, so (laughs)

Mum: he did, but that was to make space, but then any future ones that he does, she'll have a say so if she's happy

Poppy: I had a say this time

Mum: yeah, but he would have talked you out of it

Dad: yeah (all laugh)

Mum: I think though that for the first time we know there's that fine line, 'well I'm happy with how I am for the moment, I don't want it to change', and um he's amazing and he's very sensitive to that, so it was good, wasn't it to talk to him?

Poppy: yes

Mum: and then from then on she was fine about it

Poppy: not necessarily

Mum: well you kind of accepted it, didn't you?

Poppy: yeah, I did

Dad: it kind a comes back to school as well because you kind of said why do things have to change, why do I need to grow up?

Poppy: yeah, I don't want to grow up (laughs)

Dad: well, yes but towards the end of year 6 you were definitely in the mindset that this is ...because she's had such a happy experience at primary school, she was anxious about going to secondary school, we were anxious for her even though we knew Peter (older brother) was at the school as well, um and she was very much 'why do things have to change'

Mum: but the school have a really good PSHE teacher and she's had them for quite a few years, and she was brilliant in Year 6 and she talks them through all sorts of things and so I think that helps as well.

I: yes, okay. And can you tell me how many classes there are in your form at your new school, your secondary school?

Poppy: I think there's six

I: okay, and can you tell me if your cleft affected your speech – was there any speech and therapy when you were younger?

Poppy: I did, when I was younger, but I didn't see it as speech therapy it was more like playing games

Mum: yeah, they used to play really good games and then they'd talk to her and she'd speak, so that was good. You've had speech therapy, I think probably with your teeth its been a bit harder, hasn't it and now you've got a brace, it's a new thing. That happened before the summer and its kind of helped us with starting secondary school

Dad: yes, her teeth have definitely realigned, the brace was fitted mid-July, so its less than two months and its really bought them back down

Mum: and I think it was good that you had it before you started secondary school  
And nowadays everyone has a brace

I: yes, and can you tell me if you've had any hearing concerns?

Poppy: I had grommets

Mum: yes, but your hearing has always been fine

Dad: yeah, its always been fine, yeah

I: Okay, right so can I ask if you play in any clubs or sports outside of school?

Poppy: I do gymnastics, but most of it is inside of school

Dad: you have a guitar teacher, you do guitar

Poppy: yeah

Dad: you need to do some practice, don't you?

Poppy: yes

Mum: you've had the summer off, so yes you do

I: Okay and are you interested in any of the clubs at your new school?

Poppy: yeah, netball, I might audition for the choir

I: okay, is there variety in the clubs offered

Mum: yeah, there is and there's other clubs but you won't know about them yet. Its just the sports clubs that they know about now

I: okay, and how have the first days of school been Poppy?

Poppy: they seem to be okay

I: do you walk to school on your own, or maybe with your brother?

Poppy: I walk with my friends and its fine.

I: Okay, we've come to the end of the questions.

*The interviewee then explained the study further and addressed any questions the family had.*

## Transcription

**Family interview (Skype):** The N Family - Nathan, mum (Natalie), dad (Neil) (older brother, first 5 minutes)

Mum: Hello

Interviewer: Hello, hi there

Mum: Hi, you alright?

I: good thanks, how are you?

Mum: very good, there's me and Nathan there, hopefully you can see us

I: Yes – hi Nathan

Nathan: Hi

I: How are you?

Nathan: good

I: did you start school this week?

Nathan: yep

Interviewee briefly explains study to family (mum and Nathan)

I: Right, so let's begin

Nathan, can you tell me about your family?

Nathan: in my house, I live with my mum, my dad and my older brother, he's 13

I: Okay, and is your older brother at the secondary school that you've just started at?

Nathan: yep

I: and do you have any pets?

Nathan: no

Mum: no, two boys is enough (laughs)

I: I can understand that

Nathan, do you have any hobbies?

Nathan: ah, I love playing football, and um I also play on my phone a lot, a bit too much (mum laughs), and I also enjoy athletics and running

I: oh lovely, so you enjoy your sports?

Nathan: yeah

I: can you tell me how you felt about starting secondary school this week?



Nathan: ah, it was a little bit weird because we have four different houses and in my house there was no one that I knew, like from school

I: okay, can you tell me a little more about this?

Nathan: yeah, I felt a little bit nervous, but it was quite exciting

I: Can you tell me why you felt excited?

Nathan: good to also meet some new people

I: And what were you mostly looking forward to in secondary school, compared to primary school?

Nathan: Um, I was kinda looking forward to it being a bit more busy, like you got things to do and not just sitting around and have nothing to do

I: Was primary school not very busy then?

Nathan: it was okay

I: And did you have any primary school friends start with you at your new school?

Nathan: ja, I did

I: Can you tell me about them? Was it a big group of you or just a few friends

Nathan: only two other people

I: oh, okay

So, how does your family feel about you starting at secondary school?

Nathan: I don't know (looks at his mum)

I: Did you have any discussions as a family about it?

Mum: we think its good, don't we (looking back at Nathan)?

Nathan: I don't know (laughs)

Mum: I suppose it's easier when its number 2 child, we're happy with the school and Noah (older brother) is doing well there

Dad: and he was really excited about going

Mum: that's my husband, Neil

I: Oh, hi Neil

Dad: oh, sorry didn't mean to interrupt

I: I didn't see you in the picture – please do add whenever you'd like to

Mum: yeah, I suppose we just wanted to make sure that he was taking it seriously and going to work hard, and you know be a good boy and that kind of thing

Nathan: I agree

Mum: we talked about that, didn't we? (Nathan agrees), doing your best

I: Okay, so if we could talk a bit about your primary school, Nathan. Can you tell me a little about it?

Nathan: yeah, it was really small and it was only one class per year, and it was a really small school, there was like one classroom for every year and there was like an assembly hall and a couple of other rooms, but that was it.

I: ok, and were you in the same primary school since reception?

Nathan: yeah

I: Can you tell me how many people were in your year 6 class?

Nathan: there was 26 people in it

I: And what about the teachers, how did you find the teachers?

Nathan: some of them were nice, some were better than others, but they were all good

I: okay, so what made some of the teachers better than the others?

Nathan: I don't know, some of them were nicer and maybe less strict, I don't know

I: okay, so now that you left primary school, can you tell me if you had any transition days or taster days at your new school?

Nathan: yeah, ah, it was called an induction day, I think and when we went in we like met some people in the playground, um, I played football on the tennis court, um, we did like a kind a fake maths lesson, then we played football in PE, like a taster PE, then we did like music or something, I can't remember the last one. Oh, we had a really nice pizza and chips for lunch

I: okay, so what do you think was your stand out moment for that day?

Nathan: the pizza and chips (mum laughs)

I: I thought that might be it

Nathan: no, no, no... probably the football

I: okay, and how do you feel about your new uniform?

Nathan: ah, its cool because like it looks smart

I: yes

Nathan: smarter

I: and the school building – can you tell me how this is in comparison to your primary school?

Nathan: its quite annoying because um in my secondary school there's like a teacher's balcony that you can't go on and like there's two sets of stairs that you can't use and then on the third floor half of it is for sixth form only, so you have to go all the way to the other side

I: okay, so does it feel a little restricted?

Nathan: yeah, its like a maze

I: okay, and what about meeting new people – have you met anyone else yet?

Nathan: yeah

I: can you tell me about this?

Nathan: I meet them in my class

I: Can you tell me how you feel about them?

Nathan: yeah, okay

I: Right, so thinking about the main differences between primary school and secondary school, what do you think they are?

Nathan: um, its much bigger and in primary school, like you usually like know everyone abit earlier like you know who people are when you see them, you say hello, but in secondary school when you see them in the corridor you don't say hello because you don't know who they are

I: Right, and do you know how many classes there are in your year 7 group?

Nathan: In year 7?

I: Yes

Nathan: 7, because all the houses have two classes in them and one of them only has one

I: okay, and what about your transport route and your routine for school – has that changed at all?

Nathan: oh, yes I have to wake up earlier and I get to walk there by myself

I: and how do you feel about that?

Nathan: okay, cause its like not my mummy walking me to school

I: and you walk home on your own?

Nathan: yeah, I walk with a friend who goes one way and then I go the other way (uses hands to demonstrate the ways)

I: and is it the same time as primary school?

Nathan: no, we start at like 8:30 and on a Monday we finish at

14:35, and on every other day we finish at 15:00.

I: okay, a little bit earlier than primary school, then?

Nathan: yeah

I: Right, Nathan, are you happy to talk about your cleft?

Nathan: yeah

I: how would you describe it if someone asked you? Would you say it is a cleft lip and palate or just a cleft?

Nathan: um, usually they have no idea what a cleft lip and palate is, you kind a have to tell them that when I was born I had a gap in my lip and they went like that (demonstrates with hands) and sewed it up.

I: okay, so when you were in primary school, did your friends know about it?

Nathan: well, I thought they did because in year 1 they asked me what it was and I told them what it was, a year went by, then in year 2 they asked me, and in year 3 they asked me, and in year 4 they asked me, and in year 5 they asked me, then in year 6 they asked me, so on the last day they said 'what's that on your nose?' I told you already!

I: okay, so how did it feel having to talk about it year after year after year

Nathan: it was quite easy to talk about it

I: and were there any times in primary school when someone said something was wasn't very nice about your cleft?

Nathan: no, because it wasn't really recognizable so people only saw it sometimes

I: Okay, and what experiences have you had with CLAPA?

Nathan: um, yeah its good because there's lots of different things to do because we went bowling and did bumper cars and we had loads of chicken wings and chips, and then we went on the residential and we got to stay together and get to know each other really well and that was good, and that's where I found out my watch is waterproof

I: that's useful. So do you have any friends from CLAPA?

Nathan: um, you kind of meet new people every time you go there

I: So you're quite happy to join in with the activities they do?

Nathan: yeah!

I: that's good. Is there anything you would not want me to ask you about your cleft?

Nathan: yeah, I don't mind

I: Okay, and did your cleft ever affect anything you did in school? For example, in PE or playing sport.

Nathan: only when I had my bone-graph, that's the only thing because I couldn't play football for like six weeks, that was annoying

I: Okay, so was that the only time when you were absent from school and you missed a few things?

Nathan: yeah, I was 11

Mum: yeah, it was just in February this year, actually

I: okay, recent then

Mum: yeah, fairly recent

I: Was that the only time you felt your cleft affected you?

Nathan: yeah, only cause I couldn't do anything, cause like it would damage it, but it wasn't that bad

I: Perhaps your mum might remember more, but when you were younger you may have had to have some operations or it may have affected your speech or hearing?

Nathan: yeah, I had to work really hard to stop speaking down my nose, like now, but it got better, its easier now

I: Okay, did you have some speech and language help?

Nathan: yeah, its like Bob bounces blue ball at the beach...something like that, I can't remember it (laughs)

I: Natalie, did he have to have any other operations when he was in school?

Mum: um, he had to have a palate repair when he had just started in Reception class, which was slightly unfortunate as I think he'd been back one week or something and then he had to go and have an operation but it wasn't really a big deal. I think he missed, maybe a week of school then and after that he was just in school the whole time until like this recent one in January, February when he had to be off for about three weeks

I: And just thinking ahead, perhaps in the next year, will you need any more surgeries?

Nathan: I don't know, will I (directs question to mum)

Mum: no, hopefully not, we're good to go for a while now. Maybe not have any more, it may just be dental work now

Nathan: I might get braces but that doesn't count. I get to eat pasta and noodles though

I: oh, that's good

Nathan: it's a highlight

I: We have spoken a little about your hobbies and sports. Are there any other sports that you do outside of school?

Nathan: I used to do a tennis club but don't now, I do football on Saturday and sometimes we go to the park and do some family cricket or something

I: and are you part of any clubs?

Nathan: yeah, yeah, I go to scouts

I: okay, and what do you think of scouts?

Nathan: yeah, good

I: and are you interested in any of the new clubs or sports at your new school?

Nathan: yeah, I would like to do some of the clubs but we don't know yet. About the clubs.

**Transcription** (Skype)

**Family interview:** The R family – Rebecca, mother (Rachel), father (Rob), older brother (Ryan)

Technical difficulties at the start (Interviewer was not able to see family, family not able to hear Interviewer)

I: Hello, can you hear me?

Mum: yes, we can. I think there might be a band-width problem, yeah. We've always struggled to have good Skype calls with video.

I: I can see you – is this the whole family?

Mum: yes, you've got Ryan, my son, there's Rebecca, Rob, my husband.

I: Great, its lovely to meet all of you – I hope you're all well.

Mum: yes, fine thanks

I: Sorry about that beginning hitch with the Skyping, lets get started. Rebecca, please let me know if there are any questions you'd rather not answer and if anyone would like to add anything, please do. You can also ask me anything as we go along. Right, so Rebecca, do you have any pets?

Rebecca: um, no I don't any pets

I: What about hobbies, can you tell me about any of these?

Rebecca: I like reading, cello, and playing cricket.

I: okay, any family hobbies? Do you all play cricket?

Rebecca: me and Ryan do (dad: two of us), we like cycling and walking

Mum: yep, we do a lot of that

I: That sounds very good

Can you tell me, Rebecca, how you are feeling about starting at secondary school?

Rebecca: I'm excited and a little nervous

I: okay, can you tell me what are you looking forward to?

Rebecca: um, some new subjects

I: anything particular that you like?

Rebecca: Music and science

I: you do play an instrument?

Rebecca: yes, the cello

I: Anything you might not be looking forward to?

Rebecca: the homework (all laugh)

I: Are there any friends from your primary school that are starting with you?

Rebecca: um, I've got three friends going to the same school as me, so that's Ruby, Rose and Ron.

I: Are they close friends?

Rebecca: ah (looks at mum)

Mum: not really, Rose is probably the closest – we know Rose because Rose's brother is Ryan's friend

I: oh, okay

Rebecca, can you tell me how your family were feeling about you starting at your new school soon?

Rebecca: ah, happy, pleased

I: Okay, I'm just going to ask your parents about their thoughts on you starting school – Rob and Rachel, how are you both feeling about Rebecca starting?

Dad: I think great, I think she'll cope with it really well and I think she's ready for it, so it will be a big change for her, exciting for all of us, we just need to find our way through it, I think

Mum: I'm really pleased because we managed to get her into her secondary school on appeal because it wasn't the school that she originally was going to, but we managed to appeal against the decision because its actually out of catchment, um, I'm really pleased we managed to get her in because I think it will be a really good school for her

I: okay, was there a specific reason why you wanted that school?

Mum: because the school that is the catchment school and that my son Ryan goes to is a very big school centered around an atrium and its very echoey, and with Rebecca's hearing problems, I think it would have been a real issue

I: Okay, so not the same school as her brother, a new school, a new school for all of you?

Mum and Rebecca: yes, yes

I: Right, so just thinking about your primary school experience – can you tell me a bit about this, the class size, the school as a whole?

Rebecca: Its was like um, it had about 300 people in it, and there were two Year 6 classes



Mum: wasn't one split with Year 5 (asks Rebecca)?

Rebecca: Yeah, one was split with Year 5 so we had a split and then the older ones were in one Year 6 class.

I: Right, okay

So were you in the same primary school since reception?

Rebecca: ah, yeah

I: and your teachers – what were they like?

Rebecca: ah, they were really nice and supportive

I: And did you have any subject teachers – maybe in year 6 or 5?

Rebecca: We did have sets for Maths and so a certain teacher would teach a set and we had a certain teacher for French, and subjects like Science and RE.

I: okay, can you tell me how you felt about leaving primary school?

Rebecca: I felt a little sad because most of my friends have gone to a different school, but I'm really excited to start at H... (school name)

I: And did you have any transition or taster days at your new school?

Rebecca: Yeah, I did had a transition day at H..., and that was quite good fun, because I got to know a lot of people

I: And were there any stand out moments during this day that you remember, something that stood out to you?

Rebecca: um, in Science I got to spray this chemical into a Bunsen burner

I: This stood out for you?

Rebecca: yeah, it was fun

I: you said that you met some new people - can you tell me about this, where you meet them and how it went?

Rebecca: well, it was just like in class and at breaktime

Mum: they were already assigned to their forms so they knew exactly which class their going into and they knew exactly who their teachers were going to be

Dad: Rebecca is really good at getting to know new people. She'll be in a group of people her age and she'll know all the people within half an hour, she'll know all the names and know who she gets on with, she's very good at that bit.

I: Okay, Rebecca can you tell me what you thought about the school building?

Rebecca: Its, its quite a small building and its split into chunks so its quite easy to get around

Mum: its one of these schools that's quite old and its grown bit by bit and they've bolted on bits of building

I: okay, and how did you feel about finding your way around?

Rebecca: I'm a little uncertain because its quite spread out over a wide area, but, um, apparently everybody is really helpful so I should be alright.

Mum: we have been there a few times because in the holidays there's been a coding club that's been run there and that Rebecca has gone too, so there are bits of the building she actually knows quite well

Dad: I think one of the students who was showing you around took you to the wrong place and one point (directed to Rebecca)?

Rebecca: Yeah, it was on a different floor (all laugh)

I: Rebecca, can you tell me how you think primary school might be different from secondary school?

Rebecca: Ah, we'll get new subjects, and some of the subjects, I think will be harder, and its bigger

I: And your routine, will this change – waking up earlier and getting to school?

Rebecca: Yeah, I'm still going on my bike to school, but it will be a bit of a longer journey, but I don't mind the journey because at one point you pass quite a nice river

Dad: we practiced the route once or twice

Mum: yes, we've done it a few times

I: So, Rebecca, will you cycle on your own?

Rebecca: Um, eventually, I think I will, yeah

Mum: Its on both Rob and my route to work and we both cycle and its also past Ryan's school, so all in all at some point, we could meet up with her or take her in, that sort of thing, so it works quite well

I: Your normal school day may start a little earlier than primary school then?

Rebecca: yeah, except every other Monday

Mum: yeah, every other Monday they get a half day so she'll be home early in the afternoon then

I: Right, can we talk a little bit about your cleft lip and palate – are you happy to talk about it?

Rebecca: yeah

I: When you were in primary school, do you remember any of your friends asking you about it?

Rebecca: They did kind of, as I had a little trouble speaking occasionally, but I kinda told them and then they started asking questions about it

I: and how did you feel about answering those questions?

Rebecca: I was usually quite happy to answer them because it was a new thing for them

I: so you feel happy to talk to anyone about it, if they ask?

Rebecca: yeah

I: and can you tell me about your experiences with CLAPA?

Rebecca: um...

Dad: she hasn't had a huge amount to do with CLAPA. There is a CLAPA nurse we see at the clinic, but we haven't really needed to be involved with CLAPA. Rebecca's been a lot more involved because of her hearing problems with one of the local charities for the deaf, so we done a lot more meeting with people at different levels of hearing and hearing loss, lots of activities with that charity and that's been really useful for Rebecca.

Mum: and I've had involvement with CLAPA, which Rebecca hasn't been involved with because of course I was in touch with them very early on with feeding problems and things like that, and they helped us very much through the first two operations, um, and what else? Um, oh I was involved with them in a study that was being done about issues to do with hearing and cleft lip and palate

Rebecca: one of my cricket people that I met has a cleft lip, um, and we're quite good friends and we also raised money for them by doing a charity cycle

I: Is the cleft lip related to the hearing loss?

Mum: yes, it is because the hearing loss has been through glue ear, as a result of the cleft palate, um, its one of those ones where Rebecca was wearing two hearing aids from about the age of 3, and now we find that during summer it tends to clear up, um, and in fact actually, we had a whole year when she wasn't wearing any hearing aid, um, but it can still recur

I: okay, can you tell me if there were any times in primary school, maybe during PE or another activity when your cleft or possibly your hearing affected this for you, Rebecca?

Rebecca: um, I think usually in the winter my hearing is worse and it can affect some things, um

Mum: yes, there's a few things like you couldn't go scuba driving because of your hearing problems, um, and we've had hospital appointments of course, there's been lots of hospital appointments for hearing and orthodontics at the moment, that's the latest one

Dad: and I think, one of things we have done is worked well with the school where, when Rebecca's hearing has not been good she didn't like the noisy environment, so we managed to get a couple of quiet tables and find ways of coping and that sort of thing and they worked really well with us on that

Mum: yeah, they've worked also very well because she's used a radio aid in class quite a lot of the time and they've been very good with that

I: and have you needed to let your new school know about this?

Mum: yes, because that's one of the main reasons she got into the secondary school because Rebecca would need less help in a better acoustic environment than in the school she was going to go into

I: Right, and have you had any speech and language therapy?

Mum: um, we had a little bit of speech and language therapy to begin with, um, but I think that stopped at age 6 or 7, um, Rebecca was slow to start talking because it was before we realized there was a hearing loss, um various things but audiology basically lost us for about 18 months and we didn't, it didn't get picked up when it should have done, so it took them a while before they issued her with hearing aids, um and so there was a need to catch up on the speech from that, yeah speech and language she got signed off a good few years ago now

I: okay, can you tell about any other sports that you play, Rebecca?

Rebecca: I play netball

Mum: you used to do quite a lot of swimming but we don't do that quite so much anymore, so its netball and cricket

Rebecca: netball and cricket

Mum: then, um because of her music, she plays in an orchestra aswell

I: Is that outside of school?

Mum: yes, outside of school

I: and any clubs – are you part of any clubs in or out of school?

Rebecca: I'm part of the choir at orchestra too, I'm also part of a scouts group

I: oh right and how do you find the scouts group?

Rebecca: it can be noisy at times but it can be really fun

I: Are you interested in any of the clubs or sports at your new school?

Rebecca: yeah, the cricket and the choir

Mum: she's adamant she'll get onto the boy's cricket team

I: that's good (all laugh) why not!

So, what is the starting date for secondary school for you?

Rebecca: um, the Tuesday

Dad: the 7<sup>th</sup>

Mum: no, its Tuesday the 4<sup>th</sup> as they start with a 2-hour session in the afternoon, um, its when no other groups are in school so its only Year 7, and then the next day the whole of the school starts

*The interviewee thanks the family and details what happens next in the study. Also asks the family if they have any questions.*

**Transcription** (Skype)**Family interview:** The S family – Sophie and mother (Sally)*Informal introductions at the start while Sally called Sophie to the screen.*

Mum: We're in the process of moving house so its just chaotic right now. I have the removal company just calling back.

I: oh shame, it's a busy time.

Mum: yes, but its fine

(Sophie arrives in the room)

I: Hi Sophie, how are you?

Sophie: I'm good thank you

I: its nice to meet you

Sophie: you too

I: Sophie, can you introduce me to your family, I've obviously met your mum, but is there anyone else in the family – siblings, pets?

Sophie: um, so I live with my mum, my dad and my brother

I: okay, is your brother older than you?

Sophie: he's younger, he's 8 and he likes football a lot

I: okay, and do you have any pets?

Sophie: I have two dogs

I: Great, do you have any family hobbies, anything that you do as a family together?

Sophie: We always, always go on Christmas eve to a Panto, and we always host Christmas

Mum: no hobbies though

Sophie: no hobbies no

Mum: we go swimming and stuff

Sophie: yeah, yeah

Mum: activities more

Sophie: yeah

I: Okay, so just to remind you that if there are any questions that you are not comfortable answering, please let me know. As your mum knows, I have emailed the questions so you are aware of what I am going to ask.

So, Sophie, thinking about starting secondary school soon, can you tell me how are you feeling about this?

Mum: do you want me to sit here with Sophie or do you want me to disappear in case she feels more comfortable?

I: I'd prefer you to stay as your input at any time of the interview would be appreciated. As long as Sophie is fine with that.

Sophie: Um, I'm abit nervous because I don't know anyone going, like I know people briefly who I recognize, but I don't know anyone so it's a bit nervous because I'm not sure about how easy it will be to make friends. But I'm really excited to start school, it's a great school and I'm really excited to start, its definitely going to be a step up, its going to be really good once I get into it.

I: You're feeling nervous because you won't have any friends starting with you?

Sophie: Yes, I don't know anyone.

I: okay, have your primary school friends all gone to different schools then?

Sophie: um, the school that I chose was a lot further away than most people, as most people are going within the area, but I'm going a hour or so away, because I preferred the school and it was a better school for me

Mum: I suppose the bit of difference is that Sophie's been at an independent school, and so she's kind of chosen the school she wants to go to in terms of her senior school

Sophie: yeah, I took the exams and I got my letter saying that I got in to those schools and then I decided like where to go.

I: Was it the 11+ that you did?

Sophie: yeah

I: okay, well done!

So how does your family feel about you starting at this school? Without any family, without anyone you know?

Mum: um, its been big decision for the family, that's why we are moving house so its been a big decision to chose this school because its not viable to do living here so are moving to accommodate it and stuff, but its one of the top schools in the country and she got a really good place so she got a scholarship, well she got three scholarships.

I: okay, and are you moving soon?

Mum: hopefully the 7<sup>th</sup> September, fingers crossed. I'm being hassled today to move earlier and I'm like I can't do it any earlier (uses hand movements)

I: There are a few changes going on then?

Mum and Sophie: yeah

I: Right, so can you tell me about the discussions you've had about starting school?

Sophie: Well, there's been lots and lots of discussion in the family about where we move too. So, we're thinking of moving not quite into Brighton, so there are a few different areas there where we could move. Its just finding a place that will be easier and like nicer. And then also tied in with that is I'm going to be getting the school bus so that has to work well with it, and talking about which bus I might get and what time and work for my dad, and yeah

I: Yes, so your parents can manage their work too?

Mum: um, the tricky thing we've got is our son who is 8 and has some other challenges and he will be going to a school that is about 45 miles away from Sophie's school, both of them as day pupils so um, I will be spending a lot of time driving and so um part of the logistics challenge is the fact that Sophie will use the school bus and so we need to live close enough so that Sophie can walk to the school bus and she gets home to let herself into the house if I'm stuck in traffic or something like that, so its going to be a lot more independence for you, isn't it? (directed question to Sophie), compared to what you are used to. A big step of growing up, I suppose, um, where Sophie has had a little bit of bubble is because of the location of her primary school, she's been driven to school every day backwards and forwards, whereas with a local school, she would have walked to and back from school already, but she's not done that so this is going to be a little bit of a change.

Sophie: yeah, it is a bit of a change

I: yes, definitely some change. Can you tell me how you feel about this Sophie?

Sophie: yeah, okay as its more independence and a step up



I: so thinking about your prep school, can you tell me about it, for example, class size, your teachers?

Sophie: So, we had 3 classes in a year and each had about 20 pupils.

I: Okay, and what were the teachers like?

Sophie: Some of them were not good at all. They couldn't control the class, and some of them were just nice teachers as you'd expect, and some were really friendly and they helped a lot with 11+ and they were always there if you needed help with something and I would say that most of the teachers, its just obviously there's going to be a few that you don't like, it always the way with school.

I: Okay, and did you have subject teachers?

Sophie: From Reception to Year 4, we had mostly one teacher teach the same things, that would usually be our form teacher, but as we got older we'd have a different teacher for sport or for music or science. When you get into Year 5, and Year 6 and 7 and 8 you have a different teacher for everything.

I: And were you at your prep school since Reception?

Sophie: yes, so 7 years

I: Okay, and how did you feel about leaving your prep school?

Sophie: I felt quite ready to move on, I felt that school was just a bit too young for me and I was ready to go onto to something a bit bigger. I was a bit sad because I was leaving most of my friends, there'd be only a few I would talk to again, because some of them, they're moving on, so am I and it just wouldn't work out. So, I felt kinda sad, but then I was ready to move on.

I: okay, and did you have any transition days at your new school?

Sophie: there was one, I missed it (laughs)

I: Okay, so have you had any experiences of your new school, maybe an open evening when you've visited?

Sophie: Before the exam they had some taster days, there was a big group of children and you were stuck with some of the different teachers and they were really enjoyable and I got to know the school a lot better

Mum: they were all the people that were applying

Sophie: yeah, they were all the people who were applying, but yeah other than that I don't know whose got in

Mum: it was unfortunate that on the induction day, um, Sophie's existing school, they were in France on a school trip for the week, so unfortunately she missed the induction day

Sophie: but then the day before we start school on the 29<sup>th</sup> August we have a day where all of the pupils in our year and then a few other people from different years they going come and they going to help us and see where all our stuff can go and what teachers we have and meet people

Mum: yeah, so it's a like another induction day, isn't it?

Sophie: yeah

I: okay, and can you think about things that may be different from your primary school?

Sophie: well, there's less kids in a year for the next two years so instead of 60 students, they'll be 45, which will be a bit different because they'll be only two classes and they'll be less people but then in Year 9, they'll be 130, I think with the next group that come in, that will be a big change as well because that's more than double my year, so its going to be quite changing, the amount of people, for sure.

I: Yes, and in terms of the building, the college, can you tell me how this is either different or similar to what you were used to?

Sophie: the school is about the same size because its in central Brighton and so there's less space for like fields and stuff, whereas the buildings are far more modern and there, um, new not something you'd necessarily expect in a school

Mum: there's a lot more technology

Sophie: yes, technology, there's a lot more technology

I: okay, and what about your routine? Will you be waking up earlier?

Sophie: I'll be waking up maybe 20 minutes earlier

Mum: yes, at the moment we leave the house at 7:45 and I think you'll need to leave at about 7:15, so a half an hour earlier

I: and can you tell me about the uniform?

Sophie: yeah, I like it more than my old uniform, its really nice

Mum: getting it tomorrow, or is it Thursday?

Sophie: Thursday

I: okay, and just to clarify you don't have any friend or anyone that you know going to your new school?

Sophie: so, in Year 9 when loads and loads of people come, there might be one girl from my old school coming but she's not one I particularly like, so and by that time I'll have my own friends and I'll have had 2 years there so I'm not sure how helpful it will be knowing her by then.

I: okay, thanks for those answers. Lets talk a little bit about your cleft, if that's okay?

Sophie: yeah, sure

I: Can you tell me how you would describe your cleft?

Sophie: um, unilateral cleft lip and palate

I: and when we're talking online for our other questions, is it okay if I refer to it as a cleft?

Sophie: yeah

I: So, can you tell me how you told your friends at primary school about your cleft?

Sophie: So, I didn't really tell anyone unless they asked, so I don't find it offensive if people say 'oh, why is your lip or nose a bit squished?', because yes that is there, its not going to be offensive to me because I know that its there and to them I would just say something a long the lines of, 'oh, I was born without half of my lip all the way back and then there was nothing separating my nose and my mouth', and I feel like that's quite a simple way so that they can know and understand it a bit better rather than trying to do it in great detail.

I: okay, so was there ever a time at primary school when you had to explain it to anyone or was everyone used to you as you were from reception?

Sophie: yeah, cause I felt that some people behind my back, they did talk about it, but I knew that they did and I wasn't going to go talk to them about it because I don't mind that they talk about it because obviously if it wasn't there, then they wouldn't be talking about it, so its something you've got to just accept

I: Right, and can I ask your mum if she had anything to add at this stage?

Mum: we've only ever had a couple of tricky incidences, haven't we?

Sophie: yeah but most of them were general things not to do with my cleft

Mum: I think as a family we've always been very open about cleft, its not ideal but you've got to get on with it and so we've always been kind of matter of fact about it, haven't we?

Sophie: yeah

Mum: while some things might not be as you want them to be, as time goes on you have the opportunity to do something about it, if you want to. So I suppose we've just been it is what it is and there's more important things in life to be getting on with (laughs) that kind of

thing. It doesn't define who Sophie is, she is who she is, it definitely makes a difference to your character doesn't it?

Sophie: yeah

Mum: but its not everything

I: Can you tell me Sophie about your experiences with CLAPA?

Sophie: so when I was a lot younger, maybe 4 or 5, I did the picnic every year at Queen Victoria, and then since I was about 8 or 9, I've been doing a lot of the CLAPA activity days or residential. I go there quite often like whenever I can and I was really quite annoyed when I heard about the funding cuts because CLAPA is really good, I just thought that wasn't fair, and I want to try to do something to help that because its not our fault and its not a massively common thing but there is still people in this world who need the funding and, so I was quite annoyed when I heard about that, but I definitely wouldn't have been if CLAPA hadn't been so good, so they've done a lot for me and I've had contact with a lot of people and I have friends with a cleft now and its really nice

I: okay, and are you happy for me to ask you about your cleft or do you not like to talk about it for whatever reason?

Sophie: yeah I'm fine talking about it cause I've been through the experience and I'm okay with it now and I've got the opportunity now to change stuff, like my nose and my lips. I don't really mind talking about it cause its obviously happened its not something I'm going to try and hide for the sake of it.

I: Yes, and can you tell me if your cleft has affected your involvement in any school activities, for example PE?

Sophie: yes, so when I was in Year 3 I had two surgeries, my bone graft in year 3 and so I had it in the summer and at the start of the school year I couldn't do exercise for the first two weeks, then I found out in late November that it had failed so I had to have emergency surgery missing days off school until Christmas and then the first meal I was able to eat was Christmas eve lunch and so then after that I wasn't able to do anything for about a month including school activities

*(Mum leaves the room to show the 'wasp' man where to go)*

I think that really did annoy me because I'm a strong swimmer because I loved to swim but you can't get your mouth or anything in the water because it can infect that, it was quite hard but I knew that I wouldn't want it to fail again and it was quite hard for me to accept that it

had failed and I'd have to go through that again, such a major surgery and that was quite annoying for me, but I got on with it and I did miss parts of PE but that was going to happen. And then this year somehow still on my record was that I can't damage my face, whereas that was more after my surgery, so I wasn't allowed on a trip. Well I was on the trip and then after lunch there was these hills and they were all allowed to roll down them, but I wasn't because from 4 years ago it was still on my record that I couldn't hurt anything on my face because of recent surgery but it wasn't true, and that slightly annoyed me because I was like 'how is that still there?' like how, then everyone realized and was asking me oh why did you leave that on your record, which was quite annoying, that was the most annoying thing because I didn't see a reason why

I: Oh dear, what a frustrating experience for you.

Sophie, can you tell me if your cleft has had any affect on your speech?

Sophie: so as quite a young child I had problems with my speech and I did have speech therapy but I would say by the age of 7 I was completely fine. Now I have the odd days when I'm just abit nasal, and that's just something that happens like if you have a cold or something, but I don't feel like my speech is really affected compared to other children.

I: Okay, and thinking about missed school days. Can you tell me if you missed any school?

Sophie: I've missed a lot of school in the last couple years cause I've had my braces and I have to get them checked every so often, which means I miss a couple hours because it's a least 40 minutes away in the hospital, then you have waiting time, then you've got to get it done, then sometimes there's just no point in going back to school because by the time you get there it will be finished. I'm probably going to get my braces taken off soon so hopefully that will die down a bit but I'll hopefully not have to miss as much school but I think at some point I will have to miss more school as I asked my orthodontist about getting my lips done so he said I'd need to see the surgeon and then I might miss a little bit more school.

*(mum re-enters the room)*

I: Right. Sophie, do you play any sports outside of school?

Sophie: um, I play cricket outside of school and then I swim outside of school, more like fun swimming and not lots and lots of training

Mum: You used to be in the swimming team, didn't you?

Sophie: I used to but I found it too much with everything else

I: Sally (mum), can I ask you about the surgeries that Sophie had for her cleft?

Mum: we've been counting (looks at Sophie), we think nine or ten

Sophie: nine, nine

Mum: think its fair to say we've lost track (all laugh), and she's seeing the surgeon in September for her lip, so we'll see what she says

I: Yes, okay. Sophie, are you part of any other clubs?

Sophie: I do a lot of drama and dance, I'm in the National Children's Choir, I do a lot of stuff in the performing art area

I: Will you continue with this and anything else when you start at your college (Secondary school)?

Sophie: definitely the performing arts and the cricket

Mum: The college has one of the best cricket teams.

I: okay. Are there any other clubs or sports at the school that you are keen to do?

Sophie: um, so I have to do netball, rounder's and hockey, but I'm thinking of getting more into rounder's because I quite enjoy rounder's and I'm quite good at it, its just I never got the chance at primary because they didn't see that I was good at it, and they had quite a favoritist sports type of selection process, because if you're in the A's for one thing, you're in the A's for everything else because if you're good at one sport you definitely can't be bad at any other. It did annoy me because I was actually quite good at rounders and I could have easily been in the higher team but because I didn't like hockey they just...

Mum: yeah, they weren't the best, were they?

Sophie: no

Mum: I suppose you'll probably do quite a lot of dance at Brighton, won't you?

Sophie: Yeah

Mum: She got a dance scholarship

Sophie: yep

I: Okay, as I was just going to ask if you had won any awards or certificates within the clubs or activities that you were involved in?

Sophie: Well I feel its quite nice to win something but then some of the time I like it to be a surprise, not to always work towards something, just do what I'm normally doing and get better and then if they think that I deserve it, then I deserve it

Mum: Have you mentioned your singing?

Sophie: Oh yeah, I do a lot of singing, I'm going to be in 5 choirs

I: Can you tell me how you fit that all in?

Sophie: I don't really fit it all in...

Mum (*interjects here*): Sophie got an academic scholarship, a dance scholarship, an all rounder and a choral scholarship for Brighton so she does quite a bit of singing, don't you?

Sophie: yeah

I: okay

Mum: and she's in the national children's choir for Great Britain

I: yes, Sophie did mention that, which sounds very interesting

Mum: yes, its lovely

*Interviewer briefly explains the next part of the study and brings the interview to a close. The interviewer also asks if the family have any questions at this time.*

**Time Point 2: Online Snapshot Interview Transcripts and Vlog Entries  
(Children only)**

**Bella online snapshot 1**

Interviewer: Hi Bella, how are you?

Bella: Good thank you

Interviewer: Can you tell me about your first week at school?

Bella: I had a good week

Interviewer: Can you tell me why it was good?

Bella: I had my first dt food and my maths teacher is really funny so it makes learning fun

Interviewer: Great.

How are you feeling about your new school?

Bella: I like the school but I find the swearing really hard to cope with but I'm getting there

Interviewer: Swearing from the other kids in your class?

Bella: Some but mostly older children

Interviewer: Are you happy going back tomorrow?

Bella: Yes, but its tiring and some unhealthy food at lunch

Interviewer: Which lessons are you enjoying?

You mentioned maths.



Bella: Maths and dt food

Interviewer: Any you are not enjoying?

Bella: Science

Interviewer: Can you tell me why?

Bella: It's scary because of all the risks and dangers

Interviewer: How are you finding the work itself?

Bella: Kind of hard because my partner in science doesn't do any work

Interviewer: Do you want to do well at school?

Bella: Yes a lot

Interviewer: Do you like a challenge?

Bella: I love challenges

Interviewer: How do you feel about finding your way around school

Bella: I know most places but some I haven't been before

Interviewer: Has anyone helped you? Maybe a teacher?

Bella: Yes I know some people

Interviewer: From primary school?

Bella: Some

Interviewer: Any teachers that you don't like?

Bella: Yes an art teacher that I don't like

Interviewer: Can you tell me why?

Bella: He is so strict

Interviewer: What do you do at lunch time?

Bella: Hang out with my friends

Interviewer: Can you tell me more about your friends? New friends, old friends?

Bella: They are mainly from primary school

Interviewer: Have you met any new friends yet?

Bella: A few but I don't know their names

Interviewer: Where do you hang out with your friends?

Bella: On the big field

Interviewer: Has anyone asked you about your cleft?

Bella: No, no one has but a few people have stared

Interviewer: Have you wanted to tell anyone?

Bella: I've wanted to do a whole assembly so they know about clefts

Interviewer: How does it make you feel when they stare?

Bella: Annoyed that I have it and I want to give up being me.

But I never give up. I keep believing because this is me and nothing can stop me.

Interviewer: What would help? The assembly?

Bella: Yes

Interviewer: Thanks for answering those questions Bella.

How are you finding your new routine?

Bella: Tiring, but I like walking with my friends

Interviewer: Can you tell me what is so tiring?

Bella: The whole day

Interviewer: You walk with friends from primary school, right?

Bella: Yes and some from different places

Interviewer: Do you have support from your parents at home?

Bella: Yes when I need to I can talk to my parents

Interviewer: Has your school given you any information about clubs?

Bella: Yes and I want to do netball

Interviewer: What interests you about netball?

Bella: I like it I am good at it

Interviewer: Is there anything that has been different from what you expected?

Bella: Very busy and tiring. And the swearing I don't like

Interviewer: Is there anything better than you expected?

Bella: The maths

Interviewer: Anything more difficult than you expected?

Bella: Energy and friendships

Interviewer: Can you tell me more about friendships?

Bella: It's hard to make new friends because of my cleft but me and my school friends are sticking together

Interviewer: Is there anything you wanted to tell me about the first week at school that we haven't talked about?

Bella: I don't think so I'm still taking it in

Interviewer: Thanks Bella. We'll be in touch again soon 😊

Bella: Ok

**Lucy online snapshots (1)**

Date: 10/09/2018

Interviewer: Hi Lucy. When you're ready to start, let me know. Thanks

Lucy: I'm ready thanks

Interviewer: Great, how are you?

Lucy: Good you

Interviewer: I'm okay, thanks. So, we'll start with the settling in questions.

Lucy: Yes

Interviewer: Can you tell me about your first week at school?

Lucy: Busy, tiring and interesting

Interviewer: Yes, how are you feeling about your new school?

Lucy: Good and feeling tiny against the big people

Interviewer: Can you tell me what's interesting about school?

Lucy: Science DT and ict

Interviewer: Were you happy to go back today?

Lucy: Yes because I had science first

Interviewer: You really like Science?

Lucy: Yes and dt

Interviewer: How are you finding the work itself?

Lucy: Easy but hard

Interviewer: Can you explain further? Why easy and hard?

Lucy: Because French is easier and humanities is a bit harder

Interviewer: Right, that makes sense, thanks. Do you want to do well, Lucy?

Lucy: Yes I do

Interviewer: Do you enjoy a challenge?

Lucy: Sometimes

Interviewer: Okay, we might come back to that in future chats.

Lucy: Ok

Interviewer: Are you managing to find your way around the school?

Lucy: Yes

Interviewer: Has anyone helped you at school?

Lucy: The prefect form teacher's

Interviewer: Are there any teachers you really like so far?

Lucy: I like music and humanities teacher

Interviewer: And any teacher you don't like?

Lucy: My English and DT teachers

Interviewer: Can you tell me why?

Lucy: They seem to always be in a bad mood and the tone of their voice sounds cold.

Interviewer: Okay, let's talk about your friends.

Lucy: Ok

Interviewer: Can you tell me about your friends, new friends?

Lucy: Yes I have 6 friends, 2 of them are new and the other ones I met at guides

Interviewer: What do you do at lunch times?

Lucy: I walk and chat with friends

Interviewer: Including the 2 new friends?

Lucy: Yes

Interviewer: Whereabouts do you walk?

Lucy: And 1 more friend from guides

Around the yard and football field

Interviewer: Has anyone (maybe a friend) been really helpful?

Lucy: Yes one of my friends helped me know where the next class was

Interviewer: That's good.

So, has anyone asked you about your cleft?

Lucy: No only one person asked me at primary

Interviewer: Has anyone asked you about any part of your face?

Lucy: No

Interviewer: Do you feel that anyone has noticed it?

Lucy: Yes but haven't said anything

Interviewer: How do you feel about this?

Lucy: Pleased but want them to know

Interviewer: Would you like to explain it to one of your new friends?

Lucy: Yes, Lily, she's chatty silly tall has brownish curly hair and walks to school

Interviewer: You'd like to tell her.

Lucy: Yes

Interviewer: Thanks for your answers so far Lucy. Just a few more.

How are you finding your new routine?

Lucy: Hard-ish

Interviewer: Can you tell me more?

Lucy: I'm having to eat quickly and catch the bus wake up earlier and up my road which is nearly vertical.

Interviewer: Very busy then. Do you have support from your parents at home?

Lucy: Yes they help with homework

Interviewer: And do you talk about your day with them?

Lucy: Yes run through day and what I did

Interviewer: Does that help you?

Lucy: Yes

Interviewer: Have you received any information about the clubs at school?

Lucy: Yes I might do practical club

Interviewer: What's that?

Lucy: Using and making things that you wouldn't do in class

Interviewer: What interests you about this?

Lucy: I like just making stuff

Interviewer: Is there anything that has been different from what you expected?

Lucy: Yes I didn't realize that it was far from class to class

Interviewer: Ah, yes all the moving around takes time.

Is there anything better than what you expected?

Lucy: No



Interviewer: Is there anything more difficult than you had expected?

Lucy: Yes getting to classes on time

Interviewer: Is there anything you wanted to tell me about the first week of school that we haven't talked about?

Lucy: No

Interviewer: Thanks Lucy. I'll be in touch soon to hear about your vlogs! Have great week.

**Poppy online snapshot interview 1**

Date: 16/09/2018

Interviewer: Hi Poppy, how are you doing?

Poppy: Great thanks

Interviewer: Can you tell me about your first week at school?

Poppy: It's been really good and I have enjoyed most of my lessons

Interviewer: How are you feeling about your new school?

Poppy: Good. At first it was a bit strange but I have got used to it

Interviewer: Has anything helped you to get used to it?

Poppy: I think being mostly in the same classes as my friends has helped and having a map

Interviewer: Which lessons are you enjoying the most?

Poppy: I really like one of my science teachers and I really enjoy French and English and music and drama and art and games. And geography

Interviewer: Are there any lessons you don't enjoy?

Poppy: I prefer primary school maths more than secondary school maths and one of my science teachers isn't great

Interviewer: Okay. Do you want to do well at school?

Poppy: Yes

Interviewer: And do you enjoy challenges

Poppy: Yes

Interviewer: Are there any teachers that have helped you to settle in?

Poppy: My form tutor Miss P and my drama teachers and my French teacher

Interviewer: Great!

You mentioned your one Science teacher. Can you tell me why they aren't great?

Poppy: They don't understand that I find things hard to see, so when I told her she just said that the rest of my team should be able to see it.

Interviewer: Oh dear...

You referred to a map earlier. Are you managing to find your way around your school?

Poppy: Yeah, it's actually quite easy when you know what's in different buildings

Interviewer: That's good. What do you do during lunch time?

Poppy: I go into the canteen and I normally get a hot meal. Then I either go into the library go to a club or I go under the dome

Interviewer: Can you tell me what's under the dome means?

Poppy: There is a big canvas dome in the middle of the playground

Interviewer: Do you chat to your friends there?

Poppy: Yeah

Interviewer: Can you tell me about your friends? New friends? Old friends?

Poppy: Mainly old friends but I have talked to new people and I have made a few new friends

Interviewer: Lovely

Has anyone asked you about your cleft or any other part of your face?

Poppy: No

Interviewer: Do you feel that anyone has noticed this?

Poppy: Maybe. But I don't worry about it

Interviewer: And have you wanted to tell anyone about this? Maybe a new person?

Poppy: I have told my form during a 'what makes me different' exercise but they all accepted it without a second thought

Interviewer: Thanks Poppy. Just a few more questions.

Poppy: Ok

Interviewer: How are you finding your new routine?

Poppy: I'm finding it good

Interviewer: Do you feel more independent?

Poppy: Yeah

Interviewer: And do you have support from your parents or brother at home?

Poppy: Yes, my family including my cat has been very supportive

Interviewer: Your cat? How have they been supportive?

Poppy: He has sat on my bed at night and given me cuddles

Interviewer: Lovely.

Do your parents help with homework?

Poppy: Yeah they're both teachers so that helps

Interviewer: That does help. Which clubs are you involved in at school?

Poppy: I do choir netball, football, rock school and this week I'm going to start drama

Interviewer: And do you enjoy all of them?

Poppy: Yeah

Interviewer: Is there anything that has been different from what you expected?

Poppy: I thought I would enjoy maths more

Interviewer: Is there anything that is more difficult than you expected?

Poppy: Not really

Interviewer: Is there anything that you wanted to tell me about the first week at school that we haven't talked about?

Poppy: No

Interviewer: Thanks for the input Poppy. Hope you have a lovely party later!

Poppy: Thank you

**Nathan online snapshot\_1**

Interviewer: Hi Nathan, how are you?

Nathan: Good

Interviewer: Can you tell me about your first week at school?

Nathan: It was cool

Interviewer: Why was it cool?

Nathan: We learned lots of new subject like dance and I did some rugby on Saturday

Interviewer: How are you feeling about your new school?

Nathan: Good because my brother also went there

Interviewer: So you were happy to go back today?

Nathan: Yes because I was looking forward to seeing my friend

Interviewer: Which lessons are you enjoying?

Nathan: I really like maths and dance also PE but not RE

Interviewer: Can you tell me why you don't like RE?

Nathan: Because it wasn't our proper teacher it was a cover teacher

Interviewer: How are you finding the work itself?

Nathan: BORING!!!!!!!!!!

Interviewer: Is this for RE only?

Nathan: I enjoy some of it but I don't really like writing long pieces of work e.g. English and RE

Interviewer: Ok

Do you want to do well at school?

Nathan: Yes because I think learning is important

Interviewer: Do you enjoy challenges?

Nathan: Yep

Interviewer: Are you managing to find your way around the school?

Nathan: At last

Interviewer: Was it a challenge to start with?

Nathan: Yes because the teachers have there own pathway that children can't go on

Interviewer: Were there any teachers that helped you settle in easier?

Nathan: We have a teacher that goes everywhere with us.

Interviewer: And that helps?

Nathan: Yeah, because we know where we're going



Interviewer: And any teachers you don't like?

Nathan: One of my Spanish teachers

Interviewer: Can you tell me why?

Nathan: She's a bit too strict

Interviewer: Can you tell what you do during lunch time?

Nathan: Eat and talk

Interviewer: Can you tell me about your friends? New and old.

Nathan: I went to the park to play football with my old friends yesterday

Interviewer: And have you made any new friends?

Nathan: And I went to my new friends house on Friday with my other friend aswell

Interviewer: So which friend were you happy to see today?

Nathan: My old friend doesn't go to the same school

Interviewer: Has anyone asked you about your cleft?

Nathan: No

Interviewer: Do you feel that anyone has noticed this?

Nathan: No

Interviewer: Have you wanted to tell anyone about it?

Nathan: I have

Interviewer: Ok

Can you tell me who you've told?

Nathan: My friends Jack and Joe

Interviewer: Are they new friends, not from primary school?

Nathan: New

Interviewer: Can you tell me about their reactions?

Nathan: They weren't very interested

Interviewer: Thanks for answering those questions Nathan.

So, how are you finding your new routine?

Nathan: Good apart from waking up in the morning

Interviewer: And do you feel more independent?

Nathan: Yeah

Interviewer: Do you have support from your parents or brother at home?

Nathan: With homework

Interviewer: What about school-clubs? Are you starting any?

Nathan: I just finished my breakdancing club

Interviewer: That sounds interesting.

Is there anything that has been different from what you expected?

Nathan: The strictness of the teachers

Interviewer: Is there anything that is more difficult than you had expected?

Nathan: No

Interviewer: Is there anything you wanted to tell me that we haven't talked about for your first week at school?

Nathan: I got in the school rugby team

Interviewer: Well done! How did that make you feel?

Nathan: thumbs up emoji, thumbs up emoji

Interviewer: Thanks for chatting Nathan (smiley face emoji) Have a good week. I look forward to hearing more about school in your vlogs.

Nathan: Thanks (smiley face emoji)

**Rebecca online snapshot\_1**

Interviewer: Hi Rebecca, how are you?

Rebecca: Good thanks

Interviewer: Can you tell me about your first week at school?

Rebecca: It was really fun because I had different lessons from the one I use to have.

Interviewer: That sounds good. How are you feeling about your new school?

Rebecca: I'm settling in well. It's starting to feel more normal not so new

Interviewer: So you were happy to go back for your second week?

Rebecca: Yes because I got to make friends and meet more of my teachers

Interviewer: Great. Which lessons are you enjoying?

Rebecca: Drama, PE and music

Interviewer: And are there any lessons that you don't enjoy?

Rebecca: No, they are all really fun. Science is another I really like

Interviewer: Do you plan on achieving certain results?

Rebecca: I hope to do well in English, maths, science and music

Interviewer: Is it important to you to do well at school?

Rebecca: I find it important because it can decide on your future

Interviewer: Ok. And how are you finding your way around school – are you okay with this?

Rebecca: I haven't got lost yet as it is split into easy to navigate sections

Interviewer: Are there any teachers who have helped you in some way to settle in?

Rebecca: All of the teachers are really nice so it makes the transition easier

Interviewer: Good. Can you tell me what you do during lunch time?

Rebecca: I talk with friends and on Tuesday I do a netball club

Interviewer: Lovely. Can you tell me a bit more about your friends. New friends, old friends? You did mention you had met some friends.

Rebecca: I hang out with my three old friends still but sometimes play with the two new friends I have made

Interviewer: Have any of your friends been really helpful during this week? Maybe finding a new class, or chatting at lunch together? Just making you feel more comfortable.

Rebecca: Two of my new friends have been making me feel welcome.

Interviewer: Can you tell me how they've done that?

Rebecca: They have let me join in with them at lunch and group work

Interviewer: Good. So, has anyone asked you about your cleft?

Rebecca: No they haven't noticed at all

Interviewer: And have you told anyone about this?

Rebecca: No not yet as I haven't felt the need to

Interviewer: Ok, thanks. How are you finding your new routine?

Rebecca: The new routine is fine and the cycle into school is a nice one at times

Interviewer: Do you feel more independent?

Rebecca: A lot as I get to go to school by myself

Interviewer: And you feel okay with this?

Rebecca: Yes I feel more grown up and responsible

Interviewer: You mentioned that you are part of a netball club. Are you interested in any of the other school clubs offered?

Rebecca: The choir and string ensemble sound good

Interviewer: Great. Last few questions

Is there anything that has been different from what you expected?

Rebecca: I thought it would be scarier and bigger because I thought the older people wouldn't be as welcoming

Interviewer: Okay. Is there anything else that is better than expected?

Rebecca: The teachers are really nice and some are really funny

Interviewer: And is there anything that is more difficult that you expected?

Rebecca: No, not really

Interviewer: Rebecca, is there anything you wanted to tell me about your first week at school that we haven't talked about?

Rebecca: No, thanks

Interviewer: Thanks so much for chatting to me, Rebecca. Hope you have a lovely weekend.

Rebecca: Thanks and you too

**Sophie online snapshot\_1**

Interviewer: Hi Sophie, how are you?

Sophie: I'm really good thanks. How are you?

Interviewer: I'm well, thanks. Can you tell me about your first few weeks at school?

Sophie: Yes sure, they have been great.

Interviewer: How are you feeling about your new school?

Sophie: I really like it but it is quite stressful at the moment

Interviewer: Can you tell me why?

Sophie: Just getting used to it and having new friends and more homework as well as having moved house

Interviewer: Very busy. Which lessons are you enjoying?

Sophie: I'm really enjoying Spanish, Science, Mandarin and drama

Interviewer: Any you're not enjoying?

Sophie: PE as I generally don't like sport very much

Interviewer: And how are you finding the work itself?

Sophie: Mostly fine

Interviewer: Do you plan on achieving certain results?



Sophie: Yes especially in Maths, science, drama, Spanish, Latin, music and English

Interviewer: And how are you managing to find your way around the school?

Sophie: I'm quite good at finding places

Interviewer: Are there any teachers who have helped you?

Sophie: Not really because I haven't really needed it

Interviewer: Ok. Any teachers who you don't like?

Sophie: One of my history and geography teachers I just don't find that easy to understand and get along with.

Interviewer: Can you tell me what you do at lunch time?

Sophie: We don't have a proper lunchbreak. We have 2 activity days a few lessons after lunch and on the other days we get changed for sport.

Interviewer: Do you have a time for a break or to eat something?

Sophie: We eat lunch at 12pm and have a 15 minute break at 11am

Interviewer: Can you tell me about your friends? How's that going?

Sophie: I have a few friends who are nice but there is one girl who isn't very nice

Interviewer: Can you tell me why?

Sophie: I think she feels pressured to be the best and doesn't want others to be better

Interviewer: And has anyone asked you about your cleft?

Sophie: Luckily not but I'm sure that they see it still but feel afraid to ask

Interviewer: You think they've noticed?

Sophie: Maybe

Interviewer: Do you want to tell anyone about it yet?

Sophie: A few close friends know but I don't mind telling people if they ask

Interviewer: Can I ask, why do you think they've noticed it?

Sophie: Because my nose looks different in person and there is some bruising from the lip repair surgery still.

Interviewer: Do you feel that they look at certain parts of your face?

Sophie: No not really

Interviewer: Ok. Thanks for answering those questions. Just a few more.

Sophie: Ok

Interviewer: How are you feeling about your new routine?

Sophie: It feels quite normal now

Interviewer: Do you feel more independent?

Sophie: yes

Interviewer: Do you have support from your parents?

Sophie: A bit

Interviewer: Can you tell me how they support you?

Sophie: Telling me when and where my extra curricular activities are, helping with organisation

Interviewer: And how is it going with school clubs an activities?

Sophie: Good

Interviewer: Have you started any new ones?

Sophie: Yes, dissection club, choirs, dance

Interviewer: They sound interesting.

Is there anything that has been different from what you expected?

Sophie: Not really

Interviewer: Is there anything better than what you expected?

Sophie: My common room and the lunches

Interviewer: Is there anything that is more difficult than you had expected?

Sophie: Mandarin lessons

Interviewer: Is there anything you wanted to tell me about your first week at school that we haven't talked about?

Sophie: No

Interviewer: Thanks Sophie. Have a good week (smiley face emoji).

Sophie: Ok, bye (thumbs up emoji)

**Bella online snapshot\_2**

Date: 03/10/2018

Interviewer: Hi Bella, how are you?

Bella: Good

Bella: I went to the hospital yesterday

Interviewer: How did it go?

Bella: Good

Interviewer: How have the past few weeks been? Any changes since we last spoke?

Bella: I got my tooth build up at the hospital yesterday

Interviewer: How do you feel about that?

Bella: it felt really weird

Interviewer: And how are things at school?

Bella: It's alright I was nervous today about my tooth, I had to try eat soft food too

Interviewer: Can you tell me why you felt nervous about it?

Bella: I was worried I might chip it as it's my front tooth and it hard to bite

Bella: I was a bit worried someone might ask about it but they didn't notice

Interviewer: Ah, ok. Did you tell anyone about it?

Bella: Just two friends and my mentor

Interviewer: Is your mentor from school?

Bella: Yes she's like a form tutor

Interviewer: So, how are you feeling about your new teachers?

Bella: Alright

Bella: Some are strict

Interviewer: Has anyone been really helpful?

Bella: Some older kids been asking if I'm alright and stuff

Interviewer: Does that help you?

Bella: It makes me feel happy and safe

Interviewer: Good. Does it feel better if you feel safe?

Bella: Yeah

Interviewer: And how are your lessons?

Bella: Some teachers are really strict which I don't like

Interviewer: So do you enjoy the lesson less if the teacher is strict?

Bella: I find them scary but I try to do my best but it does kind of put me off

Interviewer: Are there any lessons you look forward to?

Bella: Art maths DT food and pe

Bella: Music dance and drama

Interviewer: Art? Last time we spoke, you mentioned that this teacher was very strict.

Bella: I have two art teachers

Bella: The girl is nice but the man is strict

Interviewer: Ok.

Bella: He's also the deputy head

Bella: Really fun

Interviewer: Are there any similarities to primary school?

Bella: They both had uniform

Interviewer: And any differences

Bella: Everything

Interviewer: Can you tell me more?

Bella: The classes are different

Interviewer: How are you finding the work itself?

Bella: There is a lot of writing (emoji)

Interviewer: Is it challenging for you?

Bella: Yes and there's lots of homework

Bella: And things to remember

Interviewer: Have you felt any competition yet?

Bella: In art my teacher said I was doing well and keep it up

Interviewer: Great. Do you like competition with yourself or others OR both?

Bella: Just myself

Interviewer: If you have a problem in school or outside, how do you try to solve it?

Bella: Tell my parents and my mentor

Interviewer: Do you still see your friends from primary school

Bella: Yeah I walk with one of them

Interviewer: Have you made any new friends?

Bella: A few

Interviewer: How are you finding that?

Bella: Some people stare



Interviewer: Can you tell me how that makes you feel?

Bella: Sad (Sad face emoji)

Bella: it makes me shy

Interviewer: Are any new friends making it easier?

Bella: It's more my old friends

Bella: But some of my old friends are also annoying cause they swear a lot which I don't like

Interviewer: How are you finding the school clubs?

Bella: I really like netball

Interviewer: Can you tell me why you like it?

Bella: Cause I love shooting hoops and playing against people

Interviewer: What about homework - how are you finding this?

Bella: Hard

Bella: I get a Lot

Interviewer: So it's the amount you get?

Bella: Yeah

Interviewer: Has life at home changed since you started secondary school?

Bella: It's busy

Interviewer: Was it less busy when you were in primary?

Bella: Yes

Interviewer: Do you still chat to your mum and dad about school each day?

Bella: Yes I always tell them what I did

Interviewer: Does that help?

Bella: Yeah so then they can tell me if I should ask my teacher for more help or not

Interviewer: Is there anything that has been different from what you expected?

Bella: I've been more tired

Interviewer: Is there anything better than you expected?

Bella: The food

Bella: And it's not as scary

Interviewer: Is there anything more difficult than what you thought?

Bella: Homework and lots of writing

Interviewer: Is there anything else we haven't spoken about that you'd like to tell me about?

Bella: No that's all I think (emoji)

Interviewer: Thanks Bella! I'm looking forward to hearing your vlogs!

Bella: My mums going to upload them tonight

Interviewer: Great (Thumbs up emoji x3)

Bella: Goodbye (Hand waving emoji)

**Lucy online snapshots (2)**

Interviewer: Hi Lucy, how are you doing?

Lucy: Well thank you

Interviewer: How have you found the first few weeks of school?

Lucy: Good knowing my way round now

Interviewer: Has that helped you?

Lucy: Yes so I'm on time for my classes

Interviewer: And how are you finding your new teachers?

Lucy: OK I still don't like my English teacher

Interviewer: Can you tell me why?

Lucy: she is still very crouchy and nearly always cross

Interviewer: Are there any helpful teachers?

Lucy: Maybe my form tutor she's always helpful

Interviewer: And how are your lessons going?

Lucy: Good I like my DT lessons the best

Interviewer: And you're finding the changes between classes better?

Lucy: Yes I know where I'm going

Interviewer: Are there any similarities to primary school when you think about your new routine?

Lucy: That I have to get out on time and eating breakfast at home

Interviewer: How are you finding the school work itself?

Lucy: Harder than primary work and a lot of homework

Interviewer: What about achievements? Have you considered these?

Lucy: On the first week I did a victory dance every time I got to the right lesson on the right time

Interviewer: Sounds great. Are you feeling that there's any competition yet?

Lucy: What do you mean?

Interviewer: Have you felt any competition? In class with other students or just with yourself.

Lucy: Just with me being on time

Interviewer: And if you have a problem, how do you try to solve it?

Lucy: Ask a teacher or try and solve it

Interviewer: Do you still see or chat to your friends from primary school?

Lucy: Yes I use Whatsapp

Interviewer: And have any of the people in your new school helped you to settle in?

Lucy: My friends from guides

Interviewer: Has anybody made it harder?

Lucy: My English and history teachers they want me to write a paragraph in 2 minutes

Interviewer: How are your new friendships going?

Lucy: Good

Interviewer: Have you told anyone about your cleft?

Lucy: No not really

Interviewer: Has anyone asked you about it?

Lucy: No I think they know a bit more about it and they are generally more polite

Interviewer: How do you think they know a bit more about it?

Lucy: Because they probably learnt it in class

Interviewer: Did your class talk about it?

Lucy: No not really

Interviewer: How are you finding the clubs at school?

Lucy: Have you seen my vlog yet my dad sent it to you

Interviewer: Not yet, but I will look later. Thanks!

Interviewer: So you have a lot of homework?

Lucy: Fun I'm doing practical club you get to use power tools

Interviewer: That sounds fun!

Interviewer: Has life at home changed since you started secondary school?

Lucy: Yes on the worst days I have about 4 pieces of homework

Lucy: Yes I'm always doing homework and asking for someone to help me

Interviewer: And are you still chatting to you mum and dad everyday about school?

Lucy: Not really anymore because they know what I do now

Interviewer: Okay. Is there anything that has been different from what you expected?

Lucy: Not really except that I did not realize how big it was

Interviewer: Is there anything better than you expected?

Lucy: No

Interviewer: Is there anything more difficult than you thought?

Lucy: The homework

Interviewer: Since we last spoke, is there anyone or anything that has made any difference for you during this transition?

Lucy: My friends and form teacher

Interviewer: Just checking...you mean new friends or friends you knew from guides

Lucy: My friends in general

Interviewer: Ok, great. Thanks Lucy (Thumbs up emoji) Have a restful evening!

Lucy: you to (Panda face emoji)

### **Poppy online snapshot (2)**

Duration: 00:38:43

Date:02/10/2018

Interviewer: Hi Poppy, how are you?

Poppy: Good

Interviewer: How have the first few weeks of school been?

Poppy: Good

Interviewer: Any changes since the last time we chatted?

Poppy: I've had some issues with my friends, but the school has been good



Interviewer: Ok. Maybe we can chat more about that later. Are there any teachers that are really helpful?

Poppy: Yeah

Interviewer: Can you tell me how they've helped?

Poppy: The SENCO has given me an iPad so I can see the boards better

Interviewer: That's good.

Interviewer: How are finding your lessons?

Poppy: Good

Interviewer: Any you look forward too?

Poppy: French, music and drama

Interviewer: How are you finding the changes between classes?

Poppy: Good

Poppy: It's quite easy to find your way around

Interviewer: Are there any similarities to primary school?

Poppy: Sort of

Interviewer: Can you tell me what they are?

Poppy: We have assembly's and some of our lessons are similar

Interviewer: Are you feeling challenged by the work itself

Poppy: Yeah

Poppy: Sort of

Interviewer: And do you like competition?

Poppy: Yeah

Interviewer: Have you felt any competition yet?

Poppy: I have felt more challenged in some lessons than others

Interviewer: Do you like competition with yourself or others OR both?

Poppy: Both

Poppy: Mostly

Interviewer: If you have a problem at school. How do you try to solve it?

Poppy: I talk to my parents or sometimes I can solve it

Interviewer: So, how do you feel about talking about your friends?

Poppy: I'm upset about it and I'd rather not talk about it

Interviewer: Okay. Can we chat about your cleft or is this also related to your friends?

Poppy: No its not related to my cleft

Interviewer: Has anyone asked you about your cleft? I know that you shared this in class, so maybe someone else.

Poppy: No

Interviewer: Do you feel that anyone stares at you?

Poppy: No

Interviewer: How are you finding the clubs at school?

Poppy: Really good

Interviewer: Can you tell me why they're really good?

Poppy: I really enjoy them

Interviewer: Do you enjoy learning new things there, or having fun or making new friends there?

Poppy: The first two and sometimes the third one

Interviewer: Great. How are you finding the homework?

Poppy: Ok

Interviewer: Do you think life at home has changed since you started secondary school?

Poppy: No

Interviewer: Are you still chatting to your mum, dad and your cat about your school day?

Poppy: Yep

Interviewer: Is there anything that has been different from what you expected?

Poppy: A few things

Interviewer: Can you tell me what they are?

Poppy: Some of my lessons have been a bit different in a good way

Interviewer: And is there anything better than you expected?

Poppy: Some of my lessons

Interviewer: Is there anything more difficult than expected?

Poppy: Maths

Interviewer: Can you tell me why?

Poppy: It's quite hard maths and it's very fast pace

Interviewer: Last question... is there anything or anyone that has made any difference for you during this transition?

Poppy: The visual impairment guy has made a good difference and the senco

Interviewer: Great. I'd really like to hear one of your vlogs soon, and maybe when you're ready and you feel ok to share, you could try vlog about your friends. Only if you're ok to do that (smiley face)

Interviewer: Thanks for chatting Poppy!

Poppy: Bye

Interviewer: Have a lovely evening

**Nathan online snapshot\_2**

Date: 01/10/2018

Duration: 00:40:00

Interviewer: Hi Nathan, how are you?

Nathan: Ok

Interviewer: How have you found the first few weeks of school?

Nathan: fine

Interviewer: Any change since we last chatted?

Nathan: No

Interviewer: Are there any teachers that have helped you?

Nathan: They made sure I knew what I was doing

Interviewer: That's useful.

And how are your lessons going?

Nathan: Fine. Our groups haven't been split yet into different abilities.

Interviewer: Do you want them to be split?

Nathan: Sometimes but I want to be with my friends

Interviewer: And how are you finding the changes between classes?

Nathan: Easy because I know where they all are

Interviewer: Last time you told me about getting into the rugby team. How's that going?

Nathan: Cool I've learnt a lot more about how to play

Interviewer: Great! Do you enjoy competition?

Nathan: Uhuh. It makes me play better

Interviewer: Competition with yourself or against others, or both?

Nathan: Both

Interviewer: If you had a problem at school, how do you try to solve it?

Nathan: ask a teacher

Interviewer: And do you still see your primary school friends?

Nathan: yeah, I went to the park with him on Saturday

Interviewer: And is there anyone else (besides a teacher) that has helped you at school?

Nathan: I haven't needed help from anyone else yet.

Interviewer: And has anyone made school more difficult for you?

Nathan: No

Apart from someone who threw my socks in a hole

Interviewer: Oh dear! Can you tell me a little more about this?

Nathan: I wasn't there when it happened

Interviewer: Do you know who it was and why they did it?

Nathan: It was a boy called ..., but I don't know why he did it

Interviewer: How did it make you feel?

Nathan: Annoyed! I had to walk home with no socks on

Interviewer: That's not nice. Can you tell me about your new friends?

Nathan: Only the same ones since we last spoke

Interviewer: And has anyone asked you about your cleft?

Nathan: No

Interviewer: You had mentioned it to two of your friends. Do you feel like anyone stares at you?

Nathan: No

Interviewer: And how are you finding the school clubs?

Nathan: Cool I learned some more moves today

Interviewer: Great! Have you made any friends there?

Nathan: My friend Joe goes as well

Interviewer: Does that make it more fun?



Nathan: Yup

Interviewer: What about homework – how's that going?

Nathan: I had to do 3 pieces today AN OUTRAGE!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Interviewer: More than primary school?

Nathan: Way more

Interviewer: And do you think life at home has changed since you started secondary?

Nathan: Not much apart from Mondays when I am HOME ALONE

Interviewer: How does that feel?

Nathan: I feel RESPONSIBLE

Interviewer: Is that okay or not okay?

Nathan: OKAY

Interviewer: Do you chat to your parents and your brother about school?

Nathan: Not much

Interviewer: Do you have help with homework

Nathan: Yah

Interviewer: Is there anything that has been different from what you expected? Now that you are a full month at your new school.

Nathan: Not really

Interviewer: is there anything better than you expected?

Nathan: The length of days (they end really quickly)

Interviewer: Can you tell me why that's better?

Nathan: Because it means I am in school for less time

Interviewer: Can you tell me if anything or anyone that has made any difference for you during this transition?

Nathan: My family and my tutor

Interviewer: Can you tell me how they've helped?

Nathan: They make sure I've got everything

Interviewer: And that is important to you?

Nathan: Yes

Interviewer: Great. Thanks Nathan. Have a lovely week.

Nathan: Thanks. See ya later

**Rebecca online snapshot\_2**

Interviewer: Hi Rebecca, how are you?

Rebecca: Good

Interviewer: How are you finding school? Any changes since we last spoke?

Rebecca: Good I am settling more. Some of the work is getting harder

Interviewer: How do you feel about the work getting harder?

Rebecca: Fine, it means getting challenging and that means the lessons are better

Interviewer: Are there any teachers who have helped you during this settling in time?

Rebecca: Every teacher is really nice and I have had a few questions since I have started wearing my haha again and they have given suggestions to me if I am struggling

Interviewer: What are you wearing?

Rebecca: Haha=baha! Which is my bone conducting hearing aid

Interviewer: Ok... got it. And what about the lessons? Any you really enjoy?

Rebecca: Music, science and drama are my favourite lessons

Interviewer: Great. How about finding your way around? The moving between classes.

Rebecca: Fine there is a really nice layout of the school as it split into sections for the houses

Interviewer: Are there any similarities to your primary school?

Rebecca: A few but there are a lot of differences

Interviewer: Can you explain what some of them are?

Rebecca: The similarities are that some of the lessons English, maths and R.E. are the same

Interviewer: And the differences?

Rebecca: The lesson times, the route school and lessons like music and science

Interviewer: you mentioned that the work is harder, so you're feeling more challenged. Have you thought about any achievements?

Rebecca: I am trying to become as good as I can at every lesson and to try not to get a red comment this year

Interviewer: Have you felt any competition with other students in your classes?

Rebecca: My friend Rose and I are very competitive in P.E

Interviewer: How do you feel about that?

Rebecca: I don't mind a bit of friendly competition

Interviewer: If you have a problem, how do you try to solve it?

Rebecca: I try to stay calm get help or find a solution

Interviewer: Do you still see or chat to your friends from primary school?

Rebecca: I chat to as many of my primary friends as possible and meet up with them when I can

Interviewer: And how are your new friendships going?

Rebecca: Good they are really funny and nice

Interviewer: Has anyone really helped you to settle in to the school?

Rebecca: All of my new friends are helping to settle in

Interviewer: Has anyone made it harder?

Rebecca: No

Interviewer: How are you feeling about your cleft? Have you spoken to anyone about this?

Rebecca: No

Rebecca: Fine

Interviewer: Has anyone asked you about this?

Rebecca: No

Interviewer: Do you talk about it to your new friends?

Rebecca: No

Interviewer: How are you finding the clubs at school?

Rebecca: Fun I am in a string group, a choir and a netball team

Interviewer: Can you tell me why you enjoy to them?

Rebecca: They are fun and things I enjoy and everybody is friendly

Interviewer: How are you finding the homework?

Rebecca: One week I got a lot but I have kept on top of it so far

Interviewer: Has life at home changed since you started secondary school?

Rebecca: They are starting to feel like I have done it for years

Interviewer: Do you chat to your mum and dad about school each day?

Rebecca: Yes they like to know what has happened and I like telling them

Interviewer: And do you talk to your brother about it?

Rebecca: Not really

Interviewer: Is there anything that has been different from what you expected?

Rebecca: Yes the school is easy to find your way around

Interviewer: Is anything better than you expected?

Rebecca: P.E. is really fun

Interviewer: Is there anything that is more difficult than you had expected?

Rebecca: No

Interviewer: Since the last time we spoke, is there anything or anyone that has made any difference for you during your transition to secondary school?

Rebecca: No

Interviewer: Thanks Rebecca! I hope you have a lovely weekend (smiley face)

Rebecca: Thank you bye (smiley face)

**Sophie online snapshot\_2**

Interviewer: Hi Sophie, how are you?

Sophie: I'm ok, thanks. How are you?

Interviewer: I'm well, thanks. How has school been the past few weeks?

Sophie: It had been good. Unfortunately today I was not at school as I was sick

Interviewer: Oh dear. Hope you're feeling better now.

Sophie: yes

Interviewer: Can you tell me about your teachers?

Sophie: They're good

Interviewer: Any that have helped you settle in well?

Sophie: Yes but there are lots of other people such as my friends and family who have mainly helped me with that

Interviewer: Great. Anyone who has hindered your start at secondary?

Sophie: There is one girl in my year, who has said some things but now lots of people have caught onto it so not many people hang round her anymore so it doesn't bother me too much.

Interviewer: Can you tell me some of the things she has said?



Sophie: As you may or may not know a couple of weeks ago I had a cleft checkup at my request to talk with the team about future surgeries and changing parts of my nose and lip. People started asking and then she found out that I might get my lips filled and she started to say that I was going to be “Kim Kardashian” and things similar

Interviewer: Can I ask how it made you feel?

Sophie: I am quite strong with things like that due to past experience so it didn't effect me too much.

Interviewer: So how you've dealt with similar things in the past has helped you now?

Sophie: I had a bad experience and it really affected me so now I had learnt that if someone is going to say something they have nothing better to do and you have to be the bigger person and go get on with your life.

Interviewer: Thanks for sharing that with me Sophie.

How are you doing with your lessons – any you look forward to?

Sophie: I'm really enjoying lessons and getting into the more abnormal subjects like mandarin. I am really excited for our three day team bonding residential next week.

Interviewer: That's with your school?

Sophie: Yes with school

Interviewer: Where are you going?

Sophie: Kent, I think.

Interviewer: Lovely. So how are you finding the changes between classes and general layout of the school?

Sophie: I'm really starting to get used to it now, especially as it is week 6 for us.

Interviewer: Are there any similarities to primary?

Sophie: Not really other than similar sized classes, different teachers and rooms for lessons.

Interviewer: And any other differences that you've noticed?

Sophie: Our school has a very college like and campus feeling and now we are the small kids instead of being nearly the oldest.

Interviewer: Do you feel small again?

Sophie: Not really "small" but physically smaller.

Interviewer: Are you feeling challenged with the school work?

Sophie: Not massively

Interviewer: Do you enjoy competition?

Sophie: Yes but not in huge amounts

Interviewer: Have you felt any completion yet? Either with other students or even with yourself, or both?

Sophie: Not really because now it just feels natural that we are all smart and individually good at certain things.

Interviewer: If you have a problem, how do you try to solve it?

Sophie: I go with what is logical or what comes naturally.

Interviewer: Would you ask others for help?

Sophie: If I felt I needed it

Interviewer: Do you still see your primary school friends?

Sophie: I haven't seen anyone yet but we are planning a meet up in the next couple of weeks.

Interviewer: And how are your new friendships going?

Sophie: They're good. I am really enjoying a new fresh set of friendships

Interviewer: Can I ask if you have a group of friends or one/two new friends?

Sophie: A group of friends but `I don't just stick to them I like to have a wide range of people to be friends with

Interviewer: You mentioned the earlier incident with your lips. Have you spoken to anyone about your cleft?

Sophie: No but I decided to tell my class mates about it last Friday so that I wouldn't have a ton of people asking as more people started to realize but no one has said anything since.

Interviewer: And how was thier response at the time?

Sophie: No one said anything. To be honest I have no clue

Interviewer: How did it make you feel, telling them?

Sophie: At the start, I was embarrassed but I was really glad I did it

Interviewer: Can you tell me why you were glad?

Sophie: Just because it feels like a weight off my shoulders

Interviewer: Ok, thanks Sophie.

So, how are the clubs going at school?

Sophie: I am really enjoying it.

Interviewer: Do you meet more friends there?

Sophie: Yes but usually they are older than me so kind of

Interviewer: And how is the homework?

Sophie: I am managing to do it

Interviewer: Is there a lot?

Sophie: I don't find it a lot but I know that other kids in my year do

Interviewer: Has life at home changed since you started secondary school?

Sophie: Not massively really

Interviewer: Do you chat to your parents about your school day?

Sophie: Yes most days

Interviewer: is there anything that has been different from what you expected, during this school transition?

Sophie: Yes, activities after school

Interviewer: Can you tell me a little about them?

Sophie: They are open to almost anyone and there is so many different choices and opportunities

Interviewer: Which ones do you enjoy most?

Sophie: Dissection club and dance

Interviewer: Is there anything more difficult than you expected?

Sophie: Not really

Interviewer: Anything else you'd like to tell me about that has made a difference to your school transition at this stage?

Sophie: Not really

Interviewer: Thanks for sharing this with me. I hope you feel better soon (smiley face emoji)

Sophie: Ok, thanks

## TIME POINT 2: VLOG ENTRIES

### *Bella Vlog entry 1 (September)*

Hi, um, so I've been in school for 4 weeks now and I've got used to it and the uniform's alright now, and, um, yeah I got this new desk here and I'm using it for my homework and I'm piled with homework, so like on Monday, Geography, science, history and English are due on Monday and then Spanish and Maths for Wednesday, and the week later on Tuesday I've got Art and then DT, and then like everything else, and I'm just like ahhhh, but I'm doing it like now and tomorrow and all that stuff and I also got a watch which really helps and my maths teacher always says when a student says, 'what's the time sir?' and then he says, 'it's time you get a watch', oh yeah and then he's like 'nice watch' and I was like 'thank you'. Yeah it really helps because some teachers are really far away like in the hall and then some classes don't even have clocks, so I'm good, I'm lucky, so I help people. Yeah, I've done my Geography homework, I just need to do the rest and I'll tell you Monday how it went and I'll see you. Okay, bye.

### *Nathan Vlog entry 1 (September)*

Hello, my name is Nathan and I am just starting secondary school. My school is an all boys school and I've made some friends already, I went to the part with my friend, Noah yesterday and we played football, even though he doesn't like it and he's rubbish, also, my favourite subject is PE by far and we are doing rugby at the moment. I'm also doing rugby club on Saturday, it's fun because I get to learn a lot more about how to play. I've already learnt how to tackle and also how to make sure you don't lose the ball when you tackled, we also have to wear gum shields, but I can't wear mine because it doesn't fit and it really hurts my gum.

The annoying thing about secondary school is the amount of homework I need to do, that reminds me I have to do some in a minute. One of my friends nearly got a detention just because his mom bought the wrong colour tie, strict right? Another thing is in the main part of my school there's a bridge that only teachers can go on.

Whoops my dinner's ready, see you later.

### ***Rebecca Vlog entry 1 (September)***

I'm finding school quite, quite big at the moment, it's like split into different sections which are colour coded for each house, so that makes it easier to find my way around, but its still quite big because I'm quite...

Um, the thing I was most looking forward to was making new friends in new lessons like Art and Music, um, and probably the worst thing was having to much homework cause I was like stressing out and I didn't want to forget a piece of homework, um the other, like in reality the best thing in the world is the new lessons and how fun they were and how like more advanced they are than in primary school. The worst thing were actually, um, was actually like getting around occasionally because it can be really busy and lots can be going on and it can make you feel a bit anxious and I've been like trying to deal with that in my first week but it's actually not to bad to deal with, its just like a new school and it can be a bit stressful.

And, um in my first week I found there was this really nice guy that I sit next to called Redford and he can be really funny and silly, sometimes he can be over chatty in lessons, but he's actually really nice. Um, my best lesson is probably music because I'm a cellist and I love playing the cello and I'm doing really well in music as well and I really like the teacher, she can be like funny and she's really nice, ah, the worst lesson is probably history, not because of the lesson because I really like history, it's the teacher, the teacher can be like really dronny and that make it less exciting. The general lesson plan can be really good, but it's not always fun in the way she does it.

Um, lunch time can be really busy and quite noisy but it's not to bad, I just have to wait in line chat to my friends and then go over once my name has been called.

Getting to and from school is quite a nice route near the end because I go past this river and these trees and it's really relaxing, but sometime it can be a bit of rush if I leave the house late because we have a level crossing and that can go down at anytime so if I'm not careful I can be late if I get caught up with the level crossing.

### ***Lucy Vlog entry 1 (October)***

Hello Katharine, um, today in my vlog I'm going to talk about what I do on Tuesdays, which is tomorrow so first I have my tutor called Ms Land, next I have Art with my tutor, then I have drama with Ms Lane, then I have break where you get to go into the canteen and have a snack and after break I have Science with Mrs Lille and then I have English with Mrs Line and then I have lunch. After lunch I have PSHE with my form tutor, then I have Design and Technology with Ms Lowe. Um, my favourite lesson of the day is design and technology because I like designing things and my teacher is quite nice. My second best thing from the day is Science because I like Science and inspecting stuff, um, that's it, bye

### ***Lucy Vlog entry 2 (October)***

Hi Katharine, today I'm going to be talking about what I'm looking forward to in half term. I'm looking forward to half term because my cousins coming around for two days and I don't really see her that much, so I'm exciting about that. We might go bowling and go and have pizza, um, something good about school is most of the people in your form, even though in Primary school I knew everybody, but something not so great is the amount of homework that I have to do, like I've got three maths homework, French, Science and English, all to be in by Monday, um the biggest challenges this week are getting to classes on time and getting homework finished on time and getting to the bus stop, um, goodbye, bye.

### ***Nathan Vlog entry 2 (October)***

Hello, its me again, Nathan and um, I'm going to do another video so a today, this morning I did rugby club in all the rain and my mouth really hurts here (points to chin area), and it



was bleeding from rugby so a mouth guard really hurts when I wear it so I can't really wear that... I did score a try, actually no I scored two tries but one of them I didn't put it on the right line so like it failed. And, um, also Drawing Clubs, so on Thursday I'm in comic club, where um, I drew my name on a piece of paper cause its October, its called like 'Inktober', you have to draw in pen, not pencil, so on Friday, yesterday, I went to normal drawing club, where I drew a massive picture with my friend, yeah and then after that he came home to my house and we went swimming and he came back to my house, we had some dinner and then we played ps2, its really old, but um, and then on Wednesday, so a while back I was asked by the teacher to do a dance club so that was exciting and then I had to do this thing with like a year 11 where he rolls me around on the floor and its kind a scary to be honest, so that's all from me, bye, all from me, bye

**Time Point 3: Online Snapshot Interview Transcripts and Vlog Entries  
(Children only)**

**Bella online snapshots (3)**

Interviewer: Hi Bella, how are you?

Bella: Good but quiet tired from school

Interviewer: Is school very tiring?

Bella: Yes

Interviewer: Can you tell me how you felt about going back to school after half term?

Bella: I'm not sure... I wanted to go back but I enjoyed time off too

Interviewer: Can you tell me why you wanted to go back?

Bella: Because I like some lessons

Interviewer: Great. Which lessons do you like? And why do you like them?

Bella: Food tech, I love baking

Interviewer: Are there any other things about school that you enjoy?

Bella: Art because it is creative

Interviewer: And are there any parts of school life that you don't like?

Bella: History and re

Interviewer: Can you tell me why?

Bella: Because loads of people are always told off and it's the same teacher

Interviewer: And how are your friendships at school going?

Bella: I am kind of on my own

Interviewer: Can you tell me how you feel about that?

Bella: Alright but a bit alone

Interviewer: Can you tell me what happened to your friends?

Bella: They got new friends and have said bad things so I am alone but some people are ok

Interviewer: How did you feel about what they said?

Bella: A bit annoyed because of the swearing and I don't like people who swear

Interviewer: And what do you do during your lunch breaks?

Bella: Speak to some friends or sit on my own and think and eat

Interviewer: So there are some other friends that you do talk to?

Bella: Yes

Interviewer: Can I ask how it makes you feel to sit and eat alone?

Bella: Some times alright

Bella: I don't really mind if I sit alone

Interviewer: Is there anyone who has really helped you during the start at your new school?

Bella: My parents and two friends

Interviewer: Are these friends from your new school?

Bella: No

Bella: And yes

Interviewer: Can you tell me what that means?

Bella: One is from my old school and one was from somewhere else and then I saw her again in my new school

Interviewer: Ok. And they've been helpful?

Bella: A bit

Interviewer: Are you still friends

Bella: Yes

Interviewer: Do you think friendship is important at school?

Bella: Yes

Interviewer: Can you tell me why?

Bella: Because you need to stick together

Interviewer: What are you sticking together for?

Bella: Because it is a big place and a small people

Interviewer: Can you tell me if think your cleft has played a part in your start to school?

Bella: I'm not sure

Interviewer: Why do you think that?

Bella: Because no one mentioned it but people have stared

Interviewer: Can you tell me how that makes you feel?

Bella: What starring?

Interviewer: Yes

Bella: I think it might be because I'm new or small or maybe my cleft

Interviewer: Ok. And how do you respond to the staring?

Bella: I just ignore it

Interviewer: Does that help you?

Bella: Yes kind of

Interviewer: Have you always done that? Just ignored it

Bella: Yes but depends on what they do

Interviewer: So you may respond differently?

Bella: Yes

Interviewer: Ok, thanks for those answers Bella. Has life at home changed since you started school?

Bella: Not really, a bit but mostly the same

Interviewer: Would it be your routine or homework? You said you were tired, did you feel this tired in primary school?

Bella: Both, and I didn't feel this tired in primary

Interviewer: Is there anything you'd like to tell me about school or clubs that we haven't talked about?

Bella: I didn't get picked for netball so I am not doing it anymore

Interviewer: Oh dear. How are feeling about this?

Bella: not great, but I enjoy food tech still.

Interviewer: Good. Thanks for your vlogs Bella, keep doing those please. And thanks for chatting to me

Bella: Ok I will bye

Interviewer: Bye



**Poppy online snapshots (3)**

Interviewer: No worries. Hi Poppy, how are you?

Poppy: Great thanks

Interviewer: That's good

Interviewer: Can you tell me how you were feeling about going back to school after half term?

Poppy: Good but I didn't want to go to some of my lessons. I saw friends over half term and I'm walking to school with a new group of my old school friends

Interviewer: Can you tell me why you didn't want to go to some of the lessons?

Poppy: History and Maths are boring. I don't like the teachers – the maths teacher doesn't explain anything and the History teacher is very strict

Interviewer: So it's about the teachers?

Poppy: Yes

Interviewer: And what about other things at school - do you enjoy your new routine, new friends, any challenges?

Poppy: Yes I like my new routine. I'm happier now that I'm spending time with other friends.

Poppy: Homework is a challenge. Getting it done and making sure I'm doing it really right



Interviewer: So besides Maths and History, are there anything/ anyone at school that makes you dislike it?

Poppy: Homework can be time consuming!

Poppy: No I don't dislike school.

Interviewer: Can you tell me about your friends at school?

Poppy: I have friends from St John's and I'm making new friends

Interviewer: Did you have other friends at the start?

Poppy: Yes

Interviewer: Can you tell me what happened with those friends?

Poppy: They started making new friends and leaving me out

Interviewer: Can I ask you how it made you feel?

Poppy: Upset and sad

Interviewer: It is upsetting

Interviewer: How did you manage that situation?

Interviewer: With the other friends...

Poppy: I moved on. I focused on people who made me happy

Interviewer: Can you tell me if anyone helped you during that time?

Poppy: My parents and my form tutor

Interviewer: Have you had to experience something like this before?

Poppy: In year 4 at ... (primary school), I had a similar experience

Interviewer: Do you think this other experience helped you now?

Poppy: Not really because the girl who helped me then is now the one who left me out

Interviewer: Oh dear. Can you tell me who or what makes you happy?

Poppy: My new friends my family my cat

Interviewer: Great! Can you tell me about your new friends?

Poppy: Some I know already from ... (primary school). They make me laugh and include me

Interviewer: Why do you think it's so important to feel included

Poppy: Because it makes feel happy

Interviewer: Do you think it's important to have friends at school?

Poppy: Yes

Interviewer: Why do you think that?

Poppy: So you are not lonely

Interviewer: Can I ask you if you think that your cleft made a difference to your start at school?

Poppy: No

Interviewer: And it had no role to play in your friendship changes?

Poppy: No

Interviewer: Have you started the clubs again at school?

Poppy: Yes netball and football

Interviewer: How are you finding these?

Poppy: Good

Interviewer: Thank you!

Interviewer: You mentioned the challenge of homework. Can you tell me about your life at home since you started secondary school

Poppy: Some of my weekends are homework based

Interviewer: Is that different to primary?

Poppy: A little bit

Interviewer: Anything else that has changed?

Poppy: No

Interviewer: Is there anything else you wanted to tell me? Maybe an achievement, other big challenges? Excitement about something?

Poppy: In March I am going on a netball tour

Interviewer: That sounds great! Are you excited?

Poppy: Yeah

Interviewer: Lovely. What position do you play?

Poppy: I like centre but I think I am better at defence

Interviewer: It's a great sport to play. Thanks for chatting Poppy. Hope you have a lovely week

Poppy: thanks, you to

### **Lucy online snapshots (3)**

Interviewer: Hi Lucy. Let me know when you're ready to start.

Lucy: I'm ready now I think

Interviewer: Great! How are you?

Lucy: Good, you?

Interviewer: I'm well, thanks.

Interviewer: Can you tell me how you were feeling about going back to school after half term?

Lucy: I felt excited to see my friends again

Interviewer: Are you enjoying your new school?

Lucy: Yes you have better lessons and more friends

Interviewer: So, you are enjoying having more friends?

Lucy: Yes because they are in most of your classes

Interviewer: Can you tell me why that's important?

Lucy: So then you're not the only one that doesn't know anybody

Interviewer: And are there any parts about school life that you are not enjoying?

Lucy: Getting up earlier and catching the bus

Interviewer: So the change to your routine?

Lucy: Yes

Interviewer: You mentioned your excitement about seeing your friends again. Can you tell me about the friends you've made at school?

Lucy: Most of my friends are at guides and go to my school

Interviewer: Do you have any new friends at school, that aren't in your guides?

Lucy: I have made a few new friends in my classes so then we can work together

Interviewer: Have you spent time together outside of school?

Lucy: I have been to a birthday party for one of my friends

Interviewer: Are friends important to you at school?

Lucy: Yes, so then we hang out together at break and lunch

Interviewer: Are your new friends or your friends from guides aware of your cleft?

Lucy: Yes, I think but they don't really say anything

Interviewer: Can you tell me how it makes you feel? Knowing that they know, even if they don't say anything.

Lucy: I don't really mind them not saying anything

Interviewer: Have you had any challenging situations at school when someone has asked you or made a comment?

Lucy: No not really

Interviewer: Do you think your cleft has made any difference to your start at school?

Lucy: Maybe making new friends because I look different

Interviewer: Can you tell me why you think this is about you looking different?

Lucy: Because I don't look like other people

Interviewer: Do you feel different to other people?

Lucy: Yes because I'm shorter

Interviewer: Right, so you feel different because of your height. Do you feel different because of your cleft?

Lucy: Not really

Interviewer: Has anyone or anything helped you during your start to secondary school?

Lucy: My form tutor

Interviewer: Can you tell me how they've helped you?

Lucy: They helped me get to my classes on time

Interviewer: And that's important to you?

Lucy: Yes because then I don't get told off

Interviewer: Can you tell me about your life at home since you've started at secondary school?

Lucy: I'm nearly always doing homework

Interviewer: This is different from primary school

Lucy: Yes I didn't have homework there

Interviewer: And your routine has changed?

Lucy: Yes

Interviewer: Is there anything you wanted to tell me about starting school that we haven't talked about? An after school activity, new challenge...

Lucy: No not really I do a club called practical club where you use power tools to make stuff

Interviewer: And how do you feel about that?

Lucy: Happy my friends do it as well

Interviewer: That is nice. Thanks for chatting Lucy. I hope you have a lovely week Thanks for your vlogs!

Lucy: Your welcome (emoji)



**Nathan online snapshots (3)**

Interviewer: Hi Nathan, how are you?

Nathan: Fine

Interviewer: Can you tell me how you were feeling about going back to school, after half term?

Nathan: A bit tired but I was looking forward to seeing my friends

Interviewer: So, can you tell me what parts of school life do you enjoy?

Nathan: PE and sports, seeing my friends, Art and dance

Interviewer: Are there any things at school that you don't enjoy?

Nathan: Not really it is good.

Interviewer: And how do you feel about your routine and independence?

Nathan: I find it hard to remember all my things and not lose anything. I like being independent but I don't like travelling in on my own.

Interviewer: And have you thought of how you could remember your things, so that it's a little easier for you?

Nathan: putting all the stuff I don't need away

Nathan: I get my bag ready the night before.

Interviewer: Can you tell me why you don't like traveling on your own?

Nathan: I have no one to talk to

Interviewer: So it would be better if you had someone with you?

Nathan: Sometimes I meet my friend half way

Interviewer: Does that help?

Nathan: Yep

Interviewer: Thinking about your school friends, did you see any of them during half term?

Nathan: No we went to Norfolk

Interviewer: So, you were excited to see them when you were back?

Nathan: Definitely

Interviewer: Are friendships important to you?

Nathan: Yeah

Interviewer: Can you tell me why?

Nathan: Cause they can help you

Interviewer: And you have some good friends at school?

Nathan: yup.

Nathan: But only 1

Interviewer: Does your friend know about your cleft?

Nathan: I think so

Interviewer: Have you talked about it?

Nathan: I can't remember

Nathan: I definitely told him, but I don't know if he remembers

Interviewer: Is he in most of your classes?

Nathan: All of them

Interviewer: Does that help you?

Nathan: Apart from art

Interviewer: And how are you finding the homework?

Nathan: Hard because there is so much of it

Interviewer: Does anything or anyone help you with homework?

Nathan: My parents do and I use Google

Interviewer: Was there someone or something that has really helped you during your start at secondary school?

Nathan: Definitely my parents

Interviewer: Can you tell me how they've helped?

Nathan: they help me organize myself. Also with homework and reminding me about stuff

Interviewer: And do you think that your cleft has made any difference to your start at school?

Nathan: No

Interviewer: Can you tell me if life at home has changed since you've started secondary school?

Nathan: I come home and sometimes I am on my own for a bit. I stay late to clubs and then walk home alone

Interviewer: How does being alone make you feel?

Nathan: I feel more responsible. But I don't like to be on my own for very long time

Interviewer: Do you feel more responsible now than you did in primary school?

Nathan: Yes

Interviewer: Is there anything else you wanted to tell me that we haven't chatted about, since you've been back to school?

Nathan: I am performing in a dance festival at the Horniman Museum on Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> November.

Interviewer: That sounds great. How are you feeling about that?

Nathan: Excited

Interviewer: I'm sure! Thanks for chatting Nathan. Good luck with the dance

Nathan: Thanks

**Rebecca online snapshots (3)**

Interviewer: Thanks. Hi Rebecca, how are you?

Rebecca: Good thanks

Interviewer: Can you tell me how you were feeling about going back to school, after half term?

Rebecca: I was feeling good, kind of excited to be back

Interviewer: Why are you feeling excited?

Rebecca: Because I get to catch up with my friends

Interviewer: Did you see some of your friends during half term?

Rebecca: Not that go to my school, but some of my primary friends

Interviewer: Can you tell me what parts of your school life you are enjoying?

Rebecca: Maths, science, music

Interviewer: What is it about these subjects that you enjoy?

Rebecca: I have always had a fascination for maths and science and I play the cello

Interviewer: Are there any other parts of school life that you are enjoying?

Rebecca: I just enjoy learning in general as well

Interviewer: Is there anything about your new school that you haven't enjoyed?

Rebecca: No

Interviewer: Thinking about your new friends at school and that you were excited to see them, how this going?

Rebecca: I have made a few more friends and everything is going great

Interviewer: Are they different to the ones you had at the start of school?

Rebecca: Yes

Interviewer: Is friendship at school important to you?

Rebecca: Yes I feel without friends I wouldn't have as much confidence as I do

Interviewer: Can you tell me how your friends give you more confidence?

Rebecca: They support me and they let me be me

Interviewer: Have you found any challenges at school? Maybe with the work, other classmates, teachers, certain subjects.

Rebecca: Some of the works challenging

Interviewer: Can you tell me what makes the work challenging?

Rebecca: The difficulty of the work or the subject makes it difficult

Interviewer: And how do you feel about your homework?

Rebecca: I try my best and if it is challenging I get help if needed

Interviewer: Who would you ask for help?

Rebecca: A teacher or my mum or dad

Interviewer: Have you told anyone at school or at a club about your cleft

Rebecca: No

Interviewer: Has anyone asked you?

Rebecca: No

Interviewer: Would you like to tell anyone about it?

Rebecca: Not yet

Interviewer: Do you think your cleft has made any difference to your start at school

Rebecca: No

Interviewer: And will you maybe tell someone soon, about your cleft?

Rebecca: I do feel my hearing means I need a bit more attention when I struggle

Rebecca: I might tell someone about my cleft

Interviewer: Do you feel the school has helped you with your hearing struggles?

Rebecca: Yes

Interviewer: In what ways?



Rebecca: If I am struggling in some classes so they are going to move me forwards so I can hear better

Interviewer: That's good.

Interviewer: Can you tell me about your life at home since you started secondary. Any changes?

Rebecca: Just getting up earlier

Interviewer: Is homework the same as it was in primary?

Rebecca: It can make me feel flustered if I forget but it has been all right

Interviewer: And how does the getting up earlier make you feel?

Rebecca: It can be frustrating but I have to do it

Interviewer: Is there anything you wanted to tell me about starting back at school that we haven't talked about?

Rebecca: No

Interviewer: Maybe some excitement for a school activity that is planned? A new challenge? Working towards an achievement?

Rebecca: No

Interviewer: Ok Rebecca, Thanks for sharing your answers with me. And thanks for your vlogs- they are great. Keep doing them :) Have a lovely weekend!

Rebecca: Thanks (waving emoji) bye

**Sophie online snapshots (3)**

Interviewer: Hi Sophie. Are you able to chat now?

Sophie: Hi, sorry I'm late. I can talk now

Interviewer: That's ok. How are you since we last chatted?

Sophie: Good thanks.

Interviewer: Can you tell me how you were feeling about going back to school after half term?

Sophie: Good

Interviewer: Was there anything you were looking forward to?

Sophie: Seeing my friends

Interviewer: Thinking about school friends, do you think it's important to have friends at school?

Sophie: 100%

Interviewer: Can you tell me why?

Sophie: Because if you don't you will feel disconnected and not enjoy school life.

Interviewer: And are there any other parts of school life that you are enjoying?

Sophie: Not really

Interviewer: What about certain subjects or teachers, or a club you started?

Sophie: I really enjoy dissection club

Interviewer: Sounds interesting! Can you tell me why?

Sophie: I just enjoy learning about animals and our biology

Interviewer: And is there anything about school life that you dislike?

Sophie: some lessons

Interviewer: can you tell me about these lessons?

Sophie: I just don't see the point in learning mandarin or humanities

Interviewer: So there are certain subjects that interesting for you?

Sophie: Art and drama

Interviewer: We spoke a little about some things that one other students said about you.  
How are things with that student now?

Sophie: Good

Interviewer: Did something happen which helped the situation?

Sophie: We both just put it in the past

Interviewer: And has this helped your friendships as a whole?

Sophie: Yes

Interviewer: Did you see any of your friends during half term?

Sophie: No I didn't get time

Interviewer: And how do you feel about your school routine? Still ok after your break?

Sophie: I am getting quite tired but other than that it is ok

Interviewer: Has anyone or anything really helped you over the past few months since you started back school?

Sophie: Not really

Interviewer: Do you think your cleft has made any difference to your start at school?

Sophie: Not really

Interviewer: Can you tell me about life at home since you started secondary school?

Sophie: There isn't really any difference

Interviewer: Your family moved house just before you started, but it feels the same?

Sophie: Yes

Sophie: We are just out the house earlier

Interviewer: What about homework expectations?

Sophie: They're not bad

Interviewer: So you feel ok about your homework?

Sophie: Yes

Interviewer: Is there anything you wanted to tell me about that we haven't talked about?  
Maybe achievements or a stand out moment...

Sophie: Not really

Interviewer: So school is really good right now and you're just feeling a little more tired?

Sophie: Yes

Interviewer: Thanks Sophie! Hope you get some rest. I'm still looking forward to receiving  
your video blogs (Thumbs up)

Sophie: Ok (Thumbs up)



**Bella online snapshots (4)**

Interviewer: Hi Bella. How are you?

Bella: Good

Interviewer: You're nearly finished your first full term of secondary school!

Interviewer: How are you feeling about this?

Bella: Happy

Interviewer: Can you tell me why you are happy?

Bella: Because I get to spend time with my family

Interviewer: And how have things been since last chatted?

Bella: Tough but good

Interviewer: Can you tell me why it's been tough?

Bella: Because loads of kids keep being bad and it means that I don't learn that much

Interviewer: What do you do in class when this happens?

Bella: I just keep quiet because I am really quiet at school

Interviewer: Do you think this helps you?

Bella: No not really



Interviewer: Do you think there's anything else you could do?

Bella: No not really

Interviewer: So how are you feeling about your progress so far?

Bella: Good

Interviewer: Have you felt challenged?

Bella: Yes

Interviewer: And what about achievements? Did you have any goals?

Bella: My handwriting and to make new friends

Bella: And I haven't achieved anything yet

Interviewer: How does that make you feel?

Bella: A bit sad but it makes me more determined

Interviewer: What makes you feel more determined

Bella: I love challenging myself

Interviewer: Do you feel that you could achieve more next term?

Bella: Yes

Interviewer: The last time we talked, you had some friendship worries. How is this going now?

Bella: Good ( emoji)

Interviewer: Have you made some new friends?

Bella: Not really

Interviewer: Can you tell me how you feel about this?

Bella: Fine

Interviewer: Do you feel like you have a friendship group at school? Or just one/ two good friends

Bella: Yes, a group

Interviewer: Can you tell me about them?

Bella: They are the same people but there are other people who join in our games

Interviewer: And do you spend time with them at lunch?

Bella: Yes

Interviewer: And do you spend time with them after school?

Bella: No, only one of them

Interviewer: How have your friends been different from when you were in primary school?

Bella: They have kind of split up

Interviewer: And has anyone really helped you during this term?

Bella: No not that much

Interviewer: Has anybody or anything been really difficult during this term?

Bella: No not really

Interviewer: And what role do you think your family have played during this time?

Bella: Helpful, supportive but they have been a bit stressed like me

Interviewer: Can you tell me if you think your cleft had made a difference to your first term?

Bella: No, I don't think so

Interviewer: Is there anything outside of school that you have recently started?

Bella: I am going to be in a play and I am going to do art club

Interviewer: Lovely. How are you feeling about this?

Bella: Fine

Interviewer: Has there been anything different from what you expected school to be

Bella: No

Interviewer: Anything better than expected?

Bella: No not really

Interviewer: Anything more difficult than you thought?

Bella: No

Interviewer: Is there anything else you'd like to tell me that we haven't talked about?

Bella: No thank you

Interviewer: Ok, thanks Bella. Hope you have a lovely evening

Bella: Thanks and I hope you have a nice evening too

#### **Lucy online snapshots (4)**

Interviewer: Hi Lucy. I'm ready when you are.

Lucy: I'm ready

Interviewer: Great! How are you?

Lucy: Good, you?

Interviewer: I'm okay, thanks.

Interviewer: Now that you are nearing the end of this school term, how are you feeling about your school?

Lucy: Good I'm getting to know more people

Interviewer: As friends?

Lucy: Yes in different classes

Interviewer: And how are you feeling about your progress?

Lucy: Good I'm getting better

Interviewer: Have you enjoyed the challenges?

Lucy: Yes

Interviewer: Did you have any goals for this term?

Lucy: Getting homework in on time

Interviewer: And did you achieve this goal?

Lucy: Yes I don't have much homework this week

Interviewer: Do you feel that you can achieve more in the next term?

Lucy: Maybe it was good not having as much homework as my friend in yr 8

Interviewer: Do you have any other achievements you'd like to achieve in the next term?

Lucy: No not really

Interviewer: Can we talk about your friends a little?

Lucy: Yes

Interviewer: Have you had any changes to your friendship group since school started?

Lucy: No, we have got to know each other more

Interviewer: Do you have a group of friends or just 1 or 2 friends?

Lucy: I have a group of friends all from different classes

Interviewer: Is this different from primary school?

Lucy: Yes because all of my friends were in one class

Interviewer: Has there been anyone or anything that has really helped you during your first term?

Lucy: No not really, my teachers have helped me a little bit

Interviewer: Can you tell me how they've helped you?

Lucy: If I don't know where a class is they will tell me

Interviewer: Is that important to you?

Lucy: Yes, so then I wouldn't be late for class

Interviewer: Has anyone or anything been difficult to manage during your school term?

Lucy: The amount of homework

Interviewer: And how are you feeling about this now?

Lucy: Good

Interviewer: What role do you think your parents have played during this time?

Lucy: they have helped me do my homework on time

Interviewer: Can you tell me if you think your cleft had made any difference to your start at secondary school?

Lucy: No not really

Interviewer: Do your friends know about your cleft? Have they asked you about it?

Lucy: No, I think they know, but don't ask

Interviewer: Can you explain what you mean a little more?

Lucy: Like they are more polite

Interviewer: Polite because they don't ask?

Lucy: yes, polite

Interviewer: Thanks

Interviewer: Is there anything outside of school that you have recently started?

Lucy: Sewing and textiles club on Saturday mornings

Interviewer: How do you feel about this?

Lucy: Yes its fun

Interviewer: Is there anything that has been different from what you expected?

Lucy: No not really

Interviewer: Anything better than you expected?

Lucy: No

Interviewer: Anything more difficult at school than you expected?

Lucy: The homework I thought it would be harder

Interviewer: Is there anything you wanted to tell me about your first term at school that we haven't talked about?

Lucy: No I don't think so

Interviewer: Thanks Lucy! Have a lovely Christmas.

Lucy: you to (Christmas tree emoji, Snowflake emoji, emoji, Snowman emoji)



**Poppy online snapshots (4)**

Interviewer: Hi Poppy. How are you?

Poppy: Hi I'm fine thanks

Interviewer: You're nearing the end of the term! How are you feeling about school?

Poppy: I'm feeling good and I think the first term has gone well

Interviewer: How are you feeling about your progress?

Poppy: I think I have made good progress

Interviewer: And have you felt challenged?

Poppy: yes

Interviewer: What about achievements?

Poppy: over the term I have got 107 achievements points and I have had a letter from my history teacher about my progress

Interviewer: How do you feel about this?

Poppy: I feel proud but I think I can continue making progress next term

Interviewer: Did you have some goals to start with?

Poppy: Not really but recently I had a meeting with my form tutor and we set some goals for the rest of the year

Interviewer: Great!

Interviewer: Can we talk about your friends a little?

Poppy: Ok

Interviewer: I know you've had some changes. How is it going now?

Poppy: It's better because I have moved on

Interviewer: Do you have a few close friends or a group of friends

Poppy: A few close friends

Interviewer: And how are you finding this?

Poppy: A lot better

Interviewer: Are your friends different now from what they were in primary school?

Poppy: No I have just become closer friends with some people from primary school but I have made some new friends as well

Interviewer: Has anyone or anything really helped you during this term?

Poppy: My family and my friends

Interviewer: Can you tell me how they've helped?

Poppy: They have helped me to move on

Interviewer: I know you've had a difficult time with some friends. How do you feel about this now?

Poppy: I feel better because I don't spend that much time with them

Interviewer: Your parents have been very supportive. Has your brother been too?

Poppy: Yes

Interviewer: Can you tell me if you think your cleft has made any difference to your school life.

Poppy: I don't think it had

Poppy: I mean has

Interviewer: Is there anything outside of school that you have recently started?

Poppy: I have started piano

Interviewer: How's that going?

Poppy: Really good

Interviewer: Will you continue to do this?

Poppy: Yeah

Interviewer: Has there been anything different from what you expected from school

Poppy: Yes, but mainly good things

Interviewer: Can you tell me a little more about this?

Poppy: I have a few more opportunities but I wasn't expecting what happened with my friends

Interviewer: And is there anything else you'd like to tell me about your first school term, which we haven't talked about?

Poppy: No

Interviewer: Thanks for chatting Poppy. Hope you have a lovely evening (wink emoji)

**Nathan online snapshots (4)**

Interviewer: Hi Nathan, how are you?

Nathan: Good thanks

Interviewer: You are nearly finished your first full term of secondary school. How are you feeling about your school?

Nathan: It's better since my brother was there last year

Nathan: Much better

Interviewer: Did your brother not enjoy it?

Nathan: There were lots of supply teachers

Interviewer: And now there aren't

Nathan: Yes

Interviewer: So, how have things been going since the last time we talked

Nathan: Good, but I've lost a lot of things

Interviewer: can you tell me more about this

Nathan: I lost my school rugby top and I lost my blazer today but I managed to find it, however it didn't have my key in it

Interviewer: oh dear...

Interviewer: How are you feeling about your progress this term?

Nathan: I just had my parents evening

Interviewer: And how did your parents feel about your progress?

Nathan: it was great to see good grades for effort and progress. They felt very proud of me and pleased at how well I am doing.

Interviewer: Well done!

Interviewer: Have you enjoyed being challenged?

Nathan: Yes I have.

Interviewer: Did you have any goals for this term?

Nathan: To move up to the top group in maths

Interviewer: And were you able to achieve this or is it your new goal?

Nathan: They haven't told us yet but I am 90% sure

Interviewer: Do you feel that you can achieve more in the next term?

Nathan: Yes because I will learn more

Interviewer: Great!

Interviewer: Can we talk about your friends?

Nathan: Why not

Interviewer: Do you have a friendship group or one/two close friends?

Nathan: One friend

Nathan: And a boy called Leonard

Interviewer: Have your friends changed at all since you started or was it always this one friend and the other one?

Nathan: My friends have changed for example I had a friend at the start of yr 7 who is not my friend anymore

Interviewer: Can you tell me why he isn't your friend anymore?

Nathan: He has different interest and does different things at break he also has other friends

Interviewer: And how did you feel about this?

Nathan: I don't know what you mean

Interviewer: How do you feel about him not being your friend now?

Nathan: Fine, he wasn't one of my best friends anyways

Interviewer: Has there been anybody or anything who has helped you during this term?

Nathan: Not really, possibly my friends

Interviewer: And has anyone or anything been really difficult to manage during this time?

Nathan: No but maybe people who think they are amazing at everything

Interviewer: Can you tell me how that makes you feel?

Nathan: Annoyed even though I do it sometimes. In fact a lot of the time

Interviewer: Do you think that your cleft has made any difference to your term?

Nathan: Definitely not

Nathan: I think it will if it was more noticeable

Interviewer: Can you tell me why you think that?

Nathan: not sure, just cause you can see it more

Interviewer: Is there anything outside of school that have recently started

Nathan: Rugby training

Interviewer: How are you feeling about your rugby training?

Nathan: Good I also got chosen to go to the rugby tournament on Thursday

Interviewer: Will you continue this?

Nathan: Definitely

Interviewer: Is there anything that has been different this term from what you expected?

Nathan: No

Interviewer: Anything better than you expected?



Nathan: No

Interviewer: Anything better than you expected?

Nathan: Being chosen for the cross country team, dance group and the rugby team

Interviewer: Anything more difficult than you expected?

Nathan: Homework

Interviewer: Anything else you'd like to tell me about which we haven't talked about?

Nathan: No

Interviewer: Thanks for chatting Nathan! Have a lovely Christmas

Nathan: (Santa clause emoji) you too (Santa clause emoji)

**Rebecca online snapshots (4)**

Interviewer: Hi Rebecca. How are you?

Rebecca: Fine, thank you

Interviewer: You are nearing the end of your first term. How are you feeling about your school?

Rebecca: Happy because it is nearly Christmas, but sad as we have lots of tests over the next week

Interviewer: And how are you feeling about your progress so far?

Rebecca: Good as I have been doing well in lessons and got lots of good comments

Interviewer: Have you enjoyed being challenged?

Rebecca: Yes

Interviewer: What about achievements? Did you have any that you were trying to achieve during this term?

Rebecca: I was trying to really well in all my lessons. Which I have done

Interviewer: Great. Do you feel that you can achieve more in the next term?

Rebecca: Yes as it will get harder over the year and I believe if I try my hardest I have done my best and that I can only go up trying my best

Interviewer: Can we talk a little about your friends and how this has been during this term?

Rebecca: Okay

Interviewer: Do you have friendship group or just one/two friends?

Rebecca: A friendship group of one primary school friends and lots of new friends

Interviewer: Have there been any changes to this group during the term?

Rebecca: More people have come in and I have kind of 2 groups as sometimes I am with one group or both but we are mainly all one group

Interviewer: Do you feel more comfortable with one of the groups or is it the same with both?

Rebecca: The same. We are all comfortable and friendly with each other.

Interviewer: Has there anybody or anything that has helped you with this first term at your new school?

Rebecca: Every one has been welcoming and kind

Interviewer: Have you had any difficult situations or anyone who has made this term more of a challenge

Rebecca: J.... (School name), the other school in the area, have students who are very mean when I cycle to school. My close friend who I made this year is leaving

Interviewer: Can you tell me what they do when you are cycling to school?

Rebecca: They spit and swear.

Interviewer: Does this happen often?

Rebecca: A bit once a fortnight

Interviewer: Can I ask how you respond to this?

Rebecca: I ignored them. I have told my mum and dad who have told the school.  
Occasionally I cycle in with my mum or dad

Interviewer: How are you feeling about this now?

Rebecca: A bit better still a bit anxious

Interviewer: We have talked about your family in past interviews. What role do you think your parents have played during this time?

Rebecca: A supportive kind loving people

Interviewer: And has your brother played a role?

Rebecca: He has been busy with his mock exams

Interviewer: Can you tell me if you think your cleft has made any difference to your start at school?

Rebecca: No but my hearing has meant I need to go to the front of some classes. I am also going to have an aveolar bone graft operation in the spring term

Interviewer: How do you feel about sitting in the front of the class?

Rebecca: Fine it helps me

Interviewer: Is there anything outside of school that you have recently started?

Rebecca: No but my cricket training is going to start indoor again

Interviewer: Is there anything that has been different this term from what you expected?

Rebecca: No

Interviewer: Anything that has been better than expected?

Rebecca: I have lots of friends

Interviewer: Anything more difficult than you were expecting?

Rebecca: No

Interviewer: Is there anything you wanted to tell me that we haven't talked about?

Rebecca: No

Interviewer: Thanks for chatting Rebecca. Good luck with your test! Hope you have a lovely Christmas (Smiley face emoji)

Rebecca: One quick question – do you need me to do any more vlogs? Thanks (Waving emoji) bye (smiley face emoji)

Interviewer: One more vlog would be brilliant! Thanks Rebecca :)

Rebecca: Okay (emoji). Bye (Smiley face emoji)

**Sophie online snapshots (4)**

Interviewer: Hi Sophie. Are you ready to start?

Sophie: Yes

Interviewer: Great. How are you?

Sophie: Good thanks, how are you?

Interviewer: I'm ok, thanks. Trying to keep warm!

Interviewer: How were you feeling about your school at the end of last term?

Sophie: Good and positive

Interviewer: Had anything changed since the last time we spoke?

Sophie: Not really. It just got a bit busier towards the end of term as usual

Interviewer: How are you feeling about your progress so far?

Sophie: Good still room for improvement but I have very good grades so far

Interviewer: Do you have any goals that you wanted to achieve?

Sophie: I wanted to do well in drama and languages, which I did

Interviewer: And you feel that you have more to achieve in the next term?

Sophie: In some areas and in others not so much

Interviewer: Can you tell me about your friendship groups at school?

Interviewer: Groups or one/two close friends?

Sophie: I have a small group of friends and a few close friends

Interviewer: Have there been any changes to your friendship group or between your friends?

Sophie: Yes lots but in general I am friends in a way with everyone but just a few I spend my time mostly with

Interviewer: Can you tell me how your friendships are different from how they were in primary school?

Sophie: well I didn't really have any friends at prep school, but now I have some good close friends

Interviewer: How do you feel about the friends you have now

Sophie: Good and I am happy with who I have chosen to trust and spend time with

Interviewer: Has anyone or anything helped you during this term?

Sophie: Friends and family with school support

Interviewer: Has anyone or anything been really difficult to manage during your first term of school?

Sophie: Not really

Interviewer: No worries about homework or a teacher or change to routine?

Sophie: No

Interviewer: We have spoke about this before, but what role do you think your parents have played during this time?

Sophie: A bit of support but letting me have the independence that I need

Interviewer: Can you tell me why you think independence during this time is needed?

Sophie: To be ready for things like having the right stuff at school, being able to manage extra curricular on my own and to make decisions on things for myself.

Interviewer: Can you tell me if you think your cleft has made any difference to your start at school?

Sophie: Not really sure, I miss some school but it hasn't really effected me

Interviewer: Did you start any new activities outside of school during the last term that you enjoyed?

Sophie: No

Interviewer: Thinking back to your first term at your new college... is there anything different from what you expected?

Sophie: Not massively no

Interviewer: Anything better than you had expected?

Sophie: Yes, classes and clubs

Interviewer: Anything more difficult than you expected?



Sophie: Not really

Interviewer: Ok, thanks. Hopefully I will try to organise a day soon to visit and complete a final family interviews. Please send me your vlogs I'd like to hear them. Have a lovely week  
Sophie (Thumbs up emoji)

Sophie: I uploaded one of the vlogs, so you should be able to watch it (Thumbs up emoji)

Interviewer: Thanks, I'll have a look!

### TIME POINT 3: VLOG ENTRIES

#### Bella\_Vlog 3 November

Hello, so I'm back from school, and today was manic today because I had, um, what was it again? Ah, Geography, Science, History and English too, but yeah I managed it and um I'm just in my room ready to eat and my friend keeps texting me which is nice, but I'm trying to eat and its like should I eat or should I message, should I eat, and I'm still just eat because I've got to eat soon. Yeah, tomorrow I have an appointment to get a gum shield so when I do rugby I can put it in my mouth cause I don't have one and I can't have a normal one, but yeah so far it's been amazing (*thumbs up*). And ja, I'm coping with all the swearing and stuff, it's kind a hard, but yip, I'm getting there and I'm also going to talk about my operation I'm going to do that on, I was thinking I should because then I can breathe later on so yeah. I also have a message for you guys, whenever an operation comes or an appointment comes it can help you, they're not doing it because they think it's a bad idea, they're doing it to like look after you and make sure you have the best life you can and like, just like basically they're not doing it to be like here do that, they look after you. I have this operation that where they're going to neaten my nose a bit and I'm just going to go with that opportunity because when I'm older I might not be able to breathe as much, as well so I'm just going to do it so I'm better in the future and so then I don't have to worry about it and all that, so yeah I'll see you tomorrow, bye.

#### Lucy\_Vlog 3 November

Hi Katharine, so today in this vlog I am going to be talking about my friends. So as I have been texting you, you know I have a lot of friends from Guides and I've made a couple of new friends as well. The new friends I have made are called ...and couple of others, but I cannot remember their names right now. They're mostly in my classes, oh and ..., um, ...so yeah. I normally hang around with them in classes because they're in some of my classes and ... whose from guides she's in everyone of my class except French, DT, not DT, Science and um and another one I can't remember, so anyway I will see you next time. Bye!!!

**Rebecca\_Vlog 2 November**

So now it's quite a few weeks into school and it doesn't feel that bad, it isn't actually that big, it actually quite small. Now I know my way around a lot more, its really easy to find my way around so it feels like a really small school. Um, I've started wearing my BA-HA again which is my hearing aid because I was struggling a bit to hear some of my friends, lots of people have asked about it and I have explained, but I haven't explained that it's because of my cleft lip and palate. Um, in reality I would say the best thing is music and like the different lessons like Science and Biology because they're really fun and the teachers are really nice, the worst thing I would say is that sometimes the homework can be really hard and like if you forget, it can be really hard to get in, at one point I had a close call, but I managed to sort it out just on time. Um, I've recently made new friends, um, called ... and ... and they're really nice and I think I'll stay friends with them because they're really friends and I made some other friends called ... and ... and they're also really nice. The best lesson is music and I've also become really fond of Biology as well. Both of the teachers are really nice in both of those lessons and also they're really friendly and funny, the worst lesson is still history and geography because the teachers occasionally can be really boring but the lessons can be really fun. Lunchtime the system is getting easier to sort out and like figure out and everything and also now I've decided to go to school by bus because of clubs at lunchtime and they're all really fun, I'm also taking a practical club for the same reason. Thank you for listening, bye.

**Nathan\_Vlog 4 November**

Hello, I've had a very busy half term I went with my family to ... in (*town name*) which uh, have quite a famous football team and I like football. Um, also in the holidays I got a lot of homework to do and my maths teacher gave me loads of stuff to do but then when I went back he was like 'oh, why have you done so much?', and I was like, 'cause you put it on there' and he was like, 'I didn't mean to put that much on there, that was a bit annoying. I have been chosen to do a dance show which is quite exciting and it's going to be at the H...

Museum which is quite a big thing so I'm excited about that. Um, we also have PE but we're not doing rugby anymore, we're doing basketball now, which is a bit annoying cause I liked rugby. I'm still going to rugby today, after school so that's pretty cool and I've got a few more teachers, two new teachers actually and they're okay and they can keep control of the class which is good, bye.

### **Nathan\_Vlog 5 December**

Hello everyone, I'm back, I'm doing another vlog and um ja I'm still doing my rugby, got chosen for the rugby team, um on Thursday I think and we played... (*identifies 4 other schools*), and we beat them all and I got chosen to be the main player who does all the running around so, which was pretty exciting, I'm also still doing my dance and had the performance a week ago, I think Sunday, yeah, and that was to parents so my parents got to see it and it all went well so we've been rehearsing that a lot lately. One of the not so good things is I got a lot more homework to do and I got to do some after this, most of it doesn't make any sense at all, I'm pretty sure most of the teachers don't even think about the homework when they're putting it on, they just put it on. Also, one thing that I'm also very good at is losing things so a couple of days ago I managed to lose my rugby shirt, it's like our PE kit what we wear and so I've got someone else's it was in the lost property so the teacher said I could have it. Anyway talking about homework, I got to go and do some so bye.

**Time Point 4: Family Interview Transcripts**

**Transcription** (Face-to-face interview with mum and Bella)

**Family interview:** The B family (mother, child, stepdad was working)

Interviewer: Bella, how are you feeling after completing your first full term at secondary school?

Bella: Tired (laughs)

Mother: she's very honest

I: Oh dear. Have you been busy?

Bella: yeah

I: Can you tell me why you find it tiring?

Bella: um, getting up early, its tiring

I: Is it different from primary school?

Bella: yeah

Mother: you feel more responsible now, don't you?

Bella: yeah

I: What happens at the end of your school day?

Bella: I just come home

Mother: yeah, at the moment I'm, we sort of leave for school and work at the same time and cross over a little bit. Generally, so far I've tried to make sure I'm here. Now that she's getting a bit more confidence I can sometimes walk to the shops and go around for a bit. Most of her friends get left till 6 'o'clock most days.

I: Okay. Bella, if you can think back for me to your very first day or first few weeks at secondary school, was there anything that stood out to you?

Bella: like how hard it is, cause if you have certain lessons then you have to try and barge your way through, not go one by one

I: can you tell me how this felt?

Bella: busy, yeah

I: Is the school quite big?

Bella: quite big, not tot big

Mother: well, its not, well for her it is but its only got 400 pupils in the whole school, so it's a really small secondary school, but the other secondary school has got a lot more

Bella: yeah, its got 1000

Mother: 1200, I think

I: Right. So the changes between classes stood out mostly?

Bella: yeah

I: Did anything else stand out for you? Maybe new faces or new rules?

Bella: yeah, lots of new faces, new teachers, people

I: Becky, can you tell me how you felt Bella's start at school went?

Mother (Becky): um, it came around so quick and I don't think you realize when they leave primary school you're not really prepared for it and all of a sudden it was like 'gosh, we really miss primary school' because its so safe and nurturing and all of a sudden you get hardly any contact with secondary school so they're just there fending for themselves, and they don't really have a clue what they're doing, you feel really like, yeah it was bazaar. I was fine the first day she started, I cried the last day of primary school (Bella: did you? Becky: yeah, smiles), the first day of secondary school it was quite a transition but now she's just settled. But the first few days I thought 'gosh, this is huge, you know', that's it no more primary school. I mean she was ready. You definitely were ready, weren't you? (directed at Bella)

Bella: yeah

I: okay. Can you tell me about any stand out moments you had during the term that you remember?

Bella: um, mostly about my friends because I hang out with most of my friends from primary school, um, so usually tell her what we've been doing

I: okay, were these positive experiences for you?

Bella: um, yeah positive experiences

I: okay, can you try tell me about one of these really positive times?

Bella: like how kind they were and helpful to me

I: and these were your friends from primary school?

Bella: um, some primary school friends, some I already knew, lost touch and then found them again

Mum: yeah, most of her closest primary school friends went to another school, and most of the people who went with her weren't the closest from primary

I: Becky, can you remember a time when Bella came back from school and spoke to you about this and was excited by it?

Mum: yeah, you loved your art, didn't you? (Bella: yeah) So that was really nice when she came home and had some work to show me. Um, what else? She got really into netball, which its not straight forward is it, netball, that was quite encouraging to see her trying something new really.

I: She hadn't done it before?

Mum: no, they don't do so much at primary school, its all ball skills and they don't do sports much, whereas rugby they just throw them straight into it, you know, you have to wear the gum guard

Bella: take my glasses off

Mum: yes, take your glasses off, out there in the mud, they're don't, its suddenly like, they're not um, like primary school kids anymore where its taught, its almost like they're mini adults so its just come on we're getting stuck in and...she wasn't like I don't really want to even though they took her glasses off (laughs), but she can't see a thing, um she still like went at it, kind of you know, you and that other girl both without your glasses

Bella: my other friend can go without her glasses

Mother: but your eyesight is not that good, though is it?

Bella: mine isn't, no

I: Can you tell me how you felt, Bella doing the rugby?

Bella: I didn't really want to do it at all

I: Yet you still did it. How did you feel at the end, once you had done it?

Bella: um, I was kind of like I don't want to do it again, but I want to try  
(*Mother lets the dog outside and Bella helps, then return to seats*)

I: Bella, can you tell me if you had any school trips during your first term or any school outings?

Bella: I did do the carol concert at Christmas so we had to go to the big church and we had to walk there.

I: Can you tell me about that?

Bella: quite fun

I: And did you receive any academic achievements?

Bella: I got my ... badge

I: And how did you feel about that?

Bella: quite good because it means that I'm responsible or something (laughs)

I: Ok, do you like the idea of being responsible?

Bella: Yeah

I: Right, can you tell me about any experiences you had during the first term of school that may have been a little challenging?

Bella: Mum?

Mother: you had that one day and you had a little cry, what was that for? Was it a friendship thing?

Bella: probably, yeah, there's always friendship problems with me

Mother: I think yeah she's had a few days where the girls are just not communicating and stuff or I think one day her friends wouldn't walk with her and they normally walk together

Bella: yeah, that was another recent one

Mother: and um

Bella: yeah, I find it hard when last minute I have to walk on my own

Mother: yeah, her parents, the friend's are separated so sometimes she's get the bus if she's at her dad's, but if she with her mum, then she can walk with Bella. So every now and then she'll suddenly text on the morning and say 'can't walk' and then Bella will say 'ah I'm on my own'

Bella: yeah, I have stress

Mother: you don't have to stress

Bella: no, but I do stress I get stressed about what could happen

I: Does it make you feel worried?

Bella: yeah

I: So what happens then?

Mother: You know exactly where to go, it's just the last minute change

Bella: yeah

I: okay, and what about doctor's appointments? Have you missed any school?

Mother: we've only had one, haven't we?

Bella: Yes



Mother: actually, did you miss school? No, I only picked you up 15 minutes early so it wasn't to bad.

Bella: oh yeah

Mother: yeah so far she's been I think quite lucky really, she's got another one on Wednesday, again I think she'll only need to leave 15 minutes early. I really try and structure them like that just because if she misses school she was finding that its really hard to catch up, especially at the moment with homework and stuff, it's not so much socially, its more the work, but a bit of both really

I: Yes, I was just going to ask about the homework. How has this been?

Mother: it's been different, hasn't it?

Bella: yeah, its been different, but...

Mother: She's done alright, we've had to tell her sometimes that if you don't know, you don't know, it's okay to hand in homework that's not perfect, as long as you've tried, then um, yeah

I: Yes, and Bella you've had a few changes to your friendship group, haven't you?

Bella: yeah

I: We're going to talk a little bit more about that soon. Can you tell me if there was anyone or anything that helped you during some of the more challenging experiences?

Bella: my mum

I: yes, and what about at school – would anyone help you there?

Bella: yeah, some of my friends and also my mentor

I: Your mentor – do you see them often?

Bella: yeah, every morning

Mother: she's been great actually, your mentor hasn't she?

You've had a few hiccups and I've just emails to say 'just to clarify this is the situation' and she's emailed almost straight away most days and said, 'call me if you need me and she'll help. Just think of all the workload they've got, she's been very good

I: and does she know everything about Bella's condition?

Mother: yeah, like a summary of because you know they've got so many other kids you don't want to be that parent that's going and there's this and this, yeah she's very understanding.

I: Do they have a type of department in the school that manages SEND?

Mother: they do, yes, and in fact they have said she can go there. They have like an oasis club there at lunch time to chat but she's just been assigned a year 10 student to her

Bella: every Tuesday mum

Mother: every Tuesday, what do you do?

Bella: we play games, we talk about stuff

Mother: so the Year 10's have had training to help them with this

I: How are you finding your time with the Year 10 student, Bella?

Bella: um, she's really helpful because she's says I can talk to her about anything.

I: and how does that make you feel?

Bella: quite happy, yeah

I: So can you tell me how you're feeling about your academic progress at school, Bella? We talked about this in some of our online interviews too.

Bella: yeah, its okay, I try to do my best

I: Okay, and can you tell me about any parent's evenings, how that went?

Mother: yeah we had one in December, didn't we?

Bella: yeah

I: and how was that?

Bella: good

Mother: very different to primary school – all the teachers sit in one room and you get 5 minutes at each table, and some of them will just go so, sorry what's your child's name and then they look down and kind a go yeah yeah they're fine, but then other teachers are like really encouraging and just say yeah you know she's doing everything she needs to do, getting stuck in you know, so a really different experience and like an hour and a half of, well, some of them are back to back and some of them aren't. It's quite intense, um, it was nice to put names and faces to the teachers that she was talking about and some of them that she's saying I don't like them they're scary and then I was able to see them and see what you mean, some of them she was raving about, so it was nice to see

Bella: I love my art teacher

Mother: yeah, but what was nice was just basically they were saying that she's got the right attitude and even if she struggles or is a bit behind she's got the willingness to try, they said a lot of kids are really bright but just don't bother

I: So the experience as a parent for you was helpful?

Mother: yeah, it was because it felt like forever from September to December, I mean it's a place you only visit once or twice, you feel really disjointed, which is good, but particularly when you've got an only child, suddenly it's just different.

I: Bella, do you have any future aspirations for your school work? Would you like to achieve more or continue as you are?

Bella: probably keep on working as I've been working

Mother: what about when you're older? We've talked about this a little, didn't we?

Bella: I want to be a vet

I: okay, can you tell me why you'd like to be a vet?

Bella: because then I can help the animals when they go through their operations. I know how it feels and then I can help them and look after them because I'm really caring and would like to help.

I: Okay, sounds lovely, looking after animals.

Just thinking about your school routine, can you tell me what the most challenging part of the day for you, Bella?

Bella: probably, to get up (all laugh)

Mother: I never have to wake you up though, do I?

Bella: no, I have my alarm

Mother: she gets up and gets herself dressed. You know it's not the dragging her out of bed and trying to wake her up

I: yes, and how are you feeling about the size of your school? We have spoken about this and I wondered how you felt now, as compared to when you started?

Bella: I feel okay, good about it, as there are a few minutes between class when I can relax before the next lesson

Mother: the other school was huge, which we visited and they had a one way system, and as soon as we visited that school and saw that, she said I can't go to this school, she said what if I want to go to that classroom and I can't go that way

I: Yes, okay. And what about rules? Do you think there are more or less compared to primary?

Mother: about the same?

Bella: yeah, about the same

I: And do you feel safe at school, Bella?

Bella: um, a bit, not that much

I: can you tell me why you don't feel safe?

Bella: um, sometimes there's like different smells I haven't smelt before, there's like in the science department there's like chemicals and stuff and then in the cooking area, there might be like something burnt, so it's just the different smells that are different

I: So what do these smells make you think?

Bella: um, that something is wrong, I don't really trust them

I: okay, it makes you feel a little uncomfortable?

Bella: yeah

I: okay, and how do you feel about the teachers at your school?

Bella: um, I like some teachers, some of them I don't like, some of them I do like

I: can you tell me why you like some of them?

Bella: probably because they're quite kind and gentle and the others aren't like that

I: Thinking about friendships, which we've talked about in the online interviews. Can you tell me about any new friends you've made?

Bella: I haven't really made any

Mum: ah, you didn't really spend much time with Beth before, did you?

Bella: ah, Beth

Mum: yeah a bit, but you've got to know her a lot better

Bella: I knew her before

Mum: you knew of her but you didn't see her like everyday

Bella: no

Mum: that is kind of new, isn't it?

Bella: yeah

Mum: mainly she has stuck with kids from primary school, but I think a lot of them have done that and she's got a very close friend a year above her in another school and it was exactly the same that they all clumped together and then slowly fizzled into new friendships. It doesn't worry either of us, she's kind of clinging to that safety blanket, I think, they all are a bit

Bella: I'm not

Mum: you're not clinging, but they're not good friendships, aren't they? You are waiting for a new friend though, aren't you?

Bella: I can't be bothered to find a new friend

I: Bella, can you tell me how many of your primary school children that you knew are in your form class?

Bella: not that many

Mother: you're all in one mentor, aren't you?

Bella: yeah

Mother: but then it changes when they go to their classes

I: can you tell me if your friendship groups changed during the school term?

Bella: they haven't really changed

I: so the children you knew as friends are still friends?

Bella: yeah

I: do you stay with your group of friends during your lunch time?

Bella: yeah, we meet up, some of us meet up before school and then at break and then at lunch and then we split after school

I: okay, can you tell be about lunch time at school?

Bella: its good, not much has changed

I: what do you mean by that?

Bella: like we just stay in the same place really, we stay in the library and then we just play games

Mum: you play card games and stuff, don't you which you didn't do that before, at primary?

Bella: no

Mum: they've made up some of their own games as well, haven't you?

Bella: yeah

I: Bella, how do you feel about being part of this friendship group?

Bella: yeah, okay, they know me from being part of primary school

I: Do you think it's important to have friends in secondary school?

Bella: quite important, yeah

I: can you tell me why you think it's important?

Bella: um, because if you are on your own, it sad and like you're on your own you don't know what to do, whereas if you're in your group you can like chat and tell everyone how you are feeling, and play games.

I: and do you see your friends during school holidays?

Bella: not really, no

Mum: we only really had October to spend with friends and we were busy then. She's not quite at the stage of organizing her own trips out yet, but we're getting there

I: Do all your friends know about your cleft at school then?

Bella: yeah they do

I: And did any new people ask you about it?

Bella: no, not really

I: Okay, can you tell me about any new clubs you started outside of school?

Bella: I'm now starting drama and that's after school

I: Have you had any drama sessions yet, or just about to start?

Bella: ja, I'm just starting it

Mum: you did netball, didn't you but then netball finished. It was only on for a very short period of time, and then you're just starting drama. You also go to youth clubs, and you're starting piano lessons, and you go to textiles club sometimes with B..., which is an outside of school thing

I: Bella, how do you feel about being involved in a club?

Bella: good, yeah

I: And how do you feel about being part of a team?

Bella: yes, its good because you can like work together, you get to know people, like different people who you didn't know

I: And did this happen at netball – did you meet any new people?

Bella: yeah, quite a few, but we didn't really chat much

I: Right, so can we talk about your cleft a little?

Bella: yeah

I: Has anyone mentioned it to you since you started school?

Bella: no, no one. I had loads of people at primary but none in secondary

I: Can you tell me how you would respond if someone did ask you about it?

Bella: that I was born like this

Mum: you've always been really, open haven't you?

Bella: yeah, I have

I: okay, and do you think it would make any difference if the other children in your class knew about your cleft and what it is?

Bella: they may ask some questions and I would be okay to answer

I: Would you like the opportunity to discuss it more with your class?

Bella: maybe, a little

Mum: it helped you a lot in primary school, didn't it because the younger kids were coming up and saying 'what's happened?', and she ended up doing an assembly in the end and CLAPA came in and explained everything.

Bella: and then they didn't ask anymore questions

Mum: yeah, the kids didn't ask after that because they had an explanation. That was a massive help for you, wasn't it?

Bella: yeah

Mum: she coordinated the whole thing, you know the whole assembly

Bella: ja, and they also got to see what babies with a cleft drink from

Mum: they bought in bottles, didn't they?

Bella: yeah

Mum: the kids are just inquisitive, they just want to figure how it worked and then they were fine. It was funny because initially she had said how annoying it was because they keep asking, but it was more because she just wanted to go off and play and people keep on asking questions. It was just becoming annoying so she just said can we just tell everybody and just get on with it.

I: Right, so last few questions:

For a year 6 child who is going to start secondary school in September, who has a cleft, what do you think would be important for them to know?

Bella: its not that scary, I thought it would be people kind of ganging up on people, but it isn't, there's just people, like there's different groups, cause, um some people go up to the library, some people go by the canteen, they don't really talk, and they don't hurt anybody

I: okay, I know from some of your vlogs and online interviewing, you did not like the swearing. How are you feeling about this now?

Bella: I don't really mind now because I just don't really care

Mum: it was upsetting at first though, wasn't it?

Bella: yeah, I didn't enjoy it as some of my friends did it and then I told my friends, can you not swear? And they don't. They might when I'm not with them.

Mum: well, at primary school its just not tolerated at all and then at secondary it is, the teachers are as well, aren't they, its just suddenly its just very different that was the biggest shock really, wasn't it?

Bella: yeah

Mum: and personally we don't swear at home so some of her friends and their families do so they're a bit more used to it, so that was one of your biggest adjustments, wasn't it?

Bella: yeah, I just kinda had to get used to it

Mum: its quite sad, really isn't it?

I: Can you tell me what its been like to be involved in this research, Bella?

Bella: quite fascinating because I get to say my story, to give my opinion and say what really going on

I: and do you think you've thought about your friendships more because of the questions that were asked?

Bella: yeah, I think about it, about what could change, and what couldn't and what could get better, things like that

I: Okay, and when thinking about your school, has it changed how you thought of your school?

Bella: um, a bit

Mum: its helped us talk a bit more, hasn't it?

Bella: yeah

Mum: I mean she's pretty open anyway. You tell me most things, don't you?

Bella: yeah (laughs)

I: and do you think that being involved in this research has had any affect on talking about your cleft more or not?

Mum: no, it hasn't has it?



Bella: no

Mum: but you just haven't had those opportunities, really. I mean its definitely made you think more, hasn't it?

Bella: yeah

Mum: you prefer it when people ask you, don't you?

Its harder when people stare and say nothing, she's really good if someone asks her a direct question, then she will answer it

Bella: if I can, if I can't I'll come home and ask my mum

I: So, can you tell me how you are feeling about your next term?

Bella: good

I: Do you have things to look forward to?

Mum: you've got DT food you've really enjoyed?

Bella: I'm excited to see what the next challenge brings

*(A little further more informal discussion about the end of the research, then the participant was provided with a debrief from.)*

**Transcription** (Face to face interview with Lucy, mother and father)

**Family interview:** The L family (child, mother, father)

**Date:** January 2019

**Time:** 01:05:00

I: Right, lets get started. Lucy, can you tell me how you're feeling now that you've completed the first full term of secondary school?

Lucy: I feel quite pleased now that I have got through the first term

I: Yes, can you think back to the first day of secondary school, in those first few weeks, can you tell me what stood out to you?

Lucy: um, how big the school was because I came from quite a small school

I: okay, was it the buildings that made it feel bigger?

Lucy: yeah

I: and the new faces?

Lucy: yeah, a lot of new faces, new people, new teachers

I: and what about the rules at your new school – can you tell me about these?

Lucy: um, it was, quite a bit more strict because you couldn't wear certain earrings and things

I: were you allowed to wear these things in primary school?

Lucy: yes

I: do you think its still as strict, after this first term?

Lucy: yes

I: and what about your change to routine?

Lucy: I've been having to get up earlier because I've been having to walk up a road to catch a bus

Mother: that's not entirely true

Lucy: or my mum takes me to the bus stop (all laugh)

Mother: seems to have drifted into me dropping her off on the way to work, over the winter

I: okay, so were those first few weeks of secondary school what you expected?

Lucy: I thought it would be a lot bigger

I: even though you felt it was quite big?

Lucy: yeah, I thought it'd be bigger than that

I: Right, Linda (mother) and Luke (father), can you tell me how you felt about Lucy's start to secondary school?

Father: I genuinely feel it was quite a smooth transition, we were fairly apprehensive and for me personally one of the big things that helped is that Lucy has always been in brownies and then she made the decision to move to guides, about September prior to the year before she started secondary school, the advantage there was that she then started making a lot of new friends here in L... (town name), so she moved from primary school which was 20 minutes away and none of the students except for one boy from the primary school came to this school, so all the faces she was familiar with at the new school were from guides, I think that move to guides did help her

Mother: and more to the point that did help her, that was important, I think it would have been possibly problematic if no one had known her

Father: yes, it gave her a head-start because she knew quite a few people, and one of her best friends from guides was in her form at the new school, so I think that helped as well from a social point of view, to have someone she was familiar with

Mother: you're one of the gang, aren't you (looking at Lucy)?

Father: I was quite happy actually because it felt like she had settled in quickly

Mother: well even my mum said she thought things had gone very smoothly and my mum always expects things to go badly to be honest and that was a positive thing, and she was apprehensive on the first day, I could see that, but you coped really well when you had to pay for your bus fair, do you remember?

Lucy: yep, yeah

Mother: there was a mix up with the bus passes and she had to get on the bus and pay for her ticket which she wasn't expecting and she did it, you were confident weren't you even though you've never actually travelled on a bus before on your own

I: did you go on the bus with her for the first journey?

Mother: no, but I did follow the bus (laughs)

Father: from a distance in your car...

Mother: I made sure she was on it, I had to go to work but I made sure she was on it

I: okay, and Lucy can you tell me about any stand out moments that you had during the term, when you wanted to come home and tell your mum and dad?

Lucy: um, I quite liked it when I got my Science test results because I quite like doing science and would like to be a Scientist when I'm older, so I did a science test and I got 42 out of 45 for it.

I: Well done!

Father: she's being modest, and...what were you?

Lucy: I was the top of the class

Mother: you were very pleased to come home and tell us about that

I: That's very good, wow Lucy!

As Lucy's parents, Linda and Luke, can you recall a time when Lucy came home to tell you about something, other than the Science test?

Mother: She's always quite keen to come home and tell us when she's done something different because she likes design and technology because its different, lessons that are just different from what she had at primary school she likes. She has occasionally come home to tell us about lessons she complains about, like PE, she doesn't like PE, especially when she has to play hockey in the cold and things like that, but generally its 'how was your day?', 'yeah fine', things like that

Father: yeah, for me its not these massive stand out moments but when she comes out with a nugget of something she's enjoyed, generally she'll just tell you without needing to drag it out of her, certainly the crafts and arts, the design and technology part, history she likes

Mother: she never comes home and says how marvelous maths was

Father: no, we don't get quite the same positivity on maths, unfortunately

Mother: there were a couple of days when we had letters saying you'd been down to the medical room, twice, do you remember?

Father: two head bumps already

Lucy: yeah, I got my head trapped between two double fire doors

Mother: then you had someone whack you around the head accidently in PE or something, so that's happened twice already

Lucy: yes (laughs)

I: okay, and were there any times, besides your head bumps, during the term that were really challenging?

Lucy: homework was an issue sometimes, if I got 7 homework's all to be in on the Monday and I was busy in the week, I wouldn't want to do all of it in one night

Father: she wouldn't want to do one of them in one night, let alone 7! Homework is an ongoing sort of issue, isn't it?

Mother: it seems to pile up, it all seems to come at the end of the week and then you don't want her to spend her entire weekend doing homework or it would come in on a Wednesday when she goes to my mum and dad's after school and then Thursday she goes to guides and then Friday she goes to trampoline, so it sort of ends up being shoved to the weekend, which is not the best to be honest, is it. The weekend we want to be doing other things.

I: Yes, and were there any days at school that you missed, maybe for a medical appointment?

Lucy: I missed the first two lessons because of an orthodontic appointment

Mother: you were late once but that was because of the bus, which she can't help. What is it that you like doing after school, which is developing your independence?

Lucy: on Tuesdays I do practical club

Mother: yeah there's that, but I mean you and some of the other bus people

Lucy: sometimes we go to town, and I go with my friends, and sometime I don't have money so I just go with them

Mother: you have been known to go to the sweet shop, haven't you?

Lucy: mmm

I: do you enjoy that time?

Lucy: yeah, I do

Mother: I must admit that when she was at primary school she didn't get the chance to go independently to different places, I think it's changed since she got her mobile phone as well, hasn't it (directed at husband)?

Father: yeah, we've got the location apps, so she can see where we are and we can see where she is

Mother: she gets more freedom because of that, though, I think it's been good for you to go with older children too, some of them are older than you aren't they, they're Year 8's, and then you catch the bus a little further down the road. It's not sneaky, is it, it's quite inventive because the bus goes through the town she gets on it further down.

I: yes, okay. Lucy, do you think there's anyone or anything that has helped you during your first term?

Lucy: um, not really

I: okay. Do you have a form tutor at school?

Lucy: we do, yes

I: can you tell me how you feel about them?

Lucy: um, she shouts at us sometimes when she's not in a good mood, which doesn't make us the happiest when we go to our first lesson, but she is quite funny sometimes

Mother: would you go to her if you felt you needed help or which teacher would you chose to go to, if you needed?

Lucy: um, I would go to the house office and talk to someone there or probably the hub.

Mother: so there isn't a teacher you would go to?

Lucy: no, not really

I: can you tell me about the hub?

Lucy: the hub is where the house leaders are, there's a notice on the door saying that if you have something wrong, then tell this person

I: okay, and have you gone in there before to ask about something?

Lucy: I have gone in there to ask about my locker that I needed to do, and when you sign in late you go there and when you and sometimes my friend wants me to go with her because she doesn't like going alone

Mother: who, Jessica? (Lucy: yeah) why does she need to go there then?

Lucy: sometimes she asks about her locker

Mother: oh, alright

I: Right, so thinking about your progress, your school work, can you tell me how this is going?

Lucy: um, I think I've done quite well, I've done homework nearly on time, except for my Geography when I nearly got a sanction because I got it in late but I didn't get one, as it was still in at the right time

I: okay, and did you have a report or parents evening?

Mother: she had a report

I: and how was that?

Mother: it was good, all good

I: Can you tell me which subjects you really enjoy?

Lucy: I like Art, DT, Science sometimes, History, um, music sometimes

Mother: why Science sometimes?

Lucy: because sometimes you just have to write stuff down and I like exploding things

I: the practical parts

Lucy: yes

I: and do you have any goals or certain subjects where you'd like to improve?

Lucy: um, I would like to get a hundred house points, right now I'm on 93 house points

Mother: yes you got a certificate for the 50 house points and for your English homework, that came through the post. When we were at parents' evening, who was the only teacher to say that you had to do better in that subject? Because most of them surprising to us did say she speaks out in class quite a lot and she's willing to answer questions, she's got better so, quite confident

Lucy: my maths teacher had a small complaint

I: okay, how do you feel about maths?

Lucy: I don't particularly like it since I have two maths teacher parents

Mother: we've tried

Lucy: I wish they were Art teachers

I: does it not help to have maths parents?

Lucy: well, it helps with maths homework, other than that it's just annoying sometimes

Mother: thank you, having a non mathematical daughter, that's annoying sometimes

Lucy: no it isn't

Mother: what was your maths teacher's comment though? Can you remember?

Father: yes, her constructive criticism?

Lucy: um, can't remember

Mother: can't remember!

Father: the problem was you weren't focusing, were you? She doesn't always pay as much attention as she should do in Maths, she seems to drift off and doodle and things

Mother: yes, she said you need to be paying attention when she's doing things on the board.

I: Can I ask if they place you in sets or stream you in Maths and English?

Lucy: um, I'm in the second set for Maths, but I don't know what set I am for English

I: okay, and do you feel its important to do well in school?

Lucy: yeah, because then you can get better things and do what you want to do.

I: And do you have any future aspirations?

Lucy: I'd like to be a Scientist

Mother: what other things have you talked about?

Lucy: and I'd like to be a paleontologist

I: Okay, and have you received any awards or certificates during the term? You mum mentioned the English and house points one.

Father: Yes, the English was for promptness and good work. We don't know, are there any other certificates given out, whether you get them or not?

Lucy: no, its about the house points

I: and how did you both feel about Lucy's progress during the term?

Mother: um, we're happy, I think yeah

Father: we are happy, the concern was how much motivation Lucy has from an academic point of view and I think its okay

Mother: its getting better

Father: yes, it is getting better. I think the homework and demands on Lucy's time have been different, would you agree Lucy?

Lucy: yeah

Father: I mean socially you've settled in really well and got used to everything, but I think the shock to the system has been homework and there's definitely been some resistance to getting started and some procrastination there.

Mother: I think as well that she came from such a small primary school, there were only 10 of them in your year, um 5 girls and 5 boys and they were all great friends the five girls and there was no real competition, I don't think, they were quite laid back which was quite nice but I think you're just starting to think that you want to do well in tests. I can remember the day you went to school and you weren't feeling 100% because mummy made you, you had a cold and then they gave you a surprise maths test and you didn't do so well, did you and I think you were a bit disappointed but I don't think previously she would have been worried, just did what she did, now I think you are starting to get a bit more sort of academic, sort of impetus I think is the word, which is or isn't a good thing but it's the way that secondary school are because its where we both work and you got to get the grades, so. There is a push there because we keep saying to her that whether or not you like maths you've got to get your maths to get into any sort of scientific career so, you've got the best people to help you (laughs)



I: yes, and just thinking about your homework, as this has been one of the challenges for you, just thinking ahead have you thought about how to manage your homework better? Or perhaps you've already started managing your homework?

Lucy: um, not really (laughs)

Father: I would say its still a fair dependency on your folks to get you going, yeah

Mother: to get you organized, doesn't seem to be a priority, although I was pleased this week when I said 'have you done your maths' and you said you had done it at school because it was a computer thing

Lucy: I was interested in baby armadillos

Mother: yeah, because after school her bus doesn't come immediately so she has about half an hour to spare and usually if its cold and wet they go and sit in the computer room, don't you (directed at Lucy), and she was telling me the other day 'oh yeah, I was doing this and doing that and fiddling with that and I said well, do you realize that you could have sat there and got your homework done in that half hour, but then you came home Thursday night and you actually had, so that was good, an improvement

Father: yes that is an improvement, the whole concept of getting it done hasn't really sunk in yet

Mother: but you were struggling a bit recently with that term project, the RE project, the one that's sort of an extended piece of work, well you know I think if you put a piece of paper in front of her and she knows she's got to do this, this and this, she's more likely to get it done, but if you say well this is a piece on citizenship in RE and she's got to do five things over five weeks, then she's not as focused on that, maybe because it is such a big task.

I: what do you think Lucy?

Lucy: I didn't mind my English homework because it said question 1,2,3, so its sort of like you have to do this, this and then this and I don't really like the RE because you can do that first, or that first, or that first.

I: okay, and can you tell me about the any challenges during your everyday school routine?

Lucy: um, I don't particularly like getting up in the mornings

I: okay, and what about at school, when you're moving from class to class?

Lucy: um, I complain when I have History first lesson because my form is near the middle of the school and History is all the way near the end of the school so you have to walk all the

way through the school to the History block and I don't like it when its raining and I have to be outside

Mother: and what does your granddad always say? He thinks you're carrying to much, it's not got anything particular in it but you know, I think that's a problem in school because you have to carry everything around with you. Do you find that a problem?

Lucy: I don't find that a big problem, I've sort of got used to the weight of the bag, but sometimes in the last lesson I feel the weight of it because it's heavy then

I: Do you carry it around the whole day, or do you have a locker to store some things?

Mother: locker is a bit of a sore point, isn't it? We're still waiting to get a locker sorted out for her. Although I'm not sure a locker would help because you'd probably leave something important in it and it never coming home or it never going to the right lesson, the only thing you could keep in there is your PE kit.

I: And Lucy, can you tell me how you feel about having different teachers throughout the day?

Lucy: I would like one teacher for the whole day, because it'd be better, well I do like different teachers, but sometimes I would just like one teacher, like my primary school teacher because then

Mother: what if you didn't like them then though?

Lucy: but I wouldn't like it if I didn't like them but I don't like moving around either, especially when it's raining

I: What's it like in the corridors when you're moving around?

Lucy: busy, yes, our French teacher is nice as he lets us out 5 minutes before the bell otherwise we get squashed by the older people, because the English and French blocks are always very jam packed

I: okay. Can you tell me about lunchtime at school – what do you do?

Lucy: um, I go down to the computer room sometimes with my friend (Julia) and watch her playing video games and eat lunch or I go to the canteen and have lunch with my friends and chat

I: do you like lunch time at school?

Lucy: yes

I: okay, do you feel safe at school?

Lucy: yes

I: Right, so thinking about friends and friendships during this time, can you tell me about the new friends you've made since starting school?

Lucy: um, I've made most of my friends at guides, but there's some new friends from the friends I made at guides, so the friends are friends of other people and I'm friends with them

I: Are they all in year 7?

Lucy: yeah

Mother: there's some other people on the bus that you've met aren't there?

Lucy: yeah

I: and would you think about your friends as a few close friends or as a group of friends?

Lucy: I have quite a big group of friends, I don't always hang out with them all at the same time because then I would be split in different directions, um sometimes I go down to the hub to see Julia and sometimes I stay in the canteen which is where most of my other friends are

Mother: I think you do have quite a large group of friends because before you came we were discussing, it's her birthday in April and we were thinking about who to invite

Lucy: I'm having a very difficult idea of who shall I invite

Mother: yeah, because I said if you wanted a more expensive type party you could only invite a few, and you've still got some friends from primary school that you'd want to invite, you still miss them, don't you?

Lucy: yeah

Mother: so they text each other, which has been quite helpful, hasn't it?

Lucy: yeah

I: and do you see any of your new friends outside of school?

Lucy: no, not really, I only really see them at guides

Mother: um, you've had Julia here a few times

Father: yeah, you've been here around a house, you may have not noticed, but I did (all laugh)

Lucy: Julia invites herself round

Mother: yes, she does tend to

I: does she live nearby?

Mother: in the town, it's not walking distance, it takes some arranging

Father: you've been at her house, haven't you?

Lucy: yes

Mother: I think that for her friends, none of them are within walking distance, any sort of visit has to be arranged with transport and that sort of thing, so that's sometimes a problem, isn't it?

I: And have you had any changes to the friendship group during this school transition:

Lucy: um, not really

I: can you tell me if you think friends are important in secondary school?

Lucy: It's really good because then you have someone to hang out with at break times and lunch times because you just don't want to be on your own because its quite big

I: okay, and just thinking about your cleft – do your friends know about your cleft?

Lucy: um, most of my friends probably do, and they've probably told their parents about it

I: has anyone asked you directly?

Lucy: um, not really

Mother: what does 'not really' mean?

Lucy: um, because

Mother: no one has said anything

Lucy: not anything

Mother: go on then

Lucy: they've, Jenny who's in my PE who I don't really like said, 'what's happened here?' (pointing to her mouth), and I said to her 'look it up on the internet' (quiet laugh)

Father: did you tell her why, what it was?

Lucy: um, when I did tell her, she's like 'whatttt?' and I just said just go and look it up on the internet, I couldn't be bothered to explain it

Mother: would you have explained it if it was one of your friends though, not somebody you didn't like.

Lucy: ah, yes because they would be more knowing about me

I: Did you not like the way that she asked you about it?

Lucy: no, I didn't

I: okay, and none of your close friends have asked you or you haven't mentioned it?

Lucy: no

I: And would the teachers know about Lucy's cleft, in your correspondence with the school?

Mother: we haven't made any mention about it, it's more about the adoption side of it, I think because we've been applying for extra funding

Father: we would have put down on the paperwork originally about the cleft but its not the sort of thing that would have been passed on to the teachers as a pastoral need unless we had asked them to, so I think we felt at this stage we didn't really think it was necessary

Mother: yes, we didn't feel it was necessary

Father: unless we felt issues were developing, but do you think you would agree Lucy, you were not telling us of any concerns or problems you were having about your cleft?

Lucy: no

Father: I mean you would let us know if someone was really bugging you apart from the odd Jenny comment, we've talked about how you dealt with that and obviously Lucy was pretty short and sweet

Mother: you dealt with that very well

Father: 'go and look it up, it's a cleft, go and look it up', fair enough (laughing)

Mother: I mean we don't really need to mention it, as it doesn't affect her academic ability, I mean her speech is good so we don't need to mention it for that reason, I think we haven't mentioned it because we didn't feel it was necessary.

I: okay, so thinking about extra curricular activities, can you tell me about these at school?

Lucy: um, I go to practical club at school, where um, you stay after school when the buses have left and you go to the DT woodwork room and get to go on the machines there and make stuff, I've made a lot of things

Mother: you've made a lot of little bits of wood with paint on, I'm not convinced you've made anything particularly practical yet, but you enjoy it and I think that's what's important

I: do you feel that you learnt anything from this club?

Lucy: not to sand your fingers off

I: do you think its important to go to these clubs?

Lucy: um, you get to know different people if you go to the clubs, not just the normal people that you hang out with, and you get to know more people in your classes that you didn't know

Mother: that has surprised me about your school, actually because you don't do anything with your form, do you?

Lucy: no

Mother: I mean we were pleased you were with Julia in the same form at the start but I don't think you're in any lessons with her, are you?

Lucy: no

Mother: so it's helped you make lots of different friends I think because you say that in English I sit next to so and so and in Science I'm friends with so and so

Lucy: we've moved seats in English so now I don't get to sit next to her

Mother: oh, sorry about that, but I think she's made more friends than I thought she would because she seems to be in a different class with different people with every lesson so that's been quite good for you

Lucy: Layla is nearly in every one of my lessons

Mother: yes, you haven't spoken about Layla before

I: we have spoken about your cleft and I was wondering if you thought it would make any difference if anyone in your form or your classes knew about your cleft?

Lucy: um, maybe because then they would know more about it and wouldn't ask about it as much

I: do you ever feel people staring at you at all?

Lucy: yeah

I: and they don't say anything, they just stare

Lucy: yeah

I: How does that make you feel?

Lucy: I don't really like it but it doesn't really worry me

Mother: are they staring at you because of your cleft or because you're Chinese? We don't know, I mean that's always the question, we just don't know. Are there any other Chinese children there?

Lucy: there's an African boy but except from that, although I think there's a girl from like the Philippians or somewhere like that

Mother: You see you never know, its like when we went to parent's evening, it was quite funny because you can see on the teachers faces when the three of us come walking in

Father: hold on a minute, what's this going on?

Mother: yeah, what's going on here?

Father: yeah, the fact that Lucy is adopted is not spread as common knowledge among the staff so, but you get that double take when its non matching parents, yeah so as you can imagine her school is not very mixed

Lucy: there's a lot of white people there

I: Right, so Lucy do you feel that you stare at anybody at school for any reason?

Lucy: um, not if I can help it

I: so what about the African boy, do you stare at him?

Lucy: no, I don't

I: you've just noticed that he's African

Mother: I think we've bought you up from a very early age to not stare at people, as we've said that you don't like it when people stare at you, we've always said don't stare at other people, but yeah

I: Would you prefer it if somebody asked you, either about your cleft or your background?

Lucy: I wouldn't mind either way

I: okay, so just thinking about what you've experienced about starting secondary school, if there was a year 6 child with a cleft that is going to start secondary school in September, what do you think you'd like to tell them?

Lucy: um, the school is big and you get quite a lot of homework

I: and would you give them any advice?

Lucy: um, go with your phones and don't get lost

I: and anything about what other people might say to you?

Lucy: that they would probably look at you a bit but I think that that's the most that they would do

I: and thinking back to how you thought secondary school would be, do you think it was different to how you first thought?

Lucy: I think school is better than I thought it would be

I: okay, so just thinking about the context of the study and a few final questions. During this time that you've been involved in this research, and you've been talking and thinking about school, and friends and responding to others, can you tell me what its been like for you to be involved in the study?

Lucy: um, I think its good for other people because then other people get to know more about people who have differences

Mother: you never complained, it wasn't like homework when we said oh, you got to do this chat with Katharine, you've been quite positive, haven't you?

Lucy: yeah

I: do you think that being part of this research project has had any affect on how you think about friendships at school?

Lucy: no

I: okay, and how about your school, has it affected how you thought about your school?

Lucy: ah, no

I: and do you think that it's affected how you talk about your cleft?

Lucy: no

I: and as a family, do you think you spoke more about it as a family?

Lucy: ah, no

Mother: I think that we possibly spoke less because I think she had fewer issues than we thought she might, yeah

Father: it's interesting isn't it because it didn't appear to be a significant issue at all, we didn't want to create issues, we're at the point now where I think we can trust Lucy, trust is not the right word, but

Mother: rely on

Father: yeah, talk to us and so we weren't seeing much or hearing much that was concerning us, so a hands off approach

Mother: very hands off, yeah

Father: and in a way we wanted to, um, certainly when she sat down to do the WhatsApp conversations with you we really left that to her to do and did not want to bias the conversations by setting her up

Mother: no

Father: so we were quite hands off in that respect, and the discussions around this, we've been very open talking about her cleft, talking about adoption, all these different things, so many factors here for her right from day 1 so

Mother: no, she screamed on day 1 (laughs), she didn't understand English

Father: year 2 maybe, but it's just been a natural part of our way



Mother: Yes, we are

Father: and as you can probably tell she fairly laid back about things, would you say that

Lucy?

Mother: laid back about everything

Lucy: yes

Father: But at the same time we've felt we've tried to prep her a bit if someone does ask because nothing seems to happen, there never seems to be any problems, it's that one time when Jenny does come forward and does say something to her face, do you know how to react and um...

Mother: You did that Year 6 session at the hospital, I didn't go but I remember that

Father: yes, we went to that session at the Birmingham hospital, how did you think that went?

Lucy: um, I don't think it really helped, but I made a few friends there

Mother: was there anything that they said that is at the back of your head that you remember?

Lucy: we got biscuits (all laugh)

Mother: yes, but was there anything they said that you remembered about how you responded to Jenny?

Lucy: they said that if somebody comes up to you, just say what you want to

Mother: yeah, okay so maybe it did have an impact but you just didn't think of it directly

Lucy: yeah

Mother: maybe some of the children just think you have a scare on your face

Father: it's possible

Lucy: I can make something really good up, like I fought a dragon

Mother: would you want to lie about it though?

Lucy: no

Mother: because I can remember when you very first had your lip mended, in hospital and we were coming out of hospital going home and a lady in the lift said to me 'oh what's she done?' because she was full of stiches you know and whatever, you know 'did she fall?' and I said 'no, she's just had her cleft lip repaired', because before that it was absolutely obvious you had a cleft lip, nobody knew after it was repaired, people just didn't know, and how do you feel Lucy, you're not ashamed of it, are you?

Lucy: no

I: Okay and just thinking about the services available to you, we have spoken about the school and that you haven't mentioned the cleft, but just thinking about what kind of options are available to you, if needed?

Father: I mean we had a conversation back when we had those transition days

Mother: but our concern has always been more to do with the adoption side as there is some funding available

Father: yes, but that wasn't to do with SENCO and SEN coordinator who we met with

Mother: oh yes, but that was very casually

Father: yes, very casually, but it was just to know who she was, um just to talk to them and find out what services they have and certainly they made it clear that if we needed to speak to them we could do so, but we haven't really felt it necessary in that area.

Mother: really, the next impact of the cleft lip is going to happen at the end of this week because she's having her braces put on, how do you think that will affect you (*directed at Lucy*)

Lucy: you can't eat honeycomb

Mother: right, well

Father: worried about the sweets you can't eat...

Mother: she has to go to the hospital to see the specialist because of her cleft. So what would you say if people start asking you about your braces and whether that was to do with your cleft?

Lucy: nearly everybody else has braces

Father: yeah thinking of where I work, you'll see every different type of brace you can these days, but the next option for Lucy if she chooses will be plastic surgery, but that will be her choice and it's a few years away because the face needs to stop growing. The services have been really good though

Mother: yes, and I'm in touch with the Red Cross and when Lucy feels she wants to, they offer make up classes and they can offer you, um, make up to disguise your cleft if that's what you want to do and thinking about your skin tone as well if that's something you want to do when you get a little bit older and you want to look extra marvelous

Father: only if you want to...

(Lucy nodding and laughing)

Mother: you're not terribly worried about that yet though, I'm just thinking about when you're older

Father: we've also been involved with CLAPA

I: yes, are you still involved with CLAPA?

Father: a little bit

Mother: a lot of it seems to be for younger kids, and it's quite far to go for the young people's council in London

I: yes, I've been to one of their group sessions, and found it fairly useful. Maybe something to think about if you're in London really.

Lucy, can you tell me how you're feeling about the next term?

Lucy: I feel I've settled in to school now so it isn't as bad, I just don't want the homework part

Father: to be fair, I think that Lucy loves her crafts and stuff that homework tends to intrude into all her other stuff, but it is something that has to be done.

*(A little further more discussion about the end of the research, then the participant was provided with a debrief from.)*

**Transcription** (Face to face interview with Poppy, mother and father)

**Family interview:** The P family (child, mother, father)

**Date:** January 2019

**Time:** (43:35)

Interview: Poppy, can you tell me how you're feeling about completing your first full term of secondary school?

Poppy: I feel good

I: Can you tell me why you feel good?

Poppy: Because its gone quite well

Father: There's been some ups and downs, hasn't there, Poppy? Do you think the ups outweigh the downs?

Poppy: yeah, they do

Father: yeah

I: okay, and Poppy can you try to think back to the first day of secondary school, those first few weeks. Were there any types of stand out moments that you remember?

Poppy: Everything seemed very big

I: yes, and was it what you expected?

Poppy: um, I didn't really expect to move from one end of the school to the other, like so often

I: Right, so Paul and Pam, can you tell me what you thought about those beginning stages of Poppy starting school?

Paul (father): quite nervous about how it was going to work out for her

Pam (mother): um, yeah, we've got Phillip (older brother) up there already, so we kind of knew the format and we were quite familiar with the set up at the beginning of year 7.

Father: we were really impressed with how the school were set up for the transition and also the special educational needs department have been so proactive, very impressed with them, so that kind of put our minds to rest to a certain extent and also we felt that the vast majority of Poppy's class from ... (primary school) went to ... (secondary school), and a lot of them are in this performing arts form, so we kind a thought it was going to be a fairly

smooth transition, although we were still a little anxious about it was going to pan out, so yeah.

I: okay. Poppy, can you tell me if you had any stand out moments during the school term when you wanted to come home and tell your parents about it?

Poppy: when I found out I got into the school play right at the end of term.

I: Well done! Can you think of any other stand out moments?

Poppy: um

Mother: what about when you got your progress badge?

Poppy: oh yeah, in school assembly, every term they hand out progress badges for each subject, and I got one for Geography.

I: lovely, well done

Mother: that was nice, wasn't it?

Poppy: yeah

I: And for you, Pam and Paul

Mother: um, I think when, you know she had a difficult time with some of her friends walking to school and walking back from school, and so I think when we'd spoken to her teacher and the SENCO department and they stepped in and they really helped, didn't they, so I think then when Poppy was seemingly happier after the half term break

Father: yeah, just the fact that she'd made a real effort, on our advice, to shift over to some other friends and it seemed to work, you know she's coming back and saying that she's spending time with these other girls and still is, so the friendship thing was a big deal, so yeah. And I think that Poppy has got through it has meant an awful lot to us because we were worried about it and um, yeah, and so now we're less worried

Mother: well, we chat everyday, don't we, she does tell us how her day's gone, um so I think from that point of view we've been able to keep up with things. I was thinking that I couldn't go but Paul went to the concert, the Christmas concert at the end of term and Poppy had written a poem

Father: yes, I forgot to say that, that was a massive stand out moment for me, thinking about it now, yes, Pam couldn't go, but I took Phillip (older brother) along and we went. It was lovely, she did a poem with a couple of other Year 7 pupils in her class and this is to the whole school, and then she sang in the school '...name' singers, yes it was a real stand out moment for me.

I: How did you feel about doing that Poppy?

Poppy: good

I: were you excited or nervous?

Poppy: yeah, I was excited

Mother: I think for Poppy the performing arts has helped her and the PE she does, I think that keeps them busy and active

Father: Ja, I was coming on to the PE – Poppy has been quite involved in the Netball, you're playing for the Netball B team, is that right Poppy? (Poppy: yeah) and also there's a girls football team, 6 a side football team and she's played a few fixtures and she came back a few times really buzzing about some of the a, I think you beat ... college 13 nil or something (Poppy: yeah), so that was another really lovely moment, yeah.

I: Okay. We have spoken about your friendships in the online interviews and how this has been challenging for you. Do you still feel this way?

Poppy: yeah, definitely

I: and were there any other challenging times? Possibly missing school for medical appointments or homework?

Poppy: um, probably when I miss French for other things

I: Why did you need to miss French?

Poppy: Because I had like a PE cross country thing, and I missed double French which isn't the best lesson to miss

Mother: yeah, and you had an appointment last week and you missed French, so I think if there's too many appointments in a school day, its hard. There are quite a few orthodontic appointments, and we try to make them in the holidays, so um, yeah you do worry about that, don't you?

Father: you haven't missed that much school since September

Mother: no you haven't, and I think the timing of the bone graft was really good for Poppy because it was in Year 6, which again wasn't ideal to have two weeks off (Father: right at the beginning of Year 6), just before Christmas, so I think that timing for cleft children is really crucial because its much easier in a primary school to miss a lesson

Father: yeah, but obviously it's a clinical decision when bone grafts are done, so

Mother: yes, that's it, but I think it would have been really hard for her to miss that amount of school in her first term at secondary school

Father: yeah, it would have been two weeks off, wouldn't it?

Mother: yeah, because in a primary school all those friendships have been established for a very long time, whereas in a secondary school, they're moving all the time, and to be out of that loop for that long, its quite hard.

I: Poppy, can you tell me about your academic progress from last term – how are you feeling about that?

Poppy: ah, I think I've made progress

Father: you've made a lot of progress, you've done well

Mother: you've done really well

I: Which subjects are you really enjoying?

Poppy: music, art and drama

I: and did you have any goals at the beginning of the term?

Poppy: not really

I: have you had any feedback or type of report from your teachers?

Mother: we went to see Ms Pie (tutor), didn't we?

Poppy: yeah, and there wasn't anything bad, cause I got many achievement points

I: and have you set any new goals or achievements for the next term?

Poppy: yes, with Ms Pie, we set some that I could get to the highest achievement points by the end of the year

Father: and you're on how many at the moment?

Poppy: I think 100

I: very good, well done.

Mother: I think that because of Ms Pie you've been inspired to do piano, and now she's having piano lessons

Father: Poppy's form tutor is head of music so she's very heavily involved in the performing arts as well. She's very inspirational and um, yeah

Mother: so she's kind of inspired you (directed to Poppy), hasn't she? You've started playing piano (Poppy nods), it's been helpful.

I: how are you finding the piano lessons Poppy?

Poppy: yeah, good

I: Okay, so just thinking about your school routine and how this has changed. Were there any challenging parts to your school routine?

Poppy: um, I wake up to early, and it's a bit strange having to carry your bag around with you

Mother: yes, you've had to also get used to packing your bag for the school day

I: Right, and are there lockers at school where you can store some things?

Poppy: well, I have a locker, but I need my bag because it has all my books in

I: okay, and how has the travelling to and back from school? You walk to school, right?

Poppy: yeah, its been good but it takes a lot longer

Father: can you tell Katharine about the support you've had from Tom?

Poppy: this guy comes to help me with crossing the road safely

Father: He's from the borough

I: yes, I recall you mentioned him helping at the start of the transition

Mother: he came back when it started to get dark and did a different route because she's walking with different friends so, he was very good at that, wasn't he? Yeah, that has been something we've all had to work together with as a family, and we sort of had to get used to that at the end of the day when it is darker and she's done a club and if someone's not walking with her, then we'll go meet her if she wants us to or talk to her as she's walking home. It's definitely something, which we probably didn't really think about because the primary school is just the next road and you always walked to school with me, didn't you? So that's been quite a big adjustment.

I: Do you walk home with your brother at all?

Poppy: no

I: okay, and how did you feel about moving between classes, with your bag to?

Poppy: it's actually okay because you get to talk whilst you're on the way

Mother: and this guy, Tom, who walked her to school also showed you around the school with the SENCO deputy, and they showed you some short cuts, didn't they? The school are very good though because they want the children to do the changeover as quick as possible.

Father: have you been leaving lessons slightly earlier?

Mother: no, she doesn't need to do that, I don't think

I: And have you found that there's more or less rules in secondary school, compared to primary?



Poppy: um, there's probably more rules, but I'm used to them already

I: do you feel safe in school?

Poppy: yeah

I: and how do you feel about having the different teachers?

Poppy: sometimes it can be hard to learn the different names

I: and how to you feel about the teachers?

Poppy: okay

Father: there's one or two that you said were a bit boring, is that fair to say?

Poppy: yeah

I: okay, and was there anyone else, besides Tom or your form tutor, that has helped you with the start of secondary school?

Poppy: no, not really

Father: what about Dr ...

Mother: yes, Dr ... we had a meeting with him as well, a progress meeting. He's from the SENCO, he's very kind and very supportive. Its more to do with her nystamus really so that she can take photos of the board and then enlarge. But they keep a very close check on her and her progress and copy me in as well.

I: yes, I recall Poppy talking about sitting at the front of the class to help with her eyesight, but one of the teachers not quite responding to this.

Father: yes, that teacher has left now, not because of this though (all laugh)

Mother: Poppy was really good with that because she will say when something isn't working and Dr ... said this was important because it helps, so that they can sort it out

I: Right, yes that is good.

So, just thinking about friendships, and I understand there has been some change here, so please feel free to answer as you'd like to you.

Can you tell me about your friendships and how they've going?

Poppy: um, well like I've made quite a few new friends and its quite nice once in a while to have a change and go and talk to someone new

I: why do you think it's a good thing to go and talk to someone new?

Poppy: so like it gives you more people to hang out with if you want to change

I: okay, and do you have a friendship group or just one or two close friends?

Poppy: I have a couple of close friends and then quite a few friends, but I don't necessarily have a friendship group

I: and the friends that you're closest to, would you invite them around after school?

Poppy: yeah

I: and do your parents know their parents?

Father: yeah, through primary school, we haven't really met any new parents through some of the other friends that Poppy's made so

Mother: a couple of the girls when we've been in town have said hello, haven't they? (Poppy: yeah), but I don't know the parents. But we don't with Phillip (older brother), it takes quite a while, I think.

I: Can you tell me how its changed, your friendships from primary school? How has it changed?

Poppy: um, some of my old friends have sort of moved on and, like they've sort of branched out with new people and they will sometimes come back and say hi again

I: how do you feel about that?

Poppy: okay, its quite cool having made new friends

I: do you think it's important to have friends in school?

Poppy: yeah

I: Can you tell me why?

Poppy: so it's not boring

I: so school's not boring. Do friends make it more interesting?

Poppy: yeah

I: and do all of your friends know about your cleft and your nystamus?

Poppy: I think I've mentioned it, I don't know if they know about it

I: and did anyone ask you directly about it?

Poppy: like one person's asked me why my eyes go back and forth and I've just told them and then just got on with it

Father: was that Tim?

Poppy: yeah

Mother: she's in this band and she came back and told us and I was impressed because

Poppy just explained, I think you told him you had nystamus

Poppy: yeah

Mother: and he was like, okay cool, and I think that's what the cleft team have always sort of asked us to do, is to make sure that Poppy has a really good response, so everybody knows if they ask and then they just move on

Father: just make it very matter of fact

Mother: yeah, she's always done it like that, we have as well

I: so there weren't any comments that you may have heard but it wasn't directed towards you?

Poppy: no, no one said anything

I: Right, so lets talk a little more about the clubs and extra curricular activities that you are part of. Can you tell me about these during this school term?

Poppy: um, I haven't necessarily started any because I've like done them before, but at the moment I'm only doing netball because football has been cancelled.

I: okay, so that would be for the coming term, right (Poppy: yeah). So what were you doing last term?

Poppy: netball and football

Father: and rock school

Poppy: yeah

Mother: and choir

Poppy: yeah

I: do you think its important to have these clubs at school?

Poppy: yeah, it's sort of another way to socialize

I: okay, and have you made any friends there or had some of your old friends with you?

Poppy: I haven't made any friends through those clubs but, I've had friends continue it with me, which makes it more fun

I: Are you involved in any clubs outside of school?

Poppy: I go to gymnastics

I: okay, just a couple of questions about your cleft. Has anyone new, besides the boy you spoke about earlier, who asked about your eyes, anyone else asked you about your cleft?

Poppy: At the beginning of term I already told my form

I: yes, I recall you talking about the differences that everyone spoke about. Did you choose to say that then?

Poppy: yes, I chose to say it

Mother: that's really good because then everybody knows, don't they?

I: Poppy, do you think it made any difference that the other children knew about your cleft from the start of the term?

Poppy: um, well it may save a few questions later, but I don't know how many people actually understood what that meant

I: okay, and would you like the opportunity to discuss it more with your class?

Poppy: I don't really feel the need to, but some people might want to establish that and ensure that everyone knows

I: Are you happy for anyone to ask you at anytime about it and you will then respond?

Poppy: well, if they're not being rude, then I'm okay with it

I: okay, and if you thought about a Year 6 child, who has a cleft that is going to start school in September, this year, what do you think would be important for them to know about starting school?

Poppy: um, just be yourself

I: and anything else, maybe thinking about friendships or their routines?

Poppy: um, get an alarm clock (all laugh)

I: that's very practical

Mother: what about thinking about how you tried out different clubs, some of them you have carried on but it was important that you had a go at everything in those first couple of weeks, you were very busy weren't you, trying it all out and saying hello to everybody to make the most of those opportunities, yeah

Poppy: yeah

Mother: and maybe if they get a chance, if their teacher does ask them about their differences, then saying that 'yes, I have a cleft', from the word go then it does just help

Poppy: yeah

I: okay, so just thinking about the context of the research project, you may have thought about certain things a bit more. You also may not have, as we've been talking about your school start and friends and your cleft.

So can you tell me what it's been like for you to take part in this study?

Poppy: um, I've not really thought about it

Father: when you've done the WhatsApp thing with Katharine, has it kind of made you reflect on your school day?

Poppy: yeah, a bit yeah

Mother: I think it's helped as a family because its not something you always have time to think about and not always, not that we want Poppy to feel different but sometimes it's important to address the face that Poppy does have a cleft and by talking about it you can make sure that everything is okay and to make sure that things are not difficult because you've got a cleft and that it is just how things are, so I think it's been good for us, hasn't it, Paul?

Father: yeah, I mean particularly when Poppy was going through such a hard time in that last part of the half term and we're both teachers and we know how things work and we know that we can't wave a magic wand and make everything work, and with the support of the form teacher and the school, they have got much, much better, but we um, I suppose we've just reflected on the whole situation and trying to work out the best course of action to support Poppy so, cause she wasn't happy for a good, well a month and it became better and I think being part of the research program has made us reflect even more

Mother: yeah, and your questions on WhatsApp were good because we couldn't answer them for her and when you asked very directly if what she was experiencing had to do with her cleft and she had to answer, it was reassuring to us to know that what was happening was not to do with the cleft. It came at a very good time, really

I: yes, and just listening to what you are saying, do you think it was a collective effort in supporting Poppy during the time when the friendships became an issue?

Father: yeah, it was, and I suppose I just wanted to go and march around to the parents house of the girls who were upsetting Poppy, but of course knowing full well that it was going to make the situation worse, so we had to talk about it, Pam and I and then with Poppy and basically said to her, 'look these girls are making you unhappy, don't spend time with them and um you need to spend time with people who make you feel good about yourself', and that's what you did Poppy, you didn't let go at first to a certain extend but you did

Mother: yeah, you did (looking at Poppy), and they are in her form so she does see a lot of them but it's on different terms now, it's on her terms. I think stepping away was really important

Father: and the form tutor was great because she got back to us and said she was going to redo the seating plans and she had a chat with Poppy, and she also arranged for this Year 11 girl to be a bit of a mentor, is that still happening?

Poppy: that was a one off

Father: okay, but anyway it was certainly a conversation that Ms. Pie (form tutor) had with Poppy about who made her happy and the seating plans were changed as a result, and it's about things aren't going to cause Poppy to be more upset. And you talked about having friends over and we made a collective effort to invite some girls over for a sleepover, over that half term and it kind of just happens now, so it's just about supporting Poppy to ensure those friendships are firm

I: okay, Poppy do you think that being involved in the study has had any effect on how you think about friendship at school?

Poppy: um, it has helped me get an overall thought about everything because when I answer some questions then it's shown the positives

I: okay, and has being involved in the research had any affect on your cleft or how you think about it?

Poppy: um, not really

Mother: I think its made you talk about it, a bit more because we don't, actually do we?

Poppy: yeah, a little

Father: I think from my perspective ... (Poppy's Primary School) was a very safe environment and that's what we were most concerned about going to a, well we've been really impressed with ... (Poppy's Secondary School), but ah, it's a bigger school and I'm a secondary school teacher and I know how cruel kids can be and I think its really been about having this idea about how we can support her and the research has made us really reflect on that so, yeah

I: does it feel positive for you, being able to reflect, think and talk about it a little more?

Mother: yeah, I think it's been good because we are normally just getting on with life and not always having the time to talk about things

I: Right, so moving on to the last few questions.

Poppy, you have two more terms of Year 7. How are you feeling about this coming term?

Poppy: good and excited

I: yes, can you tell me why?

Poppy: about the school play?

I: oh yes, and when is the play?

Poppy: um, March or May

Mother: yes, she's got the script and there's planned rehearsals, so I think for Poppy going back to school with this to look forward to is really good because a lot of people in your class are in it as well, aren't they so it's going to pull everyone together.

I: yes, something to look forward to

Father: and you've got a couple of weekends away with the school as well don't you? You've got a netball trip?

Poppy: oh yeah

Father: and PGL as well so she's thrown herself into that

I: Great, that sounds lovely.

Is there anything, Poppy, that I haven't asked you about that you wanted to mention or talk about?

Poppy: no, not really

*(A little further more discussion about the end of the research, then the participant was provided with a debrief from.)*

**Transcription** (Skype interview with Nathan, mother and father)

**Family interview:** The N family (child, mother - Natalie, father - Neil)

I: Hello, can you hear me?

Mother: yes, I can hear you, now

I: Great, hi Natalie, hi Nathan, how are you?

Nathan: good

I: how was your Christmas?

Nathan: good

I: Right, shall we get started, as it's a little late in the day.

Nathan, as you've finished your first full term of secondary school, how are you feeling about it?

Nathan: ah, it's good, but its getting a bit boring

I: can you tell me what's boring about it?

Nathan: well, because its mainly the same subjects, but I've gone some new ones and that's better

I: okay, so thinking back to your first day at secondary school or those first few weeks, can you tell me about something that stood out to you that you can recall now?

Nathan: um, the only thing was, it's not that it still stands out, it's just a bit annoying, the teacher's have their own corridor which you can't go across which is really annoying, so basically we have three floors and if you have a lesson on the first floor, you can go from one side to the other, because I'll school is basically a square and the two sides have classrooms on them and the other sides don't, so you can't go across and you have to go up

I: so, it will take you longer to get to class?

Nathan: yeah, and it's very unnecessary, but I think the corridors have staff rooms and stuff like that for the teachers



Mother: sorry, my husband's just come in, come in Neil (*talking to husband*)

Father: sorry, I was doing some stretches because I've just run home

Mother: so if you hear him talking, you know he's here (laughs)

I: Great, thanks, welcome Neil

Father: Hi, hi

I: Nathan, just thinking about your school rules, were these similar or different to primary school?

Nathan: there's not that many rules, I don't think, there are general rules

Mother: what about things like your uniform and your day book and things like that?

Nathan: that's not rules, that's homework

Mother: well, no because you have to have your day book and your blazer

Nathan: oh yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, but they're fine, it's easy

I: Natalie (mother), can you tell me how you feel about the first few weeks for Nathan, how did it go?

Mother: I mean I think he managed pretty well, I mean I think it is quite overwhelming, I mean there's quite a lot of homework, just a new routine to get used to and that kind of thing, sort of having to get himself up and out and we're going to work sort of a similar time so having to be a bit more independent and a bit more responsible and I think for us that's a sort of noticeable change, coming home, going on his own, that type of thing, organizing his timetable and his belongings (laughs). I think he's adapted pretty well, I mean I was just thinking the other day how it just becomes the new routine and how he's doing really well with that, just having to organize himself and it helps he's got an older brother, so he's not on his own with it

I: Nathan, do you see your older brother at school?

Nathan: yeah, he's always in the same place on the playground

I: okay, and can you remember any stand out moments that happened during the term that you wanted to come home and share with your mum and dad?

Nathan: um, my stand out moment would be, we had a dance showcase thing, there was like a, this thing at school for expressive arts and there was dance and drama and stuff and I performed there and my parents watched it

I: yes, sounds good. Natalie and Neil (parents), can either of you recall any stand out moments that Nathan shared with you during the term?

Mother: yes, I think that, the rugby, getting on to the team and when he's done well in class when they've had some sort of assessment and he's said he's done very well in it, that's always nice to hear him saying he's done well

Father: I recall the Spanish that he's learning, as he's keen to come and tell me about it which I think he's still enjoying

Nathan: yeah, it's the only lesson I see any point in, it's the most useful lesson, that's what I mean to say

I: okay, and do you think there was anyone or anything that helped you during this term?

Nathan: one of our tutors was good, but she left at half term, otherwise I can't think of anyone else

I: and were there any challenging times during the term?

Nathan: um, I got put in set 2 for Maths, so a bit annoyed, I was annoyed with myself because I thought I could do better, but still I'm going to get into set 1 in the next assessment, the teacher told me (mum laughs)

I: and how did you manage that annoyance?

Nathan: well, the teacher told me that there wasn't that much of a difference between set 1 and set 2 and there's a massive difference between set 2 and set 3 (10:13), and then there's a little difference between set 3 and set 4

I: do you enjoy maths?

Nathan: yep, they're doing my favourite part of maths at the moment, so yeah

I: what part is that?

Nathan: angles

I: okay, as we are talking about your school work, can you tell me how you felt about your overall progress during the term?

Nathan: um, well so basically like in geography my target grade for the end of the year was a 4 and then I got a 4b

I: well done, and how about your other subjects?

Nathan: well I'm in set 1 for everything else so that's really good, apart from maths, but um, yeah I did well in my Science thingy

I: Is it important to you to do well?

Nathan: aha

I: can you tell me why you think that?

Nathan: first of all, no one can call you stupid, um I think it's good to do well, especially in our school the behavior in the classes where they're not so intelligent is not very good

I: okay, Natalie and Neil, have you had some feedback on Nathan's progress?

Mother: yeah we went to see, well we couldn't see the tutor when we were suppose to because we were away with our own work, but we arranged to see one of the senior members of staff on another day, so we went to get Nathan's report card and it was all very positive, not just the grades, but sort of his attitude to learning and things like that, so behavior been good and he seems to be achieving, which is a good feeling as a parent to know that your child is doing well and is happy

I: yes, and were there any types of awards or achievements given out during the term? I know you mentioned attitude, any other awards that you may be looking to achieve?

Nathan: well, at my athletics club, I got top award for cross county runner of the year

Mother: oh, here it comes, there it is (*dad shows the cup he received*)

Nathan: yeah there's this women, I don't know if you know her, her name is Christine Ohuruogu?

I: Yes, I know of her, she's one of the fast runners for the 100 or 200m for Great Britain?

Nathan: yeah, yeah, she gave it to me

I: oh wow, you met her, how interesting

Nathan: yep, I'm not going to wash it (all laugh)

Mother: so that was good, wasn't it?

Nathan: yep

I: Yes, well done.

I: So, Nathan just thinking about your school routine, what's the most challenging part of your day?

Nathan: um, waking up, no actually it's probably not the most challenging because we have 5 periods, so it goes tutor, first period, second period, break, um, third period, fourth period, lunch and then fifth period, so at lunch it's really hard to go back to period five because it's like that it's only one more lesson, and its tiring

I: okay, and how do you feel about the size of your school?

Nathan: I think the school got smaller, a bit, it's probably a mental thing but it feels like the school got smaller, yeah, so it does feel like a much smaller school

I: Right, and how do you feel about having the different teachers?

Nathan: ah, yeah the teachers are fine, I don't mind

I: and do you feel safe at school?

Nathan: yeah, there's teachers everywhere, which is sometimes a good thing, sometimes not

I: Can you tell me about lunchtime – what do you do then?

Nathan: I play football or I talk because I'm very sociable

Mother: are you? (laughs)

Nathan: I am sociable

Mother: good

I: on that note, Nathan can you tell me about your friends at secondary school?

Nathan: oh right, so there's Anton, and there's a Lewis and there's Ryan, Liam, and Andrew, who's funny, but he's very badly behaved, so not to close to him, and there's Bill.

I: so do you have a group of friends or a couple of close friends, who you hang around with most?

Nathan: I mostly hang out with Anton and talk to the others during the lessons. Well, I don't talk in lessons, but I talk to them at lessons, you know what I mean

I: yes, and did your friendships change at all during this time?

Nathan: yes, I lost a friend, he kind a wasn't my type of friend

I: how did that make you feel?

Nathan: I had other friends, so it was fine

I: would you like to still be his friend?

Nathan: yeah, maybe

I: do you think that friends are important at school?

Nathan: yes

I: can you tell me why?

Nathan: because they help you get through boring times

I: do you see any of your friends after school?

Nathan: well, I go to the same club as him today

Mother: you do see each other out side of school, you've been to each other's houses

Nathan: oh yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah

I: Natalie, do you know the parents of any of these new friends?

Mother: yes, this boy, Anton that Nathan is friendly with we know the mum and dad a little bit now

I: okay, and does Anton know about your cleft?

Nathan: um, no but when I went camping this weekend, someone asked me about it so yeah

I: and how did you respond to them asking you about it?

Nathan: oh, I just told them what it is

I: and how did they respond to that?

Nathan: they just said 'oh, cool', that is exactly what they said

I: Right so thinking about your extra curricular activities, I know you've talked about your rugby and your athletics, were there any other activities that you started?

Nathan: breakdance, I really enjoy it and can show you

I: okay, I'm sure it's good to see (laughs), but can you tell me about any other clubs you may do at school?

Nathan: I like music, but I'm not very good at it, there aren't any others

I: do you think it's important to be part of a club?

Nathan: yeah

I: can you tell me why you think that?

Nathan: because you get to meet new people, but also they go to my school, in my class so yeah

I: can you tell me how you met Anton?

Nathan: oh yeah, I have the best reason, so you know at the start of school they have like seating plans, well, they did them all according to the register, and he's after me in the register, so he was with me in every lesson

I: okay, and just thinking a little more about your cleft, has anyone from school asked you about it?

Nathan: yes, someone called Tom T, there's basically 4 Tom's

I: How did he ask you about it?

Nathan: basically, he asked me what the line was here (*pointing to his top lip*), and then I told him and then it turned into a massive conversation about how he was in year 4 and how he tripped over and smashed his lip on a bench and cut it open, so yeah

I: do you think it makes any difference for other children to know about your cleft in the class?

Nathan: ah, yes

I: can you tell me why you think it would make a difference?

Nathan: because you can understand it

I: how does it make you feel if they understand it?

Nathan: a lot better because then they won't ask me why my teeth are wonky, I mean someone already asked about my teeth, so I had to tell them

I: so if there was an opportunity to tell everyone at the start of a school year about your cleft, would you like that?

Nathan: yes, yeah

I: and for a year 6 child who has a cleft starting secondary school this September, is there anything you'd like to tell them?

Nathan: Well, about their cleft, no one will think they're weird, it's a fun fact, that's all it is, it's fun fact about me

I: okay, and can you tell me what it's been like for you to be involved in this study?

Nathan: I think it's good because it will help people, the future generation with cleft because I don't want them to go to school, secondary school and not make any friends because they might think they're weird

I: Do you think that being involved in the study has had any impact in how you think about friendships at school?

Nathan: no, not really

I: and do you think you've thought about your school more, since being involved in the study?

Nathan: ah, no

I: and in what ways do you think being involved has made you think more about your cleft?

Nathan: um, yeah, I think so because normally if someone asked me about it I couldn't really be bothered, but now I have told them the full story

I: and how do you feel about telling the full story?

Nathan: yeah, it kind of made me realize, or think that I didn't really have any lip there, it's a bit disgusting, but okay to talk about it

I: Natalie and Neil, how did you feel about Nathan's involvement in the study?

Mother: I mean Nathan's never been one to talk about his cleft that much, I think in primary school it was a one form entry school, they all knew each other, they'd sort of grown up with each other, it's really only now where children are going to ask questions about what you look like and what's that, and the time of life there in, 11 and 12, when they're going to start looking at each other and body image and that sort of thing, so I suppose we have been a bit more aware of it coming up in conversation, a bit more, but not hugely. I think the study has made us think that perhaps other children aren't as lucky as Nathan, that perhaps he's so chilled about it, we've been very lucky because the repair is very good, so I would imagine a lot of children and adults may not even notice, I don't know, whereas other children might not have been so fortunate

I: yes, on that note, were the school made aware of Nathan's cleft at all?

Father: yeah, no we didn't do anything like that, did we?

Mother: no, we didn't include that because we didn't feel it was necessary. If anything had happened, then we would have, but it doesn't affect his learning or anything really. I mean if it had come up then perhaps we would have gone and seen the school and talk about it then.

I: Right, yes. Nathan, was there anything else you wanted to tell me about school or the past term that we haven't spoken about yet?

Nathan: ah, no don't think so

I: Okay, great.

*(A little further more informal discussion about the end of the research, then the participant was provided with a debrief from.)*

**Transcription** (Skype interview with Rebecca, mother and father)

**Family interview:** The R family (child, mother - Rachel, father - Rob)

Interviewer: Hi Rebecca, how are you?

Rebecca: Hi, good thanks

Mother (Rachel): she's a bit tired, I think. She's actually had a day off school, teacher training day actually, so I think she's been busy with her friends (*tries to reposition camera*)

Interviewer: Rebecca, how are you feeling now that you've completed your first full term of secondary school?

Rebecca: I'm really enjoying it, ah, making all of my new friends and everything and the lessons are really fun

I: okay, and if you can think back to the first few weeks of school, were there any stand out moments for you?

Mother: I think I was happiest when she came back and said she had made some new friends but then there's an occasion when you took a packed lunch in, do you remember (*asking Rebecca*), you took a packed lunch in and you didn't know where to sit and you got invited by some year 9s to go and sit with them

Rebecca: oh yes, I didn't realize that I could have hot dinners so I took in a packed lunch and all of my friends went into the hall to have a hot dinner, but I got told to go to a different hall, um, so I was sitting by myself and some Year 9s invited me over and they started chatting to me about my teachers and my lessons and that sort of stuff

I: can you remember how that made you feel?

Rebecca: it made me feel welcomed and it was really nice

I: yes, and thinking back to the new faces you saw and the buildings, can you recall some of these parts?

Rebecca: ah, yeah the buildings were really big and split into sections so, its, um, it can be harder to find your way around at points but once you get to like know it its quite easy

I: okay. Rachel, were there any other times that you can recall that stood out to you at the start of the term?

Mother: I think that I was really glad that she had started new clubs, um very quickly so she very quickly got into orchestra and choir and netball and she was also doing sort of village netball as well which she hadn't been doing before and all of that was sort of quite good and



reassuring, um and then as I say when she started coming back and telling me about all the people she knew, um, and was starting to get on with, and gradually it became more, um, sort of narrowed down to a set of people that she was getting on well with and because R... who came from her school as well, her original school, her primary school was also friends with those people, it was quite reassuring. She was starting to make a group of friends, which was nice.

Father (Rob): just to add to that I think that what also changed for Rebecca the past term is her independence because she cycles in by herself, so initially she tried by herself and then we went with her for a bit and now she's back to going by herself so it's a growth bit for her and a bit of independence

Mother: and she takes the buses now on a Thursday when she has to take her cello in, so that's something that she hasn't done before at all before starting school, but she's managing it very well, she's also keeping in touch very well so if she decides at the end of school to go off to the park to meet up with some friends, she'll now text me and I'm confident that I know where she is and she'll tell me, which is really nice.

Interviewer: Yes, good. Rebecca, can you tell me if there was a time during the school term when something had happened at school and you really wanted to share it with your parents?

Rebecca: ah, I think one of them was making new friends and like, and also there was an activity, a cloning workshop, I was chosen for as something that I might like and you had to learn how the machine worked and how to use it and stuff.

Interviewer: Can either of you, Rob and Rachel (*directed to parents*) remember a time when Rebecca came home to share something with you?

Mother: She's actually really good at keeping us up to date with what she's doing, she does well a lot of the time, which is lovely, so we do actually at the end of the day, generally over tea, say well, 'how did your day go and what did you enjoy and what didn't you enjoy?', um, so we keep up to date really well on things like that.

Father: I think Rebecca talks a lot when she needs to about when she is interacting with, particularly her friends and when she's trying to do well and things like that so, you're very good at talking that through, aren't you? (*directed at Rebecca*)

Rebecca: yes

Interviewer: Right, were there any parts of the school term that were more challenging, Rebecca?

Pause

Mother: there's been things to do with your operation. So Rebecca, I'm not sure if she's told you, but she's due to have a bone graft operation in a couple of months time, um, and, ah, she wasn't sure how to tell her friends or how to tell anyone or whether she'd be talked about a lot if she was off for two weeks and then came back with a sort of swollen face and things like that so its been, so we've been working out how best to let people know, so Rebecca's been telling her friends and we've been talking to teachers as well to try and work out how to manage the time that she has off and the fact that she won't be able to do sport for a couple of months, afterwards, so um, that's been an interesting thought process and how to work out who to say what to and when because we still don't know the date.

Interviewer: Okay, Rebecca, can you tell me how your friends have responded to you telling them about it?

Rebecca: Um, so far they've been sad that I'll be off for a bit, um, but they know what its about so they like know all the things that are going to happen.

Interviewer: Right, yes.

I also recall in one of our online interviews, you mentioned some concern with other children from a different school during your cycling route. Can you tell me how that's going?

Rebecca: um, it does occasionally happen but,

Mother: they don't always know that you're at a different school because you're wearing a jacket, as it's winter, but when she wore a jumper, it was obvious which school she was from. I think it hasn't gone away yet, has it (*directed to Rebecca*)?

Rebecca: no

Mother: and we still do cycling with her occasionally. You come back by yourself so that's alright

Rebecca: yes

Mother: but I think it's one of those things that might just keep happening. We have talked to both schools about it, um, and they've talked about getting a local volunteer police officer to just be a little more present at the end of school.

I: Rebecca, can you tell me how you respond to it in the situation?

Rebecca: I usually ignore it, um, sometimes they do, a couple of the, a few of the younger ones do jump out into the cycle path as I'm cycling so I have to like go around them

Mother: it's generally a case of ignoring them and moving on sort of thing

I: how does it make you feel though?

Rebecca: it can make me feel a bit anxious, a bit nervous sometimes, ah, yeah

I: Okay, lets talk a bit more about your progress at school. Can you tell me how you're feeling about this?

Rebecca: I think I'm going quite well in quite a lot of my lessons, ah, I got my report recently and I'm really happy with it, I feel like I'm doing really well at school

Father: you are doing really well at school

Mother: yes she is doing really well at school

Father: I mean if we really want to be honest here (*all laugh*)

I: Great! Were there any type of house points or certificates given out by the school at this stage?

Rebecca: We don't do certificates but we do do houses and we add up all our achievement points for our houses, and our house won the term cup

Father: and where are you in your class, in achieving points?

Rebecca: I think I'm about like second, cause somebody got 103

Mother: you got 100, because you got 6 this week

Rebecca: no, I think I'm on 96 at the moment

I: Well done.

Have you had a parents evening yet?

Mother: no, we haven't had one yet, that's in the end of March.

I: okay, so you haven't meet with any of the teachers really?

Mother: Oh, I beg your pardon we have had one before Christmas which was just like talking to the form tutor to check that the children had settled in okay, so it wasn't really an academic progress one so we were given her CAT scores, um, it was just to check that she was getting on alright, and you got the chance to talk to special needs coordinator and the pastoral care person as well

I: Okay, and with regards to the special needs coordinator and the services they provide, do they play a role?

Mother: they know about it, we have a teacher for the deaf that comes in every term, so she advised, we did find that when Rebecca started wearing her hearing aid again in October that the teacher for the deaf advised her to be moved in certain classes and I passed that on to

the SENCO, but she didn't seem to act on it and she was expecting Rebecca to tell the teachers, which was fine once we knew what was expected, so we'd been to this parent's evening and sorted out that actually, it was going to be Rebecca that told them, then she did get moved, um, but generally it's okay, isn't it?

Rebecca: yes

Father: ... your house, as well, the pastoral care

Mother: Mr ...

Rebecca: um, yeah

Father: So, did you have a nice talk with him at all?

Rebecca: not really

I: So there is someone there in place that you can talk to?

Mother: yes, yeah, I mean the form teacher is good and the pastoral care teacher for her form is actually very good, he's actually deaf himself so it helps to be able to explain things

I: okay, and Rebecca would you like to achieve more awards or house points in the coming term?

Rebecca: I think I'd just like to do really well in all of my lessons and keep up the standard with which I'm doing at the moment

Father: What about that partnerships...?

Mother: Oh yes, there's an inter-schools schools partnership which is a group of schools worked together that um, put on sort of extra curricular activities put on for children who show an interest and would benefit from them, so Rebecca is on that list for year 7, its about 20 from year 7 who are in that, so she gets the chance like the coding workshop which was mentioned, she gets the chance to attend extra events outside of school or during school time, so there's a couple of those sessions possibly coming up, you don't have to go to everything, um, and they have a workshop at the end of the summer for higher level maths, which Rebecca might be interested in because she's really good at maths.

I: Okay, right so just thinking about your school routine, can you tell me Rebecca what was the most challenging thing day to day of your school routine?

Rebecca: I think it was like whenever on a Thursday because I have music and I have to take my cello in, so I have to get up earlier than I usually do to get onto the bus, um, and it can be a bit challenging if I miss the bus

I: what happens if you miss the bus?

Rebecca: well, I can't because that bus is usually the only bus I catch so I'm waking up a bit earlier so I can catch the bus before that and if I miss that bus I can catch the bus after that, which means I'm on time all the time

I: Okay, and how do you find moving from classroom to classroom, as I remember you were easily able to find your way around the school, but I just wondered about the busy nature of the school between lessons?

Rebecca: um, it's not too bad, in a couple of places it can be a bit busy, cause um loads of people are moving to get to certain places, um, and some people and some places are busier than others, but generally it's not too bad

I: Okay, and do you feel safe in your school?

Rebecca: yep

I: and how do you feel about the rules in secondary compared to primary?

Rebecca: I think there are a few more cause in primary you weren't allowed things like your phone and all sorts like that, but now you're allowed them, but you have certain rules with your phones in school and ah, they're a bit stricter on your uniform and I think like secondary school is a bit stricter than primary school

I: Can you tell me about lunch time at school? What do you do?

Rebecca: I usually have a hot school dinner, um which means there's basically an outdoor area where we line up in our forms in our houses and then they call us into lunch in our years and so some weeks it can be year 9 first, and some weeks, year 8, and some weeks it's year 7. Year 11 can go out of school to get their lunch and then year 10's go in right at the start, they don't have to queue up or anything

I: Okay, and what happens after you've eaten your lunch?

Rebecca: I usually go outside and hang out with my friends and just chat and have some fun

I: Right, so let's talk a little more about your friends. Can you tell me if you have one or two friends or a friendship group?

Rebecca: I kind of have like two friendship groups cause like all of my friends are friends but I have one friendship group who usually hang around themselves and then I've got another friendship group, so my usual friendship group is 4 of us and its two of my new friends

called ... and ..., who are live in ... and then ... who went to my old school and then there's me.

I: Okay and have you had any changes to the friendship group since you started school?

Rebecca: I think like I was friends with them and then I got friends with their friends and then it kind of created the friendship group a bit bigger.

I: Do you think that friends are important in secondary school?

Rebecca: I think they are because if you didn't have that many friends you would struggle like socially and it would be like harder, you'd be more isolated and you wouldn't be able to have as much fun

I: Just talking about your friends, I was wondering if you had talked to them about your cleft?

Rebecca: um, all I've explained to them is about my hearing and the operation, at the moment

I: okay, and has anyone else made any mention or comments about this or anything else?

Rebecca: um, I don't think so, no

I: right, so talking about clubs and after school clubs, have you started anything new this term?

Mother: yes (laughs), tag rugby

Rebecca: oh yeah

Mother: she started playing tag rugby, they haven't had the after school club, and they have a short Monday every other Monday, and there's an after school class on a Monday, so because it was a short Monday she hasn't gone to it yet

I: can you tell me why you think extra curricular activities are important?

Rebecca: um, well for me I find them quite fun and also I don't like coming home and like doing nothing, I prefer to be doing something active, so a lot of my extra curricular activities are sporty ones because I like sports a lot

Mother: I was going to say that this has just reminded me, something else that Rebecca did last term, um, that she was chosen to with a group of other Year 7's to attend a workshop to encourage girls to do more sport, so it's a sort of sports leadership group so they were trained in how to um, encourage other girls to take up sport, albeit an activity rather than different sports and they're now going to set up a sports club or something

Rebecca: yeah, at first we're just getting girls to come along and not necessarily do sport, but games to make sure you're active, like and then we'll do like bring a friend kind of thing to get more and more involved, we're also doing a buddy system which... so some of us will be chosen to be put with other people to get them more involved.

I: okay, so how did it feel to be part of that workshop?

Rebecca: I found it like really exciting because I love sport personally and I'd love more people to get into sports.

I: Right so just thinking about your cleft and your experiences over the past term. Was there anything you wanted to add?

Mother: I mean the main thing about the cleft is that it's caused problems with the hearing and the operation that's coming up and all the dental work that goes with that, but apart from that it's not a day to day problem or issue

I: Were there any missed days or afternoons from school because of medical appointments?

Mother and Rebecca: Yeah, yes

Mother: we've had a couple of dental appointments, we've had a couple of hospital appointments and we've had the cleft consultant appointment at the beginning of January.

I: okay, so how does that make you feel, Rebecca, missing part of your school day?

Rebecca: um, it can be a bit annoying because ah, sometimes it's lessons which I really enjoy and I also really enjoy school, um, but, um, I think the one for the hearing isn't too bad because I like to know what's going on with my hearing and I like if it's getting better or getting worse again, um, and then finding out about my teeth and when my operation is, it roughly can be a bit scary sometimes

I: okay, have you been given a date for your operation?

Mother: no, we're on the waiting list, which is two to three months and we'll get 6 weeks notice, that's what we've been told, so we've been counting down. Rebecca would like to go and have a look at the ward and we'd like to find somebody whose been through the operation so Rebecca can talk to them, Skype them or whatever. We've joined the local CLAPA facebook group, um, so I'll put something on there once we know the date to find out if somebody would be available to talk to us or share their experiences.

I: Rebecca, do you think that it would have made any difference at the start of your school term if anyone had known about your cleft or hearing?

Rebecca: um, I don't think so

Mother: when she started school the first couple of weeks, her hearing was fine and it wasn't an issue, it's only because it fluctuates so much, it's only as it goes down that it starts to become an issue

Rebecca: it wasn't to bad, even once I told them and they found out

Mother: she's been using a microphone as well to help with group work

I: Okay, and if you knew of a Year 6 child whose going to start secondary school in September this year, and they did have a cleft, what type of advice would you give them?

Rebecca: I'd probably say don't be nervous, its actually not as bad as it seems, and once you make friends and you start doing clubs and you start getting in to the lessons, it gets really fun.

I: Okay, can you tell me how it's been for you to be involved in this study?

Rebecca: I think its been quite fun cause like, um I've been able to tell you about how everything's been going.

I: yes, and how did you feel about the vlogging?

Rebecca: um, I don't really like the vlogging because it makes me feel a bit uncomfortable, but once I had done them and my dad supported me, it was actually quite fun

I: And do you think being involved in this study has had any affect on how you think about friendships at school?

Rebecca: I feel like this study has made me feel like friendships are a bit more important because it can support you and it can help you have like fun and things like that

I: and what about your school – do you think you've thought more about school because of your involvement in the study?

Rebecca: um, I think I have, like thinking about like,

Mother: I think it's made us realise the progress she's made because you don't often sort of review it quite so critically and you can see the rapid change, when you look back, you suddenly realise, I think it was only like a couple of months ago when she was really really nervous and wasn't sure about it but now she's like oh it's fine you know tell anyone and it's been nice actually to track what has happened and what has changed



I: yes, and Rebecca do you think that being involved in the study has made you talk more about your cleft?

Rebecca: um, I think it's made me more confident because like originally I was very nervous to talk to my friends about it, but this has made me feel more confident about telling my friends

I: okay, and how are you feeling about this term that you've already started?

Rebecca: I'm feeling excited and happy

I: Great, is there anything you'd like to tell me that I have not asked you about, just thinking about your first term of school and the transition?

Rebecca: I don't think so.

I: Okay, great, thank you

*(A little further more discussion about the end of the research, then the participant was provided with a debrief from.)*

**Transcription** (Skype interview)

**Family interview:** The S family (Sophie and mother, Sally)

Interviewee: Hello, how are you?

Sophie and mother: hi

Sophie: I'm good, thank you

*(mum getting a chair, after fixing the camera)*

I: How's your week been, Sophie?

Sophie: tiring, but good, yeah

I: yes, right so we'll get started with the interview schedule and if mum would like to contribute at any points, please do

Mother: thanks

*(Oh, hello. Younger brother appears on screen)*

Brother: Hi

I: How are you?

Brother: good, just doing my homework

Father: come and do your homework

Mother: go with daddy, please

I: Hi, the whole family is with us today

Mother: yes, but they're busy with homework *(dad and son not part of interview)*.

We haven't had a chance to look at the questions you sent through as Sophie's not been up for very long *(laughs)*

I: okay, if there's any question you'd rather not answer Sophie, just let me know.

Sophie: okay

I: Sophie, how are you feeling about having completed your first term of secondary school?

Sophie: um, I feel quite good about it, like, it was a very long term, I think 15 weeks, so at the end I was very drained because it was such a long term, but I was kind of amazed because it went so quickly and it was almost half the year the first term

I: okay, and if you can think back to the start of the term, on the first day or first few weeks at school, what stood out to you?

Sophie: lots of new people, to be honest

I: And to your mum, Sally what can you recall about those first few days?

Mother: quite exciting, I think, we were both quite excited and we obviously had a lot going on because we moved that first week as well, so it was a bit strange because we were living in a B&B, weren't we up the road, but I think for me quite excited for Sophie, a bit nervous because she didn't know anyone and actually incredibly proud because she's done so well to get in there

I: Sophie, can you recall any stand out moments during the term that you wanted to tell your mum and dad about?

Sophie: um, I would say the House song, so like everyone in each house does a song and then they compete and it's really cool and that so

I: and how did your house do?

Sophie: well, because my house isn't technically a house, because we don't have houses until Year 9, so we don't actually compete but we do take part

I: you enjoyed the experience?

Sophie: yeah, I really did

I: Sally, can you remember a time when Sophie came back from school and wanted to share something with you, it stood out for her?

Mother: I think she's enjoying some of the music stuff a bit more because you do some of the contemporary stuff, don't you? (*Sophie: yeah*), I can remember you saying that some of the stuff you were recording was really cool. She did a singing recital with all the singers and you were quite excited about doing that and it was very impressive

I: yes, sounds interesting

Can you remember any times during the term, Sophie that were a little more challenging?

Sophie: well, throughout the term it's quite difficult because we get quite a lot of work and I juggle quite a lot of extra curricular, so it was quite stressful, but I can't remember any specific time

I: It's very busy for you?

Sophie: yeah, it is I mean I'm at school a long time, from when I leave the house and get back home, it's about eleven hours, so like that's a very long day, I am very busy, so it can be a bit stressful sometimes

Mother: and I think that's something we maybe need to look at, don't we, what you're choosing to do and whether you need to be doing it

I: and has there been anyone or anything to help you with this so far, Sophie?

Sophie: oh yeah, sure I have some friends and um, my mum and dad are sure to tell me if like there's a room change for dance or something like that because I wouldn't remember (laughs)

I: okay, and thinking about your progress with your school work, how are you feeling about this?

Sophie: I'm doing okay, yeah, I had some exams, some of them weren't so good, some of them were very good, I think I'm doing good, ja, I think I'm quite positive about it, um, just trying to get the hang of it and things like that so

I: Have you received a report or had a parent's evening?

Sophie: I've had one parent's evening and two reports that have gone out and one more that's going out

Mother: they get more frequent reports, they get what they call interims as well so where most schools get a termly report, they get a sort of half term report, it sort of says how they've been doing for the last 5 weeks

I: okay, and how have you felt about these more regular reports?

Sophie: yeah, I think I'm doing quite good, yeah

I: Sally (mother), how have you felt about Sophie's progress?

Mother: I think she's probably being a bit tough on herself, it's been quite a tough transition, I think she's gone from her prep school where she was comfortably the very top academically to going to a school where everybody is very academically able, that's proving a little bit of an adjustment, isn't it (*Sophie: yeah*) and knowing where you fit into it. I think Sophie thrives on being recognized for doing well, um, and you're maybe just feeling like you've not found your niche, maybe (*Sophie: yeah*), um so about the reports, we had a little bit of a sticky patch around the exams I think it was the first batch of exams, a bit more structured, a different approach, but I think that personally we learnt more about what we need to do next time, and I think that in terms of her interims, she got a lovely end of year report, really lovely, even though she hadn't done as well as she may have liked to have done in a couple of the exams, her actual report was glowing, it was a really lovely school report, so I think you know it's not been the easiest of terms, has it? (*Sophie: no*), so we've just got to find her level

I: Yes, and Sophie how do you plan on doing the next set of exams after what you now know?

Sophie: I definitely want to improve on a few subjects, yeah

I: and do you have any future aspirations?

Sophie: I don't really know at the minute, I'm kind of like well I like this, I might want to do this, I don't really know, to be honest

I: okay, and how are you finding your school, college routine?

Sophie: well I get up at 6-ish, which is very early, and that's quite challenging because I'm always tired, but I think generally I'm quite good being on routine, so just getting up is hard

I: yes, and how has it been in terms of moving around between classes and finding your way?

Sophie: I don't really have a very good memory of where things are and that and at my old school, I moved around for each subject anyways so it wasn't very difficult for me to get the hang of, really

I: okay, and you're familiar with having different teachers for the subjects too?

Sophie: yeah, I am

I: Were the rules any different between your school now and your prep school?

Sophie: there's not actually as many rules, they treat us pretty much like adults and you know what you should and we shouldn't have to really reinforce it

Mother: and I think that's probably the biggest ethos within the school, is they expect you to behave nicely and there biggest thing is absolutely kindness, um, that's the one thing they really push, isn't it?

Sophie: well they have a punishment system in place but there isn't the rules there so you should know what you should be doing anyways, so yeah

Mother: there's a little handbook that all the parents get and all the children get and I suppose there's some rules in there that you probably get explained at the beginning, like uniform, and how homework is marked, it's basically like a diary for each term, but there are some guiding rules about where you're allowed in the school, where you're not allowed

Sophie: but there isn't actually very many boundaries, like you should know, there isn't any rules like that you would have at your old school, if it's like things like behavior cause it's not like a reinforced things because you know that it's there

I: okay, can you tell me if you're feeling more independent?

Sophie: um, I do feel it, but it's also a bit stressful like making sure I'm at the bus on time in the morning and things like that and making sure I'm at the right place at the right time but then I'm getting used to it a bit and I'm finding it okay, to be honest

I: and can you remind me about your lunch times at school, as I recall this being a little different to your prep school?

Sophie: yeah, we have a 15-minute break at like 11, then we have lunch at 12 which is a half an hour lunch break, where three days a week you need to get changed for games and then on the other two days you can do what you like, but on the other two days we have like a free period on the Tuesday and the Thursday we have a free period at 2 'o clock so you can do clubs or you can do prep and other things like that

I: Okay, so on the two days when you have the full lunch break, what do you do?

Sophie: generally, I go the common room most of the time because we have a common room, there's like computers, sofas, it's just like you can go there, ja

I: is that only for Year 7's?

Sophie: and 8's, but like some people like to go on the home ground and play football or you can go anywhere you like, you can go into town in year 8, not in my year though

I: okay, and how are things going with your friends? I recall you talking about your friendship group in our online interviews.

Sophie: ja, well we only have 17 girls in our year, so I was pretty much friends with everybody, like everybody was friends, not like good friends, I would say I have a couple of good friends and then a few best friends, so I would say I have like 3 best friends, but we don't all huddle in a group but generally they're my best kind of friends, but then I'm good friends with like maybe 5 people, maybe more than that but like yeah

I: and do you spend time with you best friends?

Sophie: yeah, I do, two of them are twins and one of them is in my class so I see them, generally in class we always spend a lot of time together, we walk to class together and then we've occasionally had a sleep over or something like that

I: okay, and have there been any changes with your friends during the term?

Sophie: not massively no, I'm generally just friends with everyone and it's okay, yeah

I: have you had any other challenges with anyone, I recall you mentioned another student who you struggled with at the start?

Sophie: yeah, now we're good friends, I would say, I think it's just been getting to know each other better. She's in my class and most of her really good friends are in the other class so she spends some time with me, we are quite good friend's now

I: Can you tell me if you think it's important to have friends during this time at school?

Sophie: I think it's very important, like a lot of people they just say 'oh I probably won't be friends with everyone', like you don't have to be really good friends with everyone, but I am friends with everyone, like I may not spend very much time with some of them but they are still my friends, I think I'd say it's important with the pressures at school, especially academically that it's very important to have and good to have

I: okay, and just thinking about the extra curricular activities, have you started any new sports during the term?

Sophie: I haven't actually done any new sports, but similar to what we did at prep school, we were doing hockey and netball, I think we're going to be doing rounders and athletics, and I can tell you what I'm not keen on...

Mother: yeah, it won't be athletics (laughs)

Sophie: no, not athletics (laughs), I'm in the A's for hockey and I had a hockey tournament this week and I really enjoy netball, I enjoy hockey and netball, but I didn't always used to enjoy it but now I really enjoy it

I: Can you tell me why you think you're enjoying it more now?

Sophie: well, the teachers are just a lot lot nicer, and they're a lot younger the teachers so most of them are in their 20s and it's more encouraged sport for everyone, and everyone gets a chance and it's a lot more fair, it's just more enjoyable.

Mother: I think that's been a really noticeable with the change of schools, although all the other bits seem a bit more tricky, but it's been lovely to see Sophie going from not really enjoying games or sports to being reasonably enthusiastic about them

Sophie: it's one of my favourite subjects to do now, so

I: yes, and do you think it's important to be part of a club or a sport at school?

Sophie: well, we are encouraged to do at least one extra curricular clubs, um, there are so many on offer though and I think it's very important because you can meet lots of new people and it gives you something else to do that you can just do at the end of the school day and it's just something else nice to do

I: Okay, and just talking a little about your cleft. Can you describe how you felt at your new school how you felt when someone new asked about your cleft or found out about your cleft?

Sophie: um, I don't really mind to be honest because I don't think it massively affects me, like yeah I've had the surgery and all, but in general I don't really mind what people said about my cleft because it is there, so

I: Would you like the opportunity at the beginning of the year to talk to your class about it?

Sophie: well, I did end up talking to everyone about it because there were some people asking me, and I don't mind, but it becomes annoying having to keep explaining, so I just told everyone

I: what was there response when you did explain it?

Sophie: ah, not anything really, they were just like 'well, whatever'

I: okay, and for a year 6 child who has a cleft starting secondary school in September, what type of advice would you give them?

Sophie: I would say go into it with an open mind, um try out doing different things and talk to lots of different people even if you think they may not be good friends of yours, but it could be that in a month or two they're really your close, close friends, but they won't be if you don't talk to them, so

I: okay, so just thinking about your involvement in this study, as we've been talking about school, friends, your cleft. Can you tell me what it's been like to be involved in this study?

Sophie: um, sometimes it's been a bit like I forget and sometimes I'm very busy so it's ah, but I think there will be good to come out of it, so yeah

Mother: you found the WhatsApp chats a bit long, didn't you?

Sophie: ah, yeah, cause often I have a lot of prep and things, but I knew that there would be good things to come out of it so

I: Have you thought about your friends at school during this time?

Sophie: um, yeah a bit, but I don't actually know to be honest because I don't know how it would be different if I wasn't, but I think I've thought a bit more about friends, yeah

I: okay, and what about your new school, do you think you've thought more about your school during this time?

Sophie: I don't really think so, no

I: okay, and being involved in the study, have you thought any differently about your cleft?

Sophie: um, generally I don't really talk about my cleft cause it's something that I honestly forget about half the time



Mother: I think the only time we really talk about it is when there's something going on, either to do with dental work or make up, maybe we talk about it sometimes (Sophie: yeah)

Sophie: most of the time I do forgot that I have it

Mother: we watched the 'call the midwife thing', didn't we? (Sophie: yeah), and then you did ask me whether I cuddled you when you were a baby (laughs), yeah, I think my one observation over the school transition and I think it's probably reflective of me and Steve (father) parenting in reflecting on Sophie is that we've had a little confusion between us about how much Sophie needs to take for herself and I think she's kind of thought she's had to be very very independent and wanted to be independent, I think, and we've kind of let her get on with it a lot, but I think that what we're reappraising at the moment is remembering that mummy and daddy are here and we are here to help and we do want to help and I think the three of us need to find more time working at it, so you don't have to be doing everything yourself

I: How do you feel about that Sophie?

Sophie: yeah, often in the evening I will just do my prep, get everything done myself, so yeah

I: Would you like some more support, Sophie from mum and dad?

Sophie: yeah, because often I can forget things and then I need to sought it out sometimes and that's quite annoying because I don't actually know what I need to do, so yeah

I: okay, and how are feeling about the new school term that has already began?

Sophie: um, it's been going quite well, yeah, I think, um I've been quite busy, but yeah it's been going quite well

I: Is there any other thing that you'd like to tell me about that we haven't yet discussed, about your school transition?

Sophie: um, not really no

*(A little further more discussion about the end of the research, then the participant was provided with a debrief from.)*

**Appendix V**  
**Time point 1 Interview Transcripts – Grace and Hayden**

**First family interview transcription:**

The G family

**Participants:**

Interviewer (I)  
 Grace (participant - child)  
 Mother (Gina)

*Brief introduction's and short discussion about Grace's recent dance accident, injuring her arm, which is currently in plaster.*

Interviewer: Hi Grace, can you tell me whose part of your family?

Grace: This is my mum (mother: hiya), I have a little sister and that's my dad (Father: hello)

I: Hi everyone

Grace, can you think back to August before you started secondary school and tell me how you were feeling about starting?

Grace: I was feeling a bit nervous, quite excited as well

I: okay, can you tell me why you were feeling nervous?

Grace: um, cause it's a much bigger school cause my primary school normally had a couple hundred

Mother: one hundred

Grace: one hundred and ... (secondary school name) has over a thousand, so I was quite nervous

I: okay, and at home do you have any pets or any hobbies you can tell me about?

Grace: yeah, I do gymnastics, I go to guides, um, I haven't got any pets, we used to have a fish

I: were you looking forward to anything when you started?

Grace: um, I was looking forward to some of the new classes because um, we also do English, science, maths, but in ... (secondary school name) we get to do like music, home ec so like stuff like that

I: okay and did any of your friends from primary school start with you?

Grace: yeah, everyone from ... went up to the secondary school, and there were only 4 girls from my class and we all went up to ... (school name) and we're all still like good friends

I: How do you think your family felt about you starting at a new school?

Grace: ah, I think they were kind of like excited for me to move on

I: yes, Gina, can you tell me how you felt about Grace starting secondary school?

Mother: probably a little bit like Grace, anxious, because of the school that she was at, I mean there were only 13 in her whole class and she was moving up to about 2500, I think, so, Grace had been there from the nursery in school so she, all 13 of them had been there since they were 3 and then she went through the nursery, through primary school, they all knew each other, they knew about Grace's operations, how she looked and, so, when she started dancing over a year ago there was a few issues over the girls saying 'oh, what's wrong with her face?' and it's the first time she ever came to me and say 'oh the girls were talking about me', so that kind a worried me about going into highschool so I spoke to the Headteacher and said 'look, is there anyway she can get a bit of back up because there were only 4 girls, and if there were any chance one of the girls could be with her in the different classes in case there were any problems, and they've done that, she's got one of the girls, so, yeah, a bit anxious, we'll have to see, yeah (5:46)

I: Yes, and as a family did you have any discussions about Grace starting secondary school?

Grace: we were talking about enjoying it, and if there were any problems, speak to the teacher and mum and dad

I: okay, and can you tell me about your primary school experience?

Grace: I quite enjoyed it, we had quite a lot of fun running around and cause it was a such a small school we had like the same teacher, even for primary 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>, I had like the same teacher for both years and yeah

I: Did you have the same teacher throughout the day?

Grace: ah, yeah we did, we had the same teacher for the day

I: and how did you feel about your class?

Grace: I had close friends, but I also knew everybody

I: how did you feel about leaving primary school?

Grace: a bit sad cause I'd miss like all the teachers and stuff but then I was like quite excited to move on and everything, and make like new friends and stuff

I: did you have any transition days at your new secondary school before starting?

Mother: you had a couple, didn't you?

Grace: yeah, like two or three, and basically we just went around the school and meet some of the teachers and then we'd go to science and they'd tell us a little bit about it and then

Mother: did the head teacher not come to you as well every week?

Grace: no, it was Mrs... (tries to recall name)

Mother: no, doesn't matter

Grace: she went out to some of the schools

Mother: oh, school's liaison officer, maybe

Grace: yeah, she came and talked to us about highschool and we got like leaflets and stuff and if we had any worries or anything we could talk to her about it, and we made a board about how we were feeling about highschool

I: okay, and did you have any stand out moments at one of your transition sessions that you can recall?

Grace: ah, I think most things were exciting, the different departments and stuff and some of the teachers were really nice

I: and did you meet any new people on those days?

Grace: um, I meet a couple of new people and we were talking over Instagram and stuff and then on our first day we were all talking and most of them are in my class with me, and yeah I sit next to them and they're really nice

I: Okay, can you tell me how your routine has changed since starting secondary school? For example, your travelling to school and waking up earlier or later?

Grace: yeah, I use to get up at about 8, but now I have to get up at 7 and I usually walk to school everyday cause it's a 15 minute walk (mother: 5 minutes), and ah ... (name of school) is about, 'how many miles away?' (directed at mother)

Mother: 1 and a half

Grace: 1 and a half miles away so it's quite a far walk, but my best friend, ... her mum works in the school so she normally drives me to the school most days

I: Okay, can we talk about your cleft lip and palate?

Grace: yeah

I: when you were in primary school, did you need to tell anyone about it or did they ask you about it?

Grace: well, me and ... (best friend), we, when were in 6<sup>th</sup> we went to all the classes and done a talk about what it was, we kind of just explained it in period 7 and then people in nursery learned about it and then in primary 7 I done a talk and assembly with all the teachers and the pupils there

Mother: you probably don't remember but in primary 1 you took in your collage, cause you had to take in a baby picture and the children were only 5 and didn't realise there was anything wrong cause they'd known her from nursery so they didn't realise until she took her baby pictures in, but you'll probably not remember that

I: did the school ask you to create a collage?

Mother: well they ask in primary 1 so that the children can talk about their family and who they are, explain whose in there family and they asked me before hand if I wanted to take family pictures in before but right from when she was born we had pictures all around the house she had everything in her mouth, wires and all the rest of it so we don't remember telling her, she just always knew, and we asked her you know what picture do you want to take in and she pointed to one when she was a few hours old and didn't think anything of it, so

I: Grace, can you tell me about your experiences with CLAPA?

Grace: I really enjoy going to events and stuff cause they make it really fun cause you can go a long and talk to people and then the residential's are really fun cause it's like you're hanging out with all your friends who have the same thing as you and then there's the CLAPA young people's council and you go there and talk about things that you can do for CLAPA and make money for CLAPA

I: you've made some friends through CLAPA?

Grace: yeah, I got a couple and then there's Greg, he's one of my best friends, he came over a couple of Thursdays ago and we have a lot of fun laughing about it

Mother: Greg is three months younger than Grace and I met Greg's mum in the hospital, um Grace was going for her second op an he was going for his first so we've known them a while haven't we and they get on great together, he's quite shy and introvert and been to the residential so Grace persuaded him this year to go, didn't you and he loved it

I: does he live nearby?

Mother: no he lives on the other side of ... (town name), about an hour away from here

I: okay and is there anything you'd not like to talk about with regards to your cleft, for example medical appointments?

Mother: we're very open about it

Grace: yeah, it's fine

I: great. Are there any times when you felt that your cleft has challenged you? Maybe with a sport, or in making a friend?

Grace: um, it doesn't really affect making friends and stuff, I kind a just told them about it if they asked, but then after my operation and stuff and I couldn't do gymnastics and stuff

I: can you tell me how many operations you've had, maybe your mum can help here, since you were born?

Mother: is it 7

Grace: 7 or 8

Mother: might be 8

I: when was your last one?

Grace: um, 2 years a go

Mother: yep, 2 years a go, yeah they found a hole and had to close it and they did some work on your nose as well, tried to make it more symmetrical

I: How do you feel about going to the hospital for the operations?

Grace: I don't really mind, all the nurses are really nice

Mother: yeah, she loves it

Grace: and there's a new hospital so if you stay overnight you get a room and there's TV that has lots of games so you can put it on

I: okay, and has your cleft affected your speech?

Mother: she had speech therapy when she was 4 or 5, um, and she was there for a bout a year and there was just certain things she could say and she's had no issues, she can't say 'apostrophe' can you?

Grace: yeah, I can't I say 'papistrophe' (all laugh)

I: okay, you mentioned your dancing and guides earlier. Have you started any new clubs at your new school?

Grace: there's load of clubs like after school and at lunch time, so there's like a homework club that I go to and there's a dance club that I go to, not much now (laughs), um there's like

a reading club and in homework club there's always like teachers in there so you can go in and get some help and it's on a Wednesday after school, and at lunchtime for first years, yeah it's helpful

I: Okay, and are you interested in starting anything else outside of school? (18:45)

Grace: dance and guides are the only things I wanted to do, and once my arm is better I want to start doing contemporary

I: Just thinking back to school, has anyone asked you about your cleft or any other part of your face

Grace: ja, actually on Friday I was sitting in French and Gillian one of my friends who sits next to me asked me if I had fallen or something cause she'd noticed my scar there (points to lip) and I just told her about it and she didn't realise what it was

I: okay, and have you had any other comments about it?

Grace: oh, yeah there was a boy in maths, he sat next to me, and he was kind of making fun of me, I don't think he realised so I kind of explained it to him and then he stopped

Mother: yeah, secondary school has been different, cause in primary school everyone knew about Grace's cleft lip, but now it feels like 'every man to himself'. I put on Grace's form for the new school that she had a cleft, expecting someone to contact me to discuss, but no one's been in touch with me, I think there's just so many kids, and it's a big change from primary to secondary, I think. I mean for somebody like Grace who does tell us if there's a problem, it would be an issue because unless you speak up, there's no guidance teachers in a school in a school of 4000 kids you know, so I think that's a big difference

**First family interview transcription:**

The H family

**Participants:**

Interviewer (I)  
Hayden (participant - child)  
Mother (Helen)

*Brief introductions about the research study and, discussion about consent forms.*

Interviewer: Right, Hayden can you tell me your family, any siblings or pets, whose part of your family?

Hayden: I do have some pets, one is my dad's pet, the fish and I have a dog in the kitchen and a hamster in the other room and a hamster upstairs in my brother's room

I: okay, a few pets and some siblings?

Hayden: yeah, an older sister and a younger brother

I: Is your dad home?

Mother: He's outside in the car, trying to set up something, can't remember what it's called

I: okay. Do you have any family hobbies that you all do together?

Hayden: sometimes we do family game night and we spend time talking to each other

I: Right, so how were you feeling before starting secondary school, Hayden?

Hayden: hmmm, anxious

I: okay, can you tell me why you were feeling like that?

Hayden: because when secondary school finally finishes I get to leave school forever

I: Were you looking forward to anything in secondary school?

Hayden: um, not really

I: what about your friends? Did any of your friends from primary school start with you at your new school?

Hayden: only one

Mother: this year from his school, normally most of them tend to be going to the same secondary school but this year there was only one year 6 class, but this year for some reason



everyone went separately, you'd get one two together but not a whole bunch like six seven together, it was weird this year that they all went separately

Hayden: the highest is 4

I: okay and are you and the other child who you went to secondary school with, are you close?

Mother: no, they're not really close, they were in the same class but he wasn't in his close circle

I: and how did your family feel about you starting secondary school, Hayden?

Hayden: my mum was glad I got accepted to this secondary school because she thinks it will make me work hard

I: And Helen, how did you feel about him starting secondary school?

Mother: my main concern was about him being bullied because you know he's different, the perception of how children react to him being different and my first thing when I went in there was okay what is your policy on bullying because I'm very concerned because he didn't have no issues from primary school which helped with his confidence, so I didn't want there to be issues and not be able to show his full potential because somebody is picking on him or you just don't know, from all accounts zero tolerance, which is what I wanted and I've said to him, if something's not right he needs to say because before I'm the one championing him, fighting his little battles, saying you know and I can't go up to the teacher like I could in primary school, so it's totally different, you need to be able to speak and find you voice, if you don't like it, say it to the teacher and he's got a brilliant Head of year, he can go directly to her if he's got any issues

Hayden: that's changed though

Mother: Yeah bit you've known Ms Holt, she's very good, so if there's any issues he can go to her

I: Did you have any discussions as a family about starting school?

Mother: We did have a little discussion about our expectations, you know about getting in there, putting his head down and doing his work, you know, follow the rules, he doesn't have a problem with following the rules, you know just do what you're told, sometimes he can get a bit temperamental when he can't understand something he would not ask, and that is where we are at now, if he doesn't know, he wouldn't say that he doesn't know so I bought that up with the head so she's aware so. We're working on that now so that he's feels confident enough to ask I'm not sure if it's because it's still new, new people because in the primary school he was at he was there from nursery all the way up so he knew everyone so it was easy for him if he didn't know anything, he'd just put up his hand and say he didn't understand so this for him is a massive change, massive massive change, the building is massive, everything is different compared to a very very small school and going into this,

almost like going out into the world really, you know and it is so massive so that is what we've been working on to be brave enough to feel confident, he was always a confident child but be more confident in himself to say 'okay, I don't understand' and I've always encouraged him don't think about the others and how they think, think about yourself, you're the one that don't get it and you will be surprised when you put up your hand and say you don't get it, other people also don't get it as well, they're just not brave enough to put up their hand, so I've always encouraged him to say that if you don't understand, don't think it's silly don't think it's stupid because the only person who don't understand and the only person who knows they don't understand is you, the teacher won't know you know.

I: yes, Hayden can you tell me a little more about your primary school experience?

Hayden: I thought it was cool

I: you had just the one class in your year?

Hayden: yeah

I: and the class size – they tend to be 30 or so?

Hayden: no, 25

Mother: it was small

I: Can you tell me about your friends at school?

Hayden: lots of friends really

I: did you have subject teachers or just the one teacher?

Hayden: only one teacher

I: How does it feel in secondary school, having the different teachers?

Hayden: it's alright

I: did you have any transition days or taster sessions at your new school?

Hayden: yes, seven days of summer school, it was suppose to be two weeks, but it was one week, that's what they said

Mother: it was a chance for them to get to know the school and not make the school itself look intimidating, so it was just to break it down for them, what did they do... they did team building, they did sports, um, reading, but in depth you know, it was interesting, nothing to heavy

I: Hayden, were there any stand out moments during this time that you thought was really interesting, that you recall?

Hayden: I made a lot of friends

I: and how did it feel to have a new uniform, meet new people, the new building?

Hayden: Okay, but I mostly got lost in the school building

I: Can you tell me about secondary school now, how is different to primary school?

Hayden: a large amount of children and adults from university

Mother: oh yes they have a pathway to university for Year ...

Hayden: year 13's

I: Is that next to the school?

Mother: it's the same building

Hayden: yes, it's inside

I: Do you see these students too?

Mother: do you share the same lunch hall?

Hayden: going down the stairs

Mother: so they're the ones not in uniform

Hayden: yeah

I: okay, and is your school nearby - do you walk?

Hayden: um, we go by car

Mother: yes, his dad drops him off

I: Do you walk home or are you collected by your dad?

Hayden: I'm fetched, yeah

I: Okay, so are you happy to chat to me about your cleft?

Hayden: I don't mind talking about it

I: When you were in primary school, did anyone ask you about it?

Hayden: no

I: Did everyone know you had it?

Hayden: no, I showed them a picture of it

Mother: When um, in Year 1, you know the children were talking about their differences and they had show and tell and he bought, well he had this book that I had made, so I did this for him (*pointing to the book that was on the coffee table*) him so that the children can see how he was born, so that was such a great ice-breaker, for the kids and the teachers as well. After that it was like okay so this was when you were born and its fixed now and that's it, so yeah just showed the picture and that was it, he was accepted straight away when he showed the picture, they did not know too much about it then, but this is how he got it, and it was like okay and this is was what made him connect with the rest of the children, being different because at the beginning the speech was you could not understand him to clearly and then he bought this in and it was like 'okay, now we understand'

I: okay, and nobody asked anymore questions?

Mother: No, and all these children moved up with him. Yeah, there was no need, this was Hayden, and that's it. What I did notice that they took their time to actually listen when he spoke, so it wasn't always like asking him at the beginning can you repeat, can you repeat can you repeat, it was like okay we get you, so they adapted to suit him, yeah instead of him adapting to suit them

I: okay and there wasn't anyone else in a different class in the school that ever asked you or said anything?

Mother and Hayden: no

I: Okay. Can you tell me about your involvement with CLAPA?

Mother: Yeah, I only really read on the website about what's happening, yeah because I follow them on the website

I: Yes, because I've attended one of their young people's councils meeting, which is about children aged between 12-18 and they talk about their experiences.

Mother: Really, I did not know that they have that because I've seen some young children but I did not know they cater for his age, there's your opportunity Hayden

Hayden: I can't because I'm not 12

Mother: Yes, but I'm just saying that there's your opportunity of children who look different and sound the same as you and some of them who've had more surgeries than you so you can have the before and after picture (*older sister arrives*). You know I was just saying (including the sister in the conversation), that there's this council that meet. There is that Queen Mary's picnic and I've tried to get him to attend and before he's like 'yes, yes, yes' but

then on the day he just hides away and I'm like 'why, you want to meet other people but now you shy away from it

I: Hayden, do you think your cleft has impacted on your life?

Hayden: No, I don't think so

Mother: Well, your speech and language has been an ongoing battle. Even a year ago he was receiving help and sounds much better since then. He's doing speech and language at the school now, once a week every Thursday

I: And how do you find this Hayden?

Hayden: Um, okay we just play games there

Mother: Yes, we have talked about this because he said its quite different to primary but I think they are trying to make him more aware of how to focus more on the sounds and how to use his mouth to made those sounds, but I haven't had a report yet on what the plan is, that's what I'm guessing

I: Yes.

Hayden, do you play any sports are you part of any clubs outside of school?

Hayden: None

I: Are you interested in any of the clubs at school?

Hayden: No, they're boring

I: Okay, so what do you do when you're finished your homework, you don't have school, any other types of hobbies or games that you enjoy?

Hayden: I play Roblox

I: That's an online game?

Hayden: Yes

Mother: He has done some other activities, but he isn't doing anything now

I: Okay, right so I'd just like to fill in a form with you Hayden (*questionnaire*) and ask your mum to complete other form (*provide mum with demographic sheet*).

*Further discussion about the research study and what happens next.*

**Time point 1****Grace Online Snapshot Interviews 1**

Interviewer: Hi Gina (Mum)! Checking that Grace is online. When she is, she can just type hi:)

Respondent: hi

Interviewer: Hi Grace, how are things going?

Respondent: fine, thank you

Interviewer: Great. How has school been since your half term break?

Respondent: good I am enjoying school

Interviewer: Anything particular? maybe a subject or a teacher? Or even the whole experience?

Respondent: I am loving home ect. [cooking] and I am doing a assessment next week

Interviewer: That sounds lovely! Is there anything about school that you were not looking forward to?

Respondent: no not really I like all of my subject and teachers

Interviewer: Great. Has anybody made school harder or more difficult, another student maybe?

Respondent: no I like all of my classmates and I also have a crush x

Interviewer: Ah! That makes it more interesting. We spoke about your involvement in some clubs at school? Are you still involved in these clubs?

Respondent: well since I broke my arm I could not do a lot like in school I did gymnastics and dance but I cant for a while now but I do a home ect. cooking class

Interviewer: I remember you spoke about homework class. Do you still do that?

Respondent: yes I got to homework club sometimes.

Interviewer: So, how different is secondary school from primary?

Respondent: the main thing is that there at a lot more people and I know what class is next

Interviewer: And the variety of teachers? and the building size? Have these changes made you feel any different about your school life or work?

Respondent: no the size doesn't bother me but I like having different teachers

Interviewer: What about your friends? any new friends since you've been back from half term?

Respondent: yes I meet a girl named Gabbi and we have a lot of fun

Interviewer: Sounds great. Where did you meet her? in a lesson or at a club?

Respondent: we sit next to each other in French and modern studys

Interviewer: What about homework... how are you finding the work load? does it take a lot of time?

Respondent: I feel like I sometimes get less homework !

Interviewer: Ok. So how do you feel about your school achievements so far?

Respondent: good, I got good scores in my tests like maths I got 34/40 and science I got 26 out of 28

Interviewer: Sounds great! Well done. What about life at home? Is this different from when you were in primary, a routine change?

Respondent: yeah on a mon,tue,thu Georgia gets home at 3 and I get home at 3:45 and wed and fri I grt home before her

Interviewer: So its different to your sister.

Do you chat to your mum and dad about your school days?

Respondent: no I don't really have anything to talk about

Interviewer: Is that anything at home that plays a role in your school life?

Respondent: my mum and dad help with homework

Interviewer: That's a help.

Respondent: yes it is

Interviewer: Can you tell me how you are feeling about your cleft at school?

Respondent: well its okay but yesterday I went to see the cleft surgeon and he found a hole and I have to get another operation

Interviewer: Yes, your mum said. How do you feel about that?

Respondent: I was a bit worried but my mum helped me

Interviewer: Did you friend, Gabbi ask you about your cleft? or anyone else since we last spoke?

Respondent: no, but I told Gabbi and other close friends

Interviewer: Is there anything you wanted to tell me about your first few months at school that we haven't talked about?

Respondent: no not really

Interviewer: So you felt okay during the change/transition from primary to secondary?

Respondent: yas becace I have my family there

Interviewer: Your family have supported you.

Respondent: yes very much

Interviewer: You've been a superstar Grace! Thanks so much for all your input. I hope your arm heals soon so you can dance again!

Respondent: thank you so much and have a good weekend

bye



**Hayden Online Snapshot Interview 1**

Interviewer: Hi Hayden! I hope you are well. How was your half term break?

Respondent: Hi

Good

Interviewer: What was it like going back to school after half term?

Respondent: Tired

Interviewer: Oh dear, I can only imagine. Was there anything you were looking forward to?

Respondent: Going back to learn

Interviewer: That's lovely to hear. Was there anything you were not looking forward to so much?

Respondent: Waking up early

Interviewer: Yes, that is never fun! What about your teachers - how have they been?

Respondent: Good I think

Interviewer: Are there any teachers that really help? Or maybe some that make it harder?

Respondent: Yeah my English teacher that really helps my class

Interviewer: What about your lessons? How are they going?

Respondent: Good

Interviewer: Any you really enjoy or not enjoying?

Respondent: Its a meh

Interviewer: What do you mean by meh?

Respondent: Did not really enjoyed it and really enjoyed it

Interviewer: Ok. So which lessons are you not enjoying?

Respondent: Science

Interviewer: Is that because of the subject or possibly the teacher or something else?

Respondent: Just the subject

Interviewer: Lets move onto to friends and school. How are you finding your new friends at school?

Respondent: Good

Interviewer: That's great. Do you have a couple of new friends? Or have you made other friends since going back from half term?

Respondent: I had a couple of friends before half term

Interviewer: Have you had any other children that have made school more difficult since the last time we spoke?

Respondent: Nah

Interviewer: You're doing great. Not too much more...

What about homework? How are you finding this?

Respondent: Good but bad

Interviewer: Can you explain a little more... why good? why bad?

Respondent: Sometimes its easy and it mostly hard

Interviewer: Right. So its the type of homework you get.

Do you receive help from anyone at home for your schoolwork?

Respondent: All the subjects

Yes

Mum

Interviewer: Do you chat to your mum and dad (or brother and sister) about your day at school?

Respondent: Yeah mum

Interviewer: Mum's are great! How has life at home changed since starting secondary school?

Respondent: Good

Interviewer: Change to routine? homework amount? friends? all of there?

Respondent: Nah

Interviewer: Are you involved in any sports or extra curricular activities outside school? Your mum mentioned rock climbing.

Respondent: No

Interviewer: Are you thinking about getting involved in something?

Respondent: I really don't know

Interviewer: Ok. Maybe if you do, you can tell me the next time we chat.

Respondent: Ok

Interviewer: How do you feel about your overall school work? It is going well so far?

Respondent: Yeah

Interviewer: Is there anything at school that is better than you expected it to be? compared to primary school.

Maybe the teachers? or the lessons...

Respondent: The phone died

Interviewer: No problem. Can you read the previous question ok?

Respondent: That there are different rooms then one

Interviewer: Ok. So the changing of rooms is interesting?

Respondent: Yes because there was one when I was in primary school

Interviewer: Yes, that is quite different then.

Respondent: Yep

Interviewer: Last two questions...

Can you tell me how you're feeling about your cleft at school?

Respondent: I really don't tell anyone

Its my secret

In school

Interviewer: So no one has asked you about it or made a comment to you about your mouth in any way?

Respondent: Yes...

But ignore them

Interviewer: Can you tell me what they said, that you ignored?

Respondent: Why your lips like that

Interviewer: And you don't feel you can tell them what it is?

Respondent: Because they might find it weird

Interviewer: Ok. We can chat about this again another time. Is there anything you wanted to tell me about your first half term at school that we haven't talked about?

Respondent: No thank you

Interviewer: You are a superstar Hayden! Thanks for chatting to me. I'm looking forward to seeing your vogs. I hope you get some rest. Take care.

Respondent: Thank you

### **Grace Online Snapshot Interview 2**

Interviewer: Hello, Just checking to see if Grace is there?

Respondent: Yeah it's Grace

Interviewer: Hi Grace, how are you?

Respondent: Good, thanks.

Interviewer: How was Christmas?

Respondent: Yeah I had I good Christmas

Interviewer: Lovely. So how are you feeling about school now that you are in your second term?

Respondent: Yeah I am enjoying it

Interviewer: That's good. What are you enjoying about school?

Respondent: I like siting with my pals at lunch

Interviewer: Have you meet new friends or are they still your primary school friends?

Respondent: Yes Gigi and Gabbie are good friends

Interviewer: What about your classes? Are you still enjoying home ect and French?

Respondent: Yes and I don't mind French

Interviewer: So Gigi and Gabbie are new friends and you didn't know them before you went to secondary school?

Respondent: New friends, I had another sleepover with Gabbie yesterday

Interviewer: That must have been fun. I'm sure you're a little tired.

Respondent: Yeah

Interviewer: How are you finding the teachers?

Respondent: I like my Home Ect teacher and French

Interviewer: Okay, and any teachers you don't like?

Respondent: Maths

Interviewer: Any reason why you don't like that teacher?

Respondent: No, just find maths hard.

Interviewer: You were trying to improve this, the last time we spoke?

Respondent: Yes although I can only move up 1 more class till, I am at the top class

Interviewer: That sounds good.

So thinking about your friends, how important are your school friends to you?

Respondent: Very

Interviewer: Has your friendship group changed since you started secondary school?

Respondent: Yes a little

Interviewer: Can you tell me how?

Respondent: Some moved on

Interviewer: Have they left the school?

Respondent: No just made new pals

Interviewer: Okay, And how do you feel about that?

Respondent: Fine I have new pals

Interviewer: Do you think your cleft has affected any of the experiences you've had at school so far?

Respondent: No

Interviewer: You mentioned before that you would need another operation. How are you feeling about this?

Respondent: A little nervous

Interviewer: Do you know when you might have the operation?

Respondent: No

Interviewer: Do you talk to your parents or any friends about this, having the operation?

Respondent: No

Interviewer: Do you feel that you need to talk about it?

Respondent: No

Interviewer: How is your arm? are you able to do dancing or gymnastics again?

Respondent: Yes, but I have decided to maybe do drama

Interviewer: That sounds great. Is the drama taught at school?

Respondent: No in town

Interviewer: Do some of your friends do drama?

Respondent: No

Interviewer: Okay, so are you hoping to start drama soon?

Respondent: Yeah

Interviewer: A few final questions...

Is secondary school different than what you expected?

Respondent: No not really

Interviewer: Is there anything better than you expected?

Respondent: Friends

Interviewer: Do you have more friends or friends that you just click with more and make school better?

Respondent: Yeah

Interviewer: And is there anything that is more difficult than you expected?

Respondent: No, I expected hard

Interviewer: Its not that hard?

Respondent: Sometimes

Interviewer: What you mean? Can you tell me a little more?

Respondent: Depends what we doing

Interviewer: Do you mean what you are working on in class? what you are learning about.

Respondent: Tests and stuff

Interviewer: Okay. Oh, do you still have your crush?

Respondent: No

Interviewer: So, last question... looking back at the term, is there anything that would have made starting secondary school better?

Respondent: No not really

Interviewer: Okay, thanks Grace. Maybe when we speak again we can talk more about that.

Thanks for your time and I hope you have a restful afternoon.

Respondent: Thank u, you to.

### **Hayden Online Interview Snapshot 2**

Interviewer: Hi Hayden! How are you doing?

Respondent: good

Interviewer: Good to hear from you. How was your Christmas?

Respondent: very good

and how was yours

Interviewer: It was lovely, thanks.

How does it feel to be back at school?

Respondent: I haven't been back because my hip was hurting

Interviewer: Have you not gone back at all yet?

Respondent: I have on Monday, last Monday

Interviewer: Ah, so you've been back for a week.

You went back last Monday. How was your first week back?

Respondent: good

I did not understand the last one

Interviewer: That's fine. How is your hip now?

Respondent: better

Interviewer: Did you have an operation or just rest it?



Respondent: I had an operation 2 years ago for the hip

Interviewer: Okay. So how are you feeling about school now? Were you happy to go back?

Respondent: yeah

Interviewer: What were you most looking forward to?

Respondent: having fun

Interviewer: You have fun at school?

Respondent: yeah

Interviewer: Great.

What about your lessons? How are they going?

Respondent: good

Interviewer: Which do you enjoy the most?

Respondent: Spanish because are teacher is funny

Interviewer: Are there any that you don't like?

Respondent: just one but there all fine

Interviewer: Which one?

Respondent: science

Interviewer: You did mention this before. Is it the work you are learning about?

Respondent: work

Interviewer: Do you have any friends in your science class?

Respondent: yeah

Interviewer: Does that help?

Respondent: yes sometimes

Interviewer: So, have you made any more friends at school?

Respondent: yes

Interviewer: Are they the same friends that you met when you first started at secondary school?

Respondent: no

because there are a lot of students there

Interviewer: Okay! When we chatted last time, you had not told anyone at school about your cleft. Have you told anyone now?

Respondent: yes

and I feel happy about that

Interviewer: That's good. Did you talk to one new friend or do all your new friends know?

Respondent: most of them know

Interviewer: Can I ask what they thought about it?

Respondent: the really didn't mind

Interviewer: Did they ask about it at all?

Respondent: no

Interviewer: I'm glad to hear that you feel happy about it.

Respondent: so do I

Interviewer: Do you think your cleft has affected any of your experiences you've had at school so far?

Respondent: no

Interviewer: And what about after school activities? Have you got involved in any?

Respondent: no because i don't want my dad left in the cold with his bad knee

Interviewer: Okay. Is it not possible for you to walk home? or is your hip sore still?

Respondent: it still sore but not a lot

Interviewer: Your dad fetches you from school, doesn't he?

Respondent: yeah in the car

Interviewer: Can you walk okay at school, with all the stairs?

Respondent: no I limp when I walk but yeah

Interviewer: Has the school helped you with anything?

Respondent: yeah the gave me a lift pass

Interviewer: That's good. So how are you feeling about your progress at school so far?

Respondent: good

Interviewer: Did you have any goals for the term?

Respondent: to get good at maths

Interviewer: And how is your maths going?

Respondent: good but not so good

Interviewer: Do you feel that you can do more this term?

Respondent: yes

Interviewer: Do you talk to your family about school and your friends at school?

Respondent: yeah I talk to the best friend and family my sister

Interviewer: Is your best friend at school with you?

Respondent: no, my sister is my best friend and shes at home with me

Interviewer: Oh, okay.

Do you do any activities out of school?

Respondent: nah

Interviewer: Okay, is there anything that has been different at school from what you expected at the start?

Respondent: nah it was the same what I thought

Interviewer: Is anything better than you thought?

Respondent: no not a lot

Interviewer: Looking back at your first term, is there anything you would have changed that would have made your start at secondary school better?

Respondent: bringing my science homework home

Interviewer: You forgot that at school?

Respondent: yeah

Interviewer: Ok. Thanks for talking to me Hayden.

Thanks Hayden, have a lovely evening and all the best with your appointment tommorow.

Respondent: see ya later, goodbye

## Time point 2: Teacher and child interview transcripts

**Teacher-child interview transcription:** Grace's secondary school

**Participants:** Interviewer (I)  
Grace (participant - child)  
Teacher (Mrs Green)

Interviewer: Right, thank you, so we'll get started.

Firstly, Grace, can you introduce me, or you have (...) Mrs. Green but explain to me why you chose Mrs. Green to interview with.

Grace: Because Mrs. Green is like my guidance teacher once a week and if you like got any problems you go to your main teacher.

Interviewer: Okay, did you feel comfortable with Mrs. Green?

Grace: Yeah.

Interviewer: Okay, that's good and if you had to choose any of your other teachers another subject, what do you think you would choose?

Grace: English or Maths.

Interviewer: English teacher or Maths teacher ok, and why would that be?

Grace: Because I see them most.

Interviewer: Okay

Grace: I see them every day but one.

Interviewer: So, you feel you know them.

Grace: Yeah.

Interviewer: a little bit more.

Interviewer: Okay great, so just looking at school transitions you've been here for about six months, nearly half a year and how do you feel this transition has been for you?

Grace: Really good.

Interviewer: Yeah good, no concerns?

Grace: A little bit when I first came into the school because it was like really big and like scary, then I was fine because I've got loads of friends.

Interviewer: You started at school with a few friends from primary?

Grace: Yeah like Georgia, Gwen and Fiona, but there were only thirteen people in our class, like thirteen (...) year sevens, so yeah there were only four girls. So it was me Georgia, Gwen and Fiona.

Interviewer: Okay, and have you had any stand out moments since you've been here? Like moments that you think "oh that was really you know great" or "oh, that wasn't so good".

Grace: I'm not sure.

Interviewer: It's tough to think about right now isn't it, I might come back to that right at the end if you give yourself some thought.

Interviewer: So, Mrs. Green, do you have anything to add about Grace and how she settled into secondary school.

Mrs. Green: Well, she settled down very well, we thought at first that maybe something (...) basically down to the size of the school, but certainly what she said and yeah she's come and settled excellent, you know cause (...) key things you look for you now like if the transition in a wee bit painful or difficult in any way, but no she's been fantastic.

Interviewer: Okay

Mrs. Green: Excellent

Interviewer: That's good. Is it more about the size of the school and moving around, and trying to find all the right...?

Grace: Yeah (...)

Mrs. Green: How many people were in your primary school all together if there was only thirteen in your class?

Grace: There was a hundred and fifty

Interviewer: Yeah, very big difference. Even just walking from class to class

Grace: Yeah

Interviewer: You really have to watch where your'e going don't you, it's true.

Interviewer: Okay, so how do you feel about your school now?

Grace: Yeah, it's good

Interviewer: Do you feel that you belong? Do you feel that its...?

Grace: Yeah

Interviewer: Yeah, can you tell me what you enjoy the most?

Grace: I don't really know, I enjoy most things

Interviewer: Most things, no specific subject or specific time of day or...

Grace: Home Economics probably

Interviewer: Home Economics. Anything you don't like that much?

Grace: Maths can sometimes be boring.

Interviewer: Maths, okay, I know you mentioned that in one of our interviews before, and I think you also said you don't have many friends in maths

Grace: There's only one boy from my primary school.

Interviewer: Okay

Grace: (...)

Mrs. Green: And there's no one else from your class?

Grace: No.

Interviewer: Do you think it would make a difference if you had a friend in your class at all?

Grace: Maybe. (...) it's kind of a good thing that I don't like have many friends in that class because, if I did they could like distract me and stuff.

Interviewer: Yes

Mrs. Green: Who's your teacher? Sorry.

Grace: Mrs. G... (maths teacher)

Mrs. Green: Okay

Interviewer: And, do you feel that you are a part of the school?

Grace: Yeah

Interviewer: Did you think you felt different in the first maybe month of starting?

Grace: Yeah

Interviewer: Can you tell me if you think anything helped you become a part of the school?

Grace: They set assemblies and stuff on like on Thursday's so like (...) ...

Interviewer: Okay

Grace: ...it helps because it like talks about stuff (...) things that are like going to happen

Interviewer: Okay, so all the information that was given to you is useful, made you feel part of it.

Interviewer: And so, Mrs. Green what sort of things do you think help children feel a part of the school? What sort of things benefit them?

Mrs. Green: I think first and foremost is the basic transition that they receive in (...) year seven and then coming up is a good introduction for you with (...) it depends what school you went to and then if you hate school and then last year the guidance staff didn't get in, but we generally go down as part of the transition so (...) they know a familiar face and then they come back in for two days in June on a fuller timetable...

Interviewer: Okay

Mrs. Green: ... so that they come straight back to us all the time you know so basically part of their rule is really to be the friendly faces you know I'm the teacher, I'm the guidance teacher and I'm the friendly face. I'm not the maths teacher, I'm not the English teacher, so it's a totally different relationship that were trying to build up especially in first year...because that's what we're hoping, to gain trust, respect and then the relationship then carries on you know right on to sixth year or whenever they decide to leave and that way we can do as much as we possibly can. We might not always get it right, but I do expect, and I will say my girls, my girls they keep me right, because I forget a lot yep. But it's also so we're building this relationship up and that's the key thing...

Interviewer: Right.

Mrs. Green: ... and its making and I hope, we hope it works although I'm a teacher, I'm an adult, but it's a totally different relationship that were in isn't it?

Grace: Yeah.

Mrs. Green: We also try and encourage any activities during school, there's a lot at lunch time, there's stuff after school (...) sporty...

Grace: Gymnastics and dance.



Mrs. Green: Gymnastics and dancing, so I don't think we don't have gymnastics extracurricular, that depends on what P.E teachers we get...

Interviewer: Oh, okay

Mrs. Green: ... so it makes sense...

Interviewer: Yes

Mrs. Green: We got football, we got a lot of good girl footballers, I keep saying to the boys I know, but I know there's not one that's going to do gymnastic this year but, that might happen next year.

Grace: There's one, well they're use to be one at lunch time, but then there wasn't enough people, so they stopped it (...)

Mrs. Green: Yeah

Interviewer: So ok...

Mrs. Green: There's a lot of (...) science there's a lot of (...) science clubs they can go to and if you like your books you know there's a movie club and all that kind of stuff. So, it does take about a month to kind of kick off though...

Interviewer: Ok, so its something other to sort of offer to the variety of children so it's not just that constant...

Mrs. Green: ...and that's just to see your teachers in a different light as well you know because you can think oh alright my maths teacher, and I'm using maths because you brought maths up you know I don't really like the maths teacher but I get her for something else after school...

Interviewer: ...yeah.

Mrs. Green: ...or whatever and you see who the teacher is as a person and that helps build up the relationship and transition for them as well.

Interviewer: Yeah, and do you have a good link then with the teachers?

Mrs. Green: Yes...

Interviewer: ...because, yeah, your relationship is...

Mrs. Green: Yes, yeah I am the link, so, if mums want to speak to anyone in the school about any subject, I'm the link to home, I'm linked to all the teachers, if there's social work involved and there's (...) police anything like that it will come through me first, I will always be the link, because I'm the person that's trying to build up the relationship and get to know the pupil.

Interviewer: Okay. Great, so have there been any challenges Grace during this time at all that you've experienced?

Grace: Just moving around and stuff and like the older kind of children like because their taller and older and stuff.

Interviewer: have you found them... is it quite intimidating with the older ones?

Grace: Yeah, sometimes when they are like in front of you or behind you, like you're scared in case someone falls or something

Interviewer: and that's because of your size?

Grace: Yeah

Interviewer: Okay, and anything inside class or with any teachers that you've just found to be a real barrier at certain points?

Grace: No

Interviewer: No, you fine with all your classes, quite happy, and no other children you haven't had a run-in with anyone?

Grace: No

Interviewer: No?

Mrs. Green: Wasn't there an incident?

Grace: Oh yeah, there was a boy at the start of the year who just said something and then it made me quite upset, and then I just told him about it and he just stopped doing it.

Interviewer: Can you tell me what he said?

Grace: He was just calling me names and stuff...

Mrs. Green: like what? You're allowed to say it.

Grace: Saying that I had a big nose and stuff

Interviewer: Okay, and was he in one of your classes?

Grace: Yeah, he's in all of my classes

Interviewer: Oh he's in all your classes, okay

Grace: I just told him about it, and he stopped

Interviewer: As soon as you told him he stopped

Grace: Yeah. He just stopped.

Interviewer: Okay, well that's good

Mrs. Green: and I didn't have to do anything

Interviewer: That's very good.

Grace: That's the good thing about having a guidance teacher like if you got any problems like that like Mrs. Green tells you just to come straight up to her.

Interviewer: That is good

Mrs. Green: ...and since I wasn't aware of that what had happened with the boy for a wee while, but she dealt with it amazingly, because generally if someone tells me, I say right this what we can do but you know, and she says, 'no Miss, I've already dealt with it', and I thought excellent so it was monitored for a wee while and you know so.

Interviewer: And did you do it completely on your own? or did you have a friend sort of supporting you?

Grace: Like a ... (friend's name) had my back and stuff, which was good

Interviewer: Okay

Grace: Which was good

Interviewer: Yeah, that is good. So, you just added to those challenges there.

Mrs. Green: Sorry.

Interviewer: No, no it's absolutely great, please do.

Interviewer: So just thinking about in school lessons, do you have any support in any of your classes?

Interviewer: No, (*Grace moves head back and forth*) you don't have anyone, you don't need that do you? No, ok

Grace: Except when I broke my arm.

Interviewer: Oh, yes you broke your arm, so did you have someone help you...

Grace: yeah

Interviewer: ...write

Grace: yeah

Interviewer: Be a scribe. Oh, that's useful. You put up your hand in one class for having a lift pass, was that when you broke your arm too?

Grace: Yeah, that's when I broke my arm

Interviewer: Oh okay. That must have been good, you could avoid all the big people around, just for a little while

Grace: (...) fell down the stairs or something and broke it even worse.

Mrs. Green: That's true

Interviewer: Oh dear. Right so tell me about your, just your learning experience in the class. So, I did see some of it in some of your classes now. Do you enjoy joining in with the lesson and answering questions?

Grace: Yeah

Interviewer: You like to be part of it.

Grace: Yeah, all the teachers try and include everyone in the class. Someone's misbehaving, they just send them outside.

Interviewer: Yes. And do you like to be a part of it? Do you like to be a part of that discussion?

Grace: Yeah

Interviewer: Yeah, so do you think doing well in school is important to you?

Grace: Yeah

Interviewer: Yeah, you want to do as well as you can during each subject?

Grace: Yeah

Interviewer: Great. Do you have anything to add on that?

Mrs. Green: I'm just wondering about if we spoke about transitions but, I don't know if its going to come up later, one thing that we do, do is their transitions in primary school starts just now and for what we call enhanced transitions...right so if there is something wrong with a pupil the teacher and the headteacher from primary school gives home link the names, so I had to double check to see if you were involved in an enhanced home link and you weren't as well so that's...

Interviewer: Ah good

Mrs. Green: ...you know so from primary school she's been reasonably confident and very mature, haven't ya?

Grace: I would of in primary five, that means you're really behind on her maths because we were composite, but then the primary five teachers like gave us extra half an hour to catch up with the rest of the primary sevens.

Mrs. Green: That's great, so there wasn't an issue, so they came up from primary school either...they followed Grace into secondary school, so just in case you didn't get that part in.

Interviewer: Yeah, no that's good and then thinking about your peer groups and your friends and school activities which we touched on a little bit. Can you tell me about your friends now at school?

Grace: yeah, I have like Ginny, Georgia and Fiona, but don't really speak to Fiona anymore, we all kind of moved on Fiona and me, but me and Georgia sit together every lunch and stuff and then like Ginny and also Gabbi are in most of my classes...

Interviewer: Okay

Grace: ...and then they're really supportive and stuff

Interviewer: That's good and so do you think that your peer/ friend group did a change from the start of this year?

Grace: Yeah, at the start of the year was just kind of Geogia and then Ginny and Gwen because they came to RE with us, and then like French all my classes and stuff and the teachers introduces us to each other and then you make loads more friends too.

Interviewer: Ok. Right, have you noticed any changes in Grace's peer groups?

Mrs. Green: No, not initially you obviously let them sit where they want to, to see the dynamics and where they're going and do a couple of wee kind a games and stuff...but the pupils that she came up with are all very nice and the group she's with just now are very nice and but it's what we tend to kind of look for as the first month to two months is if there's any negative, because they all come up and it's all different schools we get like eight or nine feeder primary's... so it's a lot that's coming in and then it's the movement of I want to be in this group, or I want to be in that group and the dynamics can be sometimes quite challenging, but Grace had no, no problem.

Grace: Some people were like I want to be with the popular kids and go to all the hall parties

Interviewer: Oh okay

Mrs. Green: And so, your still keen to get that...you know and it's going to happen again, it tends to happen probably about Easter time and then when they get into third year especially with girls...

Interviewer: Really? (*nodding from Mrs Green*) Okay

Mrs. Green: You see she's laughing, it's just the dynamics, but it's just watching, sitting back and watching how well they're actually dealing with it.

Interviewer: Right yeah.

Mrs. Green: Yeah you know that's the, and they come a lot of the girls come to see to tell you or I'm not coping to good with this or their just in floods of tears but, you can either get through it or it's a friendship issue, but we've certainly not had anything like that at all with Grace.

Interviewer: Oh okay. Okay and then talking about activities in school, so what clubs are you involved in at school or sports, Grace?

Grace: Ahh, I go to dancing, used to go to gymnastics, and I think that's it in school. Yeah, I think so.

Interviewer: So, dancing happens at lunch-time or after school?

Grace: After school, but we've had lunch time practices for the competition

Interviewer: Okay and do you have friends that do that too?

Grace: Yeah ... (*friends' names*) do dancing with me

Interviewer: Okay, so I recall you have talking about this. Mrs Green, is it compulsory for the children to participate in a club?

Mrs. Green: No, it's not compulsory...

Interviewer: Okay

Mrs. Green: Um, what we do try and do again is part of the transition if there's someone or group of, wee um first years that maybe are struggling a wee bit then that's when we would go in and say right what do you like? What is it you do? Let's see right okay, science let's do it, oh it's music, lets go down to the music department...and so on you know but ideally, it's still pushed in tutor group, as well remember you've got this, but ideally, we expect a lot of the teachers to let them know...

Interviewer: Okay

Mrs. Green: Because it's the move...You know sort of if someone says, 'is there a gymnastics club?', I would say, 'well I don't think we have a gymnastics person'. See the new

P.E teacher I think she does dance. She started this week. I think she does dance I'll find that out for you, but again it's getting to know the likes and dislikes of each individual kid and then you can pass information on, but again its totally up to them...Totally up to them

Interviewer: Yes, okay

Mrs. Green: So, it might have been the P.E teacher, I'm sure I haven't met her. I met her (...) went over and speak to her. I'm sure someone told me she was dance; I'll have to ask her. I don't know her first name, I can't tell you that, so I can't think of her second name at this point.

Interviewer: Just thinking one last thing about transitions. Do you discuss with children at this point, how they feel? How they transitioned? I mean is it completely done already?

Mrs. Green: No, we don't have the one to one as such, but what we do do, is catch up with them in tutor group... and you're really looking too see if there are any signs that there not, and a lot of our children will come and tell you as well...so it's not (...) you know but ideally no because its far too many, far too many one to ones.

Interviewer: Okay. Just thinking about children who look different and talking about your cleft, Grace. Did you...I know you have spoken to Mrs. Green, but have you ever spoken to any other teacher about your cleft lip and palate, Grace?

Grace: ahhh... I don't think so

Interviewer: No

Grace: I think Mr ... knows as well because we were talking about on parent's day

Interviewer: Do you think it will be useful to talk to the teachers?

Grace: Yeah, probably

Interviewer: Can you tell me why you think it will be useful?

Grace: I don't really know, Mrs. Green is the one person to come to, I feel like other teachers are kind of like almost too many children in the classes like almost don't have time. Mrs. Green makes time for us.

Interviewer: Yeah because they sort of got to get into their lesson and go with it don't they?

Grace: Yeah

Interviewer: ... You have the link with Mrs. Green just go and have a chat about it. Ok, I know we did speak about the boy who mentioned your appearance at the start, so do you think that your appearance has affected how anyone treats you at all?

Grace: No, not really at all. I told most people in my class, so they know but like yeah, I don't really think it affects me

Interviewer: So, Gabbi and Ginny, your newer friends. Did you tell them? Or did they ask you? How did that work?

Grace: It was when I was told I needed an operation, I was kind of finding it quite hard to cope. That's when I decided to tell them, so they can help me.

Interviewer: Okay, and how did they respond?

Grace: They were just giving me hugs and stuff, and they don't like, we don't like talk about it a lot unless, I want to talk about it.

Interviewer: Okay yeah.

Grace: Like they don't just mention it out of the blue.

Interviewer: Okay. Mrs Green, do you have anything to add to that?

Mrs. Green: I would say that most of your teachers are aware because we have a confidential file...um... and it's totally confidential and only teachers can go on to it. So at the start of the term (...) so if you've got a class for P sevens coming up to first year, they'll be able to establish something besides your name and that lets your teacher look at what's known as the confidential file and then that will say, 'oh so and so maybe gets dyslexia or so and so maybe has hearing problems, visual impairments etc. etc. and then with the health one so and so is allergic to nuts and right'. so your teachers are aware and you have that, but it doesn't say anything else apart from that you haven't mentioned, but there's nothing beside it because there hasn't been anything that's been highlighted...

Interviewer: Okay

Mrs. Green: ... you would find that if you spoke to your teacher's they would know about it but, they're not going to speak to you about it unless you bring it up okay. So that's a reassuring fact for you right, they would just say that if they've got any issues always remember see the teachers in this school are my eyes and ears, I rely on every teacher to come and say 'oh Grace was a wee bit down this morning', right ok you know so we use a lot of teachers to do that but they are aware.

Grace: Ok

Mrs. Green: Okay, that's all, they only get to know what they need to know

Grace: Ok

Interviewer: No that's fine because at least Grace knows how it works, what happens behind the scenes. So, what skills do you think you've developed? I don't know if you can think of anything that helps during the transition. Have you just been able to? ... Do you think it's



maybe for example making some new friends or is it just holding on to the ones you got and following them, or you know having that person like Mrs. Green to help you?

Grace: In primary you sort of look forward to high school because like if you don't like your teacher for example you're only with them for fifty-five minutes not the whole day or the whole year, but then it's also good that you got extra subjects like home Ec. And better P.E and stuff and better equipment because it's a bigger school and stuff

Mrs. Green: Their P.E department is excellent, excellent

Interviewer: So, it's the variety...

Grace: Yeah

Interviewer: ...that's really helped you transition a little bit easier ok, and do you think also the friendships have been really important to you, I know you've spoken about that before.

Grace: Yeah, in Primary you don't really have a lot of friends to hang out with (...) you kind of feel lonely at lunch and stuff, because it's not like primary you run around the playground and stuff...you're just sitting at a table like chatting and stuff

Interviewer: It's quite different that, isn't it?

Grace: Yeah

Interviewer: Yeah it would be. Okay, so a few more questions, nearly there. Do you think she's sort of developed any sort of skill to help her or do you think she had it anyway, so she didn't really need to?

Mrs. Green: I think she had it any way she's not overly confident but she has a quiet confidence within herself that has allowed her to come in and make the friendships and also she accepts my opinion and she actually accepts who and what she is which is one of the main things that's going to get her through...

Interviewer: Okay

Mrs. Green ...You know, so and that's the way she's been since she came up...from primary school

Interviewer: Right

Mrs. Green: you know always kept a closer eye in case anything, but Grace being Grace with the confidence and the acceptance that she has, has actually...you know whether she's actually skilled you know, being honest with yourself and accepting yourself and meeting new people and telling new people is a skill within itself, really you know

Interviewer: In general, what kind of skills do you think will help children during their start to secondary school?

Mrs. Green: Resilience

Interviewer: Can you tell me what you mean by resilience?

Mrs. Green: Resilience, Resilience like yeah that's something you did with the boy that said to you, that was resilient by you answering back. Replying back though, I think that's one of the main things that a lot of younger kids in primary school are missing when they come up

Interviewer: And are there any specific barriers to when they settle in for some children? Any? Just ones that you know are sort of more general that you can just see that they happen every year.

Mrs. Green: Yeah and it's down to the size of the school and some pupils have no issues in primary school and they cannot wait to get up to secondary school. They come in for the two days' induction in June and everything's fine because it's new and then the first week in August it's reality. They come in and there's almost fourteen hundred pupils in trying to go up and down the stairs, not used to stairs and things and so the sheer size of the building, the school, the pupils, the amount of pupils that's in it and the different teachers that's there that's really a problem

Grace: When everyone's in school it's quite a lot

Mrs. Green: It is a lot, you don't realise fully until like the fire drill when everyone's out on the pitch because at different points and when they come up in June, it's the end of their exams. So you get that... everyone's meant to be back at school, but some people take it as an extended holiday. So, when the P sevens come up, you're not getting the true extent...and you're only seeing a handful of your teachers to follow the timetable that they get...

Interviewer: Okay

Grace: The sixth years take us around

Mrs. Green: ...and the second years take them around and so they get to know the sixth years, in fact we use the sixth years for the buddy system as well

Interviewer: Oh, do you?

Mrs. Green: You know so, but it's the sheer size and then being followed by four weeks down the line that I don't have no friends now, my friends have moved to people in other classes and different things and that is very apparent with quite a few of the pupils that came up.

Interviewer: Okay

Mrs Green: It's always the ones that you don't see, you just kind of wonder you know

Interviewer: Yes, and I was just thinking about children who may have another visible difference, for example a child with acne, or a scar, do you think the transition is different for these children?

Mrs Green: I don't know because especially in a school this size because we have someone in a wheelchair, someone who has dwarfism, and we have pupils with autism and Asperger's, you know so we have a wide wide spectrum with something going on in their life when you know, and believe it or not I think a lot of the other pupils within the school they just accept that's who and what they are, now I would never deny that nothing is ever said because I don't know, but that's something that you yourself, that Grace I think would have to answer

Grace: I think it depends on what it is, but I'd just treat them like a normal person.

Interviewer: Okay, and Grace I'd like to ask you, what do you understand about resilience?

Grace: I'm not sure, maybe how you behave, I don't really know

Interviewer: Okay, that's fine

Mrs Green: Yes, I think it's as we talked about earlier with that boy in how you explained to him and you didn't just leave it. Had it carried on what do you think then?

Grace: Bullying

Mrs Green: Well, yes, but I think bullying is used too often, but its building that resilience up, so it's thinking about how you're dealing with these type of situations, and every year you know we feel they need it more and more

*At this time, Grace needed to return to class and Mrs Green had an appointment. I thanked them both for their time.*

**Teacher-child interview transcription:** Hayden secondary school

**Participants:** Interviewer (I)  
Hayden (participant - child)  
Teacher (Ms Hill)

*(Hayden was not able to join the interview at the start due to lessons. He arrived a little late and we had to begin without him)*

Interviewer: Ms Hill, can you tell me about your role with Hayden?

Teacher: So, before he came here, I interviewed him I went to see him as he was one our special needs students coming in, so I went to his primary school (ok) to liaise with his teacher and I also contacted his parents. I teach him for explore, which is Geography, History, RS all in one.

Interviewer: Okay, so you knew him before he started and you've seen him through the start of the year?

Teacher: Yeah

Interviewer: So, in your experience, can you tell me how you think Hayden has settled into secondary school?

Teacher: Um, I think he's had a tough start. He started off very positively and you know we did a lot to try to make sure he would be and feel supported within the school. You know we mentioned to all the staff what his difficulties were and how they could support him. So there was kind of lots of preparation and he was very enthusiastic but I think you know because of his you know the problems with his hip and then his arm, um, and he's missed large amounts of schooling, um, so I think he's struggled. He's looking a bit brighter, since I suppose as he's physically getting better, um, but I think that he's struggled academically he's struggled, um, and he fits, he seems to fit in with the group that I teach.

*(Hayden arrived)*

Interviewer: Hi Hayden, we've just been talking about your start to the school year and your progress. Can you tell me how you are feeling about your school?

Hayden: Yeah, good

I: Do you enjoy going to school?

Hayden: Yeah

Teacher: Yeah, he seems to fit in well and he's popular

Interviewer: Can you tell me how you think Hayden was at the start of the year?

Teacher: At the start, yes he was okay.

Interviewer: And then he had the problem with his hip and his arm – can you tell me about this?

Teacher: Yes, um, well when he had the problem with his hip and his arm, then kind of everybody pulled in wanting to help him, only because he was allowed to have a wheelchair, so they all got a chance to wheel him around, but no, the kids like him. He's not one of the kids I would say that students make fun of or call names out. I've never heard that, I've heard that happen to other students in my lesson, but not to him

Interviewer: Okay

Teacher: That kind of banter that sometimes goes on doesn't tend to be directed towards him, not in front of me anyway

Interviewer: What do you think are or were the biggest challenges for Hayden during this school transition? I know you have spoken about his physical challenges.

Teacher: Well, yes the biggest challenge has been his hip, um his ability to move around

Interviewer: And being absent from school?

Teacher: Oh enormously, yes.

Interviewer: What do you think about this, Hayden?

Hayden: I feel okay, I have missed some school, but I'm good now.

Interviewer: You mentioned the wheelchair that Hayden used when he had his hip problem. Can you tell me about any other support that Hayden has had since he started school here?

Teacher: He didn't have any specific support, it was more sort of out of the classroom checking on things, checking that he was okay, um, because from a learning point of view, he isn't one of the students who we would call borderline or narrowly give additional support too.

Interviewer: Do you mean academically?

Teacher: Yes, cause academically he's (...), but he really wouldn't have wanted us providing additional support.

Interviewer: Can you tell me what you think about that Hayden, the support?

Hayden: I get support for speech and language

Teacher: Yes, you receive that too

Interviewer: Do you think it's helped you, Hayden?

Hayden: It's okay

Interviewer: Can you tell me if you think Hayden is interested in challenges and that he likes to do well?

Teacher: Um, when I first met him that was his thing that he really wanted to do well, you know he was so enthusiastic about what secondary school had to offer and the challenges, um, that enthusiasm, hasn't I can't say that I still see that level of enthusiasm

Interviewer: Hayden, can you tell me how you're feeling about school at this time?

Hayden: I don't need any help I'm going strong by myself

Interviewer: Okay. So thinking about his friends, we've had a few discussions about him and his peer groups. Have you noticed any changes in his peer group that he's been in from the start to now?

Teacher: I can't say that I have because I don't see that much of him, um, when he sits in my class, he well, it's hard to say if he's in a friendship group because we tell them where to sit anyway and I don't see enough of him outside to say who his friends are.

Interviewer: How do you feel about your friends, Hayden?

Hayden: Good, yeah

Interviewer: Oh, because the other day when I interviewed you with your friend, Harry, he wasn't aware of your cleft lip and palate, so I just wondered if Hayden ever talked about this or mentioned it?

Teacher: No, he doesn't.

Interviewer: Okay, Hayden how are you feeling about our school work?

Hayden: I feel good, I'm getting better at Maths

Interviewer: Okay, can you tell me why?

Hayden: I just like it

Interviewer: I know you have to return to class soon, I just wanted to ask what you thought resilience is?

Hayden: I think it's about not giving up or something

*(Head of Year arrived as Hayden had to return to class)*

Interviewer: Right, I know that he hasn't appeared interested in any extra-curricular activities. Does the school try to advocate for them to be involved in activities during transition times?

Teacher: Well, every student should be involved in a club, at least one club, um, not sure he is

Interviewer: He said he can't recall the club, no

Teacher: Possibly because of the absences and nobody has followed it up. But every student has to be involved in at least one club up to Year 9, has to be in one club. Um, there aren't many lunch time clubs or break time clubs or anything like that

Interviewer: So, it's all after school clubs?

Teacher: It would all be after school clubs. Some people run their clubs at lunchtime because I run my club at lunch-time, but generally speaking most people run their clubs after school.

Interviewer: So, who would do a follow up to check on club attendance?

Teacher: Well, it would be down to the person whose club you're due to be at, so I would need to chase up the list of students I've been given because at the start of the academic year then again in February, they all talk about all the clubs they go on the computers they choose which club they're going to be and then that list goes to the teacher who then follows up. So, I would need to follow up all those who don't turn up to my club

Interviewer: Right. So just thinking about the school transition, as we are more than half way through the school year, do you discuss with the children now how they are feeling about their transition?

Teacher: Yeah, everyone has a meeting with a counseling service, um and that's when they discuss any kind of transition concerns that they are worried about

Interviewer: Is that an external based counselor?

Teacher: Yes, well they are based here, they're not on our roll as it were, it's a service that we buy in, um so they all have that discussion. Also he wasn't part of our transition group so just after Christmas we get another external provider in to support students who are struggling with having moved into secondary and he wasn't on the list of students who are

Interviewer: And when does the counseling service come in?

Teacher: Um, at various points, we've got to get through the whole year group

Interviewer: So everyone has the chance to do this at a point, but you wouldn't know if Hayden has done this yet?

Teacher: No, I wouldn't know

Interviewer: Okay, so, just thinking about children that look different, have you noticed any differences with these children for them, at school?

Teacher: I've not noticed anything for Hayden, but as I said I don't see him that much, 3 or 4 times a week and I've not seen it. It doesn't mean it doesn't happen, but he's no way one of those students' whose being targeted. There are students in my group who have been targeted for various reasons, but I can say that he's not one of them.

Interviewer: And do you know if Hayden has developed any sorts of skills, something that's helped him to transition better?

Teacher: When he came, he moved here with another student, they came from the same school, um, another SEN student and they kind of pallied up for a while, but you don't see them together anymore at all, um, that may have helped him a little bit. He was fairly confident when he arrived, he was, you know, he appeared to be fairly confident.

Interviewer: So more generally, just thinking about children in general, what kinds of skills do you think help children to start secondary school? What really helps them?

Teacher: Um, I think a lot of preparation from primary school, from family, um being prepared for the resilience that they will need in secondary school, I think that's vital

Interviewer: Can you tell me what you mean by the type of resilience they will need for secondary school?

Teacher: The resilience of a... number 1, that they can cope, for us it's a very big thing, in terms of mottos that students can, yes that they can do things, yes, failures will happen, so its having that type of mantra, that it is going to be difficult, its not going to be easy, but you , so its that kind of resilience, it's the sort of resilience where cause they've gone from being top of the primary where they're going to the bottom of secondary where people aren't always nice, you know there's lots of bumps and pushes you know everyone flooding on the corridor and it's having that kind of maturity, resilience really that's not aimed at them, that having those large groups of people all going in the same direction, it's that type of resilience that I think that helps, but also knowing, um, that they have a contact point, um, knowing that there is somebody that they can talk to, so we have quite a select seminar system here so they meet with their seminar tutor it will be a small group of 8-10 students, you know always the same, you know 20 minutes a day, you know most students know that Rose's (staff member) office's is there, next door to mine, she can direct them to wherever they need to go you know so they've got these kind of ...holes, where they know I can go to this person for that, I can go to, um

Interviewer: Are they used?

Teacher: Oh Rose (teacher) is used a lot and the seminar tutors are used a lot



Interviewer: Okay, can you tell me what you think the main barriers are for children during this transition?

Teacher: Um, not being resilient (laughs), um not being prepared, I think, yeah, it's not knowing and not being prepared for what's to come, um, you know I almost wish that we could I know everyone across the country has this one day when everyone goes to their new secondary, but that's quite, you know it helps them to know the layout of the building, it doesn't necessarily get them to have a feel of what it's like, um, and I think one of the barriers can be feeling that you are one of many and not necessarily noticed, which is why we have small seminar groups so students can feel noticed because especially if you're going from teacher to teacher whereas before you're used to one teacher and that's it, so that kind of knows you quite intimately really, whereas you've got a teacher whose having loads of classes everyday you know it might take that teacher half a year to know your name, um, so there's that and I think that can be quite disrupting

Interviewer: Okay, and thinking about children that look different, for example a scar or even braces. Do you think there's any barriers for them?

Teacher: Um, I think there can be barriers, um, it very much depends on where you land you know I think that if you land with a nice group of students you're going to have a better experience, but if you happen to be with students who are very bullying or very aggressive then you're not going to have such a nice experience but also there's something about whether a student has some sort of victimhood and that's not to blame them but some students are kind of much meeker, um much more open to bullying, you know student's pick that up easy from body language and the way students conduct themselves, um so those students are more likely to be possibly targeted. Um, I think you know it helps to have good structures in place you know so the school has done lots of preparation, kind of checks in with the student now and again, not all students want to be checked in with, you know there are a lot of students who just think leave me alone, go away, you know so its finding or knowing what the particular student wants or needs, it just isn't, ah, it's not straightforward

Interviewer: Okay, and do the seminar tutor groups continue through Year 8 and 9?

Teacher: Yes, they do, they continue all the way up

Interviewer: Do they chose to go to them or do they have to go?

Teacher: They have to go

Interviewer: And that's everyday

Teacher: Yes, everyday for 20 minutes, it's 10:20-10:40 and then they have break-time for 20 minutes

Interviewer: Okay, and are tutors trained to focus on certain subjects or cover concerns?

Teacher: Well, they know who to liaise with if needed

Interviewer: Are all tutors teachers then?

Teacher: No, it can be any staff member – teaching assistants too and if there are students with any particular concerns then the Year lead will raise them in intervention meetings because we have intervention meetings once a week as members of staff where we discuss students that we are concerned about and the only reason Hayden has come up once, no, he hasn't he's come up twice and that was because it was felt that he was looking sad and then he was raised again and that was around his operation, the physical reasons for getting around school, so those are the only times and reasons he's ever been raised, that I can recall.

Interviewer: Okay, and at this stage how do you feel Hayden is doing?

Teacher: He's looking better than what he was, he isn't as focused as when he first came, but he's certainly better than he has been (*looking at the time*)

Interviewer: We're running out of time, aren't we? (teacher nods) Just wanted to ask you about the parent's role during this, can you tell me what you think?

Teacher: Oh, vital

Interviewer: Did you meet Hayden's parents?

Teacher: We spoke on the phone. I met mum on the, when did I meet Mum on the transition day, that's the July day, but then I've spoken to her on the phone

Interviewer: And parent's involvement – is this mostly at the start of the year or throughout the year?

Teacher: It depends, some parents it's just the beginning bit, some parents where there's ongoing issues we will see more and I speak to almost everyday still, um so it really does vary according to the need of each student

Interviewer: Okay, just lastly we did discuss this a little, but what would you say resilience means in school?

Teacher: I think its finding their place, um yeah knowing how they fit in knowing that life is like this (*demonstrates with hand a bumpy line*) and it's not like that (*demonstrates with hands a straight line*), um and it's also about coming into independence as well, um it's a growth thing I think.

We're going to have to go, as I have a class. I will take you to the next class to meet up with Hayden.

Interviewer: Okay, great. Thank you for your time.



## Appendix xx

### Peer and child interview transcripts

**Child-peer interview transcription:** Grace's secondary school

**Participants:** Interviewer (I)  
Grace (participant - child)  
Peers (Gabby and Georgia)

*Brief introductions about the research study and, discussion about consent forms.*

I: Grace, can you tell me how you met your friends, where it was and how it happened?

Grace: I kind a met Georgia (peer) like cause we like live in the same area like our parents knew each other and we went to the same nursery and then school

I: You and Georgia have known each other for a while, then?

Grace: Yeah and then me and Gabby (peer) met in French because we were doing like a teambuilding thing and we started giggling and laughing and stuff

I: Were you sitting next to each other?

Gabby (peer): Yeah, we still sit next to each other

I: Were you placed in that seat?

Gabby (peer): Yeah

I: Okay, can you tell me what types of things you do together at school?

Gabby(peer): Sit together at lunch and stuff, just talking to each other and all that

I: Do you do any activities together at school?

Gabby (peer): All of us go to cake decorating on a Wednesday

I: Cake decorating club?

Grace: yeah, you get to decorate cakes and stuff

I: Lovely, do you get to taste the cakes?

All three: Aha (laughing)

I: Can you tell me about your move from primary to high school? Just thinking about what it was like, was it how you expected it to be.

Grace: I felt it wasn't bad, like, nervous for a couple of days, just for like a week or something, but it was good like having friends who I knew and then making new friends as well

I: You feel that it helped to have some friends you knew starting school with you?

Grace: Yeah, aha

I: What did you think Georgia (*known school peer*)?

Georgia (peer): I was nervous as well for the first couple of day, but then I wasn't like walking to school, I was in the car with Grace and that made it easier and then the bell rang, it was just off to our own classes and it kind a just happened, it was kind a smooth

I: Okay, and for you Gabby (peer)?

Gabby (peer): I found it quite nerve wrecking because I didn't have any friends from my primary school

I: You didn't have any friends with you then?

Gabby (peer): I did, but I didn't know the other people

I: Oh, I see okay

Gabby (peer): Yeah, I was scared to have people looking at you and all that, so I decided to stick to the people I knew who were in my classes and then we were in French on the first day and that was okay, but I really struggled because it was so different to primary school

I: Do you think there was anything that helped you to settle in a little easier? For example, a teacher or starting a club, your parents or a new friend?

Grace: I think it was more our guidance teacher and then like being with Georgia and stuff and meeting Gabby, that has kind of helped, yeah I also really like my French teacher, she's quite nice

Georgia (peer): Yeah, it's the same, but I also have my older brother and my mum in the school so that made it easier for me, they kind of told me your first class is there, your second one is there so I kind of knew, it was easier for me, so yeah

Grace: Yeah, that was good for me to on the first day cause we had some different classes and she'd known where I had to go, and she'd just like tell me, 'oh go there, or go there' (laughs)

I: And for you Gabby, has anything helped you?

Gabby (peer): Well, I've got a neighbour who goes to the school and a bigger older cousin whose at the school. I look up to my neighbour cause she's the one who said to my mum and dad that if she's stuck she's to come to me, so I knew I could go to her.

I: Right, so thinking about the work from primary to [secondary school], can you tell what you think about this – changes or similarities?

Grace: I think it's definitely changed a little bit, like we were just doing revision because they didn't know where everyone was, like in French and stuff cause some people hadn't done any French and some people had done loads of French, so then they had to do that, but now it's kind of like they're starting to figure out whose better at some subjects and who needs some help in some subjects, cause we were also told we'd get like the same homework but I feel I get less homework

I: Less homework?

Grace: I had none last night

Georgia (peer): I've not had any

Gabby (peer): I feel like I've been getting more

I: Is that in certain subjects, Gabby?

Gabby (peer): Yeah, maths I get that every single night

I: Okay, and do you think that the expectation of your school work has changed since you started? Maybe it's higher here or the same or you've not quite sure?

Grace: I think they're still trying to determine where your levels at cause everyone's at different levels and from different primary's so I think they're trying to do that in first year and then in the second year they'll probably split us up into groups or something

I: You're only split in Maths at this stage?

Gabby (peer): Yeah

I: What do you think it means to do well in school, for you?

Grace: I'm just going to try as hard as I can in school

I: And for you Georgia?

Georgia (peer): I think the same, yeah

Gabby (peer): I think it's like if you get a good score like if you got 100% in your maths test, then for me I want to try to keep that up and not like make it drop, so if I get a good score in the beginning, it kind of pushes me, but if I get a low score and just feel there's no use in me trying.

I: Okay, so thinking about friends and friendship groups, can you tell me what it's like making new friends?

Grace: It is good to make new friends, say if you had no friends, you'd be really lonely, cause at lunchtime you're not like running about and playing cops and robbers or something, you're sitting at a table and chatting or going to a club

I: Yes, and it was quite easy to make friends with others, as you did with Gabby?

Grace: Yeah, it was good that Miss ... (*French teacher*) had put us together because then we could talk

Gabby (peer): Yeah, she put us all at the back of the class in the primary's when we came in, and then we thought we'd sit together, but she split us up and that was quite like nerve wrecking, so, then I met Grace, so, then our mums met each other and we've had a day out together

I: Okay, and for you Georgia, how has it been because you're in different classes, have you made some other friends?

Georgia: Yeah, I think it's good to make the new friends because if you lose the old friends you've got someone new to go to, but if you don't know if they're just using you at the start like lets just be her friends and maybe talk about her behind her back or something like that and that's what scares me, like they could be going home and saying things like mean and then they come back and pretend that they're your friend and be all nice to you, but really they're not, that's what scares me a bit

I: You feel a little more cautious about who to make friends with?

Georgia: Yeah, cause like if you told them your crush and then they tell others and you just can't trust them, yeah

I: Okay, and do you enjoy making new friends Grace, have you made others or is it mostly Gabby?

Grace: Mostly Gabby, but there's also .... (names 5 more girls)

Georgia (peer): You have quite a lot of friends

Grace: Yeah, I do

I: Are they from the classes you go to?

Grace: Yeah, we're all from the same class really

I: Okay, and do you still speak to the friends you had from primary school?

Grace: Well, me, Georgia and Fiona used to always be together and like never be apart, but Fiona kind of thinks she's, I don't know I just don't, she just ignores us now

Georgia (peer): She's kind of gone off with Flora and all that

Grace: Yeah, like Flora and Felicity

Georgia (peer): It's like we were like together and nothing would get in our way, but then

Grace: Yeah, we always used to be together and like come over to each others

I: Does she live near you?

Grace: Kind of

Gabby (peer): She lives just behind the school

I: Is she in any of your classes?

Grace: She's in all my classes

Georgia (peer): She kind a just thinks she's cooler and better than everyone

Grace: The one day she came over and spoke to us cause some of the other people were sick and we knew she was just using us because she had no one else to speak to

I: Okay, so that smaller friendship group has changed during this transition?

Georgia and Grace: yeah

I: And for you Gabby, your friendship groups from primary school, are you still friends?

Gabby (peer): I've stuck with some of them, but not all of them, but I don't like talking to some of them because they were quite mean to me in primary

I: Okay, you've spoken about this a little before, but why is it important to have friends in [secondary school]?

Grace: It's just great to have someone to sit and talk to and have fun with

I: Yes, and what do you think Georgia?

Georgia (peer): I think they like also help you go through school, like they just help you and make you feel more confident, and



Gabby (peer): They've helped me when I've had a problem like recently I was at Grace's birthday and I got quite upset and they came and they helped me through things, like Grace will really help me if I've got a problem and Georgia will also help, they make me laugh

I: Yes, and just thinking about the types of new friendship groups that you've formed at school?

Grace: We kind of like well whoever's out first then I think there's like 8 people who I mostly hang out with at lunch and one of them just saves a table

Gabby (peer): I'm usually out first and then we check we have enough seats or we get another table so that we can book that one as well, so like everyone's got a seat at least

I: And do you think that's what generally happens with some of the other friendship groups?

Gabby (peer): They tend to sit in the same places, for example Fiona would, she sits with the others now.

Grace: Yeah, she also tries to get into everyone's home party cause there's quite a few home parties, so she tries

Georgia (peer): Yeah, she's even begging to go to the home parties.

I: A home party?

Georgia: A hall party, where everyone just goes and chats

Gabby: They just sit on their phones and do snap chat and stuff

I: Do they do this for birthdays?

All: Yeah

I: Okay, and have any of you had any hall parties yet?

All: No

I: Okay, do you think it helps to belong to a group?

Gabby (peer): Yeah, cause if you only have one person then you usually go to them, but then if they're ill you got that little group you can go to and they can help you

I: Okay and do you think there's any challenges or problems when belonging to a friendship group?

Gabby (peer): Sometimes it creates drama, with like relationships and that because there's somebody in our group that's in a relationship and they broke up, so it's a hassle for all of us because we're all sitting there and then they're there and they're talking as well

Grace: Yeah, so we just try to carry on talking and sharing headphones to make as if we can't hear, but we can (laughs)

Gabby (peer): Yeah, but then they drag us both into it and it's kind of annoying

I: Okay, and do you all spend time together outside of school?

Gabby (peer): Yeah, I've not been to Georgia's, but I've been to Grace

Georgia (peer): Yeah, and I go around to Grace's sometimes when Gabby is there

I: Okay, and how often do you see each other during the school day?

Grace: Gabby and I have some lessons together

Gabby (peer): Yeah, today was 3

I: And Georgia, you don't have any lessons with Grace or Gabby?

Georgia: no, I don't

I: Okay, so just thinking about children that look different, Grace I know you're quite happy to talk about your cleft, can you tell me when you told Gabbi?

Grace: It was when I was getting my operation, I was getting quite upset about it and then Gabbi could see I was getting upset and I told her

I: Did you notice anything different about Grace, Gabby?

Gabby (peer): I didn't notice anything different about her and also the one day the teacher asked us to write two interesting facts about your partner and I was sitting next to her and then she put that I didn't think she had anything wrong with her, she looks like there's nothing wrong

I: And, Georgia you knew Grace from when you were very young

Georgia (peer): Yeah, I think like knowing Grace from a young age I've like seen pictures, I've got a picture of her from when she was just born so like, it was just Grace, it was just normal

Grace: That's also cause I just trust Georgia so much cause in primary we did a talk about it cause she knew so much about it

Georgia (peer): Yeah, it was a talk about CLAPA, cause it helps people like Grace we did that the whole way through primary school, cause some children are mean about it and call people names, so we raised £107 for CLAPA

I: Well done, that's great

Can you tell me if you think children that look different are treated differently?

Georgia (peer): there's a wee girl in my maths class and she has a cleft lip and palate, um she's not had as many operations as Grace, but some children call her names they say things like you look like this, she's got a split in her teeth, possibly from it and they say things like 'you could fit a bus through that,' and I just kind of sit there and ask, 'why are you doing it?' and, I tell them not to cause they've gone through things, like it's not their fault, yeah, it's what on the inside that matters, it's not what's happening on the outside

Grace: Tell her to come to Mrs Green (*guidance teacher*)

I: Can you tell me Georgia, how she reacts to the comments?

Georgia (peer): She mainly ignores them I think, but it's like I sit behind her in English and that's when usually the boy does it and I just tell him to be quiet cause like it's not nice, but she just ignores it and just kind a turns around and says, 'it's fine I'm used to it'. I feel like bad for her that people are always calling her names

Grace: It's not good that she says that she's used to it

I: Yes, as you said Grace, you should talk to Mrs Green.

Right, so if you could think about one thing that makes you feel like coming to school, what would it be?

Grace: I think it's more about coming to see your friends and stuff cause you might not be allowed to hang out on the weekend or stuff so you can see them at school

I: For you Grace, it's about friends?

Grace: yeah

I: And for you Georgia?

Georgia (peer): I think it's the same, it's great to just come to school and like chat to them and stuff cause like some of them don't live close and so you can go to school and just chat to your friends

Gabby (peer): I think it's the same, but I FaceTime Grace every night if she's available, so we like to talk about things and that

*I thanked Grace and her peers for their participation and briefly discussed what the study was about, sharing debrief forms with each participant.*

**Grace Online Snapshot interview (3)**

Interviewer: Hi Grace, how are you?

Respondent: I'm okay, thank you.

Interviewer: How have the last few weeks of school been?

Respondent: They have been okay.

Interviewer: It was lovely to meet you a few weeks ago and experience part of your school day. Have there been any changes since I last saw you?

Respondent: No not really.

Interviewer: What about your friends?

Respondent: Nope, all still the same friends.

Interviewer: And you're all still hanging out together at lunch?

Respondent: Yes always

Interviewer: How have you felt about your progress at school this term?

Respondent: Yes, I fell quite good about it.

Interviewer: Any particular subject or challenge that you've really enjoyed?

Respondent: Home ect still

Interviewer: Do you feel that you can achieve more in the next term?

Respondent: Yes!

Interviewer: In all the subjects?

Respondent: PE definitely.

Interviewer: Sounds good. So, tomorrow you're going to the hospital for your operation.

How are you feeling about it?

Respondent: A little nervous

Interviewer: Can you tell me why?

Respondent: Not sure

Interviewer: Do you know how long you'll be at the hospital?

Respondent: Whole day, I think.

Interviewer: Whose going with you to the hospital?

Respondent: Mum

Interviewer: How much school will you miss during this time?

Respondent: Up until Easter

Interviewer: More than a week then?

Respondent: 2 or 3

Interviewer: How do you feel about missing school?

Respondent: Not bad. I've got some work.

Interviewer: What will you miss most about school?

Respondent: My friends

Interviewer: How do you feel about your friends visiting you after the operation?

Respondent: Yeah I'm hoping some will come over x

Interviewer: That would be great. When can you do guides again?

Respondent: After Easter

Interviewer: Is there anything that helps you when you go to the hospital?

Respondent: My mum

Interviewer: How does your mum help you?

Respondent: Hugs me

Interviewer: That's lovely. Does she make you feel happy and okay?

Respondent: Yes much

Interviewer: Is there anything you don't like about going to the hospital?

Respondent: No, not really

Interviewer: How do you feel about the doctors and nurses?

Respondent: They're very nice

Interviewer: You've had quite a few operations and you still feel a little unsure. Do you know why you fell like this?

Respondent: No, I'm not sure.

Interviewer: Is your sister going to school tomorrow?

Respondent: yes she is.

Interviewer: Your mum says that you're going out for dinner tonight.

Respondent: Yes, we are.

Interviewer: Hope you have a good evening and all the very best with the hospital visit tomorrow.

Respondent: Thank you!

**Hayden Online Snapshot Interview 3**

Interviewer: Hi Hayden. How are feeling?

Respondent: Ok. I broke my arm last week.

Interviewer: Yes, your mum told me. How are you feeling after the accident?

Respondent: In a lot of pain.

Interviewer: Oh dear. Do you have some medicine to help?

Respondent: Yeah ibuprofen. And a sling.

Interviewer: How do you feel about missing school?

Respondent: I went back today.

Interviewer: That's good. Will you be there next week?

Respondent: ...

Interviewer: What does that mean Hayden?

Respondent: At the moment I'm taking it day by day depending on the pain.

Interviewer: Okay. How do you feel about going back to school?

Respondent: Good.

Interviewer: Did you miss school?

Respondent: I miss my learning and my friends.

Interviewer: The last time we spoke, you had made some new friends. Are these the same friends still?

Respondent: Yes

Interviewer: Okay. Do you have a group of friends or just 1 good friend?

Respondent: Groups.

Interviewer: How many friends do you have in your group?

Respondent: Why are you asking?

Interviewer: Just asking, as some students at schools have groups and some only have one or two. You don't need to tell me though.

Respondent: Ok

Interviewer: Are you still on crutches at school?

Respondent: No

Interviewer: That must help. Have the school helped you since the accident?

Respondent: Not really. I'm still very slow. Yes they have.

Interviewer: Can you tell me how they helped?

Respondent: They've given me a lift pass, assigned me buddy. Allowed me to leave early so I won't get crushed in the after school rush.

Interviewer: Are you having your cast put on for your arm soon?

Respondent: Yes (smiley face emoji)

Interviewer: Can you tell me who will go with you to the hospital?

Respondent: My mum and dad

Interviewer: How do you feel about doctors and nurses?

Respondent: They're alright.

Interviewer: Is there anything you don't like about hospitals?

Respondent: Waking up from the laughing gas.

Interviewer: Yes, your mum said that you don't feel well after waking up.

Respondent: It's after the surgeries. Makes me very emotional.

Interviewer: Okay. Do you know why you feel like that?

Respondent: yes, it's my reaction after waking up from surgery.

Interviewer: You said it makes you emotional. Can you tell me about the emotion you're feeling.

Respondent: not happy. Just feel tired, not sure where I am.

Interviewer: So you feel unsure because it's unfamiliar?

Respondent: yeah. I'm feeling tired now too.

Interviewer: Okay. We'll end now. Are you back to school tomorrow?

Respondent: Yes, but if I'm in a lot of pain, than no.

Interviewer: Hope you're feeling better soon Hayden. Thanks for talking to me.

Respondent: Thanks. Bye



**Child-peer interview transcription:** Hayden's secondary school

**Participants:** Interviewer (I)  
Hayden (participant - child)  
Harry (peer)

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*(Brief introductions about the research study and, discussion about consent forms)*

Interviewer: Hayden, can you tell me a little bit about your friend, Harry and how you met?

Hayden: Um, we met in summer school, it was the first lesson, it was a trampolining lesson

I: That was just before secondary school started?

Hayden: Ja, before

Harry (peer): Before

I: Did you know each other from primary school?

Hayden and Harry (peer): No

I: So when you started at secondary school, did you recognise each other because of the summer school?

Harry (peer): Well, I've noticed him because I've seen him before and our parents are friends, I've known Hayden longer than just secondary school, so I noticed him from the first day of summer school, we was in the same class

I: Okay, and can you tell me about your friendship in school? For example, do you hang out together during lunch time?

Harry (peer): Yeah, whenever

I: What do you think, Hayden?

Hayden: Mostly at school

I: And, do you see each other after school?

Hayden: No, not really, I do not know where he lives

I: What about after school activities?

Harry (peer): I do athletics

Hayden: Yeah and I do ... can't remember what it's called, but he does athletics and I do something else

I: Hayden, can you think back to the beginning of school and try to recall how it was moving from primary to secondary school? It's quite a few months back now.

Hayden: It was okay, the building was bigger than my primary school

I: And how did you find that?

Hayden: Hilarious

I: Hilarious?

Hayden: Because my primary school building is like a mansion, it is, it's very big, it has two sides of it and they're connected

I: Okay, and for you Harry, how was the move from primary to secondary school?

Harry (peer): I was just excited, that was it, I was just happy I didn't know why

I: Did you come from a primary school where some of your friends also come with?

Harry (peer): No, only one came to this school

Hayden: For me the same, only one

I: Do you think you were excited to be moving on or maybe because it was something new?

Harry (peer): Something new, yeah

I: Right, so let's talk a little more about the expectations here at secondary – do you think these are different and how?

Hayden: Yes, you have more work but some of it is practical, so you don't have to write in your books

I: Do you like that?

Hayden: Yeah

I: Okay and do you think you're working more at secondary?

Hayden: I work more, yes

I: And, for you Harry, what do you think?

Harry (peer): I'm actually working less, it's like in primary school for me in English with writing it needed to be at least two pages for me, minimum, now it's only like a page

I: You don't feel there's as much work?

Harry (peer): No, not in English

I: What about the other subjects?

Harry (peer): There's definitely more in Science!

Hayden: Yeah, and you only have one second to write it down

Harry (peer): Yeah, you get about 10 seconds to write a paragraph, literally

I: Okay, so the expectation within in each subject is different?

Hayden and Harry (peer): Yeah

I: Are there any subjects that you feel is the most challenging?

Hayden: Science

I: For you, Harry?

Harry (peer): Yeah, Science

Hayden: For everyone in our class

Harry (peer): That is literally for everyone

I: Do you think there's reason for that?

Harry (peer): Because we get through a lot in Science, more than in any other class

Hayden: Cause we have like have 5 seconds to write down some long line and then when you go right, I haven't finished yet, she just changed the pace and everyone goes like, 'why did you do that, can you please change it back?', and she changes it back, but only for another short time, telling us to focus more

I: So, you feel that your teacher is trying to move you on quite quickly in Science?

Hayden and Harry (peer): Yeah

I: And, you both feel this is challenging?

Hayden and Harry (peer): Yeah!

I: Okay, so just thinking about your school work, can you tell me what you think it means to do well in school, Hayden?

Hayden: To complete your homework

I: Okay, anything else

Hayden: That's it, just about the homework

I: And for you Harry, what do you think doing well at school means?

Harry (peer): I would say complete your homework and get higher than the expectations and get your GCSE's, that's what I would say

I: Okay, we're just going to talk a little bit about friendship groups and your peers  
Hayden, how do you feel about making new friends?

Hayden: Um, pretty exciting cause you're meeting somebody new that you don't really know about and getting to know that person

I: Do you sometimes find it hard to make new friends?

Hayden: Something's are hard to make new friends, like some friends can't understand me clearly and yeah that's mostly difficult

I: Okay, and Harry what's it like for you making new friends?

Harry (peer): I'm not really sure, I've always been able to make new friends, I don't know why it's just always like that

I: Okay, Hayden do you still see any friends from primary school?

Hayden: Yeah, just one person, my parent's know his parents

I: And, Harry do you still see your primary school friends?

Harry (peer): Yeah, my parents like know all my parent's friends, like literally

I: Would you say that you have more primary school friends still or more secondary school friends?

Harry (peer): More primary school friends, but I went to two primary school cause I moved from one to another, so I definitely see more primary school friends

Hayden: Yeah, definitely more primary school friends, like the whole primary school was my friends

I: Do you think it's important to have friends in school, Hayden?

Hayden: Sometimes it does cause you can talk to that person, but sometimes it doesn't matter cause your friend might be behind you like whilst you're working, like they ask you for help and you have to say no, but you still have to give it

I: And, for you Harry?

Harry (peer): I think it does because some people in our class like when we're doing Science and some people haven't done their homework and they need the load of questions, so they ask you for them in class

Hayden: You mean the homework

Harry (peer): Yeah the homework

Hayden: Can I copy off you (*imitates other child in class*)

Harry (peer): Yeah, they ask you cause they don't know, so they don't get in trouble. I never do that, I always do it before, when I first get it on the same day

Hayden: Aha, I do it on Tuesday

Harry (peer): Why?

Hayden: I have to relax, yeah

Harry (peer): Yeah

I: And, what about out of class during lunch time or break times - Do you think you need friends then?

Hayden: Yeah, cause then you can catch up what lessons they have and how were they, yeah

I: Do you mostly talk about what happened in class?

Hayden: No, sometimes you talk about other things like your favourite book

Harry (peer): Or your best favourite meme

Hayden: Yeah, memes

I: And, what do you think would happen if you didn't have friends at school?

Hayden: You'll become so lonely

Harry (peer): If you didn't have a friend at school, I think it would be hard to make friends. I made my first friend because Mrs ... (*teacher*) helped me, but that's because then it was quite hard, I had just started the year, but then it became easier as time went along

Hayden: I would just randomly talk to a person

I: So, Harry it was little hard at the beginning of the year?

Harry (peer): Yeah, cause most people come from other primary schools so, for them it was okay, but when it's just you and someone else, you don't know it's harder like, there's just more tension I think

I: Okay, and do you think you belong to a friendship group at this stage?

Hayden: No, I differ between friends, but if I had to pick a group I'm in this group with these silly Year 9s

I: How did you become friends with Year 9s?

Hayden: I just walked into the library and they were like 'hey' (using his hands)

I: Is that a type of handshake?

Hayden: Yeah, I have this special handshake, this one (demonstrating with his hands), it's like a high five

I: You wouldn't talk about classes with the Year 9, so what do you chat about?

Hayden: Fun stuff, games, fortnite

Harry: Yeah, fortnite

I: You both play fortnite?

Hayden and Harry (peer): Yeah

Hayden: I hacked his account one day

Harry (peer): What do you play on?

Hayden: PS4

Harry (peer): I play on Xbox

I: Harry, do you have a friendship group or just one or two friends?

Harry (peer): I have about 8 or 9

I: And, do both of you feel that you have a friendship group more than just one close friend?

Hayden: A friendship group

Harry (peer): Yeah

I: Do you think it helps to belong to a group?

Hayden: Yeah, cause you can ask them for help with the answers for homework (laughs), that's what I did for my drama homework, I asked this Year 9 to help me with the homework and I got 9 out of 9 in the drama test.

I: What about you, Harry?

Harry (peer): Yeah, it's good to have a group because then you get to know more people

I: okay, and are there any challenges in the friendship groups?

Hayden: Yeah, cause when you want to play a game, some might say 'no, lets play this game.'

Harry (peer): Yeah, I don't really mind, if they want to do something else, then just let them

I: Okay, just a few more questions. Can you tell me how many lessons you have together inside of school?

Hayden and Harry (peer): Every lesson

Hayden: Because we're in the same set, set 3, set 3 is the best set

I: And, are you allowed to sit near each other or is it seat allocation determined by the teacher?

Hayden: Seat allocation. I used to sit next to Harry in Science, but then Miss said, 'Oh, you talk to much,' and then she moved me

Harry (peer): We're still kind of close though

Hayden: Yeah

I: Okay, and just talking about children that look different while in school, last few questions. Hayden, have had told some of your friends about your cleft?

Hayden: yeah and no, but there was this one guy named ..., he said 'I never realised you had a cleft lip' and I said to him, 'how did you know that?', but he didn't say anything.

I: Okay, does Harry know you have a cleft?

Harry (peer): No

Hayden: Now he does, that's the magic of facial reconstruction surgery

I: You've had many surgeries, haven't you Hayden?

Hayden: yeah

I: And, that's also why your speech is not as clear?

Hayden: yep

I: Harry, did you notice something different about Hayden?

Harry (peer): yeah, I always saw it

I: Did you know what it was?

Harry (peer): No, I just never wanted to say anything

I: And how you think children who look a little different, maybe if they had a scar or something are treated at school?

Hayden: If it's a scar, they always ask 'how did you get that scar?'

Harry (peer): Yeah, they will with a scar

*At this time, the head of Year asked for both boys to return to class, as it was, they had missed part of their English lesson. I thanked them for their time and shared the debrief form with them. Then I accompanied Hayden to the next part of his English lesson.*



## Ethnography field notes

### Lesson 1: RMPS (Religious Moral Philosophical Studies)

15<sup>th</sup> February 2018

Time: 10.45am – 11.35am

Time	Activity	Comments
10.45am	Grace and I arrived at the class as all the other students were entering. Grace introduced me to the teacher, who was aware of my visit and smiled towards me. I navigated towards the only spare chair available, towards the back of the class, near the window. The class layout was made up of four rows of tables, all facing the white board with the teacher's desk at the front of the class, next to the whiteboard. There was a space down the center of the classroom. The walls had colourful displays about the subject, and the lighting in the classroom was passive. There were 27 students in the class, 14 of these were boys and 13 were girls. Grace sat next to the wall in the second row from the back. She sat next to another girl. Behind her was a row of boys and in front of her were a row of girls. Grace immediately took her seat and waited for the teacher to begin her lesson. Other students talked amongst themselves.	Arrival, finding a place to sit  Classroom layout
10.50am	The teacher, standing in front of the class instructed the whole class to be quiet, as she was taking register. Grace said her name clear and loud when the teacher read it out. Some of the students at the back of the class began to complain about the behavior of another student – the teacher asked that student to move to a different row near the front of the class. Grace watched and listened as this unfolded.	Always sits in the same place (asked G after class).  Students misbehavior
10.55am	The teacher then engaged the whole class in a 'think, pair, share' exercise. Grace and the other girls next to her in the same row began discussing the topic (Ghosts). Then one of the students in the back row said they were unwell, which caused a distraction for all the students and the teacher instructed the student to go to the bathroom. Grace and the other two girls continued their discussion, as I overheard Grace say, "I don't believe in ghosts" and one of the other girls began retelling a story about ghosts. The teacher was talking with some of the other groups near the front of the class during this time.	Interaction with other students – casual, friendly
11.15am	The teacher then asked for some feedback and became involved in a whole class discussion, as some of the students had questions and wanted to retell stories they had. Grace continued to listen. The students	

11.20am	<p>in the front row participated in the questioning. The teacher posed another question about ghost and evidence and some of the students engaged with the teacher.</p> <p>Grace began doodling in her book. The class discussion continued. Grace then whispered something to the girl sitting next to her and then returned to doodling in her book. Some of the students continue to retell their 'ghost stories' and the discussion became about ghost movies. The students near the front of the class were focused on the teacher and this discussion. Grace continued to draw/doodle in her book, but also looked at the teacher at different times during the discussion.</p>	<p>Asked about doodling/drawing – G said she enjoyed drawing, but was still listening in the lesson.</p>
11.23am	<p>The teacher put up some evidence (pictures) on the white board of 'ghosts' and began to talk about the history of the picture. Grace continues to draw in her book, looking up at the board briefly and then returned to her drawing.</p> <p>One of the pictures is difficult to see and the teacher used her red light pen to point at the picture on the board – Grace looked up immediately and was attentive to what the teacher was saying.</p> <p>When the last picture is shown, some of the students begin to talk amongst themselves. Grace continues to draw and begins to rest her head on her left arm.</p> <p>The teacher instructs the students to complete a short writing task. Grace immediately began the writing task in her book. The students write in silence.</p>	<p>Attention peaked</p> <p>Focused on task</p> <p>Acknowledgment</p>
11.33am	<p>The teacher instructed the students to finish their task as the lesson is ending. Some of the students began packing their bags to leave the room. Grace closed her book and put it in her bag. She smiled at me and walked towards the door. I thanked the teacher and joined Grace outside the class.</p>	<p>Busy, loud</p>
11.35am	<p>We walked very quickly to the next class and stayed on the left side of the corridor. Everyone walked very quickly. Some students shout and laugh amongst themselves as they walked to the next class. Grace was almost knocked over as we enter through one of doors to the next corridor. She said that she was fine. I enquired about the last class, asking if she always sat in the same seat, which she confirmed, and said she was able to chose her seat at the start of the year. I also asked about her drawing/doodling in her book, which she also confirmed. She tells me that it's Art next, and for her Art lesson, the teacher allocated her a seat.</p>	<p>Same routine, different lesson seating plans</p>

**Lesson 2: Art**

15<sup>th</sup> February 2018

Time: 11.35am – 12.25pm

Time	Activity	Comments
11.40am	<p>When we arrived outside the Art classroom, Grace joined the line with the other students. The Art teacher stood outside the class and I introduced myself to her. She was welcoming, aware of my visit as we talked about the newness of the school building, which was only built 6 years ago. She informed me that before this, they were in located in another school building not far from this location.</p> <p>The Art teacher then instructs the students who have lined up (quietly) outside the class to enter and find their seats.</p> <p>The high tables and high chairs were placed in groups of four students. The classroom was very light because of the large windows and it appeared/felt spacious, as there was a lot of room between the groups. There were 18 students in the class, 8 were boys and 10 girls.</p> <p>Grace hung her coat up on the hook and placed her school bag under her table – as did the other students. She sat at one of the groups close to the front of the classes opposite the windows. She also sat next to a boy and opposite a girl – there were 3 students at their table. There was a resource cupboard behind Grace.</p> <p>I sat on a high chair near to Grace’s table.</p>	<p>Teacher – open, welcoming</p> <p>Class routine</p> <p>Layout different to previous class – comfortable</p> <p>Routine/structure</p>
11.42am	<p>The teacher then called all the students to the front table, where she began to explain the task (Bird printmaking). The teacher explained that it is a continuation from the last lesson, as some students were still drawing their birds and some had moved on to the next stage. Grace stood close to the teacher listening carefully, as she explained. Towards the end of the explanation, the teacher was interrupted by one of the students, who was talking to another student. The teacher warned the student, and then continued with the explanation.</p>	<p>Teacher input</p> <p>Disruption</p>
11.50am	<p>The students were then instructed to find their drawings and return to their desks, to complete their drawings or move onto the next part. Grace was absent the lesson before so she was trying to find her drawing in the one of the folders on the Art teacher’s desk. The teacher then assisted her and they found the drawing together. The teacher also gave her some tracing paper, as this was part of the next stage. Grace then returned to her desk and continued with her bird drawing. All the students were quietly attentive to the drawings and the teacher was moving between tables.</p>	<p>Interaction with teacher – friendly, helpful</p>
11.57am	<p>Some of the students at the one group became disruptive. The teacher immediately stopped everyone, addressed the student’s behavior and then instructed everyone to continue. Grace was focused on her</p>	<p>disruption</p>

12pm	<p>drawing throughout the time.</p> <p>The other two students on Grace's table started to discuss their pictures, very quietly. Grace joined the conversations by saying, 'I can't draw!', The girl opposite immediately responded, saying, 'yeah, you can.' Grace then began to rub out part of her drawing and laughed quietly to herself. After drawing for a few more minutes, she turned to both her peers at the table and said, 'look at mine'. The boy nodded in recognition of it and the girl said, 'that's so good.' During this interaction, the teacher had to ask some of the other students to stop shouting across tables, causing disruption.</p>	<p>Questioning self</p> <p>Interacting with others</p>
12.10pm	<p>Grace began drawing on the tracing paper, also looking at her peers who had both started on the tracing paper. She then asked the teacher to help her with that part of the drawing. Grace then continued to draw.</p>	<p>Asking for help</p> <p>disruption</p>
12.20pm	<p>The teacher instructed all the students to gather at the front table again, with their drawings. She looked at and discussed some of the students' pictures. Grace stood close to the teacher again. The teacher then collected all the drawings and instructed the students to fetch their coats and bags and sit quietly on their chairs.</p> <p>Grace follows the teacher's instructions and sits at her chair waiting. Before they are allowed to leave, the teacher has to reprimand one of the students near the front of the class who was not following the instructions. The class was then allowed to leave the class. I thanked the teacher before leaving the classroom.</p> <p>I then walked with Grace along the corridor to the next lesson. This time we went in a different direction, down the stairs to a new part of the school building. Immediately, I noticed that there were musical pictures and signs about music on the corridor walls.</p>	<p>noisy, fast-paced, laughter</p>

### Lesson 3: Music

15<sup>th</sup> February 2018

Time: 12.25pm- 1.15pm

Time	Activity	Comments
12.27pm	We arrived at the music class and Grace immediately joined the line outside the class with the rest of the students. Grace quietly talked to some of the girls that were standing in line with her. I noticed that there were two adults inside the classroom and the door to the classroom was closed. The students outside began to talk amongst themselves.	Time between lessons
12.35pm	The door of the classroom was opened and one of the adults left. The teacher came to stand at the door entrance. Grace began to introduce me as some of the students entered the classroom. The teacher asked me to wait outside as the other students entered. When all the students were in the room, the teacher asked me to explain my visit. I briefly explained why I was visiting the school and observing Grace. The teacher told me that he was not made aware of my visit, but said that I could come in to observe.	Teacher questioning my visit
	As I entered the class I noticed that there were two groups of tables (3 tables faced each other and other table was at the far end of each grouping). Grace was sitting at the front of the one group close to the board, next to a boy and opposite a boy. This room was smaller than the other classes and the lighting was dull. There were 18 children in the class (8 boys, 10 girls). The tables were regular height and there were swing chairs. There were keyboards lined against the back wall. I sat on one of the swing chairs at the back of the class.	Classroom layout
	The teacher took the register. Grace responded loudly when her name was called. The teacher, while sitting on his chair at his desk began the lesson by referring to their last task from the previous lesson. The teacher instructed the students to have their workbooks out, so that they could continue with the task. There was also a visual power-point display on the whiteboard.	Grace involved in discussion
12.45pm	The teacher questioned the students about their knowledge and Grace was one of the students that answered, recognizing the repetition on the music sheet.	Student disruption
	At this stage, the teacher is interrupted by one of the student's because she kept talking. The teacher asks the student to leave the classroom. Grace continues to sit quietly, as do the other students. The teacher then moves onto the next task and starts talking about repetition in the music notes. The teacher demonstrates on the keyboard to the students, then refers to the whiteboard and back to the task. As the students independently continues with their task in their work-book, the teacher comes to talk to me, explaining that Grace is always engaged and an easy-going student in his class. He also	Other visible differences i.e.

<p>1pm</p> <p>1.10pm</p> <p>1.15pm</p>	<p>enquired into visible differences and said that he was not aware that Grace had a difference. Grace continued to make notes in her work-book, resting her left hand on her forehead and her hair was loose so it hung around her face. She was writing in her book. The other students were also writing in their books.</p> <p>The teacher put up the next slide on the presentation and used a guitar to demonstrate this part (the teacher also included me in the demonstration, by asking if I recognized the artist from the tunes he was playing). Grace continued to look at the teacher, as were the students during the instrument demonstration. There was no talking and all the students were watching the teacher demonstrate the recognizable tunes.</p> <p>Then the teacher instructed the students to complete the next part of the task in their work-book. Grace continued to write in her work book. There was silence in the room.</p> <p>The teacher concluded the lesson and instructs the students to line up at the door. He then lets them out to lunch. I thank the teacher for his time and leave the room.</p> <p>Grace took me back to the Guidance teacher, Ms Green.</p>	<p>glasses, braces, acne.</p> <p>Focused</p> <p>Routine – teacher demonstrating</p>
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## Lesson 4: English

16<sup>th</sup> February 2018

Time: 10.45-11.35am

Time	Activity	Comments
10.45am	Grace lines up outside the class with the other children. The teacher asks them to come inside. They walk in and find their seats quickly. The teacher introduces herself to me and shows me a chair that is near her desk where I can sit. There are five rows of desks with an aisle down the center of the classroom. Grace is sitting in the back row next to the wall and another student (boy). There were no displays on the walls. There were 27 children (14 boys, 13 girls). The students were quiet, as the teacher explained that she had read through the first part of their assessments. She then revisited the assessment tools and asked certain students for input. Grace was watching the teacher and listening to her speak.	Open, welcoming Routine  Experienced teacher, high expectations – children know what's expected.
10.55am	The teacher then used one of the students work as an example and read it aloud. She discussed its parts of the students work and then referred to tools that had been used in the writing.	
11.10am	The teacher handed out the assessments for the students to complete. There was silence as the students started their writing. Grace started writing on her paper, as the student next to her asked her something. She told him to be quiet and continued with her writing. A student arrived late to class. This was the student whose work was read out by the teacher earlier. Grace continued with her writing assessment. There was silence as the students continued working on their assessments.	Not distracted, focused on her task.
11.20am	The teacher explained to me that it was unfortunate I was observing during an assessment, as this is not a typical teaching lesson. She also told me that Grace was very easy going in class, engaged in class discussions and then showed me her English books. She added that Grace always responded to comments in her books.	Teacher seems to be open to my visit – helpful, answering questions
11.25am	All the students continued to write in silence. The student next to Grace started to ask her something. Grace quietly responded and carried on writing. She leaned on her left arm and wrote with her right hand.	Distraction

11.30am	Some of the students began to finish their writing task and the teacher instructed them to re-read and check their work, and then began reading their course work book.	Not distracted, focused on her task
11.35am	One of the students enquired about length and using the back of the paper. The teacher answered her and explained the format for the writing assessment. Grace continued to write.	
	The teacher collected Grace's first page of writing and showed it to me. Grace was still writing on her second piece of paper. The teacher further explained to me (very quietly), as I sat at the far side of the classroom that Grace engaged in class and was a very friendly student. The teacher instructs the class to stop writing and pass their papers to the front of the class. The students are then told that they can leave and they begin exiting the room. Grace followed the teachers' instructions, passing her paper forward and stood up to leave the room. She followed the students out of the classroom.  I thanked the teacher and meet Grace outside the classroom. Grace took me back to the Guidance teacher's office.	

**Home visit**15<sup>th</sup> February 2018

Time: 4pm - 7.15pm

Time (location)	Activity	Comments
3.40pm	School finishes. School is a 10-minute drive from Grace's home. One of Grace's school friends from primary travels to and back from school with Grace. She lives on the same road, a few houses down. Grace and her friend tell me that they are planning to walk to school in the summer, when it's warmer.	
3.55pm	Grace's mum, Gina was home when we arrived. Her mum welcomed me with a hug on arrival. She then offered tea and biscuits (in the hallway of the home).	Welcoming, open, warm, comfortable
(kitchen)	We then continued to the kitchen to make tea. Grace's younger sister, Gia came downstairs to	Introduced to sibling



<p>4.20pm (living room)</p>	<p>introduce herself. Gia had been playing upstairs in her room and heard us arriving. Gina asked how my day had been at the school. We talked about the school experience, including the vastness of the school building, the busyness of the school day, and Grace's routine to and from school. Gina and Grace both talked about how different it was from primary school. While Gina made tea, Grace talked about her Art lesson to her mum, as she had to complete her picture which she did not like. She also told her mum that she did not have much homework. Then, she wanted to make hot chocolate and was searching through the kitchen cupboards looking to make it herself (during this time Gia was also asking for a snack and some hot chocolate). Gina helped Grace with the hot chocolate and enquired further into her day. Grace was more interested in finding a snack and drinking hot chocolate. Both the girls were talking over each other and there was some discussion about the 'flat' pavlova that Gina had made for dessert – Grace thought it looked odd, and Gia was still focused on finding the hot chocolate and was not that interested in the pavlova. Gina had to ask both girls to wait and to leave the pavlova.</p> <p>The kitchen led into a casual sitting room next to the garden. As I commented on the light space, Gina explained that it was a new space and had been added on to give the girls more space to relax and enjoy themselves. There were some birthday decorations on the walls, which I enquired about and Gina told me about the sleepover that Grace had had on the weekend with some of her friends from school for her birthday.</p> <p>Once Gina had sorted the snack and the hot chocolate for the girls, she made us tea, and we went into the living room. Gia went back up to her room. There was a door between the kitchen the living room – this was closed at this time.</p> <p>As we sat on the couches in the living room, we talked about Grace's school day, as Gina was curious to see how it went and what I thought about it. Grace sat with us in the living room while she ate her snack. We talked a little more about the changes between the classes and having different friends in each class. Grace said that she enjoyed lunch and break time because she could sit with all her friends and chat.</p> <p>We also spoke about Grace's involvement with CLAPA and how she presented her 'story' to her class in primary school so that she could inform them of her condition. Grace explained that she used a collage of pictures of herself from when she was born until now to show how her mouth had changed. Gina went to get her iPad to show me the collage of pictures.</p>	<p>Routine changes</p> <p>Sibling and mum interactions</p> <p>Concern over food</p> <p>Sibling leaves</p> <p>Casual discussion about school day</p> <p>Important to Grace - friends</p>
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4.30pm	<p>Grace then went to sit in the other sitting room leading off from the kitchen so that she could talk to her friends on her iPad.</p> <p>Gina and I also spoke about the research project, which led to Gina talking about her understanding of Grace's condition. She explained that during her pregnancy she had not known she was pregnant in the first few weeks and had not taken enough care of herself. She was getting married then and felt she had drunk too much, not realizing she was pregnant. She felt that Grace's condition was because of this time.</p> <p>Gina also explained that Grace was going to have another surgery soon and told me the date. I enquired into this surgery further, as to why and what would happen. She told me how Grace had developed a small hold in her palate and that some food would travel up through this and down through her nostrils. Gina said that Grace had told her that she was worried that food would come out of her nose while she was eating at school. I asked about Grace's previous experiences with her surgeries and Gina said that Grace was really good with her hospitalization's, but had had some trouble with the anesthetic. She described a time when Grace had not woken up after one of her operations and the doctors were very concerned. The nurses had to medicate her to wake her and were glad when she did wake up and was okay. Gina said that for Grace, one of her concerns when she has an operation is when she'll be able to eat again, as she isn't allowed to eat before the operation and then initially after the operation, and then she can only have liquidized food until her mouth begins to heal.</p>	<p>Gina's interest in research project</p> <p>Self doubt – Gina as cause of Grace's cleft</p> <p>Grace's concern physical, affecting school lunch times/eating</p> <p>Worry for Gina Grace concerned with her food after op</p>
5pm (living room)	<p>Grace's dad, Greg arrived home. He had had a dental appointment and after our introduction he sat with us in the living room to talk. Grace and Gia both came into the room to say hello to their dad. They both tried to talk at the same time, about school and asking their dad how he is. They also started asking their mum when dinner time was, as they told her that they were hungry. Gina told them that she would start it soon and would need to wait a little longer.</p> <p>Both Gia and Grace went back to their iPad to play and talked online to their friends. Grace spoke to her school friends on her mobile phone in the room adjacent to the living room.</p> <p>Gina explained to Greg what we had been talking about and Greg further explained about the hospital incident in which Grace had not woken up. He said it had been a frightening experience. We also talked more about Grace's involvement in CLAPA and how this had been really helpful to her – both agreed that meeting other children with the similar condition and being able participate in some of their weekend activities was great for Grace.</p>	<p>Warm and welcoming Family interactions – Comfortable, everyday ease</p> <p>Dad – worry and concern</p> <p>CLAPA positive involvement</p>

5.20pm (kitchen)	<p>We all went into in the kitchen so that Gina could prepare the tea and make more tea and coffee. While Gina cooked the meal, Grace also helped, although she was mostly interested in the dessert. Greg helped to set the table and organized the drinks for the dinner. There were different conversations taking place between Gina and Grace and myself and Greg. Gina tried to involve herself in both dialogues. Gina was making bolognaise with pasta and garlic bread. For dessert she had made a Pavlova. Grace was asking when they would be able to eat the Pavlova, even though it had not risen as other ones she'd had before (Gia remained upstairs in her room, playing).</p>	<p>Likes sweet foods – Grace</p> <p>Busy, laughter, talking between family members</p>
5.40pm (kitchen/ dining area)	<p>We all sat around the dining table to eat. There was not a set place for anyone, and I could sit anywhere. I sat next to Gia (who had been called downstairs to join us), and opposite Grace. Gina sat next to Grace and Greg sat in between Gina and Gia. Gina remarked that she was going to her exercise class soon and would only have a little food. During the dinner we talked informally about the day and what Grace does at her dancing and in her girl guide group. There were interactions between Gina and Greg, mostly related to the logistics of the evening and how Grace is going to guides, Gina is going to her exercise class and that he will be home with Gia. Grace and Gia also talked about what they were eating and which foods they didn't like and then everyone realized that the garlic bread was still in the oven. This was quickly removed and passed around. Greg offered more drinks (water and juice), and there was some more discussion about Grace's involvement in CLAPA and her recent birthday party.</p>	<p>Girls – focused on food</p> <p>Comfortable daily routine – talkative, busy, easy-going, happy, content.</p>
6pm (living room)	<p>Gina left the table to get ready for her exercise class. I started to help with the clearing of the dinner table, but Greg insisted I leave it for him and that he was going to make some tea and then we could have some with the pavlova in the living room. Grace and Gia both had a piece of the pavlova and then returned to their iPads to play on the games and talk online to their friends.</p>	<p>Interactions constant and lively</p>
6.10pm	<p>Gina left for her exercise class, which was held at the same hall where guides took place later. She said that I must enjoy the pavlova and would see me soon at the hall.</p> <p>In the meantime, Greg had made tea and given me some dessert.</p> <p>Greg continued to talk about Grace and had similar stories that Gina had related. He also spoke about Grace's possible career paths, saying, 'she's so easy-going and really keen to help others, perhaps she might work for Cleft care,' he said she was also keen to go into nursing. Gia came downstairs for a brief time, as she sat next to her dad on the couch and they watched some TV.</p> <p>Greg also checked on Grace, to ensure that she was getting ready for guides - she came downstairs to check where part of her guide uniform was and then returned back upstairs.</p>	<p>Dad's concern and hopes for daughter</p> <p>Relaxed mood – Gia and dad interaction</p>

	<p>Greg called Grace downstairs because it was time for guides. I thanked Greg and said goodbye to both him and Gia, as I accompanied Grace and her friend to guides. This was a 5-minute drive from their home to the hall.</p>	
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**After school activity: Girl guides**

15<sup>th</sup> February 2018

Time: 7.30pm - 8.15pm.

Time	Activity	Comments
7.20pm	Together with Grace, her school friend and her friend's younger sister we travel by car to the church hall, where guides is held.	
7.25pm	When we enter the hall, there are some ladies standing at the stage area and I notice that Gina is there with them talking. She comes over to me and then introduces me to the two other woman who are the guide leaders. They suggest that I can sit near the heater and watch the activities for the observation. There are two guide leaders and then two younger girls that are guide helpers. As I sit down, I notice that there are large benches lining the sides of the hall and the girls are sitting on the one side of the hall. There is loud chatter between the girls.	Open and welcoming
7.30pm	One of the leaders blows her whistle and asks the girls to line up. They form four different lines. Then the register and money is taken from each of the girls for the session. There are 25 girls and are aged between 10-14 years of age. Grace is one of the shortest girls. She lines up with her friend from school.	routine

	<p>The leaders then engage the girls in a variety of different exercises and activities. These are all physical activities that involve teamwork and communication and good hand and eye coordination. They are fast paced and keep the girls engaged throughout the session. Grace knows all the activities and is always keen to be involved. She sticks close to her friend and together they laugh and enjoy the different activities. She chats to some of the other girls and appears to know everybody. In one of the competitive activities, i.e. jumping the furthest, Grace tried to keep up with the taller girls. She was one of the last few girls left in the activity. Her friend encouraged her in each activity and Grace also encourages her friend.</p>	<p>Physical development friendship Determined Grace friendship with her friend – strong, important, constant</p>
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### Time point 3 Interview Transcripts

**Transcription** (Skype interview with Grace and mother)

**Family interview:** The G family (child, mother)

*Brief introduction's and short discussion about Grace's returning to start her new year at school and work starting for mum again.*

Interviewer: Grace, can you tell me how you're feeling about finishing the first year of secondary school?

Grace: Quite good

Mother (Gina): Better than you thought?

Grace: Yeah

I: Can you tell me why you thought that?

Grace: I kind a liked all the different subjects that we didn't have at primary school, yeah

I: Have you enjoyed the variety of the subjects?

Grace: Yeah, and I like moving from class to class, it's more interesting and the different teachers

I: Okay, and if you can think back to that very first day of secondary school, can you recall what really stood out to you in those first few weeks?

Grace: I think it was just moving around and getting used to the teachers

I: Do you remember thinking about new rules or noticing all the new faces?

Grace: yeah, I remember the rules changing in the different classes and that was something to get used to, cause it was hard to get it all right

I: And your changes to your routine, can you tell me about that?

Grace: I did get up a lot earlier and have to walk to school and Georgia (friend), her mum works at the school so she takes us to school in the morning sometimes.

I: Gina, can you tell me how you felt the start of the school year went for Grace?

Mother (Gina): I think it was probably easier than she thought because she was also anxious about special requests you know people would notice it and say anything to her so we were concerned about that because she started nursery at the primary school so she was there for 10 years, there were only 13 of them in a class and right from 3 years old there hadn't been any difference, so I think that was the main thing for us, but, um for Grace as well felt just a bit anxious, but she's met loads of friends and she's only had a few issues with some horrible comments, but I think from the start it was a lot easier than we all thought, wasn't it (*directed to Grace*)?

Grace: yeah

I: Grace, can you think of any stand out moments that you had during the course of the year that you wanted to come home and share with your mum and dad?

Grace: I did the junior bake up... in first year you get to bake your own cookies, and the winner gets like...

I: Great, well done. Gina, can you remember any times when Grace came home and she had shared something with you?

Gina: yeah, she had towards the end she got involved in a dance club after school and then she could get involved doing the choreography, she was doing that and they were doing dance competitions with other schools, I think next year as well she's going to be teaching the first years that come in so that was something that, they've actually been doing that over the summer, they've all been keeping in touch about doing new dances and what music, that's been quite good for her

I: How do you feel about the dancing Grace?

Grace: Yeah, it's exciting

I: And being able to teach others?

Grace: Yeah, it is quite important

I: Right, just thinking about times during the year that were a little more challenging for you Grace. I know that you had some medical treatment or there may have been some other challenges during the year – can you recall a time when it felt a little more difficult?

Grace: ah, not really

Mother: I think that time in your maths class when someone was making comments about her flat nose and how she looked, her face looked funny, that was kind of only a few months into the term and she didn't really say anything about it and she hadn't told any of the teachers. We were all trying to discuss the best way forward and she didn't want to get into any trouble and she didn't want to put attention to herself, but it just so happens that she broke her wrist at her dance show so we ended up having to speak to her guidance teacher who I then slipped it to and that it had happened, cause the guidance teacher said they won't

accept that behaviours and apparently the boy had been moved in the class anyway, it was reassuring for us and probably for Grace as well

I: Grace, do you think it helped to talk to the guidance teacher about this at that time?

Grace: Yeah, it did

I: Did you speak to your maths teacher about it?

Grace: No, not really

I: And the other student had been moved – was he moved because of what he had said to you?

Grace: No, we had all been moved around, and it had happened at the same time when the guidance teacher found out about it

I: Okay, so essentially it helped to talk to your guidance teacher about it?

Grace: Yeah

I: Okay, so can we chat about your schoolwork. How do you feel about your academic progress over the past year?

Grace: I think it was like mostly what I learnt in primary, but I learnt a few extra things, but we were just going over the stuff that we learned in primary

I: And do you feel that you've improved in any of your subjects?

Grace: My English and my maths are okay and then there are other subjects like Home ec and Geography, which I didn't have in primary school so there's been some new subjects which is good

I: Yes, and Gina what do you think about Grace's progress?

Mother (Gina): Yes, apart for the fact that she was off for a couple of weeks, over the Easter holiday, and so she hadn't missed that much, actually good she'd almost completed the full year, so, no-ah I've seen a difference because she's learning new topics and certainly with her Maths and English, she was moved to a higher maths class than she was originally put in, so definitely doing better in kind a maths and English now, yeah

I: Do you think that her missing school in previous years had an effect on her school work?

Gina: yes, in primary, yes, but its been better this year, but I think that in primary it didn't bother her that she was off school for an operation or appointment because everybody knew but it was quite difficult going back this year because I wasn't aware she hadn't told anybody about it, apart from two of her friends and then unfortunately one of her friend isn't to good



a friend because then she told all the people in the class why she was off because of her cleft lip and palate so she was quite upset when she went back

I: Yes, I remember Grace talking about that in the online interview we had. How are things now with the friend?

Grace: Yeah, it's alright it's calmed down now

I: Okay and how do you feel about your report results?

Grace: Yeah, good I got mostly 1s apart from Geography, which almost everyone got 2s because the Geography teacher didn't even care

Gina: You know it was actually a really good report again, and how almost every teacher said exactly the same thing in that she's really helpful and is a lovely girl in the class which I think is equally as important as the results she got which is good, so it was nice to hear in highschool as well

I: Yes, and do they have any type of achievement awards or points?

Grace: Yeah, they do academic awards

I: Okay and do you have any future aspirations? Thoughts about what you might do when you're older?

Grace: Yeah, maybe a school teacher or something to do with children

I: Okay, and just thinking about your friendships during the year, you've made some new friends, is this still the same?

Grace: Yeah, it's like Ginny, Genny and Gabby, they're kind of like my main group of friends, we like do most things and like we're all at each others birthdays and stuff like that and then like Georgia, Gill also, and I don't speak to Fiona at all.

I: Would you say that you're better friends with the new people you've met, than the friends you had from primary?

Grace: Yeah

I: How important do you think are friends in secondary school?

Grace: Yeah, really important because if you don't have any friends you'll just be by yourself

I: And how do you feel about everyone knowing about your cleft?

Grace: It's fine, yeah

I: Have you seen any of your friends during the summer holidays?

Grace: Yeah, I saw Ginny last week, she had a birthday party and then it was Georgia's birthday party last weekend

I: And for you Gina, what have you thought about all the friends and friendship changes?

Gina: Yeah, I think Grace has already had her eyes open, I think she's beginning to realise how lucky she is actually, some of her friends have single parents or parents that work and they're just kind of left to fend for themselves, um she went to stay at someone's house last week, and I dropped her off, picked her up 28 hours later and the mum hadn't given them anything to eat at all and had just said hello once and that was it so I think so I think she's beginning to realise how lucky she is, then another friend whose confided in her saying that the mum and dad have split up now, they're sharing a one bedroom flat, her and her mum and you know with Grace I'm able to check her messages and its nice to see her saying that it doesn't matter where you live as long as you're happy so it's nice to see that side, but certainly it's opened all our eyes. She went to a birthday party and there was only four of them there and the girl was only 13 and she had taken vodka from her mum's cupboards, so she's no longer allowed to play with that person any longer, so yeah, quite an eye opener

I: Right, okay. Grace did you have any school trips during the year?

Grace: They used to do it, but they didn't do it this year, but so they just do activity days now and that was good.

I: Okay, and I was just thinking about when I visited your school, because the moving between classes seemed quite busy. Can you tell me what's the most challenging part of your everyday school life?

Grace: I think it's all fine now

Mother (Gina): Getting her out of bed is the difficult part of the day (laughs), yeah the neighbours can probably hear me shouting before she does in the morning...

I: Yes, so just thinking about the extra-curricular activities, are there any you were still doing at the end of the year or ones you may be looking forward to next year?

Grace: Not a lot in school but I'm doing my dancing outside of school

Mother (Gina): You're going to start a new dance, yeah there's a new dance company starting up in the village, yeah I think it's going to be like musical theatre

I: Great, and Grace do you think it's important to do clubs at school?

Grace: Yeah, I think it is important just to have clubs and something extra to do after school and meet more people

I: Okay, just a few questions about your cleft. Do you think it would make a difference if all the children knew about your cleft at the start of the year?

Grace: Um, not necessarily

I: Would you be interested to tell them or does it not matter?

Grace: No, it doesn't really matter

Gina: I would disagree with that, because she didn't want to tell anybody and when she went for her operation she didn't even want to tell the ones who she'd made friends with, it was like they don't need to know cause to me she was almost trying to distance herself so that nobody knew she had a cleft, you know cause it took her quite a while to tell people, you know her friends, it wasn't something she talked about. You know when she was going for her operation a few of them were asking why she was off and I said well did you not tell them? And she went 'no', they don't need to know that bit

I think she's underestimated her friends because there's about 7 or 8 of them that always meet up at lunch time and I think that if she was the type of child who had been a loner at school and wasn't so friendly then it wouldn't matter if they had told anyone, but Grace likes making friends and her friends have helped her

I: And Grace, for you how do you feel about it?

Grace: I only needed those really close to know

I: Okay, and what advice would you give a child with a cleft who is starting secondary school?

Grace: I would tell them that if they felt comfortable telling people, then tell them

I: Okay, just a few last questions thinking about the context of the study. Can you tell me what it's been like for you to be involved in this study?

Grace: Yeah, it's been fine, good

I: Do you think you've thought more about school?

Grace: yeah, a bit

I: and do you think it's had any effect on how you feel about friends at school?

Grace: no, not really

I: okay, and can you tell me if being involved in the study has affected how you talk about your cleft?

Grace: yeah, maybe, not sure

I: How do you feel about Grace's involvement in the study, Gina?

Mother (Gina): Yeah, I think probably from when you went to the school (*looking at Grace*), if she hadn't been involved in this I don't think she would have told anybody, I think it's given her more confidence to speak about it, yeah I mean if she hadn't had her operation or been involved in this, I don't think she would have told anybody

I: Grace, do you think it's better that the other children know?

Grace: Yeah

I: Can you tell me why?

Grace: I don't really know but I think it's better, they do ask if I'm okay

I: Right, so how are you feeling about starting the next school year?

Grace: I'm feeling fine actually it's probably not going to be that different.

I: And how do you feel compared to how you felt starting last year?

Grace: Yeah, okay

Gina: Yeah, as I said I think she's had so many friends and they've helped her and not really realised it, I mean there is another girl in the same year who has a cleft and she quite shy and introvert and people don't really know what she has they just think there's something wrong and I know from years back that her mum happened to be in the hospital at the same time as me, having had her baby and she just couldn't cope with it hadn't taken her out you know before she had her operation so yeah, we've always talked about it saying you've had cleft, you're going for you op, but you're brave and I think its just a different way you know the upbringing because I think she's completely different.

**Transcription** (Skype interview with Hayden and mother)

**Family interview:** The H family (child, mother)

*Brief introduction's and short discussion about Hayden returning to start his new year at school and work starting for mum again.*

Interviewer: Hayden how are you feeling now that you come to end of your first year at secondary school?

Hayden: Um, happy because I'm done.

I: Yes, anything you're looking forward to?

Hayden: I was looking forward to the school holidays

I: Can you think back to the very first day or first few weeks of secondary school and tell me what you remember?

Hayden: It was okay, it wasn't as scary

I: Do you think you felt a little nervous?

Hayden: A little bit, but not a lot

I: Can you recall all the changes, for example to your routine, the new faces, the rules at your new school?

Hayden: Yeah, aha

I: Helen, can you recall what it was like when Hayden started?

Mother (Helen): I think for me I was a bit anxious to be honest because he was going into a new environment, with new people, you know completely different to his normal routine of primary school where he knew everyone and everyone knew him so for him to go into there I was anxious, you know how they would react to him and how he would be settling in there with the rest of the other kids at school and the teachers as well, yeah, mostly anxious about the new environment and just in general

I: Hayden can you remember any stand out moments during the year when you wanted to come home and tell you parents or your sister about?

Hayden: Um, when we did cooking in school, it was really fun and it tasted really good

Helen: Oh yes, I remember and you made it all by yourself and he bought it home

Hayden: Yeah, it was good

I: And for you Helen, can you remember something that happened that you thought was a real stand out moment?

Helen: Yeah, the cooking experience he had really enjoyed because he had come home and said, 'okay, mum let's do this' because he had the recipe and wanted to try the recipes and he would tell me how he got to use the knives at school for the chopping and you know I don't let him use the knives at home to chop, but at school they let him. So each time he comes back his chopping has improved, so yeah he really likes that, he even goes and googles other recipes as well.

I: Sounds good.

Were there any school trips during the year that Hayden went on?

Helen: Yeah, he did go a school trip, what's the name of that financial building, what's the name? (*asking Hayden*)

Hayden: No we didn't go there, we went to the centre stem cell research place

Helen: Oh yes, you went there, didn't you?

Hayden: Yeah

I: How was the trip, Hayden?

Hayden: It was good, yeah, okay

Helen: What did you get to see?

Hayden: Um, I saw somebody's heart

Helen: And, what were they doing with it?

Hayden: It was research for diseases, and there was other research about the ocean

I: Can you remember any discussions you had during the school year as a family about any challenges or difficulties you had?

Helen: When he had his incident which was an accident, his broken arm, it was quite a challenge but a he got a lot of support from the school, he was assigned a buddy, he was given an elevator pass and they had him finish school before the rest of the kids and having him start before the other kids came in

I: Okay, and that helped?

Helen: Yeah, it really did and then he had his crutches too, and they gave him a wheelchair to move around and as well a buddy, they were very supportive, very very supportive, and they were sending his school work, what he had to do online so very very cooperative with us, yeah

I: And for you Hayden, how did you find that time?

Hayden: It was painful, not nice at all

I: Okay, can you tell me how your academic progress has been this year – how are you feeling about this?

Hayden: Yeah it was okay

Helen: It was quite good surprisingly, knowing that he had missed out so much on that first year, he did very well in Spanish and very well in Science as well

I: Science? That's interesting isn't Hayden, as you weren't very keen on Science.

Hayden: Yeah, it's surprising

I: Well done!

Helen, can you tell me how many days off school he's had?

Helen: Oh yeah, quite a lot, I think, about a quarter because some of the times he was ill it fell on the days they were off because he was off just before the Christmas, about two weeks on the crutches and then they had the Christmas break and then he came back and he was back on top, he would go in and out because of the hip and the crutches so he had some days in and then a full week out, so it was kind of spotted

I: Yes, and does your school have any types of achievements that you might be interested in, Hayden?

Helen: Do you have any interests (*looking at Hayden*)?

Hayden: No, don't think so

Helen: You know I think he's still trying to land on his feet you know, trying to adapt, still trying to find his way

I: Okay, just thinking about your friends, which we have spoken about before, can you tell me about any new friends you've made this year?

Helen: He's got friends in his year and older as well, are they the Year 9s?

Hayden: Yeah, year 9

Helen: Yeah on all accounts from what we've heard, he's well like, yeah, yeah, he's well liked

I: Okay, Hayden who do you mostly hang around with during the lunch breaks?

Hayden: The Year 9s, in the library at lunchtime

Helen: Yeah, he goes to the library a lot so that's where he meets them, yeah, they have the same book interests, yeah

I: And are you still in touch with your primary school friends?

Hayden: Yeah, I had great friends in primary that I still talk to

I: And do you spend any time with your newer friends, the ones from secondary school outside of school?

Hayden: No

I: And has your mum met their parents?

Hayden: No

Helen: He's only friends with them in the school

I: Hayden, how important is it for you to have friends in school?

Hayden: Ah, very, yeah

I: Can you tell me why you think it's important?

Hayden: Helps me improve my social skills

I: Right, okay and I just wanted to ask you a little more about your school day. Can you tell me what the most challenging part of your school day?

Hayden: Trying to find the class that I'm in

I: Okay, and how did you feel about the different teachers – did you like this?

Hayden: Yeah, I did

I: And what about rules – do you think there are more rules in secondary school?

Hayden: Yes, many rules and different rules in each class

I: Also, I remember being in the assembly when I visited and they spoke about safety. Do you feel safe in your school?

Hayden: Yes

I: What about activities at school – were you involved in any of these?

Hayden: No



I: Does this have to do with the types of activities they offered, maybe if they had a cookery class, would that interest you?

Hayden: No, I do not want to stay at school until 4 o'clock

I: You don't want to stay after school, can you tell me why?

Hayden: Because I come home and do my homework and that's what I can do

I: Okay, so you feel that going home, and completing your homework is good for you?

Hayden: Yeah, aha

I: Helen, how do you feel about that?

Helen: I try to encourage him but he's so set on as soon as the school day is done to head straight on home, maybe it's because it was his first year and he's still adapting to that and he's still trying to find his way, trying to feel settled in so hopefully next year, year 8 now that's he's got a little network of friends at school now, perhaps he might reconsider you know joining one of the clubs

I: Okay, just a few more questions, about your cleft.

Hayden, can you describe how you felt when someone new found out about your cleft?

Helen: Were you comfortable to tell them?

Hayden: Yeah, a little

I: Would you rather have someone ask you about it or do you like to be able to tell new people?

Hayden: Yeah, I'd rather they ask, yeah

I: I recall from the interview we did at school with your friend, he wasn't aware of your cleft, was he?

Hayden: Yeah, he didn't know

I: Would you like to be able to tell other people or not?

Hayden: No

I: Okay and if a Year 6 child was about to start secondary school and they have a cleft, like you, what type of advice would you give them about starting secondary school?

Hayden: Just be yourself

I: Would you tell them to talk more about their cleft or not?

Hayden: I don't really know

Helen: It's interesting to think about that because he kind of avoids other people with clefts because even when there's a program about clefts on the television and he's just like 'oh' and shows no interest, which I find very strange, you know you would think you would want to know if that person has the same experiences

I: Yes, I recall talking about that  
Hayden, can you tell me what its been like to be involved in the study?

Hayden: Um, okay

I: Has it made you think a little bit more about school or friends or anything?

Hayden: Um, it's made me think a little bit about school

I: And do you think it's had any affect on the friends you've made at school?

Hayden: Um, no

I: Okay and have you thought more about your cleft?

Hayden: A little bit, in no particular way though

I: And for you Helen, how's it been for you?

Helen: I think it's made us feel a bit more aware, cause not much of this type of research is out there for kids his age, you know how transition from primary school to secondary, and for Hayden he started in nursery right up to Year 6 and then transitioning to another totally different world sort of thing, you know how he's able to adapt in that different environment

I: Do you feel that you've had to adapt?

Helen: Um, yeah I had to because it felt like at primary school he was being held, like holding his hands and leading him guiding him and in secondary school he literally has to find his own way you know so there's a big difference so I was a bit nervous about that, you know 'would he?' and 'could he?' and it turns out he can, you know he's always had no issue with making new friends and forming new friends, you know and connecting to other people and I suppose it's always the fear of the unknown when you're comfortable in your own little zone, you know the fear of going into somewhere new starting from when you... is always daunting, but maybe more for me than for him, because he was more looking forward to it than I was (laughs)

I: Yes!  
Hayden, how are you feeling about starting Year 8?

Hayden: Yeah, fine

I: And you Helen?

Helen: Yeah, yeah, okay, thanks

**Grace Online Snapshot Interview 4**

Interviewer: Hi Grace, how are you?

Respondent: I'm fine. How are you?

Interviewer: I'm good, thanks. Did you enjoy your sleepover on the weekend?

Respondent: Yes but some of the girls were arguing with other girls

Interviewer: Oh dear. How many girls altogether?

Respondent: Um 4 but they were arguing with 4 girls at a different sleepover.

Interviewer: Can you chat a little about your operation?

Respondent: Yes

Interviewer: How are you feeling now, since the operation?

Respondent: I feel great, I'm finally doing PE on Friday!

Interviewer: That's good. Your mum said that the op might not have worked completely.

Respondent: Yes, nothing is doing anything but baked beans.

Interviewer: How do you feel about that?

Respondent: I was a little upset.

Interviewer: Do you know what will happen next?

Respondent: No, not sure

Interviewer: How do you feel when you're eating at school?

Respondent: I don't have beans at school so its okay.

Interviewer: Okay (smiley emoji) The last time we spoke you said that you were a little nervous about the op but unsure why.

Do you know why you felt like this?

Respondent: I don't know I guess something just changed in high school.

Interviewer: Can you try tell me what you think changed in high school?

Respondent: I guess I was scared of people finding... Which they did

Interviewer: And you didn't feel this way in primary school?

Respondent: No, cause they all knew.

Interviewer: What do you think they found?

Respondent: The way I looked

Interviewer: And now that people know, how do you feel?

Respondent: I don't kow

Interviewer: Do you feel any different? Or are you still scared?

Respondent: A little scared.

Interviewer: Can you tell me what makes you feel like that?

Respondent: Maybe they make fun of me.

Interviewer: Have you had that happen since your operation?

Respondent: No

Interviewer: How have your friends been, about the operation?

Respondent: They have been good about it.

Interviewer: Does that reassure you?

Respondent: Yeah

Interviewer: And anyone else at school that has helped since you went back?

Respondent: No just my friends.

Interviewer: Are you happy to be back at school?

Respondent: No, not really.

Interviewer: Can you tell me why?

Respondent: No one else really knows like teachers.

Interviewer: Do you want them to know?

Respondent: No, not right now.

Interviewer: Why do you not want them to know?

Respondent: Not sure really.

Interviewer: Okay, and the work at school. How is that going?

Respondent: quite easy for now.

Interviewer: Do you find any subject particularly challenging?

Respondent: Maths sometimes

Interviewer: You've mentioned that before.

Respondent: Yeah!

Interviewer: Go to end soo as I know its late

Respondent: Ok

Interviewer: i just wanted to ask how you were feeling after the anesthetic? I know that you had a poor reaction to this before.

Respondent: yeah, I was okay but when I woke up I felt a bit sick but I just slept and I felt better.

Interviewer: That's good. And the hospital staff were ok?

Respondent: Yeah

Interviewer: Great. Thanks for your time Grace. I hope you have a lovely week and enjoy PE.

Respondent: Thank you, have a good night.

#### **Hayden Online Snapshot Interview 4**

Interviewer: Hi Hayden, how are you?

Respondent: Chilling like a villian

Interviewer: Sounds good. How's your week been?

Respondent: Good

Interviewer: Can you tell me how your how your hospital procedure went?

Respondent: I didn't have the surgery yet.

Interviewer: When are you having it?

Respondent: The doctors are not sure, just waiting for the bone to heal.

Interviewer: Ok. How does your arm feel?

Respondent: It hurts a lot.

Interviewer: Do you think its getting better?

Respondent: no

Interviewer: Do the doctors know its still really sore?

Respondent: yep

Interviewer: But they have to wait?

Respondent: Yeah

Interviewer: Do you take anything for the arm? You have a sling right?

Respondent: Yep, I got a pink sponge like sling.

Interviewer: Does it help?

Respondent: Yes, alot

Interviewer: So, how has it been at school with your arm still sore?

Respondent: Yeah

Interviewer: Has it been ok at school?

Respondent: No, cos it still hurts.

Interviewer: Have you missed any days of school since the new term started?

Respondent: Nope

Interviewer: So, what do you do at school when your arm hurts?

Respondent: I just tense it.

Interviewer: Can you explain what you mean a little more?

Respondent: like when it hurts I make my hand into a fist.

Interviewer: Okay. And how are you finding getting around school?

Respondent: Ok. I walk up and down the stairs.

Interviewer: And are you able to write okay?

Respondent: I write with my right arm, so its fine.

Interviewer: Okay, that's good then.

Respondent: Yeah, very good.

Interviewer: How did you feel about going back to school after Easter?

Respondent: Good

Interviewer: I know that you missed some days last term.

Respondent: Yeah

Interviewer: Have you need any help at school, since you've been back?

Respondent: Because of the injury

Interviewer: Yes.

Respondent: Nah, I don't need help. I'm going strong by myself.

Interviewer: And how's it going with your friends?

Respondent: Good

Interviewer: And your lessons?

Respondent: Good (smiley face emoji)

Interviewer: How about your achievements at school. How are you feeling about your school grades?

Respondent: Good.

Interviewer: Any new challenges?

Respondent: Maths, because I'm getting better at it.

Interviewer: How does that feel?

Respondent: Very proud of myself.

Interviewer: And any difficulties at school since you've been back?

Respondent: No

Interviewer: Good to hear you are proud of yourself.

Respondent: Thank you! I have to go now.

Interviewer: Yes, last question... how are your teachers?

Respondent: They're ok.

Interviewer: Thanks Hayden.

Hayden: Thank you!



## Verbal debrief



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### Verbal debrief for the peer/s

Thank you for taking part in this study. The interviews are part of a year-long study looking at resilience and children starting secondary school. We have been working closely with some children and families who we have followed through their first year of secondary school, to understand more about this stage of transition for children. It is really helpful to us to find out more about children's friendship groups, which is a very important part of the transition to secondary school, and the importance and value of friendships at secondary school – both new friendships and friendships that continue on from junior school.

You were chosen as being a good friend, and this is why we asked you to participate.

There were no right or wrong answers. We were interested in a small group of children who have been friends during the important transition time into secondary school, and why friends are important, especially for children who may look different (visible difference). We really appreciate your time and thank you for your input.

If you have any questions about the interview please do not hesitate to ask me. Alternatively you may wish to contact either of my supervisors. Our contact details are on the debrief form for your parents (Researcher to give debrief form to the children who have taken part and point out the contact details).

*Once again, **many thanks** for taking the time to participate in this research.*

*Katharine*

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