Teaching for Understanding within the Affective Field

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1   Please note that, due to the extensive number of illustrations and tables, they have been classified according to chapters (this note is in accordance with the advice given in BS 4821: 1990 (12.1)).

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Teaching for Understanding within the Affective Field

Part 5

Findings

Part 5
Introduction

The findings chapters are presented in two parts:

- presentation of findings (Chapters 7 - 10)
- discussion of findings (Chapters 11 & 12).

Presentation of Findings

Chapters 7-9 set out the findings in relation to Research Questions 1-3 (RQ 1-3) as they pertain to the key stakeholder groups (c.c. Fig. 6.6). Chapter 10 presents the findings in relation to the Case Studies (c.c. 6.4) but, in order to avoid replication, the discussion of findings is incorporated within the findings drawing from the wider study (c.c. Ch 11 & Ch 12). Within all accounts, pseudonyms are used both in relation to people and institutions. In order to make sense of the statistical data relating to discipline measures, a description is given below of the derivation of the 'unit measure' to which reference is made throughout the chapters.

Exemplifications of the research tools as they pertain, principally, to Stewart (CS1) can be found in App 7 & 10.5. For reasons of economy, only the first four case studies are replicated within the thesis.

The Unit Measure

Statistical data is provided relating to measures of indiscipline - frequency of referrals; frequency of suspensions; and duration (total no. of days) of suspensions. The comparisons which are made pre- and post-intervention cover unequal time periods and periods of time in which the pupil's attendance would have varied (and would also vary from pupil to pupil). In order to control for these variables, the raw data is converted to 'unit measures'. The 'unit measure' is calculated simply by dividing the no. of incidents by the pupil's actual attendance over a specific time period (in measures of a full day). In the reporting of case studies, the 'unit measure' is the figure given in brackets. For example, 3 referrals *(.05)*.

The unit measure can be regarded as the average (mean) number of incidents occasioned by the pupil on any one day on which he/she was in attendance at school or can be expressed in terms of the average period of time over which a single incident occurred (in the case above, an average of 1 incident every 4 weeks).

In relation to 'frequency of suspensions' (number of occasions on which suspended) and 'duration of suspensions' (total number of days of suspension), the formula is adjusted as

follows:

unit measure (frequency of suspensions) = no. of occasions on which suspended (in total) ÷ (days present at school + 1st day of each suspension period)

unit measure (duration of suspensions) = no. of days of suspension (in total) ÷ (days present at school + all days of suspension).

The 'unit measure', however, whilst providing a useful means of comparing data, is difficult to conceptualise therefore, the table below (c.c. Table Int 1) expresses it in simple terms.

Table Int 1: Conversion of 'unit measures' in relation to periods of time

Unit Measure	Average Incidence
1	1 incident per day
0.5	1 incident per 2 days
0.1	1 incident per fortnight
0.05	1 incident per 4 weeks
0.02	1 incident per 10 weeks

Within the context of attendance data, it should be noted that, unauthorised absence (as pertaining to the specific period of time during which the study took place) does not distinguish between absences deriving from exclusion from school and truancy. This was subsequently remedied in the guidance issued to schools (SEED 2003b).

The guidance which was given to schools in relation to National Tests during the period of the study was that most pupils should be able to attain level D at the end of Pr (Primary) 7 and level E at the end of S (Secondary) 2.

The Reporting of Qualitative Data

In the reporting of qualitative data, a code was devised by the author (c.c. Table Int 2) to ensure a consistent and reliable approach throughout.

Table Int 2: Code of Practice in relation to terminology of report

Key	% response
the vast majority	75%+
the majority / most	56% - 74%
around half	45% - 55%
many	26% - 44%
some	15% - 25%
a few / a small minority	< 15%

Discussion of Findings

The principal focus of chapter 11 is to explore the variables which affect pupil outcomes in relation to the aims of the *Sgi* (as explored in previous chapters and reflected within the research aims and questions). Chapter 12 examines more holistically the research findings, exploring the extent, if any, to which the theoretical propositions which formed the basis and shaped the direction of the study (c.c. 1.3.2) have been realised before examining the significance of the study in contributing to knowledge transformation.

Teaching for Understanding within the Affective Field

Part 5

Findings

5.1: Description of Findings

Chapter 7
Research Questions 1 & 2

Within this chapter, the findings relating to research questions 1 & 2 are presented from the perspective of key professionals - Support Groups Leaders (*SgLs*) (7.1) and class teachers who teach pupils within the *Sgi* (7.2) - and from the perspectives of pupils (7.3) and parents (7.4).

7.1 Support Group Leaders' (SgL) Perspective

The findings in relation to *SgLs* are drawn from the questionnaire which was issued to *SgLs* asking them to comment upon the progress of individual pupils within their groups (c.c. App 6.2.1; 7.2.7) and the reports on individual pupil progress, compiled by *SgLs*, which were sent home to parents/guardians after intervention (c.c. App 6.2.8; 7.2.8). There are fifty-three responses to this questionnaire[1] and forty-seven reports to parents/guardians[2].

7.1.1 Research Question 1 (RQ1)

RQ1.1: To what extent have pupils succeeded or failed in developing further, understanding of self (intrapersonal intelligence):- attitudes (thoughts and feelings), beliefs, values and motivations?

The findings[3] indicate that *SgLs* believe that the majority of pupils (58% of responses) had gained insight into their attitudes, beliefs, values and motivations to at least some extent. Pupils are described as reflecting more upon their behaviour, developing a greater general awareness of it and developing insight into their values and motivations:- *The group enabled .. to realise that he doesn't need to behave inappropriately in order to gain friends.*[4]

Factors relating to the degree to which pupils are able to develop self-responsibility, to exercise self-control (c.c. RQ2.1) and are motivated to want to improve upon their behaviour are cited most frequently (a third of responses) by *SgLs* as evidence of the development of *intrapersonal intelligence:- There was a very dramatic change .... "I know sir I get it wrong but I'm trying hard to get it right." And he did.*

Around one fifth of *Sgi* pupils were regarded as having developed insight to a limited extent only. *SgLs* identify impediments to the development of *intrapersonal intelligence* citing (amongst others) the negative effects of peer pressure, inability to accept

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[1]   representing an 100% response rate (cohorts 2001-2002); 77% of the *Sgi* population
[2]   representing a 77% response rate (cohorts 1999a-2002); 68% of the *Sgi* population
[3]   *SgL* Questionnaire, q1 (principally) and parental reports
[4]   all of the quotes in Section 7.1 are derived from the *SgL* Questionnaire and reports to parents (the latter of which are attributed)

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responsibility for behaviour - ... *it's always someone else's fault* - and a conflict between the value systems of the child and the school:- *His behaviour is somewhat dominated by what he regards as 'street cred'.* (c.c. Case Study 2 (CS2))

A few pupils had developed an understanding of the relationship between learning and behaviour:- *.. he now cares about it and is beginning to understand the relationship between behaviour and effective learning ...* and, it is evident that learning difficulties underlie some of the difficulties experienced by *Sgi* pupils:- *.. it is hardly surprising that learning difficulties should be at the root of his frustrations.*

A further *SgL* expresses concern about the lack of response from Psychological Services in respect of one pupil:- *.. was 'jatted'*[5] *in S1 but no action was taken. We find ourselves 'jatting' him again because of our concerns about his lack of social skills and inappropriate behaviour.*

RQ1.2 & 1.3: To what extent have pupils succeeded or failed in developing further, understanding of others (interpersonal intelligence), gaining further insight into their interpersonal relationships?

The majority of responses (60%) from *SgLs*[6] indicate that pupils had succeeded in gaining insight into how their actions affect others, citing the pupils' increasing awareness of and capacity to understand the perspectives of others and to reflect upon their behaviour as it impacts upon others (indicative of a developing moral sense) as evidence of the development of *interpersonal intelligence*.

> *... has developed insight into how his actions affect others and also a greater sense of right and wrong. He shows concern for his Mum's feelings and an understanding of how his behaviour affects the learning of others.*

Whilst a few pupils are noted by their *SgLs* to have gained greater insight into their relationships, for a range of reasons, they were not always able to put this into action within their interpersonal relationships (pertaining to RQ2). Factors which are cited by *SgLs* as affecting pupil outcome in relation to this research question are peer-pressure and self-image - *He likes to be "Jack the lad";* the extent to which the pupil is able to form trusting relationships and to communicate effectively within the group; the maturity of the pupil and capacity to exercise self-control; the pupil's sense of justice/fairness; and the personality/attitude of the child - *"I know my rights" attitude and to hell with others.*

7.1.2 Research Question 2

This research question is primarily concerned with the extent to which pupils are able to

[5] an 'in-house' expression indicating that the child had been referred to the Joint Assessment Team

[6] *SgL* Questionnaire, p4 (principally) and parental reports

put into practice, in a range of contexts, the understanding which they have gained through the development of *intra- and inter-personal intelligence* and the impact which it has had on the development of interpersonal relationships, empathy, self-esteem and confidence and upon dispositions towards learning and school.

RQ2.1: To what extent, if any, have pupils been able to regulate their behaviour with good judgement in a range of contexts?

The findings[7] suggest that *SgLs* consider that the majority of pupils (58%) could be regarded as having attained this outcome to at least some extent, although it should be noted that a quarter of pupils are considered to have demonstrated minimal or no change in this respect. The factors which are cited most frequently by *SgLs* as influencing outcome relate to:

- the degree to which pupils develop a sense of self-responsibility/maturity and are motivated to want to improve upon their behaviour (target-setting in cited by a few *SgLs* as aiding this process):- *He deliberately avoids situations in which he is likely to be in trouble, choosing to ignore others whose behaviour is distracting. (Report to Parents)*
- the degree to which pupils are aware of and understand the nature of their difficulties:- *... sees his behaviour as 'normal' and therefore doesn't need changing. This results in ... not applying anything gained within the group in his school day situation.*
- context related (for example, liking of subject, teacher; capacity to exercise self-control in conflict situations).

Whilst cited infrequently, the extent to which pupils have faith in their capacity to improve and frustration in trying to cast off a reputation are worthy of note:- *I have the impression that ... has lost heart and does not genuinely believe that he can change for the better and the more often he is in trouble, the more this view is confirmed. (Report to Parents)*

It is important to note also that factors relating to the development of self-control, self-responsibility and pupil motivation are cited by *SgLs* (29% of responses) in relation to the development of the pupil's self-esteem and confidence (c.c. RQ2.3)(c.c. *SgL* questionnaire, q2).

RQ2.2: To what extent, if any, have pupils been able to develop further, empathy and interpersonal skills?

The evidence cited for RQ1.2 & 1.3[8] also holds true for RQ2.2 and should be referred to in relation to this research question.

Pupils' developing sense of empathy is expressed mostly through a developing insight

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[7]   *SgL* Questionnaire, q5 & q2 (principally)

[8]   *SgL* Questionnaire, q4 (principally) & parental reports

into (c.c. RQs 1.2 & 1.3) and greater understanding of the effects of their behaviour upon others:

> *Genuinely realises that his behaviour can affect other pupils in their ability to learn in the class. Also that his behaviour influences how the teachers react to him. Most importantly he realises the impact that can be made at home.*

The development of interpersonal skills and better relationships with others are often reflected in the pupil's more positive perceptions of relationships and, in a few instances, examples given of caring behaviour:- *Has shown a great deal of insight and has even attempted to take other pupils 'under her wing' so to speak. She is beginning to form good relationships with teachers.*

Within the context of a question probing pupils' self-esteem and confidence[9], almost half of the responses relate to the quality of communication and bonding within the group (based upon trusting relationships) and the pupils' relationships with others in general, leading to feelings of security and belonging. For example, this *SgL* says of a pupil:-

> *He can verbalise more, is willing to listen and debate; put forward his point of view which he believes is valid; can justify it thus increasing his own worth in his own eyes.*

which exemplifies not only increased self-esteem and confidence but improved communication and thinking skills.

As previously reported, for some pupils, the outcomes in respect of this particular research aim/question had not been achieved:- *... has very poor social skills. He finds it difficult to make friends and to work in any way collaboratively. He can present as loud, selfish, brash and totally self-opinionated.*

RQ2.3: To what extent, if any, has the Sgi impacted upon the development of confidence and self-esteem in pupils?

Excluding the 30% of *Sgi* pupils for whom self-esteem/confidence was not regarded as an issue, the majority of *SgL's* responses[10] indicate that pupils are regarded as having gained in confidence and self-esteem. As has already been identified, the factors cited most frequently relate to:

- the communication and bonding within the group (N =18)
- the effects upon pupils of developing self-control, self-responsibility and increased motivation to succeed (N = 15) which, in some cases, led to more positive learning dispositions (c.c. RQ2.4) and/or more positive affective states - *seems to be much less*

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[9]   *SgL* Questionnaire, q2
[10]   *SgL* Questionnaire, q2 (principally) and parental reports

anxious, agitated and 'hyper' (Report to Parents); *He displays much greater confidence in himself, now takes a pride in his work and treats staff, on the whole, with respect.* (Report to Parents)

In respect of the former, the developing ability to communicate/listen/debate; the opportunity which the group affords to be able to speak freely in a confidential setting and the pupil's general willingness to participate in group discussion were the factors mentioned most frequently:- *He felt that "I could say things and do things there. Nobody would laugh at me"; .. he was taken aback at times to discover that I was prepared to listen to him and agree on some occasions.*

For a few pupils, gains in self-esteem/confidence are tempered by generally moody behaviour or a lack of self-control:- *... she can be as 'flighty' as before and is not always able to act on what she has learned.*

A few pupils are trapped within negative reputations:

> *He sees himself beyond help and hope and that everything in his behavioural make-up is unchangeable. .. is aware that "some teachers really hate me" and that his previous behavioural reputation colours his opinion of himself and his teachers.*

RQ2.4: To what extent, if any, has the Sgi impacted upon the development of more positive dispositions towards learning and towards school?

The majority of *SgL's* responses (57%)[11] indicate that pupils are regarded as having achieved this outcome to at least some extent although, for some pupils (26%) this had not been the case. Many pupils are regarded as having developed more positive attitudes towards school and this is reflected in more positive attitudes towards learning and, in some cases, increased confidence in their ability to learn.

> *He considers that he is more motivated, able to concentrate better and has developed more positive attitudes towards some, but not all, subjects. He feels more confident in his ability to do his work and has developed better relationships with teachers.*

The development of more positive learning dispositions had led to changes in learning related behaviour and improved outcomes for a few pupils:- *He is more likely to persevere when facing difficulties in learning or to ask for help; .. is now doing projects within class and in the pupil support room in his own time ..; He was particularly chuffed that he made an improvement in one of his more difficult subjects.*

For a few pupils, gaining insight into their learning and the purpose/value of education had led to more positive learning dispositions and outcomes:

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[11]   *SgL* Questionnaire, q3 (principally) and parental reports

I think that he realised that his problems lay in learning, related to both his behaviour and inattention in class. He now feels that he's a member of 'our little society' whereas before he felt he was looking in from outside.

. wants to join the army. He is much more aware of how his actions and behaviour could jeopardise that goal.

For those pupils whose attitudes towards school and learning are considered to be negative, a range of factors was forwarded to explain this:- a sense of hopelessness; difficulties in shedding a poor reputation - *He still feels that, because of his previous behaviour, he cannot change some teachers' opinions about him.*; inappropriate learning experiences - *He is basically a very active wee boy who needs more hands on experiences rather than chalk and talk.*; lack of self-control; need for more stable home-circumstances; lack of self-responsibility; peer-group pressure; lack of co-operation with *Sgi* approach; not valuing education as a worthwhile experience and lack of support from the home for learning.

7.1.3 Brief Summary

SgLs identified that, to an extent, the majority of *Sgi* pupils had developed further, the personal intelligences (RQ1). A range of factors, such as the degree to which pupils were motivated to want to improve upon their behaviour was cited in evidence of this.

The majority of pupils, to at least some extent, were considered to have developed in their capacities to regulate their behaviour (RQ2.1); to have developed further, empathy and social skills (RQ2.2); to have gained in self-esteem and confidence (RQ2.3); and to have developed more positive learning dispositions and attitudes towards school (RQ2.4). A range of variables influencing outcome, both positive (such as the quality of relationships within the group) and negative (for example, difficulties in shedding poor reputations) was cited.

7.2 Class Teachers' Perspective

The class teachers' perspective is drawn from the questionnaire which was issued to all class teachers of pupils within the *Sgi* who completed the intervention[12] (c.c. App 6.2.4-5 & 7.2.6). Four hundred and eighty-eight questionnaires were completed in respect of 56 pupils[13], averaging 8.7 responses per pupil, equating to a 62%[14] response rate. Some teachers had very limited contact with *Sgi* pupils and this is reflected, in some cases, in sparse or 'no response' comments in respect of some or all questions. Subsequent

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[12]   it should be noted that some class teachers' responses were lost in the fire/mislaid
[13]   81% of *Sgi* population
[14]   most S2 pupils had contact with fourteen class teachers

adaptations to the questionnaire to address these difficulties[15] had implications for the analysis of data (c.c. 6.3.3.1; App 6.2.4-5). The data for all cohorts (with the exception of 1999b) is presented in relation to the collated responses for each pupil and, in addition, the data for cohort 2002 is reported upon in relation to the lie of teacher responses for the cohort as a whole. The class teachers' perspective is discussed in relation to RQ2 only.

7.2.1 Research Question 2

RQ2.1: To what extent, if any, have pupils been able to regulate their behaviour with good judgement in a range of contexts?

The first two questions of the questionnaire asked class teachers to identify if there had been any changes in the pupil's attitude and behaviour and, more specifically, in relation to the pupil's responses in a situation of conflict (for example, being reprimanded). Figs. 7.1 and 7.2 summarise the % of pupils whose teachers' collated responses could be categorised as principally positive, variable[16] or negative.

Fig. 7.1: Changes observed in pupils' attitudes and behaviour
(Cohorts 1999a, 2000, 2001 & 2002)

Question 1

Very Positive	5.4%
Positive	26.8%
Variable	46.4%
Negative	14.3%
Very Negative	7.1%
Not Problematic	0%

N = 56 (81% of Sgi pop)

% of Total

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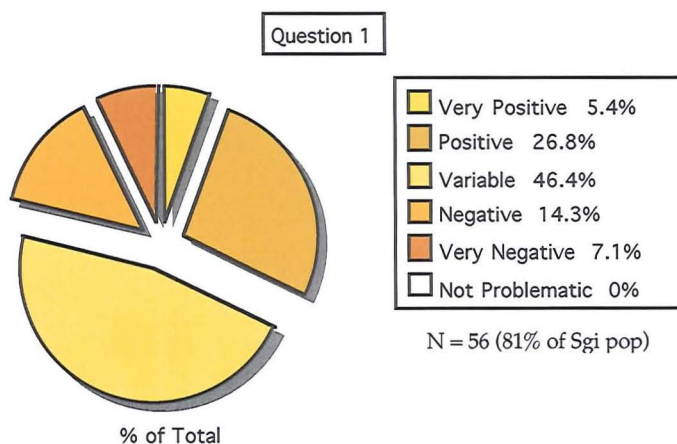
[15]   whilst the initial questionnaire asked teachers to comment only, the subsequent questionnaire asked teachers to tick a category along with a request to expand upon their answers

[16]   the individual pupil responding positively in some contexts but not in others and/or the class teachers noting improvement but qualifying it is one respect or another

Fig. 7.2: Changes observed in pupils' responses to situations of conflict
(Cohorts 1999a, 2000, 2001 & 2002)

Question 2

Very Positive 3.6%
Positive 19.6%
Variable 39.3%
Negative 21.4%
Very Negative 12.5%
Not Problematic 3.6%

N = 56 (81% of Sgi pop)

% of Total
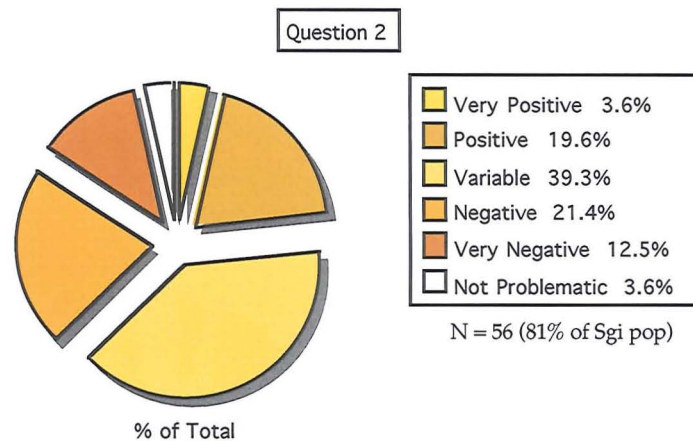
In respect of both criteria - the extent to which the *Sgi* had impacted (or not) on pupils' attitudes and behaviour and their ability to respond appropriately in situations of conflict - the majority of *Sgi* pupils (46% and 39% respectively) lie within the variable category.

In relation to cohort 2001-2002, Figs. 7.3 & 7.4 summarise the % of teachers' responses which fall within identified categories in relation to the total number of questionnaires returned by class teachers and completed for each question (N = 250).

It can be observed that teacher responses in relation to these two questions are very variable, spanning all categories.

Fig. 7.3: Summary of Class Teachers' Responses (cohort 2002):
Change observed in pupils' attitudes and behaviour[17]

Question 1

+ve/with reservations 22.8%
no change/not problematic 13.2%
mid-category 16.8%
no change/problematic 25.6%
deterioration 12.4%
no resp 9.2%

N = 250

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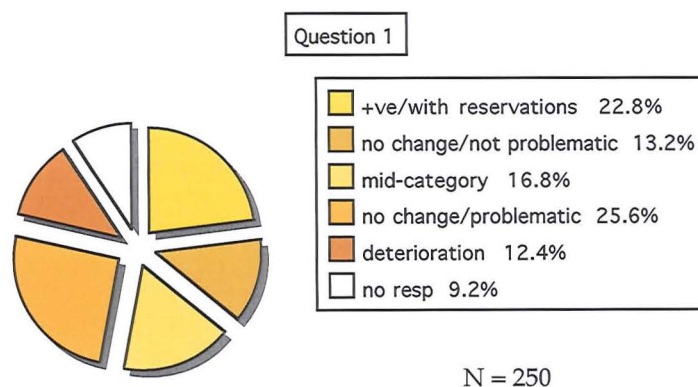
[17]   mid-category incorporated the sub-categories *not certain, it depends* and *sometimes*

Fig. 7.4: Summary of Class Teachers' Responses (cohort 2002):
Change observed in pupils' responses to situations of conflict

Question 2

+ve/with reservations 20%
no change/not problematic 21.6%
mid-category 11.2%
no change/problematic 26.4%
deterioration 12%
no resp. 8.8%

N = 250
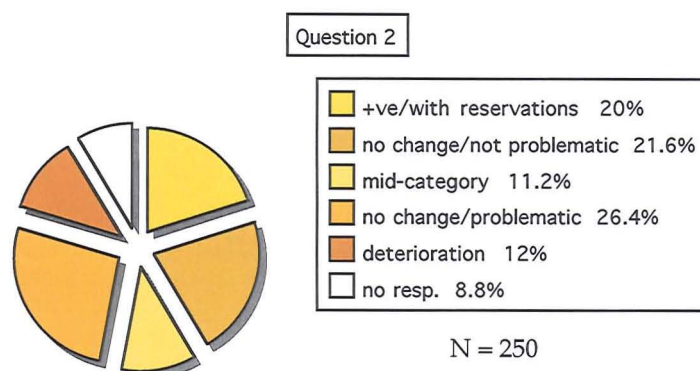
The positive factors cited most frequently by class teachers relate to general improvements in behaviour; to pupils being more settled in class, quieter and calmer; and to pupils being more responsive to the teacher, co-operative, amenable and willing to listen. A reduction in aggressiveness and confrontational behaviour and, in some instances, a deliberate attempt on the part of the pupil to avoid conflict are also mentioned which is indicative of developing self-control and self-responsibility:- *Has tried to control his tendency to answer back and respond in a rude manner.*[18]

Some responses identify that, whilst pupils were demonstrating aspects of improvement, their behaviour could be erratic - *It's like walking on egg shells - .. has good days and bad days* - and the identification by some teachers that the pupil's behaviour had not been problematic in the first instance is an indication that behaviour may be context related. Some pupils (21%) did not achieve these outcomes (Fig. 7.1):- *He continues to be insolent, disruptive, lacking in manners and common decency; That boy should not be in mainstream.*

Whilst only 23% of *Sgi* pupils are described as having positive outcomes in relation to their responses in conflict situations (Fig. 7.2), the proportion of teachers' responses lying within the categories '+ve/with reservations' (20%) and 'no change/not problematic' (22%) for cohort 2002 (Fig. 7.4) suggests a less depressing picture. Positive outcomes are associated with pupils being described as generally less aggressive and confrontational; calmer; more willing to accede, listen to and accept their teacher's point of view; and accept responsibility for their behaviour:- *On the odd occasion on which he is told off in front of the class, he accepts it without argument.* However, for 34% of pupils (Fig. 7.2) this is clearly not the case. Such pupils are described as being resentful, rude, angry, agitated, argumentative, bad-tempered and/or confrontational:- *When ... is reprimanded he becomes more verbally abusive and uncooperative.* A failure to accept responsibility for behaviour, to accept authority and an inability to control moods - *Any situation like this results in a tantrum from ...* - are also considered to be at the root of some children's difficulties.

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[18]   all quotes in respect of Section 7.2 are derived from the Class Teacher Questionnaires

RQ2.2: To what extent, if any, have pupils been able to develop further, empathy and interpersonal skills?

The findings in respect of this Research Aim are drawn principally from q3 & 4 of the Class Teachers' Questionnaire which asks teachers to comment upon changes in the pupils' interactions with peers and with themselves.

- the <u>% of pupils</u> whose teachers' collated responses could be categorised as principally positive, variable or negative for each question:

Fig. 7.5: Change observed in pupils' responses in their interactions with peers (Cohorts 1999a, 2000, 2001 & 2002)

Question 3

Very Positive 0%
Positive 3.6%
Variable 46.4%
Negative 39.3%
Very Negative 8.9%
Not Problematic 1.8%

N = 56 (81% of *Sgi* pop)

% of Total
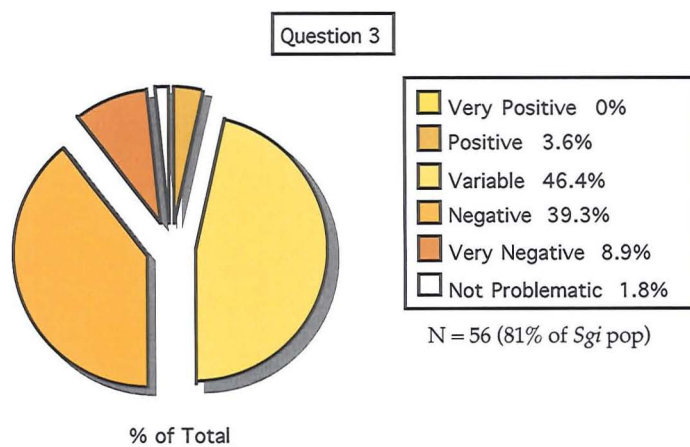
Fig. 7.6: Change observed in pupils' responses in their interactions with class teachers (Cohorts 1999a, 2000, 2001 & 2002)

Question 4

Very Positive 7.1%
Positive 16.1%
Variable 39.3%
Negative 28.6%
Very Negative 7.1%
Not Problematic 1.8%

N = 56 (81% of *Sgi* pop)

% of Total
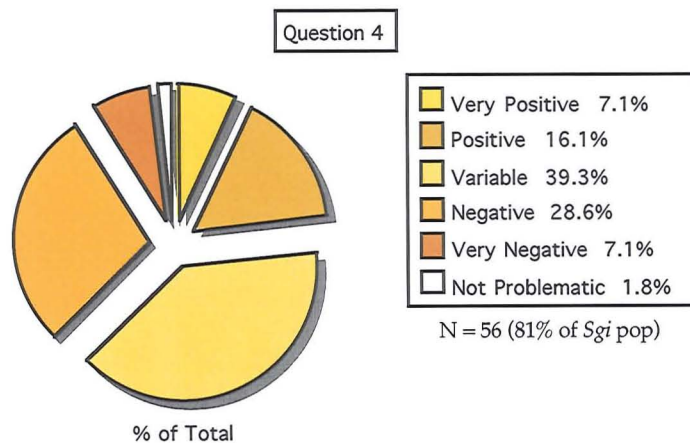
- the <u>% of teachers' responses</u> which fall within identified categories:

Fig. 7.7: Summary of Class Teachers' Responses (cohort 2002):
Change observed in pupils' interactions with peers

Question 3

☐ +ve/with reservations	12.4%
☐ no change/not problematic	23.6%
☐ mid-category	12%
☐ no change/problematic	38.4%
☐ deterioration	4.8%
☐ no resp	8.8%

N = 250
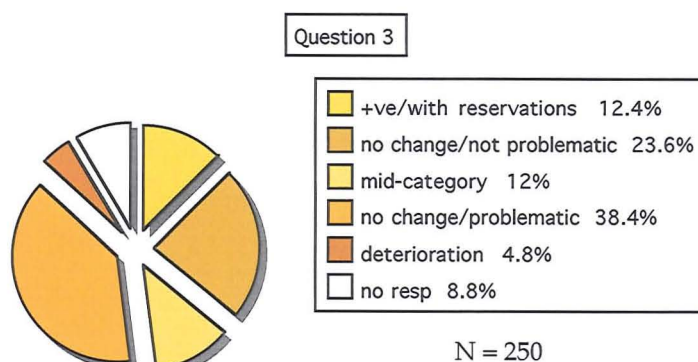
Fig. 7.8: Summary of Class Teachers' Responses (cohort 2002):
Change observed in pupils' interactions with teachers

Question 4

☐ +ve/with reservations	21.6%
☐ no change/not problematic	18.4%
☐ mid-category	12.8%
☐ no change/problematic	26%
☐ deterioration	10.8%
☐ no resp	10.4%

N = 250
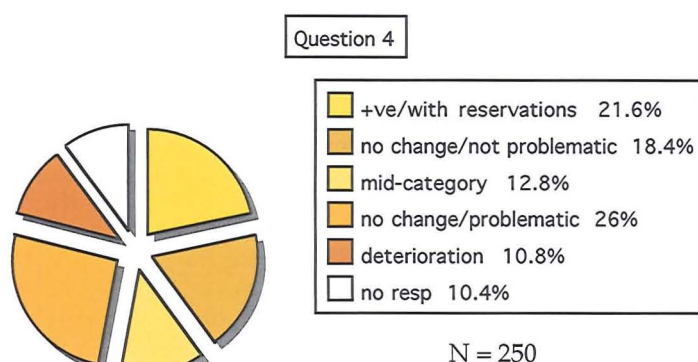
Class teachers are less convinced that the *Sgi* has impacted upon pupils' interpersonal relationships, particularly in respect of their interactions with peers where 'no change/deterioration' is recorded in 43% of all responses in relation to cohort 2002 (c.c. Fig. 7.7). In examining the lie of the distribution for cohort 2002 in relation to relationships with teachers (c.c. Fig. 7.8), it is more evenly distributed than that for peers (and less negatively skewed) (c.c. Fig. 7.7). This more positive pattern is corroborated in examining the responses in relation to individual pupils (c.c. Figs. 7.5 & 7.6).

In respect of *Sgi* pupils' interactions with peers, when improvement has been noted, the most frequent comments relate to the pupil being generally calmer, less aggressive, quieter and more settled in class leading to more peaceful classroom relationships:-
Becoming a lot calmer - not wanting to get involved in conflict. It is identified also that a few pupils had developed better quality relationships with peers; were mixing more with others; were less likely to be a negative influence on others; and were distancing

themselves from others who are likely to be disruptive:- *She seems to be getting on better with the girls - they seem more accepting of her though they can be impatient.*

When staff comment negatively on peer relationships, it tends to be in terms of the pupil being a negative influence on others/a 'ringleader' - *She still has a very disruptive influence on other pupils* - or being influenced by others. Some pupils are described as loud, disruptive and offensive and deliberately provocative - *Winds up the girls which causes major disruption.* A few pupils are described as being withdrawn - *Still a loner but will join in during experiments.*

In respect of *Sgi* pupils' interactions with class teachers, twenty-six responses[19] fall within the category, 'more responsive, listens, reasonable, can be humoured, likes to please, co-operative' - *he listens more, is more likely to ask for help and seeks to improve.*

Whilst some staff state that relationships had always been good with the pupil, other staff comment upon less hostile/aggressive/confrontational and insolent behaviour and more polite/civilised interactions:- *No longer needs to put on a show - usually very reasonable and polite.* And, of the same pupil:- *... used to become aggressive almost as soon as you looked at him. He appears more calm and in control.*

Some responses indicate a general improvement in the attitude of the pupil towards the teacher and of the development of more trusting and open relationships:- *We seem to get on - have a laugh. He comes to talk to me about things.* However, whilst there are signs of improvement in some pupils, it is by no means consistent and some pupils are hampered by an inability to manage their emotions:- *If he is in the right mood, he speaks to me normally without threats or raising his voice.* For some pupils, more positive relationships with staff had not been achieved. This is normally attributed to argumentative, aggressive and confrontational behaviour as has been described in relation to RQ2.1.

RQ2.3: To what extent, if any, has the Sgi impacted upon the development of confidence and self-esteem in pupils?

Issues relating to the general well-being of the child permeate responses to all of the questions. This might suggest that increases in self-esteem/confidence arise from a multiplicity of factors inter-relating with each other.

RQ2.4: The development of more positive dispositions towards learning and towards school

The findings in relation to these outcomes are drawn principally, but not solely, from q5 of the Class Teachers' Questionnaire (cohort 2002) probing changes in the work attitude and attainment of pupils which is one of the modifications to the original questionnaire.

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[19]   relating to 56 pupils (responses can span more than one category)

The majority of collated responses in respect of individual pupils lie within the 'variable' category (c.c. Fig. 7.9). It is of concern that 46% of class teachers' responses for cohort 2002, lie within the categories 'no change/problematic' or ' deterioration' (c.c. Fig. 7.10). However class teachers draw upon observations of the pupils' progress in relation to these criteria in addressing other questions. For example, in analysing the comments of class teachers, the mode category (23 responses)[20] in respect of q1[21] was, 'general improvement in work attitude/effort/motivation/focus'.

- the % of pupils whose teachers' collated responses could be categorised as principally positive, variable or negative:

Fig. 7.9: Change observed in pupils' responses in their work attitude and attainment (Cohorts 1999a, 2000, 2001 & 2002)

Question 5 (cohort 2002)

Very Positive 0%
Positive 10.7%
Variable 67.9%
Negative 7.1%
Very Negative 14.3%
Not Problematic 0%

N = 28 (41% of *Sgi* pop)

% of Total
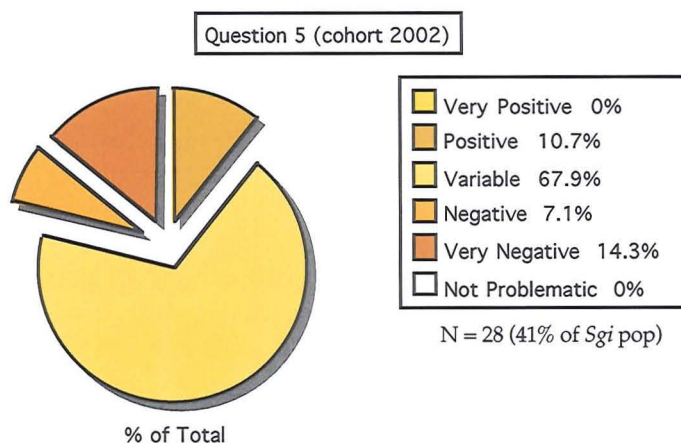
- the % of teachers' responses which which fall within identified categories:

Fig. 7.10: Summary of Class Teachers' Responses (Cohort 2002): Change observed in pupils' work attitude and attainment

Question 5 (Cohort 2002)

+ve/with reservations 23.2%
no change/not problematic 6.8%
mid-category 14.4%
no change/problematic 38.8%
deterioration 7.2%
no resp 9.6%

N = 250

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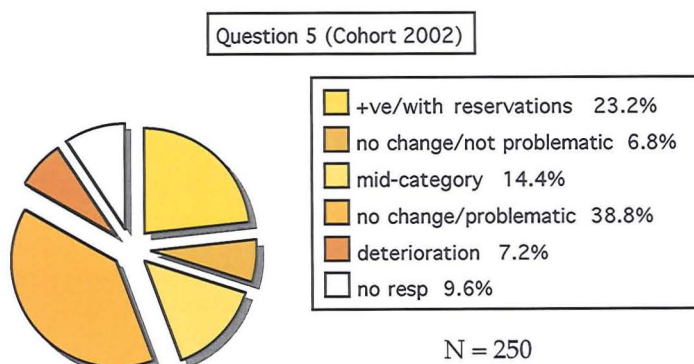
[20]   relating to 56 pupils (responses can span more than one category)
[21]   drawing from all cohorts with the exception of 1999B

Positive outcomes are related generally to improved work attitude/increased motivation towards learning - *He now cares* - and greater engagement in and enjoyment of learning.

> *Tremendous improvement in attitude this term. ... really settled down and was coping well with class work. He really seemed to be trying hard to behave and this was reflected in improved performance.*

The pupil having a clear goal and increased focus are identified by a few class teachers as affecting outcome:- *Much of this (improved effort) stems from the fact that he desperately wants to study Biology next year and not Standard Science.* However, as has already been noted, these outcomes had not been achieved for a substantial proportion of the cohort.

Impediments to success are related to erratic work patterns brought about by an inability to manage emotions effectively; an inability to concentrate and a tendency towards hyperactivity; a lack of motivation/effort; and the need for additional support in learning:- *If you stand over him he will do some work, but (he) puts his pen down as soon as you move away.* For the pupil following, the link between behaviour and learning (or lack of it!) is only too obvious:- *... cannot remain long enough in the class to be taught. He is achieving nothing in German.*

7.2.2 Brief Summary

Class teachers' perceptions were generally more variable and negative than those of SgLs. In respect of all criteria the mode category was 'variable', indicating that individual pupil response was context related and that *Sgi* pupils, as a whole, had manifested a range of outcomes in relation to these indicators.

Whilst a range of positive outcomes was identified - more settled, calmer, a greater capacity to listen to the teacher's perspective, increased motivation in learning - these outcomes were offset by more negative accounts - pupils being described as argumentative, aggressive and confrontational. A range of impediments to success was identified such as an inability to manage emotions and a tendency towards hyperactivity.

7.3 Pupils' Perspective

The findings in relation to pupils have been drawn from three sources:

- the pre- and post-self-assessment questionnaires (c.c. App 4 & 5; App 7.2.2-3) (46 and 43 responses respectively[22])

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[22] representing 82%/83% response rates (respectively) relating to cohorts 2000-2002 and 67%/63% of the *Sgi* population as a whole (69 pupils).

- the post-intervention interviews carried out by *SgLs* (c.c. App 6.2.2 & 7.2.5) (52 interviewees[23])
- the retrospective interviews carried out by the author, one or two years after intervention, on a sample of pupils within the *Sgi* (c.c. App 6.2.3 & 7.2.10) (22 interviewees)[24].

7.3.1 Research Question 1

RQ1.1: To what extent have pupils succeeded or failed in developing further, understanding of self (intrapersonal intelligence): - attitudes (thoughts and feelings), beliefs, values and motivations?

Findings: Self-Assessment

Pre-intervention, only 39% of Support Group pupils who undertook the self-assessment responded positively to the statement - *I understand why I behave in the ways I do.* In comparison, 72% of pupils in the Comparator Group (*Cg*) of pupils not involved in the intervention[25] were able to identify positively with the same statement - a highly significant differential in relation to both positive (*I understand ..*) and negative (*I don't understand ...*) responses (x^2=15, p <.001; x^2=23, p <.001).

Post-intervention, 44% of *Sg* pupils identified that they felt more positively in this respect and 40% registered *no change* to their original views.

Findings: Derived from interviews

The interview questions probing this research question[26] were framed in relation to the pupils' developing awareness and understanding of their behaviour.

For the majority of pupils, the *Sgi* had raised awareness of their behaviour (expressed in terms of thinking more about it) and many pupils had gained insight into the consequences of their behaviour; a greater sense of moral awareness and an awareness of the effects of their behaviour upon others.

We got to the grass roots of why I was behaving the way I was. It taught me respect for people around me. Making a clown of myself - people laughing at me - not with me. Others are trying to learn - they don't need me disrupting them.[27]

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[23] representing 85% response rate relating to cohorts 1999a-2002 (75% of *Sgi* population as a whole)

[24] representing 32% of the *Sgi* population

[25] 110 pupils within cohort 2000-2001 (c.c. Ch 7)

[26] derived principally from q1 & 2 of the pupil interview & q1 of the retrospective interview. Responses relating to q6 (probing the effect of the pupil diary) are explored in Ch 11.

[27] All quotes in section 7.3 are derived from the sources identified in par. 1

Made me think about the way I behave - if it was right or not. (I've) not treated others (the) way (I) would like them to treat me.

These responses are indicative of pupils developing insight into their attitudes, values, beliefs and motivations and a developing sense of responsibility towards themselves and others, facing up to their difficulties.

For some pupils the opportunity to learn from the experiences of the others in the group and to share problems was valued:- *Everybody was in the same situation and the group helped show me how to deal with it.* The use of the Support Group diary had supported this process (c.c. 8.2.1). Some pupils had become more aware of how their feelings affected their behaviour and many pupils had developed a greater awareness of when they needed to remain calm. A pupil with dyslexia articulated the following:-

> *I'm aware of becoming annoyed and frustrated - it's related to the learning difficulties*
> *I have. I need more help than the teacher has time to give. I've become aware that*
> *teachers are trying to meet lots of needs within the class. I'm more patient now - I take*
> *it less personally.*

This relationship between frustrations in learning and behavioural difficulties was raised by several pupils within the study.

Developing understanding took time for some pupils:-

> *It took time. I used to muck around with friends and that - not any more.*
> *(Why? (SgL))*
> *Because I've just come to my senses - this year's important to me to study for my*
> *exams.*

However, for a minority of pupils these outcomes had not been achieved:- *I'm still not clear about why I behave the way I do.*

RQ1.2 & 1.3: To what extent have pupils succeeded or failed in developing further, understanding of others (interpersonal intelligence), gaining further insight into their interpersonal relationships?

Findings: Self-Assessment

Pre-intervention, 56.5% (41%[28]) of *Sg* pupils identified with the statement *I am concerned about how my behaviour affects others* and only 11% (75.5%) identified positively with the statement *I am happy and relaxed about how I behave* - a highly significant differential

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[28]   responses of *Cg* are in brackets.

between the two populations with regard to the latter statement in respect of both positive (*I am happy ...*) and negative (*I am unhappy ...*) responses ((x²=55, p <.001; x²=37, p <.001).

Post-intervention, 21% of *Sg* pupils identified more positively with the statement, *I am happy and relaxed about how I behave* (around half reporting *no change* in perception) and 51% of *Sg* pupils identified more positively with the statement *I am concerned about how my behaviour affects others* (40% reporting *no change*).

Findings: Derived from interviews

Responses to this research question[29] are, on the whole, very positive. 65% of respondents had become more aware of the effects of their behaviour upon the learning of other pupils in the class - *.. can see how I kept people back* - and 54% had developed a greater awareness of the needs of others (whether teachers, pupils or relatives):- *It's not just "me, me, me" but them. Never used to think about it before. I used to think, "never mind everybody else" - it's only me. The Sg has helped me a lot.* These changes were manifested in a range of ways. For some pupils, in modifications of behaviour (c.c. RQ2.1) (although it should be noted that a lack of control impeded the capacity of a few pupils to make changes - *Don't have time to think of others when I get angry*); for others, developing responsibility for behaviour - *Whenever I get into trouble, it's myself.*

The most fundamental change in most *Sg* pupils related to their ability to perceive beyond their own perspectives upon a situation, recognising the perspective(s) of class teachers and the needs of other pupils to learn:- *By talking through things, it has made us see things from the teachers' different view.* There was a recognition from many pupils that teachers are people with feelings and rights - *The teachers are human beings and they're not there to be shouted at and that* - who experience stresses and who are fallible just as pupils are:- *You realise teachers will get stressed when they're dealing with trouble-makers in each class - it's a hard job.* It is clear that some pupils were beginning to develop empathy towards their teachers and to understand the role of the teacher:- *Teachers don't want to go through that every day. They're there to teach.* The growing awareness of the teachers' perspective had led some pupils to reframe their understanding of their relationships with teachers. In some cases, this had resulted in much more positive relationships between pupil and teacher (c.c. RQ2.2).

> *Teachers are different and have different attitudes. I'm more able now to see teachers as individuals. I'm less angry than I used to be at teachers and at school in general. I can talk to some teachers now.*

> *Now I'm behaving, she (the teacher) talks to me and I get to go to the computing room. I'm speaking nicely to her and not shouting at her. She's now being nice to me. I*

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[29] derived principally from q1, 3 & 4 of the pupil interview and q1 of the retrospective interview

wasn't showing respect to her and to other people.

One pupil, however, had not changed his view - he still felt he was being picked on:

> *Because I do stuff bad all the time and they are used to shouting at me, but if somebody else does it, they get away with it. Teachers don't listen to me (some do/some don't) but most don't.*

Some pupils showed concern for the effect of their behaviour upon their families:- *I wasnae even thinking about people at home and that and how they would feel.* However, these gains were not universal:- *I still just think of myself.*

7.3.2 Research Question 2

RQ2.1: To what extent, if any, have pupils been able to regulate their behaviour with good judgement in a range of contexts?

Findings: Self-Assessment

In comparing the responses of the *Cg* to the *Sgi* population (pre-intervention), the differences are of high statistical significance (c.c. Fig. 7.11). Post-intervention (c.c. Fig. 7.12), the factor which was most resistant to change was the pupils' perceptions of their behaviour in school and many *Sgi* pupils felt more negatively in this respect. This may reflect either a sense that pupils feel that their behaviour is deteriorating or a heightened awareness of poor behaviour.

Fig. 7.11: RQ2.1: Comparison between *Sgi* population and Comparator group responses to pre-intervention self-assessments

A	I behave well in school	
B	I can control my temper when under pressure	
C	I can control my behaviour when I want to	
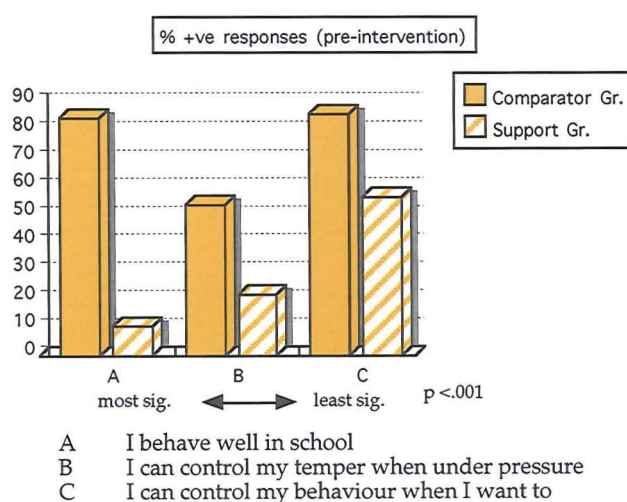
Fig. 7.12: RQ2.1: Perceptions of *Sgi* population post-intervention

Post-Intervention (%s)

Legend:
- +vely
- no change
- -vely

A   I behave well in school
B   I can control my temper when under pressure
C   I can control my behaviour when I want to
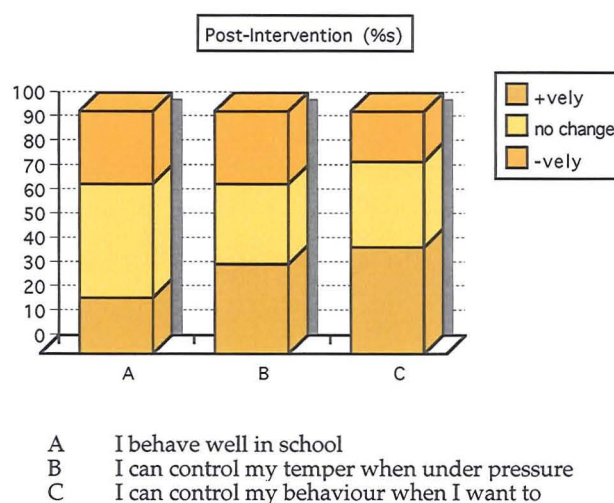
Findings: Derived from Interviews

Responses in interview[30] , however, are more encouraging. When pupils were asked to identify if the *Sgi* had made any difference to their behaviour in school, the vast majority of pupils responded positively to this question, if only to some extent and in some contexts. 15% of pupils in cohort 2002 reported improved behaviour in all classes and a further 78% of pupils in some classes. 80% of pupils in cohorts 1998-2001 reported that they were getting into trouble less often.

71% of interviewees said that they could control their anger better and many pupils identified that they were more able to accept blame when at fault, to think through their behaviour more, regretted losing their temper, could learn from experiences and could apologise genuinely for mistakes made than in the past. When looking more specifically at pupils' perceptions of their abilities to behave in a more controlled way in conflict situations, a range of responses emerged but all are positive to at least some extent:- *I still lose control but after it I felt sorry. And next time I try to get out of situation.*

These largely positive findings are corroborated in the retrospective interviews in which it is found that 67% of pupils in the sample believed that the positive changes had been sustained. Retrospectively, 73% considered that the *Sgi* had led them to be able to think through the consequences of their behaviour; 64% considered that they now had more sense of control over their behaviour and half considered that they were able to behave in a more controlled/less aggressive way.

What is perhaps most significant of all is the degree to which the *Sgi* exceeded pupil expectations. This was the case for 59% of pupils in retrospective interview and only one

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[30]   Derived principally from q5, 8 & 9 of the pupil interview and q2 of the retrospective interview.

pupil reported to having attained less than might have been expected. Many pupils reported that the target-setting process had increased their motivation to succeed, affecting both behaviour (with around half of interviewees reporting that they focussed more upon their behaviour) and learning (to a lesser extent). Parental involvement and the pupil's feelings of self-efficacy were mentioned by a few pupils.

The most significant factors affecting outcome (positively or negatively) were relationships with the teacher (mentioned by 35% of respondents) and the liking for the subject (31%). The influence of other pupils in the class and the type of activity in which the class were engaged were also important factors for some pupils:- *You have good/bad classes, the difference being the teacher allows you a lot of freedom - being allowed to talk, a certain amount of work and not on your back all the time.*

RQ2.2: To what extent, if any, have pupils been able to develop further, empathy and interpersonal skills?

Findings: Self-Assessments

Fig. 7.13 compares the responses of *Sgi* pupils to those of the comparator group, illustrating those factors in which statistically significant differences emerged between the two populations in respect of their interpersonal relationships, pre-intervention.

Fig. 7.13: RQ2.2: Comparison between *Sgi* population and Comparator group responses to pre-intervention self-assessments (Set 1)

A	I get on well with my teachers
B	I try to show respect towards my teachers
C	I am usually friendly towards other pupils
D	I am usually friendly towards my teachers
E	Most of my teachers are friendly towards me
F	Most of my teachers like me
G	Most of my teachers give me a chance
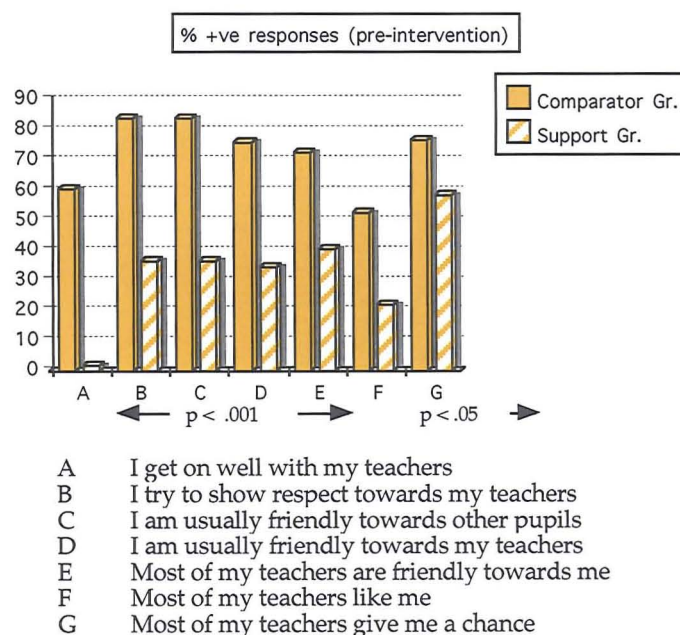
Fig. 7.14 illustrates those aspects in which the differences between the *Sg* and *Cg* were not of statistical significance.

Fig. 7.14: RQ2.2: Comparison between *Sgi* population and Comparator group
responses to pre-intervention self-assessments (Set 2)

H	Most of my teachers show respect towards me
I	I can talk to some of my teachers
J	I make friends easily
K	Most of my teachers care about me
L	Most of my teachers try to be fair
M	I get on well with my friends
N	Other pupils are usually friendly towards me
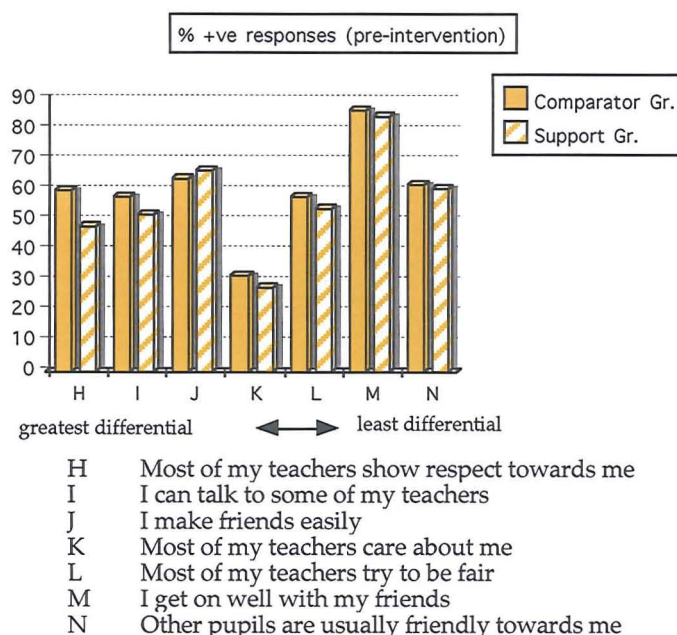
In considering relationships between pupils, it is clear that the significant factor in differentiating the responses of the *Sgi* population and the *Cg* relates to the degree to which pupils are friendly towards other pupils ($x^2=34$, p <.001). There are no significant differences between the *Sg* and *Cg* pupils in other peer-related statements.

The differences in response between *Sg* pupils and the *Cg* in respect of their relationships with their teachers exceed what might reasonably have been expected even given the target population. In particular, the differential in terms of the statements, *I get on well with my teachers*, and, *I am usually friendly towards my teachers* (both in respect of positive ($x^2=46$, p <.001) and negative responses ($x^2=37$, p <.001)). There is little differential between the number of *Sgi* pupils identifying with being friendly towards their teachers and towards other pupils indicating a disposition towards unfriendliness in general (in comparison to the *Cg*) rather than towards teachers in particular.

The respects in which significant differences emerge between the two populations in relation to their relationships with their teachers are the *Sgi* pupils' perceptions of whether their teachers are friendly towards them ($x^2=14$, p <.001 (+ve resp.); $x^2=23$, p <.001 (-ve resp.)); like them or not ($x^2=13$, p <.001 (+ve resp.); $x^2=29$, p <.001 (-ve resp.)); and, to a lesser extent, give them a chance ($x^2=6$, p < .05 (+ve resp.); $x^2= 5$, p < .05 (-ve resp.)). These wide differentials in perception could be partly accounted for when one examines the difference in response between the two groups in relation to whether pupils showed respect or not to their teachers. More than twice as many pupils, proportionally, in the *Cg* claim to show respect to their teachers than pupils within the *Sgi* ($x^2=34$, p <.001 (+ve resp.)). The perceived failure to show respect and general lack of friendliness towards

others (in comparison to other non-*Sg* pupils) are very significant factors in terms of the relationships which *Sgi* pupils formed with others around them.

Figs. 7.15 & 7.16 illustrate the extent to which *Sg* pupils' perceptions differed or remained the same in relation to the same sets of statements, post-intervention.

Fig. 7.15: RQ2.2: Perceptions of *Sgi* population post-intervention (Set 1)

A	I get on well with my teachers
B	I try to show respect towards my teachers
C	I am usually friendly towards other pupils
D	I am usually friendly towards my teachers
E	Most of my teachers are friendly towards me
F	Most of my teachers like me
G	Most of my teachers give me a chance
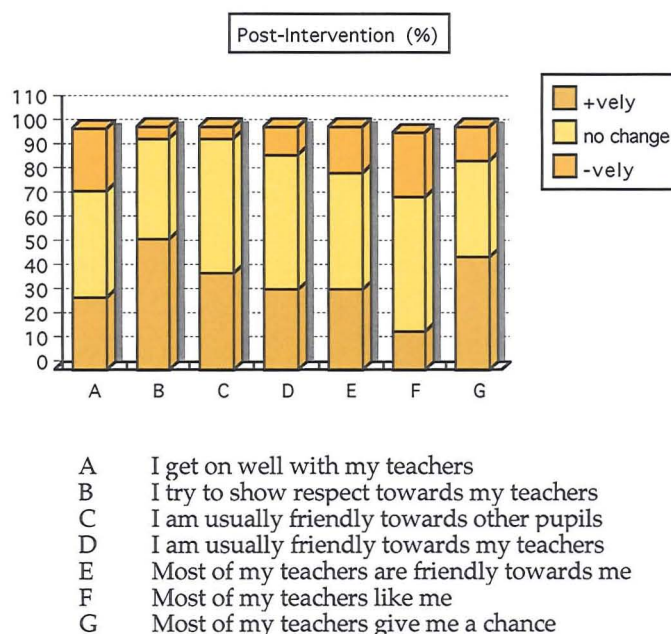
Fig. 7.16: RQ2.2: Perceptions of *Sgi* population post-intervention (Set 2)

H	Most of my teachers show respect towards me
I	I can talk to some of my teachers
J	I make friends easily
K	Most of my teachers care about me
L	Most of my teachers try to be fair
M	I get on well with my friends
N	Other pupils are usually friendly towards me
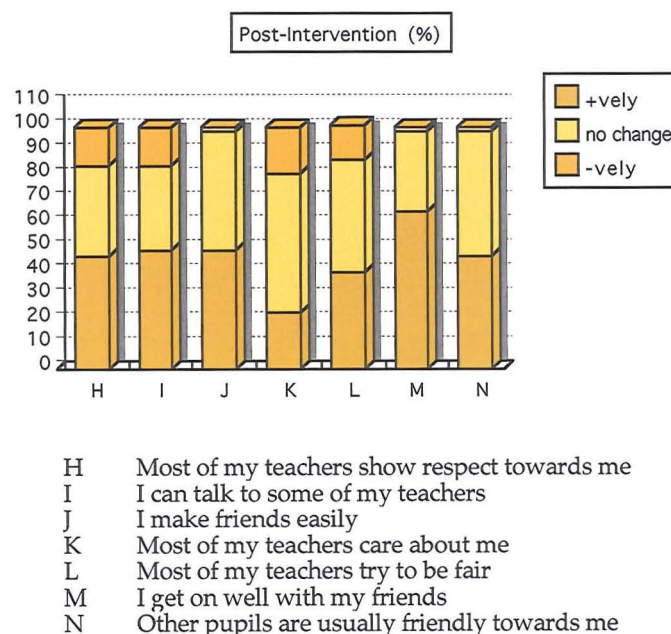
It is evident that, on average, the statements in which the highest differentials arose between the two populations are most resistant to change (c.c. Fig. 7.15) with some more

positive findings emerging in relation to those statements which distinguish the two populations least (with the exception of *most of my teachers care about me*). It is encouraging to note the more positive perceptions of respectful relationships between teachers and pupils.

Findings: Derived from interviews[31]

Of the thirty *Sgi* pupils in cohort 2001-2002[32] who were asked to account for improvements in their behaviour, seventeen (65%) cited improved relationships with their teachers. In retrospective interview[33] , 82% and 68% of pupils respectively in the sample reported that involvement in the *Sgi* had led to more positive relationships being formed with teachers and peers to at least some extent. Responses in respect of relationships with parents were almost evenly split with half of the pupils attributing more positive relationships with parents to the *Sgi* - *Well, it got my Stepdad to appreciate the fact that the Sg helped you to talk instead of being a tube about it - I'm getting on fine with him* - and the other half noting little or no effect (in some cases, stating that relationships with parents had not been problematic).

A wide range of factors was identified in respect of this research question, the most frequently mentioned related to less tension in the home, improved behaviour, an ability to talk more openly, the development of empathy, success in breaking away from a poor reputation and developing the capacity to listen.[34]

RQ2.3: To what extent, if any, has the Sgi impacted upon the development of confidence and self-esteem in pupils?

Findings: Self-Assessments

The differential in response between the *Sg* and *Cg* pupils in relation to the statement, *I feel good about myself most of the time*, is not significant. Post-intervention, 58% of *Sgi* pupils had not changed their perceptions in relation to this issue although 28% considered that they now felt more positively about it than before.

Findings: Derived from Interviews

In responding to the question, 'To what extent, if any, has the Support group made any difference to how you feel about yourself?'[35] , around half of the respondents reported

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[31]   reference should also be made to the findings in relation to RQ1.2 & 1.3 for this research question
[32]   derived from q8 of the pupil interview
[33]   derived from q4 of the retrospective interview
[34]   It should be noted that none of these factors was mentioned on more than 4 occasions in relation to the 22 pupils who formed the sample for this questionnaire.
[35]   q7 of the pupil interview

feeling more confident, 40% had more of a sense of self-control (c.c. RQ2.1); 31% reported feeling happier and more motivated towards learning (c.c. RQ2.4) and 25% felt more able to talk about their difficulties. Negative responses to this question were negligible - one pupil reported feeling more anxious and a further pupil having less of a sense of self-control.

A wide range of other issues was also put forward in relation to this question, many of which impact upon other research questions. For example, improvements in behaviour (RQ2.1); positive impact upon learning (RQ2.4); developing more positive feelings towards school (RQ2.4). A few pupils reported feeling more confident but were not certain why:- *I don't know, but I think it was because we all talked about what was happening.* For many pupils, achieving positive outcomes had been the deciding factor in achieving a greater sense of self-worth.

Fig. 7.17 illustrates the responses of pupils in the retrospective interview[36] in relation to a range of statements relating to their emotional responses to the *Sgi*.

Fig. 7.17: RQ2.3: Perceptions of *Sgi* population post-intervention

A   a sense that someone cared about you
B   that you were listened to
C   anxiety or feelings of anger
D   being able to trust
E   feelings of self worth
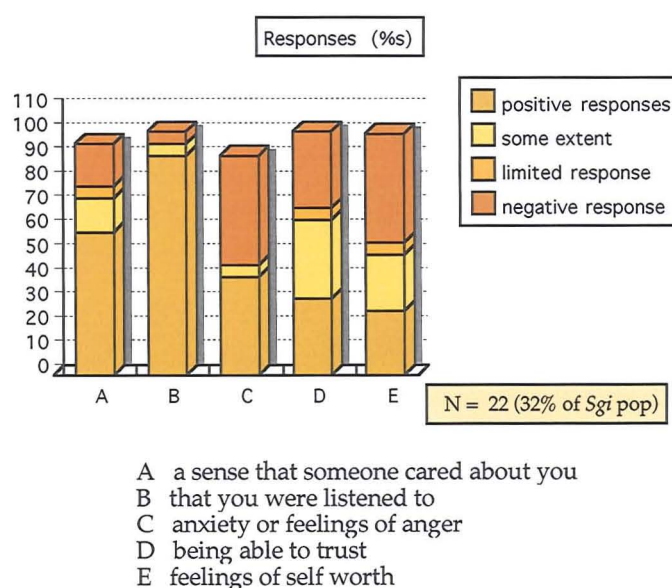
Being listened to was identified by 91% of respondents. However, to what extent was it important to pupils? -*Yes, definitely. That's one of the problems nowadays. If you get listened to, you take in much more of what the person says to you; It was important as I didn't think the teachers listened to you. Now I know they do.* Being cared about was also identified as important by the majority of pupils within the sample (although many pupils did not expand upon this point):- *There was somebody you could talk to. They would hear about the troubles you had and try to sort them out for you; .... in school hardly anyone cares about you ... (SgL) took us in and cared about us ..*

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[36]   q3

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Pupils spoke very highly indeed about the input and positive impact of their *SgLs - He (SgL) made us feel welcome. He wanted us to have a good education and achieve something with our lives* - but the effects had not always been felt in relation to other teachers. Responses in relation to *being able to trust,* were more evenly distributed. Many pupils qualified their responses in terms of those whom they would trust and those whom they wouldn't:- *I trusted you (the author - SgL) a wee bit - ... - you dealt with things in a different way; .. just the teachers who were working with me; Yes, because you (author) told them why they were getting into trouble and they could tell you.*

Responses in relation to feelings of anxiety or anger were polarised with very few pupils adopting a middle ground. For a small number of pupils, feelings of anger or anxiety had never been an issue but, for many pupils, the responses ranged from:- *It (the Sgi) helped me to feel a lot calmer,* through, *Still can be edgy but not as much as before,* to, *I hate people bringing up what I've done - I don't like being confronted with it.*

The responses in respect of self-esteem/self-worth are less positive than those of the interviews carried out on the *Sgi* population at the end of intervention in that more pupils, retrospectively, give a qualified response in relation to this issue. An equal proportion of pupils in both sets of interviews (around half) did not respond positively to this question although, in some cases, this may reflect that this was not an issue for them:- *Didn't like being in the group but in the end it worked out - I feel happier now; Yes - the world doesn't revolve around me - there's more people than just me.* A few pupils had responded by stating that they now had lower self-esteem:

> *.. it made me feel worse because I knew I had a problem.*
> *(SgL) Had you hidden away from that before?*
> *Yes.*

RQ2.4 To what extent, if any, has the Sgi impacted upon the development of more positive dispositions towards learning and school?

Findings: Self-Assessment

In considering the statement (c.c. Fig. 7.18), *I like being at school,* the results are surprising in that, whilst the response in respect of the *Sg* pupils is not unexpected, one might have anticipated a more positive response from the *Cg.* The greatest differential arose in respect of negative responses to this statement whereby 48% of *Sg* pupils claimed that they did not like being at school in comparison to only 8% of the *Cg* ($x^2=32$; p <.001).

In considering the learning related statements, the widest differentials between the *Sg* and *Cg* relate to negative perceptions ranging from *I get frustrated and give up* ($x^2=9$; p < .01) to *I don't think of myself as a good learner* ($x^2=33$; p <.001). It is clear therefore that the significant

factor which distinguishes the *Sg* population from the *Cg* is not self-esteem per-se but feelings of efficacy in relation to learning and perceptions of intelligence (x^2=16; p <.001 (*I don't think* ...)). In general, perceptions related to learning could be more positive for both the *Sg* and *Cg*s.

Fig. 7.18: RQ2.4: Comparison between *Sgi* population and Comparator group responses to pre-intervention self-assessments

A	I consider myself to be a good learner
B	I like being at school
C	I can work at a problem until I get it right
D	I think of myself as being quite intelligent
E	I ask for help when I am stuck
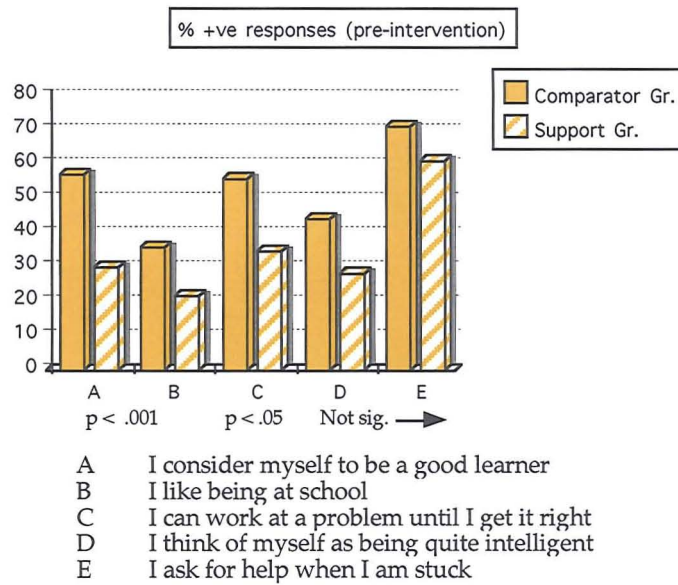
Fig. 7.19: RQ2.4: Perceptions of *Sgi* population post-intervention

A	I consider myself to be a good learner
B	I like being at school
C	I can work at a problem until I get it right
D	I think of myself as being quite intelligent
E	I ask for help when I am stuck
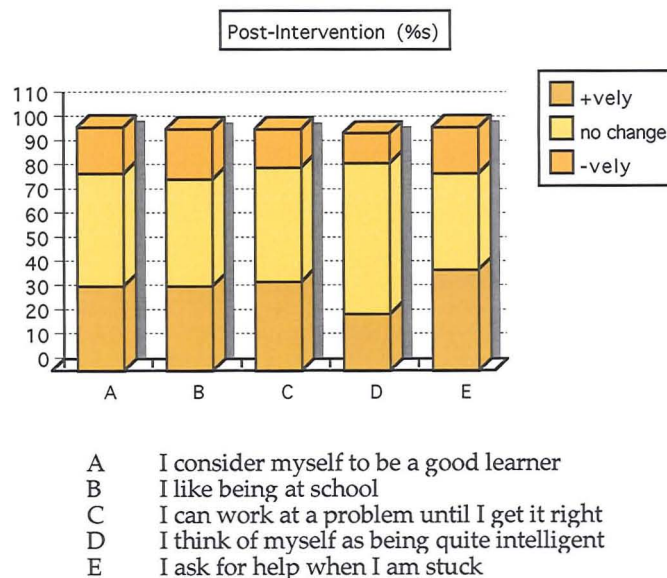
Post-intervention (c.c. Fig. 7.19), whilst the majority of learning related/attitude towards school responses lie within the 'no change' category, there is, in general, a movement

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towards more positive perceptions. The statement, *I think of myself as being quite intelligent,* is most resistant to change.

Findings: Derived from interviews

These findings are drawn principally from q5 of the retrospective interview but also from responses to other interview questions.

The findings in relation to the retrospective interviews would indicate that, for around half of those pupils in the sample, there had been improvements (even, if qualified) in terms of:

- the pupils' ability to stay on task/concentrate and cut out distractions:- .. *it's hard to cut someone off - to say "shut up" - but I don't encourage distractions now; I can concentrate and get on with my work and get my 'heed' down - it just depends upon the mood I'm in but.*

- to learn new information or skills:- *You need to be focussed on one thing and one thing only.*

- ability to listen and follow instructions:

- motivation to want to learn:- *Yes - I like learning now - it's good. I've got to thank the teachers for helping me, for telling me, "You can do this."*

The latter, for some pupils, was related to feelings towards the subject and/or teacher:- *Yes and no - it depends upon your relationship with the teacher.*

For some pupils the *Sgi* had given them the necessary push in the right direction:- *I wanted to learn more so that I could make something of my life; ... I decided I was going to knuckle under and start working.*

Other pupils gave an equivocal response:

> *Never really had a problem. If I wanted to, I could, and if I didn't want to, I wouldnae.*

> *I paid attention a lot more to teachers and listening to teachers more but I wasn't involved in what they wanted me to do - I wanted to do my own thing. When there are subjects I'm not up to, I don't co-operate with the teacher at all.*

Some pupils (13% - 19%) reported no change in these respects.

7.3.3 Brief Summary

On a wide range of indicators, statistically significant differentials emerged between the *Sgi* and *Cg* populations and some of these indicators were more resistant to change than others. The majority of pupils, to varying degrees, considered that involvement in the *Sgi* had led to a range of positive outcomes although these outcomes were not achieved for all pupils and were, to an extent, context specific. Amongst them were:

- heightened awareness of behaviour and its consequences (RQ1);
- a greater understanding of the perspectives of others and the role of the classroom teacher (RQ1.2-3; RQ2.2);
- improvements in behaviour (if only to an extent and within some contexts) (RQ2.1), related to improved relationships with classroom teachers (RQ2.2);
- some improvements in relationships between *Sgi* pupils and their peers and family members (RQ2.2);
- a range of outcomes related to the development of confidence and self-esteem and identification with 'being listened to' and 'cared about' (RQ2.3);
- and, for around half of *Sgi* pupils, the development of more positive learning dispositions and attitudes towards school, such as the capacity to concentrate and cut out distractions (RQ2.4).

The findings from pupils largely corroborate those of SgLs and are more positive than those of classroom teachers.

7.4 Parents' Perspective

The findings in respect of parents are drawn from the responses to the post-intervention questionnaire (c.c. App 6.2.7 & 7.2.9), reply slips to the report on pupil progress within the *Sgi* and any other relevant data. Twenty-three parents responded to the parental questionnaire[37].

7.4.1 Research Question 1

To what extent have pupils succeeded or failed in developing further,:

- *intrapersonal intelligence*
- *interpersonal intelligence*
- *insight into interpersonal relationships?*

The data is drawn principally from q3 of the parental questionnaire.

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[37] a 44% response rate, representing one third of the *Sgi* population

The majority (75%) of respondents considered that involvement in the *Sgi* had led to their children developing understanding of their behaviour and how it affects others. Some parents responded in terms of their children developing more awareness of and reflecting more upon their behaviour (developing insight into its underlying causes), leading to greater moral awareness:- *It made him think about his behaviour and when and why he was getting into bother.*

However, whilst some pupils had an awareness of the impact upon their behaviour upon others, it did not necessarily lead to more positive outcomes (c.c. *RQ2.1*), highlighting the importance of motivation to want to improve:- *Knows that his behaviour stops others from learning. I think there are times when he and others enjoy the fact that he is the <u>class</u> clown.*

Some parents commented upon their children's understanding of their behaviour in terms of outcomes such as their growing ability to think through situations and to think through the consequences of their misbehaviour - *He used to act first, think later instead of the other way round* - although one parent noted that this was an area still requiring work:- *Actions and consequences is an area that I feel he has most to learn.*

Parental responses indicate that some pupils were developing greater insight into their teachers' motivations and actions:- *I think that it (the Sgi) has helped ... to understand teachers and the teachers' reasons for doing what they do; ... has realised that everyone wasn't against him and that, if he tries hard, the teachers will try to help him.*

Not all outcomes were positive - *Doesn't know the reasons for (his) poor behaviour.*

Parents highlight factors which acted as impediments to change. For example, two parents expressed concern that some teachers were not supportive towards their children:- *While we agree he is immature in his attitude towards school work, he feels some teachers are not helpful towards what he is trying to achieve.* Intransigent behaviour was identified by a further two parents:- *.. never listens to what he is told and is very frustrating at times.* The relationship between learning difficulties and misbehaviour was raised by one parent:- *Only behaving badly because he couldn't do the work.*

7.4.2 Research Question 2

To what extent, if any, have pupils been able to demonstrate 'understanding performances' in relation to:

- *their capacities to regulate their behaviour with good judgement in a range of*

contexts

- *the development of empathy and interpersonal skills*
- *the development of confidence and self-esteem*
- *the development of more positive dispositions towards learning and school?*

The findings in respect of this question are drawn principally from q1, q2 and q4 of the parental questionnaire.

Findings

Parental responses to their child's progress in terms of improvements in behaviour and learning were largely positive (although most comments are framed in relation to behaviour rather than learning) - 65% of parents who responded considered that improvements had been in evidence.

The responses vary from the highly positive:-

> *We are delighted with the progress .. has made. ... has seen that the harder he tries, the more positive encouragement he gets*

> *..'s improved behaviour has meant far less periods of exclusion which in turn means more education and hopefully improved learning.*

to those which are not certain about outcome.

> *I'm not certain - he could still do better - he needs a shove. However, generally moving in the right direction. Family had a long talk with him.*

The vast majority (83%) of respondents identified that the *Sgi* had helped their children to be more focussed upon what they needed to do to improve upon their behaviour -

> *It kicked a bit of the carry on in him. It was showing off - the group helped and I spoke to him about it. The target card was very positive - let me see at the end of each day how he'd been in class.*

- and, quite simply, *The best thing for kids.*

A few parents made reference to better relationships being formed between their children and *SgLs* but this did not always extend to improved relationships with other staff:-
Although he is now getting on very well with his Guidance teacher (SgL), he doesn't say much about his other teachers.

A few respondents highlighted the importance of the opportunity for their children to talk and share their problems with others:- *It gives .. a sense of belonging as he used to think he was the only one to do silly things and get into trouble; At school he finds it hard to speak up in front of others - it built up his confidence to speak up.*

Perhaps the greatest testimonial came from an unsolicited letter from a parent. (c.c. App 8.3)

The majority of parent respondents (65%) considered that their children had developed a more positive attitude towards school and, indeed, only one parent had noted no improvement in this respect. A wide range of reasons was given to support the parents' views. These reasons reflect many of the previous findings - *Says he's staying on - before he said he was leaving. A wee bit more enthusiastic - if, with reservations, At times ... seems to enjoy school and then something else happens and he slips back to his old ways.*

A few parents expressed the view that, without intervention, the prognosis for their children would not have held much promise:- *Without it things would have gotten (sic) much worse. So in that light, I think it was most worthwhile.*

7.4.3 Brief Summary

On the whole, parental responses were very positive. In particular, they noted the warm relationships formed between their children and the SgL (RQ2.2) and the development of more positive attitudes towards school (RQ2.4). The majority of parents considered that the *Sgi* had helped their children to focus upon what they needed to do to improve upon their behaviour. Parents tended to comment more upon behaviour-related rather than learning-related outcomes. A range of impediments to progress was identified such as the negative attitudes held by some teachers towards their children.

Chapter 8

Research Question 3

Introduction to Chapters 8 & 9

Within this chapter and the subsequent chapter, the data were analysed more holistically, drawing from the full range of stakeholder accounts (RQ3i), in order to address research question 3 - *What are the strengths and weaknesses of the Sgi approach?*, exploring the variables which impact upon pupil outcome (RQ3ii) and the impact of the *Sgi* upon pupils over time (RQ3iii). The chapter examines the extent to which the materials and methodologies adopted within the *Sgi* promote the rationale and aims of the *Sgi* (RQ3.1-3.3); and issues relating to management of the initiative and staff development (RQ3.5). It also examines pupil progress holistically, subsuming RQ1 & 2, drawing upon both qualitative and quantitative data (RQ3.4). Qualitative data is presented in chapter 8 and quantitative data, examining progress in relation to the benchmark measures outlined in chapter 5, is presented in chapter 9. The chapter also begins tentatively to address RQ4 (although this is the principal focus of Ch 12).

Chapter 8 is divided into two sections - 8.1 presents principally the professional perspective, drawing from a range of stakeholders (c.c. Fig. 6.2), and 8.2 presents the perspective of *Sgi* pupils and their parents.

8.1 The Professional Perspective

8.1.1 Support Group Leaders' (SgL) Perspective

The findings in relation to *SgLs* are drawn from:

- the group interview conducted by the independent interviewer[1] in May/June, 2002, based upon a schedule devised by the author[2] (c.c. 8.1.1.1; App 8.2) (c.c. 6.4)
- an interview[3] held with a *SgL* who was unable to participate in the final evaluation of the *Sgi* (c.c. 8.1.1.2)
- the responses given by *SgLs* who were interviewed in relation to the individual case studies[4] (c.c. 8.1.1.3) (c.c. 6.4)
- the mid-intervention evaluation (c.c. 8.1.1.4; App 8.1), held in June 2001[5]
- responses to Q6 of the *SgL*'s Questionnaire (c.c. 8.1.1.5; App 7.2.7).

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[1] Stuart Hall, SCRE
[2] six *SgLs* present (excluding the author and the *SgL* upon whom the schedule was piloted)
[3] conducted by the author
[4] five (of eight, excluding the author)
[5] five (of five) *SgLs* present (including the author)

8.1.1.1: SgL Group Interview

Initial Responses to the Sgi (RQ3.1-3.4)

SgLs had become aware of the *Sgi* through a variety of means, formally (for example, whole staff presentation) and informally, and had become involved through invitation by the author or by volunteering. *SgLs* had a range of reasons for wishing to become involved in the initiative. For some, the opportunity it provided for them to form stronger relationships with pupils experiencing difficulty with school life and to gain personal/professional satisfaction from this process - extending beyond 'subject'. For others, it fitted in with their own interests/priorities. There was also a recognition that early intervention was important if a difference were to be made for these pupils. *SgLs* were concerned that they might not be able to do justice to the programme and it was felt that one period a week might not be sufficient to sustain momentum with pupils involved in the *Sgi*.

SgLs considered, that, on the whole, pupils had responded positively to the groups although some pupils were wary initially and others more open. Pupils were generally regarded as being co-operative, contributing well to discussion, taking account of the views of others and making a genuine effort to improve. Being involved in working with these pupils had challenged the views that some of the *SgLs* had held of them (*Not as awful as you first thought!*) and it was felt that pupils were often more vulnerable than first impressions might indicate. Some pupils had helped to stabilise and support the work of the group.

SgLs perceived parents as being generally very supportive of their children being involved within the groups - they were often desperate for support and hearing positive comments about their child's progress could be helpful to them. There had been no negative feedback from other pupils about the participation of pupils within groups. Some pupils had asked to join groups and pupils were generally happy to see classmates going to the groups - perhaps it led to a less disrupted class. Staff responses to the *Sgi* tended to be quite polarised. It was felt by *SgLs* that a fair proportion of the staff (perhaps 40%) had negative attitudes towards pupils with SEBD and were cynical about approaches to help them. Other staff were more positive in their views. It was considered that staff were insufficiently informed about the work of the groups - *Get them involved and attitudes will change positively.*

Was "Teaching for Understanding" actually happening? (RQ3.1-3.4)

It was generally felt by *SgLs* that the activities undertaken within the groups were promoting understanding in pupils of themselves and their relationships with others although, in the case of some pupils, it did not extend beyond helping them to understand

the perspective of the classroom teacher. Yet, there was evidence of pupil behaviour changing, of more maturity and of fewer complaints being made about pupils.

It was less clear that pupils had developed thinking skills beyond a surface level - *it may just have armed them to stop and think.* A lack of maturity was cited as an explanation for this phenomenon.

It was also hard to ascertain whether pupils had developed emotional intelligence. Many pupils had difficulty in expressing their feelings and were not used to exploring their emotions.

The effectiveness/value/worth of approaches adopted within the Sgi (RQ3.1-3.3)

SgLs considered that the response of pupils to target-setting varied considerably. It was felt that some pupils lacked the organisational skills to be able to co-operate with the processes necessary for the target-booklet to operate effectively.

The use of the pupil diary was regarded as more problematic. Whilst the approach was considered to be of value, it was very time-consuming and worked best when the SgL helped to talk the pupil through the questions before the pupil attempted to fill it in. Some pupils were also reluctant to talk about their feelings and reactions to events.

The materials were generally considered to be good (although the physical organisation of them could be improved) and many pupils loved taking part in the discussions. It was generally felt better to devote the time that was needed to exploring the activities in depth rather than 'covering ground' even if it meant that not all of the activities were attempted. There was a need to broaden the range of activities covered. One of the activities was regarded as too difficult for pupils.

The quality of support for SgLs (RQ3.5)

There had been a high level of support for SgLs through the range of processes described in Ch 5 (c.c. 5.1.3). SgLs would have welcomed more opportunity to share ideas on the use of materials and on trouble-shooting procedures with perhaps less emphasis on philosophical ideology. Some concerns were raised about the operation and demands of the target-setting process. Staff would also have welcomed less administration in the operation of the approach, some of which was necessitated through the need to gather robust evidence.

Outcomes for pupils and the reasons forwarded for these outcomes (RQ3.4; RQ3ii)

There was full agreement that pupils involved in the Sgi had, in general, been able to demonstrate the development of *intra- and inter-personal intelligence;* empathy and

interpersonal skills *(to some extent)*; and the ability to reflect upon behaviour and exercise self-control *(majority did, drop in incident reports)*. SgLs were less certain that pupils had developed more positive perceptions of themselves as learners or more positive attitudes towards learning and school although all had worked with at least one pupil who had demonstrated these things. It was generally felt that evidence in respect of improvement in attainment was not yet forthcoming - there were *some green-shoots* - but some improvements in application had been noted in pupils.

It was considered that these outcomes were largely the result of the opportunities which the *Sgi* had provided for developing relationships, for bonding with pupils - for the pupil and *SgL* to *see each other in a rounded way*. The *Sgi* created time for these pupils and provided an opportunity for them to be listened to. It was felt that the *Sgi* could stand alone and make a difference for pupils although other interventions could also help. *Home support was considered to be crucial* as the home was considered to be the source of attitudes and values. A positive relationship with the school on the part of parents was considered to be very important.

Looking at the Sgi as a whole (RQ3; RQ4)

The *Sgi* was considered to be of benefit to the majority of pupils whilst recognising that there are some pupils who find it hard to trust, who have difficulty in expressing emotions and who therefore, it was felt, can't be reached. The *Sgi* was perceived as having a positive impact upon the school as a whole and the proposed expansion of a range of group work in S1 was considered to be advantageous. It was suggested that groups should meet more frequently and run over a longer period of time if they were to be more effective. This, however, would have implications for resources and co-ordination of the groups.

Finally, in relation to national imperatives:- Sits *very well with the new agenda - part of the social inclusion agenda*. It was recommended that the *Sgi* should be one of a raft of approaches to meet the needs of *all pupils*, including one-to-one counselling.

8.1.1.2: Response of individual Sg Leader to interview (RQ3i)

The *SgL* reported very favourably upon both his own involvement in the *Sgi* and the progress of the five pupils who had been in his group (session 2000-2001):- *It was very satisfying personally - I was able to get closer to the students.* He cited the insight which he had gained into the pupils and them into him - *on a day to day basis they see me differently* - as important factors in the success of the group. His own initial reaction to the initiative had been cautious - *I wasn't certain that it would be worthwhile - just more new things to cope with.* He was disappointed at the negative reaction to the *Sgi* of some Pastoral Care teachers - *I suppose people don't like change.*

The quality of materials and the initial support through team-teaching were valued as were the regular meetings with other SgLs:- *The meetings were interesting and were a good way of knowing what other members of staff thought and of sharing problems.*

The principal outcome for him had been that it had been a positive experience for the pupils themselves. He noted that their views of their teachers had changed dramatically over the course of the intervention:- *I was quite chuffed with them.*

8.1.1.3: Examining the individual responses of SgLs (Case Studies)
The extent to which the Sgi was of benefit or not to pupils and why (RQ3.1-3.5)

It was generally felt that the *Sgi* was of benefit to pupils, with qualifications expressed in respect of some individual pupils. The benefits related to the opportunity which the group afforded to work with pupils outwith the normal classroom setting - *relaxed environs .. means teacher out from behind desk.;* to give both teachers and pupil insight into different perspectives, providing mutual support in problem-solving; to enable pupils to reflect upon aspects of their lives - *time that is theirs;* and to enable pupils to feel special and to have positive interactions with their *SgL.*

Certain conditions were considered to underpin success:- the need for pupils to be motivated to want to change - to want to be there; to have some degree of maturity and be able to co-operate within the group; to trust the *SgL* and have a willingness and openness to discuss emotions and matters of importance to the individual pupil; positive group dynamics founded on good relationships; and matters relating to the setting in which the group takes place and optimal size of the group (small is better). It was felt that some pupils (a minority) perceived the groups as a way of getting out of class and that some found discussing their emotions very difficult. Once again, the importance of a co-operative home was cited - *means we are pulling in the same direction.*

It was noted by one *SgL* that some pupils were beyond the type of help which the *Sgi* could provide - those with deep seated psychological problems may need more in-depth support. The Behaviour Support Teacher, however, noted:- *I see the benefit to pupils in later years who stop coming to see me.*

Any suggested changes to the Sgi or other issues to be raised (RQ3.1-3.3; 3.5)

Some of the individual findings, as would be expected, mirror findings of the group discussion. In summary,

- keep group size small (maximum 4)
- increase frequency of group meetings (*need two periods to get to grips more fully*)
- begin earlier in the year before problems become too entrenched
- extend length of provision to the end of the year

- modify some of the language of some of the activities
- balance needs of *Sgi* with other Pastoral Care/teaching commitments
- examine operation of target-setting
- extend programme into other year groups (the difficulty of convincing teachers to become involved was acknowledged)
- colour code materials to make them easier to manage
- make target-cards/booklets more user-friendly
- disseminate success to the rest of the school.

As can be seen from the above, the comments are generally very positive and constructive and this comment from one of the *SgLs* summed up the general feeling - *Overall, a very positive thing for me to be involved in.*

8.1.1.4: Responses to the mid-intervention evaluation of the Sgi by SgLs (June, 2001)(RQ3.1-3.5)

This evaluation was conducted as a brainstorming exercise (followed by discussion) to identify the key strengths and development needs of the *Sgi* (c.c. App 8.1). It was generally very positive with some issues being identified as requiring attention.

One of the issues to arise was the discontinuities which arose when the staffing arrangements for the Behaviour Support Base broke down, leaving the Behaviour Support teacher with the task of leading a support group whilst simultaneously supervising pupils within the Base.

Post 2001 (Taking forward Development Needs arising from Interim Evaluation)

Subsequent to the evaluation, the problem relating to staffing for the Behaviour Support Base was brought to the attention of the Head Teacher and an undertaking was made that every effort would be made to ensure continuity of staffing. In addition, the group was subsequently held in a location other than the Behaviour Support room.

Over the course of the following session (2001-2002), opportunities were created for *SgLs* to meet together more regularly, to examine the materials in depth and to share good practice. Several amendments and additions were created to the materials and a bank of potential target comments was established. An 'Area of Concern' form was introduced as a means of *SgLs* alerting the Project Leader (the author) to any difficulties encountered in respect of individual pupils or processes and a new method of monitoring pupils who lacked the organisational skills (or who did not co-operate) with target-setting was piloted.

8.1.1.5: Responses to the SgL Questionnaire (RQ3ii)

The findings are drawn from q6 of the *SgLs'* [6] questionnaire which invites *SgLs* to put forward any other factors which may account for pupil outcome.

Factors relating to the home background, the degree of support from the home in general and the operation of the *Sgi* itself were mentioned in 40% of responses. A wide range of family circumstances was identified such as a Child Protection Case, foster care and illness within the family:- *... is screaming for love, affection and understanding. .. I believe if ... had some stability, love and attention in his life, this would go a long way to supporting him to reflect upon and change his behaviour.*

Impediments to success were identified in respect of 34% of responses. These ranged from the importance of 'street cred' and immaturity, to a series of factors such as truancy, poor attendance, anti-authoritarian attitude, manipulative behaviour, general lack of responsiveness, lack of self-control, failure to maintain improvements gained, distrust, negative attitudes to staff towards pupils, lack of application of what had been learned to outside school situations, misbehaviour deflecting attention away from other problems and a lack of response due to the personal nature of the intervention:- *Really did not like this type of monitoring. He found the Support Group discussions sometimes too probing, too personal.*

Emotional/motivational factors were mentioned in respect of 28% of responses, some of which were expressed in terms of the needs of the child. For example, several mentioned the child's positive response to praise/encouragement/rewards and the need for love, affection and understanding/positive re-inforcement/praise:- *... thrives on praise. Given continuously, this is rewarded through .. gaining more self-esteem and confidence, resulting in .. exploring avenues he never thought possible including "Ah'm beginning to like school now".*

Other factors relate to other interventions in which the child participated or from which the pupil might have benefited; learning difficulties/attainment related, target-setting, attitudes towards learning/school, growing maturity, positive responses within the group and curriculum related.

8.1.2 The Perspective of the Project Leader (a Personal Account)

This account focusses upon:

- the potential conflict in role (as Depute) between discipline and welfare
- partnerships with parents

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[6]   53 responses (100% response rate representing 77% of *Sgi* population) (cohorts 2001 & 2002)

- the process of developing the *Sgi* within the school. (RQ3.5)

The potential conflict in role between discipline and welfare

It might be felt by senior managers (who ultimately are the final arbiters in discipline matters within the school context) that involvement in leading groups might compromise their capacity to be perceived as effective in relation to their discipline role and may act as an impediment to forming trusting relationships with pupils. Whilst not minimising these difficulties and whilst acknowledging that this finding might be individual to the author, it is evident from pupil and parent accounts that the bringing together of these two roles was ultimately successful and, indeed, beneficial to pupils. The capacity to draw upon what pupils have learned within their groups when dealing with discipline matters facilitates the transfer of learning.

Trust was established with pupils through maintaining pupil confidentiality and ensuring that group work was kept apart from disciplining. Only issues which were raised by the pupil were discussed within the context of the group.

> *I used to worry that you would pass on what I was saying to my Mum and others but you didn't.*
>
> *(author) Did my joint role of discipline/welfare help or not?*
>
> *Yes, it helped a lot. You listened to my version of things when I was in trouble and that made me listen to what you had to say.*
> (*Sg* pupil)

Partnerships with parents

From a personal perspective, being involved in the *Sgi* entirely changed the dynamic of the relationship between the school and parents. Parents recognised that the school was trying to provide support to the family and, whilst difficult situations still arose, there was much more of a sense of the school and family working together to resolve difficulties rather than a 'them and us' culture. Parents more readily approached the school to discuss difficulties and many of the barriers to communication alleviated.

The process of developing the Sgi within the school

Whilst Ch 5 outlines the steps which were taken to embed the *Sgi* within the school, this discussion focusses upon the nature of that process. There were major impediments to be overcome. The initiative was introduced shortly after the author's appointment to the school before the opportunity for trusting relationships could be formed. At the time at

which it was introduced, there were no other interventions of a similar nature therefore staff were initially very cautious and some, hostile. (Indeed, there had been initial discussion at an SMT meeting about the advisability of including the word 'support' within the title for the groups.) The staff profile was very settled - there had been little 'new blood' and many staff were not keen to embrace change. In addition, the school suffered under many of the pressures identified by Lupton (2005), with multi-agendas and a multiplicity of demands upon staff time and energies. Staff were concerned about the implications for their workload.

It was not an easy task and the major challenge was to win over staff, pupils and parents. The support from Senior Management, and the Headteacher in particular, was essential in achieving this aim as was the development of a collegial approach - fostering a community of practice (Wenger *et al.*, 2002). Thus, effective communication with and between all stakeholders, the provision of a high degree of support to *SgLs*, through a range of mechanisms as previously described (c.c. 5.1.3); ensuring that *SgLs* had a thorough understanding of the aims and underlying philosophies of the approach through high quality staff training; and the fostering of a team spirit and bonding between *SgLs*, ensuring that everyone felt that they had a valuable role to play in the decision making process and in supporting each other are essential processes in achieving this aim.

8.1.3 The Senior Management Perspective

This section is drawn from the perspectives of two members of the Senior Management Team (SMT) - the Headteacher and the Depute Head with responsibility for S3 - both of whom participated in individual interviews conducted by the independent interviewer (c.c. 6.4).

Responses to the Sgi (RQ 3.1-3.5)

Both members of the SMT had very positive responses towards the *Sgi*. The Headteacher joined the school after the initial pilot and considered it to be *An imaginative and positive attempt to deal with behaviour and how young people perceive this*. The Depute considered that it addressed the central problem relating to pupils with SEBD and was an ambitious venture. Both identified potential difficulties in respect of resources and the Headteacher identified that it would be difficult to inform staff of its benefits.

The Headteacher considered that pupil response to the initiative had been variable - from those (the majority) who had responded positively and had tried to look at themselves; to those not predisposed to co-operate even with skilled staff or those who had been willing to co-operate but have been unable to respond. The Depute felt that pupils had enjoyed the focussed attention from the groups and considered that disruptive pupils responded well to adult intervention in this format. He was not any aware of pupils being

stigmatised as a result of being in the *Sgi*.

Both SMT members considered that parental/family response to the groups was generally favourable (some parents had requested places for their children):- *the general impression is that it is valued.*

The Headteacher considered, however, that staff response varied widely from the very positive, through the indifferent to the negative. He highlighted the benefits to individual staff (particularly non-Pastoral Care) through their participation in the *Sgi*.

The Nature of the Intervention (RQ3.1-3.3)

The Headteacher considered all of the approaches adopted within the *Sgi* to be of worth and, in particular, drew to attention the value of target-setting. He considered discussion to be an essential component of group work:- *Way of getting them to reflect on their own and others' behaviour. Also a way of giving cohesion to the work - kids not just working on their own problems, seeing that others have similar difficulties.* He thought that some pupils would experience difficulty with the Pupil Diary as the written expression of feelings can be difficulty for pupils of low ability.

Management Issues (RQ3.5)

The support mechanisms put in place to support staff involved in the project (c.c. Chapter 5.1) were considered to be of value in terms of the smooth running of the groups, reflected in the willingness of staff to be involved. The Depute stated, *Staff are happy to be involved and want to be. No evidence in gaps in support for them (the groups).* The only difficulty which the Headteacher had become aware of was that some pupils who had been disruptive within the groups had been withdrawn from them.[7] Likewise, the Depute had become aware of an issue relating to communication with the wider staff but the issue had been dealt with promptly.

The Headteacher observed that there was a need to examine the *Sgi* within the wider context of the school and to develop a more corporate approach towards meeting the needs of pupils with SEBD. There were also significant issues relating to resourcing the initiative beyond S2 , both in terms of budgeting and the pool of staff from whom one could draw to staff the initiative - not all staff would be interested in participating or would be capable of doing so.

The Outcomes for pupils (RQ3.1-3.4)

Both senior managers were equivocal in respect of pupils outcomes, noting improvements

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[7]   This was not the case but it should be noted that one pupil had received one-to-one counselling as an alternative to group work at the request of her Pastoral Care teacher.

in some pupils but not in others and observing that it was not easy to account for pupil progress:- *Equally, some behaviour seems to improve without group input. Difficult to disentangle.* The Headteacher considered that improvements in attainment would be likely if *Sg* pupils could be kept within the system - particularly if exclusions could be avoided and disruptive behaviour minimised.

The Headteacher attributed the success of the groups to two principal factors:-

- target-setting
- attention being paid to pupils in a non-threatening sense/situation.

> *Many of these pupils get into trouble often (which) prevents teachers building more normal, positive relationships. This initiative allows staff to do that. (It) allows pupils to see teachers in a different light.*

General Overview of Approach (RQ3; RQ4)

Both members of the SMT considered the *Sgi* to be of benefit to pupils, considering it as an adjunct to the range of approaches to support pupils *and keep them in mainstream education and in the school.*

> *Good to have (a) package to give flexibility to support situations where (the) ordinary curriculum is not working.* (Depute)

Both SMT members noted that pupils with SEBD presented with different aspects of social behaviour. The Headteacher identified the following three categories of pupils as being the most difficult to impact upon:

- severely disaffected youngsters - *very difficult to find a school based strategy which will help.*

- those with chaotic home-backgrounds who are likely to be frequent truants - he highlighted the difficulties of monitoring such children.

- youngsters with difficult social behaviour - *wind others up, make relationships difficult to build - very disruptive influence.*

Both SMT members considered that the *Sgi* had impacted in the school beyond pupils. The Headteacher felt that it had *Helped alter staff perceptions of pupils. Given element of staff development. Encouraged some staff to see discipline from a different angle.* The Depute re-inforced this view - *made staff think further about (the) qualities of disruptive pupils.*

Both raised issues about the further development of groups and the resource implications

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for the school, not only in terms of staff availability but also in terms of staff training. The Depute also drew to attention to the need to target the resource where it is most needed.

Placing the initiative within the wider political context (RQ4)

The Headteacher considered that the initiative touched on most of the National Priorities.

> *In terms of inclusion, trying to keep pupils in school and develop normal relationships, current thinking of 'better behaviour - better learning' and more pro-active approach to discipline rather than previous re-active approach. (It) reflects this as well as encouraging continual learning and positive citizenship.*

8.1.4 Class Teachers', Senior Pupil Assistants' and Pastoral Care Teachers' Perspectives

This section is drawn from:

- the final question of the class teachers' questionnaire (c.c. 8.1.4.1)
- the questionnaire which was issued to staff who had observed a group in action and to the senior pupil assistants who had worked with *SgLs* [8]. (8.1.4.2)
- interviews[9] held with two Pastoral Care teachers whose pupils had been involved within the *Sgi*[10] (c.c. 8.1.4.3).

8.1.4.1: Responses to Class Teachers' Questionnaire (RQ3.4)

Fig. 8.1: Responses to q6 of Class Teachers' Questionnaire (2001-2002)

Question 6 (cohort 2001-2002)

- Yes 13.2%
- Yes, with reservations 14.8%
- Not problematic 7.2%
- Not certain/it depends/sometimes 26%
- No 22.4%
- Deterioration 3.6%
- no resp 12.8%
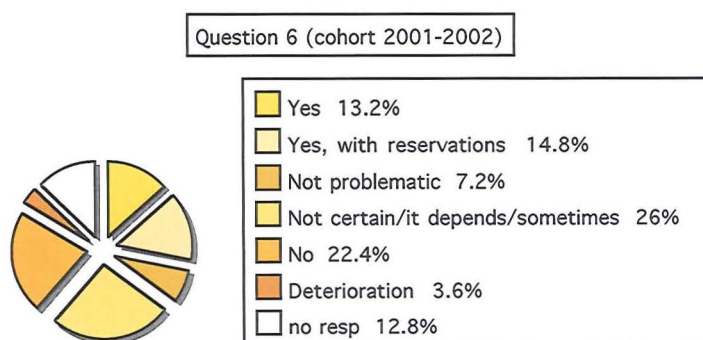
N = 250

The responses given to a question ascertaining the extent to which class teachers

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[8]   New development introduced in session 2001-2002 only.

[9]   conducted by the author, one year after intervention

[10]   Cohort 2000

considered that pupils had benefited or not from the initiative for cohort 2002[11] is illustrated in Fig. 8.1. It is evident that there is considerable variability in response. However, when the progress of individual pupils (all cohorts)[12] is classified (through examination of the collated teacher responses for each pupil) according to categories (c.c. Fig. 8.2), the following findings emerge:

Fig. 8.2: Categorisation of responses *of Sgi* pupils to intervention (1998-2002).

Question 5 (cohorts 1999 - 2002)

Very Positive 3.6%
Positive 33.9%
Variable 37.5%
Negative 23.2%
Very Negative 1.8%

N = 56

% of Total
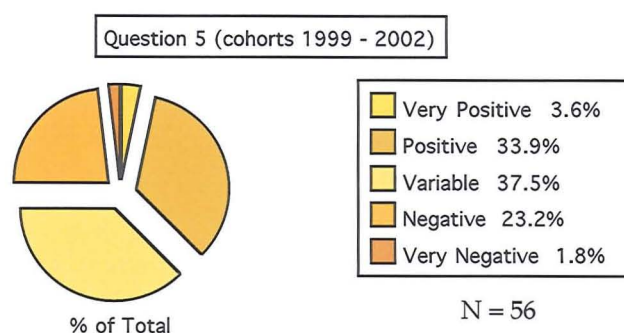
In examining the responses, it is not unexpected that the reasons put forward to account for pupil outcome mirror those given in response to previous research questions. The highest number of comments reflect general improvement in the pupil's behaviour, work-attitude and/or attainment, although not all staff attribute this change to the *Sgi*.

Some responses relate to feelings by the class teacher of the pupil not *being a lost cause* and of the intervention acting as a means of preventing further deterioration:- *Could be saved - he is just on the brink of becoming a major problem; I dread to think what would have happened to him without intervention.*

Staff did not always feel confident in their ability to comment upon the child's progress. This sometimes arose as a result of the erratic and difficult nature of the child's behaviour:- Very *hard to tell as behaviour is unpredictable and confrontational - would it have been worse?* or because, in some cases, the child's behaviour had not been problematic in the first instance:- *... always pleasant and well motivated.*

Where no improvement had been noted in the child's behaviour, this was often accounted for by the class teacher as the pupil being *a lost cause* and/or having deep-rooted psychological/social problems. Some teachers commented that individual pupils might be able to cope within a group situation but were unable to do so in a normal class:- *... was beyond redemption. Going there was a waste of time; Could well be co-operative in a group but, back in a class situation I don't think he has improved at all.*

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[11]   31 pupils (representing a response rate of 58%.to the questionnaire (inclusive of non-responses to the question))

[12]   81% of *Sgi* population

A lack of motivation to want to improve manifested in a lack of co-operation was put forward by some class teachers as the reason for the lack of responsiveness to the *Sgi* by some pupils:- *He suits himself when he works and when he doesn't and when challenged is extremely insolent.* Unfortunately, in some cases, class teachers considered that deterioration had set in in respect of a few pupils raising the possibility that the *Sgi* itself may possibly be a contributory factor:- *Pupil has become more confident in pushing situations further until some form of direct action has to be taken. He has become less likely to do what he is told first time; His behaviour is always worse p6 on Monday after Support Group unfortunately.*

8.1.4.2: Responses to questionnaires issued to observers/senior pupil assistants (RQ3.1-3.4)

This section examines responses from:

- three class teachers who observed groups
- three senior pupils who assisted with groups.

In general, the work of the *Sgi* was considered to be of value and pupils were perceived as being willing to participate in and contribute to the work of the groups:- *Yes, on my visit, the group were discussing very relevant issues such as bullying, fighting and peer pressure.*

The senior pupil assistants considered that the activities were of value in helping the *Sgi* pupils to reflect upon their actions:- *The topics discussed made the pupils involved think about matters they would not normally think about. This hopefully led to their attitudes changing for the better.* The teacher observers noted:- *Impressed that it was treated so seriously. Obvious acceptance that behaviour needed modification; They were very keen and talked openly amongst each other and their mentor.*

With the exception of the observation of one senior pupil that *the boys found the tasks rather tiresome,* and, whilst noting that one pupil in one group had not responded (*seemed very dismissive of the group and its activities and subsequently disrupted the other pupils ..),* the consensus of opinion was that pupils were generally relaxed about being in the groups and responded well. One senior pupil commented upon his surprise at how forthcoming the pupils in the group were.

It was generally considered that pupils had been encouraged to reflect critically upon themselves, although it was observed that they may require prompting and that the development of self-responsibility took time:- *As the group progressed, I felt that the pupils became more able to admit and realise when they were wrong or realise any mistakes they had made when dealing with a situation. (Senior Pupil Assistant)*

In general, the senior pupils had felt the groups to be beneficial both to themselves and to the pupils involved:- *As the group progressed, the pupils began to enjoy attending, so as to use*

the group as somewhere they could talk freely about their experiences and problems. .. I was impressed by the improvements in the group[13] . They identified a range of personal benefits such as the development of insight into the thinking processes and behaviour of the pupils and learning how to relate effectively to them through the development of communication skills and adapting a flexible approach.

A teacher observer considered it of value to see how the *SgL* created the ambience of the group and to observe the pupils in a different environment rather than the normal classroom situation.

It was suggested that it would be worthwhile to start the groups earlier to create greater continuity in senior pupil involvement (avoiding Prelims etc.) and to involve S5 pupils such that they could follow a group through for two years, enabling trust to develop.

8.1.4.3: Responses of Pastoral Care teachers (RQ3.1-3.4)

Both Pastoral Care teachers were very positive in their views of the *Sgi,* as reflected in the comments below:

> *These pupils*[14] *were very frequently out of class, disruptive and not caring and they were deteriorating. Discipline is now much better - there are hardly any referrals - they are quiet, they are settled and most important of all, they are there! Their education is not being disrupted.*

> *It did work for .... The exercises were good and really focussed upon the issues which the pupils needed to address.*

However, in respect of the latter pupil, the need for ongoing support post-*Sgi* was highlighted,

> *Unfortunately, there has been no lasting change. He's into 'image' - 'gang culture'. If the group had continued it might have made a difference. He's back to being uncommunicative and non co-operative - closed in on himself again.*

8.1.5 Summary

Sg Leaders' Perspective

In general, *SgLs* considered that the *Sgi* had been well led and well received within the school (although teachers views were more polarised) and advocated raising staff

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[13]   The group formed from pupils who attended the Behaviour Support Base
[14]   three in number

awareness of it. The approaches adopted were considered to be efficacious, although some practical difficulties emerged in relation to target-setting and the pupil diary. The aspects of the *Sgi* which impacted most upon pupils were the opportunities it provided to build relationships and trust; and to be able to talk in a confidential, 'safe' setting. The support of the home was considered to be crucial.

SgLs were well supported although further opportunities for *SgLs* to familiarise themselves with the materials and to share good practice would have been beneficial. An expansion of the approach was advocated.

Pupil outcomes were variable and individual to the pupil and pertained more to behaviour-related rather than learning-related outcomes. A range of explanations was forwarded to account for these outcomes. Home-related factors were mentioned most frequently but others, such as the child's response to praise/encouragement were also forwarded. SgLs identified a range of factors which promoted success such as a willingness on the part of the pupil to accept the need for change, to want to change and to have the capacity to form trusting relationships, enabling the pupil to 'open up'. The 'Pastoral Care link' was considered to be beneficial, although not essential. Practical considerations, such as the timing and location of the group were also important.

The approach was considered to fit in well with the Government's Social Inclusion agenda and encouraged *SgLs* to reflect upon their practice and to reappraise their relationships with *Sg* pupils.

Senior Management Perspective

Senior Management were generally supportive of the *Sgi*, welcoming it as a valuable aid in the quest for Social Inclusion, being regarded as having promoted inclusive practice within the school. For the approach to have achieved its full potential it was advocated that it is necessary to examine the initiative within the wider school context, to give consideration to resource issues and to invest in whole staff training.

Responses of Class Teachers

Class teacher responses were variable. When improvements were noted, they were attributed mainly to improvements in pupil behaviour, work attitude and/or attainment. When pupils had failed to respond, this was accounted for most often as the pupil being beyond help and/or experiencing deeper psychological/social problems. These pupils were regarded, by some class teachers, as requiring more intensive support outwith the classroom situation. A lack of motivation to want to improve, manifested in a general lack of co-operation, was also cited as a reason for a lack of response to the *Sgi*.

Responses of Senior Pupil Assistants, Teacher Observers & Pastoral Care Teachers

Surprise was expressed at the degree to which pupils engaged with the *Sgi*. There was a general feeling that the *Sgi* had encouraged pupils to reflect actively upon their behaviour and to develop insight into it. The groups were considered to be beneficial not only to the pupils within them but also to the senior pupils who had gained in insight and communication skills.

The two Pastoral Care teachers considered that their pupils had responded very positively to the *Sgi* although it was noted that one pupil had been unable to maintain the progress made, raising the issue of the need for support beyond the initial intervention.

8.2   *Pupils' and Parents' Perspective*

8.2.1 *Pupils' Perspective*

This section focusses upon q5 & 6 of the pupil questionnaire/interview schedule which probe the pupils' responses to the use of target-setting (c.c. App 7.2.4) and the Pupil Diary (RQ3.1-3.3).

Pupil Responses to q5

Fig. 8.3: Responses of *Sgi* pupils to q5 of the Pupil Questionnaire/Interview Schedule[15]
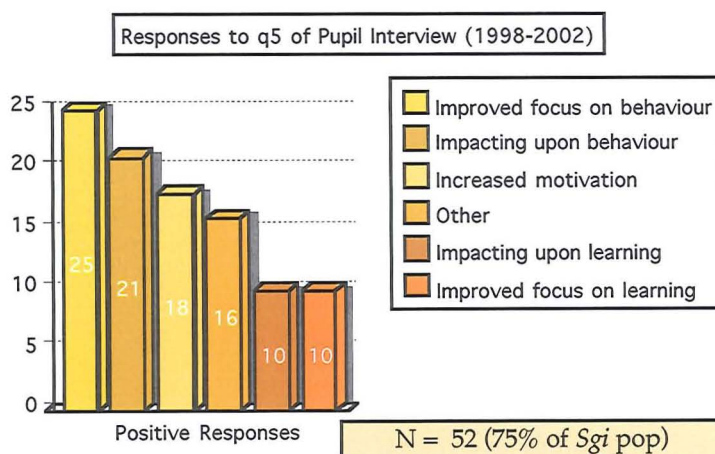
The responses in respect of target-setting are illustrated in Fig. 8.3. It is clear that pupils perceived target-setting as impacting more upon behaviour related rather than learning

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[15]   Some responses span more than one category

related outcomes. Amongst the reasons forwarded by pupils for the value of target-setting were the the clarity of focus brought about by the target-setting process, helping pupils to gain insight into what they needed to do in order to improve their behaviour; involvement of parents, *SgLs* and class teachers in the process and the negotiation rather than the imposition of targets specific to the needs of the pupil:

> *... it was clearly said what you had to do and (the) teacher could easily check. Parents can see how bad or good you've done. I've stopped bunking.*[16]

> *In the booklet, you were able to choose your own target and it was one that you wanted to work on. Made everything feel alright.*

The positive re-inforcement from class teachers had a motivational effect on some pupils - *Teachers talk to me more when I get it right* - although pupils were also motivated by a need to avoid negative consequences such as the approbation of parents. The reservations which had been expressed by *SgLs* in relation to the target-setting process featured minimally in pupil responses.

Pupil Responses to q6

The proportion of *Sgi* pupils responding positively in general terms to the Pupil Diary was much less than that for target-setting (48% of interviewees) and amongst a few pupils there was a lack of awareness of it , *What is it?*. This finding is reflected in Fig. 8.4 which categorises the responses[17] .

Fig. 8.4: Responses of *Sgi* pupils to q6 of the Pupil Questionnaire/ Interview Schedule

Responses to q6 of Pupil Interview (1998-2002)

- Thinking more about behaviour
- Understanding the consequences of behaviour
- Ability to learn from situation
- Other
- Understanding motivations underlying behaviour

N = 45 (65% of *Sgi* pop)

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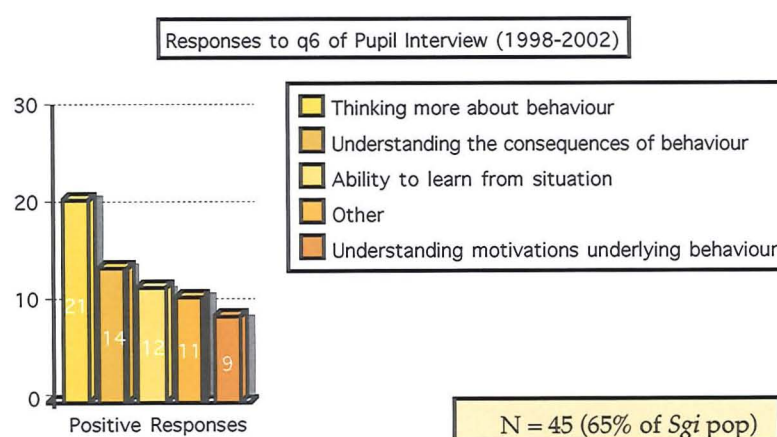
[16]   a colloquialism for truanting

[17]   some responses span more than one category

Pupil Responses to q6 & 7 of the Retrospective Interview

Questions 6 & 7 of the retrospective interview (c.c. App 7.2.10)[18] are concerned respectively with asking the pupil to account for why the *Sgi* did or did not work for that individual and with ascertaining whether the *Sgi* has had any lasting effect (RQ3ii & iii).

Pupil Responses to q6

82% of pupils interviewed considered that the *Sgi* had been of benefit to them. The responses fell within two principal categories - those which related to group function and the nature of group activities and those which related to the benefits (or not) accrued to the pupil concerned - some of which spanned both categories.

In relation to group function, target-setting/regular monitoring; the facility which the group afforded to talk in a 'safe' environment, discuss with others and to reflect; and the encouraging, friendly atmosphere within the group were mentioned most often. The formation of good relationships with the *Sg* Leader; the nature of the composition of the group; and the value of listening/being listened to were also cited by pupils:- *The fact that it was someone who wasn't a 'teacher', who was independent and someone you could talk to in confidence.*

The issue of trust and the ambience of the group are raised more specifically in these responses:- *It worked because I was able to trust the people in the group. If it had been a one-to-one, it would have been different - I would have felt awkward; Made you feel welcome and it was amazing. He wasn't strict, dead calm - you had a laugh and got to know him.*

The activities associated with the group are cited specifically by these two respondents:- *In the group you'd all sit down and say what you'd done wrong and explain it to each other and say how you wouldn't do it again; The daily monitoring, discussion and the diary helped me when you could talk about your behaviour. I felt able to talk in the group.*

The personal benefits derived by pupils were many and varied. The quotes below highlight some of the issues:

> *Yes, my aggression. The group situation was not threatening. Being able to talk about things calmed me down.*

> *It's made me want to work harder and see my behaviour from the teacher's point of view.*

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[18] N = 22 (32% of *Sgi* population) interviewed by the author within two years of completion of the intervention (c.c. Ch 7)

Helped my relationship with my Mum and Dad (never used to talk to my Mum). Then I started the group and she used to ask me how I was getting on and I started to talk to her.

Yes - because I saw what my behaviour was like and I got fed up with it and just started behaving.

A few responses were equivocal. One pupil who initially stated, *Sitting with class can't solve anything,* and who believed very strongly that *it's all down to me. I don't care what other people say - I act on my own.,* eventually conceded that the *Sgi* had helped her to take responsibility for her own behaviour.

The one pupil who responded negatively, said, *Not really - I don't really remember it - not able to apply it out of the group.* On further probing, this pupil claimed that she had not had any desire to improve and had not recognised the need to do so (c.c. CS2).

Pupil Responses to q7

Two thirds of pupils involved in the retrospective interview claimed that the *Sgi* had had a lasting positive impact upon them one to two years after intervention. Once again, a wide range of reasons was put forward in support of these claims. Foremost, were those relating to improvements in behaviour and reductions in sanctions for misbehaviour.

> *In trouble sometimes but not so often. My behaviour is better and I'm learning more effectively. Before it (Sgi), school was just a place you were sent to - you realised that you were there to learn. It's for a reason.*

> *I no longer need to be monitored. Can't remember when I last got a punishment exercise. Teachers treat me with more respect now. I'm quite confident I can keep it up. I have realised that these years are important now.*

What is particularly significant in the above statements is the development in understanding that school and learning are of importance to the individuals concerned.

Other factors cited most frequently relate to developments in self-control; confidence in the ability to sustain improvement and the desire to do so; improvements in learning/increased focus upon learning; improved relationships; and the way in which the *Sgi* encouraged teachers to see pupils in a new light - to give them a chance.

Some pupils were invited to put forward what they had learned from the experience. Below are some of the responses:

To talk to other people. I'd talk to other people now before going into a fight - give them a chance to apologise.

Well my attitude towards my parents and that - made me get on better with them - get a laugh - good attitude at home - not getting on the bad side of my Stepdad.

To keep my temper.

Teachers will listen to you and you should give them a chance so they will give you a chance.

It is evident that a few pupils had been able to apply what they had learned from the *Sgi* outwith the school situation.

A few pupils had not been able to sustain the gains which they had made in the *Sgi*:

Trying to keep this up but just keep falling away and that. School's a bit boring - just keep on doing the same things over and over. Doesn't seem to get any harder.

Well, since the group, I've lost a lot of confidence in myself. In ... , I was getting my head down on the table I sit staring at it (work) and say, "Ah cannae do this - it's too hard". My teacher tells me I can do it.

Whilst there are wider, learning related implications within the above two statements, the sense of disappointment and disillusionment comes through clearly.

The circumstances of one pupil had become dramatically worse since her involvement in the *Sgi* (c.c. CS2):- *Not led to any change. Things much worse. (Why?) When I started going about with other pupils - started bunking - couldn't be bothered with school any more.*

8.2.2 Parents' Perspective

The findings are drawn from:

- q5 & 6 of the parental questionnaire (c.c. App 7.2.9)[19]
- reply slips in response to parental reports[20]
- other forms of communication from parents.

Findings have to be interpreted with caution because of the relatively low response rate. Question 5 probes the extent to which the *Sgi* had been of value to their children (RQ3.1-4). All but two parental responses indicate that the *Sgi* had been of value, citing their

[19]   N = 23 (35% of *Sgi* population)
[20]   minimal response

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children's enjoyment of the group and the individual attention which their children had received; the gains in awareness and insight into behaviour; and the stemming of potential deterioration:- *Without the group I feel that ... may have been left out of the system because of his attitude problems.*

In response to q6 - *any further comments?* - the most common categories of response were an appreciation of the efforts of staff; recommendations that intervention should continue into S3; expressions of willingness to work collaboratively with the school; and positive comments in general about the child's progress and the helpful effect of the *Sgi:- I think the Sg has been very worthwhile and everybody involved in it deserves a medal. Give yourselves a pat on the back. These* sentiments are also in evidence within an unsolicited letter from a parent (c.c. App 8.3).

The support of the home is evident in this response:- *Individual members of the family have been working with ... to try to help her. We'll get there in the end. She feels people are picking on her - the Sg makes her feel better.*

A common theme within parental responses to the pupil progress report was an observation of the pupil's increased willingness to attend school:- *I can see that there has been a change in her behaviour and she seems more willing to go to school.*

8.2.3 Summary

Pupils' Perspective

The majority of pupils considered that negotiated targets had helped them to focus more effectively upon their behaviour. Pupils perceived target-setting as impacting more upon behaviour-related rather than learning-related factors. The negotiated nature of targets and the partnership approach are important aspects of its success. Responses to the pupil diary were more mixed. This is a reflection, in some cases, of minimal use of the diaries by some *Sg* Leaders.

The responses to the retrospective interviews were very positive indeed. It is clear that the *Sgi* had impacted upon the lives of these pupils in many different ways, individual to each pupil. Responses fell within two categories - those relating to group function and those related to the personal benefits (or not) accrued to the pupil. A wide range of factors was cited in relation to both of these categories. For the few pupils who had not sustained improvement, learning related factors and the effects of the peer group were cited as impeding progress.

Parental Responses

Parental responses were almost unanimously positive. Parents welcomed the intervention and considered it to have been very worthwhile. They cited a range of factors which had contributed to their child's progress and considered that the approach may have averted further deterioration. Parents were very appreciative of the efforts of staff and some expressed a desire to continue working in partnership with the school.

Chapter 9
Overview of Pupil Progress in Relation to Benchmark Measures

This chapter presents the findings in relation to the analysis of pupil progress in respect of the previously established benchmark measures as set out in chapter 5, relating to the realisation of RQ1, 2 & 3:

- attendance and unauthorised absence (c.c. 9.1; App 9.1)
- discipline sanctions - referrals, frequency of suspensions and duration (total number of days) of suspension (c.c. 9.2; App 9.2)
- attainment in National Tests in English (c.c. 9.3; App 9.3).

9.1 Attendance related

In Chapter 5, it was clearly established that, pre-intervention (S1), there were statistically significant differences in the attendance and unauthorised absence rates between the comparator groups (national, local authority (LA) and school cohorts)[1] and between the *Sgi* cohort and other pupils within the year groups ('other').

It is the case nationally that the % attendance rate falls and the % rate of unauthorised absence rises according to stage[2] in respect of the first four years of Secondary schooling. The school population (S1 & S2) followed these patterns but to what extent is this statistically significant in comparison to the national and LA populations?

Figs. 9.1a & b illustrate the performance of the comparator groups in respect of both measures comparing the performance in S1 with that of S2.

Figs. 9.1 a & b: Comparisons between the % attendance and unauthorised absence rates of stakeholder groups (S1-S2) (2000-2002)[3]
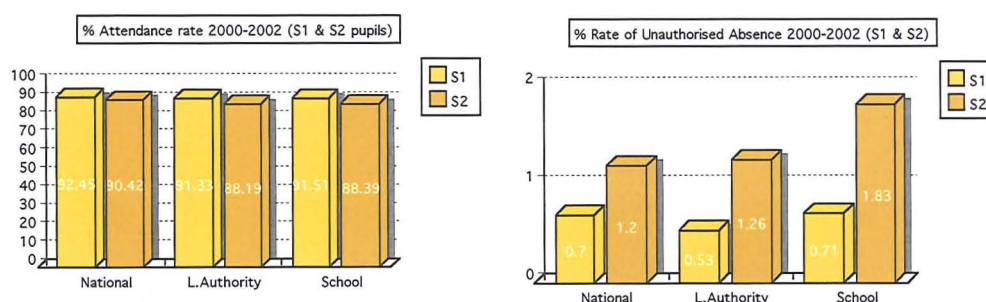
Whilst the differentials in relation to attendance in respect of the national cohort

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[1]   with the exception of the attendance rate between school and LA
[2]   SENSP (2003c)
[3]   School Handbooks 2001-2002 & 2002-2003

widened to a great extent in respect of both comparator groups:- LA and all other LAs (x^2=425, p <.001 (S1)) (c.c. App 9.1.1 (table 1)); (x^2= 1455, p <.001) (S2)) (Ibid. (table 4)); school and all other schools nationally (x^2=53, p <.001 (S1)) (Ibid. (table 2)); (x^2= 210, p <.001) (S2)) (Ibid. (table 5)), the differentials between the LA and school remained insignificant (Ibid. (tables 3 & 6)).

In respect of unauthorised absence, the differentials widened extensively in relation to the school and both comparator groups:- school and all other schools nationally (x^2= 0 (S1)) (Ibid. (table 2)); (x^2= 147, p <.001 (S2)) (Ibid. (table 5)); school and all other schools within the authority (x^2=31, p <.001 (S1)) (Ibid. (table 3)); (x^2= 139, p <.001 (S2)) (Ibid. (table 6)) with the school's rate of unauthorised absence being higher in each instance (c.c. 9.1.2 (tables 1 & 2)).

How does the performance of the *Sgi* cohort (post-int S2) compare with that of the school cohort from which it derives and the performance of 'other' for the same time period?

In comparing the attendance of the *Sgi* cohort with 'other'[4] (Fig. 9.2) the differential between the two comparator groups remained highly significant but there is a substantial reduction in the chi-squared values from S1 to S2 (x^2=2828, p <.001 (S1); x^2=682, p <.001 (S2)) (c.c. App 9.1.3 (table 1)) indicating that the populations were becoming more homogenous. Whilst both comparator groups demonstrated a deterioration in the % attendance rate from S1 - S2 (post-int), the chi-squared value[5] for the *Sgi* (x^2=15, p <.001) is very much less than that for 'other' (x^2=237, p <.001) (c.c. Ibid. (table 2)), indicating that the deterioration for the *Sg* population has been to a lesser extent.

Fig. 9.2: Comparison between the % attendance rates of the Year Group cohort, *Sgi* cohort (1999-2002) and 'other' as they performed in S1 and in S2 (post-int (2))[6]

% Attendance Rate (Sgi coh. 1999-2002)

S1 (N = 653)
S2 (post-int (2)) (N = 631)

91.48 88.74   77.55 74.1   92.87 90.17

Year Group   Sgi cohort   'other'

Sgi pop = 9% of Year Group cohort

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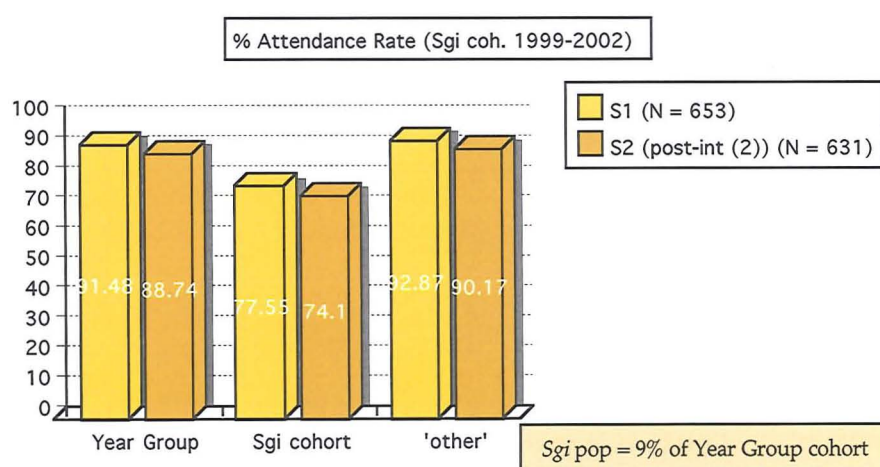
[4]   SEEMIS
[5]   derived from raw data (not %s)
[6]   Generally, the summer term. Source: SEEMIS

When the proportion of all absences attributable to unauthorised absence for each of the comparator groups over the period from when the pupils were in S1 through to S3 (*Sgi* cohorts 1999-2002) is examined, it can be seen that, for all groups, there was an upward trend (Fig. 9.3a).

Fig. 9.3a: Proportion of all absences in the period 1999-2002 attributable to unauthorised absence for each comparator group
Fig 9.3b: Proportion of all unauthorised absences attributable to the *Sgi* in S1 - S3 (*Sgi* cohorts 1999-2002)[7]
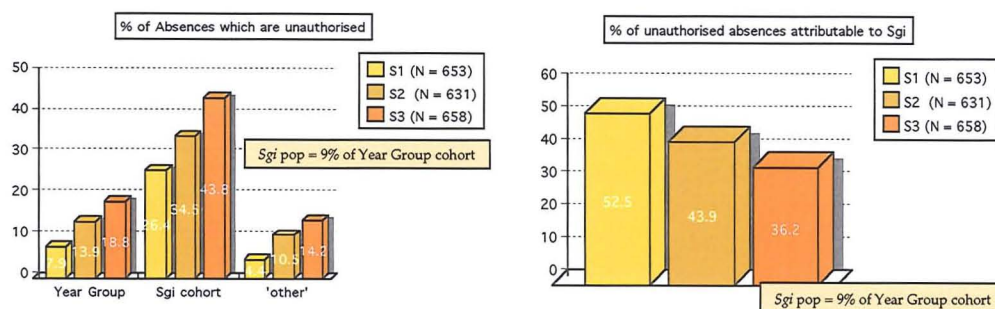
It is some consolation to note that *Sgi* pupils accounted for a smaller proportion of unauthorised absences over time, ranging from 52.5% in S1 to 36.2% in S3 (c.c. Fig. 9.3b), although this is indicative of a general deterioration in the performance of the cohort as a whole.

9.2 Behaviour related

In the initial analysis of data relating to discipline measures, the data were analysed in four time periods corresponding to:

- S1 (mid-August until the change of timetable (June));
- change of timetable (S1) until the commencement of intervention S2 (late Autumn term);
- the commencement of intervention until the change of timetable (June);
- S3 (mid-August until the change of timetable (June)).

As these time-periods varied from year to year and therefore differed for each *Sgi* cohort, unit measures are used in comparing the performance of the *Sgi* to 'other', controlling for these time related factors and also for variable patterns of attendance (c.c. Part 5: Table Int 1). Comparisons with wider populations are based upon the standard school year.

In examining the data for 2001-2002 (which had been analysed mid-intervention to

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[7]   SEEMIS

enable the selection of the sample for the Case Studies[8]), a distinctive pattern emerged which was confirmed through analysis of the data for the other cohorts. Retrospectively, it was possible to examine the data for each *Sgi* cohort in respect of two time periods after commencement of intervention in S2 with the exception of referrals for cohort 2000-2001. As such, all data is analysed in terms of five time periods[9] with the exception of referrals for cohort 2000-2001.

Referrals, whilst subjective judgements of classroom teachers, are the most sensitive and reliable measure as they measure both more minor and major infringements of discipline and are entirely independent of the author. Frequency and duration of suspensions are more indicative of serious indiscipline (as judged by the member of the SMT responsible for executing them and the Headteacher who scrutinises them and is ultimately responsible for them).

9.2.1 The Sgi in context

In Chapter 5, it was established that the local authority and school were performing very poorly in respect of national exclusion statistics and that the differentials in relation to each of the discipline measures between the *Sgi* population and 'other' were of high statistical significance. Nationally, the peak period for suspensions from school is S2-S3 (c.c. Fig. 9.4).

Fig. 9.4: Comparison by stage of exclusion openings nationally (2001-2002)

% of Exclusions per stage (1999-2002)

S1	14.8%
S2	26.2%
S3	32.6%
S4	23.1%
S5	2.8%
S6	0.5%
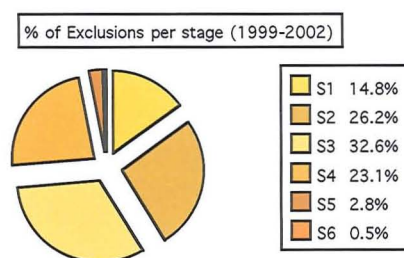
How does this compare to the more local picture - that of the S2 cohort for the Local Authority and for the school over stages S1 - S3? (Fig. 9.5)[10] The trend for the Local Authority and school mirror the national trend but exclusions for the school, over all stages, were considerably higher than those of the Local Authority, with the differential being widest at the S2 stage.

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[8] c.c. 6.4
[9] S1, S2(1) pre-intervention; S2(2), S2(3) & S3 post-intervention.
[10] Sourced from L. Authority statistics issued to schools.

Fig. 9.5: Comparison of exclusion openings, by stage, per 1,000 pupils between
Local Authority and school[11] (2000-2002)[12]
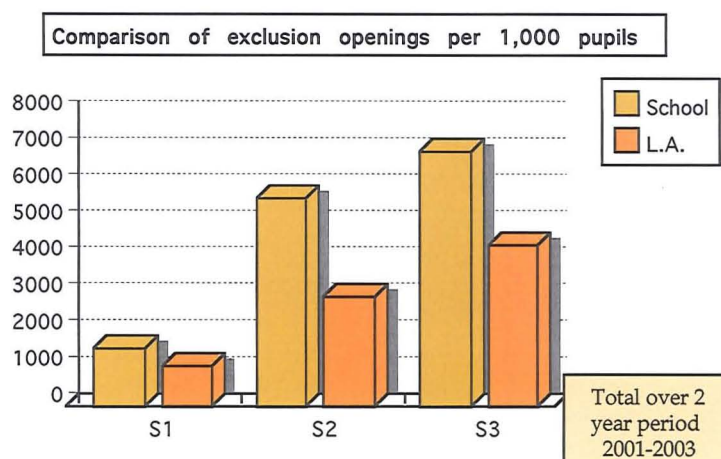
However, when one compares the performance of the school cohort over different time
periods (1999-2000 to 2002 -2003) (Fig. 9.6), it can be seen that there is a danger in over-
generalisation. The pattern of exclusions varied widely from year to year with a sharp
peak in exclusions in S2 (2001-2002) which was regarded as being a highly problematic
year group[13] . It should be noted that Deputes responsible for each year group
remained constant during this time period.

Fig. 9.6: Comparison between school cohorts (exclusion openings, per 1,000 pupils) (1999-2003)[14]
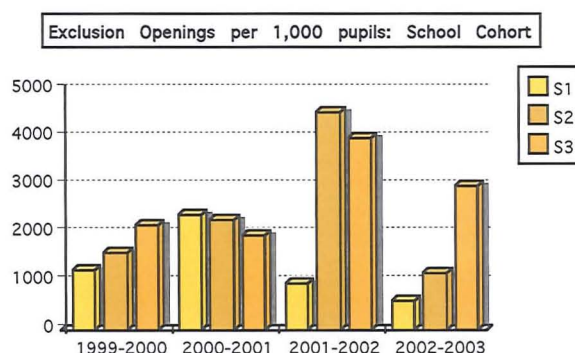
9.2.2 *Examining the performance of the Sgi as a whole in comparison to 'other' for each discipline measure*

Figs. 9.7a - c illustrate the differences pre-/post-intervention between the average
perfomance of the *Sgi* population and 'other' for each sanction as expressed in unit
measures based upon two time periods in S2 as initially described in the foreword.
There are several trends which can be clearly discerned from the data:

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[11]   SENSP 2001b, 2002, 2003b. Please note that exclusion openings relate to 0.5 days.
[12]   SENSP, 2003b
[13]   as is evidenced by their exclusions in S1.
[14]   drawn from statistics issued to the school by the LA

- the wide differential between the average performance of the *Sgi* population and 'other' in respect of each discipline measure both pre- and post intervention;
- the average performance of the *Sgi* population remained constant with the exception of duration of suspensions which demonstrated an improvement - a downward trend;
- in contrast, the average performance for 'other' deteriorated for each discipline measure - an upward trend.

Figs. 9.7a - c: Comparison between mean of *Sgi* and 'other' performances - for all discipline measures (1999-2002)[15] over 2 time periods
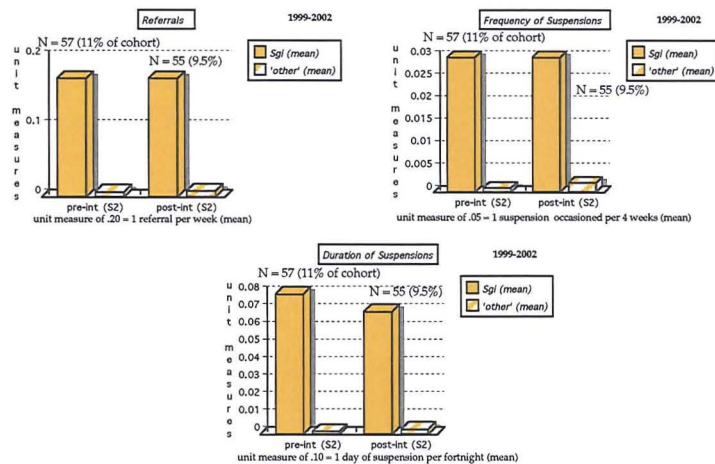
However, the post-intervention period when sub-divided into two time periods (as also described in the foreword), reveals a different and more revealing picture (c.c. Fig. 9.8a - c).

Figs. 9.8a - c: Comparison between mean of *Sgi* and 'other' - for all discipline measures (1999-2002)[16] over 3 time periods
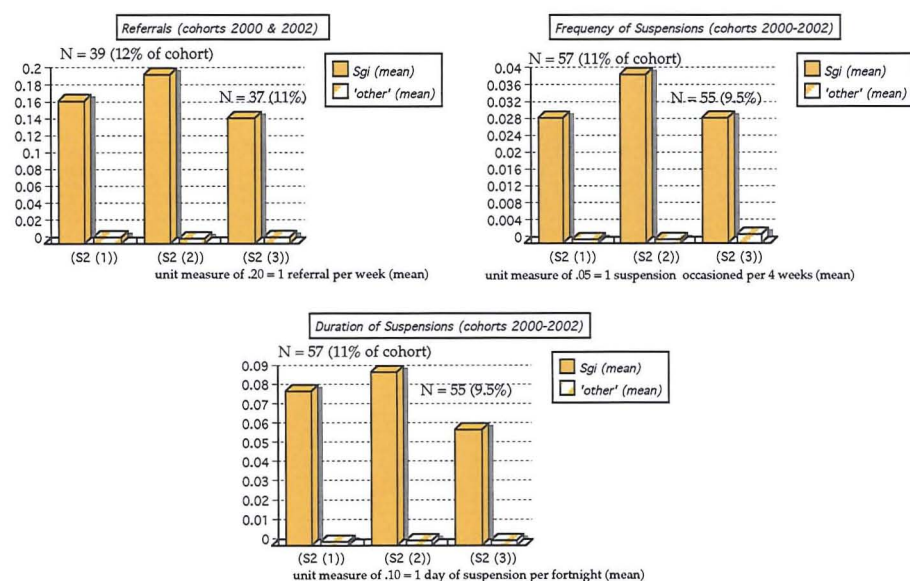
15   Taken from SEEMIS and individual pupil records maintained by the author.
16   Taken from SEEMIS and individual pupil records maintained by the author.

The apparent constant levels of indiscipline which had emerged in Figs. 9.7a-c disguised an initial further deterioration in all discipline measures which was then followed by an improvement which is statistically significant in respect of frequency of referrals and duration of suspensions (to follow). How might this be accounted for?

- perhaps the better weather or the generally acknowledged reduction in stress experienced by Secondary teachers as the pressures related to SQA presentation reduce in the final term have a positive effect upon pupil behaviour and teacher tolerance?
- perhaps the *Sgi* takes time to impact upon pupils before improvements become evident?

It may be the case that a combination of these factors could have affected outcome (and it is beyond the realms of this study to explore these issues in depth) but examination of the performance of 'other' casts some light on the situation (Fig. 9.9). If the first hypothesis were held to be true, the expectation would be that 'other' would exhibit similar trends. However, it is evident that this is not the case.

Figs. 9.9a - c: Mean performance of 'other' - for all discipline measures (1999-2002) over 3 time periods

unit measure of .005 = 1 referral per 40 weeks (mean)

unit measure of .002 = 1 suspension occasioned per 100 weeks (mean)

unit measure of .003 = 1 day of suspension every 66 weeks (mean)
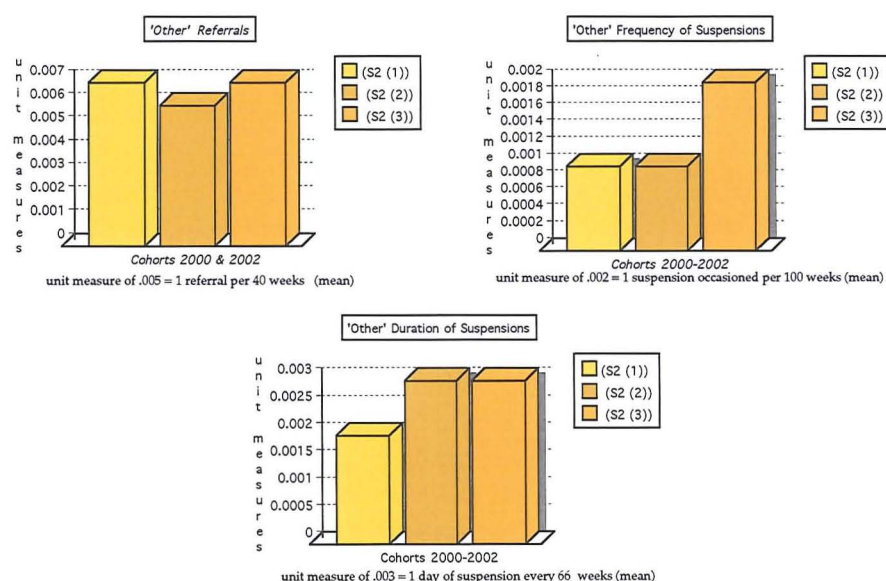
Are these observations of statistical significance?

As unit measures are too small to be of value in testing for significance the raw data is set against the potential number of incidents in chi-squared tests. In examining the differentials between the *Sgi* population and 'other', whilst in relation to S2(3) (post-intervention) the differentials between the two populations were still of high statistical significance, there is a marked difference in the x^2 values between those obtained pre-

intervention (S2(1)) and those obtained post-intervention (S2(3)) (c.c. App 9.2.1). These are as follows:-

- referrals (cohorts 2000 & 2002) x^2= 3543, p <.001 (S2(1)); x^2= 1481, p <.001 (S2(3))
- frequency of suspensions (cohorts 2000-2002) x^2= 1105, p <.001 (S2(1)); x^2= 394, p <.001 (S2(3))
- duration of suspensions (cohorts 2000 - 2002) x^2= 2664, p <.001 (S2(1)); x^2= 95, p <.001 (S2(3)) (c.c. App 9.2.1 (tables 1 & 2)).

Whilst the differentials between the two populations remain very wide, they are becoming more homogenous.

In comparing the performance of the *Sgi* cohort pre- (S2(1)) with that of post (S2(3)) - intervention, the improvements in performance in relation to referrals (cohorts 2000 & 2002) and duration of suspensions (cohorts 2000-2002) were of high statistical significance (x^2= 10.14; x^2= 9.59 (both p <.01) respectively). There were no statistically significant changes in respect of referrals for cohort 2001[17] and for frequency of suspensions (cohorts 2000-2002) (c.c. App 9.2.2 (table 1)).

In contrast to the *Sgi* population, the performance of 'other' over the two time periods (S2(1) and S2(3)) demonstrated a highly significant statistical deterioration in respect of referrals (cohorts 2000 & 2002) and frequency of suspensions ((x^2= 6.85, p <.01 ; x^2= 20.18, p <.001) respectively); and a significant deterioration for referrals (cohort 2001 (c.c. previous paragraph)) and duration of suspensions ((x^2= 3.99; x^2= 4.53, both p <.05) (Ibid. (table 2)).

These findings indicate that, in terms of 'hard data', improvements in the performance of the *Sgi* cohort as a whole in respect of at least two discipline measures can be demonstrated beyond chance in the period from pre-post intervention (S2).

9.2.3 Examining the distributions for each measure (pre-/post-intervention)

This section examines whether the effect is equal for all pupils. Are the outcomes the same for subsets of the population[18] ? In order to answer this question, closer examination of the distributions for each measure (post-intervention (S2 (3)) is required and a cross-tabulation of individual pupil outcomes (pre- and post-intervention (S2)) in order to establish if there are trends and, if so, the extent to which they are of statistical significance. Figs. 9.10a-d & 9.11a - d illustrate the pre- and post-intervention distributions[19] for the *Sgi* population for each discipline measure. Each of

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[17]   S2 (2) + S2 (3) combined
[18]   pupils categorised according to the degree of concern evidenced through measures of indiscipline (pre-intervention (S2)) (c.c. Ch 5: Figs. 5.14a - c & 5.15a -c)
[19]   categorised according to z-values for each discipline measure pre-intervention.

the distributions is heavily, positively skewed[20] which means that parametric tests cannot be used to establish the significance of the findings. However, examination of the parameters of the distributions is of value in establishing trends.

Figs. 9.10a - d: Parameters for referrals for *Sgi* pre-/post-intervention (S2)
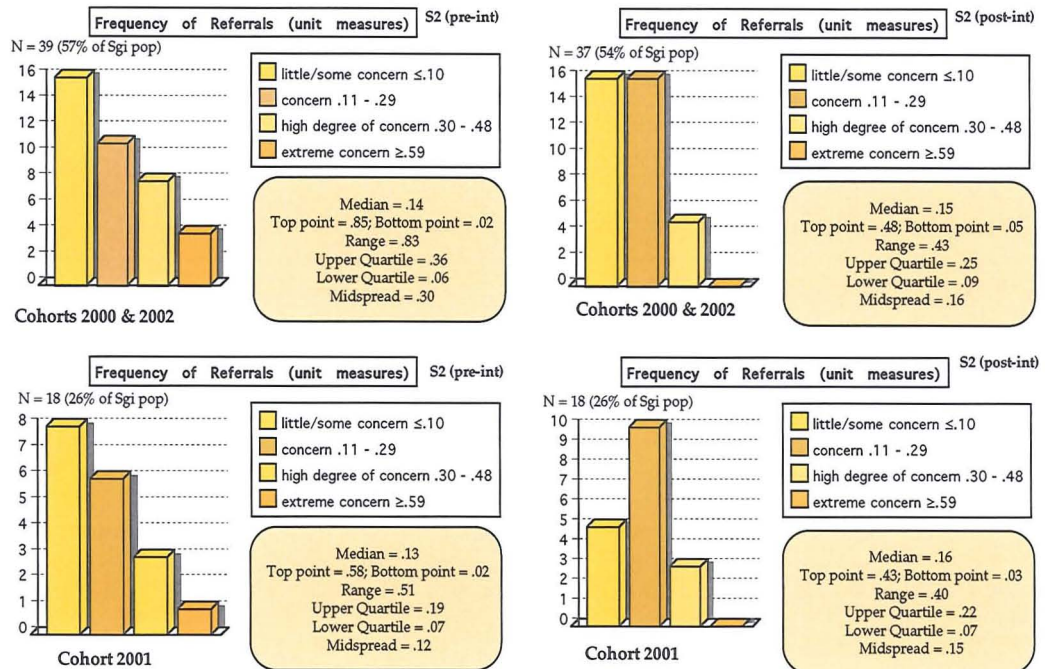
Figs. 9.11a - d: Parameters for suspensions for *Sgi* pre-/post-intervention (S2)

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[20]   the mean in each case is mid-way within the *concern* category.
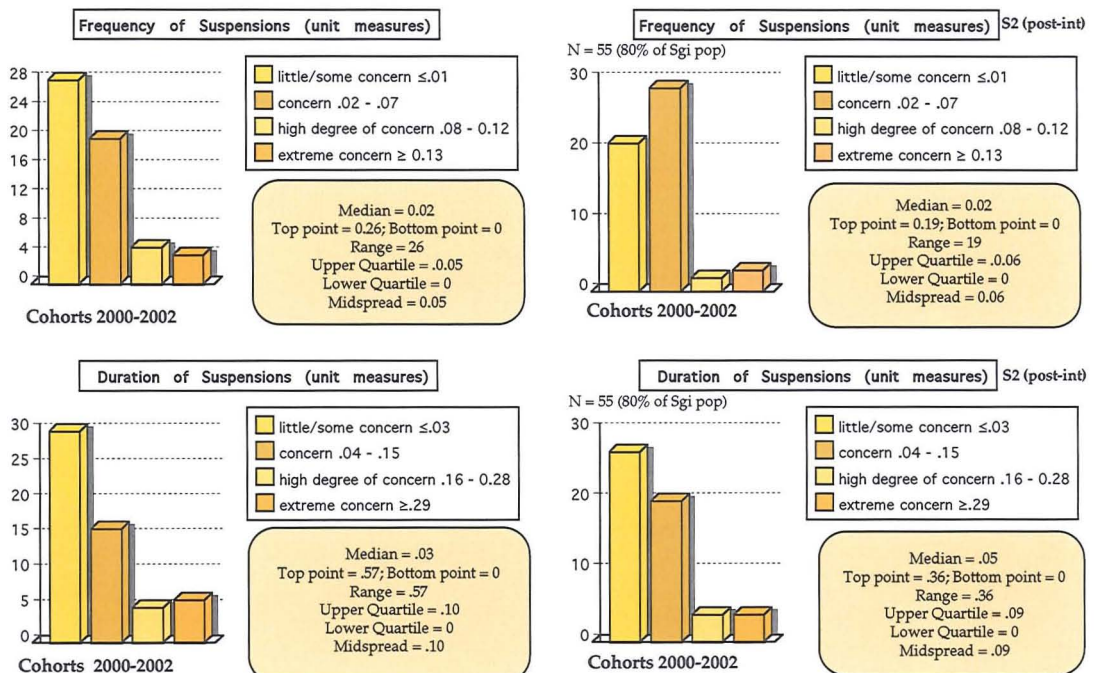
Whilst there clearly are differences between the pre- and post-intervention dispersions of values for each measure, the movement from one category to another is not statistically significant for any category within any distribution. However, some clear trends can be observed:

- the reduction in the range for all discipline measures, post-intervention. This indicates that the severity of indiscipline has lessened and that the population had become more homogenous. However, the midspread around the mean is more variable.
- the tendency for the distributions to move towards the category *concern*.

9.2.4 Examining the progress of individual pupils

Whilst the analysis of distributions provides an overview of changing patterns of discipline/indiscipline, it does not provide information about the progress of individual pupils - the extent to which pupils' performance remained the same , improved or deteriorated for each measure and the extent of these changes. The pre- (S2(1)) and post-(S2(3)) intervention unit measures were cross-tabulated for each discipline measure (categorising pupils on a scale from *little/some concern - extreme concern +* (a sub-division of the previous categories, representing 0.5 z-values in each case)) in order to illuminate both the direction and degree of change for individual pupils. Figs. 9.12a-d illustrate the findings:

Figs. 9.12a - d: Outcomes for individual pupils for each discipline measure (1999-2002) (cross-tabulation of unit measures[21]) (i)

Degree of Change: Referrals
z-values
+ve
3 - 3.4 2.7%
2 - 2.9 2.7%
1 - 1.9 8.1%
0.5 - 0.9 18.9%
0 - 0.4 (no det) 29.7%
0 - (-0.4) (no impr) 18.9%
-0.5 - (-0.9) 13.5%
-1 - (-1.9) 5.4%
-2 - (-2.9) 0%
-3 - (-3.4) 0%
-ve
Sgi Cohorts 2000 & 2002 (N = 37)

Degree of Change: Referrals (cohort 2001)
z-values
+ve
3 - 3.4 0%
2 - 2.9 0%
1 - 1.9 5.6%
0.5 - 0.9 11.1%
0 - 0.4 (no det) 33.3%
0 - (-0.4) (no impr) 33.3%
-0.5 - (-0.9) 16.7%
-1 - (-1.9) 0%
-2 - (-2.9) 0%
-3 - (-3.4) 0%
-ve
Sgi Cohort 2001 (N = 18)

Degree of Change:Frequency of Suspensions
z-values
+ve
3 - 3.4 3.6%
2 - 2.9 1.8%
1 - 1.9 7.3%
0.5 - 0.9 7.3%
0 - 0.4 (no det) 36.4%
0 - (-0.4) (no impr) 16.4%
-0.5 - (-0.9) 12.7%
-1 - (-1.9) 12.7%
-2 - (-2.9) 0%
-3 - (-3.4) 1.8%
-ve
Sgi Cohorts 2000-2002 (N = 55)

Degree of Change: Duration of Suspensions
z-values
+ve
3 - 3.4 1.8%
2 - 2.9 3.6%
1 - 1.9 5.5%
0.5 - 0.9 9.1%
0 - 0.4 (no det) 38.2%
0 - (-0.4) (no impr) 21.8%
-0.5 - (-0.9) 12.7%
-1 - (-1.9) 5.5%
-2 - (-2.9) 1.8%
-3 - (-3.4) 0%
-ve
Sgi Cohorts 2000-2002 (N = 55)

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[21]   With the exception of referrals (cohort 2001)

The outcomes for individual pupils vary enormously from *no/minimal change (0 - 0.4 z values) (no deterioration)* and *0 - (-0.4) z-values (no improvement))* to an improvement or deterioration of ≥ 3 z-values[22]. The categories *0-0.4 (+ and -)* can represent either a positive or negative outcome depending upon the degree of concern exhibited by the pupil in the first instance. For pupils within the category *little/some concern* initially, improvement cannot be demonstrated outwith the category, therefore *no/minimal change* for these pupils indicates no deterioration which is the desirable outcome for this group. In contrast, for pupils whose behaviour prior to intervention was of greater concern, *no/minimal change* is a disappointing outcome. It is evident that the highest proportion of *Sgi* pupils have remained within the *no/minimal change (no deterioration)* category. To simplify, Figs. 9.13a-d express the same information in terms of four categories - *improvement, no change (+ve), no change (-ve)* and *deterioration.*

Figs. 9.13a -d: Outcomes for individual pupils for each discipline measure (1999-2002) (cross-tabulation of unit measures[23])(ii)

Referrals (unit measures)
improvement 32.4%
no change (+ve) 29.7%
no change (-ve) 18.9%
deterioration 18.9%
Sgi Cohorts 2000 & 2002 (N = 37)

Referrals (unit measures)
improvement 16.7%
no change (+ve) 33.3%
no change (-ve) 33.3%
deterioration 16.7%
Sgi Cohort 2001 (N = 18)

Frequency of Suspensions (unit measures)
improvement 20%
no change (+ve) 36.4%
no change (-ve) 16.4%
deterioration 27.3%
Sgi Cohorts 2000 - 2002 (N = 55)

Duration of Suspensions (unit measures)
improvement 20%
no change (+ve) 38.2%
no change (-ve) 21.8%
deterioration 20%
Sgi Cohorts 2000 - 2002 (N = 55)

However, whilst this information illuminates the nature of outcomes for the *Sgi* population as a whole, it does not provide in-depth information about the progress of categories of pupils - *little /some concern* etc.. Figs. 9.14a-d illustrate the outcomes for pupils who had initially been categorised within these bands - *little/some concern; concern* (incorporating *concern +); and *high/extreme concern* (incorporating four categories from *high concern - extreme concern +).*

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22   Representing almost one referral per week (+ or -); one occasion on which suspended per month (+ or -); and around one day of suspension per fortnight (+ or -) respectively. All calculations initially based upon unit measures.

23   With the exception of referrals (cohort 2001)

Figs. 9.14a - d: Correlation between pre-intervention categories (of concern) and outcomes[24]
(1999-2002)

Referrals (coh 2000 & 2002)

z-values

▨	+ ≥ 1 13.5%
▨	0.5 - 0.9 18.9%
□	no change (0 - (-)0.4) 48.6%
▨	-0.5 - (-0.9) 13.5%
▨	+ ≥ -1 5.4%

N = 16   N = 10   N = 11

little/some concern   concern   high/extreme concern

Sgi Cohorts 2000 & 2002 (N = 37)

Referrals (cohort 2001)

z-values

▨	+ ≥ 1 5.6%
▨	0.5 - 0.9 11.1%
□	no change (0 - (-)0.4) 66.7%
▨	-0.5 - (-0.9) 16.7%
▨	+ ≥ -1 0%

N = 8   N = 6   N = 4

little/some concern   concern   high/extreme concern

Sgi Cohort 2001 (N = 18)

Frequency of Suspensions

z-values

▨	+ ≥ 1 12.7%
▨	0.5 - 0.9 7.3%
□	no change (0 - (-)0.4) 52.7%
▨	-0.5 - (-0.9) 12.7%
▨	+ ≥ -1 14.5%

N = 28   N = 19   N = 8

little/some concern   concern   high/extreme concern
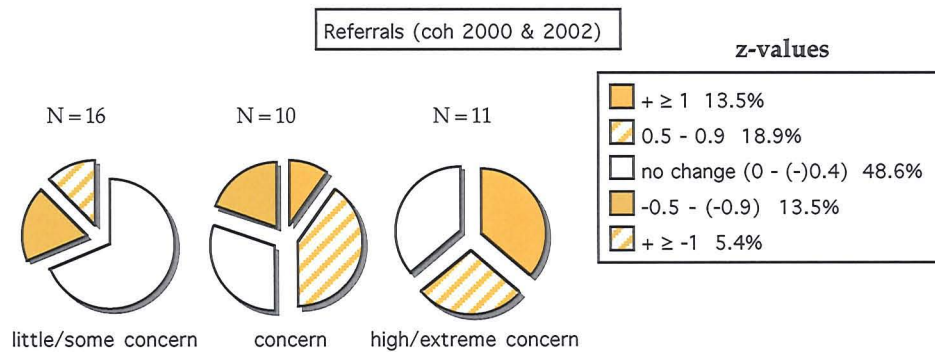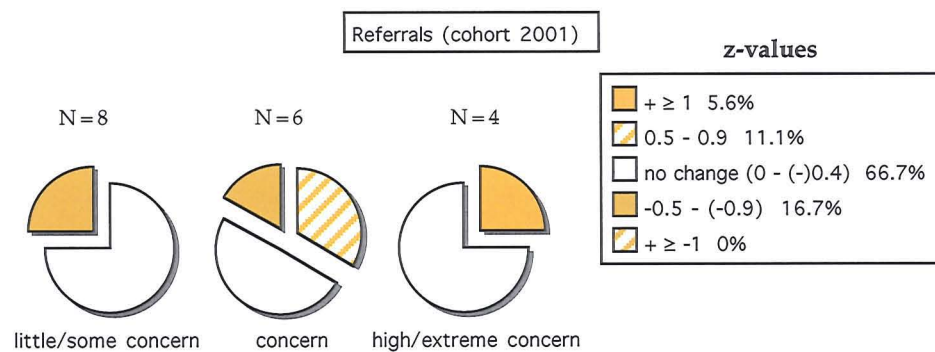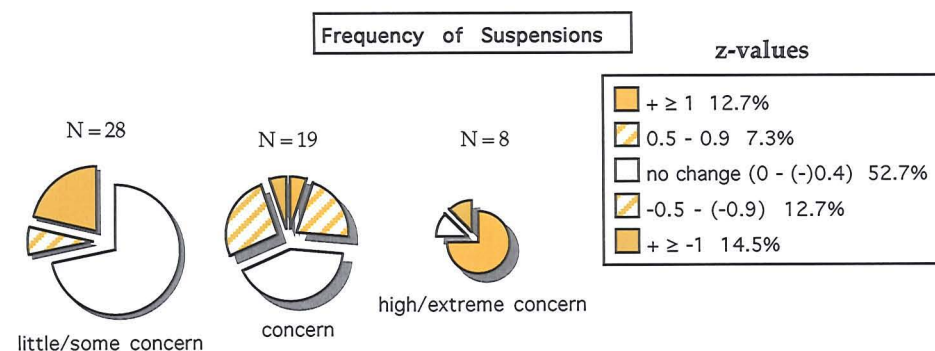
Sgi Cohorts 2000 - 2002 (N = 55)

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[24]   With the exception of referrals (cohort 2001) which is post- (S2(2 & 3))

Duration of Suspensions

z-values

- + ≥ 1 10.9%
- 0.5 - 0.9 9.1%
- no change (0 - (-)0.4) 60%
- -0.5 - (-0.9) 12.7%
- + ≥ -1 7.3%

N = 29 — little/some concern

N = 16 — concern

N = 10 — high/extreme concern
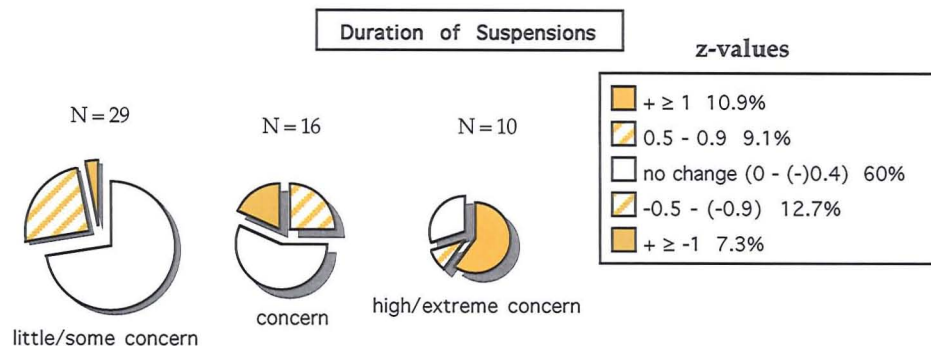
Sgi Cohorts 2000 - 2002 (N = 55)

These findings, whilst presenting a very variable and complex picture, indicate the following trends:

- the majority of pupils within the initial category *little/some concern* demonstrated *no/minimal change;*
- of the remaining pupils within *little/some concern,* the majority deteriorated by ≤ 0.5 z-values for all measures (with the exception of frequency of suspensions);
- only one pupil deteriorated beyond one z-value (in relation to one measure).
- outcomes for pupils within the category *concern* were more variable and tended to centre around *no/minimal change* although more pupils demonstrated improvement than deterioration;
- outcomes for pupils initially within the category *high/extreme concern* were, on the whole, very positive and tended to demonstrate the widest swings. The vast majority of outcomes for this category were positive with only one pupil (on one measure) demonstrating deterioration.

Figs. 9.15a-c illustrate the individual outcomes for each pupil in respect of each discipline measure. It is important to note that Figs. 9.15b & c are exclusive of the eleven pupils who occasioned no suspensions both pre- and post-intervention. These findings illustrate the trends which were identified in the previous set of charts (Fig. 9.14a-d). It is evident, that there are individual pupils who 'go against the trend' (quite dramatically so) in relation to their respective categories. Taken as a whole, however, whilst outcomes are variable, the *Sgi* has impacted successfully upon the outcomes (as can be measured in 'hard data') for the majority of pupils either in terms of preventing pupils 'at risk' of developing SEBD from deterioration (≥-0.5 z values) or in impacting in a positive way on pupils already demonstrating SEBD.

Figs. 9.15a (i): Individual pupil outcomes in relation to discipline measures[25]
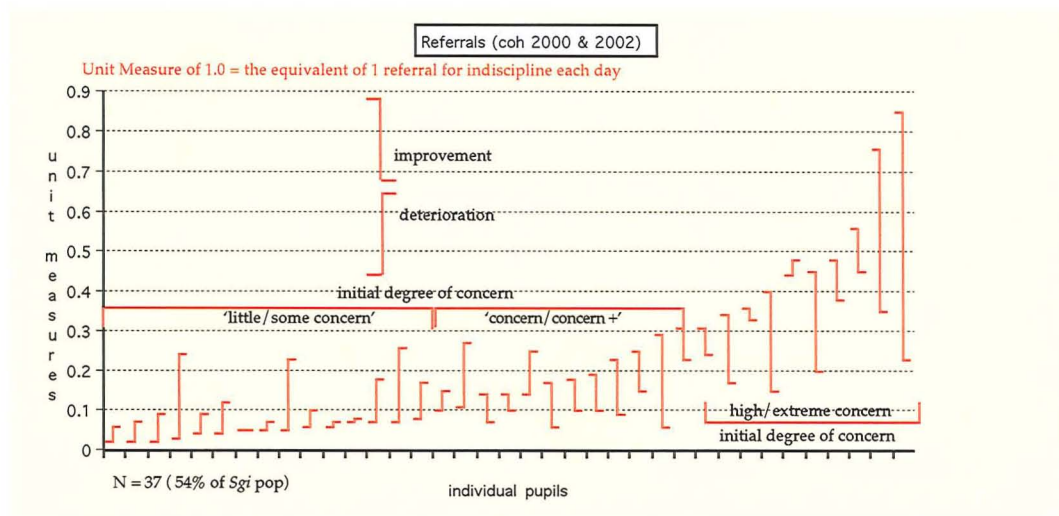
Figs. 9.15a (ii): Individual pupil outcomes in relation to discipline measures
(comparison between S2 (1) and S2 (2+ 3))
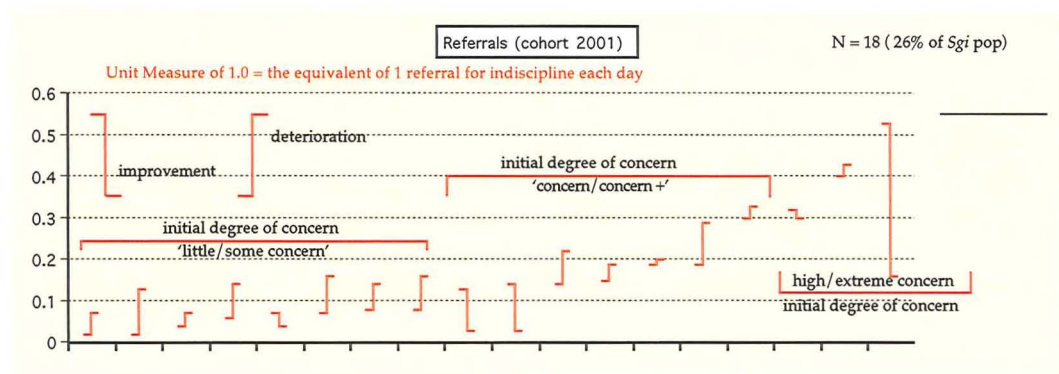
Fig. 9.15b: Individual pupil outcomes in relation to discipline measures
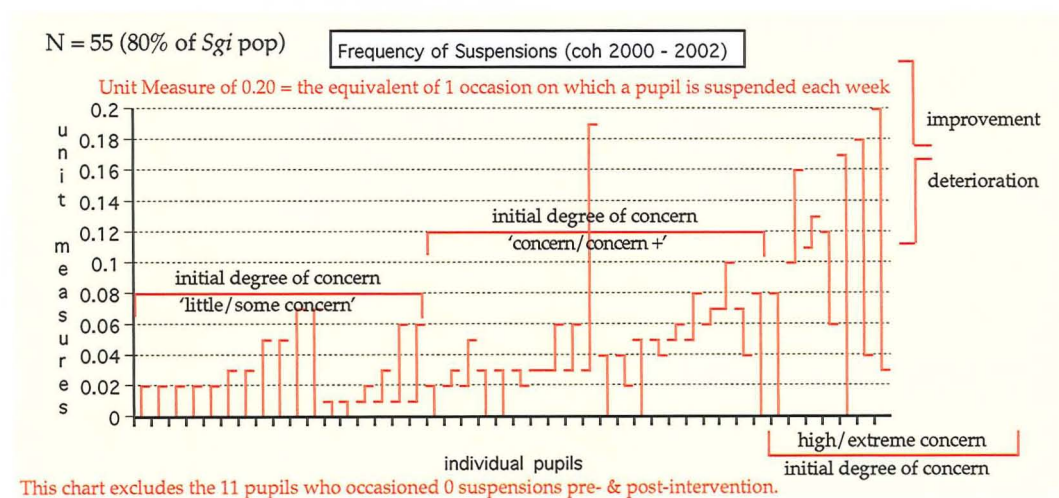
[25]   comparison between S2 (1) and S2 (3) for all tables with the exception of Fig. 9.15a (ii)

Fig. 9.15c: Individual pupil outcomes in relation to discipline measures

N = 55 (80% of *Sgi* pop)

Duration of Suspensions (coh 2000 - 2002)

Unit Measure of 0.20 = the equivalent of 1 day suspension each week.

This chart excludes the 11 pupils who occasioned 0 suspensions pre- & post-intervention.
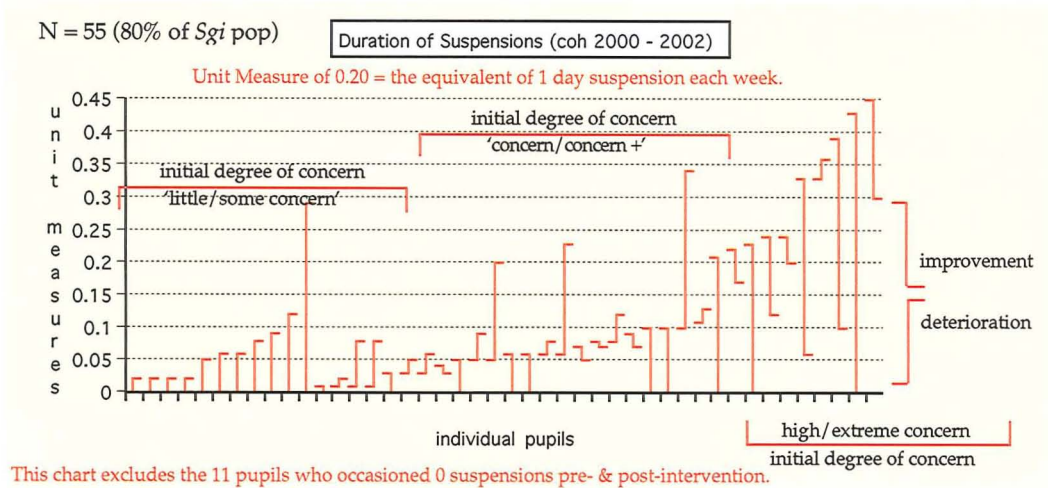
9.2.5 Examining the cohort, group and Group Leader effects

In examining Fig. 9.16, it is clear that the individual cohorts were quite distinct, indicated even by the substantial differences in the number of pupils involved within the initiative each session and also in the variation in unit measures (pre-intervention) for each discipline measure .

Fig. 9.16: Comparison between the discipline profiles of each *Sgi* cohort
pre-intervention (S2(1)) (1999-2002)
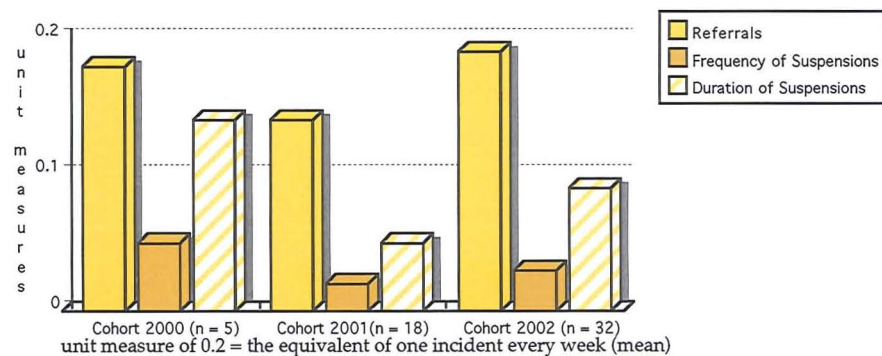
These differences between the cohorts have already been noted in examining the variable pattern of exclusion openings (c.c. Fig. 9.6).

In examining the progress of each of the cohorts in relation to each discipline measure (Table 9.1), it can be established that there is a substantial variation in the outcomes although it is pleasing to note that there is no statistically significant deterioration for any cohort for any measure (c.c. App 9.2.3 (tables 1-3)). As such, it would be fair to say that there is a 'cohort effect', if unpredictable.

Table 9.1: Degree of significance of outcomes for each cohort (chi-squared tests) (1999-2002)[26]

	Referrals	Frequency of Suspensions	Duration of Suspensions
Cohort 2000 (5 pupils)	no significant difference	Improvement $(x^2=4.65, p < .05)$	Improvement $(x^2=8.97, p < .01)$
Cohort 2001 (18 pupils)	no significant difference	no significant difference	Improvement $(x^2=4.18, p < .05)$
Cohort 2002 (32 pupils)	Improvement $(x^2=8.12, p < .01)$	no significant difference	no significant difference

Table 9.2 summarises the extent to which group responses to two measures - referrals and duration of suspensions - were of statistical significance or not (c.c. App 9.2.3 (tables 4 & 5)).

Table 9.2: Degree of significance of outcomes for each group (chi-squared tests) (1999-2002)

	$p < .001$ det	$p < .01$ det	$p < .05$ det	No sig change	$p < .05$ imp	$p < .01$ imp	$p < .001$ imp
Referrals (coh 2000 & 2002)		Group 02D $(x^2=10.16)$		All other groups (6 in total)	Group 02F $(x^2=6.17)$		Group 02C $(x^2=12.07)$
Referrals (cohort 2001)			Group 01D $(x^2=3.85)$	All other groups (3 in total)			
Duration of Susp. (cohorts 2000-2002)		Group 02D $(x^2=9.16)$ Group 02E $(x^2=7.77)$	Group 02F	All other groups (7 in total)		Group 00A $(x^2=8.97)$ Group 01C $(x^2=7.50)$	Group 02G $(x^2=12.70)$

Key: det: deterioration; imp: improvement

It can be observed that the responses of the groups are variable and differ according to the discipline measure in question.

A further variable to consider is the impact of group size. Groups varied in size from three to six pupils. Did this have an effect upon pupil outcomes? (c.c. Table 9.3)

The outcomes according to size of group are variable and no clear pattern emerges from the data. However, before one can postulate that there is a group effect, it is of value to examine the data in more detail.

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[26]   for all measures and cohorts except referrals 2001 which is S2 (2 & 3)

Table 9.3: The impact of group size upon pupil outcomes in relation to referrals and duration of suspensions

| No. of pupils | Referrals | | | Duration of Suspensions | | |
	Sig Imp	Not Sig	Sig Det	Sig Imp	Not Sig	Sig Det
3		Group 02A Group 02E			Group 02A	Group 02E $(x^2 = 7.7, p < .01)$
4	Group 02F $(x^2 = 6.17, p < .05)$	Group 01A Group 02G Group 02H	Group 01D $(x^2 = 3.85, p < .05)$	Group 02G $(x^2 = 12.7, p < .001)$	Group 01A Group 01D Group 02H	Group 02F $(x^2 = 3.94, p < .05)$
5	Group 02C $(x^2 = 12.07, p < .001)$	Group 00A Group 01C Group 01E Group 02B		Group 00A $(x^2 = 8.97, p < .01)$ Group 01C $(x^2 = 7.5, p < .01)$	Group 01E Group 02B Group 02C	
6			Group 02D $(x^2 = 10.16, p < .01)$			Group 02D $(x^2 = 9.16, p < .01)$

Key : Sig: significant; Imp: improvement; Det: deterioration

Figs. 9.17a-f illustrate the individual progress of pupils within groups 00A, 01A and 02E (all of which were led by the same group leader).

Figs. 9.17a - f: Individual pupil outcomes in relation to discipline measures according to group (1999-2002)

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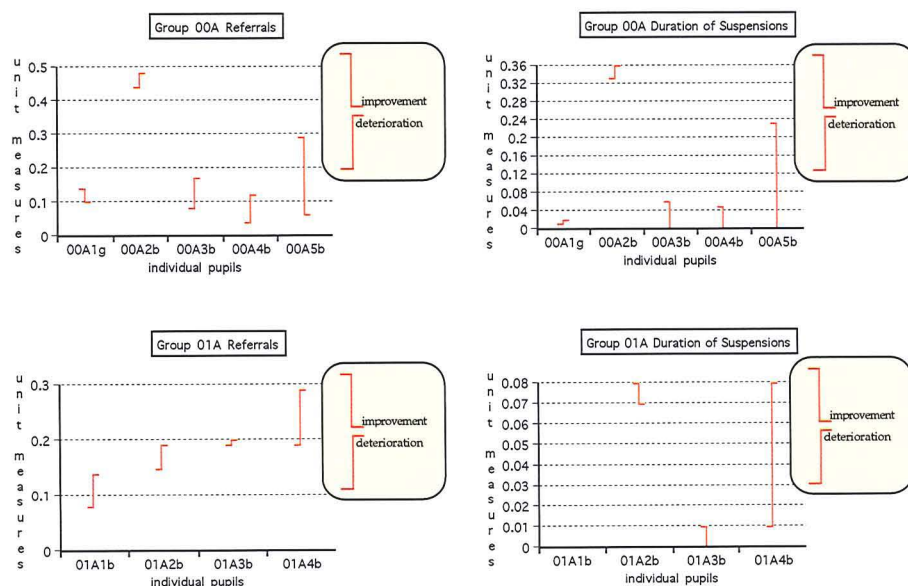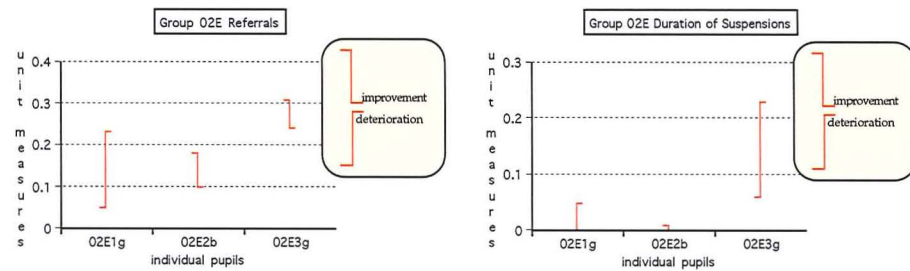
It is clear from examination of the above data that there are no clear trends within or between the groups and what may appear to be a 'group effect' could indeed by affected to a large extent by one or two pupils (as is the case with 00A5b, 01A4b and 02E3g). In these cases, the 'individual pupil effect' is clearly the most significant factor.

The conclusion has to be reached therefore that, whilst it may be the case that there is a 'group effect', it is outweighed by the 'individual pupil effect' indicating that a wide range of variables may be interacting with each other in effecting outcome. Given this conclusion, it is even more unlikely that a 'Support Group Leader effect' can be demonstrated to any significant extent. The evidence in respect of groups 00A, 01A and 02E would indicate not.

9.2.6 Examining the impact of the Sgi over time

This section examines the performance of pupils within the *Sgi* as they progressed into S3[27]. Within the national and local authority[28] context of declining standards of discipline from S2 into S3, how have *Sgi* pupils and 'other' fared? Figs. 9.18 a-d illustrate the mean frequency of suspensions and duration (total days) of suspension for the *Sgi* and 'other' populations from S1 through to S3, expressed as unit measures. Whilst the scales are entirely different for the two populations, it can be seen that the trends are also different.

In comparing the progress of both populations from S2 pre-intervention (S2(1)) to S3 in relation to the two suspension related measures, the *Sgi* population demonstrated significant improvement in respect of duration of suspensions ($x^2 = 5.4$, $p < .05$) whereas 'other' demonstrated highly significant deterioration in respect of both frequency of suspensions ($x^2 = 32$, $p < .001$) and duration of suspensions ($x^2 = 43$, $p < .001$) (c.c. App 9.2.2 (tables 3 & 4)).

These findings would indicate that, in relation to these two measures, the *Sgi* had, at the least, prevented deterioration (in respect of average performance) and had promoted improvement in respect of duration of suspensions in the period from S2(1) to S3.

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[27]   there is no available data for referrals for S3 pupils therefore the comparison is restricted to data relating to suspensions

[28]   local authority exclusions per 1,000 pupils increasing by 33% over this time frame.

Figs.9.18a - d: Mean performance (unit measures) of *Sgi* population and 'other'
in relation to suspensions (1999-2002)
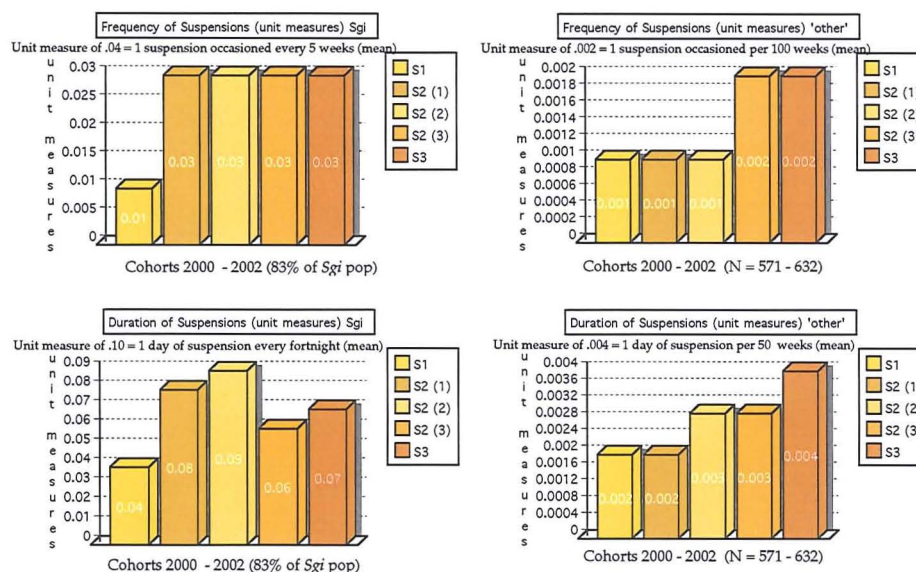
This is reflected in the proportion of suspension related measures accounted for by 'other' (S2 (pre-int.) - S3) in relation to the cohorts as a whole in which *frequency of suspensions* almost trebled for 'other' and *duration of suspensions* more than doubled (c.c. Figs. 9.19a & b).

Fig. 9.19 a & b: Proportion of suspensions accounted for by *Sgi* population
in comparison to 'other' in S2 (1) and S3 (Cohorts 1999-2002)
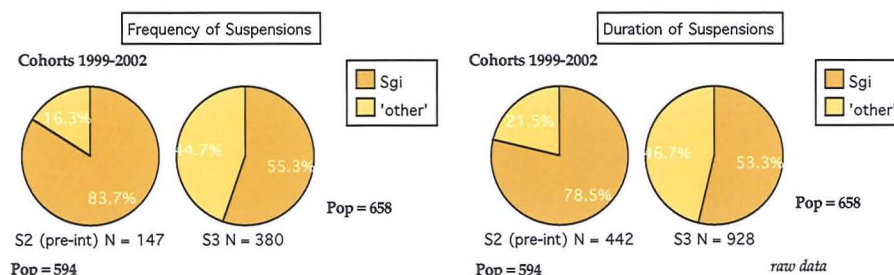
In relation to National trends, 'other' is following the conventional pattern of deterioration whereas the *Sgi* population is not. It is reasonable to surmise that, without intervention, a deterioration in line with 'other' might have been predicted.

The statistical data needs to be examined in conjunction with the narrative accounts of pupil progress in S3 provided by the Depute Head (c.c. App 6.2.8) and the observations by the Behaviour Support Teacher of the progress of *Sgi* pupils as they move through the school (c.c. 8.1.1.3).

9.3   Attainment related

It has been established that the performance of the school cohort (Pr7) (and, in particular, the *Sgi* population) in National Tests in English compared unfavourably with National and Local Authority cohorts and in relation to national benchmarks and targets. The differentials in performance between the prospective *Sgi* population and 'other' were statistically highly significant at $\geq$ levels C & D in reading and $\geq$ levels B, C & D in writing (c.c. 5.2.4).

9.3.1 Examining the wider context

Fig. 9.20 illustrates the performance of the comparator populations (S2) in national tests in English during the period 2000-2002[29] . The differentials between the performance of the *Sgi* population and the wider populations are of even greater statistical significance than those for the same pupils at the Pr 7 stage, ranging from a chi-squared value of $x^2 = 26$, p <.001 for writing (*Sgi* population and 'other') to $x^2 = 51$, p <.001 for reading (*Sgi* population and all other pupils nationally) (c.c. App 9.3.1.2 (tables 4 - 6) & App 9.3.1.3 (tables 3 & 4)). The performance of the *Sgi* population falls very far short of the national targets set for 2001 for reading and writing and the national benchmark of 75% of pupils achieving at $\leq$ level E in S2 (SEED, 1999c). It is evident that the gap in performance between *Sgi* pupils and other comparator groups, is widening over time.

Fig. 9.20: Comparison between wider populations in national tests in English (2000-2002)
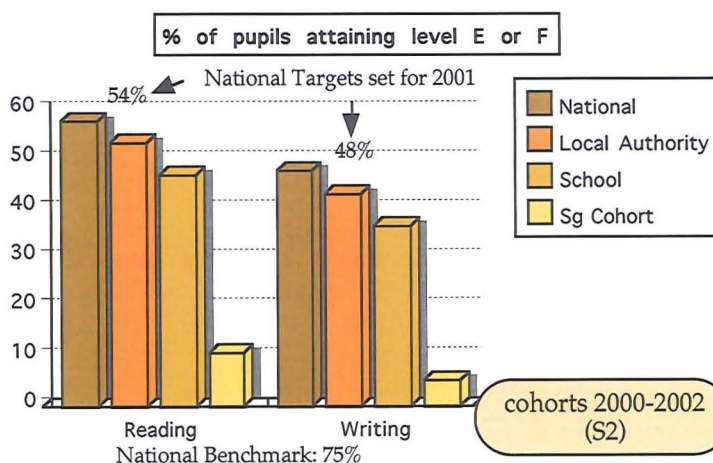
9.3.2 Examining the performance of the Sgi measuring change Pr7 - S2

A break down of the performance of the *Sgi* population in respect of levels attained in Pr 7 and subsequently in S2 is illustrated in Figs. 9.21a-d. The proportion of pupils attaining

[29]   Drawing from School Handbooks and school-based documentation

at ≥ level D in Pr 7 for reading (23%) and writing (14%); and at ≥ level E in S2 for reading (11%) and writing (5%)[30] is cause for great concern and the proportion of pupils attaining stage-related targets is diminishing over time. Of even greater concern, is the proportion of pupils who have only attained ≤ level B in S2 (11% in reading and 32% in writing).

Figs. 9.21a - d: Performance of the *Sgi* population in national tests in English: Pr 7 (1998-2000) and S2 (2000-2002)

Sg Cohort Reading (pre-intervention) 2000-2002

A 3.6%
B 17.9%
C 35.7%
D 21.4%
E 1.8%
No N. T. 19.6%

pre-int   N = 56 (81% of cohort)

Sg Cohort Reading (post-intervention) 2000-2002

A 0%
B 10.7%
C 50%
D 26.8%
E 10.7%
No N.T. 1.8%

post-int   N = 56 (81% of cohort)

Sg Cohort Writing (pre-intervention) 2000-2002

A 1.8%
B 33.9%
C 30.4%
D 10.7%
E 3.6%
No N. T. 19.6%

pre-int   N = 56 (81% of cohort)

Sg Cohort Writing (post-intervention) 2000-2002

A 5.4%
B 26.8%
C 41.1%
D 19.6%
E 5.4%
No N.T. 1.8%

post-int   N = 56 (81% of cohort)
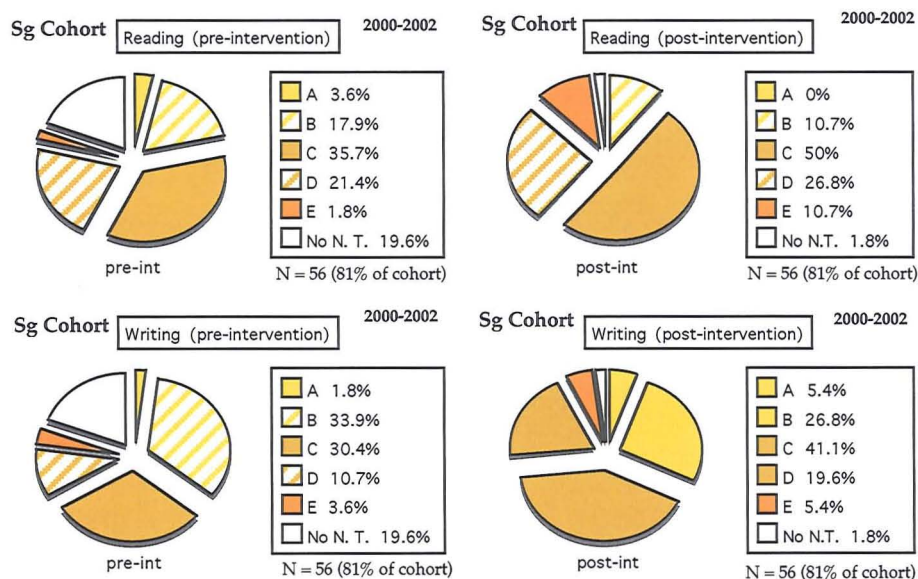
How does this compare with the progress of other pupils within the cohort for the same period (Pr 7 (1998-2000); S2 (2000-2002))? (c.c. Figs. 9.22a -d)

Figs. 9.22a - d: Performance of 'other' in national tests in English: Pr 7 (1998-2000) and S2 (2000-2002)

Reading (pre-intervention)

A 2.3%
B 5.6%
C 27.2%
D 44.9%
E 9.5%
No N. T. 10.5%

pre-int   cohort 2000-2002   N = 430

Reading (post-intervention)

A 0.9%
B 4.9%
C 17.9%
D 24.4%
E 44%
F 6.7%
No N.T. 1.2%

post-int

Writing (pre-intervention)

A 2.8%
B 14.2%
C 35.1%
D 35.8%
E 9.7%
No N. T. 2.4%

pre-int   cohort 2000-2002   N = 424

Writing (post-intervention)

A 0.2%
B 8.3%
C 18.9%
D 25.7%
E 40.3%
No N.T. 6.6%

post-int

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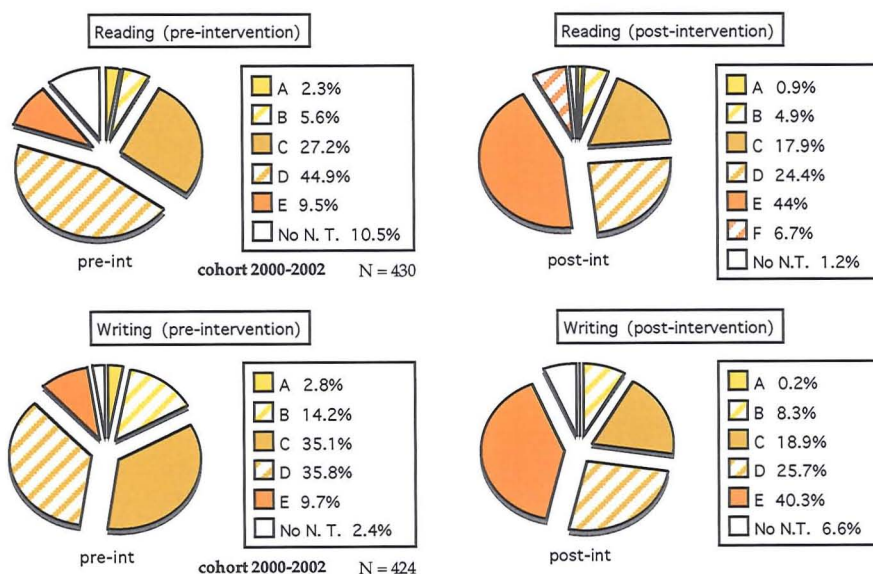
[30]   %s relate to those pupils for whom it was possible to make comparisons (81% of *Sgi* pop)

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In respect of both reading and writing, the proportions of pupils attaining at the upper levels are significantly higher for 'other' than for the *Sgi* cohort. The differential between the two populations at the end of S2 is greatest at ≥ levels C & D in reading (($x^2 = 37$, p <.001; $x^2 = 33$, p <.001 respectively) (although statistically significant also at ≥ level E (($x^2 = 4$, p <.05)) (c.c. App 9.3.2 (table 2)); and in writing at ≥ levels B, C & D ($x^2 = 13$; $x^2 = 35$; $x^2 = 27$ (all p <.001) respectively) (Ibid. (table 4)).

What is also noticeably different between the performance of the two populations is the conversion from level D (Pr 7) to level E (S2) - what might be described as the 'value-added' measure. Post-intervention, the proportion of pupils still performing at ≥ level B in reading and writing within 'other' is much smaller than for the *Sgi* population, particularly in respect of writing.

9.3.3 Comparing the degree of change for individual pupils between the Sgi population and the S2 cohort as a whole

These differences which had been observed when examining the statistics for the populations as a whole, are reflected in the examination of the progress of individual pupils from both populations as can be observed in Figs. 9.23a-d:

Figs. 9.23a-d: Measuring the degree of change for the *Sgi* population in comparison to 'other' (2000-2002) in national tests in English
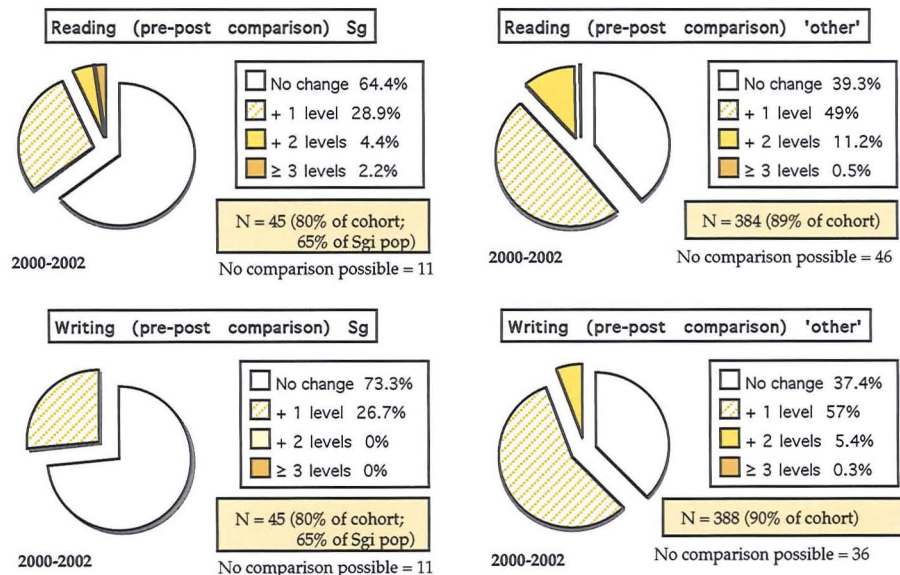
The profiles for the *Sgi* population and the S2 cohort are very different. A much higher proportion of pupils within the *Sgi* population record *no change* in respect of both reading (64%) and writing (73%) than for 'other' (39% and 37% respectively). However, it is important not to equate *no change* with *no progress*. Whilst pupils may have not attained to the next level, they may have consolidated previous learning and progressed within the level (c.c. 6.3.3.2).

Differentials between the two populations are greatest in respect of those pupils remaining at the same level in reading and writing ($x^2 = 5$, p <.05; $x^2 = 22$, p <.001 respectively) and those pupils progressing by one level ($x^2 = 7$, p <.01; $x^2 = 15$, p <.001 respectively), indicating that writing, in particular, was more resistant to improvement for *Sgi* pupils in comparison to 'other'[31] (c.c. App 9.3.3 (tables 1 & 2)).

9.4 Summary

In general, quantitative data corroborates qualitative findings within the study. The statistically significant differentials which emerged between the wider populations pre-intervention - national, LA and school - tend to become even more pronounced over time. This is exemplified by:

- the widening gaps between the school and national cohorts in relation to attendance, unauthorised absence and attainment in reading and writing;
- the rise in exclusions in the school cohort which, whilst exemplifying the national trend, exceed those of the LA at all stages.

However, the *Sgi* population demonstrates distinctive trends:

- whilst attendance declined for both the *Sgi* population and 'other' to a statistically significant extent and the differential between both populations remained of high statistical significance, the differential reduced between S1 and S2 (2) for the *Sgi* population;
- whilst 'other' demonstrated a deteriorating trend in relation to all discipline measures pre- to post-intervention (S2) which is of statistical significance, the *Sgi* population demonstrated a positive trend on some measures (also of statistical significance). These opposing trends continued into S3;
- the *Sgi* population, in relation to discipline measures, was becoming less extreme and more homogenous;
- further deterioration in discipline measures (> 0.5 values) had been averted for the majority of *Sgi* pupils and, for some pupils, positive outcomes (>. 05 values) had been achieved.

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[31]   taking account of the provisos given in 6.3.3.2.

Chapter 10
Case Studies

Introduction

The case studies within this Chapter were selected via. a stratified random sampling method (c.c. 6.4.1) to be representative of the cohort of the *Sgi* population from which they emanate (cohort 2002 (session 2001-2002)). As previously indicated, for reasons of economy, only four of the six case studies are included within this chapter although the findings from all six studies are incorporated within the study. A summary of the sources from which the case studies are drawn is provided within the Appendix. (c.c. App 10.1)

A summary of the statistical data for each case study in relation to the benchmark measures (c.c. 5.2) is provided in the Appendix (App. 10.2 - 10.4). It should be noted that the average % attendance nationally (Local Authority figures in brackets) for session 2000 - 2001[1] is 88.6% (87.3%) and 88.9% (87.7%) for session 2001-2002[2] . An exemplification of an interview transcript (relating to Stewart (CS1)) can be found within the Appendix (c.c. App 10.5).

10.1 Case Study no 1: Stewart
10.1.1 Background

Stewart is from a single-parent home. In response to general concerns about his behaviour both at school and in the local community (involving police intervention), and in relation to his mother's ability to cope with him, the wider family had become involved and Stewart had left the family home to live with his Aunt and Uncle mid-way through S2.

10.1.2 Pre-Intervention

Concerns about Stewart's indiscipline arose in S1. He lost the sight of one eye as an outcome of fighting. In the initial term in S2, he amassed 12 referrals *(0.22)* and had been suspended on three occasions *(0.05)* for a total of six days *(0.10)* for persistent disruption, fighting and bullying (respectively). In the pre-intervention period, Stewart had a 66% attendance rate.

Stewart's Pastoral Care teacher regarded him as having a poor attitude towards school, truanting (condoned by his mother in his opinion), mixing with other *bad influences* and doing stupid things. He was concerned by the lack of parental support (the mother failing to attend interviews) and he had reached a point where he felt there was little more that

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[1]   the *Sgi* cohort in S1 (SENSP, 2001a)
[2]   the *Sgi* cohort in S2 (SENSP, 2001a)

he could do to support Stewart.

Stewart was not nominated for Support Group intervention by his Pastoral Care teacher as the teacher did not consider the groups to be of value to pupils (preferring Intermediate Treatment (IT) groups which he considered to be more disciplined) and he also thought that Stewart would regard the group as an opportunity to 'carry on' and to miss classes.

However, at the request of the author, the Pastoral Care teacher completed a referral form which identifies the following as being the areas of greatest concern:

- argues with teachers *(frequently)*
- defies teachers and/or refuses to obey rules *(frequently)*
- deliberately does things to annoy other people *(frequently)*
- is angry, resentful, spiteful or vindictive *(frequently)*
- physical fights *(frequently)* (c.c. App 1 & App 7.2.1)

He also observes:- *Doesn't always co-operate with monitoring system. No improvement despite interviews and assurances.*

There were no representatives from Stewart's family at either of the briefing meetings held for parents of pupils in Support Groups. However, Stewart's aunt was very supportive of his involvement in the initiative. She considered that any kind of help for Stewart would be beneficial - *Stewart is clever and just needed support.* She hoped that it would improve his attitude towards teachers. Stewart did not consider that he needed help but recognised that others thought that he did and that the group might improve his behaviour.

Stewart's pre-intervention self-assessment (c.c. App 10.4) indicates that he felt positive about his ability to make friends and get on with them and he rates his self-esteem highly. Most of his responses relating to his relationships with his teachers are positive (or at least mid-response). In contrast, however, he indicates anxiety about his behaviour; concern about the effects of his behaviour on others and motivation to want to improve his behaviour. He indicates experiencing frustration in class work when encountering difficulties and concerns related to his lack of self-control. Prior to S1, Stewart had attained level C in reading and mathematics but only level B in writing.

Stewart was placed in a group led by a teacher who had expressed an interest in becoming a *SgL*.

10.1.3   Response to Intervention: The Professional Perspective

Drawing together the accounts of Stewart's *SgL* and class teachers, the general consensus is that Stewart responded very positively to the intervention. The only discordant voice is

that of his Pastoral Care Teacher who had not changed his view. He did not consider that the Support Group had impacted upon Stewart's behaviour. If any positive changes had occurred, they were more likely to be attributable to the involvement of the wider family. He did not expand upon his reasons for coming to this conclusion.

His *Sg* Leader describes Stewart as being *extremely co-operative* and wanting to improve. Stewart is described as being an active and thoughtful participant within the group, displaying a maturity *more sometimes than I would have imagined.* and certainly not fulfilling the stereotype of a troublesome pupil. He co-operated fully with target-setting/monitoring - *I have all his weekly booklets signed by parents (aunt & uncle) and teachers.* He attended the group regularly.

His *Sg Leader* observes:

> *Big part of (the) success is the relationship with the teacher. Strong and positive - allows you to have more influence on them. Many of these kids need the security of work with one or two teachers maximum.*

He attributes the success of the *Sgi* in helping Stewart to the quality of the materials which structure discussion effectively. The *SgL* notes that Stewart's Aunt was also delighted with the change in him - she was 100% behind the school which was reinforcing the message from home. He considers that the impact of a father-figure in Stewart's life (Stewart's uncle) had been very beneficial to him.

He also notes that attitudes of class teachers towards Stewart were becoming more positive:- *"Co-operating with German" - very positive comment. It says so much given that many pupils have difficulties with German.* Concerns had still been expressed by one of his teachers but the *Sg Leader* notes, *She has her own problems.*

His *SgL* considers that Stewart had developed a greater capacity to reflect upon his behaviour and had gained insight into it; to take on board what others said to him; and to be aware of how his behaviour affected others. He had developed understanding of *how his actions impact on other pupils' ability to learn.* He was now able to perceive teachers as human beings with strengths and failings and had also realised that his behaviour influenced how teachers reacted to him.

This is reflected in the reports of class teachers. Of the nine responses by class teachers[3], only two noted no change to his behaviour and attitude - *Behaviour much improved on last year.* Similar improvements were noted in respect of his interpersonal relationships - *Much more amenable with teachers/pupils,* although this was not always perceived to be a difficulty in the first instance.

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[3]   2/3rds of his class teachers

His *SgL* considers that Stewart had developed a much greater understanding of the value of school and how it fitted into his life which resulted in more positive attitudes towards school generally, encouraged and supported by his family. Five of his class teachers note improvements in his classwork - *Stewart produces a much higher standard of work now*. One teacher, however, notes a deterioration which was attributed to poor attendance. The vast majority of his teachers consider that Stewart had benefited from his involvement in the *Sgi*.

10.1.4   Parent and Pupil Perspectives

Stewart enjoyed the Support Group and liked the individual attention which he had received. He considers that the activities had encouraged him to reflect upon his behaviour and feels that he had been listened to and supported. Both Stewart and his Aunt had found the target-setting process beneficial - *It was clearly said what I had to do and teachers could easily check.* (Stewart) - and, over time, his reports from class teachers, particularly in German, improved.

Stewart's aunt was surprised at Stewart's positive response to the group - *It has exceeded initial expectations.* She appreciates the time which the *Sg Leader* had spent with Stewart and notes that Stewart responded well to encouragement and help - his teachers were now 'giving him a break'. The Support Group, and these more positive responses helped him to see that staff didn't dislike him. He had recognised that he needed help and was being given a chance:- *His attitude towards teachers is so different. He now wants to go to school. Attitudes have completely reversed - a much calmer boy.*

She considers that the group had also impacted upon Stewart's learning. He was getting better reports from teachers and was really trying with his homework. Teachers had recognised the effort he had put in. She thought that his attendance, attitude and school work had all improved in response to the *Sgi*. This is corroborated by Stewart who had learned that, when you are well behaved,you learn a lot more and his relationships with teachers had improved. He had come to see his teachers as being nicer that he had thought before and less grumpy:- *Teachers help more when I am good. They just kick me out when I'm bad. They can spend more time with other people and can teach you more.*

He considers that his grades in Maths had improved (he had passed both of his assessments) and that he was now paying more attention in class and listening more carefully - *Spend less time talking and carrying on.* He had also begun to reflect more upon his future prospects and how his behaviour in school might affect them.

> *I'm trying to behave better as it well help in later life when trying to get a job. Don't learn anything when (I'm) bad and if (I) don't learn anything, (I) won't get a job. I don't want to be a junkie or end up homeless.*

His uncle had re-inforced this point.

He saw that some of the others in the group were disruptive and weren't really trying to improve but this did not make any difference to his motivation:- *Just decided to try to improve myself. Have to make an effort in the group.*

Stewart's post-intervention assessment is largely positive (although he still feels negatively about aspects of his behaviour and experiences frustration in learning). He attributes the positive changes in himself principally to his aunt and uncle but also recognises the role which the Support Group had played in helping him. He considers that the *Sgi* could be beneficial for pupils but it depends upon the motivation of the pupils to want to improve. Stewart's Aunt attributes the success of the group to the fact that Stewart had not been given up as a *lost cause. It gave him the support he needed.*, and the fact that he came to believe that he needed help. She also drew attention to the change in family arrangements which she considered had provided stability in his life which had been lacking.

10.1.5 Examining Stewart's attendance, discipline record & attainment

It is evident in examining all measures that there has been an improvement. After an initial slump (at the beginning of the intervention period) Stewart's % attendance rate improved radically from 54% in S1 to 94% in S3. Stewart's unauthorised absence is entirely accounted for by suspensions from school.

There is a steady reduction in the incidences of indiscipline for all discipline measures from the period of commencement of intervention (S2) until the end of S2 eg. referrals reducing from 12 *(0.22)* to 4 *(0.09)*. In the final period (56 days) there were no suspensions. In S3, there are two suspensions *(0.01)* (a single day in each case *(0.01)*).

At the end of S2, he had attained level D in reading, level C in writing but remained at level C for mathematics.

10.2 Case Study no 2: Linda
10.2.1 Background

Linda comes from a single parent family. Her mother is very supportive of the school[4] but was very concerned about her daughter's behaviour and felt inadequate in dealing with it.

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[4] As is evidenced by her willingness to attend parental interviews and parents' evenings

10.2.2   Pre-Intervention

Serious difficulties had emerged for Linda towards the end of S1. She had been suspended on three occasions *(0.02)* for a total of 9 days *(0.05)* for swearing at and threatening teachers, fighting and general disruption. In order to give Linda a fresh start in S2, she was placed in a new registration class with a different Pastoral Care teacher. Her attendance rate in S1 was 92.4%.

In the initial term of S2, Linda had four referrals for indiscipline pre-intervention in S2 *(0.07)*, none of which justified exclusion from school. In a review of her progress four months into the session, the majority of class teachers reported that she had settled well into her new class and noted an improvement in her behaviour and attitude although some concerns were raised. One teacher tells of Linda's potential for trouble:- *Personally, this year, I haven't had any problems. I can see the potential, but it hasn't come to anything yet.*

On the basis of these concerns, Linda was nominated for Support Group intervention by her Pastoral Care teacher, Mrs Stewart. The referral form highlights the following as being of concern:

- argues with teachers *(sometimes)*
- defies teachers and/or refuses to obey rules *(sometimes)*
- deliberately does things to annoy other people *(sometimes)*
- blames others for his/her own mistakes *(sometimes)*
- is touchy or easily annoyed by others *(sometimes)*
- is angry, resentful, spiteful or vindictive *(rarely)*
- swears or uses obscene language *(frequently)*
- truanting *(rarely)*
- physical fights *(rarely)* (c.c. App 1)

Mrs Stewart considered Linda to be very insolent, loud, rude and offensive to staff, re-inforced through aggressive body-language. She hoped that the intervention might lift Linda's self-esteem, re-inforce appropriate behaviour and help her to be more reflective and aware of her behaviour. She also hoped that it would build upon the good relationship which she had already established with Linda and to help Linda to improve upon her relationships with teachers.

Linda's mother was very positive about Linda attending a group and came along to the introductory meeting for parents. She was a little concerned about the stigma that could be attached to pupils attending the groups but hoped that the *Sgi*, in addition to giving strategies to help Linda manage her behaviour, might *help her to see that her behaviour was a serious issue and that people were trying to help her.*

Linda, herself, had an entirely different perspective. She didn't consider that she needed

help - teachers were picking on her. She saw it as an opportunity to *get me out of German* and *avoid doing classwork*. However, she did think that it would improve her behaviour.

Linda's pre-intervention self-assessment indicated that she felt positively about her relationships with peers, accepted that some of her teachers tried to be fair and that she could talk to some teachers. She also indicated that she was concerned about her behaviour and wanted to improve upon it. She acknowledged the lack of mutual respect between herself and her teachers and her aggression towards them. She also acknowledged her poor behaviour and her inability to understand it or control it; perceived herself as a poor learner; and indicated frustration in learning when she encountered difficulties. Linda's attainment in Pr 7 is well in keeping with expectations for her stage - level D in reading and mathematics and level E in writing.

10.2.3   Response to Intervention: The Professional Perspective

Drawing together the response of Linda's Pastoral Care teacher and class teachers, it is evident that Linda's response to the *Sgi* is mixed. Within the *Sg* itself, Linda was co-operative although she was initially very quiet and slow to contribute to discussions. Mrs Stewart was concerned, however, that Linda's lack of co-operation with target-setting made it difficult for her mother to monitor her progress at home. She attributes this lack of co-operation to the dynamics of the friendship group and Linda's strong-willed behaviour:- *She is a very strong-willed individual with a strong sense of values. The difficulty arises when these values are at odds with the daily procedures in school.*

Mrs Stewart considers that Linda had demonstrated little development with regard to self-insight, empathy and understanding in her relationships with others:- *My agenda for the Sg is to let them see that they have choices in situations. Linda is still very volatile. The group doesn't seem to have impacted upon her.* However, the group had provided the opportunity for Linda to meet with Mrs Stewart in a more confidential setting. Mrs Stewart considered that the group might have had more impact upon Linda if it had met more regularly and if Linda had faced up to the difficulties that she had rather than constantly justifying her behaviour. She was concerned by Linda's friendships with older, disaffected youngsters and felt that this had had a negative impact upon Linda's progress within the group. Whilst Linda had an awareness of how her behaviour impacted upon others, it did not deflect her challenging behaviour or insolence. The only positive change had been the development of some self-discipline but it was not certain that this could be sustained.

This is reflected in the variable responses of Linda's class teachers (nine of whom responded[5] to the questionnaire) whose comments range from, *Behaviour has improved significantly,* to, *I find her very aggressive.* Whilst it is noted that she could be more amenable - *More co-operative and more aware she'll have to face consequences* - it is also noted

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[5]   around two-thirds

that she could be defiant - *More able to answer back.* Whilst no change is observed in her relationships with peers, relationships with staff are variable.

Linda's Pastoral Care teacher notes that whilst Linda had goals for the future, she was poorly motivated and lacked the insight to equate her ability to learn and attitude towards school as being necessary to achieve these goals. Whilst some improvement had been noted in Linda's work attitude and attainment (noted by almost half of her teachers in the questionnaire), this was not replicated in other classes - *Remains chatty and distracted.*

However, on a more positive note, the majority of staff consider that Linda had benefited from the group (if to varying degrees). Comments once again reflected the range of opinions:- *Linda smiled this year!; Rapid deterioration abated.;* to *Attitude continues to be insolent and aggressive.*

10.2.4   The Parent and Pupil Perspectives

Linda's mother considered that Linda had reacted quite positively to the group although her daughter was reluctant to talk about it at home, or school generally. Whilst Linda still had incidents of indiscipline, her mother felt reassured by the members of staff with whom she had regular contact (the Depute Head and Pastoral Care teacher) that improvement could take time. Linda's experiences in the *Sg* were mixed. Some activities and discussions she had found interesting but others, boring. She felt that the teacher dominated the discussion and sometimes it didn't seem relevant. One of the boys in the group had been disruptive and the teacher had needed to devote a lot of time to him.

Linda's mother considered that her daughter co-operated with target-setting and she, personally, found the approach very helpful in re-inforcing links between school and home and in helping to re-inforce the positive behaviour which Linda exhibited in some of her classes - *She can be good.* Linda, whilst accepting that the target-card and the pupil diary had made her focus more upon improving her behaviour and made some difference to her behaviour, didn't like the target card and felt that she got into trouble a lot of the time for not bringing it to class. She didn't want her Mum to see the card if it was negative and would occasionally forge her Mum's signature. Linda didn't like being 'talked down to' by teachers:- *Most pupils get talked down to but they keep their heads down. I can't.*

Linda's mother noted some positive outcomes arising from Linda's involvement in the group. There had been some improvement in her relationship with her mother - *Doesn't lose her temper so much.* She also recounted a recent incident at school in which Linda had taken responsibility for her behaviour and had genuinely apologised to the teacher, something which would not have occurred in the past. However, her mother recognised that her daughter was not always open with her and would be covering up some of the difficult situations in which she would find herself.

In her interview with her *SgL*, Linda indicates that the *Sgi* has helped her to be more aware of her behaviour to an extent and to gain some self-insight (although it hadn't stopped her from *blowing up*) - *I've always got to do what I think is right. I always think I have a reason to argue.* Likewise, she had gained more insight into how her behaviour affected others but this had not impacted upon it. She had also gained a little more understanding of the teacher's perspective in handling the class. She expresses regret at losing her temper and says that, on some occasions, she could say sorry and genuinely mean it. She also states that she could learn from her experiences.

Both Linda and her mother consider that the *Sgi* had made no impact upon Linda's attitudes towards learning or attainment - school reports generally said the perennial *Could do better* (Linda's mother). Linda identifies that some of her difficulties are related to boredom in class and difficulties in coping with classwork:- *I get bored in class and cause trouble. It's hard to concentrate when you don't know what you are doing. Teachers can only help you for short periods.*

Both Linda and her mother consider that the *Sgi* had limited impact upon her, reflected in Linda's comment, *Cos it's only words.* She'd heard it all before! She didn't always understand what was being said to her:- *Use big words when talking to you. Don't know what they mean.*

Linda's mother relates this to Linda's inability to accept responsibility for her own behaviour - *Seems to be taking time to get this message across to her* - and the adverse effects of peer pressure, the latter of which is corroborated by Linda - *I do stuff to give me mates a laugh. Gets you into trouble.* She did, however, say, Mrs M (Depute Head (the author)) *is an influence for good behaviour.*

Linda's post-intervention assessment is very polarised (c.c. App 10.4). In following up Linda's progress over the summer holiday period, her mother comments that Linda was now more aware that people are trying to help her and is more focussed upon wanting to improve. She had gained more awareness of the effects of her behaviour on others and had demonstrated very good progress at home. Her mother was hopeful for the future.

10.2.5   Examining Linda's discipline record, attendance and attainment

It is evident that, as S2 progressed, there was a deterioration in Linda's behaviour. Referrals for serious indiscipline become more frequent and increase as the year progresses from 4 *(0.07)* to 12 *(0.26)* in the final term. She incurred two suspensions post-intervention *(0.02)* - two days at the beginning of intervention *(0.03)*; and three days *(0.06)* in the final term. Linda's attendance in S2 was variable ranging between 84% and 93% (at the three points at which it was measured) and her unauthorised absence was entirely accounted for by suspensions. Unfortunately, Linda's attendance and behaviour

deteriorated further in S3. Her attendance rate fell to 54% and 89% of all absences were unauthorised, of which around half are accounted for by suspensions. She occasioned 9 *(0.10)* suspensions in S3 which totalled 38 days *(0.29)*. At the beginning of S4, Linda took up a place on an *Alternatives to Exclusions* scheme offering an alternative curriculum to disaffected pupils. Given the steep decline in performance in S3 on these measures, it may be the case that the *Sgi* had served in S2 to hold back deterioration but had not been sufficient to secure long term gain, highlighting the need for further ongoing support.

At the end of S2, Linda attained level E in reading and writing but remained at level D in Mathematics.

10.3 Case Study no 3: Alastair

10.3.1   Background

Alastair first came to the attention of Psychological Services in Primary 1. He was described as exhibiting disruptive behaviour, aggression towards other children and extreme mood swings. He was placed in a unit for children with SEBD before being re-integrated into mainstream in Primary 7, one month ahead of his transfer to secondary schooling.

Alastair's elder sister also attends the school. His mother's current partner had adopted her but not Alastair and Alastair had had several placements in residential care which had broken down. Prior to intervention, Alastair was living at home but the situation was described as dire - he was involved in alcohol and solvent abuse and was exhibiting threatening behaviour towards his family.

The child psychologist describes Alastair's difficulties as stemming from detachment problems, his stepfather being ambivalent towards him, if not hostile, and his mother, to whom he has continued to have a strong emotional attachment, not fulfilling his emotional needs. He had been referred to the Children's Reporter and had attended several IT groups but to no effect - a *marked deterioration* was noted.

Alastair attends normal classes but teachers have the facility to send him to the Pupil Support room (with work) if they consider it to be in his best interests. He had been referred to the Joint Assessment Team (JAT) and has been reviewed on a regular basis. Mid-way through S2, Alastair was placed in Belvedere Children's Home. The Child Psychologist indicated that the problems which had been identified in Primary 1 still manifested themselves. He stated:- *This boy does not function well in normal sized peer groups, in contrast to small settings such as room 25 (Pupil Support Base) and the Rannoch House unit previously.*

Alastair had an Individualised Educational Plan (IEP) prepared by the Learning Support Team which recommended differentiated work, kinaesthetic approaches and individual or paired work. He had a reading age of 10 (three years less than his chronological age at the time of testing). The report from Psychological Services, states:- *Alastair presents as an intelligent boy who at the moment is achieving satisfactorily but may not be stretched to his full potential due to his history of emotional and behavioural difficulties.*

10.3.2   Pre-Intervention

Alastair's discipline record indicates a severe deterioration between S1 and the onset of S2. In S1, he was suspended on five occasions *(0.03)* for a total of 10 days *(0.06)* but in the first half of S2 alone, he had had 24 referrals for indiscipline *(0.49)*; and four suspensions *(0.07)* for a total of 16 days *(0.24)*. His suspensions in S1 related to a wide range of indiscipline - fighting, bringing an air gun and pellets to school, general disruption and disobedience, vandalism and throwing water balloons and he continued in a similar vein in S2 with the addition of theft.

His attendance rate in S1 was 86% and all of his unauthorised absence was accounted for by suspensions.

Alastair's referral to the Support Group by his Pastoral care teacher, Mr Hannah, indicates the following concerns:

- loses temper *(frequently)*
- argues with teachers *(frequently)*
- defies teachers and/or refuses to obey rules *(frequently)*
- deliberately does things to annoy people *(frequently)*
- blames others for his own mistakes *(sometimes)*
- is angry, resentful, spiteful or vindictive *(sometimes)*
- swears or uses obscene language *(sometimes)*
- stealing *(frequently)*
- physical fights *(sometimes)* (c.c. App 1)

Mr Hannah considered Alastair to be highly attention seeking. Alastair had little idea of how to behave appropriately within a classroom situation and Mr Hannah questioned the wisdom of Alastair being placed within mainstream - he was constantly in trouble and had a very limited concentration span. Whilst he could be sensible on a one-to-one basis, was intelligent and had a range of skills, he had multiple problems - *his life-experiences had twisted his personality*. Mr Hannah hoped that the small group work scenario of Support Groups would help Alastair to adjust better to secondary school and see the perspective of others. He added, *He needs some expert help - more than we can provide.*

There were no representatives from Alastair's family at the briefing meetings held for

parents of pupils in Support Groups. The Residential Care Worker responsible for Alastair was largely unaware of the Support Group. He felt that it was unlikely that Alastair would derive benefit from the intervention - *Alastair doesn't want to participate in anything.*

Alastair himself had been unconcerned about his involvement in the Support Group although he was pleased to be getting help. He showed little understanding of the severity of his difficulties, considering that he was *only playing around.* The group would get him out of classes! He didn't really expect it to be able to help him much - he had previously been in r25 (Pupil Support Base) which had only helped a little.

Alastair's pre-intervention self-assessment was surprisingly positive given the above scenario. He was positive about his relationships with others. On the other hand, he didn't consider himself to be a good learner, thought of himself as being unintelligent, recognised that he didn't behave well in school and had difficulties in controlling his temper. In contrast to the the view that he had expressed in interview about *only playing around,* he expressed anxiety about his behaviour and indicated that he did want to improve.

There was no National Test data available for Alastair at the end of Primary school.

Alastair was initially placed in a group led by his Pastoral Care Teacher but the group was taken over by the Behaviour Support Teacher, Mr McDonald, due to the extended absence of Mr Hannah.

10.3.3   The Professional Perspective

10.3.3.1: Response to Intervention: The Professional Perspective (School-based)

Mr McDonald believes that Alastair, whilst slow to respond, was co-operative to a degree - *couldn't always get through to him - he would just shut down* - and could be influenced adversely by others in the group. Alastair had made a genuine effort to improve although he had not always contributed to group discussion and activities as he might have done. Mr McDonald considers that Alastair was at last beginning to 'open up' - it had taken time to establish trust with him. Mr McDonald feels that there had been little input from the Care Worker but Alastair was now beginning to see that others were trying to help him. Alastair had not responded to either target-setting - *dead loss* - or the pupil diary.

Mr McDonald considers that Alastair was beginning to develop self-understanding which was reflected in more co-operative behaviour. He was beginning to develop self control - he was less huffy than in the past and was now able to prevent himself from responding aggressively to teachers when reprimanded. Alastair was more relaxed with teachers now

and more willing to accept their authority. There was some evidence that he was beginning to appreciate perspectives other than his own and to develop empathy and interpersonal skills. Mr McDonald considers that Alastair's self-esteem was still very low and that Alastair required support in relation to this. Whilst Alastair's interest in school had waned as family problems had increased, there was some evidence of increased motivation. Some teachers were reporting Alastair's greater interest in lessons and considered that he could now be reasoned with.

Reports from class teachers are very variable. Comments range from, *He now accepts my criticism without over-reacting,* to, *Still a major concern.* There is little change noted in respect of his relationships with peers or work attitude and attainment. Of the ten class teachers who responded to the questionnaire[6] , there was uncertainty as to whether Alastair had benefited from the intervention although some were prepared to give him the benefit of the doubt.

Alastair's Pastoral Care teacher, Mr Hannah, is not convinced about the *Sgi* having any real impact upon Alastair. He believes that although Alastair had enjoyed the company of others in the group, he was still very isolated. As highlighted in his initial concerns, Mr Hannah considers that Alastair requires much more specialised help than can be provided within a mainstream setting but feels that Alastair is not a lost cause if the right type of support were to be provided.

In Mr McDonald's opinion, the most important influence that the Support Group had had upon Alastair was that it had given him an opportunity to talk and be listened to by an adult. Mr McDonald also considers that the Children's Home had provided security for Alastair although Alastair had struggled to come to terms with his placement there. Alastair had been prevented from participating within the X Trust[7] activities because of an incident in a Science class in which he had proved himself to be a danger to other pupils.

Mr McDonald considers Alastair's greatest source of difficulties as lying within the family situation and feels that Alastair's chances of long term improvement lie within remedying this situation. Whilst Alastair had gained from being within the group, he could be a *law unto himself* and his stubbornness, moods and strong sense of justice could hinder his future progress. In his report to the Children's Home, Mr McDonald highlights the need for Alastair to accept responsibility for his behaviour, to communicate with others when in difficulties and to make a distinction between situations in which it is appropriate to have fun and those for learning.

10.3.3.2: Alastair's Care Worker

The comment made of Alastair is that it is *like getting blood out of a stone.* Whilst the Home

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[6]   almost three-quarters
[7]   a charitable body working within the community

provided a range of support mechanisms for youngsters, Alastair was not willing to engage in any of the activities. The overall impression was that Alastair had deteriorated. He was more likely to swear and more reluctant to go to school. School reports were invariably negative. Physically, Alastair was constantly eating and was on medication for sleeping difficulties. Alastair had very little contact with his mother who made little effort to keep in touch with him although he occasionally had weekend visits home. His family life was stagnant - nothing was moving forward.

Over the summer holiday period, Alastair's Care Worker had managed to establish a little more rapport with him and he considered, in retrospect, that the *Sgi* had had some benefit for Alastair:- *I think it has helped Alastair to understand teachers and the teacher's reasons for doing what they do.*

Alastair had indicated an intention to be more focussed upon improvement in the coming session; had developed a little more understanding of the motivations for his behaviour; and had more awareness of the importance of schooling for him. His Care Worker expressed the view that Alastair would probably have been expelled by now if it had not been for his group work.

10.3.4 The Pupil Perspective

Alastair felt quite happy about being in the group and appreciated being listened to - *It was a chance to talk about how teachers felt about you and how you felt about them.* He could talk about his problems rather than going into a huff. He was beginning to engage in group discussions and activities and there is some evidence that he is beginning to develop further, *intrapersonal intelligence.* Whilst he does not know how these changes came about, he identifies that target-setting helped him to focus upon his behaviour.

There are anomalies within his various accounts. For example, in the external interview, he states that he did not find the pupil diary helpful (which corroborates the view of his *SgL)* but in his interview with his *SgL* he says that it helped him to work through his problems. Likewise, in relation to his earlier involvement in an IT group and r25, at one point, he says that they had kept him out of trouble but, at a later point, he says that they did not make much of a difference.

He thought that his behaviour had improved in some classes but not in all. He put this down largely to the approach of the class teacher - the extent to which teachers were willing to *give him some leeway.* He had put into practice some of the lessons which he had learned within the group (particularly in Modern Languages) and this made him feel better in class. He considers that he could control his anger more effectively, could sometimes accept responsibility for his behaviour and whilst he could still get things wrong, he was more able to reflect upon his behaviour than he used to. He regretted losing his temper and could say sorry and genuinely mean it. He says that he can appreciate things more

from the teacher's point of view - *You have to be responsible for your actions.*

He now had a greater appreciation of the needs of others to get a good education without constant interruptions; had an improved relationship with teachers; had more self-control - *doing the work and not shouting out;* was starting to be more interested in school and felt that he was doing better in general. Whilst there had not been much difference in the grades achieved, he felt he was beginning to catch up in his work. In conclusion, he considers that the group had been helpful to him - more than he had expected.

> *What did I get out of it? - more self-control and it made me more aware of what was happening in school. I see school now as a place to improve your knowledge and still as a social place for meeting your mates.*

Alastair's post-intervention self-assessment indicates that he feels more positive about his relationships with peers and staff, had greater perseverance in working at problems in class work and greater motivation towards wanting to improve. He felt more negatively about his behaviour in school and his inability to control his temper when under pressure.

10.3.5 Examining Alastair's discipline record, attendance, JAT reviews and attainment

There is a steady decline in referrals for indiscipline as S2 progresses, ranging from 24 *(0.49)* pre-intervention to 14 *(0.39)* in the final term. The number of suspensions, however, remains fairly constant throughout S2 with 4 *(0.07)* pre-intervention and 3 *(0.06)* and 4 *(0.10)* in the two post-intervention periods. However, there is a steady decline in the total no. of days of suspension indicating that Alastair's difficulties were less severe, ranging from 16 days pre-intervention *(0.24)* to 5 *(0.12)* in the final term. The suspensions related to general indiscipline/disobedience rather than the more specific acts which characterised his behaviour in S1 & early S2. These measures would thus indicate improvement post-intervention.

Alastair's attendance throughout S2 was variable with an improvement in the initial period of intervention (86%) being countered by a deterioration in the final term (65%). Alastair has a 16% rate of unauthorised absence, around half of which is accounted for by suspensions, the remainder, truancy or condoned absence.

There were four subsequent JAT reviews and a report from the Psychological Services over the second half of the session. The first indicated that, for a variety of reasons (including the ill-health of his initial Support Group Leader), Alastair's attendance at the Support Group had been very poor and, consequently, he was failing to derive benefit from it. There was a feeling that Alastair's situation had deteriorated since his placement in the Children's Home. He was unco-operative in class, adversely affected by another pupil in the class and his sleeping problems were affecting his ability to concentrate on his work.

In personal discussion with Alastair (as Depute Head), it became apparent that underlying a lot of Alastair's frustration was the sense that he had little control over his life. It was therefore recommended that Alastair should be given as much opportunity to participate in decision making relating to his current and future prospects, such as the negotiation of his timetable.

A wide variety of school and Social Work measures were proposed for Alastair (continuing support in r25 (Pupil Support Base) and restricted timetable; Social Work family intervention; home-tutoring; referral to Joint Social Work/Educational Group; Intermediate Treatment (IT) provision over school holidays; referral to Psychiatric Services; and referral to Support Services at the Local Authority). It was felt, however, that, ultimately, a placement in a day unit catering for pupils with SEBD would best suit Alastair's long-term needs. At the commencement of S3 Alastair took up a place at a day unit although he was subsequently re-integrated back into the school.

At the end of S2 he had attained level C in all three National Test elements which, given that, in general, accounts of him are of an intelligent boy, would indicate that he is under-achieving.

10.4 Case Study no 4: Thomas
10.4.1   Background

Thomas is the younger of two brothers who have both attended the school. His mother has re-married and has since had another child. His elder brother had a very disturbed school career and has been in trouble with the police.

10.4.2   Pre-Intervention

Thomas had experienced some difficulties in Primary school and his mother intimated that he had had an input from Psychological Services at that stage. Thomas did not settle well into Secondary school and his class had been changed early in the session to remove him from other pupils who were considered to be an adverse influence upon him. Most of the communication with the family was through the mother who reported that she was *at the end of her tether* with regard to her son's behaviour.

In S1, Thomas had amassed thirteen suspensions *(0.09)* for a total of 35 days *(0.22)*, the latter of which represented a fifth of his potential schooling (excluding absence through illness). Most of these suspensions were incurred for persistent disruption and disobedience although he was also responsible for setting off the fire alarm, being abusive to staff and members of the public and violent towards other pupils. Thomas was referred to the Joint Assessment Team (JAT) and provision was made for him to receive

support in the Pupil Support Base. Psychological Services and Social Work undertook to look into his background.

The picture in S2 (pre-intervention) was even more disturbing. He amassed 30 referrals for serious indiscipline *(0.85)*; 9 suspensions *(0.20)* and 23 days of suspensions *(0.39)* all within a 4 month period. The suspensions incurred during this period were, once again, mainly for highly disruptive behaviour but he was also verbally abusive to staff and was involved in fighting. It is clear that Thomas had 'given up' and saw no prospect of improvement. His mother had reached the point at which she was no longer prepared to bring Thomas to school to sign the assurance of co-operation and it was decided to refer Thomas to the Local Authority. The final paragraph of this referral, which was compiled by the author, stated,

> *If these measures are not successful[8], serious consideration should be given to providing education for Thomas outwith mainstream as the evidence, to date, is that he is unable to cope emotionally and socially within this environment.*

Thomas and his parents were duly seen by the Local Authority and it was recommended that his progress should be monitored at regular intervals by them.

Thomas was not initially put forward for Support Group intervention by his Pastoral Care teacher - *No chance of success. Wouldn't turn up, would have no effect.* As a result of personal intervention (as Depute), his Pastoral Care teacher was persuaded to nominate him. The grounds of the referral are as follows:

- loses temper *(rarely)*
- argues with teachers *(frequently)*
- defies teachers and/or refuses to obey rules *(frequently)*
- deliberately does things to annoy other people *(frequently)*
- blames others for his/her own mistakes *(frequently)*
- is touchy or easily annoyed by others *(sometimes)*
- is angry, resentful, spiteful or vindictive *(sometimes)*
- swears or uses obscene language *(sometimes)*
- truanting *(frequently)* (c.c. App 1)

In addition, his Pastoral Care teacher indicates that Thomas had been unresponsive to previous attempts to help him and he was concerned that Thomas would seek confrontation and be disruptive within the group sessions.

Thomas's pre-intervention self-assessment highlights very few positive areas (c.c. App 10.4) and whilst he acknowledges problems with his behaviour, he is ambivalent about the effects of his behaviour upon others.

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[8]   inclusion in the *Sgi* and continued support of r25

Both Thomas and his mother were positive about his participation within the *Sgi*. Thomas thought that it would be better than his usual experience at school when some teachers didn't listen to him. He hoped that it might help him. He was aware that his behaviour was very immature:- *Doing stupid things, not thinking about consequences - crawling around the floor.* He was slightly worried, however, that the group wouldn't help him and that he would end up getting into more trouble. His mother attended the briefing talk which was given about the work of the groups. She stated, *I hoped that the group would help Thomas to understand that his behaviour was unacceptable and he could make changes ..*

Thomas attained level C in reading and mathematics in Primary 7 and level B in writing.

Thomas was placed with his Behaviour Support Teacher, Mr McDonald, rather than his Pastoral Care Teacher for Support Group Work.

10.4.3   *Response to Intervention: The Professional Perspective*

Contrary to expectations, Thomas's *SgL* reports that Thomas responded in a very mature way to the group, making a very valuable contribution to group discussion:- *Never dominated group. Took other contributions on board. Helps draw out other pupils.* He had responded well to the confidential nature of the group which had allowed trust to build up over time - as reported by his *SgL, Feeling safe to say what I want.* Thomas had been given the opportunity to *vocalise his problems.* An atmosphere of mutual respect had been established within the group which had helped the reasoning process:- *Gives a freedom to explore (pupils') own agendas in a confidential setting. Pupils took this seriously and a sense of trust built up.* The opportunity which Mr McDonald had had to build up a relationship with Thomas and his family in the Pupil Support Base had contributed to the impact of the Support Group for Thomas. Mr McDonald considers that Thomas's family were 100% behind the school and that Thomas's involvement in the group had helped to alleviate staff resentment about him.

The establishment of positive relationships between the *SgL* and Thomas is also identified as an important factor by Thomas's Pastoral Care teacher who notes that there have been fewer incident reports[9] and that he he could now have a sensible conversation with Thomas:- *Key is that someone took an interest in him. Positive relationships with teacher (are) very important. The group gave him time out from coursework to think about self. Don't think they ever get the chance to do this.*

All the methodologies adopted within the group were considered by Mr McDonald to be of benefit to Thomas who could also see the benefit of them. Thomas, alongside others in the group, was pro-active in setting his own targets for improvement.

Mr McDonald considers that Thomas had developed self-insight and understanding of

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[9]   He speculates, however, that Thomas may be truanting.

others' attitudes, values, beliefs and motivations. He found him to be responsive and empathetic - *Very receptive pupil. Can see how you feel about things.* He observes, however, that Thomas's self-esteem could be affected by his mood and noted that he tended to be erratic.

He feels that Thomas had developed the skills needed to cope in confrontational situations with teachers and had observed Thomas behaving in much more controlled ways when being disciplined. When Thomas did, at times, lose focus and react aggressively, he was genuinely remorseful once he had had the opportunity to reflect upon his behaviour. Thomas responded positively to staff who were positive in their dealings with him. Mr McDonald had had much less contact with Thomas in the Pupil Support Base which was an indication that the classroom situation had improved for him.

Mr McDonald considered that Thomas's poor perceptions of himself as a learner could be accounted for partly by inflexible teaching methodologies which failed to take account of individual differences and needs:- *Some pupils need different teaching styles and methods. (We) could avoid a lot of difficulties if we could remember this. Methods of working are crucial.* However, he felt that Thomas was now exhibiting more positive attitudes towards learning, towards school in general and in his own perceptions of himself as a learner.

Thomas's Pastoral Care teacher is also clear that the group had been successful for Thomas. On reflecting upon the reservations which he had in relation to nominating Thomas for the *Sgi,* he stated, ... *(Depute) persuaded me to the contrary. She was right.*

However, responses from Thomas's teachers[10] are less positive. Responses to all questions were variable with few positive effects noted, with the exception of the development of more positive relationships with peers. Very few staff commented upon Thomas's progress although some did state that their contact with him had been limited.

10.4.4   The Parent and Pupil Perspectives

Thomas's mother says that Thomas didn't really have any expectations of what the group would be like or do for him. She thought that he had found it interesting, had became more confident and had felt that he was listened to and cared about. She was pleased by his response to the group and noted a change in his behaviour. She considered that he had co-operated well with the approaches and felt that he was motivated by target-setting which had been highly beneficial in helping him to focus on his behaviour and in enabling her to know the details of his behaviour in school. He was delighted by the certificate which had been presented to him for good progress:- *You'd have thought it was a gold medal from the Olympics - he was so chuffed and so was I. He gets excited about nothing but it's hanging on the wall in the kitchen.*

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[10]   Eight class teachers responded to the questionnaire (representing just less than two-thirds)

She felt that he responded when he knew that someone was looking out for him and monitoring his behaviour. He was now more reflective and exercised greater self-control. His attitudes towards learning and school were more positive:- *It used to be, "I don't want to go to school" but that's stopped and I suppose it's because he's coping better.*

Thomas was aware of his parents' support for the intervention, didn't really care what his friends thought about his participation in the group and thought that teachers noticed that he was suspended less. He had found the target booklet helpful in letting him know how he was getting on and the diary useful in writing down about situations and reactions to them. He gave an example, *When you (Sg Leader) told us it takes a man to fight but it takes a bigger man if you can walk away.*

The most important aspect of the *Sg* for Thomas was that he was listened to:- *Teachers listen to what you have to say rather than just dishing out the orders.* He had developed a sense of agency - *Realised that you could change things 'yerself'*. He found mixing with other pupils with similar problems helpful and particularly appreciated the input from the 6th year boy who had assisted with the group.

Thomas considers that the *Sgi* had enabled him to develop greater awareness and insight into his behaviour and that of others:- *If I swore at a ... person in the street they could punch me but in class they (the teachers) are just trying to control my temper/anger.*

Thomas's mother had noted little change in Thomas's self-understanding but did note that she was no longer down at the school so frequently. She observed little change in Thomas's behaviour at home but this had not been problematic.

Thomas felt generally happier (although his attitude towards school hadn't really changed much) and he had noticed that he stopped to think about things more than before. He was no longer involved in anti-social behaviour within the community (for example, fire-raising) as he was now more aware of the consequences for himself and others.

Both Thomas and his mother didn't think the *Sgi* had made any impact upon his schoolwork but Thomas wasn't really bothered by this. However, he did think that he was more motivated to learn in some classes where he was beginning to like the subjects.

Thomas was aware that the *Sg* had made a difference for him but wasn't really sure why. He considered that his father was the greatest influence on him - his father was unhappy to see him getting into trouble at school. Whilst the Pupil Support Base was OK, it could lead to further trouble because of the mix of pupils who attend it. He had not been allowed to participate in other initiatives (such as the Outward Bound Activities run by the X Trust) and had not attended the IT groups to which he had been invited. He sums up his progress as, *I am doing about 10 times better than what I used to.*

Thomas's mother also was convinced that the *Sgi* had made a difference for Thomas. She attributes this to his changed perceptions of teachers - *You (Depute) used to be the 'big bad wolf' - now you're 'super cool'.* - and his recognition that people were trying to help him.

He had found the transition from Primary to Secondary difficult:- *He needs a prop. If there was no group, no yourself (Depute), he would have gone from bad to worse.* She considers that insecurity lies at the heart of Thomas's problems - *he thinks he's the wee guy.* He hadn't responded to previous attempts to help him - *He wouldn't go to the IT group - he just ran away.* She cautions,

> *Although Thomas's behaviour has improved much more than I expected, I realise*
> *that continued involvement in the Support Group is almost certainly a must for*
> *improvement to be maintained.*
>
> (Parents' Evaluation Questionnaire)

Thomas's post-intervention self-assessment (c.c. App. 10.4) indicates that he feels more positively on many fronts but feels more negatively in his perceptions of his behaviour, his relationships with teachers, ability to control his temper and propensity to ask for help in classwork.

10.4.5   Examining Thomas's Discipline Record and Attainment

There is a vast improvement in Thomas's discipline recorded. His referrals, post-intervention dropped to 8 *(0.23)* which, after having taken account of the time variable, is an almost 75% reduction. He incurred only one suspension *(0.03)* for a total of 4 days *(0.10)*. His attendance rate in the final term, whilst still quite low, at 62% represents a considerable improvement upon 51% (pre-intervention). Whilst 76% of his absences in S1 were accounted for by unauthorised absence, this reduced to 57% in S2. However, there had been no impact upon National Test results over the course of S1/2.

Teaching for Understanding within the Affective Field

Part 5

Findings

5.2: Discussion of Findings

Chapter 11
Discussion of Findings

Introduction

Chapters 7 - 10 set out, systematically, the findings relating to RQs 1 - 3 as they pertain to a range of stakeholders and documented evidence. This chapter serves to explore and discuss these findings, identifying a set of underlying themes and a range of variables which have impacted upon individual pupil outcomes (a major component of RQ3), relating these themes to the literature, seeking to generalise beyond the specifics of the case to theory, preparing the way for the realisation of RQ4 (c.c. 12.2).

As has been described in chapter 6 (1.3.3), the research questions are closely inter-related (and, indeed are embedded within each other) and this is reflected in the data. As such, each section of the chapter draws eclectically upon the research questions, although there may be a greater emphasis upon some research questions (or specific aspects of) than others within individual sections (indicated in footnotes). The discussion is organised around central themes, commencing with the micro-level (the ethos of the Support Group and the emotional well-being of pupils) and extending outwards to the macro-level (the wider context within which the school operates and the implications for practice) (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

11.1 The ethos of the Support Group and the emotional well-being of pupils[1]

> *... the underlying deep structure of a culture, the values that animate it, that collectively constitute its way of life.* (Eisner, 1994, p2)

The opportunity to communicate in a safe environment

It is evident that ethos-related factors play an important role in understanding pupil responses to the intervention. In particular, the opportunity which the *Sgi* affords for pupils to be able to communicate in a safe environment in which their views would be listened to respectfully, as identified by a range of stakeholders within the study[2], is regarded as key (a finding corroborated in Kendall *et al.*, 2001; Lloyd *et al.*, 2001; and Davies, 2005). Munn and Lloyd (2005) note that there is a propensity for young people to individualise their difficulties and to see them as private troubles. This emerged also as a theme within this study (7.4.2 (RQ2)). Within the context of working (primarily) with adolescent boys, some of whom experience difficulty in expressing and exploring their

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[1]   relating to RQ1, 2 and 3 but with a specific emphasis upon RQ1 , RQ2.2-3 and RQ3.1-3.
[2]   7.1.2, 7.3.2 (RQ2.3); 7.4.2 (RQ2); 8.1.1-8.15, 8.2.1

emotions[3] (a factor which was considered by *SgLs* to be an impediment to improvement for a few pupils (8.1.1.3[4])), the capacity of the *Sgi* to provide time and a framework through which young people are enabled to express their anxieties is considered to be important by a range of stakeholders[5] , as advocated by Davies in respect of working with pupils with EBD (2005).

A sense of belonging and of being affirmed

'Being listened to' is not just about being enabled to communicate but about being affirmed as a person who matters which is an aspect of group bonding[6] , regarded by *SgLs* as an important factor in achieving a successful outcome (8.1.1). It has been established that 91% of *Sgi* pupils who had undertaken the post-intervention self-assessment[7] had identified more positively with 'being listened to' and 59% to 'a sense that someone cared about you' (7.3.2 (Fig. 7.17)). Given that 'most of my teachers care about me' had one of the lowest ratings pre-intervention not only for the *Sgi* population but for the comparator population (7.3.2 (Fig. 7.14)), this is a very heartening finding.

The establishment of trusting relationships founded upon mutual respect

The capacity of the pupil to form trusting relationships is regarded by *SgLs* (8.1.1) and by the Headteacher (8.1.3) as crucial in terms of achieving a positive outcome, a finding which is corroborated by Kendall *et al.* (2001) who identify that previous damaging relationships with adults may impede the capacity of the young person to trust. Chapter 4 identified that the establishment of trustful and respectful relationships lies at the heart of working with children with SEBD and/or disaffected young people. (4.2.3) Feelings of not belonging, of alienation have been identified throughout the literature as being factors which may pre-dispose pupils towards disaffection and the litany of behaviours which accompanies it[8] . Davies (2005) advises that large, impersonal environments (which characterise many Secondary schools) are cited by many disaffected young people as having contributed towards their unhappiness, manifesting itself in truanting, antisocial or disruptive behaviour. (Davies, 2005)

The relationship between the pupil and SgL is crucial

Sg parents draw attention to the quality of relationships between the *SgL* and pupil, linking this to the child's general sense of confidence and sense of self-esteem (7.4.2 (RQ2)). The importance of this is highlighted by Kendall *et al.* (2001) who identify the establishment of a relationship between the young person and an adult who can model

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[3]   7.4.2 (RQ2); 8.1.3

[4]   please note that all references to chapter 8 relate to RQ3

[5]   as per footnote 2

[6]   one of the key concepts identified with Social Capital ((McGonigal *et al.*, 2005)

[7]   62% of the *Sgi* population

[8]   Kendall *et al.*, 2001; Cooper, 2002; The Prince's Trust, 2002; Adams, 2005; Munn and Lloyd, 2005

pro-social values as being one of the key components of learning rehabilitation in young people (Kendall *et al.*, 2001, p3) and Lloyd *et al.* (2001) who note that, *sometimes it only took one person* (Ibid, pp. 59-61), showing an interest in the child, to make a difference.

The quality of relationships between the pupil and *SgL* is identified as an important factor in pupil outcome within each of the case studies (Ch 10) along with other ethos related factors. However the question could be asked, might these conditions not prevail in any intervention where pupils have the opportunity to interact with an adult in a small group setting? It would be outwith the scope of this thesis to address this question fully - it would require an in-depth study of a range of different approaches. It is important to remember, however, that relationships form within a context - in this case, the learning context. No matter how friendly, warm, caring, empathetic an adult may be, if the relationship takes place within the context of activities which are not seen as relevant by the pupil or which do not engage the pupil in meaningful learning, the value and sustainability of such a relationship is likely to be called into question.

A process of self-actualisation

A sense of personal safety, of being cared about and affirmed are clearly important elements in the child's general sense of well-being and self-esteem. Maslow (1943)[9] proposes that the needs to feel emotionally secure and to feel loved; and to have a sense of self-esteem and confidence, achievement, respect of and by others require to be met before a process of self-actualisation can take place.

It is evident from examining the accounts of *Sg* pupils and other stakeholder groups that, to an extent, for many pupils, these needs have been or were in the process of being met[10]. Both Stewart (CS1) (10.1.3-4) and Thomas (CS4) (10.4.3-4) are regarded as being more comfortable and at ease with themselves, although Thomas is perceived still as being dominated by his moods. To an extent, pupils had internalised the values under discussion (53% of respondents to the post-intervention self-assessments identify that they behave more respectfully towards their teachers (Fig. 7.15)) and this was of significance not only to them within the environs of the school but also within the home and community (8.2.1). Responses from class teachers, however, are much more cautious and variable in this respect (7.2.1 (RQ2.2)).

The development of empathetic responses in SgLs

However, the benefits were not restricted to pupils. *SgLs* also reported that they had gained in empathy. In the mid-intervention evaluation of the *Sgi* (8.1.1.4; App 8.1), *SgLs* identified that they had gained insight into the thinking processes, values and motivations of the pupils in their groups, enabling the *SgLs* to build more effectively in scaffolding the pupils' learning. Visser (2005)identifies the development of empathy

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[9]   cited in Riches (1994) in Bush and West-Burnham (eds.), pp. 229-233
[10]   7.1.2, 7.2.1, 7.3.2 (RQ2.3); 7.4.2 (RQ2); 8.2.1-2

towards the child as an 'eternal verity' - an aspect of good practice in working with children with SEBD - and Davies (2005) observes that increased teacher empathy can lead to the adoption of more appropriate teaching approaches to engage <u>all</u> pupils more effectively within learning. (Davies, 2005, p311)[11]

The group dynamic

Whilst the role of the *SgL* is crucial in setting and maintaining the tone of the group, relationships between pupils also play an important part. It has been observed that pupils could be disruptive within groups (as noted by Stewart (CS1), Linda (CS2) and one of the senior pupil assistants)[12], but it has also been observed that pupils could have an effect for good, supporting each other (7.1.2 (RQ2.2)), indicating that peer-influence need not always be a negative factor and can be harnessed positively. Whilst, no clear trends in outcomes related to discipline measures emerge in relation to group size (Table 9.3), *SgLs* identified group size as being a factor in the likely success or not of the group (8.1.1).

A focus upon teamworking

Tuckman's theory (1965)[13] of *forming, storming, norming, re-forming and performing* is a helpful means of conceptualising how groups operate and it is apt for the *Sgi* in that, if the individual pupil is to succeed, it may be dependent upon the degree of co-operation of and support from other members of the group. Factors which affect the continuity of the group (such as the absence of a Support Group Leader (CS3(10.3.3); CS6); pupil absence (or suspension from school); and difficulties internal to the school's operations (8.1.1.4)) could have a significant impact upon this process.

The ambience of the group

SgLs and the Headteacher identify that the capacity which the *Sgi* affords for teachers to form more relaxed, personal relationships with pupils (which are not characterised by the negative interactions which often occur between pupils with SEBD and their teachers) as being a contributory factor in the success of the groups[14].

A few pupils had not enjoyed the intervention and, in some cases, this arose because the pupil had found it too intrusive (8.1.1.5). This accords with the findings of Cooper (1993) who observes that the process involved in *positive resignification* through which pupils embark upon a journey to discover their true values, can be a painful and difficult process.

It is evident in examining the accounts of the pupils involved within the Case Studies and their parents that, for the vast majority of pupils, initial concerns about stigmatisation

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[11]   The initial author's emphasis
[12]   10.1.4, 10.2.4, 8.1.4
[13]   cited in Everard and Morris (1996)
[14]   8.1.1.2, 8.1.1.3, 8.1.3

were not realised, although one pupil expresses a sense of shame about being the only member of his family to be identified as having difficulties (7.3.1 (RQ1.1)). Alexander's mother continued to have concerns about his involvement in the *Sgi*, feeling that her son shouldn't *be mixing with those other pupils* (CS5). The disparity between her account and the more positive account of her son - *The group was nice. People weren't shouting out.... The teacher was nice. Felt she wanted to help.* - is quite striking.

For some other pupils, including Jonathan (CS6), the Support Group had exceeded expectations. The warmth of the atmosphere was highlighted by a few pupils, underpinned by humour - *you had a laugh and got to know him* (Sg pupil) (8.2.1). Whilst it would be wrong to imply that all groups were characterised by these features, it is evident, that, on the whole, pupils enjoyed their participation within the *Sgi*.

A synthesis

These findings accord with findings within the wider literature[15] . It is evident that pupils valued being listened to, cared about and treated with respect and, to an extent, had internalised the values and dispositions under discussion and that SgLs had developed a sense of empathy towards the pupils in their care. The tone set by the SgL in establishing the ambience of the group, affording more relaxed, personal relationships between staff and pupils; the group dynamic and the extent to which group members operated effectively as a team are all important factors in achieving a successful outcome for individual pupils.

11.2 *The process of positive resignification*[16]

Teachers having faith in you (MacBeath et al., 1995)

It has already been identified that the role of an individual adult can be key in 'turning around' a pupil or preventing further deterioration. Teachers 'having faith in you' is one of the indicators of a 'good' teacher as identified by pupils in a study by MacBeath *et al.* (1995). Having faith in the capacity of the pupil to effect change and seeing the potential for good within the child (Visser, 2005) are essential if the *SgL* is to support the pupil through the process of *positive resignification,* as described by Cooper (1993) (11.1). The process of *positive resignification* might be likened to a mirror-image of the process by which individuals attain 'labels' and become stigmatised from the use of such labels. Through this process, pupils can develop more positive self-images of themselves, re-framing the situations in which they find themselves. Through the support of a 'significant other' who communicates a sense of value and worth to the individual, the person is able to internalise more positive images of himself and develop a sense of agency. (Cooper, 1993, p144)

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[15]   Hamill and Boyd, 2000; Davies, 2005; Munn and Lloyd, 2005; Visser, 2005
[16]   this discussion draws fully from all aspects of RQ 1, 2 & 3 but with a specific emphasis upon RQ1, RQ2.1 and RQ 3.1-4

A lost cause?

Teachers (and other significant adults) 'having faith in you' and being there at the point of need (Lloyd *et al.*, 2001) are very important in relation to the *Sgi*. As previously described, the author, as Depute Head, had to persuade Thomas's (CS4) (10.4.3)Pastoral Care teacher to nominate him for the *Sgi*. Not only had Thomas been perceived by his Pastoral Teacher as a 'lost cause', his mother, who had ceased attending interviews for exclusions, was also despairing of him. A range of stakeholders, but particularly parents, identify that it is the tenacity in holding onto the child (Lloyd *et al.*, 2001) which prevents exclusion (8.2.2).

It is salutary to note that the greatest variability in pupil outcome was observed within those pupils who initially exhibited the most extreme behaviour, indicating that previous patterns of behaviour may not be a reliable indicator of future outcome in relation to the *Sgi* (9.2.4 (Figs. 9.2.11a-d)).

A state of disequilibrium

It is not only the people surrounding the child who need to have faith in the capacity of the child to change, this also needs to be internalised by the child (7.1.2 (RQ2.1 & 2.3)). Drawing upon constructivist theories of learning (Ch 2), there needs to be a recognition within the child (which may occur at a subliminal level) of a state of *disequilibrium* (Piaget, 1953, 1959, 1971)[17] as otherwise there is no catalyst for learning. If changes in behaviour are to be effected, the child has to reach a point at which he recognises the need for change. There has to be a gap between the child's current perceptions of how he is behaving and how he wants to behave. A child who is happy with his/her current behaviour (7.1.2 (RQ2.1)) and/or who fails to take responsibility for it, as in the case of Linda (CS2) (10.2.3-4), has no incentive to want to improve upon it. Kendall *et al.* (2001) highlight the importance of the motivation of the young person to want to engage with the initiative and this becomes evident in examining the case studies in which there is a relationship between the pupil's engagement within the *Sgi* and the outcome for the pupil (Ch 10).

The question arises as to how to bring pupils to that point in such a way that it does not damage their self-esteem and promotes a sense of self-efficacy.

(A note of caution. Thomas (2005) argues that such a position rests upon a deficit model of the child. He describes the child as being cast in the mode of 'sufferer' and 'victim', the only release from which is to admit culpability. This argument cannot be entirely dismissed. Any model of intervention is based upon perceived deficits (otherwise, why intervene?) and it may be the case that *Sg* pupils may be adopting such practices.)

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[17]   cited in Donaldson, 1987

A synthesis and an hypothesis

The hypothesis has been forwarded that pupil outcome may be dependent upon the degree to which *SgLs* have faith in the capacity of the pupil to change (facilitated through the development in the pupil of *intra-* and *inter- personal intelligence* (Gardner, 1993a, 1999, 2006) (Ch 3)) and support the process; the pupil has internalised this perspective through a process of *positive resignification;* and the pupil has recognised the need to and wants to change, developing a sense of responsibility for his own behaviour. It may be the case that it is the point at which these factors interact with each other that the process of change becomes possible.

Developing a sense of agency and self-responsibility

In examining the accounts of individual pupils, it is evident that these are important factors in distinguishing between those pupils for whom a successful outcome has been achieved (no further significant deterioration or improvement) and those for whom this has not been the case. For example, Stewart (CS1) states, *Just decided to try to improve myself* (10.1.4); Alastair (CS3), *You have to be responsible for your actions.* (10.3.4); Thomas (CS4) , *Realised that you could change things 'yerself'* (10.4.4); Alexander (CS5), *Once I realised how I was affecting other people and what I was doing to myself, I stopped.* A common theme in these responses is that pupils are developing a sense of agency and a sense of responsibility for their own actions - a theme identified also by Munn *et al.,* 2000 and Munn and Lloyd, 2005.

Linda (CS2) (10.2), for whom there was not a successful outcome, had reached the point of realising that there was a problem but it had not impacted upon her behaviour which had deteriorated. Perhaps some insight can be gained into her lack of response through reflecting on her reaction to Support Group activities - *'cos its only words* (10.2.4). She did not see the activities or discussion as relevant and was unable to relate her education to her future goals.

The motivations underlying improvement

What evidence is there to indicate the motivations underlying any changes in the child's desire to want to improve his/her behaviour and improvements emanating from it?

In examining the findings in relation to the pre-intervention self-assessment (5.2.5 (Fig. 5.19)), it is evident that the majority of *Sg* pupils recognised that their behaviour was problematic and were disposed towards improvement. But, when pupils did seek to improve upon their behaviour, was it motivated by a sense of expediency (recognising a need for compliance with the school's systems and structures whether or not the pupil agreed with them or recognised the need for them)? did it arise out of an awakening and further development of the pupil's moral sensibilities - a sense of right and wrong, developing an understanding of the needs and perspectives of others and the capacity to

empathise with others? from a desire to please others, recognising that *SgLs* and teaching staff were trying to help them? from a desire to avoid punitive measures and the approbation of teaching staff and family members? or from some other phenomenon?

A definitive answer cannot be provided to these questions. The likelihood is that it is a combination of these factors which interact with each other to act as a catalyst for change. It is evident in examining the responses that there is a reluctance on the part of *SgLs*, pupils and parents to address issues relating to morality although there is evidence of some pupils becoming more aware of moral issues (7.3.1 (RQ1.1)). This may be an indication of the sensitivity surrounding these issues - whole morals? whose values? (3.3.2) It is sometimes only indirectly that a sense of the underlying motivations begins to emerge, if subtly.

There is a sense of expediency in some pupil responses - of recognising the need to 'buckle under'. Stewart (CS1) notes that he doesn't learn anything when he is badly behaved and, if he doesn't behave, he won't get a job (10.1.4). However, it is also evident from the response of a range of stakeholders - *SgL*, class teachers and family (10.1.3-4) - that there are other forces at work. He was attaining positive re-inforcement from his efforts to improve, his attainment had improved in five of his classes, his relationships with some of his teachers had improved and his aunt noted that Stewart now recognised that staff didn't dislike him. More importantly, he was appreciative of the efforts of his *SgL*, family and class teachers to help him. Further, his *SgL* considered that Stewart had developed an understanding of how his behaviour impacted upon others (10.1.3), indicative of a developing moral sense and sense of empathy. It is clear within this single account that a multiplicity of factors is at play, working with each other in intricate ways, culminating in more positive attitudes towards school (10.1.4).

Developing intra- and inter-personal intelligence and insight into behaviour

However, the extent to which a pupil may be able to effect changes in his behaviour may be dependent upon a range of factors, not least, the extent to which the pupil has been able to develop insight into his behaviour, which is a function of the development of *intra-* and *interpersonal intelligence* (relating to RQ1). The extent to which this was exemplified within pupils has been explored fully in chapters 7 & 8 and is also exemplified within the case studies. CS4 (Thomas) highlights the importance of the Support Group in providing a forum through which pupils can reflect upon their behaviour (10.4.3).

Compliance or self-actualisation?

This discussion raises wider issues about the extent to which schools foster compliance rather than foster self-responsibility and the personal growth of young people, an argument which is forwarded by Khon (2001). To what extent are pupils who are labelled as 'SEBD', 'deviant', 'disruptive', 'disaffected' the products of an inflexible system which

does not meet either their needs to learn or for personal development?

Reference has been made in Chapter 4 to the 'fundamental attribution error' which leads teachers to attribute poor behaviour to complex explanations, deriving from a range of disciplines, which rest on the assumption of *disturbed-therefore-meet-needs* rather than *naughty-therefore-impose-sanctions*. (Thomas, 2005, p64) Whilst these attributions may be well-intentioned, he argues that this prevents teachers and school leaders from examining the school's systems and practice. (4.2.3) Bowers (2005) observes that it is externalised emotions, such as children's anger (which may mask a range of other emotions such as frustration, shame, guilt and envy) which schools have the greatest difficulty in dealing with rather than internalised emotions which are expressed in depression or anxiety.

Riley *et al.* (2002), citing a range of factors, note that the process of schooling in itself may disadvantage young people. Thomas (2005) raises similar concerns considering that misbehaviour is endemic in institutions which organise themselves in particular ways and McCluskey (2005b) asks if the 'persistent acts of defiance' of pupils are a reaction to *a fundamental and legitimate criticism of the structures of our schools.* (McCluskey, 2005b, p4). Perhaps this is a problem inherent in all large, bureaucratic institutions and may be one of the reasons why difficulties become compounded within Secondary schools.

Change takes time

Linda's case (CS2) (10.2.4) highlights also that change takes time. She has reached a point of beginning to understand her difficulties and is recognising the need to change but has not been able to envisage the process of overcoming these difficulties. Riley *et al.* (2002) note that this is a recurring pattern in their study of disaffected young people, conditioned by other people's low expectations of them. This is corroborated through the data relating to indiscipline where it was found that it took time before the trajectory began to change when examining the average unit measures for the Support Group population (9.2.2 (Figs. 9.7 & 9.8)).

Developing self-control

For some children, it is a lack of self-control and/or a lack of maturity which stands in the way of progress. Whilst there are some inconsistencies within the evidence base, it is clear that this is an area in which many pupils feel that they have made progress (7.2.1 (RQ2.1)). What is also encouraging is the high proportion (67%) of pupils in retrospective interview (8.2.1 (RQ3)) who believe that these improvements had been sustained one-to-two years after intervention. However, it is evident from class teacher responses that it is still a significant problem for some pupils (7.2.1 (RQ2.1)).

Although negotiated target-setting was not unproblematic and some difficulties had emerged in relation to the use of the pupil diary, some pupils had benefited from these

approaches, as indicated by a wide range of stakeholders[18] . The Headteacher notes improvements in some pupils which he attributes to the target-setting process (8.1.3). The Depute (S3) indicates that pupil outcomes are variable beyond intervention and sometimes difficult to explain (8.1.3). The Behaviour Support teacher observes that the benefits of the *Sgi* for the pupils who normally frequent the Behaviour Support Base often do not become apparent until later in their school careers (8.1.1.3). It may be the case that it is the combination of a range of factors, including the growing maturity of pupils, which accounts for the improvements noted in the capacity of pupils to exercise self-control, although when questioned specifically on this point in retrospective interview, the pupils themselves mostly attributed the positive changes to the *Sgi*.

An important point to arise from the above discussion is the need for ongoing support for *Sgi* pupils beyond the intervention, an issue raised by parents (to follow) (8.2.2).

"But I'm from the ..." : Challenging limiting aspirations

A further factor which needs to be explored in relation to the agency which pupils are able to exert in relation to their behaviour is the low aspirations held by many pupils, as exemplified in this description of a pupil by his *SgL* - *... appears to be dominated by what is expected of him due to the community in which he lives. (SgL)* (7.1.1 (RQ1.1)) This was exemplified in group discussion[19] when one pupil said, "But I'm from the .... ." as if this were a self-explanatory statement. As has previously been explored, some pupils had never reflected upon the purpose of school or perceived that it had any meaningful purpose (8.2.1). They had not made the connection between schooling and life chances. Given that the school is situated in an area of multiple deprivation, where generations of the same family have been unemployed (1.1), it is perhaps understandable that this should be the case, however, it is devastating for the prospects of these individual children and of concern in relation to the general prosperity of the nation, as is reflected in concerns about the NEET group (HMIE, 2006a; SEED, 2006b). This finding resonates with Kinder *et al.* (1996) and Riley *et al.* (2002).

Kinder *et al.* (2000) observe that, at the heart of the discourse of disaffected pupils, was a lack of engagement manifesting itself in a dislike and ultimate rejection of school. The authors indicate that an essential element of re-engaging with education is the forming of positive relationships by pupils with educational professionals and peers, together with a recognition of the possibilities of education in accessing and widening life opportunities. (Ibid., p18) It is encouraging to note therefore that some pupils, through their participation in group activities and discussions, had begun to overcome these limiting perceptions of themselves and had begun to form more positive attitudes towards learning and towards school (7.3.2 (RQ2.4)).

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[18]   8.1.1.1, 8.1.1.3; 8.2.1-2
[19]   led by the author

Teachers make a difference

These findings highlight once again that teachers make a difference - one of the principal findings from the school effectiveness movement, in which it has been established that the 'teacher effect' surpasses the 'school effect' (MacBeath and McGlynn, 2002, p6). This is corroborated by Riley *et al.* who note that teachers (*through their style, methods and personalities*) can exert significant influence upon pupils. (Riley *et al.*, 2002, p70)

A synthesis

This section has argued that, through participation within the *Sgi*, pupils have been enabled to form a more positive sense of identity, re-conceptualising and re-formulating their relationships with others, and that a range of variables, such as the degree to which SgLs had faith in the capacity of the pupil to change, impacted upon this process. Common themes to emerge in those pupils who had evidenced improvement are the development of a capacity to reflect upon their behaviour and its consequences for themselves and others; a sense of agency; and a desire to improve upon their behaviour. However, the motivations underlying improvement are complex and inter-related.

There is a need also to give consideration to the nature of schooling, to the explanations which teachers attribute to poor behaviour and to the organisational structures of schools which may be hostile environments for some children.

SgLs need to be tenacious in approach, to challenge the limiting aspirations which may be held by pupils, encouraging them to see the value in education and learning.

11.3 The Classroom Context - a focus upon relationships[20]
The context-specific nature of pupil behaviour and outcomes

One of the striking features of the findings is the extent to which outcomes for individual pupils are highly context related. This is reflected particularly within the questionnaire responses of classroom teachers in which, when collated and analysed for each individual pupil on a range of factors, the mode category is 'variable' (7.2 (RQ2)). This would indicate that pupils are responding well in respect of the identified criteria in some classes but not so well in others. Within individual classrooms, there is also a variability in the capacity of some pupils to regulate and control their behaviour when under stress (7.2.1 (RQ2.1)). The context specific nature of pupil behaviour is noted also within the literature (Hamill and Boyd, 2000; Munn *et al.*, 2004). How might these variations in response be explained?

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[20]   the specific emphasis within this section is RQ2.2 and RQ3.4

A focus upon interpersonal relationships

Within the pre-intervention self-assessments (Fig. 5.19), it has been established that it is on many of the measures relating to interpersonal relationships, and, in particular the relationship between pupil and teachers, that the most statistically significant differentials appear between the *Sgi* population and the comparator group which would suggest that addressing this area would be of prime importance. The post-intervention self-assessments (7.3.2 (Figs. 7.15 & 7.16)) indicate that, in many respects, many pupils feel more positively in relation to their interpersonal relationships and this is corroborated in interview accounts (7.3.2 (RQ2.2)). Class teachers, however, are less convinced that pupils are evidencing improvements in relationships, particularly in respect of peer relationships (7.2.1 (RQ2.2)).

Teachers make a difference for good or bad

These findings would indicate that, in understanding the dynamics of the classroom situation, the relationships between teachers and pupils are highly important (as cited in 4.2.3). Previous discussion has highlighted that 'teachers make a difference' but it is important to recognise that teachers make a difference for good or bad. Riley *et al.* (2002) observe from their study of disaffected young people that teachers can *tip the balance, sending pupils spiralling down the path of exclusion, or truanting from school* (Riley *et al.*, 2002, p29).

There is evidence that some *Sg* pupils and their parents feel that class teachers are supportive of the pupils' efforts to improve and had noted teachers' positive reactions to that improvement (7.3.1 (RQ1.2 & 1.3)). One *SgL* draws attention to the importance of positive re-inforcement and the use of praise in motivating pupils (8.1.1.3), a strategy endorsed in 'Better Behaviour - Better Learning' (SEED, 2001a).

Negative perceptions of teachers

There are also indications, however, that not all class teachers are supportive of pupils in their attempts to improve (7.4.1 (RQ1)), a finding corroborated in Hamill *et al.*, 2002. This was noted by Jonathan's father (CS6) who commented upon his son's relationship with one specific member of staff. Likewise, whilst Stewart (CS1) continued to experience difficulties in his relationship with one of his teachers, his *SgL* attributed some of the difficulty to the teacher (10.1.3). McLean (2002) cautions:- *The judgemental, personalised, confidence-crushers are the biggest problems I see in schools.* (McLean (2002)[21]) It would be over-simplistic and wrong on the basis of a lack of further evidence to attribute Jonathan's and Stewart's difficulties principally or solely to their teachers. Relationships are two-way affairs. These negative perceptions of teachers by pupils are replicated within the literature as cited in Ch 4. (4.2.3)

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[21]   in TESS, 22.09.02

A focus upon peer relationships

In general, *Sgi* pupils' perceptions of their relationships with peers are much more positive than their perceptions of their relationships with teachers and, as previously noted, peer relationships distinguish them less from the comparator group of pupils than do teacher-pupil relationships (7.3.2 (RQ2.2)).

Kinder *et al.* (2000) identify peer relationships as being one of three central relationships within Secondary schools with which disaffected young people fail to engage effectively (the others being teacher-pupil relationships and the curriculum). The authors note that peer culture (through a real or imagined continuum of enticement, coercion, harassment or exclusion) could stimulate disaffected behaviours. (Ibid., p6)

Kinder *et al.* (1996) observe that attention-seeking behaviour - a means of trying to gain status within the peer group - perhaps confirms a pupil sub-culture in which anti-authority attitudes are perceived as being the norm. Concerns about attention-seeking behaviour are identified in professional and parent accounts within this study[22] , yet, there is evidence of many pupils developing greater insight into their interpersonal relationships, if only to an extent[23] . As previously noted, the majority (68%) of respondents to the pupil interview[24] reported more positive peer relationships, to at least some extent, although this is not corroborated in class teacher accounts (7.2 (RQ2.2)).

The development of empathy

This thesis suggests that a capacity for empathy may be dependent upon forming a *theory of mind* (Astington, 1994) and, further, that it can be nurtured if the correct conditions prevail (3.1.2). If teachers and pupils are to form trusting relationships based upon mutual respect, then it is imperative that an understanding of the perspectives and roles of others and the motivations which underlie behaviour develops on both sides.

Davies (2005) draws from the literature to argue that, in order for pupils to address the perceptions which they hold about their relationships with their teachers, it is necessary for them to explore their experiences of school such that they *achieve a resignification of the identities that others hold of them*. (Davies, 2005, in Clough *et al.*, p300). There is ample evidence in the accounts of all stakeholders that empathy has developed on the part of many *Sg* pupils in their relationships with others[25] , in some cases, extending to their families[26] . It can reasonably be deduced that empathy has arisen through the nature of activities and discussions within the group which have sought to explore the dynamics of the classroom and to help *Sg* pupils understand the role and perspectives of their classroom teachers and the effect which their (the pupils') behaviour has on the learning

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[22]   7.2 and 7.4.2 (RQ2.1-2)
[23]   7.3.1 (RQ1.3); 7.3.2 (RQ2.2)
[24]   representing 85% of the *Sgi* population
[25]   7.1.2, 7.2.1, 7.3.2 (RQ2.2); 7.4 .1 (RQ1); 8.1.1.1-8.1.1.5, 8.2.1
[26]   7.3 (RQ1.2-3; RQ2.2); 8.2.1

of other pupils.

Negative attitudes of teachers towards pupils with SEBD

What is less clear from the available evidence is that the same process (empathy towards *Sg* pupils) has been extended towards them by some of their class teachers. This may be a reflection upon:-

- the negative attitudes held by some teachers towards SEBD pupils (4.2.3);
- the reservations which many teachers express in relation to social inclusion (4.2.1);
- the concern which teachers have for the welfare and quality of learning of *all* of their pupils which may be threatened by the behaviour of what is perceived as a disruptive minority (Hamill *et al.*, 2002; Munn and Lloyd, 2005; Adams, 2005; McCluskey, 2005).

Wilkin *et al.* (2005) note that, in schools which lack consistency in discipline approaches, the behaviour of some staff could be described as almost provoking pupils towards behaviour which would lead to exclusion, which is not so much in evidence in schools which have a more inclusive approach. This raises an important issue about the need for an holistic approach to inclusion, focussing upon whole school ethos, systems and practices and upon the need for high quality staff development.

A sense of injustice

A recurrent theme in the accounts of *Sg* pupils is a sense of injustice - of being picked upon unfairly, being victimised and/or stigmatised by teachers and of having attained a reputation (whether justified or not)[27] . This accords with much of the literature relating to pupils 'on the margins' of school life. (4.2.3) Jonathan's father (CS6) observes that his son, whilst having gained a more positive attitude towards school (post-intervention), still has a perception of being 'picked on' by some teachers. Thomas (2005), in a study of how teachers talk about pupils with SEBD noted that, whilst in public they used politically correct terminology, in private this was often replaced by a litany of expressions such as 'nutter', 'thug', 'waste of space' and 'mental' which revealed their underlying beliefs.

Whilst it may be the case that some teachers are unfair in their attitudes towards and treatment of some pupils, it may also be a manifestation of a tendency in some pupils to externalise difficulties, failing to take responsibility for their own behaviour.

The negative effects of labelling and stereotyping

Of concern, in relation to Thomas (CS4), is the failure of his class teachers to note any improvement in him, despite significant evidence to the contrary (10.4.3). The negative effects of labelling and stereotyping are well documented within the literature (4.3).

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[27]   7.1.1 (RQ1.1 - 3); 7.12 (RQ2.3-4)

Pupils often feel trapped within negative reputations - they are caught in a cycle of low-expectations. (Riley *et al.*, 2002) Whilst labels may be readily acquired, they are exceedingly difficult to shift.

'Better Behaviour - Better Learning' (SEED, 2001a) maintains that it is *neither possible nor desirable to put labels on children* (Ibid., section 2) but recognises that children experiencing social and emotional behavioural difficulties may have special educational needs. However, this position is being forwarded in the face of increasing tendencies to diagnose children with conditions such as ADHD (Lloyd, 2003).

In contrast, Kauffman (2003) makes the case that, in order to be able to offer support to specific groups of pupils (what he describes as Secondary or Tertiary Prevention (Kauffman, 2005)), it is necessary to delineate that group from others who do not require the same degree of support. He draws attention to a paradigm shift which argues that because instruction is to be more individualised for all pupils, *no one need be considered special*. (Kauffman, 2005, p433)

MacKay (2002) raises a similar argument from what initially appears to be a contradictory position - that of claiming that 'every child is special'. He argues that this paradigm may have the effect of minimising or denying the needs of those who are in the greatest need of support.

Kauffman argues that the hesitancy to anticipate disabilities, in particular behavioural disabilities, is based upon the premise that by so doing, the disabilities are created. Preventative action is regarded as *stigmatizing or unfair because it is anticipatory, proactive, and preemptive*. (Kauffman, 2003, p 197). Whilst Kauffman and Mackay approach the debate from different perspectives, the argument which they are forwarding is essentially the same - the costs of failure to act. The possible dangers of stigmatisation have therefore to be balanced against the possible risks of failing to take preventative action.

This is a highly contentious, difficult area which needs to be perceived in all its complexity - in shades of grey rather than 'black and white'. Whilst the dangers of labelling are readily apparent and whilst devising a means of classifying pupils as having SEBD is fraught with difficulties (Munn *et al.*, 2000), failure to do so may result in the needs of pupils for additional support not being met, as is indicated in the under-representation of this group in relation to the former RoN (Audit Scotland, HMIE, 2003).

Chapter 4 drew upon Kendall *et al.* (2001) (drawing, in turn upon a range of studies (Kinder *et al.*, 1995 - 1998)) (4.2.3) to observe that the negative perceptions of teacher behaviour by disaffected pupils are symptomatic of a larger systemic breakdown between mainstream schools and pupils. Within the literature, there is a sense that, once established, these perceptions are intractable, implying that the solution lies outwith mainstream schools. One of the most important findings to emerge from this study is that these perceptions are not intractable. Over and over again, pupils, parents and *SgLs* refer

to the shifting perceptions of *Sg* pupils in relation to their class teachers[28] and even in relation to the author as Depute Head with a responsibility for discipline (CS4) (10.4.4). This finding, highlights the importance of the curriculum, pedagogy and ethos working in synergy with each other. Helping children to understand the complexity of the classroom situation - the fact that teachers are often juggling a multiplicity of demands and needs and are fallible - is an important element is achieving this end.

A Synthesis

Relationships between teachers and pupils were variable and context specific - not all teachers were supportive of pupils in their efforts to improve. Whilst many Sg pupils had developed a sense of empathy towards their teachers, this was not necessarily reciprocated. In common with other studies, a sense of injustice emerged as a common theme in *Sgi* pupil accounts. Whist the author acknowledges concerns about the potentially negative effects of labelling, this has to be countered by the need for early intervention.

11.4 *The classroom context - A focus upon learning*[29]

As argued by Munn (2000), discipline serves two purposes within schools - it is an end in itself and it also serves as a means to an end, creating an effective climate for learning. Effective learning[30] (and the cultivation of dispositions which foster effective learning), it can be argued, is the prime purpose of schooling and therefore should be an important factor in pupil outcome, as reflected in RQ2.4.

The relationship between SEBD and attainment

It becomes readily apparent in examining the statistical data in relation to attainment (9.3), as measured in National Tests (given the provisos given relating to the reliability of the data (6.3.3.2)), that there is a strong relationship between SEBD and attainment. Highly significant statistical differences emerge between the performance of the *Sgi* population not only in relation to national and Local Authority comparators (9.3.1) but also in relation to their peers within the same cohorts within the school both pre- and post-intervention (9.3.2-3).

A focus upon support for learning

It is evident in examining the case studies that issues relating to learning arise (CS1, CS2, CS5[31]), encompassing frustrations in learning and a need for one-to-one support. In some

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[28]   7.1.2, 7.3.2 (RQ2.2); 7.4.1 (RQ1); 8.1.1, 8.2.1
[29]   the specific emphasis within this section is RQ2.4 & RQ3.4
[30]   whilst acknowledging that this may be conceptualised in many different ways
[31]   10.1.2, 10.2.2; App 10.2

of the individual accounts given by *Sg* pupils, their parents and *SgLs*, attention is drawn to the learning difficulties experienced by *Sg* pupils.[32] Through discussion within the groups, pupils were able to externalise their feelings of anger and alienation in a positive way in relation to schooling (and the teachers whom they associated with it) and their learning difficulties:

> *I'm more aware of becoming annoyed and frustrated - it's related to the learning difficulties I have. I need more help than the teacher has time to give.*
>
> (*Sg* pupil) (7.3.1)

This is a sad and highly unsatisfactory situation which is an indictment upon the system. As previously noted (5.2.6), of the sixty-nine pupils within the study, eleven of them had Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and four were supported through the paired-reading scheme in S1 or S2. This, however, seems inadequate in relation to the scale of the problem. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to explore in detail why this might be the case but it may be a reflection on the reluctance to perceive pupils with SEBD as being deserving of support either in respect of their behaviour or learning needs as previously identified within this chapter (11.3) and chapter 4 (4.2.3). This also re-inforces the argument forwarded by Head (2005) (4.2.2) for the need to conceptualise the additional support needs of children with SEBD in relation primarily to learning rather than discipline. It may also be an issue of finite resources and a measure of the value which society places upon supporting vulnerable groups. The experience of school as frustrating and unfulfilling, in which frustrations in learning lead to misbehaviour is highlighted within the Prince's Trust study (The Prince's Trust, 2002, p55).

Lupton (2005) makes the case that an understanding of the process of improvement for schools situated in areas of deprivation requires an understanding of the context within which they operate and the pressures which arise from working within that context. The multiple demands upon such schools, and the teachers and managers within them, diverts attention away from the core business of learning and teaching. Lupton argues that standard resources for teaching and pastoral care (including staff/pupil ratios) are insufficient to meet the needs of these schools. She advocates increased investment in learning support, and funding provided through the core mechanisms for schools rather than through additional funding schemes which divert the time and attention of senior management away from the promotion of effective teaching and learning. (Lupton, 2005, p602).

The inadequacy of learning support within schools has been identified by Kinder *et al.* (2000), HMIE/Audit Scotland (2003) and by SEED (2004e). This author would entirely endorse these findings. Failure to act promptly at the time of need can lead to infinitely higher costs not only to the individual in terms of the quality of their lives and life trajectories but also to society. The high proportion of the prison population with learning difficulties (as observed by the departing chief of Porterfield Prison who commented that

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[32]   7.1.1., 7.3.1 (RQ1.1); 7.1.2, 7.3.2 (RQ2.4); 7.4.1 (RQ1)

30% of those entering prison could neither read nor write and 50% had not reached the level of a Primary 6 child (Dinwoodie, 2006)[33]) is testimony to this.

A focus upon low expectations of pupil performance

A further factor related to learning is the sense of under-achievement - of not being stretched - which emanates from the accounts of some pupils. All but one of the Case Study pupils (Linda, CS2) were performing in Primary 7 below the level of attainment which would be expected of pupils at that stage[34] . Alastair (CS3) is described by the Child Psychologist as *achieving satisfactorily* yet Alastair was performing at a level three years below his chronological age in standardised reading tests (10.3.1). The low expectations which teachers hold of pupils also feature in the study by Riley *et al.* who describe pupils' perceptions of themselves as being 'thick', 'stupid' and 'at the bottom of the heap'. (Ibid., pp. 31 - 32)

Linda (CS2) states that she *got bored in class*, resulting in disruptive behaviour (10.2.4). Thomas's (CS4) *SgL* draws attention to the need for a flexible approach in teaching children with SEBD, taking account of their varied learning styles and individual needs (10.4.3). A further pupil comments upon work which *doesn't seem to get any harder*. (8.2.1) HMIE (2006b) observe that barriers to learning, arising from the *cycle of low expectations associated with social disadvantage,* are still clearly evident in Scottish schools. (HMIE, 2006b, Section: 3.5)

These observations are supported within the literature. Ainscow *et al.* (2006) share the Government's concern about low expectations, particularly as they pertain to pupils from working-class and ethnic minority backgrounds. Kinder *et al.* (1996) note pupil boredom often related to the nature of the tasks, the lack of relevance or interest in the lesson's overall content and lack of stimulus all playing a part in pupil disaffection as well as the lack of differentiation. Hamill *et al.* (2002) draw upon the observations of young people to note that there is little evidence of differentiation happening in practice (Ibid., p7), a finding which is replicated in Boyd and Simpson (2002) where it is found that, in relation to S1/2, the 'fresh start' approach is *still alive and well* (Boyd, 2002, p11).

Riley *et al.* (2002) draw attention to the stereotype of the disaffected young person as being *deviant, damaged and uninterested in learning.* (Riley *et al.,* 2004, p87) The 'deviance', 'damage' and disinterest in learning are conceived as lying within the individual circumstances of the pupil - their home-background or founded in psychologically based negative traits. There is no sense in which any of the difficulty is attached to the nature of schooling. The authors also note the tendency for disaffected young people to fail to persevere when encountering difficulties which corroborates the findings in relation to the low degree of self-efficacy and poor or lack of strategies for coping when in difficulties, identified within this study within the pupil self-assessments, in which

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[33]   Glasgow Herald, 30.09.06

[34]   10.1.2, 10.3.2, 10.4.2; App 10.2

statistically significant differences in these respects emerge between the *Sgi* population and the comparator group (7.3.2 (Fig. 7.18)) prior to intervention.

What all of the above indicate is the need for a flexible, differentiated approach which takes account of the previous learning of the pupil and builds upon it effectively, exposing pupils to a wide range of different contexts and approaches.

The response to the above statement is likely to be, so what? What's new? It is difficult to pick up a Standards and Quality Report emanating from HMIE which does not stress the need for a flexible, differentiated approach and for high teacher expectations of pupils' progress (for example, HMIE, 2002c; HMIE 2006b). The question then has to be asked, on the basis of these findings, why is it not happening?[35]

A focus upon learning dispositions, attitudes towards school and attendance

As has previously been noted, outcomes in relation to the development of learning dispositions and more positive attitudes towards school are equivocal[36]. Whilst some progress has been made in terms of developing in *Sg* pupils more positive learning dispositions and the behaviours associated with them, the responses are generally more mixed and more negative than for other measures. Class teachers' responses to this area are much more variable than for any other aspect of pupil progress on which they were asked to comment, although some comments are very positive (7.2.1 (RQ2.4)). Some parents observe that their children were happier to come to school (or it was less of a problem than in the past) (8.2.2). More positive attitudes towards learning/school were identified in respect of Stewart (CS1); Thomas (CS4) and Jonathan (CS6)[37]. This is an encouraging finding indicating that negative perceptions of school are not intractable. In the case of Stewart (CS1) (10.1.5), in conjunction with changes in home circumstances, this had manifested itself in much improved attendance at school. In respect of the *Sgi* population as a whole, however, it has been noted that attendance continues to decline post-intervention, as did unauthorised absence, but the deterioration for the *Sgi* population was of lesser statistical significance than for other pupils within the same cohort within the school (9.1: Fig. 9.2).

A focus upon perceptions of intelligence and the development of a sense of self-efficacy

Whilst *Sg* pupils identify some positive outcomes in relation to learning related outcomes (Fig. 7.18), the factor which was most resistant to change was 'I think of myself as being quite intelligent'. Stewart (CS1), Linda (CS2)[38], Alastair (CS3) and Thomas (CS4) do not perceive themselves as effective learners prior to intervention[39] although there are some

[35]   Whilst it is beyond the scope of this thesis to explore this issue, Lupton (2005) puts forward the hypothesis that the low expectations held by teachers may be a learned response to working within an unpredictable., demanding environment.

[36]   7.1.2, 7.2.1, 7.3.2, 7.4.2 (RQ2.4); 8.2.1, 8.2.2

[37]   10.1.1, 10.1.3, 10.1.4; 10.4.3, 10.4.4)

[38]   despite evidence to the contrary

[39]   10.1.2; 10.2.2; 10.3.2; 10.4.2

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indications of more positive learning dispositions developing post-intervention in respect of Stewart (CS1) and Thomas (CS4) (10.1.4; 10.4.4).

In the light of the discussion relating to motivation (3.4) in which it is argued that pupils' conceptions of their intelligence, together with their sense of self-efficacy, are crucial factors in achieving a 'mastery' orientation rather than a 'helpless' orientation/mindset (Dweck, 2002; McLean, 2003), this finding is of concern.

Whilst it is generally believed that it is the pupil's sense of self-esteem which is of the essence (3.4.1), given that within this study there is no statistically significant difference between the *Sgi* population's and the comparator group's perceptions (pre-intervention) in relation to the statement ' I feel good about myself most of the time' but highly significant statistical differences emerge in relation to the pupils' sense of self-efficacy as reflected in their beliefs about their capacities to learn (7.3.2 (Fig. 7.18)), the indications are that perhaps the focus needs to be directed more towards this area if under-achievement is to be ultimately addressed, if these findings were to be replicated more widely in further studies.

Contextual factors impacting upon learning

The context in which the learning takes place may be a factor which accounts for the variability in pupil response in relation to learning related outcomes. Pupils commented upon aspects such as their liking for the subject and the teacher (7.3.2 (RQ2.1)), the degree of leeway given by the teacher (CS3) (10.3.4)) and the degree to which the work was directed towards their abilities[40] as being factors which affected outcome.

Whilst it has been noted that the gap between the attainment in National Tests in English widens between the *Sgi* population and other pupils within the cohort (in the period spanning the end of Pr 7 to the end of S2), remaining highly significant statistically (9.3.2 & 9.3.3), it may be the case that changes in learning related behaviour may take longer to come to fruition.

A Synthesis

Within this study, the relationship between SEBD and attainment is clearly evident: *Sgi* pupils performed to a statistically significant extent below their peers in National Tests (c.c. 5.2.4 & 9.3). Provision of learning support was not sufficient to meet the needs of pupils within the *Sgi* experiencing learning difficulties, compounded by the low expectations held by some teachers of some *Sgi* pupils.

Outcomes, in relation to learning and the development of positive dispositions towards it (RQ2.4), on the whole, are variable and pupils' conceptions of their intelligence were most resistant to change. Self-efficacy emerged as a factor which delineated *Sgi* pupils more

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[40]   7.3.2 (RQ2.4); 8.2.1

from their peers than did self-esteem indicating that this may be an area to which attention should be devoted if under-achievement is to be addressed. A range of variables, such as liking for the subject and teacher, emerged as affecting pupil outcome.

11.5 Leadership and Management of the Support Group Initiative[41]
11.5.1 Some Key Issues

The evidence in respect of this aspect of the *Sgi* is that it has largely been successful in terms of the quality of leadership and management of the initiative and in relation to the quality of materials and pedagogy. Both the Depute (S3) and Headteacher note that there is support for the initiative within the school reflected in a willingness of staff to become involved in leading groups (8.1.3). A range of suggested changes is identified through both the mid-intervention evaluation (8.1.1.4 ; App 8.1) and the evaluation drawing upon the group (8.1.1.1) and individual interviews with *SgLs* (8.1.1.3), such as giving consideration to the frequency with which groups meet in order to maximise impact. This discussion focusses upon a few key issues to arise from the evaluation of the approach.

Senior Pupil Helpers

The senior pupils who had assisted with groups considered that it had been beneficial to their own personal development (8.1.4.2) and it is evident from CS4 (Thomas) that the efforts of the senior pupil had been appreciated. (10.4.4) This is in accordance with the findings of a previous study (Mowat, 1997) (in which senior pupils had supported younger pupils with SEBD within a classroom setting) and initiatives promoting peer support (Mowat, 2004; SEED, 2007), and is an area worthy of further investigation and development.

The Pastoral Care Link

The Pastoral Care link was regarded as being very important (ie. *SgLs* working with pupils within their own guidance groups) (8.1.1.1-5) and it acted as an incentive for some Pastoral Care teachers to become involved within the *Sgi*. However, pupils in groups which were not led by their Pastoral Care teacher could also achieve successful outcomes, CS1 (Stewart) being a case in point (10.1).

Gender Imbalance

It is evident from examining the profile of the *Sgi* population that there is a significant gender imbalance - a ratio of approximately 1: 4 girls to boys (5.1.1). Whilst this study has not focussed upon gender issues (and the data was not analysed accordingly), the study corroborates National Statistics relating to exclusions from school (in which, for the period of this study, 81% of exclusions (permanent and temporary) were accounted for by

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[41]   The specific emphasis within this section is RQ3.5 & RQ4

boys (SENSP 2001b, 2002, 2003b). Insight Paper 15 (SEED, 2004j), drawing from the series of surveys undertaken by Munn *et al.*, highlight three issues of note, one being that boys are regarded by both Primary and Secondary teachers as being particularly challenging (SEED, 2004, p8), a finding corroborated by Wilkin *et al.*, 2006.

Within the context of:

- the findings of 'The Social Justice Policy Group' (2006) which identifies white working-class boys as the most under-performing ethnic group in Britain;
- the higher proportion of males in relation to females comprising the NEET group (HMIE, 2006a);
- the under-performance of boys (relative to girls) in National Qualifications (Tinklin *et al.*, 2001),

the over-representation of boys is a matter of serious concern. However, McCluskey's (2005) study indicates that the prevalence of indiscipline in girls may be of a higher order than is indicated in exclusion statistics which may indicate that this also is an area which needs to be monitored and addressed.

11.5.2 The Embedding of the Approach within the school

The need for effective communication and the wider involvement of staff

The Headteacher identified the importance of the *Sgi* being perceived more as integral to the school's systems and practice rather than something which happens on the periphery of the experience of the majority of pupils and staff (8.1.3), an issue identified also by HMIE in relation to its evaluation of Integrated Community Schools (HMIE, 2004c). *SgLs* identify that awareness of the nature of the work of the groups amongst staff was not as high as it should be (8.1.1.1). Both in the evidence provided by *SgLs* (8.1.1.1-2) and by the two members of the SMT (8.1.3), the indications are that staff views about the *Sgi* were polarised.

It may be the case that a lack of knowledge/understanding of the nature and aims of the *Sgi* could have coloured staff views (CS1) which may have impacted upon the prognosis for pupils participating within the *Sgi*. There is a tendency for staff to view such interventions as 'rewards for badly behaved pupils' (Munn *et al.*, 2000; SEED, 2004e) or 'too attractive' (Kendall *et al.*, 2001, p105). On the occasions on which teaching staff had taken up the invitation to observe a group in action, they were very positive in their comments (8.1.4.2). This raises important issues about the quality of communication with the wider staff, extending beyond teaching staff (an issue also highlighted by Kendall *et al.* (2001)).

The importance of the role of culture in the effective management of change

MacGilchrist *et al.* (1997) and Fullan (2003) identify the complexity of the change process, highlighting the need to take account of the cultural context - the state of readiness for the school to be able to move forward positively. This requires an understanding of the range of contextual factors which may promote or hinder effective implementation, both internal and external to the school. Chapter 8 outlined some of the challenges to be overcome in embedding the *Sgi* into the school - in particular winning over staff, pupils and parents. (8.1.2)

The impact of the external environment on leadership and management within the school

Just as it is important to take account of the culture of the school, it is also important to recognise the role of external forces in shaping that culture and the pressures upon senior managers working in schools situated in areas of deprivation - *running to stand still* (Lupton, 2005, pp. 601 - 602).

Booth and Ainscow (1998)[42] draw from the literature to identify impediments to inclusion arising through and from the change process:- how when National policy, supportive of inclusion, becomes filtered and diminished as it transcends through the various levels of the education system; how conflicting policies generate tensions within the system which militate against inclusion; how the complexity of schools as dynamic organisations enables non-inclusive values and attitudes to re-surface despite the efforts of those committed to inclusive practice.

Whilst, there are respects in which *SgLs* identified that improvements could be made (for example, more opportunities for the sharing of good practice) (8.1.1.1), it is clear from *SgL* accounts (8.1.1) and from those of senior management (8.1.3) that *SgLs* felt well supported and that the project was well managed.

A Synthesis

The initiative was considered to have been well led and received within the school, although class teacher views were more polarised. Senior pupil involvement and the Pastoral Care Link were regarded as being of value. The gender imbalance within the groups reflects national statistics of indiscipline and is clearly of great concern and an issue which needs to be addressed nationally.

If the *Sgi* is to impact to best effect within the school, a whole-school approach and effective communication with the wider staff is required. Management of change requires an understanding of the importance of school culture, the range of factors internal and external to the school which impact upon it and the impediments to it.

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[42] cited in Ainscow *et al.* (2006)

11.6 Extending beyond the school[43]

11.6.1 Home-school partnerships

> *The need for establishments and teachers to work effectively with parents and carers and with all those services which support young people and their families remains vital.* [44]
>
> (HMIE, 2006b, Commentary by Graham Donaldson)

SgLs identify the support of parents as being one of the most crucial factors in helping *Sg* pupils to achieve the identified aims of the approach as the home was considered to be the source of attitudes and values (8.1.1.1) and, particularly in respect of those pupils in most need of support, effective inter-agency working is essential. This accords with MacBeath *et al.* (2007) who describe educational improvement (in its broadest sense) as *building bridges between school and the world of family, community and external social agencies.* (Ibid., p46)

The impact of the home environment upon pupils

SgLs consider that one of the most important variables in accounting for pupil outcome is the home environment (8.1.1). Factors relating to the home environment also feature in the reasons why children were initially nominated to the *Sgi* (5.2.1). This finding is paralleled within the literature (Cooper, 1993; Kinder *et al.*, 2000; The Prince's Trust, 2002). Hamill *et al.* (2002) identify that class teachers consider that parents are part of the problem in respect of pupils with SEBD, yet, it is evident that they can also be part of the solution, as in the exemplifications within the case studies (Ch 10).

A focus upon parental support and the wider (extended) family

Parental support is a difficult variable to measure and it manifests itself in a range of ways in relation to the *Sgi*. Whilst it may be reasonable to presume that a lack of parental support may impede the capacity of the *Sgi* to effect improvement in pupils, the corollary may not apply. It is evident that Linda's mother (CS2) was highly supportive of her, yet Linda failed to respond (10.2).

Given the degree of family breakdown[45] (UNICEF 2007) which is evident in the United Kingdom, there is a need to broaden the focus of discussion to encompass the wider family. The Prince's Trust (2002) identifies that pupils who had been excluded from

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[43]   the specific emphasis within this section is RQ3 and RQ4

[44]   Identified with 'bridging' (Putnam, 2000 (drawing from Gittell and Vidal (1998))) and 'linking' (Woolcott, 1998) Social Capital (McGonigal *et al.*, 2005)

[45]   Around 17% of children (aged 11,1 3 and 15) growing up in single parent families and around 14% living in stepfamilies (the 2nd highest of the twenty-one nations which make up the OECD countries included in the UNICEF survey (Report Card 7))

school were more likely to seek support from the extended family. It is unlikely that Stewart (CS1) would have achieved such a successful outcome without the support of his aunt and uncle and the change in home circumstances which provided a much more stable environment for him (10.1.3-4). It was also considered that Stewart's uncle functioned as an effective male role-model for him (10.1.3), a role which is lacking for many young boys growing up in single-parent families. The positive influence of Thomas's (CS4) (10.4.4) and Jonathan's (CS6) fathers was also considered to be important in effecting a positive outcome for them. The general lack of an effective role model (whether male or female) is raised as an issue in respect of excluded pupils within 'The Prince's Trust' study (2002).

The stability of the home environment and the need for a sensitive, flexible approach in working with children with SEBD

The lack of a stable home-background is a key factor in Alastair's case (CS3)(!0.3). As previously described, Alastair had experienced a range of placements in residential care which had broken down, and after a further attempt at home rehabilitation, he had been placed in a Children's Home during the course of S2. One of the major impediments in working with children who have had such a disrupted home life and education is the lack of a sense of control over their own lives.[46] One of the strategies adopted by the author in working with Alastair was the negotiation of a flexible timetable. Connelly *et al.* (2003) draw attention to the need for sensitivity in working with children in care, noting that they desire, first and foremost, to be seen as individuals rather than 'looked after'.

The quality of relationships between home and school

As previously observed, both members of the SMT consider that the *Sgi* was valued by parents, some of whom had requested places for their children (8.1.3). The vast majority of parents who responded to the questionnaire[47] considered that the *Sgi* had helped their children to focus upon what they needed to do in order to improve upon their behaviour and some identified the target-setting process as facilitating that process (7.4.2 (RQ2)). The importance of effective communication between the school and home and a pro-active approach in working with children with SEBD, demonstrating a commitment towards the child, are highlighted within the literature (SEED, 2004e). Kendall *et al.* (2001) draw attention to the need for information sharing and dynamic feedback relating to the young person's engagement with the initiative, as exemplified within the target-setting process.

Parents within the study are generally very appreciative of any support offered to their children (8.2.2 ; App 8.3). Some of the positive outcomes achieved by pupils had manifested themselves within the home and community[48], and this, together with

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[46]   This issue was raised in the BBC 2 documentary "The Boys of Ballikinrain", broadcast on 19.02.07

[47]   one-third response rate

[48]   7.1.1 (RQ1.2-3); 7.3.1 (RQ1.2-3); 7.3.2 (RQ2.2); 8.2.1

reductions in indiscipline-related incidents at school (9.2.2), may have alleviated some of the tensions within the family home for some families.

Alexander's case study (CS5) is not a good exemplification of the home and school working together. Despite the efforts of his *SgL*, Alexander's mother indicated that she had little knowledge of what transpired within the groups and there was little indication that she was supporting her son in the target-setting process (although Alexander admits some culpability in this respect).

Whilst it cannot be said that all relationships with parents improved as a consequence of the *Sgi* (8.1.2), an important lesson to be learned is that the pre-occupation with structures and systems in relation to home-school partnerships (SEED, 2006a) may not ultimately lead to the objective in mind which is to have schools and parents working harmoniously together to enhance the learning and well-being of pupils. Sometimes, it is the small and incremental steps which make the difference - conveying to the family that the staff within the school care about the child as an individual - as a person of worth who matters.

Beyond the Support Group

A theme to emerge was that a few parents were anxious about the progress of their children beyond the Support Group, as exemplified by Thomas's mother (CS4) (10.4.4) and the letter of thanks sent by a parent (App 8.3). They were grateful for the help which had been given to their children but were concerned that, in the absence of further support, their children would regress to previous patterns of behaviour. It was evident that a few parents were very keen to work in partnership with the school in order to maintain the progress made to date (8.2.2).[49]

A synthesis

SgLs identified the home environment, and support from the home, as being one of the most important variables in accounting for pupil outcome. Parents valued the *Sgi* as an intervention which had enabled their children to focus upon what they needed to do to improve upon their behaviour leading, in some cases, to positive outcomes. The importance of effective communication between the home and school was stressed, facilitated by the target-setting process. A few parents expressed a desire to continue to work in partnership with the school to ensure that any gains made were sustained and built upon.

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[49] Subsequent to the study, the school has extended its range of support to pupils, through a range of different mechanisms to different year groups, including S1, S3 & S4.

11.6.2 A focus upon multi-agency working, upon Looked after and Accommodated Children (LAAC) and upon the management of transitions

In respect of Alastair (CS3), the *Sgi* is only one of a range of interventions brought to bear upon his situation. One of the difficulties to emerge was the apparent lack of communication between the Children's Home and the school (10.3.1-2). Alastair's nominated Key Worker seemed unaware of the *Sgi*, despite the numerous communications between the school and Children's Home. If the *Sgi* were to have maximum impact for Alastair, it is important that the lines of communication between the Children's Home and school and within the Children's Home itself are open.

The importance of effective communication and high quality collaboration between agencies is highlighted throughout the literature (Borland *et al.*, 1998; Wilson and Pirrie, 2000; Lloyd *et al.*, 2001; Tomlinson, 2003). This discussion might indicate that it is not enough to have structures and systems in place. Monitoring and evaluation of those systems to ensure that they are working effectively is also key.

A focus upon systems (The Joint Assessment Team) (JAT)

Another important issue to emerge from this study is the function which the JAT serves as a gateway to services and support for children. In examining the initial concerns re. Stewart (CS1) the question arises as to why it was not considered appropriate to refer him to the JAT (10.1.1-2). The consequences of Stewart's indiscipline in S1 had been severe and would have been grounds for referral to the Children's Panel in many schools and Local Authorities. There may be several issues at play in this circumstance. His Pastoral Care Teacher had reached a point at which he felt that there was little more he could do to support Stewart - Stewart was not co-operating with monitoring and his mother was not attending interviews. Stewart's Pastoral Care Teacher appeared, however, to withdraw from the situation rather than to seek to resolve it. It raises issues about structures and systems within the school. Were the criteria clearly laid down which would trigger a nomination to JAT and were these rigourously monitored and evaluated?

A further explanation may lie in the argument put forward by Lupton (2005) - that schools situated in deprived areas and the staff working within them are over-whelmed by the demands upon them emanating from a range of factors (many of which are external to the school) but which create pressures and stresses within the system. MacBeath *et al.*, (2006) observe that, in schools set in disadvantaged areas, strategies which may apply in more stable circumstances may not be effective. This raises, once again, the issue of resources targeted to meet need.

There is also limited evidence within the study of a failure of follow-through in respect of some of the decisions arising from JAT meetings. This failure to monitor and evaluate outcomes arising from JAT meetings, other than through the review of individual cases, is

corroborated in Lloyd *et al.*, 2001. Difficulties in accessing resources, in particular, Psychological Services, is raised on a few occasions within this study. This is corroborated also in Kendall *et al.* (2001) and in HMIE's/Audit Scotland's (2003; pt. 6.21) audit of provision for pupils with SEN.

Access to services and appropriateness of placements

Concerns are also raised about the appropriateness of mainstream placement for a few pupils. For example, the author (in her capacity as Depute Head) had raised this issue with the Local Authority in relation to Thomas's (CS4) capacity to cope in mainstream schooling (10.4.2). Likewise, Alastair's Pastoral Care Teacher (CS3) identified that he required more specialist support than could be provided by the school alone (10.3.3). Class teachers also raise concerns about the capacity of a few pupils to operate successfully outwith small class/group settings (7.2.1 (RQ2.1)). These concerns about the capacity of individual children to cope within mainstream provision are mirrored within the literature (4.2.2), highlighting the need for a continuum of provision as advocated by HMIE/Audit Scotland, 2003.

The management of transitions

Alastair's (CS3) school career had consisted of a series of placements, within and outwith mainstream provision (10.3.1). This led to a very disrupted experience for him. Questions need to be raised about the manner in which Alastair was returned to mainstream education after his placement in an EBD unit. Only a three week period was allowed for Alastair to settle back into Primary school prior to his transition to Secondary and there was a lack of information provided for the Secondary school in relation to his attainment. The transition process from Primary to Secondary may present difficulties for even well-adjusted pupils (Bryan and Treanor, 2006). To place Alastair in this situation was setting him up to fail. The provision of more stringent guidelines to Local Authorities relating to child protection issues (SEED, 2002c) and provision for Looked after and Accommodated Children (LAAC) (Connelly *et al.*, 2003; HMIE/Care Commission, 2007)[50] should, hopefully, prevent the recurrence of such a situation.

In more general terms, the transition from Primary to Secondary is regarded as difficult for some of the pupils within the *Sgi* population and considered to be a factor in the difficulties which these pupils were experiencing. Thomas's mother (CS4) intimated that the transition from Primary to Secondary had been difficult for him (10.4.4). Difficulties experienced by pupils in relation to the transition process are highlighted in Kinder *et al.* (2000), The Prince's Trust (2002) and Boyd and Simpson (2002) and the effective management of transitions is highlighted as one of the key areas for development in the HMIE recommendations for personal support for pupils. (HMIE, 2004b)[51] .

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[50]   both of which were published subsequent to the conduct of this study

[51]   Subsequent to this study, the school has introduced transition groups for vulnerable pupils, led by Behaviour Support staff.

A Synthesis

A common theme to emerge in the three discussions is the need not only to have effective policies, structures and systems in place but to monitor and evaluate them in practice. Communication emerged as of being of prime importance. However, factors relating to the wider policy context, relating to issues of social justice and access to resources, are also of import. Lupton (2005) and MacBeath *et al.* (2006) draw attention to the specific circumstances surrounding schools situated in areas of multiple deprivation, noting that the solutions which might otherwise apply may not suffice.

11.6.3 A Focus upon the Community

Tensions between the values of the pupil/home and the values of the school and/or community

MacBeath *et al.* (2007) note that the influence of neighbourhoods and peer groups in shaping the attitudes and aspirations of young people often outweighs that of parents or teachers. Kinder *et al.* (1996 and 2000) and Kendall *et al.* (2001) highlight the difficulties which can arise when the values of the family clash with those of the school. Munn *et al.* (2004) note the ever-widening gap between the values held by schools and those of society. This is an issue which was felt to impede the progress of Linda (CS2) who was regarded by her *SgL* as being strong-willed and having her own set of values which often conflicted with those of the school (10.2.3-4).

The influence of 'street cred'

Likewise, the extent to which a child may be influenced by peers, by the expectations of the community in which he/she lives and by 'street cred' (Kinder *et al.*, 2000), as identified within this study, (exemplified by Linda (CS2) (10.2) and other stakeholder accounts (7.1.1 (RQ1.2-3); 8.1.1.5)) creates an under-culture, sometimes expressed in gang culture, which often manifests itself in anti-social behaviour and the approbation of the school and wider community. The Social Justice Policy Group (2006) describe the harsh street culture as a magnet and the gang as an alternative 'family' for disaffected boys from dysfunctional homes. (Ibid., p17) The affiliation with such a culture may be a manifestation of the child's need to have a sense of belonging (which was identified as lacking in up to a quarter of fifteen year olds in the OECD survey (2003, p21)[52]) and needs to be addressed at the level of society.

MacBeath *et al.* (2007) note that strong bonding within groups may act to prevent teachers from being able to engage pupils in learning or to change their belief systems. The negative influence of the peer group is identified specifically in relation to Linda (CS2) in which she identifies the descent into truancy in the period beyond intervention as being a major factor in the decline of her behaviour and attitude (10.2.4-5).

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[52]   cited in MacBeath (2007)

Behaviour within the community

Munn *et al.* (2000) draw attention to the context in which schools are trying to promote inclusion and the trends which characterise society. SEED (2004g), drawing from the Institute of Psychiatry UK National Survey, notes that adolescent mental health has declined significantly during the last twenty-five years, a trend which is observable also in the USA which Seligman (1996) attributes to the rise of the 'positive thinking' movement.

There is evidence, prior to intervention, of anti-social behaviour within the community in respect of Stewart (CS1), Alastair (CS3) and Thomas (CS4)[53], encompassing alcohol and solvent abuse, arson, vandalism and violent, aggressive and threatening behaviour. Post-intervention, stakeholder accounts would indicate that this has abated (although there is no official corroboration of this).

Hamill and Boyd (2000) question the extent to which children, mainly boys, exhibiting criminal behaviour can be catered for within mainstream schools (Hamill and Boyd, 2000, p 36), as do Kendall *et al.*, (2001) who consider that schools are not sufficiently flexible enough to cater for their needs.

Children who are loved and cared about within their homes, schools and communities have much less of a need to seek affirmation from their peers. Within the context of the UNICEF study (UNICEF, 2007) which rated the United Kingdom as being at the bottom of the OECD survey of twenty-one nations and, in particular raised concerns about the quality of family and peer relationships and behaviours and risks amongst British children aged 11, 13 and 15, this is an highly important issue which needs to be addressed within the wider society.

A Synthesis

The clash in values which may occur between the home and school, the influence of 'street cred' and the potentially negative effects of peer relationships impact upon young people and may have impeded progress for *Sgi* pupils, highlighting a chasm between the needs of young people and the circumstances which surround them, reflected in the low standing of the UK in the UNICEF study (2007). However, it is evident that involvement in the *Sgi*, for three of the six case studies, had alleviated these difficulties, leading to a reduction in anti-social behaviour within the community, as reported by the pupils themselves.

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[53]   10.1.1-2; 10.3.1-2; 10.4.2

11.6.4 Support for the most vulnerable pupils

As previously indicated around one third of pupils within the *Sgi* were also supported through the Behaviour Support Base and the majority of these pupils were placed in groups led by Behaviour Support staff (5.2.6 (Table 5.2)). The outcomes for many of the pupils within this sub-set of the *Sgi* population exceeded expectation (9.2.4)[54] . It would be fair to conclude that access to both interventions was more efficacious than access to the Behaviour Support Base alone and that access to both had been a 'winning combination' for some, but not all, pupils. However, concerns are raised about the potential problems which can emanate from the mix of pupils within the Base (10.4.4).

These pupils also fell within the 51% of *Sgi* pupils who came under the auspices of JAT (5.2.6 (Table 5.2)), opening to them (and their families) the range of services available through Social Work and The Health Service from which they may also have derived benefit. A few of these pupils also participated in the activities provided by voluntary bodies within the community. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to evaluate the effectiveness of such interventions but it should be noted that the *Sgi* compared favourably with some of the other approaches which had previously been adopted with *Sgi* pupils (CS6). It is evident that, whilst previous attempts to help a few pupils had failed, namely Stewart (CS1) (10.13-4) and Thomas (CS4) (10.4.2 & 10.4.4), the pupils had subsequently responded positively to the *Sgi*.

Weaknesses in the support provided to children presenting challenging behaviour were noted in around half of Education Authorities. (HMIE, 2005b: NP 3)

A Synthesis

As noted, the combination of involvement in the *Sgi* together with support from the Support Base had been a 'winning combination' for many of the pupils most at risk from exclusion: of being 'written-off' by teachers and, sometimes, even by parents. This is within a context of concern about the quality of support offered to children presenting challenging behaviour in around half of Education Authorities. (HMIE, 2005b: NP 3)

11.7 The whole school context - towards inclusive schools[55]

Promoting inclusion

It is evident that some practices serve to exclude children rather than to promote inclusion. For example, both Alastair (CS3) and Thomas (CS4) (10.3.3; 10.4.4) were excluded from the potentially beneficial effects of participation within the X Trust - a charitable. body working within the community to promote inclusion. Schools are

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[54]　the vast majority of these pupils would fall within the 'high/extreme concern' categories prior to intervention

[55]　the principal emphasis in this section is RQ 3 and RQ4

walking a very fine tight-rope between balancing the needs of the individual against the majority but sometimes practices which are developed to promote positive behaviour - such as reward trips - can be counter-productive if they serve to exclude the most disadvantaged young people, adding to the sense of alienation and rejection which they feel, building up problems for the future. Munn and Lloyd (2005) observe that, ... *school practices can promote or not a sense of belonging* (Ibid., p214) and The Prince's Trust (2002) raises concerns about policies relating to exclusion from school which are producing an 'underclass' of young people.

In analysing the function which the *Sgi* has played within the school, perhaps its most important contribution has been in promoting a more inclusive ethos within the school[56] and in keeping children within the system, as highlighted within the case studies (CS1, 3, 4 & 6) (10.1, 10.3 & 10.4), promoting a sense of belonging (as previously discussed). This is sometimes conveyed in terms of 'what otherwise might have been'- *I dread to think what would have happened to him without intervention.* (Class Teacher) (8.1.4.1). During the period of the study, one of the sixty-nine pupils was permanently excluded from the school and no pupils withdrew from the programme.

Moving forward?

This thesis has argued that the adoption of polarised positions with regard to inclusion is not helpful. Whilst it is not desirable for people to be defined principally or solely in terms of specific characteristics and nor is it acceptable to justify unjust practices on that basis, it also has to be recognised that what is right for one individual may not be right for all. A flexible, responsive approach, drawing upon a continuum of provision (as recommended in HMI/Audit Scotland, 2003) which takes account of the needs of the individual for additional support; which focusses upon systems and practice within the school and also upon wider societal factors is more likely to be successful in meeting the needs of children with SEBD. It achieves little to pursue relentlessly a debate on the basis of medical v social models of disability (and to adopt entrenched positions in respect of such) and it detracts from the essential aim which is to focus upon the needs of the individual and how those needs can be balanced with the needs of all children to learn in a safe environment, the latter of which is a tension identified within the system (Riddell, 2005/2006) and an issue raised within the literature[57].

Academics have a duty to "tell it as it is" but they also have a responsibility to develop an understanding of the complexities of the change process (which is rarely the straightforward, linear process it is often portrayed to be (MacBeath *et al.*, 2007, p46)[58]) such that they can gain a fuller understanding of the intricate interplay of factors surrounding the issues under investigation. Winzer (2005) draws attention to the need to take account of the prevailing culture and the capacity of the school to change and

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[56]   7.1.2 (RQ2.4); 8.1.1.1, 8.1.4
[57]   Munn *et al.*, 1998 and 2000; Hamill *et al.*, 2002; Lawson *et al.*, 2005; Adams, 2005; HMIE, 2006b
[58]   citing MacGilchrist (2003, p32)

restructure in order to meet needs. Whilst some might argue that an inclusive ethos should principally be developed through focussing upon the practice, values and beliefs of staff, this does not take account of the fact that children only have one chance at their education and that change takes time. Educators are faced with the decision about what they can do in the 'here and now' to ensure that the learning experience for the pupils in front of them is 'the best that it can be'. Whilst it is necessary to have a 'vision' and to share that vision with others, sometimes the choice comes down to not where ideally one *should* start but with where one *can* start. *The imperative is to take preventative action before problems escalate and become intractable.* This view is shared by Visser (2005) and corroborated in the GTC survey in which it is suggested that early intervention is not only required to support learning but also in relation to the emotional and behavioural needs of children (Adams, 2005, pt. 4.3 (iv)).

Whilst it is understandable that a cautious approach to prevention may be adopted, the difficulty is that an incremental, staged-intervention approach (as advocated in HMI, 2004b), if it is not successful, may lead to highly traumatised children for whom intervention comes too late. 'Too little - too late' is a concern raised by Kendall *et al.* (2001) and by Pirrie *et al.* (2006). This may have been the case in respect of the single *Sgi* pupil who was permanently excluded from the school (after having been permanently excluded from his previous school) therefore failing to complete the intervention.

A focus upon sustainability and the process of change

True inclusion cannot be legislated for. No amount of exhortation of staff to be inclusive in their practice will achieve this end if account is not taken of the perameters in which schools and teachers operate. HMIE/ Audit Scotland (2003) observe that in schools which had been most successful in achieving inclusive practice, the drive has come from within the school. Staff within these schools had a commitment to the principles of inclusion and valued diversity. It is the personal belief of the author that one of the principal means of achieving inclusion is through leading by example, gradually bringing other people on board, creating a 'community of practice' (Wenger *et al.*, 2002), encouraging people within that community to reflect upon their values and beliefs, and challenging those values and beliefs within a supportive context. This accords with the constructivist theories of Nuthall (2002) - through participation in the range of activities and the discourse of the 'learning community', the values, beliefs and norms of the community are gradually assimilated by its members. Ainscow identifies 'organisational conditions'- distributed leadership, a participative culture, and a commitment to enquiry - which promote a collaborative and problem-solving culture, thus promoting inclusive practice (Ainscow *et al.*, 2006, p38). MacBeath (2001), likewise, observes:

> *What we are only now beginning to understand is that the strength, resilience and capability of a school lies in its distributed intelligence, its shared leadership and its*

communal learning.
    (MacBeath, 2001)[59]

MacBeath *et al.* (2007) find that it is only when staff begin to *get hold of a powerful idea* that change becomes possible.

Munn *et al.* (1997) draw attention to the important role which senior managers play in establishing an ethos in which it is conveyed that teachers have a responsibility towards all children, not just the well-behaved, well-motivated or high-achievers. Munn *et al.* (2000) note, however, that the commitment of senior managers is not sufficient to achieve inclusion - it is necessary also to persuade teachers of the rationale for and benefits of such a policy.

Attention has already been drawn to the agency which teachers exercise in re-formulating policy in practice (c.c. 4.2). Sustainable change is often incremental (Law and Glover, 2000). Sometimes it is the cumulative effect of a series of small steps which act as a catalyst for change, leading to the 'tipping point' (Gladwell, 2000). Gladwell argues that, in order to bring about that fundamental change in people's beliefs and behaviour, it is necessary to create a community around them in which these new beliefs can be nurtured and grow. (Gladwell (2000) in Fullan, 2003, p44) The concept of 'critical mass' is also important in understanding this phenomenon. (LTS, 2006, p15)

The early signs are that the *Sgi* is making an impact upon the ethos of the school and that staff are beginning to question their values and beliefs and to develop more empathetic approaches towards working with children perceived as having SEBD. This is more in evidence in relation to *SgLs* who are most involved in the initiative. It is no longer the case that many staff are questioning the fact that children with SEBD should be deserving of support and the question which was raised in the initial stages about the advisability of incorporating the word 'support' into the title of the groups would no longer be asked[60] . This does not mean that there is not a great deal to be achieved but the path to inclusive practice is not easy (Boyd, 1996[61]; Allan, 2004; Lloyd *et al.*, 2001).

The chapter has also argued for the need for an holistic approach in which ethos cannot be separated from the quality of the teaching and learning process and the nature of the curriculum. It has emphasised the importance of respectful, trusting relationships as underpinning effective practice.

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[59]   in TES (14.12.01)
[60]   Whilst beyond the period of the study, subsequent in-service provision on the work of the Support Groups elicited a very positive response from teaching and auxiliary staff.
[61]   drawing upon Solity, 1993

A Synthesis

This section has explored some of the tensions between the genuine attempts of schools to promote positive behaviour and the, often unintended, consequences for pupils who 'never reach the starting line' (Mowat, 2005)[62] . The promotion of an holistic approach towards inclusion, avoiding polarised positions, taking account of the prevailing culture of the school and recognising the imperative to take preventative action before problems become intractable is advocated. Leading by example, creating communities of practice (Wenger *et al*, 2002), recognising the personal agency of teachers in translating policy into practice (Lawson *et al.*, 2005), enabling teachers to *get hold of a powerful idea* (MacBeath *et al.* 2007) are important components not only in creating inclusive communities but in sustaining them.

One of the key findings to emerge from this study is that the *Sgi* had been instrumental, as one of a range of interventions within the school, in promoting an inclusive ethos and that the negative perceptions held by young people about schooling, about their teachers, about learning are not intractable - schools and committed teachers, working within trustful and respectful relationships in partnership with parents and other agencies, can make a difference.

11.8 The wider context within which the school operates and the implications for inclusive practice[63]

The chapter has also drawn attention to the importance of understanding the changing context in which schools operate. Without attention to the forces in society which militate against social inclusion relating to poverty, health, the 'cycle of disadvantage' which blights the life chances of many young people (SOEID, 1998a: Crown Office, 2006, pt. 1.4), societal trends such as family breakdown, the 'ladette' and gang cultures and under-age pregnancies, schools are likely only to have limited impact. Lupton (2005) argues that a concern for social justice demands that attention is paid to the forces external to the school as, only when this is understood will more promising policies follow. (Lupton, 2005, p603)

The chapter suggests that there requires to be a recognition of the needs of schools which face particularly challenging circumstances and a need for greater consideration to be given towards determining the most effective means of directing funding to meet needs and to ensure that it is put to the best of use[64] , fostering capacity building and building in sustainability. It also highlights the complexity of and interplay between a range of variables - relating to the *Sgi* (its conception and realisation in practice) and

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[62]   TES, 2005
[63]   the principal focus of this section is RQ4
[64]   giving consideration to the fact that policy initiatives can have unforeseen consequences such as limiting freedom of choice of schooling for parents of pupils with ASN (as reported by Andrew Denholm, Education Correspondent of the Glasgow Herald, 29.10.07)

inherent within the individual child (and the circumstances surrounding that child); the school environment (its policies, systems and practice); and the wider environment and policy context - as they impact upon outcomes for individual pupils.

Chapter 12
A Synthesis: Research Question 4

This chapter returns to the initial 'theoretical propositions' (Yin, 1994, 2003) (c.c. 1.3.2) to ask to what extent, if any, they can be substantiated (12.1). The chapter also addresses RQ4 (c.c. 1.3.3), concerned with the wider implications of the study (12.2), before drawing from the study to make recommendations for the various audiences of the study (12.3) and drawing the thesis to a conclusion (12.4).

12.1 The Initial 'theoretical propositions' (Yin, 1994, 2003)

The previous chapters have teased out and discussed the findings in relation to each specific stakeholder group and sought commonalities and differences between the varied accounts. In drawing together the evidence from a range of sources as they relate to the *Sgi* population as a whole, it is evident that, to varying extents and dependent upon context, whilst there is a wide variation in respect of the achievement of aims (as reflected in the initial 'theoretical propositions' (Yin, 1994, 2003) and research questions), positive outcomes have been attained in respect of all of the identified criteria in at least some respects. Just as in Wilkin *et al.*'s study (2006), the findings reflect the world views of the varied stakeholder groups, those stakeholders closest to the initiative – pupils, parents and Sg Leaders – holding more positive perceptions than class teachers. What are the most notable findings in relation to each of these stakeholder groups?

Pupils

It is evident from examination of the benchmark measures that the *Sgi* population was not only distinct in relation to comparator groups (c.c. 5.2) but also diverse, thus highlighting the need for caution in relation to over-generalisation. Outcomes were individual to each pupil (in some cases, extending beyond the confines of the school to family relationships and the community). This is most apparent in the pupils who participated within the retrospective interviews (86% of whom identified the approach as having been efficacious for them) who were able to identify what they had taken away from their experience of participation, two-thirds of whom considered that these positive effects had remained with them.

The pupil response at the immediate end of intervention was varied in respect of individual indicators although in overall terms, it was generally very positive with the vast majority of pupils considering that involvement in the initiative had either met

(25%) or exceeded (59%) expectation. According to these accounts, pupils were reflecting more upon their behaviour and understanding, to a greater extent, its effects upon others (RQ1, RQ2.2); developing a greater awareness of the needs of others (RQ2.2); and were developing the capacity to regulate their behaviour to a greater extent (RQ2.1). The post-intervention self-assessments, whilst once again variable, indicate that involvement in the *Sgi* had had a motivating effect upon 72% of pupils.

Pupils' attitudes towards school, their teachers and learning are not intractable (RQ2.4) and this was particularly evident in their empathetic responses towards their teachers (RQ2.2). Whilst pupil outcomes were variable, the majority of pupils were able to take something positive away from their experience of participation - it had been an enjoyable and worthwhile experience for them.

Support Group Leaders

Support Group Leaders' responses were generally very positive both towards the *Sgi* as an intervention and also in relation to individual pupil progress. They were, however, pragmatic in their responses and recognised the constraints under which inclusive practice is being promoted and raised concerns about the capacity of mainstream schools to meet the needs of all pupils. In respect of all criteria, positive outcomes were identified to at least some extent, ranging from 51% of pupils considered to have gained in self-esteem and confidence (RQ2.3) to 68% developing interpersonal intelligence (RQ1.2) and empathy (RQ2.2). One of the most interesting findings was the warmth of relationships and empathy which developed between SgLs and the pupils in their groups, an important component in the process of resignification for pupils. SgLs identified communication and reaching out to the wider school community as being of importance if the approach is to be as efficacious as it could be. They also highlighted the family as being the source of values for the child and stressed the need for support from the family for the child.

SgLs played a very important role in setting the tone for the group but also in teaching for understanding and transfer, fostering thinking skills and metacognition, acting as a mediator between the child and the learning environment, scaffolding the learning and through a process of Socratic questioning, leading pupils to a deeper understanding of the issues under question (RQ1 & 2) (c.c. Ch 2).

Class Teachers

The most striking aspect of the findings in relation to class teachers was the variability of response, highlighting the context-specific and, in some cases, erratic nature of pupil behaviour. Class teacher responses were generally more cautious - 38% of pupils were identified by the majority of their class teachers as having benefited from their participation in the initiative, which is paralleled with an equal proportion for whom their teachers' responses were more variable. It is evident, however, that some

improvements had been noted in relationships between teachers and pupils, if not to the same extent in relation to *Sg* pupils and their peers (RQ2.2). Despite the reservations which class teachers had held, they, as a whole, were still prepared to give the *Sgi* the benefit of the doubt and a few teachers drew attention to what might otherwise have been the consequences for individual pupils without intervention.

SMT

The Headteacher and Depute (S3), whilst supportive of the *Sgi* and the role it can play within the school, as part of a wider framework of strategies and approaches to promote inclusion and address under-achievement, had a pragmatic perspective which recognised the complexity of the endeavour.

Parents

The most important thing for parents was that someone cared. Parents were generally very appreciative of the efforts of SgLs to work with their children and a few expressed a desire to continue working in partnership with the school to support their children. In general, it was the capacity which the *Sgi* afforded for their children to be able to 'open up', to express their feelings and anxieties and to grow in confidence (RQ2.3) which they valued most. Some parents observed that their children were getting into trouble less often at school (RQ2.1), easing some of the tensions within the home and their children's reluctance to attend school (RQ2.4). 92% of respondents[1] indicated that they considered the initiative to be worthwhile.

The quantitative data in respect of discipline sanctions would support the 'theoretical proposition' (Yin, 1994, 2003) that, in general, the *Sgi* had impacted positively upon the capacity of pupils to regulate their behaviour with good judgement within a range of contexts (RQ2.1) (or, at the least, stemming further deterioration) (as measured in relation to two of the indicators) although deterioration was not averted for some pupils. The improvement in the vast majority of pupils initially categorised as 'high/extreme' concern was particularly marked. Many pupils, however, continued to experience difficulties in this respect in the year following intervention, as portrayed in the observations of the Depute Head for S3. Whilst, within some stakeholder accounts, there were some indications emerging of more positive learning dispositions and more positive attitudes developing towards school (RQ2.4), this is not exemplified either in pupil attainment or pupil attendance.

All of the above, taken in conjunction with the findings as outlined in previous chapters, would indicate that the 'theoretical propositions' (Yin, 1994, 2003) - derived from the premise that teaching for understanding can impact upon a range of pupil outcomes, within the context of working with children with (or perceived to be at risk of developing) SEBD (c.c. 1.3.2) - can be substantiated, but only as qualified.

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[1]   representing a third of parents

12.2 Research Question 4

12.2.1 The implications of the Sgi for imperatives within Scottish Education

Chapter 1 outlined the principal policy initiatives (and the underlying themes) which have developed since the inception of the *SgI* until present times, spanning almost a decade (c.c. 1.2.2). The challenges facing many countries are of a similar nature – the challenges of creating societies in which people behave with consideration, respect and courtesy towards each other; of bringing up young people such that they value themselves and others and can make a meaningful, valuable and valued contribution towards society, having an understanding both of their rights and their responsibilities; of creating an inclusive society in which young people do not feel alienated but have a sense of belonging; of enabling young people to fulfil their potential and develop their full range of talents and abilities. (Mowat, 2007)

It would be entirely wrong (and misleading) to present the *Sgi* as a panacea for all of the problems facing today's schools (and which are reflected in wider society) but it is evident that it was considered by a range of stakeholders as being a valuable tool (as part of a wider programme but also standing alone) in combating social exclusion and promoting social justice and citizenship, which are embedded within the National Priorities and the four capacities of 'A Curriculum for Excellence' (SEED, 2004a) (which is part of the wider 'Excellent, Ambitious Schools' programme (SEED, 2004b)). It is evident from a range of stakeholder accounts that the majority of *Sg* pupils had developed further their capacities to empathise with and understand to a greater extent the needs of others, summed up in the quote by a *Sg* pupil, *It's not just "me, me, me", but them* (7.3.1; RQ1.2-3).

The UK Government has advocated the use of group-work approaches in promoting positive behaviour within schools (as part of the policy , 'Every Child Matters' (DfES, 2004) and the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) programme (DfES, 2005)) and there is a tradition of therapeutic group work in a range of disciplines such as the prison services and social work. The Scottish Executive has established Behaviour Support Bases in many Scottish schools yet there is scant guidance as to the nature of the work which should be undertaken within them (this is barely addressed in 'Better Behaviour - Better Learning' (SEED, 2001a)). The Scottish Government (2007), however, indicates its intention to focus upon this area through the establishment of networks to share good practice and the publication of advice to LAs and schools. A clearly defined programme of activities, with a sound theoretical basis, which focusses upon the affective development of pupils would be of value in taking forward the aspirations of 'Better Behaviour - Better Learning' in *unlock(ing) the potential of all our children and young people* (SEED, 2001a, foreword).

As Scottish education has developed in its capacity to raise attainment generally amongst the school population with, accordingly, a higher proportion of young people entering Further and Higher Education (Paterson, 2003), the spotlight has been focussed increasingly upon the performance of vulnerable groups such as those not in education, employment or training (NEET). Whilst the difficulties experienced by the NEET group[2] become more apparent when they leave school and fail to enter further education, employment or training, it is apparent from a wide range of studies (as examined in Ch 4 & 11) that disaffection from school sets in at a much earlier stage, emphasising the need for early intervention. It is evident, particularly in the accounts of parents and pupils respectively, that the *Sgi* had served as a means of enabling some pupils to develop more positive attitudes towards school and more positive dispositions towards learning which may ultimately lead to their more likely engagement in lifelong learning (National Priority 5) and prevent disaffection setting in or becoming further established. It is also evident from study of Alastair (CS no 3) that the *Sgi* had helped him, to an extent, to cope with the very difficult circumstances pertaining to his home-circumstances and his placement within a Children's Home, indicating that the approach may be of value to vulnerable groups such as LAAC.

It is also clear in examining the responses of many *Sg* pupils that involvement within the initiative had contributed towards their emotional needs to feel valued, affirmed and listened to. This is reflected in parental accounts of their children being calmer, less anxious about coming to school, feeling more able to participate and generally happier. As such, it is evident that the *Sgi* may also serve as a means of taking forward the aspirations of 'Happy, safe and achieving their potential' (SEED, 2005).

12.2.2 *The Significance of the Study in building upon and extending the boundaries of knowledge and understanding*

This section focusses upon the respects in which the initiative itself and the study build upon and extend knowledge and understanding.

The author considers that the foremost way in which this objective is achieved is in respect of the application of the *TfU Framework* to a new field - the Affective Field. The Framework was conceived as a tool to promote understanding within the cognitive domain and it was not envisaged by the team at Project Zero that it would be utilised other than in relation to the subject disciplines. In a meeting with David Perkins (2006) to discuss both the approach itself and the thesis, David described the *Sgi* as innovative and indicated that in his work, world-wide, he had not encountered a similar application of the theory.

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[2] recognising that it is a diverse group which incorporates young people who may be on gap years or involved in volunteering

Another respect in which the study is innovative is in its application of MI theory. Gardner (1999) is highly critical of many of the applications of his theory to the classroom. In particular, the application of what he describes as *a battery of tests* which are then used as a means of classifying or labelling children, sometimes in ways which can be as damaging as the labelling associated with standard IQ tests. He describes a scenario of small children crawling along the floor with the labels "Bodily-Kinaesthetic Intelligence "attached to them, to which he responds:- *That is not bodily kinaesthetic intelligence; that is kids crawling across the floor. And I feel like crawling up the wall.* (Gardner, 1999, p122)

These approaches to implementing MI theory are reminiscent of many of the approaches which are adopted in relation to learning styles (arising from the psychoanalytical tradition and the work of Carl Jung (1927)), the majority of which have been brought into question through Coffield *et al.*'s study (Coffield *et al.*, 2005), claiming that they have little conceptual basis of any validity.

Gardner (1999) describes a range of approaches which are in tune with his conception of MI theory as do Campbell and Campbell (1999). Campbell (1997) classifies the means of realising MI theory in practice under five headings:

- lesson designs: using the multiple intelligences as entry points into lesson content
- interdisciplinary curriculum
- student projects
- assessments
- apprenticeship.

In most of these approaches, the teacher teaches or assesses a topic/task through providing opportunities for pupils to approach the topic/task through a range of what might be defined as 'understanding performances' which draw from the different intelligences. Thus, a range of intelligences are brought to bear upon the specific task. Many of these tasks foster inter-disciplinary links and take place within authentic contexts, helping students to 'make the connection' between the bodies of knowledge of different subject disciplines and practical applications of learning. These approaches differ from *Sgi* work in which *TfU* is the mechanism through which the personal intelligences are developed within the group setting. Perhaps it can be summed up by comparing these two questions?

How can I approach this topic/task/assessment through the development of a range of intelligences?

How can I develop the personal intelligences through the application of the *TfU framework* and the development of thinking skills to a range of topics/tasks?

Whilst the *Sgi* has elements in common with cognitive behavioural therapy and with group work approaches in general, the approach is unique. Feuerstein's theory of Instrumental Enrichment has been applied successfully within a Scottish context in working with children with SEBD (Head and O'Neill (1999)) but this has a different conceptual basis from the *Sgi*.

The synthesis of theories brought to bear both upon the conceptualisation of the initiative and upon the study – constructivist theory (teaching for understanding, thinking skills, teaching for transfer and metacognition), theories of intelligence, of self-esteem and motivation, of *theory of mind*, of the development of morality and of dispositions towards learning - is unique. Likewise, the study draws from fields as diverse as the Affective and Cognitive domains, school effectiveness and improvement, school leadership and inclusion; from a range of disciplines such as psychology, sociology and didactics; and from a very wide range of Government and Scottish Executive policies which impinge upon the study. Indeed, it could be argued that whilst this is one of the greatest weaknesses of the study (its breadth), it could also be argued that it is also one of its greatest strengths. Just as a process of triangulation strengthens the basis of a study in respect of the validity and reliability of its findings (what Bassey (1999) describes as 'trustworthiness'), this author maintains that the insights gained (and the inter-relationships and connections which can be formed, creating a complex web of new understandings) through illuminating both the initiative and the study by drawing upon a range of different domains adds greatly to its value in taking forward the boundaries of knowledge and understanding. Gardner (2006), in his theory of 'Five Minds for the Future' (Gardner, 2006), describes the *synthesising mind* as *likely to be the most coveted in the modern era.* (Tapestry Conference Notes, Glasgow, 08.09.06)

Coffield (2005) suggests that much academic research takes place within a vacuum of specialised knowledge specific to a field and, it could be argued, that whilst much can be gained from illuminating a narrow field of study in great depth, a great deal can also be lost if the study fails to take account of knowledge and understanding from wider fields which can cast a different perspective on the topic under consideration. This was one of the conclusions of Ch 4 in which it was argued that an understanding of the change process (relating to the fields of school improvement and management/leadership) might help to illuminate the issues in relation to the promotion of inclusive practice. This difficulty is compounded further by the rigid boundaries with which academics often surround their work as described by Coffield in his analysis of the field of learning styles:

> *This problem is worsened by a tendency for academics to build reputations by setting out clearly individual territories which they vigourously defend. This ... militates against cumulative knowledge and cooperative research.*
> (Coffield, 2005[3])

This difficulty is being recognised in academic circles and networking by academics in a

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[3]   cited in the Guardian, 04.05.2004

range of disciplines across universities, through mechanisms such as the Applied Education Research Scheme (AERS), is to be welcomed.

The study has examined issues pertaining to social inclusion and ASN, specifically in relation to children perceived as having SEBD, exploring changing perceptions and conceptualisations within these fields. It has argued for the need to avoid polarised positions based upon ideological bases, recognising the complexities inherent within the field and placing the needs of the individual child to the forefront. It has argued that it is too simplistic to equate inclusion with participation of a child within a mainstream class within a mainstream school, no matter how honourable the intentions, drawing upon the many ways in which children can be included, yet excluded. Further, it is not sufficient to implore schools and teachers to be inclusive in their practice - it is necessary to build a community of practice such that the values, beliefs and practices associated with inclusion are assimilated by the members of the community and become part of the culture of the school, reflected in its ethos. This requires an understanding of the change process and of the factors internal and external to the school which may impede progress. This study has demonstrated that, by means of small incremental changes, and through a process of intervention, a school can become more inclusive in its practice impacting not only upon the pupils directly involved within the study and their parents but upon the community as a whole. Whilst the findings of a case study cannot be generalised (in the sense of establishing universal truths) beyond the study to wider populations (as in *positivist* approaches), they can serve to illuminate the issues for others such that they can develop a deeper understanding of their own specific circumstances - the *naturalistic generalisations* of Brown (2001). (c.c. 6.1.1)

A further respect in which this study adds to the body of knowledge and understanding relates to the current quest to recognise achievements beyond the academic, as reflected in 'A Curriculum for Excellence' (SEED, 2004a) and 'HGIOS: The Journey to Excellence' (HMIE, 2006c). Since the inception of ethos indicators, there has been a quest to measure the 'softer indicators' in order to more fully evaluate whether schools are meeting the National Priorities and addressing the 'whole' needs of the child. This has resulted in the establishment of sets of criteria (such as whether a school has a Pupil Council) against which schools and local authorities can be measured. Laudable as these aims are, this author would argue that such attempts are doomed to failure for the reasons outlined earlier in this chapter. 'Number crunching' will never provide an adequate picture of a school and its achievements. A school may have a Pupil Council, but does it provide any valuable function? If it is in name only and does not provide genuine opportunities for participation in meaningful decisions which affect the lives of pupils, of what value is it? Such approaches to evaluation (particularly if combined with target-setting) only encourage tokenism - a 'jumping through the hoops' mentality as has also been evidenced within the Health Service[4]. Whilst there are respects in which this study presented difficulties in respect of gathering and analysing robust evidence (c.c. methodology chapter), it provides a different model (and a different lens) through which the affective

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[4]   as widely reported in the National media

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domain can be perceived.

Finally, a further respect in which this study moves forward boundaries is a methodological issue. Whilst there are many examples of practitioner research, there are few models of collaborative practitioner research. Much practitioner research is undertaken as part of a post-graduate qualification which is pursued as a solitary activity. Instigating a team of staff not only into a new approach (the *Sgi*) but also involving them in an integral way within the evaluation of the study was a major challenge and much was learned on the way (c.c. 6.5). It raised important issues about ensuring reliability. However, the potential disadvantages (less robust evidence) have to be weighed against the potential advantages. It helps the evaluation process to be perceived as a normal process, integral to the approach, rather than as an 'end-on' carried out by external evaluators, thus having the potential to impact upon the initiative as it develops - the formative process described by Watt (6.1.2). The creation of a research culture within a school is a very important means of building capacity within that school, of enhancing the skills, knowledge and understanding of staff and of building sustainable practice.

12.3 Recommendations and suggestions for further study

Principally (but not solely) Policy Makers

The advocacy of the:

1. *Sgi* as one of a range of interventions which can be brought to bear upon the problems of SEBD, school indiscipline and social exclusion;
2. application of social constructivist approaches (and, in particular, the 'TfU framework') in working with children with (or at risk of developing) SEBD;
3. *Sgi* in combination with support from a Behaviour Support Base for pupils most at risk of exclusion;
4. *Sgi* as an intervention which helps to forge positive relationships between home and school and which can impact not only upon the school itself, but upon the home and community;
5. *Sgi* as an intervention which can impact upon the negative perceptions held by some young people of school, learning and of their teachers;

All Audiences

1. schools and committed teachers can make a difference if they are appropriately supported, resourced and have the vision and will to do so;
2. the need for caution in assessing and addressing the additional needs of pupils with SEBD - there is no single solution which can be applied to all pupils;

3. the need to recognise the complexity of the endeavour and to seek to understand it in all of its complexity;
4. the need for an holistic approach;
5. the need to challenge the limiting aspirations held by some young people, within the wider context of challenging social exclusion and inequalities in society;

Principally (but not solely) Empirical Researchers[5]

The need to examine the:

1. disparity in performance on a range of indicators between pupils with SEBD and comparator groups
2. relationship between SEBD and gender;
3. adequacy and quality of learning support for pupils with SEBD;
4. relationships between pupils' perceptions of their intelligence, their sense of self-efficacy, motivation and under-achievement;
5. contextual factors within the classroom environment which impact upon pupil attitudes, motivation and attainment

Principally (but not solely) Practitioners

The need to/for:

1. lead by example and model good practice, creating communities of practice;
2. identify the factors internal and external to the school which may foster or impede progress and take account of these in managing change;
3. a whole school approach;
4. effective leadership and management of the Sgi with clear lines of responsibility;
5. monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of policies, structures and systems and to ensure effective communication within organisations and between organisations/agencies;
6. establish and maintain effective partnerships between home and school;
7. address the negative attitudes of some teaching staff towards pupils with SEBD through promoting an inclusive ethos and the provision of high quality ITE and CPD;
8. recognise the important role which the SgL plays in creating the ethos of the group and in fostering learning;
9. ensure that SgLs are fully conversant with the theoretical underpinnings of the Sgi and are able to develop the necessary skills and attributes;

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[5]   it would be expected that the outcome of empirical enquiry would be recommendations for policy makers and practitioners

10. careful selection of SgLs and for high quality training and ongoing support, provided through a range of mechanisms;
11. the SgL to have the capacity to 'see the good' in the pupil, recognise the importance of 'not writing pupils off', have faith in the pupil's capacity to change and the tenacity to hold onto the pupil;
12. give consideration to the value of the Pastoral Care link and the potential of peer support for pupils with SEBD.

Principally (but not solely) Academic Theorists

The need to:

1. recognise the constraints under which LAs and schools operate and the importance of culture in the effective management of change, taking account of the state of readiness of the school to more forward;
2. avoid entrenched positions;
3. balance conflicting tensions and priorities and to take a balanced view;
4. work across boundaries and academic disciplines.

The following recommendations apply to all audiences and arise from engagement with the literature which informed and guided the direction of the study:

The need:

1. for effective partnership working between policy makers, the academic community and practitioners, fostering collegiate ways of working such that all parties feel that their voice is heard;
2. to work together to foster a shared vision of inclusion and how it might be realised in schools;
3. to recognise that inclusion cannot be imposed from the centre - the concerns of pupils, parents and teachers need to be acknowledged and acted upon;
4. to give consideration to the specific sets of circumstances which pertain in areas of multiple deprivation; to ascertain how SEBD manifests itself and is experienced by pupils, staff and parents and to ascertain whether the solutions which might be applicable in 'leafy suburbs' are apposite for all schools;
5. to give consideration to the means of funding of schools in areas of multiple deprivation, particularly in respect of meeting the additional needs of pupils with SEBD.

12.4 Brief Conclusion

It is a formidable and almost impossible task to bring together, in a few sentences, the essence of this study. It has been a journey of exploration which has led in new and unforeseen directions, leading to a constant refining and re-conceptualisation of thinking as understanding and knowledge have developed over the course of the study. It was never the intention to provide definitive answers to complex problems and the further the study was explored, the more aware the author became of the sheer body of knowledge surrounding each and every aspect of the study, leaving the author in awe of it and aware of the challenges ahead in building upon and extending further what has been learned within the study. It is clear that this study has a potential to make a difference to lives. To the lives of children and their families but also to the nature of schools - the extent to which they are inclusive in their practice and, as such, has an important contribution to make in terms of taking policy and practice forward in Scottish Education and beyond, illuminating the issues for others.