

THE UNIVERSITY OF HULL

The Formation, Implementation and Reception of Gender and Sexualities
Education in English Primary Schools

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in the University of Hull

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the formation of gender and sexualities education and its implementation and reception in two state-funded English primary schools. The first part identifies how childhood discourses circulating in Section 28 debates influenced the trajectory of UK government legislation and guidance for gender and sexuality education. I demonstrate how anti-homophobia and anti-bullying emerged as a desexualised policy paradigm following parliamentary debates in which the Western cultural myth of ‘childhood (sexual) innocence’ was preserved. The second part explores how Stonewall (a leading Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual third sector organisation) and two pioneering English primary schools use these initiatives to create and implement gender and sexualities education. I show how social actors within these schools interpret national government policy in different and with contrasting outcomes. The final part examines how pupils (5-11 years old) respond to gender and sexualities education in the context of everyday school life. In doing so, I expose a socio-spatial underpinning to children’s simultaneous performances of acceptance and recuperation of heteronormativity where a performative self that cites recognisable liberal pluralistic equalities discourse in ‘formal’ school space can be distinguished from a performative subject that is simultaneously compelled to perform normative (hetero)gender/sexuality in ‘informal’ school space in order to achieve viable subjecthood. As such, this study provides the first comprehensive overview of gender and sexualities education in the UK, from its inception to its reception, and highlights the possibilities - as well as the limitations – of neoliberal equalities programmes based around anti-homophobia and anti-bullying.

AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

I declare that the work in this thesis was carried out in accordance with the regulations of the University of Hull and is original except where indicated by specific reference in the text. No part of the thesis has been submitted as part of any other academic award. The thesis has not been presented to any other education institution in the United Kingdom or overseas.

Any views expressed in the thesis are those of the author and in no way represent those of the University.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

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1.1 THE ORIGINS AND AIMS OF THIS RESEARCH

The work we are doing is so important because our kids are going to grow up in a world where they are going to meet more openly LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans) people and if we can give them the kind of safe place for them here to explore what they understand by that, how they feel about that and how they feel about other people then the better equipped they are for when they get older

Interview with Weirwold's Deputy Headteacher, 24/11/11

It's equipping them for life beyond primary school ... getting them ready for the real world

Interview with Weirwold's Year 3 Teacher, 10/2/12

'Gay education in primaries climbs back into the closet' (TES, 2008) read a *Times Educational Supplement* left on the common room table. The title immediately caught my eye. The article reported the apparent failure of the *No Outsiders* project (2006-2009)¹ which, as a tabloid newspaper reported, had attempted to 'Teach the pleasure of gay sex children as young as five' (Daily Mail, 2008). This was one of many sensational headlines about a project that had dared to challenge heteronormativity and address 'sexualities equality' (DePalma and Atkinson, 2009b: viii) in English primary schools. Other headlines included 'Pro-gay kids' books launched' (The Sun, 2007), 'The schools where pupils aged four learn about gay lifestyle' (Daily Mail, 2007), and 'Primary schools 'should celebrate homosexuality'' (The Telegraph, 2008). It

¹ *No Outsiders* was an ESRC Participatory Action Research (PAR) project led by academics at the University of Sunderland. It featured 15 primary schools across England and over 40 participants, including activist-researchers and teacher-researchers (see ESRC, 2014).

had been nearly 20 years since the introduction of the infamous ‘Section 28’ of the 1988 Local Government Act², but only a few years after its repeal another ‘moral panic’ had erupted.

I was captivated by this story and found myself delving deeper and deeper into research on sexualities and schooling. The first book I came across was Debbie Epstein’s (1994a) *Challenging Lesbian and Gay Inequalities in Education* and this spurred me on to discover many other inspirational works, not least Emma Renold’s (2005) *Girls, Boys and Junior Sexualities: Children’s Gender and Sexual Relations in the Primary School*. It was this book that sparked my geographical imagination as I came to view the primary school as a crucial site for the production and reproduction of children’s heteronormative subjectivities. This was clearly an ideal site to challenge heteronormativity and address ‘sexualities equality’ (DePalma and Atkinson, 2009b). Yet the widespread myth of the primary school as a ‘cultural greenhouse for the nurturing and protection of children’s (sexual) innocence’ (Renold, 2005: 1) curtailed attempts to do so. How, then, have discourses of ‘childhood (sexual) innocence’ been negotiated outside of school and what engagements with sexuality does this allow inside school? More crucially, how does this map onto children’s lived experiences of gender and sexuality in the primary school?

In this research I set out to explore these questions by critically examining the formation, implementation and reception of ‘gender and sexualities education’³ in two maintained community primary schools in England: *Cutlers* and *Weirwold* (both pseudonyms). In light of the above I consider how conceptual space has opened up for gender and sexuality education following the negotiation of childhood discourses during Section 28 debates, and I explore how gender and sexuality education has filtered into primary schools and been negotiated within and across school space. These aims translate into three research objectives:

1. To examine existing UK government legislation, guidance and support for primary gender and sexualities education, and to understand how these initiatives are mobilised by the non-profit sector

² Section 28 of the Local Government Act 1988 added a new section (‘Prohibition on promoting homosexuality by teaching or by publishing material’) to the Local Government Act 1986, specifying that a local authority shall not ‘intentionally promote homosexuality or publish material with the intention of promoting homosexuality’ or ‘promote the teaching in any maintained school of the acceptability of homosexuality as a pretended family relationship’ (S.2A(1) Local Government Act 1986).

³ See section 1.2 for definition and scope.

2. To explore how social actors within specific English primary schools interpret national government policy, and to understand how gender and sexualities education is subsequently incorporated into the broader school curriculum and delivered in lessons
3. To investigate how pupils respond to gender and sexualities education in the context of everyday school life

I explore these research objectives through a multi-method, qualitative approach comprised of discourse/ textual analysis, ethnography, semi-structured interviews and focus groups. Research participants included governors, senior management, teachers and children from the two schools in addition to Stonewall representatives, which is the Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual (LGB) non-profit/ third sector organisation I focus on. The fieldwork consisted of a total of 10 weeks in school and took place between November 2011 and February 2013, during which time Stonewall officially launched its 'Primary School Champions' programme. This was clearly a pivotal moment for undertaking research with both schools held up as leading exponents of Stonewall's 'Primary School Champions' programme. One of the schools would also launch its own award-winning charity to disseminate its work and become the first primary school known to offer in-house training for preventing and tackling homophobia and homophobic bullying while the other had been one of only a handful of schools to participate in the *No Outsiders* project. These were fascinating schools and interesting times.

In the next sub-section I define key terms used in this study and I establish the scope of enquiry.

1.2 KEY TERMS AND SCOPE OF ENQUIRY

In order to be clear about the intentions of this study it will be necessary to provide definitions for key terms and outline the scope of enquiry.

Gender and sexualities education

This is not a term used in law or statutory/non-statutory government guidance. Rather, I use this term throughout the thesis to encapsulate schools work around sexism/sexist bullying/transgender, homophobia/homophobic bullying, and 'sexualities equality' (DePalma and Atkinson, 2009b) more generally and refer to aspects of government legislation and guidance which, when grouped together, could be seen to be producing 'gender and sexualities education'. Even though my focus is 'sexuality' I use the term 'gender and

sexualities education', rather than simply 'sexualities education', as I deem it appropriate to encapsulate schools' work around sexism/sexist bullying/transgender⁴ and aspects of government legislation and guidance pertaining to 'gender equality'⁵ (as this intersects with, and relates to, 'sexualities education') as anti-sexism/transphobia informs anti-homophobia / homophobic bullying approaches. It is therefore important not to separate and discount 'gender' as this influences 'sexualities education'. By including 'gender' I do not claim to look at the full sweep of 'gender' education, nor do I claim to encompass everything which could be considered part of 'gender' and/or 'sexualities' education, such as current political debates around sexting, sexual consent and sexualisation, amongst other issues.

Maintained community schools

Maintained community schools are one of five types of maintained schools, as specified by the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. The four other types of maintained schools are foundation schools, voluntary schools (voluntary aided and voluntary controlled), community special schools and foundation special schools (S.20(1) School Standards and Framework Act 1998). All maintained schools in England are funded by central government via their local authorities and of all the maintained schools only community schools are not permitted to have a religious designation (Johnson and Vanderbeck, 2014). Regardless of religious designation, all maintained schools are required to teach the statutory 'basic' curriculum which encompasses the National Curriculum, introduced under the Education Reform Act 1988, and religious education (*ibid*). There is no requirement in law for primary schools to provide sex education, although primary schools must adhere to the statutory guidance if they provide sex education (often referred to as Sex and Relationships Education (SRE)).

Academies and free schools

Academies were created by the Labour Government under the Learning and Skills Act 2000 and the extension of the academies program under the Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition government (as part of the Academics Act 2010) allowed for the creation of new academies or 'free schools' (Vanderbeck and Johnson, 2015). Maintained schools were encouraged to apply to convert into academies, particularly under the Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition, but this has mainly affected state-funded secondary schools (*ibid*).

⁴ This was less common with only Cutler's Year 6 class incorporating a lesson on 'transphobia' into a scheme of work on 'gender stereotypes' (November, 2011).

⁵ This includes government legislation and guidance addressing transphobia/transphobic bullying.

Academies and free schools are funded directly by government⁶ but are not required to follow the National Curriculum and can exercise greater autonomy than maintained schools (Johnson and Vanderbeck, 2014).

Having defined key terms and established the scope of enquiry I now provide an overview of subsequent chapters.

1.3 SUMMARY OF SUBSEQUENT CHAPTERS

Chapter 2 establishes a theoretical framework for this thesis and provides a comprehensive review of existing literature relevant to the empirical chapters.

Section 2.1 outlines how children's sex, gender and sexuality has been theorised in order to contextualise postmodern and poststructural theories which I draw on in this thesis. First I focus on Foucault's socio-historical approach to sexuality, bodies, and identities before outlining feminist poststructuralism and queer theory - where I focus on Butler's (1990; 1993; 1997a) oeuvre. This theoretical framework provides critical insights into heteronormativity and the formation of gendered and sexual subjectivities, and will allow me to analyse the formation, implementation and reception of gender and sexualities education.

The remainder of the chapter is structured around three intersecting bodies of literature which span several academic disciplines.

Section 2.2 reviews literature in children's geographies and geographies of education. The first part (2.2A) focuses on children's geographies and sociological studies of children and childhood. This literature has particular methodological relevance and will be revisited in Chapter 3, although it also highlights issues central to the empirical chapters - such as the problematic western association between childhood and (sexual) innocence which dominates popular understandings of children. In the second part of this section (2.2B) I review literature on geographies of education, which largely emerge out of children's geographies. This section focuses on formal curricula and hidden geographies of the "third" curriculum⁷ by exploring predominately school-based research.

⁶ Although some are also associated with a sponsor, such as a business, charity or university (Johnson and Vanderbeck, 2014).

⁷ Holloway *et al.* define this as the 'informal lessons which students learn, enforce, reject and rewrite in schools' (2010: 588). This involves moving beyond the content of lessons and examining how children's identities are reproduced and reworked through informal sociospatial practices within different learning spaces, including playgrounds, dining halls, corridors and 'alterative' educational contexts (see 2.2.5).

Section 2.3 deals with sociological and geographical engagements with sexualities and queer theory. The first part (2.3A) builds on geographies of education by reviewing sociology of education literature on sexualities and schooling. This section establishes that the primary school is a key arena for the production and regulation of (hetero)sexual discourses, practices and identities; yet a crucial site for intervening in these processes. The second part of this section (2.3B) builds on the first by exploring how geographers have engaged with sexualities and queer theory. In this section I consider the theoretical and political impact of queer theory within geographies of sexuality, which has led to the formation of the splintered sub-field: *queer geographies*. I focus more on queer geographies, particularly its adoption and utilisation of Judith Butler's (1990; 1993; 1997a) ideas, as this more usefully informs the present study.

Section 2.4 concludes by exploring geographical and sociological engagements with 'families'. Following Valentine (2008a), this final section links geographies of sexualities/ queer geographies and children's geographies with sociological engagements with 'family' (understood in the broadest sense) in order to show how these seemingly disparate sub-fields share connections. I outline key theories and ideas that 'family geographers' are currently grappling with and I take a closer look at three influential bodies of work: (i) Stacey (1990; 1993; 2004); (ii) Gillis (1996); and (iii) Weeks (1977; 1990; 1991) and Weeks *et al* (2001). The section concludes with consideration of *Emotional functioning of family homes: towards emotional geographies of intimacy*, which brings the discussion of 'families' back to geography.

Chapter 3 uses the theoretical position established in *Section 2.1* to develop a theoretically-informed methodology. It also revisits *Section 2.2* to explore methodological considerations when undertaking research with children. Both have epistemological and ontological implications for methods and methodologies and are explored throughout the chapter. Prior to outlining the multi-method, qualitative approach I re-state the research objectives and discuss research sites. This allows me to refine the research and demonstrate how the research methods address the research objectives. I then discuss each method and how I applied them. I refer back to *Section 2.3*, in particular, when rationalising a multisite school-based ethnography. The chapter concludes with a reflective account of the methodology. This includes discussion of ethical dilemmas, empowering research and my positionality.

Chapter 4 addresses the first research objective – to examine existing UK government legislation, guidance and support for primary gender and sexuality education, and to understand how these initiatives are mobilised by the non-profit sector. It does so by drawing on ethnographic research/ interview data and undertaking textual/ discourse analysis. First, I analyse childhood discourses circulating in society that inspired Section 28 of the 1988 Local

Government Act since these discourses have shaped contemporary UK government legislation and guidance. I then examine existing UK government legislation and guidance for primary gender and sexuality education following the repeal of Section 28 in England in 2003. In doing so I follow Ellis (2007) and Monk (2011) in paying particular attention to 'conditions of possibility' (Foucault, 1974) in which anti-homophobia and anti-bullying has emerged as a desexualised policy paradigm. In the remainder of the chapter I examine how Stonewall has secured government support and mobilised initiatives to create gender and sexualities education for English primary schools.

Chapter 5 addresses the second research objective - to explore how social actors within specific English primary schools interpret national government policy, and to understand how gender and sexuality education is subsequently incorporated into the broader school curriculum and delivered in lessons. In this chapter I focus on schools as specific local expressions of the education institution. First, I explore how social actors within specific primary school settings interpret national government policy. In line with Holloway *et al* (2000; 2010) schools are considered to be institutional spaces, 'precarious geographical accomplishments in time and space' (Philo and Parr, 2000: 517) and sites of social agency. Therefore, policies and practices will be variously interpreted, contested and (re)produced within (different) institutional spaces (also see Holt, 2007). In the second part I explore how gender and sexuality education is subsequently incorporated into the broader school curriculum and delivered in lessons. This involves analysing schemes of work, lesson plans and accompanying resources.

Chapter 6 addresses the third research objective - to investigate how pupils respond to gender and sexualities education in the context of everyday school life. It examines how children respond to gender and sexualities education in the context of everyday school life.

Part One – performative selves and performative subjects – explores children's contradictory responses to the schools three schemes of work: 'Different Families'; 'Alternative Fairy Tales'; and 'Heteronormative masculinity and homophobic language'. To conceptualise children's contradictory responses I draw on subjectivity theory and performativity theory after Butler (1990; 1993; 1997a) where a performative self that cites recognisable liberal pluralistic equalities discourse and performs acceptance in 'formal' school space in order to be a 'good student' can be distinguished from a performative subject that is simultaneously compelled to perform normative (hetero)gender/sexuality and recuperate heteronormativity in the face of subversion in order to achieve viable subjecthood.

Part Two – spatializing subjectivity – foregrounds the spatiality of performative selves and performative subjects. Here I develop earlier notions of children performing acceptance *in ‘formal’ school space* (i.e. classrooms and assembly hall) by considering how space is ‘brought into being through performances and [itself] a performative articulation of power’ (Gregson and Rose, 2000: 434). This explores how ‘formal’ school space regulates un/acceptable attitudes towards gender and sexual diversity, and how some children treated focus groups as an extension of ‘formal’ school space in which to perform acceptance of gender and sexual diversity. However, on other occasions the relational work of the participants allowed focus groups to be produced as a private space in which dissent could be more fully articulated. This created space for performative subjects whose spatial expression had been more evident in ‘informal’ school space (i.e. playground, corridors and toilets) where gender/sexual difference was regularly reinstated through children’s everyday spatial practices (6.5). This extends beyond the school, as I illustrate in 6.6, which indicates why neoliberal programmes, such as this one, do not always succeed in changing people’s subjectivities as these are ‘performed moving through multiple spatial-temporal domains’ Pyckett *et al* (2010: 489).

Chapter 7 concludes by tying together the various issues raised in the analysis chapters whilst reflecting on the above objectives. First, I provide a synthesis of the empirical findings and discuss their theoretical implications. Second, I outline the policy implications of key empirical findings. Third, I identify future research directions that respond to the limitations of this study whilst acknowledging existing trends. Finally, I conclude by reflecting on the overall significance of the study.

CHAPTER 2: THEORY AND LITERATURE REVIEW

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2.0 CHAPTER INTRODUCTION

This chapter establishes a theoretical framework for this thesis and provides a comprehensive review of existing literature relevant to the empirical chapters. The chapter is structured around three main issues which concern this thesis: children and families, education and schooling, gender and sexuality. Section 2.1 explores how children’s sex, gender and sexuality

has been theorised in order to contextualise postmodern and poststructural theories which I draw on in this thesis. This main theory section is followed by three intersecting bodies of literature. The first of these (section 2.2) reviews literature in children's geographies and geographies of education. The first part (2.2A) focuses on children's geographies and sociological studies of children and childhood. This literature has particular methodological relevance and will be revisited in Chapter 3. The second part (section 2.3) deals with sociological and geographical engagements with sexualities and queer theory. The later section builds on the former section by exploring how geographers have engaged with queer theory in particular. The final part (section 2.4) concludes by exploring geographical and sociological engagements with 'families'. Here I outline key theories and ideas that 'family geographers' are currently grappling with.

2.1 THEORISING SEX, GENDER AND SEXUALITY

This section explores how children's sex, gender and sexuality has been theorised (2.1.1) in order to contextualise postmodern and poststructural theories (2.1.2) which I draw on in this thesis. This acknowledges how notions of subjectification and identification emerged from criticisms of sex role socialisation with these more sophisticated understandings of subjecthood explored in relation to Butler's (1997a) refinement of Foucault. I trace Foucault's socio-historical approach to sexuality, bodies and identities in 2.1.2 as I build towards feminist poststructuralism and queer theory (2.1.3). In this sub-section I outline Butler's (1990; 1993; 1997a) theorisations in full as these are central to this thesis. First I situate Butler's anti-foundational critique of identity within a broad history of feminist theory before exploring key concepts: performativity; the 'heterosexual matrix'/ heterosexual hegemony; and psychoanalysis. These concepts are utilised throughout empirical chapters alongside broader poststructuralist concepts: language; power and agency; discourse; and heteronormativity. These are discussed in the final part of 2.1.3.

2.1.1 Biological and socialisation theories

According to Blaise (2009), children's sex, gender, and sexuality are usually understood through biological or socialization understandings of identity. As Blaise explains, the relationship between sex, gender, and sexuality, like the concepts themselves, is usually understood through developmentalism where it is believed that children are first born with a sex, then learn their gender, and finally become sexual. However, despite widespread belief in

this 'developmental discourse'¹, which 'systematises and frames how early childhood educators think, feel, understand and practise' (MacNaughton, 2005: 20-21) a number of scholars have challenged this 'regime of truth' (Foucault, 1980) and have questioned 'the usefulness of a knowledge base informed exclusively by developmental psychology' (Blaise, 2009: 451; Grieshaber and Cannella, 2001; Kessler and Swadener, 1992; Mallory and New, 1994; see 2.2.2).

The above scholars, known as 'reconceptualists', question the notion of the 'developmental child' and argue that an individualistic model of child development universalises the child and childhood (also see Alloway, 1995; Cannella, 1997; MacNaughton, 2000; Burman, 1994; 2008). Universalising childhood, as James *et al.* (1998) have shown, reinforces the concept of 'the naturally developing child' - something that Walkerdine (1989) refers to as a fiction². Yet for many scholars, this image of childhood fails to recognise the importance of sex, gender, and sexuality as having an impact on children's life experiences, learning and development (Blaise, 2005a; Browne, 2004b; Epstein and Johnson, 1998; Kehily, 2002; MacNaughton, 2000; Renold, 2005; see 2.3). Thus, as Renold (2005) and others (e.g. Blaise, 2005a; Davies, 1989a; Kehily, 2002; Alsop *et al.*, 2002) have shown, sex role socialisation theories were important to early feminist theory because they encouraged a move away from understanding male and female behaviour as biological, innate and inevitable, and rather, conceptualised gender as socially constructed. Essentialist arguments, which understand gender difference as genetically determined, were therefore confronted by social constructionist perspectives which claim that gender is shaped by and through the society in which we live.

As Davies (1989b) explains, social constructionism understood sex 'roles' as taught or learned through culture – in the family, in school and in social interactions more generally (also see Kehily, 2002). In essence, they were a 'superficial, social dressing laid over the 'real' biological differences' (Davies, 1989b: 5). Conceptualising gender in this way and viewing it as culturally specific undermined notions of gender as fixed or stable; rather, 'gender' would be subject to change over space and time (see McDowell, 1999). This meant that gender was not inevitable (Rose, 1993; WGSG, 1997; 2004). That said, social constructionists recognised how powerful relational constructions of sex-gender were in maintaining male-female binaries - with gendered identities of masculinity and femininity discursively seen as mutually defining and mutually exclusive (Kehily, 2002). Thus, while social constructivism was useful for feminists documenting the subordinated status of 'femininity' and female 'roles' within society (as these

¹For Browne (2004b), biological theories provide simple explanations about children's sex and gender, yet because they are read as scientific discourses they seem both logical and obvious and are therefore easy to accept.

²Walkerdine (1989) uses feminisms to expose the notion of 'the naturally developing child' as a fiction.

follow binary logics of active-passive and rational-emotional), sex role socialisation theories were challenged on numerous grounds (Jones and Jacka, 1995).

Criticisms of sex role socialisation theories included an assumed biological basis of sexual difference with masculine and feminine 'roles' invariably connected to biological sex, which naturalised the dichotomy of male and female roles (Connell, 1995). For Connell (1987; 1995), a 'deterministic socialisation model' also failed to account for complex, contradictory, and often ambiguous social and psychological processes involved in boys' and girls' gendered identities (see also Jones, 1993 and Jackson, 1996). As Davies (1989b) explains, sex role socialisation theories did not acknowledge the child as implicated in the construction and maintenance of the social world, thus there was no room for the child as active agent (see 2.2). As such, becoming a boy or girl and internalising masculine and feminine 'roles' was simply theorised as passive learning, with variations within 'masculinity' and 'femininity' understood as 'deviance' or socialisation failure (Renold, 2005; Stacey and Thorne, 1985). Sex role socialisation theories therefore could not distinguish between expectations and what people actually do (Carrigan *et al.*, 1987) with sex-role accounts of gendered behaviour failing to acknowledge how individuals actively construct and negotiate their gendered identities (Blaise, 2005a; Davies, 1989b).

This sub-section outlined how children's sex, gender and sexuality have been theorised in order to contextualise postmodern and poststructural theories which I draw on in this thesis. The next sub-section identifies how postmodern and poststructural notions of subjectification and identification emerged from criticisms of sex role socialisation.

2.1.2 Postmodern and poststructural theories

As Davies remarks, criticisms of sex role theory led to the individual or subject being regarded as one that is 'not socialised but [goes] through processes of subjectification' (1993: 3). 'Subjectification' (Foucault, 1994), also known as subjectivation or simply subjection (Davies, 2006) infers that individuals/ subjects are complex, irrational and non-unitary beings and not the fixed product of some process of social construction (Shotter and Gergen, 1989). Rather, an individual - in postmodern and poststructural accounts - is understood to be constituted and reconstituted through 'discursive practices' in which they participate (Weedon, 1997; Davies, 1989b). Butler (1995; 1997a; 2004) has been credited for extending this Foucauldian notion of subjectification by outlining a process of simultaneous mastery and submission: that is, a necessary vulnerability to the Other in order to be (see Davies, 2006). As a counter-

discourse to liberal humanism³, Butler's subjection offers an alternative perspective into how we become who we are and what we are by accounting for the paradoxical conditions through which the accomplishment of subjecthood is made possible (also see Thomas, 2008). Thus, in contrast to Foucault, who focused on larger discursive shifts over time and space through which different kinds of subjecthood become im/possible, Butler used the concept of subjectification to breathe life into the body by focusing on how subjection works on and in the psychic life of the subject (see 2.1.3).

For Butler (1995; 1997a; 2004), the ambivalence of simultaneous, yet paradoxical mastery and submission is central to becoming a subject - as the formation of subjecthood depends on external powers. As Butler notes, while the subject may well resist or agonise over those powers that dominate and subject it, ultimately, and ironically, the subject depends on them for its existence - with power understood to *form* the subject (see Butler, 1997a in particular). From this perspective the subject does not have an existence that lies outside, or prior to, acts of formation: it does not construct its own conditions of possibility separate from its *performance* of itself within those conditions. This is not to say that subjects are passively and inevitably shaped by one set of discursive practices within a dominant moral order. Rather, Butler's subjects are understood to have 'radically conditioned agency' (Butler, 1997a) which allows them to reflect on, and critically examine, their conditions of possibility with the potential to subvert powers that act on them which they, in turn, feel compelled to enact. The 'performativity constituted subject' and performative subversion/ reinscription (see Youdell, 2004; 2006a) is one aspect of subjecthood (see 2.1.3). Also central to the formation of the subject (through the process of submission and mastery) are mutual acts of recognition through which subjects accord each other the status of viable subjecthood. Butler claims that the subject disavows its dependence on the Other who 'recognises' it because the illusory achievement of autonomy is necessary for the accomplishment of oneself as a viable subject. Dis-identification and 'being through not being' will be explored in more detail in 2.1.3.

Talk of dis-identification requires contextualisation of identification - a term used in postmodern and poststructural accounts to emphasise the constitutive force of a 'self' always in process (Davies, 1997). Identification, as Nayak and Kehily note, is 'a partial, split and ambivalent process that, in the moment it announces itself as 'identity' (in common statements such as, 'As a black man ...', or 'Speaking as a feminist ...'), conceals its incurable multiplicity and precarious contingency' (2006: 466). In this regard, the act of identification is always an approximation: 'a process of articulation, a suturing, an over-determination not a

³ Prominent in educational contexts, liberal humanism posits students and teachers as autonomous individuals with varying degrees of freedom to 'choose' what kind of a person to be (see Davies, 2006).

subsumption' (Hall, 2000: 17). As Hall continues, 'there is always 'too much' or 'too little' – an over-determination or a lack, but never a proper fit, a totality' (2000: 17). As such, identification can be understood as an act of desiring which is always subject to its lack (see Blaise, 2005a; Davies, 2006; Nayak and Kehily, 2006). In working through this idea Nayak and Kehily (2006) use the example of being a 'proper boy' (whatever that means). Despite being an imaginary ideal, Nayak and Kehily demonstrate how this subject position is no less desirable with identification understood to be 'the never-touching encounter that exists between the desiring subject and the desired object' (2006: 265). Indeed, if it follows that 'identity is a signifying practice' (Butler, 1990: 145) then from a Butlerian perspective, the act of identification remains a strategy through which other signifiers are negated, repudiated or erased (see Nayak and Kehily, 2006).

This first part outlined postmodern and poststructural notions of subjectification and identification which provide more sophisticated accounts of the paradoxes of personhood. These understandings will be applied in Chapter 6 to make sense of children's attempts to create subjecthood when responding to gender and sexualities education. The next part traces Foucault's socio-historical approach to sexuality, bodies and identities as I build towards introducing feminist poststructuralism and queer theory.

Foucault (1978) argues that sexuality is neither a fact of life nor something that is natural. Rather, sexuality is understood to be a constructed category of experience that has historical, social, and cultural origins. *The History of Sexuality* (Foucault, 1978; 1985; 1986) and Rabinow's (1984) overview of Foucauldian thought provide a useful framework for understanding the connections between knowledge, power and pleasure which are understood to sustain the discourses of human sexuality. Volume 1 (Foucault, 1978), in particular, provides a powerful genealogical account of the emergence and discursive formation of particular modes of sexuality with a concise historical charting of the spatial confinement of sexuality. Having enjoyed free expression in the public sphere before the seventeenth century, sexuality was incorporated into the private domain of the home from the 1800s, which imposed sexual restraint on individuals. Foucault illustrates how this process favoured reproductive (hetero)sexuality which would come to dominate discourses on sexuality - effectively keeping sexual desire in check by reducing sexuality to its functionality. This development, Foucault reveals, coincided with the advance of capitalism in Europe. Hegemonic heterosexuality, together with the idealised nuclear family, became an essential part of the bourgeois order which required the reproduction of class and labour relations, hence the production of an economically useful and politically conservative sexuality. These discursive frames, Foucault continues, reached far though modern societies.

The medicalization of sexuality in the centuries that followed brought human sexuality within the realm of medical and scientific discourses, Foucault continues. Practices of classification – indeed naming ‘homosexuality’ – produced a binary relationship between ‘normal’ and ‘natural’ heterosexuality and ‘abnormal’ and ‘unnatural’ dissident sexuality (see Weeks, 1981; 1986). Once enmeshed in a hierarchical web of power relations homosexuality could be subject to ‘disciplinary technologies’ in order to control and manage such sexual ‘deviance’ – a strategy that ‘safeguarded’ more desirable procreative (hetero)sexuality. As Foucault explains, such regulation of sexuality produced ‘docile bodies’ with individuals subjected, used, transformed and ‘improved’ to suit prevailing heteronormative ideologies.

What is particularly interesting about these accounts is the explicit reference to children’s sexuality. According to Foucault children’s sexuality came under increasing scrutiny in the eighteenth century as sexuality became a concern of the family - to be dealt with and managed within the domestic sphere. The figure of the ‘masturbating child’, Foucault (2003b; 2006) reveals, was central to discussions of infantile sexuality and the role of the modern nuclear family in managing the ‘proper’ development of sexual conduct. In this later work the child is shown to become a target of psychiatric intervention with psychiatric power dispersing from the asylum into the spaces of the family where responsibility is placed on parents to intervene and correct minor ‘deviances’ in children. Instruments for preventing masturbation⁴ appeared during this period with the child’s bodily comportment coming under increasingly surveillance as children’s sexuality started to be regulated within the micro-panopticism of the nuclear family (see Philo, 2011a; 2011b). This newly emerging discourse on children’s sexuality - Stoler (1995) adds - coincided with race- and nation- making imperatives with the sexual body of the child tied to a new form of biopower. Stoler notes how this discourse was directed at bourgeois families and how it should be understood in the context of nationalism and pedagogy, patriotism and moral training of children. It was the moral mission of bourgeois liberalism, Stoler continues, to make children into moral citizens to ensure the survival of a master race.

This second part outlined Foucault’s socio-historical approach to sexuality, bodies and identities and serves to provide an historical context for the contemporary regulation of children’s sexuality. These understandings frame an analysis of Section 28⁵ and ‘post-Section

⁴Scientific discourses linked physical and mental illness to improper sexuality (see Philo, 2011b).

⁵ Section 28 of the 1988 Local Government Act prohibited local authorities from ‘promoting homosexuality’ or ‘promoting the teaching in any maintained school of the acceptability of homosexuality as a pretended family relationship’ (see 4.1).

28' UK government legislation and guidance in Chapter 4. They are also relevant to section 6.6 where I consider spaces of 'the family' beyond school gates (also see 2.4).

The next sub-section introduces feminist poststructuralism and queer theory. Here I outline the theoretical framework for this thesis.

2.1.3 Feminist poststructuralism and queer theory

Blaise (2005a; 2009) uses the term 'postdevelopmentalism' to broadly define alternative theoretical perspectives that question modernist assumptions of truth, universality, and certainty. As Blaise explains, '[p]ostdevelopmentalism rejects the idea that gender is simply an expression of sex, or that gender and sex are biological or natural traits that are inside us' (2009: 452). For Blaise, feminist poststructuralism and queer theory are postdevelopmental perspectives that take a critical stance toward taken-for-granted ways of understanding the world, including sex, gender and sexuality. The former places gender at the centre of enquiry in order to interrogate and deconstruct the social processes through which we *become* gendered (see Weedon, 1997). Thus, rather than conceptualising gender as a trait that individuals are either born with (the biological perspective) or socialised into (socialisation theory), feminist poststructuralism views gender as a social construct that identifies particular acts or *performances* that are understood to be appropriate to one sex (Bohan, 1997). From this perspective, gender is not a way of being that children learn *from* others. Instead, emphasis is placed on how gender is constructed *through* children's talk, actions, and interactions with each other and the social world (Blaise, 2005a; Davies, 2003; Thorne, 1993; 1997).

Queer theory builds on feminist poststructuralism and is primarily concerned with heterosexual discourses and how they influence the social construction of gender (Sedgwick, 1990; Warner, 1993). As such, queer theory attempts to 'undermine an overall discourse of sexual categorisation and, more particularly, the limitations of the heterosexual-homosexual divide as an identity' (Edwards, 1998: 47). As Brooks (1997) explains, queer praxis involves the political and theoretical rejection of Western liberal homosexuality as a form of constraining difference premised on notions of rights and identity (also see Dollimore, 1991). The move from identity politics (equalities-based 'strategic essentialism'⁶, as derived from Guha and Spivak (1988) to queer praxis involves shifting the focus from sexual minorities to sexual majorities, specifically the politics and practice of heterosexuality (Kiley, 2002; Sedgwick, 1994;

⁶ Spivak (1988) uses the term 'strategic essentialism' in her work on race theory to refer to the option of allowing discrete and essentialist categories to persist temporarily, while recognising their limitations, because an overall strategic aim is advanced (see 2.3.2a).

see 2.3.5). Focusing on the dominant has involved an analysis of the power and fragility of heterosexuality as a sexual category that can only exist in relation to that which it opposes (Sedgwick, 1990; Butler, 1990). Thus, in deconstructing the heterosexual-homosexual binary queer theorists have highlighted the vulnerability of heterosexuality and its dependence on homosexuality as its Other.

This contemporary feminist theory is a reaction to earlier biological and socialisation theories, and provides a more sophisticated framework for critically theorising sex, gender and sexuality throughout this thesis. These understandings will be particularly useful when analysing gender and sexualities education (4.3.4 and 5.3) and addressing the third research objective - how pupils respond to gender and sexualities education in the context of everyday school life (Chapter 6).

The next part of this chapter outlines Butler's (1990; 1993; 1997a) anti-foundational critique of identity.

Butler (1990; 1993; 1997a) made a fundamental contribution to queer theory by building on a broadly poststructuralist understanding of subjectivity, as rooted in the work of Foucault (see 2.1.2). Butler's antifoundational critique of the ontological status of identity inspired a new generation of Queer Theorists and gender scholars. It also represented a major shift in feminist thought from the 1990s, which had previously been underpinned by heterosexist assumptions and a preoccupation with the supposedly self-evident basis of gender identity (see Alsop *et al.*, 2002; Jagger, 2008; Nayak and Kehily, 2006). Butler's contribution was a radical critique of identity categories in which gender, but also sex, sexuality and the body are conceived as cultural products. Butler challenged the naturalization of sex, gender, the body and (hetero)sexuality through highlighting the role of 'compulsory heterosexuality' (Rich, 1980) in the production of these categories. For Butler, sex and gender do not produce heterosexuality; rather, sex and gender are produced within a binary framework *conditioned* by heterosexuality. Butler therefore rejects 'femininity' and 'masculinity' as articulations of a biological sex. For Butler, there is nothing given about gender, nor is there any pre-cultural or pre-discursive sex that underpins its cultural construction - for the category of sex is itself a gendered category (see Jagger, 2008).

Butler's insistence on the impossibility of sexed identities and that 'gender norms are finally phantasmic, impossible to embody' (Butler, 1990: 141) proved too challenging for some feminists and gay and lesbian activists who had, until this point, operated through identity politics (see Alsop *et al.*, 2002). Butler's queer theorisations have therefore not been accepted by all with a 'split' in the field of gender research between those who continue to operate

through identity politics and those who strive to work *against* it (see Edwards, 1998; Nayak and Kehily, 2006). Of course, the situation is much more complex in reality with many proponents of identity politics seizing opportunities for queer praxis, while many queer researcher-activists also understand the importance of 'strategic essentialism' (see DePalma and Atkinson, 2009a). Indeed, Butler acknowledges that it is hard to act from a place of deconstruction, so 'strategic essentialism' and occasional strategic use of 'universality' in LGBT rights work is sometimes necessary (Butler, 1997b; 1999; also see 2.3.2a).

This complicates earlier understandings so these ideas will also be taken on-board when analysing gender and sexualities education and the implementation of gender and sexuality education in primary schools (4.3.4 and Chapter 5).

Now that I have situated Butler's (1990; 1993; 1997) anti-foundational critique of identity within a broad history of feminist theory I will outline more specific concepts used throughout this thesis: performativity; the 'heterosexual matrix'/ heterosexual hegemony; and psychoanalysis.

For Butler, 'gender' is not understood as a cultural construct that is imprinted upon the subject, and 'sex' is not simply what one is or has but 'one of the norms by which the "one" becomes viable at all' (Butler, 1990: 2). Rather, she proposes a less tangible conceptualisation of identity as gendered 'performance' which gives the illusion of substance but does not exist outside of the performed act. For Butler there is no pre-given subject, no 'doer behind the deed' (1990: 25). Identity does not prefigure action but is constituted *through* action, discourses or the words we speak and the ways we behave. In other words, gender identity achieves the *appearance* of subjective personhood through the sustained enactment of performances which give the illusion of a 'proper', 'natural' or 'fixed' gender. While performativity may sustain the illusion of gendered identity, Butler also acknowledges the subversive potential of performative genders by illustrating how transgression and violation of gender norms can expose gender performances. Butler claims that gaps and cracks in performances open up discursive spaces and create possibilities for alternative gendered performances, although she also concedes that transgressive acts do not always subvert gender norms but can reinforce them, depending upon social context and audience. Paying attention to the constraints as well as the possibilities of enacting non-normative gender/sexual performances therefore involves attending to the social space and social relations within which gender performances occur (see Lloyd, 1999).

When gender is viewed as a social activity - a 'doing' - which is performed in normative ways it becomes impossible to understand gender except through what Butler (1990) calls the

'heterosexual matrix'. This matrix should be thought of as a specific discursive framework that *produces* femininity, masculinity, and heterosexuality as intelligible. That is to say, the concept of genderedness becomes meaningless in the absence of 'compulsory heterosexuality' (Rich, 1980) which is enforced through rewards for 'appropriate' gendered and heterosexual behaviours and through punishments for deviations from the 'norm'. This understanding of gender assumes that heterosexuality functions to produce regulatory notions of femininity and masculinity. As a relational concept, particular forms of femininity are produced in relation to, and through, particular, and highly valued, forms of masculinity. Such critiques of heterosexism, Blaise (2009: 453) warns, 'are not attacks on heterosexual practices, but rather on heterosexual discourses and how they have become embedded into our thoughts and everyday actions' (see Butler, 1990; Sedgwick, 1990). As such, Butlerian queer theorising aims to reveal how heterosexual practices have become normalised, and thus instruments of power, with heterosexual relationships positioned as the most valued and acceptable form of sexuality.

Throughout *Gender Trouble* Butler (1990) exposes the ways in which 'the regulatory norms of sex' work in a performative fashion in the service of the 'heterosexual matrix'; however, in *Bodies that Matter* Butler (1993) favours the term 'heterosexual hegemony' (see Jagger, 2008). Like Renold (2005), I see the emergence of this more recent notion as a significant and necessary theoretical development from the earlier, more universal, 'heterosexual matrix'. This is significant because it accounts for shifting, multiple and hierarchical heterosexualities while at the same time recognising that this is a matrix open to rearticulation which has a kind of malleability (see Butler, 1993). Indeed, as Epstein (1993) and others (Blaise, 2005a; Jackson, 1996; Kehily, 2002; Renold, 2005; Thorne, 1993) have demonstrated, girls and boys perform and 'practice heterosexuality' in multiple and diverse ways which could - at different moments and in different contexts - subvert and maintain hierarchical normative gender/sexual power relations. Thus, 'heterosexual hegemony', as a reconfigured notion, responds to the complex and contradictory ways in which children, in particular, 'do' gender and sexuality in the primary school (Epstein, 2000b; Renold, 2000; 2007; 2008; Thorne, 1993; 1997).

These elements of queer theory premised on challenging heteronormativity are deeply wedded to psychoanalytical discourse (see Lesnik-Oberstein and Thomson, 2002). Psychoanalysis, in short, assumes the existence of an active and insistent unconscious in which repressed desires speak through the subject regardless of taboo or prohibition. As such, psychoanalysis examines what '*insists* on being spoken rather than what is *allowed* to be said' (Rose, 1986: 86). While psychoanalytic theory is rooted in the work of Freud and Lacan, both of whom provide an initial framework for understanding the interior landscape of the

unconscious, and particularly gendered subjectivity⁷, it is the development of their oeuvre in feminist theory (i.e. Kristeva, 1982; Mitchell, 1974) that I am interested in here, especially after Walkerdine (1990) and Butler (1997a), given my conceptual framework. Like Kehily (2002), I see theoretical hybridisation (combining elements of Freud with Foucault in light of Butler) to be appropriate in developing our understanding of subjectivity within discourse analysis. Thus, following Kehily, I argue that psychoanalytic ideas shed light on unconscious dynamics and associations at the level of the psyche which are important for understanding social relationships, especially when theorising issues of subjectivity and desire (see Walkerdine, 1984 in 2.3.2b).

These analytical concepts supplement postmodern and poststructural notions of subjectification and identification introduced earlier (2.1.2) and will be applied throughout this thesis, but particularly in Chapter 6 when addressing the third research objective - how pupils respond to gender and sexualities education in the context of everyday school life. In addition to these concepts Blaise (2009) and Youdell (2010b) outline five additional poststructural notions and theoretical tools that are useful for understanding sex, gender, and sexuality in ways that are not situated in biological or social learning frameworks: language; power and agency; discourse; and heteronormativity. All of these are central to this thesis and I will outline these 'tools' here.

'Poststructuralism asserts that all meaning and knowledge are constituted through language, and that language is the key to how we create meaning as socially constructed individuals' (Blaise, 2009: 455). If meaning is created through language then it follows that this will be neither fixed nor essential but open to challenges, redefinitions, and reinterpretations (MacNaughton, 2005; Weedon, 1997). As Youdell (2006a) explains, language is a social and political site of struggle where social meanings and identities about femininity, masculinity, and sexuality are formed but it is also the space where these social meanings are open to change. This understanding of knowledge construction 'moves away from the belief that children are merely born into their sex or uncomplicatedly learn their gender and sexuality'. Rather, '[i]t positions the child (even the very young child) as playing a significant part in "doing" or producing femininities, masculinities, and sexualities' (Blaise, 2009: 455). This means that children *themselves* are constantly creating and re-creating meanings about gender and sexuality through their talk and interactions with other each and constitute what it means to be a "girl" or a "boy" in that particular place (Blaise, 2005a). This poststructural

⁷Psychoanalytic theories suggest that gendered subjectivity is central to identity and that the process is precarious, not easily achieved and ever incomplete (see Kehily, 2002).

understanding of language is particularly useful when analysing children's focus group accounts (see 3.3.3) and conversations in the playground (see 3.3.2). It also provides an analytical framework for 5.3.2c when conceptualising efforts to challenge, refine and reinterpret 'homophobic language'.

The second poststructural concept is power. Power is envisaged as a process operating in our social worlds, rather than as something possessed by individuals (Youdell, 2010b). Power is understood to operate within all relationships and is expressed through discourse (see below). Foucault and feminist poststructuralists understand power as something that circulates to produce particular kinds of subjects with individuals seen to be 'the vehicles of power, not its points of application'. From this perspective, it is crucial to understand how the strategies and techniques of power work to produce different kinds of girls and boys. For Blaise (2009), this is central for understanding gender and sexuality. Foucault (1980) also underscores how power and knowledge are inseparable and strongly influence each other (see below). Closely associated with power is agency, the third poststructural concept. Agency is concerned with 'an individual's ability to make choices, control events, and access power' (Blaise, 2009: 456). As Davis (1990; 2003) reveals, agency can also be thought of as one's capacity to resist, subvert, and change discourses (see below). Agency is not understood to be something that individuals possess; rather, agency is produced through the gaps of gender, heterosexual discourses, and power. Both of these poststructural concepts are applied throughout the thesis with the former, in particular, used throughout Chapter 4 (as power-knowledge) when analysing Section 28 and 'post-Section 28' UK government legislation and guidance (see below).

Discourse is the fourth poststructural concept. As Youdell (2010b) explains, discourses are multiple and shifting socially organised frameworks of knowledge and meaning with varied and potentially porous status ranging from what is taken as self-evident – a 'regime of truth' – through to what is unspeakable or ridiculous – 'disavowed' or 'subjugated' knowledges' (see Foucault, 1990; 1991). Focusing on discourse or 'discursive practices' allows us to see how gender is constituted as a 'proper object' with dense historical meanings. Further, these meanings are then routinely iterated in social and institutional practices, visual representations, bodily movements and gestures, utterances and other performative acts reproducing these categories and the knowledge that frames them (see above). Feminist poststructuralists utilise the term discourse to expose how certain regulatory 'truths' about gender (e.g. 'boys are boisterous', 'girls are weak') come about and create and control particular ways of thinking, feeling and acting as 'normal' and 'natural' (Davies, 1989b). Butler (1997a) also notes how 'discursive relations' are configured through inner compulsions that

may engender psychic processes of dis/identification and abjection (see 2.1.2 and 2.1.3). These understandings are central to the arguments developed in this thesis and are applied throughout, particularly in Chapter 4 when tracing the discursive formation of gender and sexuality education.

The final poststructural concept is heteronormativity. Heteronormativity is a key concept and has been defined as follows:

‘the institutions, structures of understanding, and practical orientations that make heterosexuality seem not only coherent — that is, organized as a sexuality — but also privileged. Its coherence is always provisional, and its privilege can take several (sometimes contradictory) forms: unmarked, as the basic idiom of the personal and the social; or marked as a natural state; or projected as an ideal or moral accomplishment. It consists less of norms that could be summarized as a body of doctrine than of a sense of rightness produced in contradictory manifestations ... One of the most conspicuous differences is that it has no parallel, unlike heterosexuality, which organizes homosexuality as its opposite. Because homosexuality can never have the invisible, tacit, society founding rightness that heterosexuality has, it would not be possible to speak of “homonormativity” in the same sense’

(Berlant and Warner, 1998: 548).

Heteronormativity, in short, encapsulates processes and practices through which heterosexuality is normalised (Warner, 1993). As Blaise explains, ‘heterosexual norms are recognised when their social practices reinforce that there is only one best, right, or ‘normal’ way to be in a relationship and that this is a heterosexual one’ (2009: 457). Heterosexual norms are understood to be regulatory when they coerce children into maintaining stereotypical gendered roles. Likewise, the norm of ‘heterosexual discourse’ is understood to be regulatory when there is an expectation or assumption that all girls will want, need, or have boyfriends, which limits the possibilities for both sexes (Renold, 2005). As Epstein (2000b) and Davies (1989) highlight, understanding children’s attachment to stereotypical gendered differences makes it possible to locate how heterosexual discourses operate in the classroom and how they enforce heteronormative behaviours. These understandings will be central to arguments developed throughout Chapter 6 (in particular).

Broader poststructural notions and theoretical tools extend the conceptual framework for analysing the formation, implementation and reception of gender and sexuality education. This robust theoretical framework will allow me to critically interrogate the ‘conditions of

possibility' (Foucault, 1974) which make gender and sexuality education available in English primary schools through to understanding children's contradictory responses to this education. Having established my theoretical position I will now review three intersecting bodies of literature which span several academic disciplines, not least human geography, sociology, education, and childhood studies. The first of these is concerned with literature in children's geographies and geographies of education.

2.2 CHILDREN'S GEOGRAPHIES AND GEOGRAPHIES OF EDUCATION

This section reviews literature in children's geographies and geographies of education. The first part (2.2A) focuses on children's geographies and sociological studies of children and childhood. In the second part of this section (2.2B) I review literature on geographies of education, which largely emerge out of children's geographies.

2.2A CHILDREN'S GEOGRAPHIES AND SOCIOLOGICAL STUDIES OF CHILDREN AND CHILDHOOD

This section starts by tracing the Anglo-US emergence and development of children's geographies, which to-date has largely focused on the Global North (2.2.1). It highlights the continued growth of this sub-field along sociological lines by examining the influence of the 'new' social studies of childhood, particularly the notion of the 'sociological child' (James *et al.*, 1998). This builds towards a consideration of childhood as a historical and socio-spatial construct (2.2.2). A key aim of this sub-section is to highlight a problematic western association between childhood and (sexual) innocence which continues to dominate popular understandings of children. This sub-section also acknowledges competing understandings of childhood from developmental psychology. I include this literature as young children (from 5 years old) feature as research participants in this thesis. It is therefore important to recognise arguments which claim that they may not be able to extrapolate beyond their own experience. The final sub-section brings children's geographies up-to-date by recognising contemporary developments and future aspirations (2.2.3).

2.2.1 Emergence and development of children's geographies

Geographical interest in children has been a marginal sub-field of the discipline but it is more longstanding than most realise. Geographers' earliest engagements can be traced back to the early 1970s (e.g. Blaut *et al.*, 1970; Blaut and Stea, 1971; Bunge, 1973). Focusing on children's

spatial cognition and mapping abilities, and later the spatial oppression of children, these Anglo-US studies brought the previously absent subject of 'the child' into the remit of human geography (Aitken, 2001; Holloway and Pimlott-Wilson, 2011). While this early agenda produced some provocative empirical research its uncritical adoption of 'the child' as a self-evident, homogenous subject was soon scrutinised (Aitken, 1994; Holloway and Valentine, 2000a). This criticism led to a split in work on children's geographies - with some researchers continuing to further psychological interest in children's spatial cognition and mapping abilities (e.g. Blaut, 1991; 1997; Matthews, 1987; 1992; 1995; Stea *et al.*, 1997) while others (e.g. Aitken, 1994; Matthews and Limb, 1999; Philo, 1992; Sibley, 1995b) followed a sociological course premised on the belief that children are social actors, which, in many ways, furthers Bunge's (1973) original commitment to give children - as a minority group - a voice in an adultist world⁸ (see Holloway and Pimlott-Wilson, 2011).

As Holt (2011) remarks, the adoption of the concept of the 'sociological child' (James *et al.*, 1998) has underpinned the sociological development of children's geographies (also see Holloway and Valentine, 2000a). This notion came to the fore in the 'new' social studies of childhood which had evolved from the sociological study/ sociology of childhood (James and Prout, 1990; Jenks, 1982). The concept encapsulates a radical shift in thinking about children and childhood with young people perceived to be much more than adults-in-waiting whose development proceeds along a series of pre-defined steps (Aitken, 2001; James *et al.*, 1998; Holloway and Valentine, 2000a; Oakley, 1994a). Rather, childhood is understood to be a socially constructed phenomenon which varies between social groups, societies and historical periods (see 2.2.2). The new social studies of childhood claim an epistemological break from previous sociological work in that they study children as social actors and as *beings* in their own right rather than pre-adult *becomings* (Brannen and O'Brien, 1996; Holloway and Valentine, 2000a; James *et al.*, 1998). A key emphasis of this scholarship has been children's agency to reflect upon and affect change in their worlds as they are not simply considered to be passive subjects of social structures and processes (Holt, 2011; Prout and James, 1990). That said, children's creativity and resourcefulness is not celebrated at the expense of an analysis of wider social structures as children's lives are also understood to be shaped by forces beyond their control (Gagen, 2004b; 2010; Holt, 2006; Vanderbeck, 2008).

Aitken (1994) has been credited for introducing these interdisciplinary, international debates to human geography: a manoeuvre which many claim laid the foundations for *critical*

⁸ Hugh Matthews has actually crossed 'the divide' so the two paths are not necessarily mutually-exclusive, even though they are underwritten by seemingly contrasting theoretical and political positions.

children's geographies (see Horton and Kraftl, 2005; Holloway and Pimlott-Wilson, 2011). Indeed, the notion of the 'sociological child' had huge theoretical and methodological ramifications for the sub-field (Holloway and Valentine, 2000a). Yet this was a two-way process - with children's geographies imbuing 'new' social studies of childhood with a sense of spatiality (*ibid*). As Holloway and Pimlott-Wilson (2011) have shown, children's geographers have contributed to wider sociological debates by: emphasising the importance of place and dangers of ethnocentrism; revealing the complex nature of everyday spaces in and through which children's lives are made; and highlighting the importance of ideas about childhood in spatial discourses which inform socio-spatial practices in different sites (also see Holloway and Valentine, 2000b). Such insights have been well received within 'new' social studies of childhood (particularly engagements with everyday spaces and places of identity construction - e.g. Gagen, 2004a; Holloway *et al.*, 2000; Pike, 2008; 2010; Valentine, 1999a).

These more recent understandings of children have a significant bearing on methodology and will be revisited in Chapter 3, particularly 3.2.2a. On the one hand, recognising children as competent social actors requires research *with* children that is empowering and 'child-centred' (see Darbyshire *et al.*, 2005). However, as Gagen (2004b; 2010), Holt (2006) and Vanderbeck (2008) have suggested, children's agency should not be celebrated at the expense of an analysis of wider social structures as children's lives are also shaped by forces beyond their control. Both of these perspectives influence the methodological approach taken in this thesis and will be discussed in the next chapter.

The next sub-section builds on the previous sub-section by reviewing geographical, sociological and psychological literature on childhood.

2.2.2 Childhood as a historical and socio-spatial construct

Childhood is understood to be culturally constructed and so its meanings vary over space and time (Aries, 1962; Jenks, 1996; Valentine, 1996; Waksler, 1991). As Aries (1962) reveals, in Europe in the Middle Ages young people were simply regarded as miniature adults, rather than conceptually different from adults, so far from being a biologically defined category childhood has been shown to be a western cultural invention. According to Aries (1962), the sixteenth century marked the beginning of modern childhood where children came to be understood as separate and distinct types of beings (also see Holloway and Valentine, 2000a). Enlightenment thinking, Jenks (1996) argues, allowed modern conceptions of childhood to dominate along two lines of thought: Dionysian and Apollonian views of childhood. Dionysian understandings posit children as 'little devils' – inherently naughty, unruly and unsocialised beings - while

Apollonian understandings, formalised in the mid-eighteenth-century, posit children as 'little angels' – born good and innocent of adult ways (see also Valentine, 1996). Both of these contradictory understandings of the child continue to be mobilised in contemporary western societies, Jenks notes, yet both are problematic, especially for childhood sexuality (Jackson, 1982; Renold, 2005; Robinson, 2008).

Dionysian and Apollonian notions of childhood can be linked to broader ideas about the control and regulation of sexual discourse in modern western societies. For instance, Elias (1994) notes how the seventeenth century privatization of the sex drive and the maintenance of a 'conspiracy of silence' about sex in the presence of the young became a feature of the 'civilizing process' (also see Stoler, 1995). Likewise, Foucault (1998) demonstrated how the demonized figure of the masturbating child contributed to 'a pedagogization of children's sex' from the eighteenth century (see 2.1.2). Since then dominant twentieth-century western imagining of children as vulnerable, incompetent and in need of protection (James and Prout, 1990; Jenks, 1996; Valentine, 1996) has influenced how we think about parenting and the way children should be brought up (Aitken, 2000; Alanen, 1990; Valentine, 1997a; 1997b; 2003). The conflation of childhood with innocence, particularly 'sexual innocence', continues to be particularly powerful with children commonly believed to be not only asexual but requiring adult protection from 'dangerous' (sexual) knowledge (Epstein, 1999; Jackson, 1982; Valentine, 2000; Renold, 2005; 2006b; Robinson, 2008). In this context the adult-child binary serves to reinforce, even naturalise, responsibilities that adults have for safeguarding children from a 'corrupting adult world' (Aitken, 2001; Holloway and Valentine, 2000a; Valentine, 1996). Yet when it comes to knowledge about sexuality such 'protection' can actually harm children as it neglects how (hetero)sexuality already plays a major role in shaping children's social worlds, particularly at school (Epstein and Johnson, 1998; Kehily, 2002; Renold, 2005; see 2.3).

In light of these arguments feminists and poststructuralists have challenged traditional understandings of childhood as disempowering since they deny acquisition of supposedly 'adult knowledges' - like sexuality - despite how important these understandings are for identity formation (Archard, 1993; Epstein and Johnson, 1998; Renold, 2005; Valentine, 2000). According to these scholars, if we are intent upon 'liberating childhood' we must transform our assumptions of what constitutes 'natural' child development (see 2.2.2), although as Aiken (2001: 59) warns, while it is important to take a critical stance on natural predispositions to childhood and child development 'it is possible that by throwing out nature we may also be throwing out the metaphorical baby with some very fast flowing and mercurial bathwater' (see Colls and Hörschelmann, 2009; Costello and Duncan, 2006; Hörschelmann and Colls, 2010). As Aitken (2001) argues, 'matter matters' (Barad, 2003) and so we must acknowledge the ways

society and culture work on and change biological bodies, and how societal images of childhood are 'embodied' in the corporeality of children, including their sexuality (also see Atkinson and Moffat, 2009; Costello and Duncan, 2006; Talburt, 2009). For Aitken (2001), focusing on development as a natural phenomenon and then simply mapping some social and cultural dimensions onto it would sidestep critical engagement with childhood as an embodied and sexualised discourse. I will return to this in 2.2.3.

This literature provides a context for this thesis by establishing how Dionysian and Apollonian notions of childhood can be linked to broader ideas about the control and regulation of sexual discourse in modern western societies with dominant twentieth-century imagining of children as vulnerable, incompetent and in need of protection reinforcing notions of 'childhood (sexual) innocence' (also see 2.3). These understandings will be drawn on in Chapter 4 when analysing arguments surrounding Section 28 and 'post-Section 28' UK government legislation and guidance (see footnote 5).

The next part acknowledges competing understandings of childhood from developmental psychology. I include this literature as young children (from 5 years) feature as research participants in this thesis. It is therefore important to recognise arguments which claim that they may not be able to extrapolate beyond their own experience. This is particularly relevant to 6.1.2 where I show how the youngest children recuperate heteronormativity when responding to a scheme of work on 'Different Families' (see 5.3.2a).

Despite the multiple realities of childhood (Jenks, 1982; James, 1993; Katz, 1986; 1991a; 1991b; Sibley, 1995b), Valentine (1997b: 66) notes how in contemporary western society the dominant understanding of it 'remains one of a linear sequence of developmental stages in which children's behaviour progressively evolves from simplicity to complexity, from irrationality to rationality (despite the fact that adulthood is a social construct not merely a matter of physical maturity) on the path to adulthood' (see Prout and James, 1990). This psychological understanding of childhood can be attributed to Piaget (1951; 1971) who believed that intelligence develops through complex interactions between a child and its environment, such that four stages of intellectual growth can be identified: sensorimotor, pre-operational, concrete operational and formal operational (see Piaget, 1952; 1954; Piaget and Inhelder, 1956). According to Piaget, while some capacity to reason is inborn, for the most part it requires education, maturation and experience. By this logic, infants only have limited representations of their world as it is only towards the end of the sensorimotor stage that any intelligence begins to form (see Valentine, 1997b; Walkerdine, 1984).

In Piaget's pre-operational stage (approximately 2-7 years old) children begin to evoke mentally things that do not actually happen and represent the world in terms of symbols, which they can operate upon at an intuitive level. However, spatially they are still considered to be egocentric and experience great difficulty de-centring themselves from any one aspect of a situation. By the concrete operational stage (approximately 7-11 years old) the intuitive constructions of the pre-operational stage supposedly stabilise into higher forms of mental representation with children now capable of linear thought. Apparently, they can also abstract knowledge beyond the self and no longer fuse or confuse their point-of-view with those of others. When children finally reach the formal operational stage they are allegedly not only capable of linear thought but also discursive and logical thinking. In this stage reasoning is said to be freed from 'reality'. Thus, children can abstract to new and novel contexts that they have not yet experienced (see Aitken, 1994; 2001; Shaffer and Kipp, 2010).

While Piaget's child development theories continue to be held in high regard (see Shaffer and Kipp, 2010; Siegler, 1991) his work has been criticized, particularly by feminists and poststructuralists, on empirical and theoretical grounds (see Aitken, 1994; 2001; Valentine, 1997b). For Aitken, 'Piaget does not look at what children's interests are in the world; instead, his focus is on the construction of an ordered child' (2001: 52). As such, Piaget has been accused of de-centring emotional experiences and underestimating children's abilities as part of a 'mechanistic and disembodied philosophy of science that privileges reason and logic as the building blocks of knowledge (*ibid*: 52). Despite these criticisms, Piaget's linear sequence of development remains significant in shaping popular understandings of children's competencies (Aitken, 1994; 2001; James *et al.*, 1998; Valentine, 1997b). Indeed, as Shaffer and Kipp (2010: 278) reveal, Piaget's theory of children's developmental thinking continues to direct scholarship seeking to *explain* transitions in children's thinking – with Piaget's sequences of intellectual development widely believed to provide 'a reasonably accurate overview of how children of different ages think' (also see Siegler, 1991). Thus, while I reject Piaget's theories of cognitive development (see 6.1.2) I recognise how influential this work has been (see Shaffer and Kipp, 2010).

Having established key debates this final sub-section brings children's geographies up-to-date by recognising contemporary developments and future aspirations.

2.2.3 Reaching critical mass: towards geographies of- Children, Youth and Families and children's and young people's bodies

'The body – whether it be infant, child or adult – is a surface of social and cultural inscription; it houses subjectivity, it is a site of pleasure and pain; it is public and private; it has a permeable boundary that is crossed by fluids and solids; it is material, discursive and psychical'

(Longhurst, 2005: 91).

Vanderbeck (2008) and others (i.e. Horton and Kraftl, 2005; 2006; Horton *et al.*, 2008; Valentine, 2008a) claim that children's geographies has become somewhat ghettoised of late, especially within (or as a result of) the journal *Children's Geographies* published since 2003. As Horton and Kraftl (2005) foresaw, the field was at risk of becoming too much of a comfort zone with recurring themes from the same small group of authors. Vanderbeck (2008) and Valentine (2008a) kept this discussion alive, noting only a few years later how children's geographies had become quite insular and self-referential⁹. Valentine (2008a), in particular, argued that children's geographers were merely preaching to the converted and that this was not troubling the 'adultist' nature of the discipline, which would be corrected if children's geographies scaled up. This 'scaling-up' would involve joining-up the sub-field with geographies of sexualities/ queer geographies (see 2.3) and broader sociological scholarship on reconstituted families (see 2.4) by developing their connections through the concept of intimacy. As Valentine (2008a) argues, these seemingly disparate fields are effectively studies of affective structures and intimate relations, so by focusing on this link these sub-fields could be scaled-up such that they are more than the sum of their parts. This, Valentine (2008a) believes, would allow these isolated areas of research to have a collective impact on the discipline.

Re-integrating children into familial contexts might at first appear to be a backwards step, Seymour (2011) recognises, given how classic socialization theory was criticised for subsuming children within families (also see McNamee, 2007). However, as Seymour (2011) argues, while the social study of childhood paradigm has rectified this trend, it has also metaphorically removed children from the home (also see Holt, 2011). Thus, for Seymour (2011) and others (i.e. Brannen and O'Brien, 1996; Holt, 2011; McNamee, 2007; Valentine *et al.*, 2003; Valentine and Hughes, 2011) it is time to reintegrate children into these key sites so as not to isolate them from their families, although as Seymour (2011) points out, this would not be to render

⁹Although see Robson *et al.* (2013) for a contrasting response from incoming editors.

them invisible once again but to recentre them as competent social actors within familial contexts. Such a manoeuvre, Seymour (2011: 110) claims, would do justice to Holloway and Valentine's (2000a) original agenda for children's geographies which 'encouraged us to recognise the interconnections that exist between households, their immediate locality and the wider world' - as encapsulated in their book's sub-title *playing, living, learning*. According to Seymour (2011), these interconnections are not spatially distinct and she calls for engagements similar to Mayall (1998) who demonstrated how *children's bodies* demarcates the 'public world of the school' and the 'private world of the home' (see also James *et al.*, 1998; Seymour, 2007).

As this final example illustrates, children's bodies are central to a research agenda concerned with the spatial interconnections of children's everyday lives. Indeed, as Horton and Kraftl (2006) recognised (in a seminal blueprint for children's geographies) bodies matter, despite how the norms and habits of social science all too often systemically and problematically 'silence the body and emotional life' (Seidler, 1994: 18), or, for Rich 'the geography closest in' (1986: 212). According to Horton and Kraftl (2006) and others (i.e. Colls and Hörschelmann, 2009; Hemming, 2011b; Hörschelmann and Colls, 2010; Longhurst, 1995; 1997; 2005), everything we do is done with and through our bodies and so 'the body' is a key site where modes of power are imposed and resisted. Following Aitken (2001), Horton and Kraftl have therefore reiterated that children's geographies are inherently embodied and that 'a closer apprehension of the bodily details of children's lives – as well as wider conceptualisations of bodies and embodiments – might give *more* fresh and rich insights into [...] Children's Geographies' (2006: 79).

While 'the body' has largely been an 'absent presence' in children's geographies it is important not to overlook some notable exceptions (i.e. Colls and Hörschelmann, 2009; Valentine, 2010), particularly recent work on the *Contested Bodies of Childhood and Youth* (Hörschelmann and Colls, 2010). Two seminal studies are particularly noteworthy: Holt (2004; 2007) and Costello and Duncan (2006). The first draws usefully on Butler's (1990; 1993) theories of performativity to explore children's socio-spatial (re)production of dis/ability within the primary school, focusing in particular on mind-body differences and everyday practices in 'inclusive' classrooms (see 2.2). Costello and Duncan's (2006) analysis of legal proceedings during a child court case for reversible hormonal treatment is particularly interesting given how gender came to be understood as an ontological category that normatively contains children's subjectivities. Using the example of Alex, the authors suggest that claims upon a child's body undermine the possibility for rethinking sex and gender - since these are commonly understood through a nature-nurture model that places limits on how children might acceptably define themselves.

Thus, for Costello and Duncan, ‘any notion of childhood subjectivity must take into account the limits imposed upon children as a result of institutional and everyday norms about gender, sexuality and identity’ (2006: 159).

These contemporary debates in children’s geographies inform the latter part of this thesis where I consider: how children routinely perform heteronormative- gender/sexuality through their bodies in everyday school space (6.5.1/2/3); how everyday gendered/sexual institutional norms impose limits on childhood subjectivity (6.5.4); and how children’s gendered/sexual subjectivities are largely shaped in familial spaces of the home (6.6).

In the next section I review literature on geographies of education, which largely emerge out of children’s geographies. This review will centre on formal curricula and hidden geographies of the “third” curriculum by exploring predominately school-based research.

2.2B GEOGRAPHIES OF EDUCATION

This section starts by providing an overview of geographies of education and institutional geographies (2.2.4). The first part establishes the ongoing relationship between children’s geographies and geographies of education and in the second part I briefly review literature on institutional geographies. This acts as a preface for this section. I then focus on a significant body of literature on formal curricula and hidden geographies of “the third” curriculum (2.2.5). The first part focuses on studies of formal school curricula and the second part focuses on scholarship concerned with hidden geographies of the “third” curriculum. Critiques of this literature are acknowledged in the final sub-section (2.2.6) which concludes by acknowledging the need to move beyond school boundaries.

2.2.4 Overview of geographies of education and institutional geographies

For Holloway and Jöns (2012), geographies of education underscore ‘the importance of spatiality in the production, consumption and implications of formal education systems from pre-school to tertiary education and of informal learning environments in homes, neighbourhoods, community organisations and workspaces. Between them, these geographies foreground the wider political, economic, social and cultural processes shaping, and being reshaped through, formal and informal spaces of education across the globe, and the ways they are experienced, embraced and contested by educators and diverse subjects of education, including children, young people, parents and workers’ (Holloway and Jöns, 2012; 482). According to Collins and Coleman (2008), it is possible to distinguish two strands of work

by geographers of education: studies within educational spaces and particularly individual schools, and studies of educational systems, especially the neoliberal restructuring of education (also see Kraftl, 2013). The latter includes many interesting studies on residential and educational segregation (Johnston *et al.*, 2007; Thrupp, 2007; Witten *et al.*, 2003), the real estate market and school competition (Butler and Robson, 2003; Nash and Harker, 2005) and the restructuring of tertiary education (Olds, 2007; Hoyler and Jöns, 2008), but for the purposes of this review I shall focus on the former.

While the term 'geographies of education' is relatively recent, geographers have been increasingly interested in education and educational spaces since the mid-1990s (see Cook and Hemming, 2011; Holloway *et al.*, 2010; Kraftl, 2013). Most of this scholarship emerged in the sub-field of children's geographies (see 2.2a) and has been concerned with children's experiences of, and participation within, everyday spaces of schooling (see Collins and Coleman, 2008; Kraftl, 2013; Vanderbeck and Dunkley, 2004). In response to Hanson Thiem's (2009) agenda for geographies of education Holloway *et al.* reassert the continued importance of engaging with this literature on children, youth and families as it circumvents 'adultist formulations which cast young people as the objects of education' (2010: 594). For Holloway *et al.*, geographies of education need to account for the voices and subjectivities of young people and focus on their experiences of education, both now and in the future, and this will be achieved by moving 'the subjects of education – the children, young people and adults involved in learning and teaching – into the foreground' (2010: 594).

In 2.2.5 I review literature on formal curricula and hidden geographies of the "third". Before then I want to briefly acknowledge literature on institutional geographies which acts as a preface for this section.

From Flowerdew (1982) onwards, geographers have been increasingly interested in institutions of various kinds (see Philo and Parr, 2000). At first, geographical studies were historical in focus and concerned with the spatial distribution and impact of institutions like the asylum (Philo, 1987), the workhouse (Driver, 1993) and the prison (Ogborn, 1995). However, by 2000 Philo and Parr documented a proliferation in other institutional geographies and observed a shift away from geographies *of* institutions to geographies *in* institutions. This shift towards internal geographies foregrounds 'the role of space inside the institution for constituting and mediating social relations' (Hemming, 2007: 355), and so socio-spatial processes that take shape within institutions, which then ripple out from them, become a primary focus (see Cook and Hemming, 2011). As such, institutions are regarded as fluid and dynamic 'geographical accomplishments' (Philo and Parr, 2000) that are continually in the

process of 'becoming' (Massey, 1999). These understandings are taken up in Chapter 5 and in Part Two of Chapter 6.

Reflecting on this literature, Collins and Coleman (2008) critiqued the absence of children as active agents within contemporary institutional settings. They argued that schools had received less attention from geographers than other institutions. Yet schools, for Collins and Coleman (2008), are central to the geographies of children and young people as they play a central role in shaping social identities (also see Holloway *et al.*, 2010). Collins and Coleman (2008) also stressed that the few studies that had considered children and bodies (see 2.2.3) in school spaces had tended to focus on secondary schools rather than primary schools (see also Hyams, 2000; Holloway and Valentine, 2003; Evans, 2006). This followed Hemming's (2007) observation that links between children's geographies and institutional geographies in the primary school context remained under-developed and in need of further exploration (although see Pike, 2008; 2010; Holloway and Pimlott-Wilson, 2011; Harden, 2012 for responses since).

This thesis responds to the gaps in this literature by focusing on primary schools and foregrounding children as active agents in this institutional setting. I will return to this in Chapter 3.

I now review a significant body of scholarship on formal curricula and hidden geographies of the "third" curriculum which is central to this thesis.

2.2.5 Formal curricula and hidden geographies of the "third" curriculum

This sub-section is divided into two parts. The first part focuses on studies of formal school curricula and the second part focuses on scholarship concerned with hidden geographies of the "third" curriculum. Critiques of this literature are acknowledged in the final sub-section (2.2.6).

Interest in geographical imaginaries has led geographers to examine the influence of formal curricula in shaping different scales of identity and citizenship (see Holloway *et al.*, 2010). This has involved tracing the making of these identities through school and university curricula (Marsden, 2001; King and Ruiz-Gelices, 2003; Gagen, 2004a; Kong, 2005), and through observing the impact of transnational flows of academics on curricula (Foote *et al.*, 2008; Theobald, 2008). However, more recently Holloway *et al.* have called for an additional focus on 'other aspects of identity which are not necessarily self-evidently geographical, including class, dis/ability, faith, *gender*, race and *sexuality*' (2010: 588; *emphasis added*). With regards to the

latter, Collins and Coleman (2008) highlight how debates about curricula are conducted almost exclusively by adults with little regard for the voices of young people, despite the Convention on the Rights of the Child (see 3.2.2a). Consequently, they tend to reflect prevailing adult anxieties, especially about the moral status of children - which could not be more acute than in debates over matters of sexuality (Collins, 2006).

Collins (2006) explored public struggles over secular education in Surrey, British Columbia, following legal proceedings over the suitability of using three books portraying same-sex parents in elementary schools. Collins traced the importance of the public/private distinction in debates about the use of these books and showed how 'progressive arguments based on the acceptance of diversity and the rights of pupils of pupils to access a broad spectrum of sexuality-related knowledges run up against arguments founded on a mixture of moral panic and a desire to minimize the dissonance between schools and conservative homes' (Collins and Coleman, 2008: 289). Within this context, Collins (2006) applied a concept of 'culture war' (Hunter, 1991) to theorise cultural politics in education, with schools regarded as 'a key battleground' for progressive and conservative activists. However, in light of the Supreme Court of Canada's ruling that religious concerns have a place in public decision making Collins showed how the religious opinions of some parents may shape the public school curriculum¹⁰.

In a UK context Hemming (2011a; 2011b; 2011c) found that a primary school's ethos can have an important influence on social cohesion with social cohesion initiatives also able to promote meaningful encounters between children of different backgrounds and religions. For instance, Hemming reports that children often cited socially acceptable discourses and displayed the 'right' values that schools are teaching. However, as Hemming acknowledges, giving the 'right' answers does not necessarily mean a full understanding or respect for another culture. In some instances, 'surface acting' (Hochschild, 1983) was evident: giving the impression of being respectful to others, but not following this up in practice. As Hemming illustrates, one of the main techniques used by primary schools 'to achieve the cultivation of socially cohesive bodies' (2011a: 68) involves the teaching of 'emotion work' (Hochschild, 1983)¹¹. This pedagogy encourages individuals to convert private emotions into socially acceptable ones so as to comply with 'feeling rules' within particular social and cultural contexts. Such 'emotion work' is delivered through formal curricula (e.g. PSHE, SEAL and 'values education' more broadly; see Stephenson *et al.*, 1998; McLaughlin and Halstead, 2000).

¹⁰ See Johnson and Vanderbeck (2014) for a discussion of the relationship between religion and legal frameworks that govern the inclusion and exclusion of knowledge about homosexuality within the curricula of British schools.

¹¹ Geographers have recently recognised the significance of emotions for making sense of children's lives and social processes in general (see Anderson and Smith, 2001; Davidson and Milligan, 2004; Valentine, 2008b).

These understandings of formal school curricula inform arguments throughout Chapters 4 and 6 where I analyse the formation and reception of gender and sexualities education. Hemming's (2011a; 2011b; 2011c) observation that children cite socially acceptable discourses and display the 'right' values that schools teach is particularly useful and is drawn on in 6.1.1, 6.2.1 and 6.3.1.

The next part focuses on scholarship concerned with hidden geographies of the "third" curriculum.

While Collins and Coleman (2008) acknowledge that young people have extremely limited opportunities to shape educational spaces at the formal policy level, they insist that their presence within school spaces should not be discounted. As Collins and Coleman (2008) argue, young people retain some agency even in the most adult-controlled spaces, and their diverse interests and backgrounds inevitably complicate standardised approaches to delivering the curriculum and maintaining discipline. Thus, for Collins and Coleman (2008) the challenge of conducting socially informed research in schools is about achieving an analytical balance between education's 'generalising tendency to futurity', which shapes the 'discourses and practices of learning', and the desire to recognise 'the diversity of childhoods that exist' (Horton and Kraftl, 2006: 83).

Indeed, Holloway *et al.* argue that in the case of school curricula putting pupils first 'widens our focus beyond the remaking of self-evidently geographical identities through formal curriculum provision, and instead highlights the importance of analysing young people's experiences in educational spaces and the production of a wider diversity of social identities through the delivery and consumption of the formal and informal curricula' (2010: 594). While acknowledging the importance of the design and administration of the curriculum (Catling, 2005; Hemming, 2011a), Holloway *et al.* stress that the 'informal lessons which students learn, enforce, reject and rewrite in schools' need to be accounted for (2010: 588). This involves moving beyond the content of lessons and examining how children's identities are reproduced and reworked through sociospatial practices within different learning spaces, including playgrounds (see below), libraries, dining halls, corridors and 'alterative' educational contexts (Shilling and Cousins, 1990; Banks, 2005; Thomson, 2005; Newman *et al.*, 2006; Pike, 2008; 2010; Kraftl, 2013).

Allen (2005) and Coleman (2007) provide one case in point when considering hidden and informal geographies within school environments. In the context of heteronormative Health and Physical Education in New Zealand high schools (Allen, 2005), Coleman (2007) shows how

students pass on sexual health information relating to homosexuality in informal school settings, such as fields and common rooms. As such, informal sites were implicated in the communication of sexually related knowledges, which produced a hidden geography of teenage sexuality (also see Collins and Coleman, 2008). Hemming (2011a; 2011b; 2011c) and Valentine *et al.* (2002) provide further examples of the importance of hidden geographies of the third curriculum in a UK context. Hemming, in a primary school setting, showed how emotional processes at the level of the body - operating and interacting with formal and informal institutional space - helped to determine the success or failure of techniques used to promote social cohesion. Focusing on social in/exclusion and the delivery of a secondary school ICT curriculum, Valentine *et al.* (2002) foreground 'hidden geographies' of peer cultures at the intersections of school practices and government policies. This approach allowed Valentine *et al.* (2002) to uncover a fragmented uptake of ICT provision.

In addition, Holloway *et al.* identify another strand of research informed by Butler's (1990; 1993) performative understanding of gender (see 2.1.3) which they claim 'usefully enriches our understanding of geographies of education' (2010: 589). This work follows much scholarship in the sociology of education (see 2.3) in applying feminist and poststructural understandings to further illuminate the relationship between subjectivity and space (Pile, 2008). Evans (2006) provides one example of geographical work that has used a notion of performativity to understand the centrality of girls' gendered and heterosexual performances in and through school in shaping their disaffection with a sports curriculum. Thomas (2005; 2008; 2011) provides another example of the spatially performative nature of identity with a series of studies on racial segregation at a US high school. Thomas examines how teenage girls reinstate racial difference through everyday socio-spatial practices in the lunchroom and the school yard. In doing this she foregrounds a number of key 'geographical imaginations' that geographers have used to explore subjectivity, such as spatial policing and boundary making (see Pile, 2008). In more recent studies, Thomas (2008; 2011) shows how these socio-spatial practices contradict students' in-school responses to multicultural education.

As highlighted above, playgrounds in primary schools have been the focus of much geographical research with a number of key studies undertaken by children's geographers (e.g. Collins and Coleman, 2008; Holt, 2007; Thomson and Philo, 2004; Thompson, 2005). Within this literature, pupil's territoriality emerges as a key theme. This is often encapsulated in the spatial dominance of football-playing boys, who monopolise central playground space and, through physical and verbal intimidation, force girls and other boys to the margins (Catling, 2005; Newman *et al.*, 2006; Thompson, 2005). In this literature play is viewed as children's serious real-life work of constructing, organizing and shaping social orders (Blaise, 2005b;

Davies, 2003). One of these social orders, as alluded to above with the football playing boys, revolves around (hetero)masculinities (see Renold, 2005). Arnot (1994) argues that within male-dominated societies, and, indeed, their microcosmic representations (e.g. playgrounds), masculinity, and ultimately manhood, have to be earned through a process of 'struggle and conformation'. Thus, as Askew and Ross (1988) illustrated in their playground ethnography, any physical interaction between two boys, other than an aggressive interaction, is likely to be construed as a sign of weakness on the part of one or both boys, and would, more often than not, result in them being called names such as 'poof' (also see Mac an Ghail, 1994). Likewise, Epstein and Johnson (1998) have shown primary-aged girls partake in playground rituals which position heterosexual romance as an object of desire. Skipping rhymes, in particular, were shown to contain multiple verses pertaining to marriage, honeymoons and babies.

Recognising the importance of the lessons children learn in 'informal' school space, particularly lessons about heteronormative- gender and sexuality (see 2.3) has had a significant influence on the methodology, as I discuss in Chapter 3. Most clearly, this led to ethnographic research across 'formal' (i.e. classrooms and assembly hall) and 'informal' (i.e. playground and dining hall) school sites (see 3.3.2) where I would explore children's responses to formal gender and sexualities education as well as everyday 'doings' of gender and sexuality. Spatializing subjectivity (Pile, 2008) in this way allows me to foreground the role of micro-spaces within school when attempting to understand children's contradictory responses to gender and sexuality education (Chapter 6).

In the final sub-section I acknowledge critiques of this literature which suggest research should also attempt to move beyond school boundaries.

2.2.6 Critiques – beyond school boundaries

As Holloway *et al.* (2010) acknowledge, studies which construct schools as 'spaces distinct from, but embedded within, the contexts of everyday life' (Ansell, 2002: 180), emphasise the consequences of these performances for young people in the here and now. However, as Ansell (2002) has shown in relation to gender and discourses of 'equal rights', there can be a mismatch between school and material conditions outside school. Likewise, in the context of 'emotion work', Hemming (2011a) notes how there can be a 'values mismatch' between home and school with clashes revealing the limitations of teaching socially cohesive values to children (also see Hemming and Madge, 2011; Lewis, 2007). This suggests that research should look 'beyond school boundaries' as well as looking at the spaces of identity construction within

schools¹² (Hemming, 2011a; Holloway *et al*, 2010; Cook and Hemming, 2011; Holloway and Jöns, 2012). As Collins and Coleman (2008) argue, spaces of schooling and education reflect and contribute to their wider communities, so it is important not to see them isolated from other socio-spatial processes and practices (also see Hanson Thiem, 2009). For instance, when examining global citizenship education Pyckett *et al.* found that neoliberal programmes do not always succeed in changing people's subjectivities as these are 'performed moving through multiple spatial-temporal domains' and are not solely shaped within particular institutions such as schools (2010: 489). This led Holloway and Jöns to declare that 'it will be necessary to look more closely at the ways in which the different worlds of home, pre-school/college/university and informal spaces of learning coalesce in shaping the lives of individuals' (2011: 484).

While it would be beyond the remit of this research to engage with spaces of identity construction 'beyond school boundaries' in 6.6 I follow earlier calls to (re)situate children in familial contexts by considering how children's gendered and sexual subjectivities are also shaped in spaces of the home (see 2.4).

The first part of the next section builds on this geographical literature by reviewing sociology of education literature on sexualities and schooling.

2.3 SOCIOLOGICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL ENGAGEMENTS WITH SEXUALITIES AND QUEER THEORY

This section deals with sociological and geographical engagements with sexualities and queer theory. The first part (2.3A) builds on earlier geographical literature by reviewing sociology of education literature on sexualities and schooling. The second part of this section (2.3B) builds on the first by exploring how geographers have engaged with sexualities and queer theory.

2.3A SEXUALITIES AND SCHOOLING

This section starts by providing a brief overview of sexualities and schooling before focusing on gender and sexuality in the primary school (2.3.1). This sub-section establishes that the primary school is a key arena for the production and regulation of (hetero)sexual discourses, practices and identities. Yet it is also a crucial site for intervening in these processes, as I show

¹² Kraftl (2013) takes this critique a step further when he highlights how geographical studies of education have overwhelmingly focused on mainstream schooling contexts with little consideration of 'alternative' education (see Kraftl, 2006a; 2006b; 2012).

in 2.3.2a. In this sub-section I consider how heteronormativity has been challenged in elementary/ primary schools, which includes discussion of the *No Outsiders* project (2007-2009). The next sub-section (2.3.2b) unpacks a key discourse that is used to prompt school-based intervention: 'homophobic bullying'. This sub-section acknowledges how this discourse has been strategically deployed to make homophobia *a harm that can be spoken of*. However, it also explores critiques of homophobic bullying as a 'progressive' and 'common-sense' discourse by critically examining the 'conditions of possibility' (Foucault, 1974) that homophobic bullying simultaneously opens up and closes down. The final sub-section (2.3.3) reviews studies that have shown how children recuperate heteronormativity when presented with anti-sexist stories which were meant to challenge heteronormativity.

2.3.1 Schooling sexualities: gender and sexuality in the primary school

Research influenced by queer theory (see 2.1.3) has examined the school as not merely reflecting dominant power relations (Nayak and Kehily, 2006; Redman, 1994) but as a specific social and cultural arena for the production and reproduction of hetero- gender and sexual identities (see Blaise, 2005a; Epstein and Johnson, 1998; Haywood and Mac an Ghail, 1995; Kehily, 2002; Epstein *et al.*, 2003; Renold, 2005). Initial studies focused on the secondary school and the sexual cultures of young men (i.e. Haywood and Mac an Ghail, 1995) but subsequent research has queered¹³ childhood sexuality in pre-school (Blaise, 2005a; Robinson, 2002) and elementary/ primary school (Letts and Sears, 1999; Renold, 2005). Scholars have examined a number of intersecting themes, including the sexual politics of the curriculum (Haywood and Mac an Ghail, 1995; Gabb, 2004); the heterosexist structure of school relations (Mac an Ghail, 1991; Epstein and Johnson, 1994); and the relationship between homophobia and the formation of heterosexual masculinities (Nayak and Kehily, 1996; Renold, 2005). This has involved exploring the normalisation of heterosexualities, how hegemonic heterosexual masculinities are dependent on homophobic practices, and in the case of the former, how the formal and hidden curriculum reproduce dominant forms of sexuality that ignore 'the realities of a pluralistic society' by 'validating only traditional heterosexual family structures' (Trudell, 1993: 3).

Since this thesis is concerned with the primary school I explore studies conducted in this site in more detail in the next part of this sub-section.

¹³ Disrupting Western notions of childhood (sexual) innocence by applying feminist poststructuralism and queer theory, particularly after Butler (1990; 1993; 1997a; see 2.2.2 and 2.1).

The primary school has been explored as a crucial site of social reproduction and one that sustains discourses surrounding sexuality and the formation of sexual subjectivities. Research in Education studies and the Sociology of education has shown how a notion of childhood sexuality is refused within primary school discourse - despite children's evident engagements and investments in sexuality practices (Epstein and Johnson, 1998; Renold, 2005; Kehily, 2002; Blaise, 2005a). These studies critique right-wing educational agendas that legitimise normative sexual assumptions (Epstein, 1994a; Redman, 1994; Trudell, 1993). They also show how this occurs at the expense of dissident, dangerous 'Other' sexualities (Epstein and Johnson, 1994; Haywood and Mac An Ghail, 1995; Epstein, 1994b). In this scholarship primary schools are regarded as important cultural arenas where children learn about the different value attributed to diverse sexual identities (Redman, 1994). They are not considered to be 'sexually neutral spaces' (Renold, 2005) and children are not simply seen as 'asexual beings' (DePalma and Atkinson, 2008a; see 2.2.2).

By highlighting how sexuality is already embedded in children's school-based cultures these studies have posited the primary school as a key social arena for 'doing' sexuality and they have also shown how sexuality actively shapes children's friendships and peer relations. According to this work, to be a 'proper' girl or boy necessarily involves investing in a heterosexual identity and it has been shown that children often use gender or sexual insults to maintain gender and sexual norms (Renold, 2000). As such, these scholars come to view primary schools not as purified spaces that nurture 'innocent' children, but as concentrated sites of contestation around issues of power and identity, and finally as key arenas for the production and regulation of sexual discourses, practices and identities (Rasmussen *et al.*, 2004; Haywood and Mac An Ghail, 1995; Renold; 2002). Exploring the salience of gender and sexuality within the primary school has, therefore, necessarily involved a deeper interrogation of these twin concepts of childhood and sexual 'innocence' (see 2.2.2). They also expose the role they play in casting the primary school child as an 'innocent' sexual subject (Renold, 2005) that needs 'protection' from 'harmful' sexual knowledge, particularly where these harmful knowledges compromise heterosexual values and are thus seen as potentially dangerous and contaminating (Epstein and Johnson, 1998; Renold, 2000; 2002; 2005; Wallis and VanEvery, 2000).

This body of work further shows how heterosexual desirability is produced and reproduced in the context of the primary school and how particular constructions of gender are heterosexualised through notions of the complementarity of masculinities and femininities. For some, this has clear effects on the intelligibility of homosexualities (Willis and VanEvery, 2000; Renold, 2005; Holland *et al.*, 1998). Furthermore, they emphasise how 'compulsory

heterosexuality' (Rich, 1980) (where to be a 'normal' boy or girl involves the projection of a coherent and abiding heterosexual self (Renold, 2002; 2006b)) is maintained and enforced within peer groups and by the school, while divergence from this 'norm' is punished (Renold, 2002; 2005; Wallis and VanEvery, 2000). The pressures of 'compulsory heterosexuality' have particularly damaging consequences for boys and girls who are positioned as Other to the normalising and regulatory (heterosexual) gendered scripts (Renold, 2000; Holland *et al.*, 1998). This recognition prompts calls for sexuality to be included as an equal opportunities issue that is legally able to deal with the everyday realities of boys' and girls' early sexual experiences (Epstein, 1997; Renold, 2005).

Primary schools are therefore considered key sites of identity construction where gendered and sexualised identities are formed amidst social relations of power (Epstein and Johnson, 2008; Renold, 2005; Kehily, 2002). As a whole the studies demonstrate how sex and sexuality are infused into peer group cultures and relations, reappearing 'in an extensive repertoire of student-student interactions, including name-calling, flirting, classroom disruption, harassment of girls, homophobic abuse, playground conversations, desk-top graffiti, students' dress codes as well as teacher typifications and student-teacher interactions' (Haywood and Mac an Ghail, 1995: 224-5). It is these everyday practices and performances that are central to generating hegemonic and subordinate sexual subject positions. Despite this, scholars note how the myth of sexual innocence in early childhood prevails (see 2.2.2), which effectively desexualise schools as institutions (Epstein and Johnson, 1994; Renold, 2005). Tracking the historical construction of childhood innocence in industrial societies over the past century, Piper (2000) suggests that little has changed. The 'child' and 'sex/uality' not only continue to be presented as oppositional and incompatible, but unthinkable when it comes to children of primary school age (4-11 years old).

Attempts to challenge and undo heteronormative processes in primary schools have therefore not been an easy undertaking. As Cullen and Sandy (2009) note, a canon of sexual innocence in our societies undermines any effort to teach honestly about sexualities. Yet paradoxically, under the guise of 'protecting' children we actually put them at risk of becoming bullies or being bullied, of adopting dysfunctional coping behaviours and of not realising their full humanness as gendered and sexual beings. Yet, with the understanding that the foundations for marginalisation are consolidated during primary school years (DePalma and Atkinson, 2008a), and that the primary school is a key site for intervening in processes of heteronormativity (DePalma and Atkinson, 2009a; Miles, 2010), recent work has focused on undoing homophobia at source rather than simply addressing 'homophobic bullying' in later years (DePalma and Atkinson, 2009b; Elizabeth A and Renée, 2010). There has been a shift

from reactive approaches to homophobia to proactive interventions (Elizabeth A and Renée, 2010; Sanders, 2008) with children's literature, featuring gender and sexual transgressive characters, used to combat homophobia in primary contexts (Donovan, 2008; Miles, 2010; No Outsiders Project Team, 2008).

This sub-section provides a context for this thesis by establishing how the primary school is a key arena for the production and regulation of (hetero)sexual discourses, practices and identities. These understandings are drawn on throughout the thesis, particularly in Chapter 5 where I show how 'the myth of the primary school as a cultural greenhouse for the nurturing and protection of children's (sexual) innocence' (Renold, 2005: 1) surfaces in debates about the un/suitability of gender and sexuality education in Weirwold primary school (5.2).

In the next sub-section I explore how heteronormativity has been challenged in elementary/primary schools in more detail.

2.3.2a Challenging heteronormativity in elementary/primary schools

The publication of *Queering Elementary Education* (Letts and Sears, 1999) in a US context is regarded as a seminal text by those actively identifying and subverting heteronormative processes in school settings. Despite 'considerable opposition and angry reactions to challenging established norms in terms of family, marriage and sexuality' (Sears, 1999: 193) the book 'created a dialogue out of a dead silence' (DePalma and Atkinson, 2008c: xii) by challenging foundational assumptions about childhood, sexuality and pedagogy as it advanced a critical sexual pedagogy that challenged 'heterosexual hegemony' (Butler, 1993; see 2.1.3; also see Letts and Sears, 1999). Key to this was the belief that homophobia and heterosexism are acquired (Letts and Sears, 1999) and can be combatted through 'purposive intervention' (Sears and Williams, 1997). This involves considering how prejudices are instilled in the first instance and how they intensify over time (Sears, 1999). As Sears explains, this involves interrogating oneself and 'our complicity in 'regimes of truth' (Foucault, 1980) that ill-serve those who are young' (Sears, 1999: 199). It also involves critically reflecting on classroom practice, which routinely 'privilege the heterosexual condition and presume sexual destinies' (Sears, 1999: 5). Such reflection and subsequent interventions, it was hoped, would help create 'classrooms that challenge categorical thinking, promote interpersonal intelligence, and foster critical consciousness' (Letts and Sears, 1999: 1).

Those kind of interventional strategies were not systematically operationalised in the UK until the advent of the *No Outsiders* project (2007-2009). *No Outsiders* was a Participatory Action Research (PAR) project which brought together teacher-researchers, University-researchers

and diversity trainers to understand how English primary schools could interrupt heteronormative processes through critical pedagogical practices that proactively incorporated discussions of sexuality and gender into curricula (see DePalma and Atkinson, 2008a; 2009a). Throughout this project there was a tension between queer praxis (destabilising categories of sex, gender and sexuality - informed by the work of Butler (1990; 1993; see 2.1.3)), and identity politics. While recognising that it is hard to act from a place of deconstruction (Butler, 1997b; 1999), there has been dissent amongst practitioners towards the latter approach being adopted in primary schools with some reacting against fixing and limiting identities (Cullen, 2009; DePalma and Atkinson, 2009b; Youdell, 2009; 2011). Yet 'sexualities equalities' as a type of strategic essentialist approach, which is more easily accessed through neoliberal discourses of 'equality' and 'tolerance' has allowed work to proliferate in primary schools.

While this stance has allowed sexual 'inclusion' to be put on the primary school agenda, some point out that an equalities-based approach actually does little to challenge normative heterosexuality (Cullen, 2009; DePalma and Atkinson, 2008a; 2009b), the condition in which homophobia is produced (Ellis, 2007; Watkins, 2008). In fact, many scholars question whether gay and lesbian children's literature, used as the basis of 'sexualities equalities' work, may actually be contributing to heteronormativity – as these books exclusively depict lesbian and gay characters in monogamous, nuclear relationships (see DePalma and Atkinson, 2008b; 2009b; Nixon, 2009; Rasmussen, 2006; Youdell, 2009; 2011). Limiting sexuality to (safe) relationships and focusing on the couple or the family over the individual (which is supported by the government's *Sex and Relationship Guidance* (DfEE, 2000)), is said to reinforce the perceived superiority of heteronormative, child-centred, family relationships (DePalma and Atkinson, 2008b; 2009b; Donovan, 2008). Further, celebrating Civil Partnerships for same-sex couples is also said to reinforce the patriarchal and heterosexist institution of marriage (Cullen, 2009; DePalma and Atkinson, 2009b). Adopting what Nixon (2009) calls 'Vanilla' strategies, that is highly sanitised representations of safe and approved sexual practice and fantasy that are deemed acceptable in the teaching profession (Silverstein and Picano, 1993; Rofes, 2000), thus creates new exclusions with borders being renegotiated rather than questioned or undermined (DePalma and Atkinson, 2009b; Youdell, 2011).

This sub-section has established key debates concerning how heteronormativity could be challenged in primary schools. These understandings will be drawn on in Chapter 4 when I examine identity politics as the approach favoured in UK government legislation and guidance. They will also be drawn on in Chapter 5 when I analyse schemes of work, lesson plans and associated activities.

The next sub-section unpacks a key discourse that is used to prompt school-based intervention: 'homophobic bullying'.

2.3.2b Homophobic bullying: a harm that can be spoken of

A genealogy of bullying as a discourse [would] locate its ascendancy within the broader developments of neoliberal individualistic governance, the increasing dominance of psy-discourses and, of particular relevance here, a reinscription of the political as primarily private

Monk, 2011: 196

The heading for this section takes inspiration from Monk's (2011) provocative paper 'Challenging homophobic bullying in schools: the politics of progress'. While Monk's (1998; 2001; 2011) oeuvre is brought into focus here in order to provide an overarching structure for this sub-section on homophobic bullying as a 'progressive' and 'common-sense' discourse that has 'enabled [homophobic bullying] to become a harm that can be spoken of' (Monk, 2011: 181) it should not be seen in isolation. Rather, it contributes to a larger body of work that critically examines the 'conditions of possibility' (Foucault, 1974) that homophobic bullying simultaneously opens up and closes down (Airton, 2009; DePalma and Atkinson, 2009c; DePalma and Jennett, 2010; Ringrose, 2008; Ringrose and Renold, 2010; Quinlivan, 2002; 2006; also see Johnson and Vanderbeck, 2014). 'Homophobic bullying', as a conceptual and applied term, is increasingly accepted at face-value not only by the third sector and public sector but within academia, whether strategic or otherwise. It is therefore important to unpack this discourse to appreciate its limitations and potential to shape a gender and sexualities education for primary schools.

Rivers (1997; 1999; 2001; 2004; 2011) is well-known for utilising 'homophobic bullying' as a conceptual device in retrospective research about UK secondary school experiences of lesbian, gay and bisexual youth (also see Rivers and Noret, 2008). In River's oeuvre young adults recount secondary school experiences through a discourse of homophobic bullying which is made available to them. River's strategically uses this discourse to expose the *individualised* harm of homophobia, even though this perpetuates a 'victim-perpetrator' binary¹⁴ (Ringrose, 2008; Ringrose and Renold, 2010; Monk, 2011). However, this brings *traumatic* experiences of

¹⁴ Ringrose and Renold (2010) point to how individualised accounts - where homophobic bullies are ultimately responsible for homophobic bullying - overlook *structural* forms of homophobia. Focusing on an individual perpetrator shifts the focus away from institutional and more complex structural understandings, yet these are arguably more powerful since they are implicit and subtle.

homophobic bullying to light; traumatic experiences which ensure that action is taken to prevent homophobic bullying (see Rivers, 2001 in particular). Stonewall¹⁵ latch on to this statistical research and perpetuate a discourse of homophobic bullying themselves by commissioning similar research that allows them to claim that homophobic bullying (broadly defined) is 'endemic in schools' since 65-98 per cent of pupils experience it at one time or another (see Stonewall, 2007: 3). While scholars rightly question the limitations of construing homophobia in this way (i.e. DePalma and Atkinson, 2009c; DePalma and Jennett, 2010; Ringrose, 2008; Ringrose and Renold, 2010), for some it is a necessary evil (see Rivers, 2011).

In the next part I will evaluate the merits of Rivers' approach *in its own right* before moving on to consider critiques. I do this because statistical evidence for homophobic bullying has become a crucial catalyst for school-based intervention, so it is important to recognise the value of this literature.

Homophobic bullying rhetoric and associated statistics are present in any public discussion of children, sexuality and schooling - whether at policy level (Chapter 4) or in schools (often used as justification for intervention – Chapter 5). Ian Rivers is one of several scholars working in this field (also see Douglas *et al.*, 1999; Warwick *et al.*, 2001; Birkett *et al.*, 2009), but his research encapsulates scholarship in this field and provides an historical overview of the development of this field. One of Rivers' key contributions was to illustrate how homophobic bullying in UK secondary schools has been on an upward trajectory since the early 1980s. Rivers and Noret (2008) originally showed this by comparing 2003-2006 data on homophobic bullying with earlier data sets about homophobic bullying (i.e. Warren, 1984; Ellis and High, 2004). Rivers and Noret brought UK research into the secondary school experiences of lesbian, gay and bisexual youth up-to-date and showed how homophobic bullying had intensified (which Rivers (2011) continues to demonstrate in more recent work).

In the context of increasing homophobic bullying in UK secondary schools, Rivers has shown how pupils are bullied because of their actual or *perceived* sexual orientation. This lasts for an average of 5 years, with name-calling the most frequent form of bullying for both sexes. This is closely followed by 'being ridiculed in front of others', 'hit or kicked by bullies' and 'being subjected to intimidating rumours', with such incidents occurring at least once a week, if not several times per week (Rivers, 2001; Rivers and Noret, 2008, Rivers, 2011). Homophobic bullying was found to be most frequent in the playground, followed by the classroom, corridors, changing rooms and 'on way home/ on school bus' (*ibid*). But perhaps the most

¹⁵ Stonewall is a lesbian, gay and bisexual charity that lobbies for 'gay rights' and 'equality'. In 2005 it launched an 'Education For All' campaign to prevent and tackle homophobia and homophobic bullying in UK schools and colleges (see 4.3).

striking aspect of this research, at least as far as policy makers and schools are concerned, is data on absenteeism. This data is key to this research and in his most recent work Rivers (2011) reports that roughly a fifth of those surveyed (190) either feigned illness or played truant *at least* once a week in order to avoid school.

As alluded to earlier, River's oeuvre focuses on the retrospective experiences of lesbian, gay and bisexual adults who re-examine their time at UK secondary schools in light of a homophobic bullying discourse. However, the implication of such research is not confined to this context. Rather, it highlights how secondary school outcomes are as a result of the avoidance of the issue in primary education (DePalma and Atkinson, 2009a; DePalma and Jennett, 2010; Epstein and Johnson, 1998). Indeed, Rivers (2011) uses his research to forward Mac an Ghail's (1994) thesis of facilitating change in behaviour through transforming the philosophy/ ethos of the educational system, which is something DePalma and Jennett (2010) continue to argue for. Thus, while it is important to critically examine the 'conditions of possibility' (Foucault, 1974) that homophobic bullying simultaneously opens up and closes down (Monk, 2011) (which I'll explore in the next section) it is important to recognise how significant Rivers (1997; 1999; 2001; 2004; 2011) statistical research has been in putting homophobic bullying on the school agenda.

Before going any further it is worth reiterating a point made by Monk (2011: 183) in relation to critical analysis and examining homophobic bullying as a discourse:

It is important to make clear from the outset that asking critical questions about homophobic bullying, placing it in a broader political and cultural context, and thinking about it primarily as a discourse as opposed to simply a harm, does not suggest that the real-life experiences of young people are being taken in any way less seriously. Nor is it to suggest that demands for intervention and both national and local action are necessarily misguided. On the contrary, enquiring into the speakability of homophobic bullying raises the question as to what happens and what is enabled when this discourse becomes the key plank for challenging homophobia in schools.

While the speakability of homophobic bullying allows homophobia to become a mainstream concern Monk (2011) is right to be troubled by a lack of critical engagement with this discourse. Monk's main concerns with a supposedly 'progressive' politics of homophobic bullying can be grouped into four strands. The first complements arguments made in relation to geographies of 'the family' (see 2.4) and could be referred to as geographies of homophobic bullying. As Monk warns, the speakability of concern is contingent on its location, such as

'home' or 'school', so while schools may explore the issue, the more significant impact of parental homophobia on children remains unaddressed (see Johnson and Valentine, 1995; Valentine, 1993b; Valentine *et al.*, 2003). Monk's second concern relates to 'homophobic language' and not taking into account the *contextual* use of the word 'gay', thereby viewing its use as necessarily derogatory (i.e. Rivers, 2001; Matthews, 2001; Stonewall, 2007; Winterman, 2008). Monk notes how the term is often contained, controlled or banned in schools, but this fails to acknowledge how the word 'gay' has different contextualised meanings - and so attempts to curtail 'gay' in schools may have contradictory effects¹⁶ (also see McCormack, 2012). The third concern is selective statistical representation (i.e. Rivers, 2011; Stonewall, 2007). Monk argues that exaggerated statistics based on wide definitions of 'homophobic bullying' appeals to broader fears of schools as dangerous spaces (also see Hunter, 1996). According to Monk, the homophobic bullying agenda utilises the dominant image of the child as innocent victim which renders silent other concerns, most notably sex. In the context of HIV awareness, speaking of safer sex would require speaking of sexual agency, pleasure and choice, but this, Monk warns, would rub up against idealised notions of the sexually innocent child (see 2.2.2 and 2.3.1). This leads onto Monk's final concern: 'the tragic gay' – double victimhood. As Monk explains, accounts of the effects of homophobic bullying align the image of the lesbian and gay child with dominant 1950s' representations of the homosexual in popular discourses: depressed, lonely, isolated, and suicidal (Rebellato, 1999; Cook, 2007). This portrayal of the gay victim provides an image of the homosexual as a *reassuringly* distinct and tragic 'other' from the heterosexual, which enables religious groups to distinguish between protecting the sinner and condemning the sin. For Monk, conservative and religious groups' recognition of homophobic bullying reflects a highly limited shift in thinking with 'at risk' gay and lesbian youth positioned within a deviant model which infers that they 'need help' (see also Quinlivan, 2002).

In summary, Monk exposes how the 'homophobic bullying' agenda is not solely concerned with harms inflicted on children but with 'broader political strategies and future-focused discourses of innocent and universal childhood' (2011: 189; see 2.2.2). As Monk argues, 'the developmental question now is not 'what makes someone homosexual?', but instead, 'what makes someone behave in a way that fails to confirm to heteronormative behaviour' (2011: 191). Harwood (2004) refers to this as 'post-pathological' intelligibility of homosexuality where the impact of homophobic bullying is measured against assessments of 'psychopathology in adulthood' (i.e. inability to form 'stable' adult relationships), as encapsulated in Rivers and

¹⁶Butler (1997b) has emphasised the importance of the context-specific meaning of speech when evaluating censorship as attempts to censor necessarily propagate the very language it seeks to forbid.

Noret's (2008) work. Here Monk makes visible political dynamics underpinning the homophobic bullying agenda, masked, as they are, by developmentalist modes of thinking and investment in the child as future. If homophobic bullying is made speakable through discourses of heteronormativity, then those outcomes become the form through which its success is evaluated. Queer theorists talk about this in terms of the conditions of inclusion within civil society (Bell and Binnie, 2000; see 2.3.5).

This sub-section acknowledged how homophobic bullying has been strategically deployed to make homophobia *a harm that can be spoken of*. However, it also explored critiques of this supposedly 'progressive' and 'common-sense' discourse by critically examining the 'conditions of possibility' (Foucault, 1974) that homophobic bullying simultaneously opens up and closes down. These understandings are drawn on throughout this thesis, particularly in Chapters 4 and 5 where I analyse how this discourse influences UK government legislation and guidance, and is used by primary schools to rationalise the implementation of gender and sexuality education.

The final sub-section of section 2.3A reviews studies that have shown how children recuperate heteronormativity when presented with anti-sexist stories which were meant to challenge heteronormativity.

2.3.3 Recuperating heteronormativity

Anti-sexist teaching practices aim to promote gender equity by eliminating gender stereotypes, gender bias, and gender discrimination within schools (Carelli, 1988 in Blaise, 2005a). Yet for all these efforts society is still highly gendered, and gender inequalities continue to exist in classrooms, schools, the workplace, and society (Blaise, 2005b). As Epstein explains, 'children are active in the making of their own meanings [therefore] anti-sexist *intentions* do not always succeed, in part because of the very complexity of social relations and in part because of the inherent difficulty of challenging dominant discourses' (1995: 57). According to Epstein, the point of Judith Butler's (1990) argument about understanding gender and, by inference, children's attachment to stereotypical gendered difference through the 'heterosexual matrix' (see 2.1.3), is that limits of what is permissible for each gender are framed within the context of 'compulsory heterosexuality' (Rich, 1980). It is clear, for example, that 'the meanings of being both a 'good girl' and of being a 'real boy' are constituted within a silent heterosexuality, which is made all the more powerful by its very silence' (Epstein, 1995: 60).

Walkerdine (1984) argued that in order to understand the production of girls as subjects (and the production of alternatives) we must take account of desire and fantasy. It is no good resorting to a rationalist account which consists simply of changing images and attitudes. If new content in whatever form does not map on to the crucial issues around desire, Walkerdine argued, then we should not be surprised if it fails as an intervention. Practices which put forward the possibility of alternative literature and images for girls, create a set of conflicts and contradictions which often go unrecognised and may in fact make the struggle more difficult (also see Ringrose, 2008). For example, Walkerdine notes how it is quite common in alternative/feminist literature to display women and girls engaged in activities traditionally undertaken by men. However, Walkerdine claims that such a simple image or appropriation is more problematic and complex than it might first appear. What we need to be aware of is how such texts operate at the level of fantasy. For some girls they might well provide the vehicle for an alternative vision, while for others they might, by stressing the one as alternative to the other, fuel a resistance *to* the feminist alternative (see Walkerdine, 1984).

Walkerdine's (1984) work has been taken up by Bronwyn Davies (1989a; 1993) who further explored how children made sense of anti-sexist stories based on how they adopt gendered positions in school. In later work Davies (2004) expands upon the concept of 'category-maintenance work' which emerged in relation to how children take up gendered positions in school. This later work acknowledges 'border-work' that children do in constructing their own identities, which involves the process of *abjection* (see 2.1.3). This psychoanalytical term proves to be particularly useful when theorising boys' rejection of femininity in order to maintain a coherent masculine self. Davies used such insights to provide explanations for why children commonly 'rescued' these stories from feminist interpretations and would re-inscribe them in sexist discourse. She argued that it is not enough to expose pupils to stories without guidance in deconstructive skills (Davies, 1993; 2004). Epstein (1995) extends this argument in relation to play. She claims that doing *is* learning:

When children play in gendered ways they are actively creating themselves as gendered, learning to interpret and understand the world in the same moment as they are playing and indeed changing their immediate world by their play

Epstein, 1995: 63

In practice, children will not simply accept alternative meanings offered to them by feminist or anti-racist teachers – although these may well provide alternative discourses for those seeking them (also see Troyna and Hatcher 1992). Children need to be able to act on the world in

alternative ways in order to be able to experience it differently (Epstein, 1995). Simple attempts to tell children to be more anti-sexist or to re-socialise them into anti-sexism are doomed to failure. What is needed, according to Epstein, is the introduction of activities and organisation of the classroom so that alternative and oppositional discourses and discursive practices are available to children (see Kraftl, 2013). Thus, Epstein argues for creating and providing classroom materials and curriculum content which necessitate activities which undermine heterosexist gendered stereotypes *and* which also allow the children to remain comfortable in their play with their current (but developing) understandings of what it might mean to be a boy or a girl.

These studies show why children may feel compelled to recuperate heteronormativity when presented with feminist tales. They suggest that children need to be able to act on the world in alternative ways to experience it differently. As Epstein (1995) remarks, this requires the introduction of activities and organisation of the classroom so that alternative and oppositional discourses and discursive practices are available to children. These understandings inform arguments throughout Chapter 6, particularly in 6.2 and Part Two where I investigate how pupils respond to gender and sexualities education in the context of everyday school life.

The next section builds on section 2.3A *Sexualities and schooling* by exploring how geographers have engaged with sexuality and queer theory.

2.3B GEOGRAPHIES OF SEXUALITIES AND QUEER GEOGRAPHIES

This section explores the emergence and development of the sub-fields: geographies of sexualities and queer geographies. Once I have outlined early geographical engagements with sexuality (2.3.4) I consider the theoretical and political impact of queer theory within geographies of sexuality, which has led to the formation of the splintered sub-field: *queer geographies* (2.3.5). I use the term splintered here to highlight how geographies of sexualities has not simply morphed into queer geographies, although queer theorisations have had an enormous influence on geographical scholarship. Thus, 'moving on' from geographies of sexualities to queer geographies does not imply that the latter has replaced the former. However, the latter more usefully informs the present study. Hence, I focus more on queer geographies, particularly its adoption and utilisation of Judith Butler's (1990; 1993; 1997a) ideas, although I conclude with critiques of this scholarship (2.3.6). This stresses the importance of acknowledging 'family' (broadly defined) as a way of moving forward (Valentine,

2008a; 1999a; 1997a; Valentine and Hughes, 2011; Valentine and Skelton, 2003; Valentine *et al.*, 2003).

2.3.4 From geographies of the gay 'ghetto' to socio-sexual spatialities

Sexuality first appeared on the geographical agenda when McNee (1984) claimed that the discipline was a 'heterosexist institution'. This observation prompted debate over the relationship between sexualities, space and place with the first studies within the emerging field of geographies of sexuality focusing on gay residential and commercial concentration in American inner-cities and the political power of such clusters for civil rights movements (see Castells, 1983; Lauria and Knopp, 1985; Knopp, 1987; 1990). British urban geographers and sociologists soon followed suit, although they tended to comment on uneven geographies of gay spatialities until recognisable urban enclaves emerged in British cities like Manchester, Brighton and London (see Bell and Binnie, 2000; Quilley, 1997; Whittle, 1994). The consideration of lesbian spatialities was an obvious, yet acknowledged (Quilley, 1995), absence in this early work - although geographers eventually moved beyond one-dimensional notions of territoriality (Podmore, 2001; Peace, 2001) to explore informal neighbourhood networks and lesbian appropriation of heterosexual spaces (e.g. Rothenburg, 1995; Valentine, 1993a; Winchester and White, 1988).

As Browne *et al* (2009) illustrate, lesbian geographies complicated simplistic dualities of 'gay-straight' space by developing notions of time-space relations. This broadened the remit of geographies of sexuality beyond the inner city to include the spaces of home, work and street (Johnston and Valentine, 1995; McDowell and Court, 1994; Valentine, 1993b; 1993c), and the rural (Bell and Holliday, 2000; Kramer, 1995; Phillips *et al.*, 2000). As Podmore (2001) explains, lesbians make themselves visible (to each other) in very different ways to gay men, so to explore these practices geographers increasingly turned to the domestic sphere (see Jay, 1997; Valentine, 1993c). This manoeuvre highlighted how previous scholarship had been built on an artificial separation of public and private space, which masked the plurality of different identities (see Valentine, 1993b). For Podmore (2001) and Peace (2001), a lesbian geographies-inspired approach facilitated a better understanding of lesbian space and also revealed the everyday geographies of other queers, like those of colour or gay men beyond the commercial gay 'scene' (see Browne *et al*, 2009).

2.3.5 Towards queer geographies

Despite emerging in a US context 'queer theory' was first embraced by British geographers in accord with a 'cultural politics of resistance' (see Bell *et al.*, 1994; Bell and Valentine, 1995; Binnie, 1997). As Binnie (1997) recognised, the work of Knopp, Valentine and others successfully added lesbian and gay concerns to the pot of geographical analysis, but there was still a considerable amount of 'stirring' needed in order to challenge the heteronormativity of space and the many ways in which everyday spaces reinforce the invisibility, marginalisation and social oppression of queer folk (see Browne *et al.*, 2009). The phrase 'queer folk' is used here not as an umbrella term for lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans but to recognise the multiplicity of 'dissident sexualities' that might otherwise be categorised as 'non-heterosexual' (see Weeks *et al.*, 2001). 'Queer theory' questions the supposedly stable relationship between sex, gender, sexual desire and sexual practice (see 2.1.3), so its more recent use by queer geographers is regarded as a reaction to earlier 'uncritical' notions of lesbian and gay identity found in geographies of sexualities scholarship (see Browne *et al.*, 2009; Hemmings, 2002; Valentine and Binnie, 1999). The hallmark of *queer geographies* is therefore socio-sexual spatialities *after* the problematization of the 'heterosexual-homosexual' binary (Edwards, 1998).

As Browne *et al.* (2009) note, early queer geographies initiated a discussion about how sexed and gendered performances *produce space* and, conversely, how spatial formations *shape* how sexual dissidents present and perform their sexualities in public spaces (e.g. Bell, 1994; 1995; Brown, 2000; Binnie, 1995; 1997; Bell and Binnie, 1998; 2000; Valentine, 2002). The influence of Judith Butler (1990; 1993; 1997) is clear, particularly with regards to notions of performance and performativity – concepts that have since been developed by geographers more generally when illustrating how space is actively constituted through actions that take place (e.g. Gregson and Rose, 2000; Thomas, 2011). More specifically, the development of queer geographies used such insights to expose how the everyday repetition of heterosexual relations becomes normalised so that quotidian space is not assumed to be sexual at all¹⁷ (Bell *et al.*, 1994; Binnie, 1997; Thomas, 2004). Geographers have thus explored how spaces come to be hierarchically sexualised, but also how racialised, classed and other forms of social hierarchies come to structure seemingly unitary categories of sexuality such as 'gay' or 'lesbian' (Nast, 2002; Haritaworn, 2009).

¹⁷ For example, Thomas (2004) brings performativity, spatiality and sexuality together through exploring the routine, everyday practices of teen girls. In doing so Thomas shows how mundane practices create and reproduce the identities, subjects and *spaces* of heterosexuality.

Of all the studies and bodies of work cited above two stand out as deserving more specific attention for the contribution they make to queer geographies and to this thesis. The first is Gregson and Rose's (2000) seminal paper 'Taking Butler elsewhere: performativities, spatialities and subjectivities'. Here Gregson and Rose argue that a notion of performance is crucial for a critical human geography concerned with understanding the construction of social identity, social difference, and social power relations, and the way space might articulate all of these. For Gregson and Rose, space needs to be thought of as performative – as brought into being through performances and as a performative articulation of power. Further, more needs to be made of the complexity, instability and uncertainty of performances/ performed spaces and the power which infuses them. For slippage is always possible with the iterative performances of subject positions - and that this is no different for the spaces produced through them. As such, it is not only social actors that are produced by power but the spaces in which they perform.

Gregson and Rose (2000) use these understandings to argue that performances do not take place in already existing locations: the City, the bank, the franchise restaurant, the straight street - contra many geographical accounts (e.g. Crang, 1994; McDowell and Court, 1994; McDowell, 1995; Probyn, 1995). According to Gregson and Rose 'these 'stages' do not pre-exist their performances, waiting in some sense to be mapped out by performances; rather, specific performances bring these spaces into being' (2000: 441). Since these performances are themselves articulations of power, of particular subject positions, Gregson and Rose conclude that 'we need to think of spaces too as performative of power relations' (*ibid*). Thus, for Gregson and Rose, Butler's (1990; 1993) radical antifoundationalism¹⁸ provides a key tool for denaturalising social categories and for destabilising dominant forms of social reproduction.

The second key intervention is a body of work most commonly associated with Phil Hubbard (1998; 1999; 2000; 2002; 2009): *geographies of heterosexuality*. As Browne *et al.* (2009) note, while feminist geographies have a long history of examining how patriarchal social relations reinforce and are reinforced by heterosexist relations with the home, the work-place (McDowell, 1997; Gregson and Lowe, 1994; WGSG, 1997; Domosh and Seager, 2001) and elsewhere, geographers of sexuality took time to address the spatial production of heterosexual identities and desires (Nast, 1998; Hubbard, 2000; Thomas, 2004). Yet, as Browne *et al.* (2009) suggest, geographies of heterosexuality should have always been an intrinsic part of geographies of sexualities and especially queer geographies in light of the gauntlet that Butler (1990; 1993) throws down, namely to blur and transcend the 'gay-straight' binary.

¹⁸ A key (yet contested) political paradigm shift in the *herstory* of feminist theorising whereby identities were understood not to pre-exist their performance (see 2.1.3).

By exposing the contextually specific heterogeneity of different forms of heterosexuality, exposing how heterosexual space is variously sexualised and desexualised by and for different people at specific times, and exposing how heterosexuals are caught up in various modes of self-production and self-surveillance (Brown, 2000; Howell, 2000; 2004; Hubbard, 1998; 1999; 2000; 2002; Hubbard and Saunders, 2003) geographies of heterosexuality have made a valuable contribution to geographical studies of sexualities. Hubbard (2009) has pushed this further by using queer theory to deconstruct normative heterosexuality to illustrate how some heterosexualities are 'queerer' (or more dissident) than others - and themselves challenge established heteronormative power relations. Despite the emergence of such work Browne *et al.* (2009) warn that much work still needs to be done to understand the mundane processes by which everyday expressions of heterosexuality are (re)produced in social space. After all, the construction of heterosexuality is central to the construction of all forms of alterity and difference (Blum and Nast, 1996).

These key interventions foreground performative spatialities and complement literature on formal curricula and hidden geographies of the "third" curriculum introduced in 2.2.5. Both of these bodies of work inform arguments throughout Chapter 6 and provide an overarching structure for 'spatializing subjectivity' (Pile, 2008) when distinguishing between children's performances of 'acceptance' in 'formal' school space (e.g. classroom and assembly hall) and their everyday heteronormative performances of gender and sexuality in 'informal' school space (e.g. playground, corridors and toilets).

The next part of this sub-section reviews contemporary queer critical geographies.

Queer geographers have more recently analysed the 'achievements' of civil rights for some lesbians and gay men and have suggested that with these rights come responsibilities. But some argue that rights are only granted on the condition that lesbians and gay men conform to a white, middle class normative model of a monogamous, long-term, consumerist relationship (Browne *et al.*, 2009; Bell and Binnie, 2000; Binnie, 2004; Bell, 1991). As Bell and Binnie (2000) explain in relation to sexual citizenship, the price paid for such rights is the reproduction of these norms. Hence, while some sexual dissidents 'benefit' from these rights and are 'included', others – whose sexual lives do not conform – are delegitimised (also see Browne, 2006; Johnson and Vanderbeck, 2014). As such, most recent critical scholarship is concerned with the inherent contradictions and complexities of being both 'normal' and 'dissident' (Browne, 2006; Brown, 2009; Duggan, 2002; Elder, 1999; Bell, 1991). According to these scholars, when previously marginalised sexualities become socially, culturally and politically

'accepted' and 'celebrated' we need to explore how 'new' hegemonies, hierarchies and elites are established and recreated.

'Homonormativity' (Stryker, 2008) is often cited to encompass this sense of some white, middle class gay men achieving a certain degree of 'liberation' because of their inclusion into more mainstream capitalist social relations (whilst many working class gays and queers of colour are still denied access to these privileges (Nast, 2002; Browne, 2004a)). In addition to contesting notions of assimilation and 'conservative social projects' for the (re)integration of diverse sexualities, critical queer geographers have engaged with queer theorisations of becoming by exploring how bodies come to take shape and the importance of emotions and affects in these constitutions (Browne, 2004a; Knopp, 2004; 2009; Lim, 2009). There has also been a recent move towards *trans geographies*, as encapsulated in a 2010 Special Issue of *Gender, Place and Culture* (see Browne *et al.*, 2010). As Browne *et al.* (2010) argue, while feminist and gender geographies have deconstructed masculinities and problematized the 'dominant' framing of the man/woman, male/female and masculine/feminine gendered roles and relationships (McDowell, 1999; McDowell and Sharp, 1997; WGSG, 1997; 2004) geographers have largely neglected the lives and experiences of people, including trans people, that trouble and call into question these hegemonic, normative binaries. According to Browne *et al.* (2010), such omissions mean that assumptions predicated on a straightforward gender mapping onto biological sex organs and gender roles, and relations grounded in male/female and man/woman separations, are often uncritically reproduced. As such, articles within the special issue push for new and innovative understandings of the spatializing of gender and the creation of gender through socio-spatial relations, and of the challenges and resistances trans people experience in the spaces and places they use, create and reject (see Nash, 2010 in particular).

These more recent *Queer critical geographies* complement sociological literature on *Challenging heteronormativity in elementary/ primary schools* (2.3.2a) by questioning 'gains' made through identity politics and formal equality. I use these understandings throughout Chapter 4 when analysing the formation of gender and sexuality education.

In this final sub-section I conclude with critiques of this scholarship. This stresses the importance of acknowledging 'family' (broadly defined) as a way of moving forward.

2.3.6 Critiques of geographies of sexualities/ queer geographies: towards geographies of the 'family'?

Despite being heavily involved in the development of geographies of sexualities and queer geographies as sub-disciplinary fields, Valentine (2008a; 1999a; 1997a) along with others (Valentine and Hughes, 2011; Valentine and Skelton, 2003; Valentine *et al.*, 2003) has repeatedly challenged the tendency to focus on either the individual experiences of lesbians' and gay men's lives or on 'community' experiences. However, little attention has been paid to either sexual relationships or to the way that lesbians' and gay men's lives (as individuals and in partnerships) are embedded into 'families' of origin (birth families) and 'families of choice' ('family' relationships that people create for themselves) (see Weston, 1991; Weeks *et al.*, 2001). As Valentine (2008a) acknowledged, talk of 'family' may at first appear to be at odds with queer critical geographies (see 2.3.5), especially queer critiques of hetero-patriarchal life (e.g. Bell, 1991; Rofes, 1997; 2000). Indeed, in the context of individualisation, detraditionalisation and increased self-reflectivity where profound changing are occurring in relationships (Giddens, 1991; Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 1995) it may seem illogical to re-assert the centrality of family. However, as Valentine and others (Stacey, 1990; 1993; 2004; Goss, 1997; Weeks *et al.*, 2001) have stressed, 'family' - defined in the broadest sense - still remains a form of relationship that most people strive for and are still attached to. This is found even within the most unexpected places, like gay male cruising culture which Stacey (2004) argues yields social and familial consequences far more complex and contradictory than most critics seem to imagine. While the gay cruising arena of unencumbered, recreational sex certainly disrupts conventional nuclear family norms and practices, Stacey (2004) continues: like other 'families of choice' (Weston, 1991; Weeks *et al.*, 2001) and 'invincible communities' (Nardi, 1999) they also generate bonds of kinship and domesticity. As such, families - in the broadest sense - play a fundamental part in the intimate life of and connections between individuals (Silva and Smart, 1999; Weeks *et al.*, 2001; Valentine *et al.*, 2003). As Goss remarks:

The appropriation of the term *family* is not an assimilationist strategy of finding respectability in general society. *We are not degaying or delesbianizing ourselves by describing ourselves as family.* In fact, we are Queering the notion of family and creating families reflective of our life choices. Our expanded pluralist uses of family are politically destructive of the ethic of traditional family values.

Goss, 1997: 12

As Valentine *et al.* (2003) argue, despite the growth of individualistic values and different forms of living arrangements, people *still* remain committed to reciprocal care and support (financial, emotional and instrumental) of kin (see Brannen *et al.*, 2004; Finch and Mason, 1993). To illustrate their point Valentine, Skelton and Butler (2003) show how most people turn to significant others for support when faced with the uncertainties of the 'risk society' (Beck, 1992). While Valentine *et al.* (2003) focus on young people's experiences of 'coming out'¹⁹ with, and in, their 'families of origin', elsewhere Valentine and others have remarked upon the central role that 'families of choice' play in the lives of sexual dissidents - whether historically (as 'families of friends' during the notorious 1980s HIV/AIDS crisis) or more recently with new trends in same-sex parenting and civil partnerships. In all cases, Valentine and others (Weeks *et al.*, 2001; Berlant and Warner, 1998; Goss, 1997; Stacey, 1990; 1993; 2004) suggest that lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans folk have never been more confident about creating, and publicly proclaiming, their own affective structures and 'doings' of intimacy, which Valentine regards as providing a counterpoint to the focus on individuals within geographies of sexualities/ queer geographies literature (see Valentine, 2008a in particular).

These critiques of geographies of sexualities and queer geographies are the same as critiques of children's geographies (2.2.3) and geographies of education (2.2.6). All point towards engagements with 'families' and so it is to this literature that I now turn.

2.4 GEOGRAPHIES OF THE 'FAMILY'

This section explores geographical and sociological engagements with 'families'. I start by exploring 'the family' as an absent presence within geography (2.4.1). Following Valentine (2008a), this first part links geographies of sexualities/ queer geographies and children's geographies with sociological engagements with 'family' (understood in the broadest sense) in order to show how these seemingly disparate sub-fields share connections. As Valentine (2008a: 2106) explains, 'all of these bodies of work are effectively studies of affective structures and intimate relations, albeit manifest in increasingly diverse and complex ways'. In recognising this, and bringing together these sub-fields, I hope to advance Valentine's (2008a) aspirations for a new geography of intimacy which would mark a 'private' turn within the discipline. Having provided this context I then consider geographical engagements with broader sociological scholarship on families. Here I outline key theories and ideas that 'family geographers' are currently grappling with. In 2.4.2a, 2.4.2b and 2.4.2c I take a closer look at

¹⁹ Valentines *et al.*'s (2003) study represents a rare engagement with young people in what has largely been an 'adultist' sub-field.

three influential bodies of work. The first explores Stacey's (1990; 1993; 2004) oeuvre, particularly the idea of 'postmodern families'. The second builds on this by examining the anthropological perspective of Gillis (1996), particularly the idea of 'imagined families' we live by. The third sub-section deals with Weeks (1977; 1990; 1991) and Weeks *et al.*'s (2001) thesis on 'families of choice'. The section concludes with *Emotional functioning of family homes: towards emotional geographies of intimacy* (2.4.3), which brings the discussion of 'families' back to geography.

2.4.1 The 'family': an absent presence within geography

It has been well documented that the 'family' has received relatively little attention from geographers despite how 'families' (broadly defined) are pivotal in everyday life (Valentine *et al.*, 2003; Valentine, 2008a; Holloway and Pimlott-Wilson, 2011; Seymour, 2011; Valentine and Hughes, 2011). As Valentine *et al.* (2003) note, there are two notable exceptions to this. First, the 'family' is given due attention in feminist research, including feminist geographies, and second children's geographies also addresses families (see 2.2.3). The former largely focused on the home as a domestic workplace, exploring themes like women's caring responsibilities for the young and elderly; the relationship between domestic spaces and wider geographies; and the way that family identities are embedded in a complex web of cultural politics at a range of scales from home to the region (e.g. England, 1996; Holloway, 1998; Aitken, 1998). Yet, despite engaging with the 'family' and geographies in/of the domestic sphere, Valentine *et al.* (2003) argue that both feminist and children's geographies have neglected broader concerns like parent's relationships with 'adult' children; relations between 'extended' family members; the dynamics of intergenerational relationships (although see Vanderbeck, 2007); the production of familial identities; and the emotional functioning of the space of the home. While Valentine and others (i.e. Vanderbeck, 2007; Valentine and Hughes, 2011; Seymour, 2011) have sought to address these broader concerns more work is needed, especially through joining up children's geographies; geographies of sexualities/ queer geographies; and geographies of the 'family' in exploring these broader concerns (Valentine, 2008a).

Of the broader concerns discussed above two in particular are key to this thesis in uniting children's geographies and geographies of sexualities/ queer geographies with geographies of the 'family'. The first is the production of familial identities and the second is the emotional functioning of the space of the home, both of which are interlinked. As Valentine *et al.* (2003) note, few consider how young people's transitions from childhood to adulthood are embedded in day-to-day family life, and to the emotional functioning (and geographies) of the space of the home. While Valentine *et al.* (2003) acknowledge that young people grow up in a

variety of family forms and may have experiences of living in more than one household, home(s) remain a key site where young people spend prolonged periods of time with a parent or parents, siblings, and possibly extended 'family members' (whether biological or otherwise). As Valentine *et al.* (2003) argue, it is within the often neglected space of the home where young people spend so much time that their understandings about maturity and morality are constructed by parent(s). Even when young people leave the family home, many of their individual biographies and *expectations* are still routed through these sites. As such, it is important to recognise how what goes on within family homes has consequences for young people's identities and social relations in other spaces (also see Valentine and Hughes, 2011; Seymour, 2011).

These understandings complement critiques of geographies of education (2.2.6), in particular where the importance of moving beyond school boundaries and engaging with spaces of the 'family' was established. This thesis aims to respond to these critiques by taking home spaces into account when spatializing children's gendered and sexual subjectivities in Chapter 6 (see 6.6 – *Beyond school gates: (re)situating children in familial contexts*).

Having provided this context I now consider geographical engagements with broader sociological scholarship on families. In this next part I outline key theories and ideas that 'family geographers' are currently grappling with.

It should be clear by now that 'family' is a problematic term as it tends to conceal a complex and diverse array of household forms, not least lone-parent households; cohabiting partners (with or without children) who are not legally married; queer family arrangements; part-time relationships; and reconstituted families (Stacey, 1990; Morgan, 1996; Weeks *et al.*, 2001). As Valentine (2008a) puts it, families are not homogenous or monolithic institutions but are formed through complex webs of differentiated relationships between individuals, which mean they are constituted in many different forms. While some commentators (most notably Popenoe, 1988; 1992) have claimed that the 'family' (narrowly regarded as conventional nuclear families) is in decline with the rise of individualisation, self-fulfilment, choice, rights and freedom, by contrast family sociologists, most notably Stacy (1990; 1993; 2004), have argued that the way people are 'doing' families is changing (also see Morgan, 1996; Weeks *et al.*, 2001). Although marriage rates may be declining, most people – Stacey argues – continue to live in partnerships, or at least aspire to these forms of relationships - so while they may not be legally bound, they are still together through choice (what Weeks *et al.* (2001) call 'families of choice').

Given these arguments, Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (2002) claim that recent changes in how people 'do' family does not necessarily mean that the conventional nuclear family (and associated values) are simply disappearing. Rather, it is losing its monopoly (also see Stacy, 1993; Gillis, 1996; Weeks *et al.*, 2001). So, while 'post families' (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2002) or 'postmodern families' (Stacey, 1990) may differ to conventional nuclear families, they are still characterised by their members commitment to intimacy, sharing resources, and maintaining responsibilities for each other (Finch and Mason, 1993; Silva and Smart, 1999; Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2002). As a result, despite individualisation, many of the risks involved in making the transition from dependent childhood to 'independent' adulthood are still mediated through families of one sort or another (Valentine, 2003; Valentine *et al.*, 2003; Valentine and Hughes, 2011). This is particularly the case when it comes to children's attachment to, and reliance on, families of origin, as Valentine *et al.*, 2003 have illustrated particularly well.

I now take a closer look at three influential bodies of work on 'families'. The first explores Stacey's (1990; 1993; 2004) oeuvre, particularly the idea of 'postmodern families'.

2.4.2a Modern and postmodern families: the sociological perspective

Nostalgia for an idealized fifties sitcom image of 'the family' has harmful effects on most contemporary children whose familial arrangements are increasingly diverse

Stacey, 1993: 545

Short of exhorting or coercing people to enter or remain in unequal, hostile marriages, family decline critics offer few social proposals to address children's pressing needs. Further stigmatizing the increasing numbers who live in 'nontraditional' families is surely no help [...] solvent, secure, publicly respected families provide better hope for a democratic future than do impoverished, distraught, stigmatized ones

Stacey, 1993: 47

Stacey (1990) charts the rise and fall of the 'modern nuclear family' which, for her, is not an institution but an ideological, symbolic construct that has a history and a politics. As Stacey has argued, nostalgic images of 'traditional' families rarely recall their instability or diversity - yet with hindsight one glimpses the structural fragility of the orthodox family system, particularly its premise of enduring voluntary commitment. According to Stacey, 'a romantic 'until death do us part' commitment volunteered by two young adults [...] was the vulnerable linchpin of

the modern family order [while] divorce ultimately [proved] to be its Achilles' heel' (1990: 9). As Stacey has shown, the gap between dominant cultural ideology and discordant behaviours was the cause of radical challenges to the modern 1950s family, with gay liberation and the legalization of abortion also posing challenges to the cultural bond between sexuality and procreation in the 1960s and 1970s. These developments coincided with a militant movement for the liberation of women in the same period. Ultimately, these shifts would also contribute to the opening up of the modern family and its associated values.

As Stacey (1990) illustrates, the demise of the modern nuclear family led to nostalgia for the modern family, and even for premodern patriarchal kinship patterns. This generated a backlash literature within feminism as well as elsewhere. Although the profamily movement failed to halt the disintegration of the modern family, Stacey reveals how it placed feminists and liberals on the defensive as it achieved major political gains. Meanwhile, the 'postmodern family' emerged out of the ashes of the modern family as people drew on a diverse, often incongruous array of cultural, political, economic, and ideological resources and fashioned these into new gender and kinship strategies to cope with postindustrial challenges, burdens, and opportunities. Stacey refers to the fruits of these diverse efforts as 'the postmodern family'. However, 'postmodern families' have provoked an uneasiness amongst profamily campaigners but also more generally, as it implies the end of - or radical transformation of - a familiar structure and the emergence of new, unknown social frameworks. As Stacey explains, 'we are living through a transitional and contested period of family history, a period *after* the modern family order, but before what we cannot foretell. *The* postmodern family is not a new model of family life, not the next stage in an orderly progression of family history, but the stage when belief in a logical progression of stages breaks down' (1990: 17). Rupturing evolutionary models of family life history and incorporating both experimental and nostalgic elements, 'the' post-modern family – Stacey concludes - lurches forward and backward into an uncertain future.

The second influential body of work builds on *Modern and postmodern families: the sociological perspective* by examining the anthropological perspective of Gillis (1996). In this next sub-section I focus on the idea of 'imagined families' we live *by*. This complements ideas introduced in this sub-section, which are used in 6.1 to shed light on children's responses to a scheme of work on 'Different Families' (see 5.3.2a).

2.4.2b *'Imagined families' we live by: the anthropological perspective*

We all have two families, one that we live *with* and another we live *by*. We would like the two to be the same, but they are not

Gillis, 1996: xv

It is through our imaginings – our images, myths, and rituals – that family takes on meaning. The way we live *by* our families is just as important as the way we live *with* them, even more so today than at any time in the past

Gillis, 1996: xvi

The families we live *with* can no longer be regarded as a private matter; they must be given the highest priority in our thinking about the public well-being

Gillis, 1996: 239

In the conclusion of *A World of Their Own Making: Myth, Ritual, and the Quest for Family Values* Gillis (1996) cites British sociologist Jan Bernardes (1985a; 1986b) who estimated that in 1985 there were already as many as two hundred different family arrangements that were considered legitimate in Europe and North America. Some see this diversification as a recent development, however, Gillis shows that variation has always been a part of Western family history. For Gillis, this makes the power that the notion of 'The Family' continues to exercise over the modern imagination even more astonishing. This idol of family life, Gillis continues, 'sustains our economy and dominates our politics, holding us hostage to the "culture wars" currently being waged in the name of family' (1996: 238). Thus, when self-appointed legislators of 'family values' (what Stacey, 1990 refers to as the antifeminist profamily movement) survey Western society, they see little but chaos and degeneration. The emotional appeal of this position, as both Gillis and Stacey (1990; 1993) have shown, is enormous - but it obscures the diversity of family forms, inflecting real pain on those who do not conform to a single, narrowly defined notion of family. As such, 'imagined families' we live *by* (the image of the relationships we aspire too) remain a powerful force in shaping how we live our lives even though this is little more than an ideological, symbolic construct (also see Stacey, 1990).

On the back of these arguments Gillis asserts that it is about time we abandoned the idol of 'The Family' and begin validating the great variety of families that people are actually living *by*. According to Gillis, in 1996 mainstream culture had yet to acknowledge the creativity we see in various family forms, and instead promote images of family and home that no longer bore

much relation to either reality or the imaginings of a large part of the population. As Gillis (1996: 239) proclaims, 'it is time to recognise the richness of our contemporary family cultures and to explore the possibilities that these open to all of us regardless of our class, race, or gender'. Further, 'we must strive toward new family cultures that will not unduly burden or privilege either sex or any age group, or ignore the creativity of any class or ethnic group'. In contrast to advocates of 'family values', Gillis insisted that we keep our family cultures diverse, fluid, and unresolved - open to the input of everyone who has a stake in those futures. This 'democratizing endeavour', Gillis concludes, should extend across families of all kinds: gay and lesbian as well as heterosexual. It should bring together ethnic and racial groups since 'we are all involved in the age-old quest for relations that are caring, supportive, and enduring' (1996: 240).

The third influential body of work, which is also drawn on in 6.1 to shed light on children's responses to a scheme of work on 'Different Families' (see 5.3.2a) is Weeks (1977; 1990; 1991) and Weeks *et al.*'s (2001) thesis on 'families of choice'. This will be reviewed in the next subsection.

2.4.2c From the 'crisis of the family' to families of choice and other life experiments

Weeks *et al.* (2001) note how the language of familialism is all pervasive in our culture and it is difficult to escape its entanglements. Even during its most militantly anti-family phase in the early 1970s, Weeks (1977; 1990) noted how the lesbian and gay activist movement used the familial terms 'sisters' and 'brothers' to affirm one another as signs of a political and emotional solidarity, even if these terms were derived from the American Civil Rights and British Labour movements (Weeks *et al.*, 2001). Nevertheless, it is highly ironic that as this initial usage disappeared, more explicit use of the language of family has emerged as 'a key element in contemporary non-heterosexual politics' (Weeks *et al.*, 2001: 16). Weeks, Heaphy and Donovan attempt to explain this by reflecting on a wider shift in family politics which I've already outlined (especially with reference to Stacey, 1990; 1993; 2004). Interestingly though, they note how 'early polemics of gay liberation were concerned not only to critique but to outline *alternatives* to the family, which was seen as an imprisoning and outmoded institution' (Weeks *et al.*, 2001: 17). As Week *et al.* (2001) note, this reflected a wider challenge to the hegemony of 'the family', which was expressed both in theoretical critiques and in counter-cultural challenges to the existing order. However, this rhetoric has almost completely disappeared since the 1970s - with family critics increasingly talking not of *replacing* the family but rather recognising *alternative families* (Weeks *et al.*, 2003; also see Weeks, 1991).

As Weeks *et al.* (2001) note, this manoeuvre signals an acknowledgement of the pluralisation of family forms as various types of families exist - differentiated by class, ethnicity, geography, and lifestyle choices. By this logic, why should same-sex families be ignored? For Weeks *et al.* (2001), the appropriation of the language of family by many non-heterosexuals should be seen as 'a battle over meaning, one important way in which the sexually marginal are struggling to assert the validity of their own way of life' (2001: 17). The fact that the usage became much more common in Britain after the condemnation of 'pretended family relationships' in Section 28 (Weeks, 1991) is significant for Weeks, Heaphy and Donovan, who regard this shift as a classic example of a 'reverse discourse'. As such, non-heterosexuals have found themselves part of a wider struggle over meaning and participate in, and reflect, a broader 'crisis' over family relationships (see Stacey; 1990; 1993; 2004; Gillis, 1996). This 'transformation of intimacy' (Giddens, 1992; 2013) 'beyond blood' (Wakeling and Bradstock, 1995) informed Weeks *et al.*'s (2001) argument that if families are indeed becoming more complex as a result of divorce, remarriage, recombination and step-parenting, then why would the chosen families of lesbians and gays (composed of lovers, ex-lovers and friends) be denied a voice? As Week *et al.* (2001) conclude, 'each of us, hetero or homo, has a stake in nurturing a diverse landscape of families' (in Sullivan, 1997: 134) – and of 'claiming as 'family' whatever our own arrangements are' (2001: 17).

Having outlined the three influential bodies of work on families I now conclude this section by recognising future research directions. I also bring the discussion of 'families' back to geography.

2.4.3 Emotional functioning of family homes: towards emotional geographies of intimacy

Valentine *et al.* (2003) make an excellent general point when they acknowledge how families serve as a buffer between the state and the individual in the UK. The range of support provided by families (from material and practical to emotional and moral), with their ill-defined sense of obligations, is one of the unremarkable characteristics of everyday domestic life (Finch and Mason, 1993). Young people – according to Valentine *et al.* (2003) – have a strong sense of obligation to their parents and are fearful of hurting them. While children no longer have much economic value within the household and are often a financial drain, they are valued more in personal and emotional terms (also see Valentine and Skelton, 2003; Valentine, 2008a). As a result, children are believed to increasingly anchor parent's identities (Valentine *et al.*, 2003; Valentine and Skelton, 2003; Valentine and Hughes, 2011), so while individualisation infers that young people have more choices about how to live their lives

ultimately parents are responsible for them reaching their full potential: educationally, emotionally, and aesthetically (Beck-Gernsheim, 1998).

Finch and Mason (1993) discuss how parental investment in children's futures is often accompanied by implicit expectations that this support will be repaid, though not necessarily in a direct way. Gouldner (1973) describes this diffuse sense of reciprocity as an 'all-purpose moral cement' that binds families together, and according to Finch and Mason (1993), it locks individuals into particular sets of relationships. Morgan (1996) adds to this - arguing that children give parents a foothold in the future and, as such, provide a bridge between individual time, life-course-time, and historical time. In light of these arguments Valentine *et al.* (2003) declare that children, as the 'public' face of families, represent one of the many ways that households are woven into wider structures and practices (also see Seymour, 2011). The flip side of the mutual constitution of parent-child identities, as Valentine *et al.* (2003) explain, is that parents can only blame themselves, and expect to be blamed by others, if a child does not 'turn out right'. This, according to Valentine, Skelton and Butler (2003), ends up 'spoiling' the whole family's identity with 'identity struggles' (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2002) breaking out between members within 'postmodern families' (Stacey, 1990) as individuals increasingly pursue divergent life projects (also see Finch and Mason, 1993).

Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (2002) discuss these issues in relation to tensions in the home due to women's increased economic independence. However, similar arguments could be made in relation to religion and sexuality. With regards to the former, Lees and Horwath (2009) argue that many young people see religion as contributing positively to family life, yet many studies emphasise the constraints that adherence to family expectations may create for individuals (Baumann, 1996; Hemming, 2011a; Hemming and Madge, 2011; Lewis, 2007; Sahin, 2005). Hopkins *et al.* (2011) look more closely at the strategies young people use to negotiate their religious identities with family members and while 'correspondence' - adopting similar, but not identical, positions to their parents - was one option several others were observed: conforming with parental religious expectations but privately questioning them ('compliance'); openly debating and negotiating the religious positions of family members ('challenge'); and adopting combative and contradictory stances to their parents ('conflict')²⁰. While young people may not necessarily adhere to their families' religious expectations there is, nevertheless, conflict and 'identity struggles' if young people disrupt family harmony. The same could be said for family expectations and image of heterosexuality (Valentine, 1993b; Valentine and Skelton, 2003; Valentine *et al.*, 2003; Valentine, 2008a).

²⁰ Hopkins *et al.* (2011) also note how some young people influence the religious beliefs and practices of their parents.

These understandings complement ideas introduced in 2.4.1 and will be drawn on in 6.6 when taking home spaces into account.

2.5 CHAPTER CONCLUSION

This chapter has established a theoretical framework for this thesis and provided a comprehensive review of existing literature relevant to the empirical chapters. In this conclusion I return to aspects of this literature that have methodological relevance in order to show theory and previous research influence the methodology. The first section (2.1) outlined how children's sex, gender and sexuality have been theorised in order to contextualise postmodern and poststructural theories which I draw on in this thesis. This acknowledged how notions of subjectification and identification emerged from criticisms of sex role socialisation with these more sophisticated understandings of subjecthood explored in relation to Butler's (1997a) refinement of Foucault. In the final part of this section I outlined feminist poststructuralism and queer theory, particularly Butler's (1990; 1993; 1997a) anti-foundational critique of identity. As I show in the next chapter, queer theorisations influence the methodological approach taken in this thesis.

Section 2.2 reviewed literature in children's geographies and geographies of education with the first part (2.2A) focusing on the notion of the 'sociological child' (James *et al.*, 1998). Recognising children as competent social actors has particular methodological relevance and will be revisited in the next chapter. However, as Gagen (2004b; 2010), Holt (2006) and Vanderbeck (2008) have suggested, children's agency should not be celebrated at the expense of an analysis of wider social structures as children's lives are also shaped by forces beyond their control. As I demonstrate in the next chapter, this perspective has influenced research design. The second part of this section (2.2B) reviewed literature on geographies of education, particularly formal curricula and hidden geographies of the "third" curriculum. Recognising the importance of the hidden geographies of the "third" curriculum - the lessons children learn about heteronormative gender and sexuality in 'informal' school space (i.e. corridors, toilets and the playground) – also has a significant influence on research design and will be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

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3.0 CHAPTER INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 2 I established my theoretical position and reviewed existing literature relevant to this thesis. In this chapter I want to demonstrate how this informs my methodological approach. First, I refine the research in light of the literature review by outlining objectives and research sites (3.1). This establishes the scope and parameters of the research. I then outline a multi-method, qualitative approach before considering epistemological and ontological implications for methods and methodologies (3.2). This establishes how my theoretical position influences my selection and use of research methods. The next section (3.3) continues

this discussion in relation to individual methods and methodologies. I then provide a detailed breakdown of how each method was implemented. In the final section (3.4) I reflect on the research process. This involves a critical examination of the research methodology, my positionality and the co-production of knowledge.

3.1 REFINING THE RESEARCH: OBJECTIVES AND RESEARCH SITES

A thorough review of existing literature allowed me to identify gaps and tensions in current debates and understandings of children, education and schools, and gender and sexuality. This helped me refine the focus of the research by knowing how I could build on and extend previous scholarship while underscoring the importance of thinking geographically. Thus, in conjunction with existing knowledge and personal experience the literature review allowed me to devise a coherent set of objectives which would guide the research and establish parameters. This ensured that the research was well-defined and would be feasible within the three year timeframe (Bryman, 2008). Suitable research sites could then be selected with due regard for the scope of the study.

The first sub-section (3.1.1) outlines the research objectives and provides a justification. In the second sub-section (3.1.2) I outline how research sites were selected and accessed.

3.1.1 Research objectives

The following objectives capture a multiscalar research design that examines national formation of gender and sexuality education and local implementation of gender and sexualities education in English primary schools. In order to extend previous policy research (DePalma and Atkinson, 2008a; 2009a; DePalma and Jennett, 2010; Elizabeth A *et al.*, 2010) I first set out to provide a comprehensive analysis of existing UK Government legislation and guidance pertaining to gender and sexual diversity as relevant to English primary schools. This critical examination deconstructs the policy context that the non-profit sector and English primary schools draw on to create gender and sexualities education. The next part of the research explores a largely fragmented process documented in the literature – how this agenda is operationalised in schools (see Chapter 5). In this research the roles of key actors within schools are examined, which provides insight into how gender and sexualities education becomes operational. The final part of the research responds to a lack of in-depth understanding of how schools integrate gender and sexuality education into the broader school curriculum and deliver this work as part of a ‘whole school’ cross-curricular approach. In particular, this research addresses an absent understanding of how children respond to school-

wide gender and sexualities education in the context of everyday school life (see Chapter 6), which makes an original contribution to existing literature.

My research objectives are as follows:

1. To examine existing UK government legislation, guidance and support for primary gender and sexuality education, and to understand how these initiatives are mobilised by the non-profit sector
2. To explore how social actors within specific English primary schools interpret national government policy, and to understand how gender and sexuality education is subsequently incorporated into the broader school curriculum and delivered in lessons
3. To investigate how pupils respond to gender and sexualities education in the context of everyday school life

These objectives identify two research sites: the non-profit sector and primary schools. In the next section I will discuss the rationale behind selecting one charity and two primary schools.

3.1.2 Selecting and accessing research sites

The first sub-section (3.1.2a) provides a rationale for selecting Stonewall – a prominent LGB non-profit/ third sector organisation with charitable status. In this sub-section I also outline how I accessed this research site. The second sub-section (3.1.2b) provides a rationale for selecting *Weirwold* and *Cutlers* primary schools (both pseudonyms). This sub-section also outlines how I accessed these sites.

3.1.2a Selecting and accessing Stonewall

Several non-profit/ third sector organisations promote gender and sexual diversity in English primary schools and these include Stonewall, *Schools Out*, *EACH* (Educational Action Challenging Homophobia), *Diversity Role Models*, *Out For Our Children* and *SexYOUality*. However, I decided to focus on Stonewall for a number of reasons. Firstly, Stonewall has a national remit which has allowed this charity to form strategic relationships with key national agencies, such as the Department for Education and Ofsted¹. This has allowed Stonewall to

¹ The Department for Education (DfE) is a department of the UK Government and Ofsted (Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills) is an education quango that reports to Parliament.

become the most influential non-profit/ third sector organisation when it comes to promoting gender and sexuality education in English primary schools. Secondly, unlike other non-profit/ third sector organisations Stonewall has an on-going involvement with schools, whether directly or through Local Authorities. This means that 'Stonewall schools' have sustained engagements with gender and sexualities education. Finally, Stonewall has an established *Primary School Champions* programme with distinct resources and schemes of work. This comprehensive programme provides sufficient material for analysis.

In addition to these qualities Stonewall also has a long history of campaigning for equalities legislation. For example, Stonewall lobbied for the Civil Partnership Act 2004 and more recently the Equality Act 2010. Stonewall has therefore helped shape the policy context which has subsequently informed gender and sexuality education. This makes Stonewall an ideal case study since it has influenced Government policy and gained Government support (see 4.3). Thus, focusing on Stonewall allows me to explore the reciprocal relationship between Government and the non-profit/ third sector. This and the above qualities allow me to address the first research objective.

Stonewall's central office is located in Waterloo in the London Borough of Lambeth. I needed access to this office to conduct interviews with Stonewall representatives as I knew it would be difficult to arrange these interviews elsewhere, due to time constraints (see McDowell, 1998). I also wanted to establish who was who and be introduced to those I wanted to speak to, which is more effective in person (*ibid*; also see Bryman, 2008). However, first I would need to identify a gatekeeper, which I managed to do at Stonewall's 2011 '*Education For All*' conference (Valentine, 2005). I explained the research and outlined what I required, and once they agreed to facilitate my visit I began drafting consent forms. One form was for the organisation, which the gatekeeper signed and the others were for interviewees (see Appendix A). I maintained regular contact with the gatekeeper and arranged to visit on 11th May and 12th June 2012.

3.1.2b Selecting and accessing Weirwold and Cutlers primary school

Weirwold and *Cutlers* primary schools (both pseudonyms²) were selected as research sites as both are considered to be leading exponents of Stonewall's 'Primary School Champions' programme, as the following statements testify. For the *Primary Education Officer* at Stonewall the schools are:

² I created these fictitious pseudonyms.

[F]ounding members of the School Champions programme and are pioneers in that kind of work [...] both of them piloted our posters for example and have been instrumental in taking this work forward and developing work

Interview with Stonewall's Primary Education Officer (12/06/2012)

While for the *Senior Education Officer* at Stonewall the schools are:

[L]ong time friends of Stonewall [and] some of the leading schools in doing this work [...] in terms of a spectrum they would be towards the progressive end

Interview with Stonewall's Senior Education Officer (11/05/2012)

Both these schools are therefore at the forefront of delivering gender and sexualities education and their sustained engagements with the *Primary School Champions* programme make them ideal research sites. It was always important to identify schools in more advanced stages of implementing gender and sexualities education as they would provide richer accounts than those at an earlier stage. My main concern was that there would not be enough substance for research if gender and sexualities education had just got underway at a school. Rather, I wanted to understand how such programmes had become embedded over time. I also wanted to speak to school governors, senior management, teachers and children about gender and sexualities education work, and observe a reasonable number of lessons, but this would have been difficult at a school that was just starting out. In contrast, *Weirwold* and *Cutlers* had incorporated gender and sexualities education throughout the school curriculum and it had a regular presence in events like Anti-bullying Week. This made my research feasible and productive. For instance, I knew in advance when gender and sexualities work would be happening so I could be in school during a concentrated period to observe many lessons throughout school.

As leading exponents of Stonewall's 'Primary School Champions' programme *Weirwold* and *Cutlers* are often held up by Stonewall as examples of 'good practice' schools. After all, they 'have been instrumental in taking this work forward and developing work' (Primary Education Officer at Stonewall, 12/06/2012). As such, Stonewall invites the schools' deputy head teachers to speak at their annual '*Education For All*' conference and at other education seminars throughout the year where they share good practice with other schools. This also informed my decision to select these schools since they are held up as model schools for others to follow. One of the schools now even provides a training course for staff at other

schools on how to prevent and challenge homophobic bullying. This is the only primary school in the country known to offer this.

The two schools have characteristics which set them apart from each other, as I outline in Chapter 5. This variability adds to the richness of the qualitative data generated across the two sites. Together the schools serve socially, economically and ethnically diverse communities (see sections 5.1.1 and 5.2.1). This was another important consideration when selecting schools as I wanted to account for a broad range of backgrounds when examining how children respond to the work. This and the above qualities allow me to adequately address the research objectives.

I approached the schools deputy head teachers at Stonewall's 2011 'Education For All' conference. Stonewall officially launched its *Primary School Champions* programme at this conference so both of the deputy head teachers were showcasing their schools' work in breakout sessions. I approached the deputy head teachers at the end of each session and both agreed to have me in school. I maintained regular contact with these gatekeepers after this and sent additional information to the schools, which outlined the research and what I required from them. I included an institutional consent form which was signed and returned before fieldwork commenced (see Appendix A). I then liaised with the deputy head teachers to identify dates for an initial visit once I gained access to the schools I was able to arrange subsequent visits (see 3.3.2b).

Now that I have refined the research I will outline the multi-method, qualitative approach adopted.

3.2 A MULTI-METHOD, QUALITATIVE APPROACH

This section provides an in-depth account of my theoretically-informed methodology. First, I outline a multi-method, qualitative approach (3.2.1). I then consider the epistemological/ontological position underpinning this methodology (3.2.2). This includes specific discussion of queer epistemology/ methodology and epistemological/ methodological stances in relation to qualitative research with children.

3.2.1 Ensuring rigor through a multi-method approach

To address the research objectives I took a multi-method, qualitative approach. This centred around the discourse analysis of documents, ethnography, semi-structured interviews and

focus groups (see 3.3). Combining qualitative methods achieves ‘crystallisation’³ (Richardson, 1994), which ensures that rigor is built into qualitative research with multiple techniques used for gathering and cross-examining data (Bradshaw and Stratford, 2010). Using different research methodologies ensures that findings can be reinforced or challenged from different data sources and this gives qualitative research credibility⁴ (Winchester and Rofe, 2010).

Credibility is one of four considerations when evaluating trustworthiness and is used alongside authenticity when assessing the quality of qualitative research (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). As Bryman notes, quantitative notions of reliability and validity are not appropriate criteria for evaluating qualitative research as these standards ‘presuppose that a single absolute account of social reality is feasible (2008: 377)’. Hence, trustworthiness and authenticity are taken as alternative criteria for assessing the quality of qualitative research (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). Transferability, dependability and conformability are the three other considerations when evaluating trustworthiness (Bryman, 2008). Transferability is concerned with whether findings ‘hold in some other context, or even in the same context at some other time’ (Lincoln and Guba, 1985: 316). In order to allow others to assess the transferability of findings qualitative researchers are encouraged to utilise Geertz’s (1973) notion of ‘thick description’. This entails providing rich accounts of the research context and the phenomena experienced (Bryman, 2008). I provide detailed accounts of the research sites in 5.1.1 and 5.2.1 but ‘thick’ description also entails justifying and explaining the methods selected: the process of identifying and selecting participants; setting out how the analysis was conducted; and how the data was interpreted and results reached.

Transferability overlaps with dependability. This involves taking an ‘auditing’ approach and keeping complete and accessible records of all phases of the research process (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). As Bryman explains, retaining original copies of transcripts and fieldwork notes allows ‘peers [to] act as auditors [and] establish how far proper procedures [have been] followed’ (2008: 378). This satisfies the criteria ‘confirmability’, since ‘auditors’ can check that personal values or theoretical inclinations have not manifestly swayed the conduct of research and findings deriving from it (*ibid*). To meet this criterion I kept complete and accessible records of all phases of the research process and present samples in Appendix B.

³ Postmodern writers like Richardson (1994) build on Denzin’s (1970) notion of ‘methodological triangulation’ by using the term ‘crystallisation’ as this implies that there are more than three sides to the world and that mixing methods can only produce a deeper and more complex view of the issue under investigation, rather than improve validity (Hemming, 2007).

⁴ Triangulation (see above) addresses positivist concerns with validity in qualitative research (Blaikie, 2000), although Guba and Lincoln (1994) replace the quantitative term validity with credibility.

Having outlined a multi-method, qualitative approach I will now consider epistemological and ontological implications for methods and methodologies.

3.2.2a Epistemological and ontological implications for methods and methodologies

[O]ntological, epistemological, methodological and methods-related considerations necessarily intersect, overlap and are engaged in mutual and contingent constitution

Browne and Nash, 2010: 9-10

Qualitative methodologies draw on interpretivism as an alternative to positivist epistemologies, which are otherwise associated with the adoption of a natural scientific model in quantitative research. Positivism is based on the premise that 'science must (and presumably can) be conducted in a way that is value free (that is, *objective*)' (Bryman, 2008: 13). This involves applying the methods of the natural sciences to the study of 'social reality' so as to attain an unbiased account of the universal 'Truth' about the social world. However, this epistemological standpoint is critiqued from poststructuralist/ post-modernist (Butler, 1990; Foucault, 1980; Sibley, 1995a) and feminist/ queer positions more specifically (Binnie, 1997; 2010; Browne and Nash, 2010; Laurie *et al.*, 1999; Rose, 1993; 1995; WGSG, 1997). Such critiques emphasise how positivist claims are in fact situated within a hegemonic ethnocentric, masculinist, adult-centric, hetero-normative narrative and so they expose the myth of objectivity as a totalising discourse which conceals knowledges 'other' than that disembodied Knowledge gained from 'scientific' studies by those who claim to be capable of acquiring a removed gaze of 'others' (Haraway, 1988).

By dislocating the subjectivity of research 'subjects', and denying researchers subject positions, positivism can mirror and reinforce unequal power relations between 'the same' and 'others' in society (Oliver, 1992). Thus, Young (1991) identifies 'objective' social science as imperialist as it denies 'other' knowledges, and subdues and appropriates 'other' voices, including those of children (Christensen and James, 2000). As Holt (2010) explains, positivist epistemologies tend to draw an artificial dichotomy between 'detached' social scientists and 'objects' of social science research by representing some groups as 'emerged in the body' and therefore unable to produce valid knowledge. Children have frequently been objectified and defined by their immature bodies as not-yet-subjects, and consequently constructed as 'objects' of scientific knowledge, incapable of achieving that detached universal subjectivity required to produce (or participate as equal partners in) objective social science (Alderson, 2000). These unequal

research relations help to reproduce and reinforce the marginalised position of children in society (Holt, 2010). As such, researchers examining 'new' social studies of childhood have argued that 'objective' research has an impoverished, adult-centric view of childhood, which fails to take account of children's own experiences (Christensen and James, 2000). I shall return to this point in the next section.

Interpretivism, as a contrasting epistemology, subsumes the views of those writers who have criticised the application of the scientific model for studying the social world (e.g. Binnie, 1997; Sibley, 1995a; Laurie *et al.*, 1999; Rose, 1995; WGS, 1997). They believe that because the subject matter of the social sciences is fundamentally different from the natural sciences, a different logic is required that allows social scientists to grasp the subjective meaning of social action. This logic is known as hermeneutics. Hermeneutics is less concerned with a positivist impulse to *explain* human behaviour and is more concerned with the interpretation of human action, and *understanding* human behaviour (Silverman, 2011). This approach engages with people's 'common-sense thinking' in order to interpret their actions and their social world from their point of view (Hughes, 1990). These interpretations are then interpreted by the researcher who is guided by concepts and theories, outlined in 2.1.3 and 2.1.4 (Bryman, 2008). Proponents of feminism and queer theory have more recently grappled with the idea of feminist and queer epistemologies (Binnie, 1997; 2010; Maynard, 1994; Stanley and Wise, 1990; 2002; Stanley, 2013), which have additional implications for methods and methodologies (Browne and Nash, 2010). I will return to this in the next section.

Ontology is concerned with whether social entities have a reality external to social actors or whether they are built up from the perceptions and actions of those actors (Silverman, 2011). The former ontological position is associated with objectivism. This views social phenomena as a tangible entity which has a reality of its own - hence it is possible to talk about an objective reality 'out there' (Bryman, 2008). Constructionism, on the other hand, understands social phenomena, meanings and categories to not only be produced through social interaction but in a constant state of revision (Silverman, 2011). 'Culture' is thus regarded as an emergent reality that is in a continuous state of construction and reconstruction, which highlights the active role of individuals in the social construction of social reality (Becker, 1982). Constructionism therefore encourages researchers to consider the ways in which social reality is 'an ongoing accomplishment of social actors rather than something external to them' (Bryman, 2008: 20). This ontological position also encourages researchers to reflect on how their own accounts of the social world are constructions and can therefore only be a specific version of social reality (Haraway, 1988; Rose, 1997). I shall return to this point in the final section (3.4).

The next sub-section (3.2.2a) focuses on epistemological and ontological implications for qualitative research with children.

3.2.2a Qualitative research with children: methodological considerations

As Darbyshire *et al.* (2005: 419) note, ‘researchers undertaking qualitative research with children immediately confront cultural, social, psychological and political perspectives that militate against taking children seriously’ as it has often been assumed that children are unsophisticated and ‘silly’ (Oakley, 1994a). These understandings stem from powerful, yet contested tenets of developmentalism (see 2.2.2) which maintain that children lack the capacity for abstract thinking otherwise associated with the ‘maturity’ of later adolescence and adulthood (Burman, 1994; Scott, 2000; Walkerdine, 1993). As such, children have not traditionally been regarded as ‘good research respondents’ (Scott, 2000: 101) with ‘adult proxies’ often used to explore children’s experiences (Christensen and James, 2000; Jones, 2000; Waksler, 1986). However, ‘adultist assumptions’ underpinning social research *on* children have since been critiqued (see Valentine: 1999c) and conceptualisations of children as incompetent, unreliable and incomplete have been challenged (Barker and Weller, 2003; Hill *et al.*, 1996; Oakley, 1994a). Hence, it is no longer assumed that adults can give valid accounts of children’s lives. Rather, children are now considered to be competent social actors who can speak for themselves (Valentine, 1999c; James *et al.*, 1998; Hood *et al.*, 1996).

Scholars identify the emergence of the ‘new’ social studies of childhood (see 2.2) and the *United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child (1989)*⁵ as bringing about a shift which has led to children being regarded as ‘experts’ on their own lives (Darbyshire *et al.*, 2005; Fargas-Malet *et al.*, 2010; James *et al.*, 1998). As Renold (2002: 122) explains, ‘within the ‘new’ sociology of children and childhood, children are no longer researched ‘on’ but ‘with’ and their accounts of social reality and personal experience are taken as competent portrayals of their experiences’ (also see Darbyshire *et al.*, 2005; Mayall, 2000). The children’s rights paradigm, in similar vein, recognises that children have agency and a right to express their views, and must therefore be consulted when it comes to decisions affecting their lives (Lundy and McEvoy, 2011; Greene and Hogan, 2005; Marrow and Richards, 1996). This is reinforced through initiatives like *Unicef’s* ‘Rights Respecting Schools Award’⁶ and in revised legislation like the *Children Act (2004)*⁷.

⁵ See <https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/creating-a-fairer-and-more-equal-society/supporting-pages/the-united-nations-convention-on-the-rights-of-the-child-uncrc>; accessed 15 January 2015

⁶ See <http://www.unicef.org.uk/Education/Rights-Respecting-Schools-Award/>; accessed 15 January 2015

⁷ See <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/31>; accessed 15 January 2015

As Fargas-Malet (2010) and others note, these developments brought about a methodological shift in qualitative research with children with the adaption of more traditional methods, the emergence of new ‘participatory’ research methods and the development of multi-method approaches (see also Darbyshire *et al.*, 2005; Greene and Hogan, 2005; Hemming, 2008). As Valentine (1999c) explains, it was thought that children would be intimidated by conventional research methodologies as these are often ‘adultist’ so as well as adapting existing methods, researchers have also experimented with new ways of allowing children to communicate their experiences, such as role play, drawing and photography⁸ (e.g. Barker and Weller, 2003; Ennew and Morrow, 1994; Hill *et al.*, 1996). In children’s geographies such ‘child-centred’ methods⁹ are often used in conjunction with techniques like participant observation and semi-structured interviews¹⁰ ‘to capture the complexity and diversity of children’s values, perceptions and experiences’ (Hemming, 2008: 152), and in the social sciences more generally, participatory methodologies have been incorporated into interviews and focus groups (see Fargas-Malet, 2010).

Using multiple methods (participatory ‘child-centred’ methods and adapted traditional methods) in researching children’s experiences is now considered a valuable approach as it allows researchers to access a broader and deeper range of children’s perceptions and experiences (see Darbyshire *et al.*, 2005). Indeed, researchers have found that data generated through a multi-method approach can actually contradict rather than complement each other but instead of viewing this negatively researchers like Hemming see this as an ‘opportunity to better understand the complexities of social life, and avoid the presentation of ‘easy’ conclusions that ‘gloss over’ some of the hidden difficulties that mixed methods may reveal’ (2008: 155). This informed my decision to take a multi-method, qualitative approach – especially for exploring how children respond to gender and sexualities curricular (research objective 3). I illustrate how the individual research methods work well together and are in-keeping with this epistemological/ ontological position in section 3.3. However, since feminism and queer theory provides the broader conceptual framework for this thesis it has also been important to acknowledge the implications of feminist and queer epistemologies, which have additional implications for methods and methodologies (Browne and Nash, 2010).

⁸ Punch (2002: 323) warns that such techniques ‘should not unquestionably be assumed to be more appropriate for conducting research with children’ and as Valentine (1999c) acknowledges, researchers need to be sensitive to differences in children’s abilities to engage with different methodologies. Thus, in light of Punch’s remark I reflect on my use of ‘child-centred’ methods in section 3.4.

⁹ ‘Child-centred’ methods aim to reconstitute power relations between adult researchers and child participants at the data generation phase (Hemming, 2008).

¹⁰ E.g. Barker and Weller, 2003; Hemming, 2007; 2008; Holt, 2010; Newman *et al.*, 2006.

The next sub-section (3.2.2b) focuses on epistemological and ontological implications for queer qualitative research.

3.2.2b Queer qualitative research: methodological considerations

If methodologies are meant to coherently link ontological and epistemological positions to our choice of methods, are methodologies automatically queer if queer conceptualisations are used? Can we have queer knowledges if our methodologies are not queer?

Browne and Nash, 2010: 2

As Browne and Nash (2010: 1) note, ‘many scholars who use queer theorisations can use undefined notions of what they mean by ‘queer research’ and rarely undertake a sustained consideration of how queer approaches might sit with (particularly social scientific) methodological choices’. Yet according to Boellstorff theory, data and method cannot be understood in isolation from each other as the ‘relationship between theory and data is a methodological problem’ (2010: 210). Binnie (1997) first introduced a discussion of queer epistemology into geography and has more recently revised his thesis in light of ever increasing work on sexuality and space (Binnie, 2010). Binnie (2010: 29) argues that epistemological and methodological issues ‘can no longer be sidelined but instead need to be foregrounded’ as we re-think ‘how we conduct research on sexuality in human geography’ (see also Brown *et al.*, 2010). While Binnie is not prescriptive in advancing a single, coherent queer epistemology (and rightly so) he argues that there is much to learn from feminist discussions of epistemology and methodology. Thus, rather than attempt to suggest that some methods or techniques can be queerer than others Binnie advises that we should ‘pay attention to how techniques are used and to what end’ (2010: 33).

Browne and Nash have taken up Binnie’s (1997; 2010) thesis most recently to question ‘the place of conventional research techniques in examinations of messy and unstable subjectivities and social lives’ (2010: 3). They concur with Binnie having undertaken an extended consideration of the relationship between epistemology, methodologies and knowledges (opening quotation) and also cite feminist scholars who claim that methods themselves have no inherent epistemological or ontological qualities (Maynard, 1994; Stanley and Wise, 1990; 2002). Thus, in support of Binnie’s proposition Browne and Nash (2010) reiterate feminist arguments that what is important is how methods and methodologies are deployed in

supporting feminist (or queer) ways of knowing¹¹ (see Stanley, 2013). I will acknowledge this in the next section.

3.3 METHODS AND METHODOLOGIES

This section focuses on individual research methods and methodologies. Sub-section 3.3.1 discusses textual and discourse analysis; 3.3.2 focuses on ethnography; 3.3.3 deals with focus groups; and 3.3.4 outlines qualitative, semi-structured interviewing. In each case, I provide a theoretically-informed rationale for their selection and a detailed breakdown of their application. This establishes how my research objectives have been addressed.

3.3.1 Textual and discourse analysis

Foucauldian discourse analysis is applied throughout the research but especially in relation to textual analysis of government legislation¹² and guidance documents. This corresponds with the first research objective:

1. To examine existing UK government legislation, guidance and support for primary gender and sexuality education, and to understand how these initiatives are mobilised by the non-profit sector

Interpreting meaning in language and texts builds on the epistemological tradition of hermeneutics and is concerned with understanding texts from the author's point-of-view with due regard for the social and historical context of its production (Bryman, 2008; Silverman, 2011). This recognises that 'the social' - how people act, think and perceive - is constituted within linguistic description (Waitt, 2005). Hence, discourse analysis examines how discourses are constituted and circulated within texts, and how they function to produce a particular understanding or knowledge about the world that is accepted as 'truth' (Foucault, 1980). Thus, discourse analysis departs from previous modes of textual analysis (content analysis, semiology and iconography) by focusing on how particular ideas are privileged as 'truth' (Bryman, 2008). This makes discourse analysis in-keeping with a queer epistemology (3.2.2b). As Browne and Nash note, 'certain strands of queer theorising, in rejecting a representational theory of 'truth', use various forms of discourse and textual analyses to consider how power relations are constituted and maintained in the production of social and political meanings'

¹¹ Even though these methods assume a 'humanist subject' who is 'deemed able to accurately recount lived experiences and observations 'authentically'' (Browne and Nash, 2010: 11).

¹² In section 4.1 textual analysis of government legislation takes the form of parliamentary discourse analysis (see Johnson and Vanderbeck, 2014).

(2010: 6). As such, discourse analysis can be used to expose 'common-sense' neo-liberal policies as constructed through discursive structures (Waitt, 2005).

As Waitt (2005) explains, Foucauldian discourse analysis exposes how discursive formations articulate 'regimes of truth' that naturalise particular 'ways of seeing' social difference. This emphasises the social effects of discourse by highlighting how specific texts (policy documents and Government guidance) produce particular subjectivities and meanings about social relationships (*ibid*). The application of Foucauldian discourse analysis also allows for the development of additional concepts besides 'regime of truth' and 'power/knowledge' (see 2.1.2). For instance, a notion of *episteme* can also be utilised to understand how thinking is structured about a particular subject and how discourses operate to limit what can be said, what can become objects of our knowledge, and what is accepted as knowledge (Waitt, 2005).

3.3.1a Analysing parliamentary discourse

As Johnson and Vanderbeck recognise, 'legislative debates in parliament have an importance that extends beyond the law that emerges from them. Parliamentary debates serve as important platforms from which public opinion on key social issues is both shaped and reflected' (2014: 4-5). In parliament – the theatre of the state (Kyle, 2012) – politicians use a range of discursive strategies (correspondence from constituents, anecdotal accounts of interactions with 'ordinary people' and media reports of particular events) in creating parliamentary discourse which, curtailed by multiple and competing interest groups¹³ influence? public opinion. These narrative strategies have ontological effects which for Johnson and Vanderbeck 'create, reinforce or challenge the symbolic and material exclusion of sexual minorities' (2014: 5). As such, parliamentary rhetoric and ensuing discourses are key performative acts which deserve critical analysis for the ways in which they contribute towards the social and cultural construction of sexuality. In this thesis I will be applying this socio-legal approach to discourse analysis by considering parliamentary rhetoric (the speech acts of politicians during legislative debate) and the relationship between parliamentary discourse and the production of law.

3.3.1b Identifying relevant legislation/ guidance documents and ensuring authenticity

Existing academic literature which references current Government interventions (i.e. Atkinson and DePalma, 2010; DePalma and Atkinson, 2008a; 2009a; DePalma and Jennett, 2010; Ellis, 2007; Monk, 1998; 2001; 2011) was used to identify relevant legislation and guidance

¹³ For instance, government departments, lobby groups (e.g. pro-gay campaigners and conservative religious groups), commercial interests and private citizens (see Rush, 1990; Johnson and Vanderbeck, 2014).

documents for analysis. Interviews with Stonewall representatives and school management (see 3.3.4) also highlighted existing policy and future developments (i.e. forthcoming Ofsted guidance). In addition to this, I conducted my own policy and guidance search via Government websites (i.e. legislation.gov.uk and education.gov.uk) and educational websites (i.e. Stonewall.org.uk and schools-out.org.uk) with key words such as 'gender', 'sexism', 'sexuality', 'sexual orientation', 'education' and 'primary schools'. This allowed me to compile an extensive database of relevant Government legislation and guidance which could be accessed online or in print. All documents were reviewed and those that were particularly significant (specific documents or legislation/ guidance identified by Stonewall and school management) were analysed in greater detail.

Bryman (2008) advises researchers to check the legitimacy of official documents to ensure that they are authentic. This includes ensuring that they are still valid and that you have the most recent version. All documents were accessed from their primary source to ensure that they were reliable and I made sure that all documents were the latest version. I also ensured that legislation and guidance was still active, although in some instances this did not matter (i.e. historical analysis of Section 28).

Having discussed textual and discourse analysis I now focus on ethnography.

3.3.2 Ethnography

The research is grounded in a school-based ethnography. This overarching methodology informs all aspects of the research with other research methods used to supplement and extend this methodological approach. Ethnography is used to explore all the research objectives:

1. To examine existing UK government legislation, guidance and support for primary gender and sexuality education, and to understand how these initiatives are mobilised by the non-profit sector
2. To explore how social actors within specific English primary schools interpret national government policy, and to understand how gender and sexuality education is subsequently incorporated into the broader school curriculum and delivered in lessons
3. To investigate how pupils respond to gender and sexualities education in the context of everyday school life

Ethnography complements discourse and textual analyses in consolidating a queer methodology (3.2.2b). As Browne and Nash explain, ‘with the initial focus on discourse analysis and cultural critique, some scholars argue that queer approaches, while interesting theoretically, are largely detached from the blood, bricks and mortar of everyday life (2010: 6). However, as Rooke (2010) has shown, a ‘queer sociological ethnographic perspective’ accounts for everyday, lived realities of hetero and homo-normativities and can provide cogent insights into how sexual subjectivities are necessary, negotiated and always being reformed. This supports Valocchi’s (2005) earlier conviction that a queering of gender and sexuality would require a sensitivity to the complicated and multi-layered lived experiences and subjectivities of individuals, which he argued ethnography could respond to while also providing insights into the significance of social settings within which these experiences and subjectivities take shape. As such, ethnography is seen to address methodological challenges associated with distinguishing practices, identities, and hegemonic structures of gender and sexuality, which is another important concern for queer praxis. Thus, ethnographic approaches are understood to be the most useful means of combining queer theory with sociological analysis (Browne and Nash, 2010).

Ethnography has long been regarded as a key research method for exploring the social worlds of children (Christensen and James, 2000; Davies, *et al.*, 2000; James *et al.*, 1998) and as noted in Chapter 2 it has been used extensively in schools to explore formal curricular, classroom practice, and the hidden geographies of the ‘third curriculum’ (Coleman, 2007; Collins and Coleman, 2008; Holloway *et al.*, 2010; Thomas, 2011). Indeed, studies exploring gender and sexuality in school have often taken ethnographic approaches when investigating children’s micro-cultures (Blaise, 2005a; Davies, 1982; 1989b; 1993; Epstein, 1995; Lees, 1993; Mac an Ghail, 1994; Renold, 2005; Thorne, 1993). These studies, in particular, have influenced my methodological thinking, especially when viewing the school as ‘a specific productive and reproductive site within which gendered (and sexual) identities are expressed, experienced and regulated in an ongoing, day by day, way’ (Renold, 1999: 23). When combined with the now widely held belief that ‘children are not passive receptors of socialization but are active social agents managing their own experiences’ (Emond, 2005: 124) the value of ethnographic research *with* children is clear.

3.3.2a Adoption and adaption of ethnography

Ethnography originates from anthropology and was first used to describe and understand ‘other’ cultures (i.e. Malinowski, 1922), although as Emond (2005) explains sociologists have since adopted, and adapted, this methodological approach such that it would now be common

to find ethnographic research in a range of social science disciplines, such as sociology of education/childhood studies (e.g. Blaise, 2005a; Epstein, 1995; Renold, 2005; Youdell, 2010a) and human geography (e.g. Hemming, 2007; Holt, 2003; Thomas, 2011; Thomson, 2005). Ethnography uses the researcher as a primary tool for data collection – ‘the research instrument par excellence’ (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995:19) - and involves the immersion of the researcher in people’s daily lives for an extended period of time so as to watch what happens, listen to what is said and ask questions (Agar, 1996; Willis and Trondman, 2000) – ‘in fact, collecting whatever data are available to throw light on the issues that are the focus of the research’ (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995: 1).

Ethnography holds as its central tenet the irreducibility of human experience and existence, and contends that in order to comprehend the complexity of social life we need to have engagements that are sensitive to the nature of a messy social world (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995; Law, 2004; Willis and Trondman, 2000). In its initial inception as ‘naturalism’, it was argued that ethnography allowed a deeper, more sensitive understanding of the social world through allowing the researcher to experience it *directly* (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Advocates emphasised the need to study and ‘respect’ the social world in all its complexities as opposed to over-simplifying it (Denzin, 1970; Matza, 1969). This was borne out of a growing rejection of positivism as a reductionalist instrument of scientific enquiry (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995). Thus, proponents of ethnography argued that researchers needed to get closer to actual lived experience and the everyday routines in which people made sense of the world in order to understand participants’ social and symbolic worlds (Denzin, 1970; Goffman, 1968; Lincoln and Guba, 1985). This reinforced my conviction in spending prolonged periods of time in school so that I could be immersed in school life.

3.3.2b Implementing a school-based ethnography

As many authors note, ethnographic research with children in schools demands a reconsideration of the relationship between researcher and participants as hierarchical adult-child relations prevent ethnographers from accessing children’s worlds and accurately ‘representing’ children’s knowledges (Christensen and James, 2000; Emond, 2005; Epstein, 1998; Hemming, 2008; Holt, 2010; James *et al*, 1998; Renold, 2005). Thus, it is important for ethnographers to consider their role within school as presentation and conduct will influence field relations (Agar, 1996; also see Vanderbeck, 2005). As Hemming (2008) observes, ethnographers have previously attempted to remove power differences by trying to ‘blend in’ with children’s worlds, however, the complexities of power relations between adult ethnographers and child participants are such that these are now accepted as inevitable and

unavoidable (see James, 2001). Thus, in light of Agar (1996), researchers now adopt a reflective approach to ethnographic research with children and consider their own role in the field, and the impact this has on children's everyday worlds (Emond, 2005). One strategy to reduce power disparities has involved ethnographers adopting a semi-adult role (Hemming, 2008), like 'adult friend' (Fine and Sandstrom, 1988) although the most common approach has involved ethnographers adopting a 'least-adult' role (Mandell, 1988).

For Holt (2010) a 'least-adult' role means performing your identity in non-dominant ways, like avoiding an authoritarian role within school and not 'disciplining' children (also see Renold, 2002). More generally, it is about avoiding the reproduction of unequal relationships with children through everyday practices 'in order to deconstruct hierarchical adult/child relations within the research' (Holt, 2010: 19). As Warming explains, this 'enhances the possibilities of successfully achieving empathetic and empowering representation of young children's perspectives' (2011: 39). In my research context, like Holt (2010) and Renold (2002), I was committed performing a 'least-adult' role and would always attempt to adopt a non-authoritarian role within school. This involved distancing myself from teachers and other figures of authority, relinquishing disciplinary power and engaging with children on their level. For instance, if invited I would play with children at break times and join in conversations. On a few occasions I joined children in the dining hall for lunch and would queue up with them rather than jumping the queue like other adults. Like Epstein (1998), I found that a 'least-adult' role was productive but it was also not without its problems. I shall reflect on the advantages and disadvantages in section 3.4.

Ethnographic research took place in the two schools mentioned in 3.1.2b: *Weirwold primary school* and *Cutlers primary school*. While some school ethnographies focus on just one research site (Davies, 1982; Mac an Ghail, 1994) I decided to follow in the footsteps of Thorne (1993) and Renold (1999) and include two schools in the study as this would allow me to 'map school-specific arenas' as well as 'identify and analyse practices and relationships that were durable across both schools' (Renold, 1999: 26). I could have included a third or fourth school which would have allowed me to map practices and relationships across a greater number of schools but, like Renold (1999), I felt that limiting my focus to just two schools would allow me to produce detailed accounts and also better understand the complexity of school life (see also Hemming, 2007; Holt, 2003). After all, 'thick description' (Geertz, 1973) and long-term immersion in sites of study are hallmarks of ethnographic practice (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995; Willis and Trondman, 2000).

To undertake sustained ethnographies I arranged multiple visits to each school over a one and a half year period. The table below shows how fieldwork primarily coincided with each school's concentrated work around gender and sexuality. At *Cutlers primary school* this is spread over a two week period in November with 'Anti-bullying Week' and 'Overcoming Adversity Week' used to implement the school's work. At *Weirwold primary school* this work is delivered during 'Diversity Week' each February. I visited each school twice during concentrated weeks of work and twice outside of these weeks – once for data collection and once for feedback. In total I spent 10 weeks in the schools, arriving when the children arrived (roughly 8.45am) and leaving when the teachers left (around 5.30pm). This gave me a chance to spend some time with staff having immersed myself in children's worlds during the school day.

TABLE 1 – DURATION OF ETHNOGRAPHY

Cutlers Primary School

November 2011 2 weeks During 'Anti-bullying/ Overcoming Adversity Week'	May 2012 1 week Outside of 'Anti- bullying/ Overcoming Adversity Week'	November 2012 2 ½ weeks Prior to/ during 'Anti- bullying/ Overcoming Adversity Week'	May 2013 1 day Feedback and informal visit
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Weirwold Primary School

February 2012 1 ½ weeks Prior to/ during 'Diversity Week'	May 2012 1 week Outside of 'Diversity Week'	February 2013 1 ½ weeks Prior to/ during 'Diversity Week'	May 2013 1 day Feedback and informal visit
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Like Hemming (2007) and Holt (2003), I divided my time in school between the classroom and the playground. However, rather than limiting my focus to particular classes/ age groups, like Hemming (2007), Holt (2003) and Renold (1999) I decided to focus on multiple pupil cohorts, like Thorne (1993) and Davies (1990). I did not spend equal amounts of time in each class or with all the children in the playground, as I did not have any predetermined ideas about where I would spend my time. Rather, I would follow my interests, wherever this might lead (see Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995). I was aware of Renold's (1999) conundrum about not spreading yourself too thinly and sending quality time with a select number of classes/ groups of children in order to get to know them properly, so once I gained an initial impression I would spend more time with some classes/ groups of children than others. For example, I visited every class at *Weirwold* but spent more time with Years 2, 3 and 5. This allowed me to

establish good rapport with children in these classes, which was useful for focus groups (see Hemming, 2007).

I arrived in school a few days before topic weeks got underway. This gave me time to identify when lessons would be taking place the following week. There were often overlaps or gaps in the timetable I produced, but this allowed me to see where my time would be best spent. In class I observed how gender and sexualities education was being delivered and how pupils were responding to it. This involved moving between an observational role and a participant role, depending on the format of the lesson, but wherever possible I would participate in activities and interact with the children. In-between lessons I based myself in the playground and would watch games and chat informally to children (Hemming, 2007). If invited, I would play games but I would not take charge or settle disputes as I didn't want to adopt a position of authority (see Holt, 2010 and Renold, 2002). First and foremost, I was interested in how classroom understandings of gender and sexuality were reworked in the playground but I was also interested in everyday understandings and 'doings' of gender and sexuality (Blaise, 2005a). As Holt notes, 'due to more flexible expectations on bodily comportment in the playground, children's cultures have more scope for open expression in this context' (2010: 20). As such, the classroom-playground focus captured 'divergent expectations placed on mind-body regulation and performance within the whole-school space' (2010: 20).

Everyday institutional practice and children's gendered play was my focus when I returned to school outside of concentrated weeks of work. This was also an opportunity to see what related work was done outside of concentrated weeks of work and whether values were maintained outside of these weeks.

3.3.2c Recording observations/ interactions and ethical considerations

I produced elaborate written records of events, observations and interactions when in 'the field' and used note taking as the primary mode of 'data collection' (Emond, 2005; Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995) to 'make 'the field' (both) manageable and memorable' (Atkinson, 1992: 17). As Lofland and Lofland (1995) recommend, I kept two types of accounts: field notes and field diaries. Field notes were compiled during the school day and were recorded either as events unfolded or shortly after (Agar, 1996). Sometimes it was not possible to write notes out in full so I would 'jot down' key words or themes to be expanded upon later (Lofland and Lofland, 1995; Spradley, 1979). I would always record the date, time, and context and I distinguished between verbatim and summaries so as not to superimpose my narrative (Emond, 2005; Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995). Field diaries were used for recoding

theoretical and methodological notes. As Emond explains, field diaries 'serve as a record of the researcher's thoughts and feelings [and are] a helpful tool to explore the ways in which the researcher's presence may have impacted on the environment' (2005: 132). As such, field diaries are often used as a tool for reflectivity (see 3.4).

As Holt (2010: 14) notes, 'research with children raises particular ethical issues, given children's socio-spatial marginalisation in society' and these issues are further exacerbated when undertaking research within institutional contexts, such as schools. For Valentine (1999c) five key ethical considerations need to be considered when conducting research in this context. These are: consent, access and structures of compliance; privacy and confidentiality; methodologies and issues of power and dissemination and advocacy¹⁴. However, as Holt (2010) and others have recognised, ethnography is ethically problematic as it is not possible to gain fully *informed* consent (also see England, 1994; Boden *et al.*, 2009). This is particularly evident in schools where there are often 'institutional pressures to comply with research' (Valentine, 1999c: 145). Thus, while I received informed consent from head teachers to undertake ethnographic research in school staff and children would have had no say in the matter and once I arrived it would have been difficult, if not impossible, for them to opt out (*ibid*).

To compensate for this I took Epstein's (1998) advice on board and introduced myself and my research so that staff and children at least knew who I was and what I was doing. In addition to this, I would always encourage questions and answer these as honestly as I could (Epstein, 1998; Matthews *et al.*, 1998). This way, children could choose not to talk to me and teachers could also opt not to have me in their class (I always sought permission before entering a classroom). This only gave children some autonomy though as they would still be observed even if they didn't want to talk to me (Valentine, 1999c). In any case, I always anonymised names in field notes to ensure confidentiality (Epstein, 1998). This was particularly important since children would often glance at my notes or ask to read them, which I allowed (Renold, 2002).

I also reviewed relevant ethical guidelines and codes of practice (i.e. British Sociological Association, Economic and Social Research Council, University/ Departmental and National Children's Bureau guidance) prior to undertaking fieldwork in schools. I used these initially to inform my research proposal which I submitted to the Departmental Research Ethics Committee. While I received ethical approval I knew that ethical dilemmas would arise during

¹⁴ Holt (2010) argues that 'empowering research relations' between children and adult underpin, and are therefore central to addressing, all of these ethical issues (see earlier methodological considerations).

the course of the research so I saw this as ongoing (Alderson, 1995). This is particularly evident when it comes to Child Protection issues and I had a responsibility to protect research participants, both during the research and as a consequence of it (Alderson, 1995; Marrow and Richards, 1996). I also completed a CRB (Criminal Records Bureau) check before commencing fieldwork. This gave me ethical clearance to work with children (Marrow and Richards, 1996).

Having discussed ethnography I will now deal with focus groups.

3.3.3 Focus groups

As outlined in 3.3.2, focus groups were used to supplement and extend the ethnographic approach (see Renold, 1999; 2005). These were conducted with groups of children to further explore research objective 3:

3. To investigate how pupils respond to gender and sexualities education in the context of everyday school life

Morgan *et al.* (2002) claim that focus groups can only provide a partial account of children's experiences and need to be supplemented by other data. Thus, following Warming (2011) I combined the 'voice approach' with 'ethnomethodological insights'. As Hemming (2008: 155) argues, this 'is a good way of working towards the aim of 'crystallisation' as it allows the researcher to investigate both the 'doing' and how children represent these 'doings' through talk' (see 3.2.2a).

Hennessy and Heary define a focus group as 'a discussion involving a small number of participants, led by a moderator, which seeks to gain an insight into the participants' experiences, attitudes and/or perceptions' (2005: 236). Morgan usefully supplements this definition, adding that a focus group is 'a research technique that collects data through group interaction on a topic determined by the researcher' (1997: 6). Thus, when the negotiation of 'collective knowledge' is the focus, as it is here, group interviews could not be more relevant as they are conducive to constructing collective knowledge (Darbyshire *et al.*, 2005; Freeman and Mathison, 2009; Matthews *et al.*, 1998). As Freeman and Mathison explain, group interviews are useful because 'the usual patterns of negotiation, communication, and control are likely to

arise during the interview' (2009: 103)¹⁵. Thus, for Eder and Fingerson (2003) group interviews grow directly out of peer culture as children construct their meanings with their peers.

Many researchers use group interviews with children because they are familiar with discussing matters in groups, but also because they diminish the effects of adult power and reduce the pressure on individuals to answer questions (Hemming, 2008; Hennessy and Heary, 2005; Darbyshire *et al.*, 2005; Mauthner, 1997). For instance, Hemming notes how during group interviews 'children felt able to use short conversations between themselves in order to move the interview on in creative ways, thus disrupting the usual model of adult-directed interaction in school'. However, as Freeman and Mathison note, 'power and status differences play out among children as well and affect the interaction and contribution of each member' (2009: 104). As such, Hurworth *et al.* (2005) advise researchers to observe interactions and the way meaning is negotiated because one or two more vocal participants may influence the discussion and sway the 'shared' consensus of the group. I return to this point below.

3.3.3a Recruiting/ selecting participants and gaining 'informed consent'

In the first instance, I gained permission from the head teacher to run focus groups with children in school (see 3.3.2b). This request was included on the consent form that I sent to the schools before ethnographic research got underway, so once I arrived in school I could begin distributing letters and consent forms to children in each class (see Appendix A). As Morrow and Richards note, 'in the UK, consent is usually taken to mean consent from parents or those 'in loco parentis', and in this respect children are [...] seen as their parents' property, devoid of the right to say no to research' (1996: 94). However, as Kellet and Ding (2004) note, while it has often been assumed that children are not able to give informed consent some claim that children are fully capable of giving informed consent, if presented with 'child friendly' information about the research¹⁶ (Alderson, 1995; Matthews *et al.*, 1998; Barker and Weller, 2003; Fargas-Malet *et al.*, 2010; Holt, 2010).

In light of the above, and following Valentine (1999c), I supplied parents and children with appropriate information about the research and asked both for written consent. As Weithorn and Scherer (1994) argue, getting written consent from children gives them a sense of control, individuality, autonomy and privacy, so I asked parent(s)/ guardian(s) to show their child a section on the back of the consent which had been written specially for them. I asked children

¹⁵ Like Freeman and Mathison (2009), I do not differentiate between focus groups and group interviews and use the terms interchangeably.

¹⁶ According to Alderson and Morrow (2004), competent minors less than 16 years of age can give consent, with competence being defined as having enough knowledge to understand what is proposed and enough discretion to be able to make a wise decision in light of one's own interests.

to sign this if *they* wanted to take part, regardless of whether their parent(s)/ guardian(s) had agreed. However, as Valentine (1999c) recognises, I had to rely on parent(s)/ guardian(s) showing their child this information and I could not be sure whether they had (I suspect that several signed on their child’s behalf). Even when it was clear that the child had signed I still could not be sure that they had agreed voluntarily (*ibid*), so following Matthews *et al.* (1998) I would always explain the research and encourage any questions in the focus group and gain verbal consent before proceeding.

Due to a limited number of returned consent forms (typically 3-7 per class) I rarely found myself in a position to select participants and simply ran focus groups with those who had returned consent forms. In a few exceptional cases I received slightly more (up to 12 per class)¹⁷ but rather than select participants I simply ran two focus groups. In such instances I referred to consent forms where I had asked children who they would like to be in a focus group with and I matched up pupils as best I could (see Appendix A). As Hennessy and Heary (2005: 239) explain, ‘it is important to consider the role of group processes in determining the nature of that interaction and to recognise that such interactions are not necessarily positive’ (also see Freeman and Mathison, 2009). For instance, intimidation may inhibit some individuals from making a contribution (Lewis, 1992). Thus, allowing children to choose who they would like to be in a focus group with ensures that there is a good dynamic (Matthews *et al.*, 1998) and I was pleased that I could do this in a few instances.

The table below provides an overview of pupils who participated in focus groups. In response to McNamee and Seymour’s (2012) criticism of an over-focus on 10-12 year olds in the ‘new’ social studies of childhood and to explore how children respond to gender and sexualities curricular throughout school I ran focus groups with children from Year 1 (5/6 year olds) to Year 6 (10/11 year olds):

TABLE 2 – OVERVIEW OF FOCUS GROUPS

Total number of focus groups: 32 (C= 14; W=18)
Average number of participants: 5
Average length: 20-25 mins
Total number of pupils in focus groups: 106 (63 featured once, 31 featured twice and 12 featured three times)
Total number of girls: 84
Total number of boys: 77

¹⁷ I found that teachers’ were more likely to encourage participation and chase consent forms if I had managed to establish rapport with them.

Year group break down

	No. of focus groups	No. of participants	No. of girls	No. of boys
Year 6 (C)	2	10	7	3
Year 6 (W)	2	9	7	2
Year 5 (C)	3	17	5	12
Year 5 (W)	5	26	16	10
Year 4 (C)	9	48	18	30
Year 4 (W)	2	10	7	3
Year 3 (W)	4	23	13	10
Year 2 (W)	3	11	5	6
Year 1 (W)	2	7	6	1

(C) = *Cutlers Primary School*

(W) = *Weirwold Primary School*

3.3.3b Preparing for focus groups and the focus of focus groups

Focus groups were held in school towards the end of each visit and at a time that was convenient for each teacher¹⁸. This allowed children to reflect on the week's activities when focus groups had taken place during concentrated weeks of work (in February and November). This also allowed children to feel more relaxed and comfortable speaking to me once they had become more familiar with me (Hemming, 2008). Holding focus groups at the end of the week also gave me more time to get to know the children and re-affirm my non-teacher role in preparation for the focus groups (Goodenough *et al.*, 2003; Hill *et al.*, 2006). As Fargas-Malet *et al.* (2010) note, children may feel pressured to say what they think adults want them to say if they perceive the researcher to be a teacher, so it was important for children to see me performing a 'least-adult' role (Mandell, 1988) before focus groups got underway. I would also reiterate that I was not a teacher at the beginning of each focus group and reassure children that there were no right or wrong answers (Punch, 2002).

Barker and Weller (2003) note how the research context also affects what children talk about. It was therefore important to think carefully about where to hold focus groups in school as children may associate places like the classroom with 'school work' and the above expectations (Kellet and Ding, 2004). Thus, following Darbyshire *et al.* (2005) and Goodenough *et al.* (2003) I decided to use activity rooms and resource areas, which for Fargas-Malet *et al.* (2010: 178) represent 'an in-between of the formal and informal worlds of the school'. These were detached from classrooms so children would also not be overheard, which is another

¹⁸ Teachers would identify a lesson I could remove children from in order to cause minimal disruption for them but I was aware that missing lessons wasn't convenient for the children who had to catch up with schoolwork (see Hampshire *et al.*, 2012).

important consideration when choosing a location within schools and addressing issues of privacy and confidentiality (Valentine, 1999c).

First and foremost, focus groups explored how children were responding to gender and sexualities curricular. However, they also provided an opportunity to discuss classroom and playground observations. Typically, focus groups began with a summary of the week's activities, which acted as a recap for the children. I would then encourage the children to expand upon the week's activities and say something about what they had learnt. This often led to more general discussions about gender expectations and the legitimacy of same-sex relationships, and I would encourage children to take the conversation in these directions by reaffirming that 'no topic was off limits' (Renold, 2005: 13). However, I would often steer the discussion and ask children to relate this back to the activities in class.

Researchers have been known to use a wide range of activities and techniques in focus groups with young children to make them fun and engaging (Hennessy and Heary, 2005; Fargas-Malet *et al.*, 2010). Using different materials and techniques also gives children time to think about what they want to communicate so they won't feel pressured to give an instant answer (Punch, 2002). This gives children choice and control when expressing themselves, and it also helps them talk about complicated, sensitive and abstract issues (Thomas and O'Kane, 1998). With this in mind I incorporated a range of supplementary materials and activities into focus groups, such as class materials (books and posters), drawing activities, role play and games (see Barker and Weller, 2003; Ennew and Morrow, 1994; Hill *et al.*, 1996). These were introduced to stimulate discussion and access deeper levels of meaning as well as provide opportunities for moving away from a purely oral exchange (Barker and Weller, 2003; Hennessy and Heary, 2005).

The drawing activity was introduced towards the end of each focus group when discussion started to dry up. I asked children to draw something which stood out for them from the topic week and then I encouraged children to talk about their drawing (see Barker and Weller, 2003). A child in the first focus group suggested that they interview each other about their drawing so I adopted this approach thereafter since it enabled 'empowering research relations' (Holt, 2010). Role play was also introduced in some focus groups to break up discussion, especially if children were restless (Hill *et al.*, 1996). This allowed children to get out of their seats and re-enact scenes from class books (i.e. how the dad should have spoken to Elmer in *The Sissy Duckling*) or explore hypothetical scenarios (i.e. what would happen if the sissy duckling came to this school). The final activity was a game introduced to explore 'Different Families' (a scheme of work). This involved children making and discussing

hypothetical families from a pile of character cards (Figure 1). I would make families with two mums and two dads if these had not already been made, and I would encourage children to discuss these families and the relationship between characters. This interactional, hands-on activity allowed children to move cards around so often children's actions (replacing a mum with a dad when a family had two mums) were more interesting.

FIGURE 1 – CHARACTER CARDS FROM 'DIFFERENT FAMILIES' FOCUS GROUP GAME



3.3.3c Recording focus groups

I gained permission from parent(s)/ guardian(s) and children before audio recording focus groups (see 3.3.3a) and I assured both that recordings would be stored securely, used only for my own purposes and be deleted immediately after they had been transcribed (Bryman, 2008; Matthews *et al.*, 1998; Morrow and Richards, 1996). I also promised to anonymise transcripts so that individual participants could not be identified, and following Valentine (1999c), I gave children the option to choose their own pseudonyms. However, like Epstein (1998) I often found that children chose the name of their best friend or celebrity names that bear little relation to their own identities (see also Valentine, 1999c). I was therefore faced with the ethical dilemma of 'prioritising academic rigour by ignoring their chosen names and allocating them ones more in keeping with their actual names or whether to respect their choices regardless of how these may distort the way transcripts, or extracts from them, are read by others' (Valentine, 1999c: 148). After careful consideration I decided to adopt 'the usual practice of many ethnographic researchers of giving research subjects ethnically similar

pseudonyms' (Epstein, 1998: 36). This retains a sense of the diverse ethnic backgrounds of the children who participated in focus groups (see also MacNaughton *et al.*, 2007).

In addition to the audio recording I made notes throughout the focus group about nonverbal behaviour, particularly group dynamic (Bryman, 2008). As Hennessy and Heary explain, such notes 'enhance understanding of the discussion when it is transcribed', so in line with their recommendations I recoded 'hesitance among individuals, consensus within the group (for example, when individuals nod in agreement) and details regarding patterns of interaction among the participants' (2005: 245). These notes were subsequently embedded within transcripts (see Appendix B).

Self-completion questionnaires were also used to record participant information (i.e. age, gender, ethnicity and family composition) and capture children's experience of participating in the focus groups. This data informed the selection of ethnically similar pseudonyms (see above) and provided opportunities for reflectivity (see section 3.4.3). Questionnaires were distributed to the children at the end of each focus group and were stored securely thereafter (see Appendix B).

Having discussed focus groups I will now outline qualitative, semi-structured interviewing.

3.3.4 Qualitative interviewing and semi-structured interviews

Interviews with Stonewall representatives, school governors, senior management and teachers supplemented ethnographic conversations and provided additional opportunities for extended discussion. This allowed me to explore all the research objectives in more detail:

1. To examine existing UK government legislation, guidance and support for primary gender and sexuality education, and to understand how these initiatives are mobilised by the non-profit sector
2. To explore how social actors within specific English primary school's interpret national government policy, and to understand how gender and sexuality education is subsequently incorporated into the broader school curriculum and delivered in lessons
3. To investigate how pupils respond to gender and sexualities education in the context of everyday school life

Interviews were sometimes organised as ‘stand-alone’ events but more typically they were ‘ethnographic interviews’ (Burgess, 1988). These took place during the ethnography and were often not pre-arranged.

Qualitative interviewing is a way of finding out what others feel and think about their worlds (Bryman, 2008; Rubin and Rubin, 1995). As Rapley explains, ‘qualitative interviewing does not involve extra-ordinary skill, it involves just trying to interact with that specific person, trying to understand their experience, opinion and ideas’ (2004: 25). This involves introducing a topic for discussion, listening to the answer and then probing with follow-up questions (Rapley, 2004; Silverman, 2011). This allows interviewees ‘to construct their own accounts of their experiences by describing and explaining their lives in their own words’ (Valentine, 2005: 111), which results in rich, detailed and multi-layered data (Burgess, 1984). Semi-structured interviews can be defined as ‘conversations with a purpose’ (Eyles, 1988). They start with a number of predetermined questions or topics but adopt a flexible approach for discussion with the interviewee (Hemming, 2008). This flexibility allows respondents to raise issues that the interviewer may not have anticipated which allows researchers to explore new directions and themes that may not have been anticipated (Silverman, 2011). This results in data co-produced by the researcher and the researched (Legard *et al.*, 2003).

3.3.4a Identifying and recruiting interviewees

As with Stonewall representatives, school governors, senior management and teachers were identified through a snowball sampling procedure once I gained entry to the schools (Valentine, 2005). Gatekeepers were my first port of call and would often recommend potential interviewees, however, as Valentine (2005) warns, I had to ensure that they were not simply directing me to a narrow selection of colleagues and discouraging me from speaking to others (see also Bryman, 2008). Thus, following Valentine I used multiple contact points which allowed me to access a wider range of participants and not just a ‘narrow circle of like-minded people’ (2005: 117). This allowed me to identify and interview the following people:

TABLE 3 – INTERVIEWEES

Senior Education Officer	Male	Stonewall
Primary Education Officer	Female	Stonewall
LEA-appointed Chair of governors	Male	Weirwold Primary School
Parent governor and SEAL staff-parent liaison	Female	Weirwold Primary School
Staff governor and KS2 Cover Supervisor	Female	Cutlers Primary School
Deputy head teacher (2 interviews)	Male	Weirwold Primary School
Deputy head teacher (2 interviews)	Male	Cutlers Primary School
Year 6 Teacher	Female	Cutlers Primary School

Year 5 Teacher (2 interviews)	Female	Weirwold Primary School
Year 5 teacher	Female	Cutlers Primary School
Year 5 Teaching Assistant - PGCE student	Male	Cutlers Primary School
Year 4 Teacher	Female	Cutlers Primary School
Year 4 Teacher	Female	Cutlers Primary School
Year 3 Teacher	Female	Weirwold Primary School
Year 1 Teacher	Female	Weirwold Primary School
Reception Teacher	Female	Weirwold Primary School
Reception Teacher	Female	Cutlers Primary School

Unfortunately, it was not possible to interview the schools' head teachers. Cutler's head teacher was away during the first period of fieldwork and was otherwise engaged during the second period (see 3.3.2b). Likewise, Weirwold's head teacher was unavailable during school visits having only recently been appointed head teacher. While it would have been useful to interview the schools' head teachers, two interviews with the schools' deputy head teachers (who were responsible for coordinating gender and sexualities education) allowed me to explore the role of senior management in operationalising gender and sexualities? education in school (Research Objective 2).

3.3.4b Conducting interviews and the focus of interviews

The location of an interview can make a difference, so wherever possible I would find a quiet and comfortable place where we would not be overheard or disturbed (Bryman, 2008; Denzin, 1970; Valentine, 2005). However, as Holloway *et al.* (2000) acknowledge, it can be difficult to find such places in schools or in offices where space is at a premium (McDowell, 1998), so on several occasions we had to settle for communal areas. As Valentine notes, 'talking to people on their own 'territory', i.e. in their home, can facilitate a more relaxed conversation' (2005: 118) and I certainly found this to be the case when I had the opportunity to interview two participants at home. However, this required a certain level of rapport which I was not always able to establish beforehand. I therefore interviewed most participants in work. These interviews coincided with school visits so all of the interviews took place within the timeframe set out in 3.2.2b. The majority were held during the school day or immediately after with break times and spare periods the most popular times. However, this didn't give me a lot of time, so interviews were sometimes carried over or rearranged (usually after school).

Four groups of people were interviewed as part of the research (Stonewall representatives, school governors, senior management and teachers) and for each of these interviews I had a

different focus and interview schedule¹⁹. When interviewing Stonewall representatives I focused on how Stonewall had lobbied for and used existing legislation to inform its educational work. I also explored how Stonewall utilised an anti-bullying approach to put homophobic bullying on the school agenda post-Section 28. School governor interviews focused on the role of the governing body in making gender and sexualities education available in school. These interviews also focused on the relationship between the school ethos and the emergence of equalities/ anti-bullying work. Interviews with senior management focused on how Government legislation and guidance had been used in implementing gender and sexualities education in school and how the school had incorporated this into the school's broader curriculum. Finally, interviews with teachers focused on how gender and sexualities education had been rationalised and operationalised in school. These interviews also explored how teachers were delivering gender and sexualities education and how they felt children were responding.

3.3.4c Recording interviews and 'informed consent'

Interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed shortly after. As Valentine explains, this 'allows the researcher to concentrate on the interview [and it] allows the interviewee to engage in a proper conversation with the researcher' (2005: 123). An audio-recording also produces a more accurate and detailed record of the conversation (capturing all the nuances of sarcasm, humour and so on), and it can be replayed which allows the researcher to pick up on ideas and inferences missed during the interview (*ibid*). However, as Bryman (2008) warns, you should not completely rely on an audio-recorder, so following Bryman's (2008) recommendations I always took brief notes and recorded key quotations in case the recording failed. I also made brief notes on non-verbal behaviour since this data would otherwise be lost (Silverman, 2011). I reflected on each interview afterwards and recorded my thoughts in my field diary (see 3.4).

I gained informed consent from each interviewee in addition to institutional consent and asked them to sign a Departmental consent form before interviews got underway. This outlined the purpose of the research and the aim for that particular interview. It also sought permission for interviews to be audio-recorded and confirmed that transcripts would be anonymised (see Appendix A).

¹⁹ An interview schedule or guide is a flexible list of questions or issues to be addressed in the interview (Bryman, 2008).

Having provided a detailed breakdown of individual methods and methodologies I now reflect on the research process.

3.4 POSITIONALITY, REFLECTIVITY AND KNOWLEDGE(S)

In this final section of Chapter 3 I reflect on research methodology, my positionality and the co-production of knowledge. First, I acknowledge feminist critiques of disembodied geographical knowledges which inform this reflective account (3.4.1). I then critically reflect upon ethnographic relations (3.4.2), focus group participation (3.4.3) and interview dialogue (3.4.4). This establishes the strengths and weakness of my methodological approach.

3.4.1 Feminist critiques of disembodied geographical knowledges

The process of writing constructs what we know about our research but it also speaks powerfully about who we are and where we speak from

Mansvelt and Berg, 2005: 256-7

Feminists take the illusion of white men transcending their embodiment and 'speaking from nowhere' as a starting point for thinking about positionality (Grosz, 1993; Haraway, 1988; Rose, 1997). They critique the detached third-person writing style so common in academia which implies that the researcher is omnipotent – that they have a perspective that is all-seeing and all-knowing when in fact this is a partial perspective spoken from *somewhere* by *someone*. As Mansvelt and Berg suggest, 'because the practice of writing is not neutral, the voices of qualitative researchers do not need to hide behind the detached 'scientific' modes of writing' (2005: 257). Instead, researchers should 'acknowledge their position in ways that demonstrate the connection between the processes of research and writing' (Mansvelt and Berg, 2005: 257).

Reflexivity is the term often used for writing self into the text²⁰ (Rose, 1997). England defines this as 'self-critical sympathetic introspection and the self-conscious analytical scrutiny of self as researcher' (1994: 82). For Rose (1997) this involves writing critically in a way that reflects the researchers' understanding of their position in time and place, their particular standpoint, and the consequent partiality of their perspective. For others this entails acknowledging the role of emotions in research (Widdowfield, 2000) and the embodied positionality of the

²⁰ While reflectivity has been widely embraced by social scientists Vanderbeck (2005) remains ambivalent about this prospect (see Vanderbeck, 2005: 398 in particular).

author-researcher (Horton, 2001), which is understood to be central to a queer geographical epistemology and methodology (Binnie, 1997; Brown *et al.*, 2010; Browne and Nash, 2010). This includes thinking about how one's positionality is 'mutually constituted through the relational context of the research process' (Valentine, 2003: 377). As Mansvelt and Berg argue:

This understanding of the dialogic nature of research and writing (in the sense of a 'dialogue' between various aspects of the research process) enables qualitative researchers to acknowledge in a meaningful way how their assumptions, values, and identities constitute the geographies they create

Mansvelt and Berg, 2005: 257

I shall reflect on *my positionality*²¹ and how this mediated social encounters/ relationships in relation to each research method in the sections that follow. To begin with I reflect on ethnographic relations.

3.4.2 Reflecting on ethnographic relations

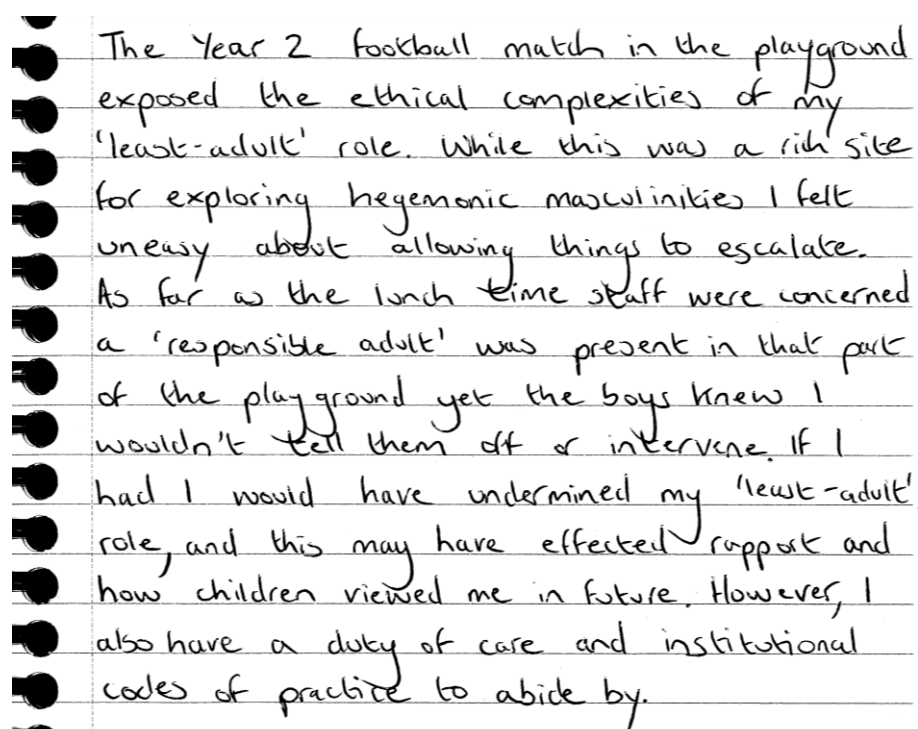
Ethnographic research is affected by the researcher's values since social scientists are part of the social world they study (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995). Acknowledging my *positionality* involves thinking about who we are and how this informs all aspects of the research process, from our particular readings of events to the recording and final construction of the ethnographic account (Rose, 1997). An analysis of the self and self-awareness of relationships and power relations can be monitored with field diaries, which are used as tools for reflectivity (Oakely, 1994b). In this section I refer to my field diary in order to reflect on the 'least-adult' role and ethical dilemmas, my attempts to access 'children's social worlds' and participant observation in the classroom.

The 'least-adult' role and ethical dilemmas

As Mauthner (1997) and Valentine (1999c) note, methodological issues are refracted in unique ways in research with children because of the particular social context of adult-child relationships and most significantly the unequal power dynamics that constitute these relationships. As discussed in 3.2.2a and 3.3.2, I considered it essential to adopt a 'least-adult' role (Mandell, 1988) in order to minimise power discrepancies and forge 'empowering research relations' with children (Holt, 2010). However, like Epstein (1998) and Vanderbeck

²¹ As a Male, White British, Young Adult presumed(?) to be heterosexual.

(2005) I found this subject position problematic. I found that my in-between status, as a researcher and as someone who was not necessarily performing an 'appropriate' adult identity sharply exposed my 'interloper status' (Doyle, 1999) and this left me vulnerable at times when authority figures were not around. This was most apparent in the playground, especially on the football pitch, which became a battleground when other adults were not present. I reflect on one instance below following a fierce exchange between Year 2 boys:



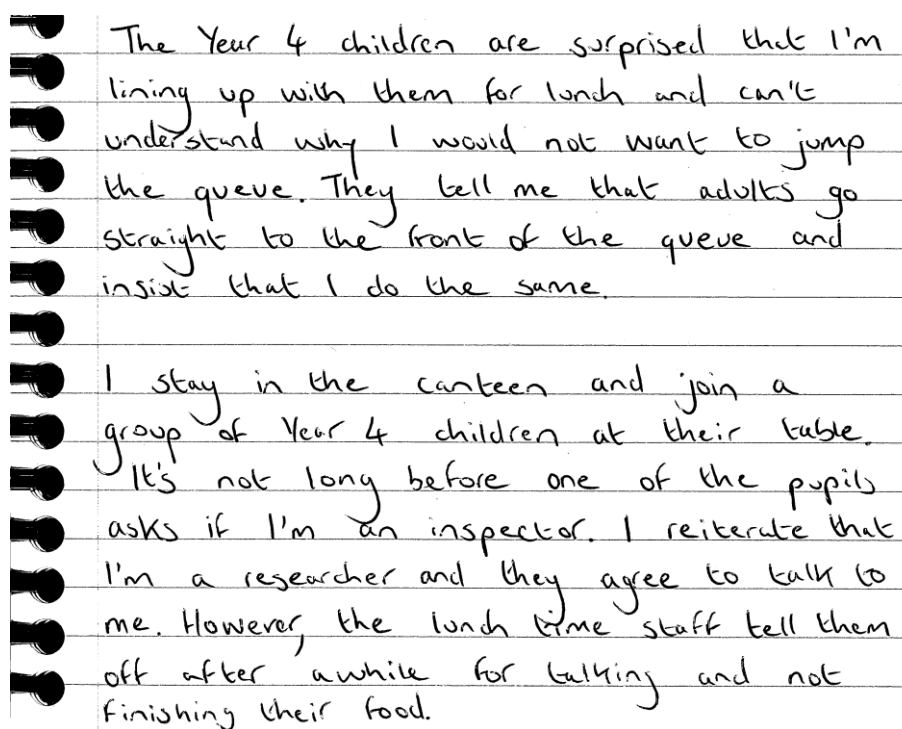
The Year 2 football match in the playground exposed the ethical complexities of my 'least-adult' role. While this was a rich site for exploring hegemonic masculinities I felt uneasy about allowing things to escalate. As far as the lunch time staff were concerned a 'responsible adult' was present in that part of the playground yet the boys knew I wouldn't tell them off or intervene. If I had I would have undermined my 'least-adult' role, and this may have effected rapport and how children viewed me in future. However, I also have a duty of care and institutional codes of practice to abide by.

Extract from Weirwold field diary (15/5/12)

Maintaining equal research relationships (Holt, 2010) and not unduly disrupting the 'natural state' of the environment (Agar, 1996), in this instance, required contesting both institutional and societal norms and expectations placed on adult and child behaviour (Valentine, 1999c; Vanderbeck, 2005). This allowed rich ethnographic insights into boys' everyday (hetero)gendered play, which was a useful counterpoint when examining how children were responding to gender and sexualities curricular in 'formal' school spaces. Yet, by neglecting my adult responsibilities I was condoning such behaviour and jeopardising my relationship with the school (Holt, 2010). This left me feeling uneasy and I wasn't sure how to proceed. In the end I followed Renold's (2002) advice and would discreetly inform a member of staff rather than intervene myself. This may have brought such enactments of hegemonic masculinity to a premature end but at least I was fulfilling the adult role expected of me.

Accessing 'children's social worlds'

On the whole, I found that a 'least-adult' role allowed me to access children's more private social worlds (Renold, 2005) and gain a deeper understanding of how they were responding to gender and sexualities education. This was evidenced by phrases such as "you're not going to tell Mark (Deputy Head teacher) this are you?" (Weirwold) and confessional remarks like "the word gay has been banned but people use it in the boy's toilets" (Cutlers). Moments like these demonstrated not only the ability of the 'least-adult' role to facilitate access to children's informal cultures and hidden curricular, but also the spatially regulated nature of children's in-school gendered and sexual productions. However, I was not always able to pass as an 'adult friend' (Fine and Sandstrom, 1988) and children would sometimes re-affirm my adult status, as the following extract from my field diary demonstrates:



The Year 4 children are surprised that I'm lining up with them for lunch and can't understand why I would not want to jump the queue. They tell me that adults go straight to the front of the queue and insist that I do the same.

I stay in the canteen and join a group of Year 4 children at their table. It's not long before one of the pupils asks if I'm an inspector. I reiterate that I'm a researcher and they agree to talk to me. However, the lunch time staff tell them off after a while for talking and not finishing their food.

Extract from Cutlers field diary (22/11/11)

I decided to join this group of children in the canteen to discuss a lesson I had just observed but I was made to feel 'out-of-place' shortly after this when I joined them at their table. The children informed me that adults don't eat here and those who talked to me got in trouble. As a male researcher I also found that I didn't have access to girls' private spaces in the playground (Figure 2). These hidden geographies, which are rich sites for girls' talk (Renold, 2005) were off-limits, as were children's toilets (both sexes).

FIGURE 2 – GIRLS' PRIVATE SPACES IN THE PLAYGROUND



Girls transformed the 'nature area' on the edge of the Key Stage 2 playground at Weirwold into a private space for girls' talk.

Source: Author's own photographs.

Conversely, as a male researcher (presumed to be heterosexual?)²² I found that I readily had access to boys' private spaces. For instance, boys often invited me to play football in the playground and on many occasions I accepted, given my interest in the hidden geographies of the "third" curriculum (see 2.2.5). As such, I had more immediate access to boys' intimate peer groups cultures although I was still able to observe girls' hetero-feminised play, even if this was mostly from a distance.

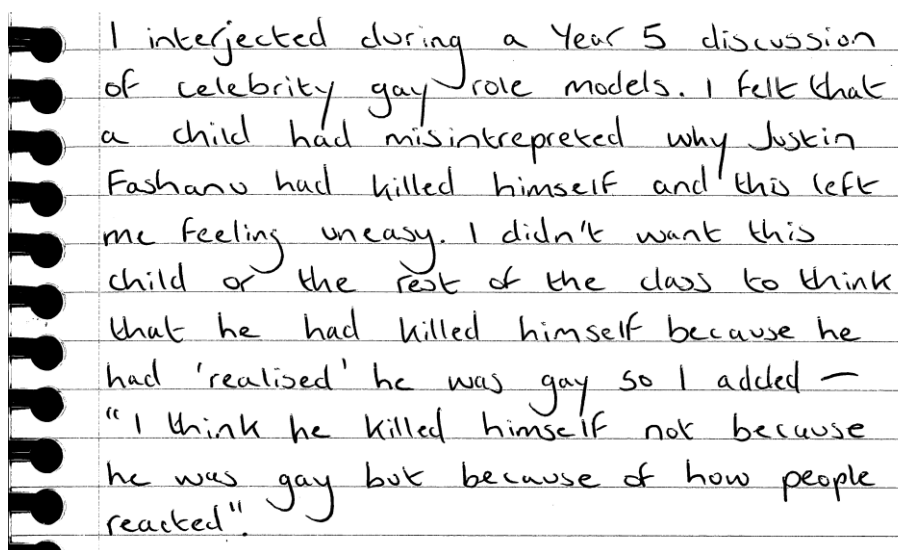
Participant observation in the classroom

Like Holt, I had to 'fulfil promises that had been made, and perform in ways that were consistent with the aspects of my identity that had been strategically drawn upon in gaining access to the institutional spaces of the school' (2010: 20). For instance, I had offered to help out in class so teachers would sometimes ask me to work with specific groups of children, which I felt obliged to do, even though this restricted my interactions with children (I would nearly always be asked to work with lower ability groups as they required extra help). On one occasion a teacher asked if I could mark a maths test and in order to appear helpful I agreed. However, this gave the impression that I was a teaching assistant and it diverted my attention

²² My sexuality was never brought up in conversation and I didn't feel the need to disclose any sexual preference. As such, my 'default' sexual orientation would have been heterosexual (see Renold, 2005). This would have possibly been unintentionally legitimised through my masculine performances (I often played football in the playground).

so I tried to avoid such tasks even though it sometimes appeared as though I wasn't doing anything 'useful'. I tried to compensate for this by helping out with school trips.

Some teachers, particularly Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs), incorporated me into class discussions and would ask me to elaborate as they assumed that I was an 'expert'. While it was productive to be actively involved I was reluctant to be too heavily involved and would resist being positioned as an 'expert'. However, I would draw on my knowledge from time to time and offer insights when I felt this was appropriate, like in the instance below:



I interjected during a Year 5 discussion of celebrity gay role models. I felt that a child had misinterpreted why Justin Fashanu had killed himself and this left me feeling uneasy. I didn't want this child or the rest of the class to think that he had killed himself because he had 'realised' he was gay so I added - "I think he killed himself not because he was gay but because of how people reacted".

Extract from Weirwold field diary (8/2/12)

In moments like this I felt that I was making a valuable contribution to the discussion, even though this possibly exceeded my role as participant observer. However, I didn't want to hold back in case there was a misunderstanding so I spoke out in such instances. This may have affected how I came across in class (I usually sat and interacted with children at their table) but I felt that the positives out-weighted the negatives.

Having considered ethnographic relations I will now reflect on focus group participation.

3.4.3 Reflecting on focus group participation

Due to limited opportunities to have in-depth discussions with children in school, focus groups became a key method for exploring how children were responding to gender and sexualities education. Focus groups gave children time and space to reflect on lessons and expand upon meanings and understandings stemming from them. They also provided opportunities to discuss ethnographic observations more generally, particularly playground observations (Thomson, 2005). This allowed children to elaborate on events, which supplemented my own

interpretations (Emond, 2005; James *et al.*, 1998). I therefore found focus groups to be an essential methodology for research with children in school. I shall reflect on how focus groups were mutually beneficial in the final section but before then I want to reflect on a few issues, namely rewards/incentives and acting up, discussing sensitive topics, and 'child-centred' (?) activities.

Rewards or incentives and Acting up

There has been a longstanding debate in the 'new' social studies of childhood as to whether researchers should reward children for participating in research (see Fargas-Malet *et al.*, 2010). Like Cree *et al.* (2002) and others, I decided to give children a non-monetary reward (a chocolate biscuit and fruit drink) to show my gratitude, but I only informed them about this during the focus group since this may have acted as an incentive (Bushin, 2007). However, I found that word soon spread after the first focus group and the next day I had an influx of consent forms (usually from siblings). What had meant to be a reward had become an incentive and in repeat focus groups children would always inquire about 'rewards'. Indeed, many children stated that this is what they had enjoyed about the focus group on their questionnaire:

Did you enjoy the focus group? Yes No
Why? BECAUSE we get treats.

This left me feeling uneasy about what was motivating participation, but I could not give some children rewards and not others. In the end I decided that I still wanted to show my appreciation although I would make sure that participation was not solely dependent on 'treats'.

Like Hemming (2008), I found that children were more relaxed around me and would open up in ways that other children wouldn't if they were familiar with me. For instance, I found that themes of recuperation (i.e. recuperating heteronormativity) were more likely to surface in focus groups with children I had spent more time with. Conversely, children who had not seen me perform a 'least-adult' role were more likely to perform accepting attitudes rather than reveal more ambivalent attitudes. As such, there was a certain amount of 'acting up' and children would sometimes tell me what they thought I wanted to hear (Agar, 1996), as the following extract exemplifies:

SCHOOL: CUTLERS

- JH So what was the message of that story?
- Andrew Don't bullying people for what they like ... I think it was that
- Sarah Do you know what it was? (directed at me)

Focus group with Year 5 (22/11/12)

Despite insisting that I wasn't a teacher and that there were no right or wrong answers (Fargas-Malet *et al.*, 2010; Punch, 2002) children who were not that familiar with me would 'surface act' (see Hemming, 2011a in 2.2.5). However, this data was no less important and I would not want to suggest that one set of performances were more 'authentic' or 'valid' than any other.

Discussing sensitive topics

Reflecting on research with children, Horton (2001) discusses an enduring unease as a male researcher in primary school. Despite receiving 'police clearance' and putting specialist ethical research training into practice Horton reflects on a number of 'moments' during fieldwork in which he was made to feel uncomfortable in the presence of children as a well-liked young man²³. While my ethnographic experiences in school (similarly as a well-liked young man) do not correspond with those of Horton (2001) I did feel a similar sense of unease when discussing sensitive topics with children in focus groups. Like Horton, I received 'police clearance' to work with children and put specialist ethical research training into practice. However, I still felt slightly exposed at times when talking to the children about sexuality (children freely used terms like 'gay' and 'lesbian'). While conversations were always age-appropriate²⁴ I felt uneasy as a young man left alone with children²⁵ and I sometimes worried that our conversations might be taken out of context by passers-by who may have overheard us. This was particularly acute in one focus group when a child decided to talk about 'Moshi Monsters' and why his parents no longer allowed him to play the game due to reported fears of paedophiles. Like Horton, I could not have prepared myself for such unexpected remarks which left me feeling uneasy, although I felt I dealt with the situation appropriately.

²³ Horton (2001) cites discourses of paedophilia and 'stranger danger' that position men known to children as a 'high risk' group.

²⁴ We simply discussed class activities as delivered in an 'age-appropriate' way.

²⁵ Albeit within eye sight of a member of staff.

'Child-centred' (?) activities

Despite the growing popularity of 'child-centred' methods (see 3.2.2a) Punch warns that such techniques 'should not unquestionably be assumed to be more appropriate for conducting research with children' (2002: 323) and as Valentine (1999c) acknowledges, researchers need to be sensitive to differences in children's abilities to engage with different methodologies. I incorporated a range of materials, activities and games into focus groups (see 3.3.3b) and on the whole I found that they engaged children, stimulated discussion and allowed me to access deeper levels of meaning (Hennessy and Heary, 2005; Fargas-Malet *et al.*, 2010; Barker and Weller, 2003). For instance, children really enjoyed the 'different families' game and this allowed them to talk about abstract ideas (Thomas and O'Kane, 1998). However, the drawing activity wasn't as well received as some children were self-conscious about their drawing abilities (Barker and Weller, 2003). One child even screwed-up his drawing because he didn't feel it was good enough. I therefore introduced the drawing activity as an optional activity and gave children choice over how they expressed themselves.

Focus groups as mutually beneficial

I found that focus groups were mutually beneficial and once they got underway it was clear that children really valued the opportunity to express their opinions in small groups. As Matthews *et al.* note, researchers often 'make contact with an organisation, involve children, raise interest and expectation and give no feedback whatsoever. This can be likened to a 'raid', whereby the investigator moves in, plunders the results, swiftly moves out and, in this process, children are denigrated to little more than tokens' (1998: 316). While I ensured that children received feedback I found that they actually got more out of the focus groups themselves, as children's questionnaires (see section 3.3.3c) reveal:

Did you enjoy the focus group? Yes No
Why? It was good saying what I thought
and not holding it in.

Did you enjoy the focus group? Yes No
Why? Because the focus group really allowed
me to show my opinions.

Did you enjoy the focus group?

Yes

No

Why? Because it gave me a chance to share my ideas with a smaller group of people

Did you enjoy the focus group?

Yes

No

Why? I enjoyed this because I felt as if I could share what I thought with people who would listen.

Did you enjoy the focus group?

Yes

No

Why? Because we get to discuss important issues and it helps us to understand things that we may not understand.

Yes
I liked it because you got to say what you want and hear what everybody else thought. Also, it was fun talking to someone who understands what we say
Thx xxx

Children enjoyed the opportunity to say what they thought in what had been a safe and supportive environment. As one pupil commented, 'it was good saying what I thought and not holding it in'. For others, it was an opportunity to further explore important issues and find out what everybody else thought²⁶. Thus, rather than simply being a one-way 'data extraction' process I found focus groups to be mutually beneficial²⁷. As the extracts illustrate, children felt empowered by the opportunity to state – in front of each other - where they stood in relation to the school's anti-bullying and equalities stance. While I had not envisaged the research to be socially transformative I found that focus groups opened up a reflective space within the confines of rigid school life where children could collectively work their way through ideas

²⁶ While a previous part of this sub-section discussed the issue of children 'acting-up' I do not feel that this was the case here as children's behaviour - during and after the focus groups - confirmed what they had written in the questionnaires.

²⁷ Vanderbeck (2005) discusses mutually satisfying interactions with youth when undertaking fieldwork, although not in relation to focus groups.

introduced in class. For me, giving children the opportunity to negotiate understandings in peer groups was as valuable as the data generated and when it comes to sexualities research I see this as a way of empowering children as participants (Holt, 2010).

Having considered focus group participation I now reflect on interview dialogue.

3.4.4 Reflecting on interview dialogue

As noted in 3.3.4, interviews were often conducted in communal work spaces and had to fit around busy schedules (McDowell, 1998; Valentine, 1999c). This affected the duration of interviews and the nature of the conversation. In this final section I reflect on how this sometimes led to a stilted Q&A interview format more commonly associated with quantitative interviews (Bryman, 2008). However, I also acknowledge how good rapport allowed me to conduct several interviews in participant's homes, which led more in-depth discussion. I finish by reflecting on the potential of interviews to open up reflective spaces.

Forced Q&A interview format

Despite taking an exploratory, semi-structured approach to interviewing (Hemming, 2008; Valentine, 2005) I often found that I was forced to adopt a stilted (question and answer) interview format due to context and time constraints. This meant that the open discussion I had been hoping for, where respondents are able to raise issues and take the interview in unanticipated directions (Silverman, 2011) became more of a rigid exchange, as these opening remarks suggest:

Right, what do you want to ask me, GO!

Interview with Weirwold's Year 5 teacher (8/2/2012)

So you'll ask and I'll answer?

Interview with Cutler's Year 4 teacher (25/11/2011)

While I was still able to find out what I needed to know there were limited opportunities for probing (Rapley, 2004) and I often found that I prematurely interrupted interviewees in order to ask remaining questions. This meant that responses were sometimes short and snappy. However, I tried to arrange repeat interviews to follow-up loose ends but this was not always possible.

Establishing rapport and interviewing in participant's homes

Valentine notes how 'talking to people on their own 'territory', i.e. in their home, can facilitate a more relaxed conversation' (2005: 118) and I found that interviews conducted in participant's homes were the longest and most in-depth interviews. I interviewed Weirwold's Deputy Head teacher and Year 5 teacher at home and compared with initial interviews in school these were much more open and considered. Interviewing at home also meant that I could probe more and allow interviewees greater flexibility in taking the conversation in new directions, which meant they could raise issues and introduce themes they felt were important (Silverman, 2011). This produced rich accounts which informed subsequent interview schedules (Bryman, 2008). I found that good rapport was essential in gaining access to these interviewees outside of work and in a limited timeframe I was not able to establish the same level of rapport with others. This meant that remaining interviews were conducted in work.

Opening up spaces for reflection

While interviews in school were often stilted I found that in a few instances interviews opened up spaces for reflection within the rigid confines of school life. Much like focus groups, interviews had the potential to be mutually beneficial since teachers would often reflect on pedagogy in interviews and this presented an opportunity to review classroom practice. For instance, one teacher recognised how 'Diversity Week' themes could be incorporated into PSHE (Personal, Social and Health Education) and SEAL (Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning) at other times in the year when reflecting on the existing syllabus:

I don't know where in the curriculum it could come up again apart from PSHE and SEAL [...] next term it's 'good to be me' for their theme topic and I could incorporate different families and relationships and changes so next term this might be an opportunity to reintegrate these resources and I think that would be brilliant ... yes, that's just given me an idea actually to carry on using these resources for lesson plans in PSHE and SEAL lessons

Interview with Weirwold's Year 1 teacher (13/2/2013)

Moments like these demonstrate how mutually beneficial interviews could be since they provided teachers with time and space to reflect on existing practice. This allowed teachers to identify how they could continue to integrate gender and sexualities education into the school's broader curriculum.

3.5 CHAPTER CONCLUSION

This chapter has refined the research by outlining a set of research objectives that emerge from a critical appraisal of existing literature. These research objectives have guided the selection of research sites and have informed the qualitative, multi-method approach outlined in this chapter. I have demonstrated throughout this chapter how my theoretical and epistemological/ ontological position is in-keeping with this methodological approach and I have critically reflected on the research methodology so as to identify the strengths and weaknesses of research methods as they have been applied in this thesis. This acknowledges the methodological underpinning of data collection, which will be analysed and presented in subsequent chapters.

CHAPTER 4: THE FORMATION OF GENDER AND SEXUALITY EDUCATION

- *Educational spaces at the formal policy level* -

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4.0 CHAPTER INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 3 I refined the research in light of the literature review by outlining the research sites and research objectives which will be addressed through a theoretically-informed methodology. In this chapter I deal with the first research objective – to examine existing UK government legislation, guidance and support for primary gender and sexuality education, and to understand how these initiatives are mobilised by the non-profit sector - by drawing on ethnographic research/ interview data and undertaking textual/ discourse analysis. First, I analyse childhood discourses circulating in society that inspired Section 28 of the 1988 Local Government Act since these discourses have shaped contemporary UK government legislation and guidance (4.1). In section 4.2 I examine existing UK government legislation and guidance for primary gender and sexuality education following the repeal of Section 28 in England in 2003. In doing so I follow Ellis (2007) and Monk (2011) in paying particular attention to ‘conditions of possibility’ (Foucault, 1974) in which anti-homophobia and anti-bullying have emerged as a desexualised policy paradigm, leading to an essentialising curriculum. In the

remainder of the chapter I examine how Stonewall has secured government support and mobilised initiatives to create gender and sexualities curricula for English primary schools (4.3).

4.1 SECTION 28

Section 28 proved to be one of the most contentious legislative acts of the Thatcher Government (1979-90) and when it was introduced in 1988 much controversy and protest surrounded it (Thomas and Costigan, 1990). The amendment to the 1986 Local Government Act ('Prohibition on promoting homosexuality by teaching or by publishing material') stated that:

- (1) A local authority shall not –
 - (a) Intentionally promote homosexuality or publish material with the intention of promoting homosexuality;
 - (b) Promote the teaching in any maintained school¹ of the acceptability of homosexuality as a pretended family relationship

S.2A(1) Local Government Act 1986.

While Section 28 did not apply directly to schools its 'symbolic effect' (Epstein, 2000a) created a climate of fear and uncertainty which hung over schools for decades. This deterred teachers from discussing sexual diversity for fear of being seen to be 'promoting' homosexuality while for other teachers it endorsed homophobia (DePalma and Atkinson, 2008c; Epstein and Johnson, 1998; Johnson and Vanderbeck, 2014). Section 28 was repealed in England in 2003 but its symbolic action is often felt to be profound (Epstein, 2000a), not least for contemporary government legislation and guidance (Ellis, 2007; Johnson and Vanderbeck, 2014; Monk, 2011; Vanderbeck and Johnson, 2015). In this section I analyse childhood discourses circulating in society that inspired Section 28 since these discourses shape contemporary UK government legislation and guidance.

4.1.1 *Building towards Section 28*

The policing of sexuality brings it out into the open and involves the very production of sexuality itself

Foucault, 1978: 105

¹ See section 1.2 for a definition of maintained schools and the recent proliferation of academies and free schools.

While many commentators cite the introduction and repeal of Section 28 as defining moments for sexuality education in England (see DePalma and Atkinson, 2008a; 2008c; Elizabeth A *et al.*, 2010) it is important to see Section 28 as part of a longer history of ‘schooling sexualities’ (Epstein and Johnson, 1998). This includes placing Section 28 within a broader cultural history of sex education in the UK (Hall, 2009), which has been underpinned by religious interests and anxieties about the future of the child (Johnson and Vanderbeck, 2014; Moran, 2001; Monk, 2011; Vanderbeck and Johnson, 2015). As Moran (2001) explains, more comprehensive forms of sex education² emerged in British state schools in the second half of the twentieth century but these were placed firmly within the highly circumscribed framework of the nuclear family and stressed the importance of monogamous heterosexual relationships³ (also see Weeks, 1989). This ‘particularly resonant intersection of power/knowledge’ (Thomson, 1993: 219) ensured that ‘traditional family values’ were normalised in school long before the introduction of Section 28 (Stacey, 1991) with ‘disciplinary technology’ used to create ‘docile bodies’ (Foucault, 1977; 1980; 1991; see 2.1.2).

Heteronormative sex education continued in years preceding Section 28 and this further consolidated ‘traditional family values’ in schools as Section 28 came into force (see Epstein and Johnson, 1998; Moran, 2001). For instance, the Education (No.2) Act 1986 required Local Education Authorities (LEAs) and schools to ensure that any sex education provided had ‘due regard to moral considerations and the value of family life’ (S.46 Education (No.2) Act 1986, consolidated by S.403 Education Act 1996). However, as Johnson and Vanderbeck have shown, prior to Section 28 debates in parliament official sex education guidance issued to schools in 1986 presented ‘a relatively moderate view on the *teaching of homosexuality*’ (2014: 177; *emphasis added*). While ‘family values’ foregrounded sex education the Department of Education and Science *Health Education from 5 to 16* guidance (HMI Series: Curriculum Matters No.6, 1986) called for homosexuality to be dealt with ‘objectively and seriously’⁴ (*ibid.*, p.20).

For Johnson and Vanderbeck (2014) the tone of this statutory guidance stands in sharp contrast to the rhetoric that characterised debate later that year over a Private Members’ Bill introduced in the House of Lords by the Earl of Halsbury to ‘restrain Local Authorities from

² There has been no legal requirement to provide sex education in UK primary schools, although primary schools must adhere to statutory guidance (DfEE, 2000) if delivering sex education (see 4.1.2 and 4.2.2). However, the statutory basic curriculum for UK maintained secondary schools includes ‘provision for sex education for all registered pupils at the school’ (S.80(1)(c) Education Act 2002; see 4.22).

³ These ‘values’ are closely tied to religious interests (see Johnson and Vanderbeck, 2014).

⁴ Although the guidance also acknowledged that this was ‘difficult territory for teachers to traverse’ (Department of Education and Science, *Health Education from 5 to 16*, HMI Series: Curriculum Matters No.6, 1986: 20).

promoting homosexuality'⁵ (Local Government Act 1986 (Amendment) Bill 1986-1987; also see Thomas and Costigan, 1990). This was prompted by a 'moral panic' (Cohen, 1972) following two incidents in the Inner London Education Authority (ILEA)⁶ that came to national prominence in England during the late 1980s (Ellis, 2007; Johnson and Vanderbeck, 2014). The first concerned a primary school headteacher who taught her students that the love of Romeo and Juliet could be known as heterosexual (Ellis, 2007; Epstein and Johnson, 1997). As Epstein and Johnson (1997) explain, the implication was that heterosexuality was not 'natural' and that there were other possibilities (Foucault, 1978). This clashed with the 'revelation' that a picture book rendering other sexual possibilities intelligible (Butler, 1997b) had been available in an ILEA teachers' resource centre (Epstein, 2000a). What is more, *Jenny Lives with Eric and Martin* (Bösche and Hansen, 1983; see Figure 3) was 'hijacking' and 'undermining' traditional conceptions of 'the family' (Stacey, 1991) in rendering these other possibilities intelligible and, above all, this was 'promoted' by a Local Authority.

FIGURE 3 – JENNY LIVES WITH ERIC AND MARTIN



(From left) Cover, (in)famous bed scene and opening page

The Dutch children's book depicted a young girl's happy life with her two fathers and their good relationship with her birth mother.

Text on opening page (top to bottom): This is Jenny. She is five years old. This is Jenny's dad. He is called Martin. This is Eric. He lives with Jenny's dad.

Source: *Jenny lives with Eric and Martin* (Bösche and Hansen, 1983)

⁵ S.18(2) Education (No.2) Act 1986 had already limited the power of LEAs by placing primary control of sex education in the hands of school governing bodies. Johnson and Vanderbeck (2014: 176) refer to this manoeuvre as 'the first direct statutory intervention on sex education'.

⁶ ILEA was a centre of 'socialist influence' and had established itself as a pioneer of 'educational innovation' (Epstein and Johnson, 1997: 29).

According to Johnson and Vanderbeck (2014) the ‘Halsbury amendment’⁷, which is often regarded as a precursor of Section 28 was voted upon by the Commons but failed due to a lack of attendance, despite unanimous support from those attending⁸. Nevertheless, with the announcement of a General Election in 1987 the then Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher expressed her hope that similar legislation would be introduced in the next Parliament (*ibid*; also see Thomas and Costigan, 1990). Anticipating this, subsequent sex education guidance issued in 1987 evoked hostility towards homosexuality similar to the Halsbury amendment by stating that ‘there is no place in any school in any circumstances for teaching which advocates homosexual behaviour, which presents it as the “norm” or which encourages homosexual experimentation by pupils’ (Department of Education and Science, ‘Circular 11/87: Sex education in schools’, 1987; see Moran, 2001). According to this statutory guidance, which represented a huge shift from 1986 guidance, sex education should also help pupils to understand ‘the benefits of stable married and family life and the responsibilities of parenthood’ (*ibid*). Section 28 had not yet surfaced in the public realm but sex education had already established the limits of acceptable sexual knowledge⁹ and what would be regarded as ‘subjugated knowledge’¹⁰ (Foucault, 1974; 2003a).

A third term for the Conservative government meant that the Halsbury amendment was back on the agenda and in the same year as the new sex education guidance the government added a version of Lord Halsbury’s bill as an amendment to the Local Government Bill 1987-1988. Clause 28¹¹, as it came to be known, would prohibit the ‘intentional’ promotion of homosexuality - particularly in schools - by local authorities. Such promotion, according to the Conservative government, was ‘an unacceptable development’ (Thomas and Costigan, 1990: 9; also see Epstein and Johnson, 1998; Johnson and Vanderbeck, 2014; Smith, 1994). As Baroness Cox, a cross-bench member of the House of Lords put it:

By aggressive anti-heterosexist policies and by expenditure of large sums of public money on the active promotion of so-called “positive images” of homosexuality [local authorities] have caused grave offence to many parents and have thus violated the

⁷ See Johnson and Vanderbeck (2014) for further analysis of the ‘Halsbury amendment’ and the role of religious discourse.

⁸ The Bill passed through the House of Lords without any division (see Johnson and Vanderbeck, 2014).

⁹ Foucault (1974) uses the term *episteme* to encapsulate how discourses operate to limit what can be said, what can become objects of our knowledge, and what is accepted as knowledge (see Waitt, 2005).

¹⁰ Johnson and Vanderbeck (2014) use the phrase ‘non-statutory knowledge’ to indicate how knowledge about homosexuality is kept outside the requirements of the National Curriculum.

¹¹ The term ‘Clause’ is used when referring to a Parliamentary Bill. ‘Section’ refers to an Act of Parliament.

trust invested in them to provide schools which should be serving their children in *loco parentis*

Baroness Cox, 1987, cited in Thomas and Costigan, 1990: 8

By 'targeting activities inside and outside of school to glamorise homosexuality' local authorities had clearly overstepped the mark, and as MP Dr Rhodes Boyson continued, this called for 'a measure to control homosexual and lesbian propaganda in schools' (quoted in Thomas and Costigan, 1990: 9).

While Clause 28 was debated in the House of Lords and the House of Commons, public support and fierce opposition grew outside of Parliament. Proponents of Clause 28 mobilised parliamentary discourses in furthering claims that 'ordinary tax-payers money' had been misused by local authorities to 'promote homosexuality as acceptable sexuality, and as a lifestyle and family arrangement that was on an equal footing with heterosexuality' (Epstein and Johnson, 1998: 58). Some even went as far as claiming that homosexuality was being 'actively endorsed by local authorities as superior to heterosexuality and that school children, in particular, were targeted for this message' (Thomas and Costigan, 1990: 8). As such, local authorities were accused of 'influencing' children to become gay when, by default they would have been heterosexually inclined (Epstein, 2000a). Such discourses evoke Dionysian and Apollonian understandings of childhood (see 2.3.6) and notions of the 'developmental child' (see 2.1.1 and 2.2.5) with premature exposure to 'dangerous sexual knowledges' disrupting 'normal' sexual development during childhood. Thus, what was at stake for proponents of Clause 28 was improper infantile sexuality (see 2.1.2).

While proponents of Clause 28 were rehashing popular childhood discourses fierce opposition was mounting against it. As Thomas and Costigan (1990) explain, it was felt that Clause 28 brought the very legitimacy of gay sexuality into question and even though Ministers claimed that it did not violate human rights or perpetuate discrimination, civil liberty groups (for instance, the National Council for Civil Liberties¹²) and the gay rights movement¹³ (most notably Stonewall) thought otherwise and fiercely opposed it. And they were not on their own. Opposition to Clause 28 was expressed in many countries and numerous demonstrations took place throughout Britain while the clause was debated in Parliament (Figure 4). This was certainly not going to be a popular piece of legislation to pass and it was always going to divide

¹² Now known as *Liberty*.

¹³ Epstein and Johnson argue that Clause 28 'stimulated campaigns for lesbian and gay rights' (1998: 38).

opinion with strong support for the clause stacking up against fierce opposition (see Thomas and Costigan, 1990).

FIGURE 4 - THE NORTH WEST CAMPAIGN FOR LESBIAN AND GAY EQUALITY



(From left) Out And Proud Special Chartered Train to London poster, 30 April 1988; Rally in Albert Square; and Lesbians Come Together, 20th February 1988.

The North West Campaign for Lesbian and Gay Equality (NWCLGE) organised many events to lobby against Clause 28. The largest of these was the national march, rally and festival in Manchester on 20th February 1988.

Source: Manchester City Council collections and the People's History Museum

Those opposing Clause 28 argued that politicians had at best misunderstood local authorities' "positive image" policies or had at worst deliberately misrepresented such actions to gain political and popular support for a bill that was a product of anti-gay sentiment (Thomas and Costigan, 1990; Smith, 1994). In light of the adverse public reaction opponents claimed that "positive image" policies could not be more necessary, given the clear presence of prejudice towards gay and lesbian people that this 'propaganda' was, in fact, hoping to address (Epstein, 2000a; Johnson and Vanderbeck, 2014). Thus, rather than positioning homosexuality as superior to heterosexuality opponents of Clause 28 argued that "positive image" policies had *merely* positioned homosexuality so as to have 'equal validity and naturalness as heterosexuality' (Thomas and Costigan, 1990: 9). However, this in itself was problematic given the reaction against the primary school headteacher who had debunked heteronormativity and there was no escaping prevailing childhood discourses.

Back in Parliament, Clause 28 continued to be debated in both Houses (Smith, 1994). Eventually amendments to the clause were passed in the House of Lords, most notably the amendment which prohibited the 'intentional' promotion of homosexuality, and these

amendments were subsequently accepted by the House of Commons (*ibid*). The Local Government Bill received Royal Assent on 9th March 1988 and on 24th May - following a new public awareness of AIDS where gay people were linked explicitly with amorality and disease (Stacey, 1991; Thomson, 1993) - Section 28 of the Local Government Act 1988 came into force (Epstein and Johnson, 1998). Thomas and Costigan (1990) believe that it was within the context of this most recent 'moral panic' that Clause 28 debates really took off with Section 28 largely believed to have been fuelled by the popular misconception that homosexuals were responsible for the spread, if not the cause, of HIV and AIDS¹⁴. This has particular resonance with psychoanalytical accounts of 'borderwork' where disease and fear of contamination are used to police 'boundary maintenance' (Walkerdine, 1990), in this case between proper and improper sexuality (Foucault, 1978).

The second part of Section 28 points towards this connection between homosexuality and the onset of HIV/AIDS, which arguably galvanised pro-Section 28 debates (Thomas and Costigan, 1990):

(2) Nothing in subsection (1) above¹⁵ shall be taken to prohibit the doing of everything for the purpose of treating or preventing the spread of disease

S.2A(2) Local Government Act 1986.

This second part of Section 28 would be particularly significant for sex education with limited, subsequent discussion of homosexuality in schools focusing entirely on disease¹⁶ (Monk, 1998). While Section 28 did not apply to governing bodies, who were responsible for sex education, like schools it was often felt that it did apply to them (Ellis, 2007; Johnson and Vanderbeck, 2014; Vanderbeck and Johnson, 2015; Moran, 2001). This was partly down to the 'sloppy' and 'imprecise' nature of the wording of Section 28, which left meaning and interpretation wide open (Epstein, 2000a; Thomas and Costigan, 1990). The term 'promotion' was amongst the most contentious phrases and even after prolonged debate it remained unclear exactly what this meant (Thomas and Costigan, 1990). Yet this term had a significant impact on how the legislation was interpreted and implemented (Epstein, 2000a). This was

¹⁴ More recently, Johnson and Vanderbeck (2014) have shown how religious morality also featured prominently in the passage of Section 28.

¹⁵ See section 4.1.

¹⁶ Under the Education Act 1996 there is a requirement for students at maintained schools to learn about sexually transmitted infections including HIV/AIDS (S.579(1) Education Act 1996). This also continues to be a key feature of non-statutory Sex and Relationships Education (SRE) guidance (see Monk, 2001; Johnson and Vanderbeck, 2014; Vanderbeck and Johnson, 2015).

particularly evident in schools, which would not deal with homophobia or present homosexuality as acceptable for fear of breaching Section 28 (Epstein, 2000a; Johnson and Vanderbeck, 2014; Moran, 2001). As many commentators observe, this had (and in many ways continues to have) a profound impact on schools, teachers and pupils (DePalma and Atkinson, 2008a; 2009a; 2010; Douglas *et al.*, 1998; 1999; Ellis and High, 2004; Mason and Palmer, 1996; Rivers, 1997; 2001; 2004).

4.1.2 Repeal of Section 28

The fundamental aim of Section 28, as Jeffrey Weeks argues, was to insist on ‘a return to the narrow interpretation of the 1967 [Sexual Offences] Act’ which legalized homosexual acts among consenting adults in private, accepting gay sex as long as it remained ‘private’, was practised only by those coming within the law’s definition of an ‘adult’, and was not part of the sexual knowledge made accessible to children and adolescents¹⁷

Moran, 2001: 77-8, citing Weeks, 1989: 295

According to Johnson and Vanderbeck (2014) the Labour Party pledged to repeal Section 28 in its 1992 general election manifesto¹⁸, although attempts to repeal it started in 2000 after Labour were re-elected in May 1997. By this time the Labour Party had a small number of openly gay and lesbian MPs which meant that ‘gay rights’ was firmly on Labour’s parliamentary agenda and, in time, a repeal of Section 28 - in the Local Government Bill 1999-2000 - would be part of their reform programme (Moran, 2001). However, repealing Section 28 divided public opinion once again and it soon became clear that any attempt to revoke Section 28 of the Local Government Act 1988 would be met with firm resistance, particularly from religious leaders (see Johnson and Vanderbeck, 2014; Wise, 2000).

While Section 28 did not apply to schools Moran (2001) notes how a central argument for retaining Section 28 revolved around an emphasis on what gets taught in schools. As Moran explains:

[T]he parliamentary debates, public campaigns and media coverage of the Section 28 debate often focused on the ‘gay lobby’s crusade’ to make children ‘read textbooks promoting homosexuality’. If Section 28 was repealed, it was alleged, children would

¹⁷ S.1(1) Sexual Offences Act 1967.

¹⁸ *It’s Time to Get Britain Working Again*, London: Labour Party, 1992.

be ‘force-fed gay sex education’ through the use of ‘gay sex packs’ and ‘homosexual role playing’

Moran, 2001: 74; quoting Baroness Blatch, Lords *Hansard*, 23 March 2000 and Desmond Swayne, House of Commons *Hansard*, 30 March 2000 - ‘Guidance from the Lords’ and ‘Keep the Clause’

The argument for retaining Section 28 thus relied heavily on childhood discourses evoked in earlier debates and parallel debates over the Adoption and Children Act (ACA) 2002¹⁹ with those against the repeal ‘motivated by the desire to ‘protect’ children from the supposedly pernicious influences of the adult world, specifically the sexual world’ (Moran, 2001: 75). The force of this argument relies on Dionysian and Apollonian notions of childhood, which have been linked to broader ideas about the control and regulation of sexual discourse in modern western societies (Elias, 1994; Jenks, 1996; Stoler, 1995; Valentine, 1996). This dominant twentieth-century western imagining of children as vulnerable, incompetent and in need of protection influences how we think about parenting and the way children should be brought up (Aitken, 2000; Alanen, 1990; Valentine, 1997a; 1997b; 2003). In this instance it could be argued that these conflicting notions have combined to consolidate an already powerful discourse of the sexually innocent, yet potentially corruptible child (Epstein, 1999; Moran, 2001; Renold, 2005; Robinson, 2008; Valentine, 2000). In this context the adult-child binary serves to naturalise responsibilities that adults have for safeguarding children from a ‘corrupting adult world’ (Aitken, 2001; Holloway and Valentine, 2000a; Valentine, 1996). Yet paradoxically, under the guise of ‘protecting’ children we actually put them at risk (Cullen and Sandy, 2009; Epstein and Johnson, 1998; Kehily, 2002; see 2.1.2; 2.3.1 and 2.3.6).

As Moran recognises, ‘this systematizing of the discourse on sexuality places great emphasis on the role of education in both maintaining childhood ‘innocence’ and dictating when children should be deprived of it’ (2001: 76). In the debate about the repeal of Section 28 it was this, in combination with an overlapping discourse of adolescent sexuality that informed the inter-connected argument for retaining Section 28 and a higher homosexual age of consent²⁰ (Epstein *et al.*, 2000; Moran, 2001; Waites, 2000). The entwined and inseparable nature of these two debates proved to be problematic for those leading the campaign against

¹⁹ In opposing legal reforms that would benefit same-sex couples, religious groups were simultaneously perpetuating discourses of child harm in relation to the dangers posed to children by exposure to homosexuality (Johnson and Vanderbeck, 2014).

²⁰ In decriminalising homosexual acts in private between two men the Sexual Offences Act 1967 imposed a higher homosexual age of consent of twenty-one years compared to a heterosexual age of consent of sixteen years (S.1(1) Sexual Offences Act 1967).

Section 28 with what Epstein *et al.* (2000) call the ‘age of fixation’ (the age when sexual orientation might be said to be fixed) proving to be a real stumbling block for them²¹. Thus, while some argued that homosexuality was not the product of environmental factors but was an unchangeable element of a person’s biology, others claimed that this reinforced a dubiously essentialist notion of sexual orientation (Evans, 1995; also see Stacey, 1991). This made the debate over a possible repeal of Section 28 as heated as the original debate had been over the introduction of the clause (Epstein *et al.*, 2000).

That said, The Labour Government were still keen to repeal Section 28 as this came under their reform programme, which at the time also included equalizing the heterosexual and homosexual ages of consent (at 16 years)²² and the admission of homosexuals into the armed forces (see Moran, 2001). However, after attempts to repeal Section 28 in the Local Government Bill 1999-2000 were blocked by a campaign in the House of Lords led by Baroness Young - an influential campaigner for ‘Christian values’ (Christian Institute, 2012) - it became clear that a compromise would have to be reached with religious groups²³ to get a repeal through the House of Lords (Johnson and Vanderbeck, 2014). The compromise in England with the Church of England²⁴, the Catholic Education Service and other religious groups revolved around new guidance on sex education that would be put in place following the repeal of Section 28 (also see Vanderbeck and Johnson, 2015). As I illustrate below, this statutory guidance, which remains unchanged to date would reaffirm the importance of ‘marriage and traditional family life’ (Reeves, 2000).

The Department for Education and Employment²⁵, *Sex and Relationships Education (SRE)*²⁶ *Guidance* 2000 (DfEE 0116/2000) requires schools to teach about ‘the significance of marriage and stable relationships as key building blocks of community and society’ (§1.21). In addition to this, when compared to Section 28’s injunction against promoting homosexuality the statutory guidance contains what Vanderbeck and Johnson describe as the ‘ostensibly more neutral statement’ (2015: 5) that there ‘should be no direct promotion of sexual orientation’ (§1.30). However, given that ‘sexual orientation’ is often conflated with non-heterosexuality

²¹ Although at this time powerful, long-standing religious arguments about the dangers to children of homosexuality lost their rhetorical self-sufficiency in the context of ACA 2002 (Johnson and Vanderbeck, 2014).

²² An equal age of consent became law in January 2001 under the Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act 2001.

²³ A range of religious groups participated in well-funded campaigns opposing the repeal in order to, it was commonly claimed, protect ‘vulnerable young people’ (Christian Institute, 1999; see Vanderbeck and Johnson, 2015).

²⁴ The Church of England agreed not to campaign against the repeal in exchange for this new statutory guidance on sex education (Vanderbeck and Johnson, 2015).

²⁵ Now Department for Education (DfE).

²⁶ A term used in guidance but not statute.

the implication here is that while the direct promotion of heterosexual marriage goes unnoticed ambiguity surrounding teaching about homosexuality may persist (Monk, 2001; Vanderbeck and Johnson, 2015). This was further consolidated in an amendment to the Education Act 1996, which was also part of the compromise (Johnson and Vanderbeck, 2004). This states that when sex education is provided to pupils they must ‘learn the nature of marriage and its importance for family life and the bringing up of children’ while at the same time be ‘protected from teaching and materials which are inappropriate having regard to the age and the religious and cultural background of the pupils concerned’ (S.403(1A) Education Act 1996, as amended by S.148(4) Learning and Skills Act 2000).

The Labour Government agreed to these compromises and in November 2003 Section 28 of the Local Government Act 1988 was repealed in England²⁷ (see Ellis, 2007; Epstein, 2000a; Moran, 2001). However, despite claims that opposition to repeal was ‘the “last ditch” attempts of organised religions to have a say in the secular world of politics’ (Wise, 2000) Johnson and Vanderbeck are right to refute this when they argue that in retrospect ‘this assessment significantly underestimated the extent to which religious interests would continue to influence the legal frameworks that govern the circulation of information about homosexuality in schools’ (2014: 185). Indeed, the legacy of Section 28 persists in the negotiated framework for sex education (also see Vanderbeck and Johnson, 2015).

Having established the significance of continuing heteronormative sex education and the role of childhood discourses in Section 28 debates I now focus on how this has shaped contemporary UK government legislation and guidance.

4.2 POST-SECTION 28 LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE

In this section I examine existing UK government legislation and guidance for primary gender and sexuality education following the repeal of Section 28 in England in 2003. First, I examine government legislation²⁸ which opens up conceptual space for gender and sexuality education in English primary schools (4.2.1). In light of the previous section I further Ellis’s (2007) critique of how sexualities have become ‘strategically essentialised’ (Fuss, 1989) in legislation since the repeal of Section 28. I continue with this line of argument when analysing government guidance (4.2.2) where I show how anti-homophobia and anti-bullying emerge as a desexualised policy paradigm, which leads to an essentialising curriculum (Ellis, 2007; Monk,

²⁷ S.122 Local Government Act 2003 repealed S.2A Local Government Act 1986, as amended by Local Government 1988.

²⁸ Unless otherwise stated, I refer to primary legislation.

2011). In the final sub-section I explore how Ofsted (Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills) reinforces this approach through its revised inspection framework (4.2.3).

4.2.1 Government legislation

Many commentators cite the 2003 repeal of Section 28 as a major turning point for 'gay rights' which paved the way for 'LGBT equalities' legislation in England (see DePalma and Atkinson, 2008a; 2008c; Elizabeth A *et al.*, 2010). These authors note how the 'symbolic action' of repealing Section 28 erased concerns that schools had over the legitimacy of broaching sexuality and they observe how subsequent legislation has opened up conceptual space for gender and sexuality education in English schools. However, what these 'celebratory accounts'²⁹ lack is critical engagement along the lines of Ellis (2007) and Monk (2011), although elsewhere DePalma and Atkinson briefly acknowledge how 'government policy and guidance tends to reduce [sexualities equality] to an anti-homophobia and anti-transphobia – and more explicitly, a general anti-bullying – stance' (2009c: 2). Thus, in this section I extend Ellis (2007) and Monk's (2011) analysis by providing a comprehensive examination and critique of existing legislation informing sexuality education.

While not informing sexuality education *directly* Ellis (2007) notes how the Sexual Offences Act 2003 almost simultaneously accompanied the repeal of Section 28 in England. As Ellis explains, this 'criminalised *any* sexual activity between young people under 16, ranging from touching to sexual intercourse'³⁰ (2007: 25). Earlier I quoted Moran (2001) who argued that 'the fundamental aim of Section 28 [...] was to insist on 'a return to the narrow interpretation of the 1967 [Sexual Offences] Act' which legalized homosexual acts among consenting adults in private, accepting gay sex as long as it remained 'private', was practised only by those coming within the law's definition of an 'adult', and was not part of the sexual knowledge made accessible to children and adolescents' (Moran, 2001: 77-8, citing Weeks, 1989: 295). Thus, it would appear that the Sexual Offences Act 2003 would hark back to the fundamental aim of Section 28. When viewed alongside amendments to the Learning and Skills Act 2000 (section 4.1.2) it becomes even clearer that a series of precautionary measures were already in place prior to any 'progressive' 'post-Section 28' legislation. For Ellis 'the implicit messages to teachers and young people was clear: sexual identities continue to be subject to surveillance

²⁹ This *No Outsiders* literature is aimed at practitioners and tends to celebrate, rather than critique, developments in legislation and guidance that support work around LGBT equalities in schools.

³⁰ S.13(1) Sexual Offences Act 2003 states that '[a] person under 18 commits an offence if he [sic] does anything which would be an offence under any of sections 9 to 12 if he were aged 18'.

by the state, sexualities are the property of “adulthood”, and heteronormativity remains unnameable and unchallenged’ (2007: 25).

From this point on Ellis (2007) claims that sexualities have either become ‘erased’, ‘unspoken’ or ‘statically essentialised’ (Fuss, 1989) in government legislation with anti-homophobia and anti-bullying emerging as a desexualised policy paradigm (also see Monk, 2011). The first piece of legislation, surfacing a month after the repeal of Section 28 in December 2003 was the Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003. This would allow teachers to be ‘open’ about their sexual orientation without fear of discrimination³¹. This initial secondary legislation meant that homosexual teachers could be ‘out’ in school without fear of losing their jobs³² (Warwick *et al.*, 2004) and the significant role of openly gay and lesbian teachers as a catalyst for change in schools has been remarked upon (see DePalma and Jennett, 2010; DePalma and Atkinson, 2009b; Jackson, 2007; Quinlivan, 2006).

A year later the Department for Education and Skills (DfES)³³ issued the guidance document *Every Child Matters: Change for Children in Schools* 2004 (DfES 1089/2004). This required Local Authorities to make provision for ‘every child, whatever their background or circumstances to have the support they need to be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution and achieve economic well-being’ (DfES, 2004: 5). This includes meeting the needs of those *deemed* most vulnerable, with children who grow up to identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (as well as children with LGBT family members) often considered to be a ‘vulnerable group’ (see DePalma and Atkinson, 2008c). In this regard, *Every Child Matters: Change for Children in Schools* stipulates that young people should ‘feel safe from bullying and discrimination [and] choose not to bully or discriminate’ (DfES, 2004: 5). When combined with the *Every Child Matters* (DfES, 2003) Green Paper emphasis on ‘preventing disadvantaged outcomes’ (DfES, 2003: 7), rather than intervening at a later stage, primary education becomes an obvious site for proactive measures that undercut discrimination and bullying. While this puts a specific onus on primary schools to address ‘LGBT equalities’ it does so through identifying lesbian and gay youth as “at risk” (Quinlivan, 2002; 2006). This, Quinlivan argues, ‘allows them to be classified as fitting within a deviant model which argues that they “need help”’ (Quinlivan, 2002: 25). For Monk (2011) this reinforces notions of the ‘the tragic gay’ with

³¹ This secondary legislation outlawed direct and indirect discrimination in training and in employment on grounds of sexual orientation, and this applied to all staff in schools and nurseries (Part II Discrimination in Employment and Vocational Training, Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003; see Elizabeth A *et al.*, 2010; Charlesworth, 2004; also see NUT, 2007).

³² The Local Education Authority in Bristol encouraged its teachers to disclose their sexual orientation in guidance to schools on the repeal of Section 28 (see Charlesworth, 2004: 12).

³³ Now Department for Education (DfE).

the child as victim becoming double victimhood in the context of homophobic bullying (see 2.3.2b).

While children with LGBT family members are often regarded as a 'vulnerable group' the introduction of the Civil Partnership Act 2005 a year later would strengthen this assertion. This radically repositioned school responsibility towards same-sex couples *in civil partnerships* by placing an onus on them to recognise and showcase these same-sex families like they would any other (see Elizabeth A *et al*, 2010). This was given even greater prominence with the introduction of the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013 (MSSCA 2013). However, while this has allowed primary schools to introduce the idea of same-sex couples this has been done within the context of monogamous heteronormative nuclear relationships (DePalma and Atkinson, 2009b; Rofes, 2000; Youdell, 2009; 2011). This has raised questions over what is being held up as models of acceptability for sexual dissidents (Nixon, 2009) with 'homonormativity' (Stryker, 2008) often used to encompass this sense of the 'acceptable homosexual' (see 2.3.5).

Legislation supporting gender equality also emerged alongside these key developments in sexualities legislation. The *Gender Equality Duty: Code of Practice for England and Wales 2007*³⁴, which was introduced as part of the Equality Act 2006 requires schools to promote gender equality in the same way as they do 'race' and dis/ability (§1.24; also see Elizabeth A *et al*, 2010). Furthermore, the Equal Opportunities Commission³⁵ makes it clear in their guidance to schools (*The Gender Equality Duty and Schools: Guidance for Public Authorities in England 2007*³⁶) that to do this without addressing homophobia and its links with sexism would be impossible³⁷ (EOC/EHRC, 2007). The relationship between gender and sexuality is made even clearer when they add that children seen by their peers to be breaking gender norms are frequently subjected to homophobic bullying³⁸ (*ibid*). Indeed, subsequent gender equality legislation has further consolidated schools' statutory obligations for addressing homophobia via gender-based bullying (i.e. Gender Recognition Act 2004). This continuing naturalisation of anti-homophobia and anti-bullying as 'an unproblematic 'common-sense' good' (Monk, 2011:

³⁴ §1.3 declares that '[t]his Code of Practice is a 'statutory' code and has been laid before Parliament before taking effect'.

³⁵ An independent non-departmental public body set up under the Sex Discrimination Act (1975) with statutory powers to enforce this act and other gender equality legislation (now part of *Equality and Human Rights Commission*, EHRC).

³⁶ The document states that '[t]his guidance has been developed to supplement the gender equality duty [statutory] Code of Practice in England and Wales' (EOC/EHRC, 2007: 3).

³⁷ For example, the guidance states that '[s]chools should also understand the link between gender stereotyping and homophobic bullying' (EOC/EHRC, 2007: 12).

³⁸ For example, the guidance highlights that '[a]ttitudes such as "real boys don't try in class" often lead to homophobic bullying of children who are seen by their peers to break gender norms' (EOC/EHRC, 2007: 12).

182) may allow homophobic bullying to 'become a *legitimate* object of social concern' (*ibid*: 181) but as Monk warns this 'determin[es] the construction of the harms focused on and the legitimacy of the means used to challenge them' (2011: 196; see 2.3.2b).

The introduction of a single Equality Act 2010 has more recently continued this agenda of tackling disadvantage and discrimination based on 'race', gender, dis/ability, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief (§4), and even singles out gender and sexual orientation as deserving particular attention³⁹ (§12(2)(a); see Elizabeth A *et al.*, 2010). *The Public Sector Equality Duty* (PSED) (S.149 Equality Act 2010) - part of the Equality Act which commenced in 2011 - reinforced the earlier *Duty to Promote Community Cohesion* (2007) by again highlighting gender and sexual orientation as crucial areas to be recognised in school programmes (DCSF, 2007). This requires schools and other public bodies to have due regard to the need to 'eliminate discrimination', 'advance equality of opportunity' and 'foster good relations' (S.149(1)(a)-(c) Equality Act 2010)⁴⁰. As with *Every Child Matters*, primary education becomes an obvious site for these proactive strategies. Stonewall add that *The Public Sector Equality Duty*, in particular, requires schools and academies to be more *proactive* and to go beyond non-discrimination by advancing equality (Interview with Senior Education Officer, 2013). For Stonewall, this means *preventing* homophobic bullying and language, and talking about different families in primary school (*ibid*). I will explore Stonewall's role in operationalising government legislation in section 4.3 but it is worth noting how equalities legislation is used yet again to forward homophobic bullying and representations of sexual dissidents in monogamous heteronormative nuclear relationships.

All of this legislation has been given greater prominence with the introduction of the Education and Inspections Act 2006. This legislation placed a duty on Ofsted to ensure that schools⁴¹ *proactively prevent* all forms of bullying, including homophobic bullying⁴² (§89(1)(b); see Elizabeth A *et al.*, 2010). Ofsted were already responsible for ensuring that schools complied with *Every Child Matters* (DfES, 2003) so the Education and Inspections Act 2006 strengthened Ofsted's obligations for ensuring that schools have comprehensive anti-bullying and anti-discriminatory measures in place (DePalma and Atkinson, 2008c). Homophobic bullying, in particular, has been given greater attention more recently with the introduction of specific

³⁹ Although the ambiguous distinction between curriculum content and manner of delivery remains a source of dispute (see Vanderbeck and Johnson, 2015).

⁴⁰ Moreover, the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011 require public authorities to publish objectives related to the PSED.

⁴¹ Ofsted inspects UK maintained schools, free schools and academies.

⁴² Part 7: Discipline, Behaviour and Exclusion states that '[t]he head teacher of a relevant school must determine measures to be taken with a view to encouraging good behaviour and respect for others on the part of the pupils and, in particular, preventing all forms of bullying amongst pupils' (S.89(1)(b) Education and Inspections Act 2006).

briefing notes for Ofsted inspectors on *Exploring the school's actions to prevent and tackle homophobic and transphobic bullying* (Ofsted, 2012c). I will return to Ofsted's role in enforcing government legislation in section 4.2.3 but for now it is worth noting how Ofsted underscore the *proactive prevention of homophobic bullying* which again naturalises this approach while making it highly relevant for primary education.

In this section I have shown how post-Section 28 legislation increasingly focuses on anti-homophobia and anti-bullying stances. I suggest that this is the outcome of continuing heteronormative sex education and other precautionary measures, and popular childhood discourses circulating in Section 28 debates. Thus, following Ellis (2007) and Monk (2011) I argue that 'conditions of possibility' (Foucault, 1974) in which childhood sexuality has been disavowed has resulted in a desexualised policy paradigm. In the next section I show how these discourses are refined in government guidance issued to schools.

4.2.2 Government guidance

The vast majority of non-statutory government guidance informing 'gender and sexuality education'⁴³ was issued after the repeal of Section 28. However, one contradictory statutory guidance document (DfEE, 2000) – the main statutory guidance for sex education – was in circulation before the repeal of Section 28. The Department for Education and Employment, *Sex and Relationships Education Guidance 2000*, which was analysed in an earlier section (4.1.2) stipulates that when SRE programmes⁴⁴ are provided they must 'make sure that the needs of all pupils are met' (§1.30). Furthermore, the guidance states that 'teachers should be able to deal honestly and sensitively with sexual orientation' (*ibid*; see Elizabeth A *et al.*, 2010). A 2002 Ofsted report on *Sex and Relationships* (Ofsted, 2002) reinforced the above when it recommended that:

Schools make sure that values relevant to education about sex and relationships are consistently adhered to within the school so that, for example, homophobic attitudes do not go unchallenged. Teachers should be given further guidance about content and methods in teaching about sexuality

Ofsted, 2002: 34

⁴³ This is not a term used in law or statutory/non-statutory guidance. Rather, I use this term in this section to refer to statutory and (mainly) non-statutory guidance which, when grouped together, could be seen to be producing 'gender and sexuality education'.

⁴⁴ Despite campaigns (i.e. Sex Education Forum) for compulsory SRE in UK maintained schools (primary and secondary), academies and free schools SRE remains a non-statutory subject (see NCB, 2008).

In the same report Ofsted noted that:

In too many secondary schools homophobic attitudes among pupils often go unchallenged. The problem is compounded when derogatory terms about homosexuality are used in everyday language in school and their use passes unchallenged by staff. Where problems arise, staff have often had insufficient guidance on the interpretation of school values and what constitutes unacceptable language or behaviour

Ofsted, 2002: 10

The endurance of homophobic attitudes into secondary school points to negligence in primary education where such outcomes could have been prevented. However, this report was neglected at both primary and secondary level (Moran, 2001). This could be put down to the 'symbolic effect' (Epstein, 2000a) - or what Johnson and Vanderbeck (2014) refer to as the 'chilling effect' - of Section 28 and/or concerns about dealing with *sex-uality* - particularly at primary level - within a *Sex and Relationships* context, given the tendency to automatically associate sexual identity with sexual acts (Sears, 1999). This 'hyper-sexualisation of gay and lesbian sexualities', DePalma and Jennett note, 'clashes strongly with the widespread myth in primary schools of the asexual and naive child' (2010: 19) which explains why this report and aspects of the statutory guidance may have been neglected, given the prominence of these childhood discourses during Section 28 debates. Popular assumptions about the sexual ignorance of children have of course been challenged more recently in research which shows how children's awareness of sexuality interacts with adults' discomfort and denial of it (Blaise, 2005a; Renold, 2005; see 2.3.1). However, the force of these prevailing discourses denying childhood sexuality continue to run up against attempts to include sexual diversity in SRE programmes (NCB, 2008). As such, SRE remains a contentious place to acknowledge diverse sexualities.

In light of the above I would argue that it has taken more recent non-statutory government guidance issued after the repeal of Section 28 to allow primary schools to meaningfully engage with sexual diversity. However, as I have shown, this reinforces 'strategically essentialised' sexualities and approaches based on anti-homophobia and anti-bullying (Ellis, 2007; Monk, 2011). Thus, government guidance informing gender and sexualities curriculum continues to naturalise these approaches. In this section I will demonstrate how this occurs in relation to specific government guidance issued to schools.

The first non-statutory guidance for primary school work around gender and sexuality was *Bullying: Don't Suffer in Silence* (DfES, 2002), which was published in anticipation of the repeal of Section 28. For the first time, this guidance recognised 'homophobic bullying', which was a significant development in itself. Of equal importance was that bullying was recognised regardless of whether it is perceived or actual. As the guidance states:

Pupils do not necessarily have to be lesbian, gay or bisexual to experience such bullying. Just being different can be enough

DfES, 2002: 15

Homophobic bullying is therefore construed as being applicable to all children who are likely to be subjected to homophobic insults just for being different. While this allows homophobic bullying to be seen as relevant at primary level it immediately reduces discussion of dissident sexualities to this limiting conceptualisation, to 'a harm that can be spoken of' (Monk, 2011: 181). As noted earlier, this may allow homophobic bullying to 'become a *legitimate* object of social concern' (*ibid*: 181) but as Monk warns this 'determin[es] the construction of the harms focused on and the legitimacy of the means used to challenge them' (2011: 196; see 2.3.2b).

Following the publication of *Bullying: Don't Suffer in Silence* the government published *Stand Up for Us: Challenging Homophobia in Schools* (DfES/DOH, 2004). This highly influential document was produced by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) and the Department of Health (DOH)⁴⁵, and was the first government guidance to be released to schools following the repeal of Section 28. The non-statutory guidance encouraged the development of a 'whole school' approach for challenging homophobia and it reiterated that primary education is a crucial site for proactive interventions. As Jennett argued in *Stand Up For Us*:

All schools, particularly early years settings and primary schools, are ideally placed to challenge homophobia because they make a significant contribution to the development of values and attitudes in young children that are likely to be highly resistant to change in later life

DfES/DOH, 2004: 4

⁴⁵ Now DH.

While this continued to make sexuality relevant to primary schools it did so through reinforcing anti-homophobia and anti-bullying stances, and as Elizabeth A *et al.* (2010) note it was no coincidence that this guidance was introduced in November 2004 to coincide with the launch of *National Anti-Bullying Week* (NCB, 2004). It is also important to note that *Stand Up for Us* was developed within the Healthy Schools framework as a result of the involvement of the Department of Health. This meant that as well as justifying interventions within an anti-bullying context the guidance could also make use of psy-discourses⁴⁶ to further validate proposed strategies. Indeed, as DePalma and Atkinson remark, the guidance ‘demonstrate[s] how addressing homophobia can help schools meet their statutory guidance for student well-being’ (2008c: xiv). However, this utilisation of psy-discourses in furthering a homophobic bullying agenda has been criticised, most notably by Ellis (2007).

For Ellis (2007: 22) what is ‘most remarkable about this document is the association of homosexuality with being “at risk” within the very target-driven, market-oriented school reforms that have characterised education policy in England for the last 16 years’ (see Apple, 1990; Quinlivan, 2002; 2006). As Ellis explains, the guidance highlights how young people who are bullied (sexuality erased from the outset) suffer from ‘anxiety and misery’ which affects their ‘capacity to learn’ (not defined). Yet ‘content secure pupils are more likely to thrive academically and continue to do so in adult life’ if schools ensure that they ‘enjoy and achieve’ (DfES/DOH, 2004: 9). Schools, therefore, have ‘fulfilled their responsibility if they pay attention to the safety of their students’ (Ellis, 2007: 22) since student participation leads to ‘economic well-being’ (DfES/DOH, 2004: 9). What concerns Ellis is the erasure of any understanding of sexuality in this discourse. As Ellis puts it, ‘*Stand Up for Us* is a plea for tolerance that doesn’t speak about *what* is to be tolerated (2007: 23). More crucially, ‘it fails to develop teachers’ and students’ understandings of how heteronormativity or compulsory heterosexuality create the very conditions in which homophobia is produced’ (*ibid*). Thus, as Quinlivan (2002, 29) has argued this approach re-pathologises queer students ‘whilst normative constructions of heterosexuality remain unchallenged’ (also see Monk, 2011 and 2.3.2b).

Despite this critique *Stand Up for Us* remains an influential cornerstone document for gender and sexuality education in UK schools, and while perpetuating psy-discourses through ‘managerialist language’ (Ellis, 2007: 22) it has allowed homophobic bullying to become ‘a *legitimate* object of social concern’ (Monk, 2011: 181). Arguably this was a necessary strategic course of action given Section 28 debates although this guidance would set a precedent with

⁴⁶ Discursive, psychological disadvantaged outcomes widely associated with bullying (i.e. lack of self-esteem, becoming withdrawn and self-harming) that become the yard stick against which interventions are evaluated and ‘success’ determined (see section 2.3.2b and Monk, 2011).

future non-statutory government guidance reinforcing anti-bullying approaches. Indeed, 3 years after *Stand Up for Us* the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF)⁴⁷ produced *Safe to Learn: Embedding anti-bullying work in schools* (DCSF, 2007). As Elizabeth A *et al.* (2010) observed, the DCSF simply incorporated earlier guidance on homophobic bullying from *Stand Up for Us* into their *Safe to Learn* guidance. Thus, rather than offer alternative strategies *Safe to Learn* continued to emphasise anti-bullying approaches and schools' responsibilities in this regard. As the guidance reiterates:

Schools have a legal duty to ensure *homophobic bullying* is dealt with in schools [as] homophobic bullying can have a negative impact on young people

DCSF, 2007: 14-15; *emphasis added*

Like *Stand Up for Us* the guidance lists high absenteeism, low self-esteem, poor attainment, self-harm and contemplation of suicide as 'negative impacts' before noting how '[y]oung people who experience homophobic bullying are unlikely to fulfil the objectives of *Every Child Matters*' (DCSF, 2007: 15)⁴⁸. This reference to *Every Child Matters* (DfES, 2003) is particularly important given the prominence of this legislation and its onus on *preventing* bullying (see 4.2.1). Thus, the guidance reiterates that homophobic bullying is relevant to primary schools citing homophobic language as a form of bullying and pupils who are bullied for having gay parent/carers or family members (note continued erasure of childhood sexuality and heterosexism).

Finally, as DePalma and Jennett (2010) note, latest non-statutory government guidance, such as *Transphobic bullying: Could you deal with it in your school?* (GIREs, 2008); *Combating Transphobic Bullying in Schools* (Home Office, 2008); and *Guidance for schools on preventing and responding to sexist, sexual and transphobic bullying* (DCSF, 2009)⁴⁹ do show that 'the problem', at least understood in terms of homophobic and transphobic bullying, is being taken seriously. However, as DePalma and Jennett argue, '[a]s important as this recognition is, it still reflects a shallow understanding of the social processes underpinning these phenomena and the subtle ways in which schools are complicit in sustaining them, even from the very earliest years' (2010: 16). Thus, while additional guidance on homophobic bullying, and more recently

⁴⁷ Now Department for Education (DfE).

⁴⁸ *Stand Up for Us* previously stated that '[t]he *Every Child Matters* outcomes will not be deliverable in a culture of homophobia and homophobic bullying' (DfES/DOH, 2004: 9).

⁴⁹ This guidance has since been condensed in England although it has been retained in full by the Welsh Government (as *Respecting others: Sexist, sexual and transphobic bullying*).

transphobic bullying, may have provided a solid foundation for gender and sexuality education this has ever increasingly sanctioned anti-bullying approaches as a 'common-sense' discourse. As Monk argues, 'homophobic bullying is heard through three key discourses ('child abuse', 'the child victim' and 'the tragic gay') [so] while enabling an acknowledgement of certain harms they simultaneously silence other needs and experiences' (2011: 181). This prompts Monk to ask if 'the readiness to speak of homophobic bullying represents the opposite to prohibitions on speech (such as the notorious Section 28) or whether it itself contains or relies on more subtle and implicit heteronormative assumptions and premises' (2011: 182-3; see 2.3.2b).

While homophobic and transphobic bullying dominate government guidance for gender and sexuality education SEAL (Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning) has provided a framework for promoting social and emotional literacy in primary schools (DfES, 2005). This can be used for anti-bullying work but with a diverse range of children's books available to schools for dealing with gender and sexuality SEAL can also exceed anti-bullying discourses (DePalma and Atkinson, 2009c). Indeed, primary schools involved in the *No Outsiders* project (see Chapter 1 and 2.3.2a) utilised SEAL to 'go beyond an anti-bullying discourse of tolerance' although 'the comfort and support of government guidance' ultimately provided teachers with 'security to engage in professionally risky [...] work' (DePalma and Atkinson, 2009c: 2-3). Thus, while SEAL has the potential to exceed anti-bullying discourses many of these teachers cast their work in terms of existing government guidelines and were reluctant to 'go beyond the scope of neoliberal discourses of equality and tolerance' (*ibid*: 3). Anti-bullying guidance can therefore be somewhat of a double-edged sword - it may well provide a legitimate means of broaching sexuality, especially in primary school, but then there is a tendency not to exceed this discourse.

Having established the nature of government guidance I shall now explore Ofsted's actions towards inspecting schools and requiring that they challenge and prevent homophobic bullying.

4.2.3 Ofsted

Ofsted have inspected schools' actions towards preventing and challenging homophobic bullying since the implementation of the Education and Inspections Act 2006. However, this received little attention prior to 2012 as this was only a minor consideration and it was seen to be more relevant to secondary school inspections (Palmer, 2012). The same can be said for *Every Child Matters* (DfES, 2003), which also came under Ofsted's remit. While this received

more attention at primary level homophobia and homophobic bullying was still regarded as an issue more relevant to secondary schools (Palmer, 2012). This all changed in 2012 when Ofsted introduced new grading criteria within the revised *Framework for section 5 inspections* (see Ofsted, 2012a). Interestingly, modifications to Ofsted's inspection framework were shaped by interpretations of the Education Act 2005, which replaced the School Inspections Act 1996 (Palmer, 2012). The Education Act 2005 simplified the school improvement process and strengthened the accountability framework for schools (*ibid*). Of most interest here is how the act amended the approach used by Ofsted for school inspections in England. Four new judgements emerged out of this revised framework, which were, in effect, new grading criteria for school inspections. One of these judgements concentrates on 'the behaviour and safety of pupils at school' and as revealed at Stonewall's 2011 *Education for All* conference this would give prejudice-based bullying more prominence than ever before (Gregory, 2011; see Ofsted, 2012a).

As part of this new judgment Ofsted acknowledged 'the needs of groups of children [...] including those who are LGBT' (Gregory, 2011: 2) and would ensure that this group of children 'feel safe, are part of their school communities, are valued and respected in order that they attend school regularly, stay on in education and achieve as well as they can' (*ibid*). As with *Stand Up for Us* and *Safe to Learn* Ofsted used strategic 'managerialist language' to justify this stance and appeal to school leaders. However, Ofsted also acknowledged that it was equally important to make inspectors aware of what they should be looking for while making sure that they are aware that this applies to primary schools as much as secondary schools (Gregory, 2011; Palmer, 2012). Ofsted believe that they have taken necessary steps towards achieving this and cite the publication of briefing notes for inspectors while reporting that these are also supported by a 'strengthened programme for training inspectors' (Gregory, 2011: 5).

The first briefing notes for section 5 inspections were *Inspecting equalities* (Ofsted, 2012b). As the document outlines, its purpose is to guide inspection in this area so that inspectors can 'judge the impact of schools' work in advancing equality of opportunity, fostering good relations and tackling discrimination' (Ofsted, 2012b: 1). A clear link is made to the *Public Sector Equality Duty* (S.149 Equality Act 2010) which also comes under Ofsted's inspection remit as a result of the new framework and as the document unfolds statutory duties placed on inspectors become clear. The briefing notes include examples of what inspectors should look for when evaluating schools. This includes identifying 'coverage in the curriculum of equalities issues, particularly with regard to tackling prejudice [and] understanding diversity' and ensuring that 'teaching and curriculum materials *in all subjects* have positive images of [...] gay and lesbian people [and] of both women and men in non-stereotypical gender roles'

(Ofsted, 2012b: 8; *emphasis added*). Also cited, under 'Behaviour and safety' and 'Leadership and management' is evidence of:

- clear procedures for dealing with prejudice-related bullying and incidents
- appropriate training that equips staff to identify/ deal with this effectively
- pupil confidence in staff (to address discrimination, including use of derogatory language)
- positive action of how the school is advancing equality and tackling discrimination (i.e. in a statement of overarching policy)
- the governing body demonstrating its impact on the schools' promotion and advancement of equality of opportunity and outcomes

Ofsted, 2012b: 9

The above is emphasised in more specific briefing notes for primary schools: *Exploring the school's actions to prevent homophobic bullying* (Ofsted, 2012c). This subsumes gender within sexuality (or homophobic bullying, as it is to be understood here), but this is simultaneously productive and damaging for gender as a category that is at once distinct from sexuality while also implicated in it (DePalma and Atkinson, 2009c). Combining gender and sexuality is productive since gender non-conformity is commonly read as indicative of sexual preference (Renold, 2005). According to a Stonewall (2012) report, a boy who prefers baking over football is likely to be subjected to homophobic taunts. In this sense it is useful to deal with gender and sexuality together. Hence you have to undo gender stereotypes when addressing homophobic bullying (see DePalma and Atkinson, 2008a; 2009a). However, this fusion of gender-sexuality becomes problematic when gender is conflated with sexuality, which happens all too easily when sexuality is seen to supersede gender. Arguably this is most apparent in this Ofsted document.

The document itself is a refined extension of the previous briefing notes. It is clear that as far as Ofsted are concerned homophobic bullying needs to be prevented and challenged in schools, and with a specific section on what inspectors will explore with primary-aged pupils it could not be clearer that homophobic bullying is considered as relevant to primary schools as it is to secondary schools (see Ofsted, 2012c). For instance, inspectors are encouraged to explore whether primary-aged pupils:

- ever hear anyone use the word 'gay' when describing a thing and/ or whether they have been told by teachers that using the word 'gay' to mean something is rubbish is wrong, and why it is wrong
- pupils ever get picked on by other children for not behaving like a 'typical girl' or a 'typical boy'
- have had any lessons about different types of families (single parent, living with grandparents, having two mummies or two daddies)

Ofsted, 2012c: 3

Inspectors are also encouraged to explore the following with senior leaders and school governors:

- how the school meets its statutory duty to prevent all forms of prejudice based bullying including homophobia and transphobia
- whether they are aware of any instances of homophobic or transphobic language in schools, if this is recorded and how it is acted upon
- whether the school's equalities, bullying and safeguarding policies address gender identity and sexuality
- if training has been provided for staff in how to tackle homophobic/transphobic bullying including language

Ofsted, 2012c: 3-4

Ofsted's contribution towards the implementation of measures to address gender and sexuality in primary schools has been highly significant. As Stonewall's Senior Education Officer noted in an interview (11/5/12), 'schools are very mindful of two things [...] parents [and] Ofsted'. Therefore, what Ofsted say carries enormous weight. To clearly state their position on homophobic/transphobic bullying and incorporate this into the section 5 inspection framework is arguably the most crucial recent development for gender and sexuality education. However, this continues to naturalise anti-bullying approaches as a 'common-sense' discourse (Monk, 2011).

Having established how anti-bullying discourses increasingly dominate government guidance I will now examine how Stonewall secured government support and mobilised initiatives to create gender and sexualities curriculum for English primary schools.

4.3 STONEWALL GAINS GOVERNMENT SUPPORT TO OPERATIONALISE INITIATIVES

The previous sections traced the recent emergence of UK government legislation and guidance that has provided conceptual space from which initiatives - centred on homophobic bullying – can begin to materialise. The government has set wheels in motion for initiatives in schools but has not implemented a national programme. This has been left up to the non-profit sector with the government, via the Department for Education and Skills (DfES), supporting a number of charities who operationalise legislation and guidance. Out of all these charities the DfES has given its greatest backing to Stonewall, a lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) charity that now enjoys being ‘the national organisation’ for school-based initiatives. This section examines how Stonewall secured government support and mobilised initiatives to create gender and sexualities curriculum for English primary schools. This involves examining how Stonewall achieved its prominent status as the key national LGB charity within the non-profit sector; how it lobbied for and mobilised government legislation and guidance to inform an emerging educational agenda; how this subsequently influenced the development of its primary school initiatives; and how these initiatives have been strategically implemented.

4.3.1 *Brief history of Stonewall*

Stonewall is an influential lobbying group that campaigns for LGB⁵⁰ equality. It was founded in 1989 in response to the 1988 introduction of Section 28 of the Local Government Act. As discussed in 4.1, this provoked an outcry amongst members of ‘the gay community’ with those active in the struggle against Section 28 coming together to form Stonewall. In the years that followed Stonewall became more than just a charity campaigning for the repeal of Section 28 and it played major roles in other successful campaigns, like the equalisation of the heterosexual-homosexual age of consent in 2001 and same-sex adoption in 2002. More recently, Stonewall lobbied for the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013 (MSSCA 2013)⁵¹, having previously campaigned for the Civil Partnership Act in 2004, and continues to be at the forefront of putting LGB equality on the mainstream political agenda (see Stonewall, 2014a).

The name Stonewall is derived from the place considered to be the birthplace of ‘gay and lesbian liberation’: the Stonewall *Inn* in Greenwich Village, New York. This was the location of the infamous 1969 riots where police clashed with customers of the raided gay bar. The riots continued for 5 days, growing in magnitude from hundreds to thousands of participants, and in

⁵⁰ Although Stonewall has more recently added ‘transgender’ to its scope.

⁵¹ Although it should be noted that Stonewall did not originally support the same-sex marriage agenda (see Johnson and Vanderbeck, 2014).

the wake of the riots the *Gay Liberation Front* was established. Related bodies formed elsewhere, including in Britain, a year or so later and have diversified since. Thus, Stonewall is synonymous with gay resistance to oppression and the name resonates with images of insurgency and self-realisation (see Carter, 2010; Duberman, 1994).

4.3.2 Stonewall's 'Education for All' coalition

I think being in the position we're in, we are the national organisation that has not only worked with Ofsted to bring about changes in the framework but provided that national research as well, it gives us the kudos that we need and the expertise that we need to go and say to them [schools] we're the people to support you to do this

Interview with Stonewall's Senior Education Officer (11/5/12)

Stonewall's 'Education for All' campaign aims to prevent and tackle homophobia and homophobic bullying in schools and colleges. It was launched in January 2005, two years after the repeal of Section 28. 'Education for All' is a coalition campaign featuring 70 organisations, including the Qualifications and Curriculum Agency; The National College for Teaching and Leadership; the Teaching Agency; Ofsted; and the Department for Education. According to Stonewall's Senior Education Officer, Stonewall brought these national agencies together and works across them to make sure that when they are communicating with schools and education professionals they make reference to homophobic bullying and the need to support LGB youth (Interview with Stonewall's Senior Education Officer, 11/5/12). Stonewall contributes to the campaign by providing 'ground-breaking national research on the extent of homophobic bullying in UK schools' (*ibid*). *The School Report* (2007) – a survey of over 1,145 LGB secondary school students (Stonewall, 2007) – and *The Teachers' Report* (2009) – a commissioned YouGov poll of over 2,000 primary and secondary school staff (Stonewall, 2009) – are considered by Stonewall to be the largest research projects of their kind to ever take place in Britain. *The School Report* was updated in 2012 to include the experiences of 1,600 LGB youth at school (Stonewall, 2012) and in 2010 Stonewall published the *Different Families* report which showcases the experiences of children with LGB parents (Stonewall, 2010). This research allowed Stonewall to provide a national context for homophobic bullying which enabled working relationships to form with key agencies. As Stonewall's Senior Education Officer recalls:

[W]e set the scene [and provided] the national context for what was going on and it made sense following that to build those relationships with government [...] having been able to provide that information put us in a good position to take forward work with central government

Interview with Stonewall's Senior Education Officer (11/5/12)

Stonewall strategically positioned itself within the coalition in order to be effective in driving forward an educational agenda centred on homophobic bullying. This would allow Stonewall to gain significant support from key agencies while in turn putting itself in a prime position to advise on homophobic bullying. Crucially, this allowed Stonewall to link with the Department of Education's anti-bullying and behaviour and attendance teams. As Stonewall's Senior Education Officer reveals:

[W]e built a relationship with key agencies who we knew we had to make sure we fine-tuned [in terms of] what was going on within national policy, to make sure they were always talking about homophobic bullying. [S]o we have our key relationships with the Department for Education [and] we work very closely, in particular, with their anti-bullying team but also with their behaviour and attendance team [...] we've been working with them for several years on a formal basis advising them on policy. [W]e've also been working across all of those key national education agencies that have a role to play [and] what we do is work with them to look at the way that they are communicating messages to schools, to education professionals and making sure that in that rhetoric they're making reference to homophobic bullying and the need to support any young people, including lesbian, gay and bisexual young people

Interview with Stonewall's Senior Education Officer (11/5/12)

Once Stonewall established itself as the key LGB charity within the 'Education for All' coalition it could link with agencies and forward a homophobic bullying agenda. However, this was only possible once Stonewall had strategically situated itself as being in a suitable position to advise on homophobic bullying, which was achieved on the back of 'ground-breaking research'. This research can be located within the English tradition of 'political arithmetic', which Heath describes as being based on the collection of putatively 'hard data [...] for informing public debate and policy-making' (2000: 313). Monk (2011) critiques this tradition and campaigns by Stonewall in which homophobic bullying is shown to be 'endemic in schools' (i.e. Stonewall,

2007)⁵². Monk argues that selective statistical representation based on an extremely broad definition of homophobic bullying:

[C]oheres with and appeals to the broader cultural shifts within which schooling itself is increasingly perceived as a dangerous space. More particularly, it attests to the extent to which the homophobic bullying agenda utilises and is spoken of through the dominant image of childhood as vulnerable and one premised on the status of the child as innocent victim

Monk 2011: 186

Victimhood, Monk continues, has ‘a reassuring role within lesbian and gay political discourses [and] this political move is reflected in Stonewall’s representation of contemporary school life as overwhelmingly one of hardship and of bullying of ‘endemic’ proportions’ (2011: 188). While this may allow Stonewall to link with agencies in forwarding a homophobic bullying agenda it continues to reduce the experience of lesbian and gay youth to one of passive victimhood (Ellis, 2007; Monk, 2011; Quinlivan, 2006; also see McCormack, 2012). As Monk has argued, accounts of the effects of homophobic bullying – documented in government guidance (i.e. DfES/DOH, 2004; DCSF, 2007; 2009) but reinforced in Stonewall’s research - align the image of the lesbian and gay child with dominant 1950s’ representations of the homosexual in popular discourses: depressed, lonely, isolated, and suicidal (see Rebellato, 1999; Cook, 2007). This portrayal of ‘the gay victim’, Monk warns, provides an image of the homosexual as a *reassuringly* distinct and tragic ‘other’ from the heterosexual. Monk fears that ‘the very means by which the issue has been made speakable could limit more radical developments’ (2011: 202; see 2.3.2b).

4.3.3 Lobbying for and mobilising legislation

As well as providing research on the extent of homophobic bullying in UK schools Stonewall has lobbied for and mobilised legislation to inform its primary school work. In interviews with Stonewall representatives I explored what legislation Stonewall had been lobbying for and how they had used this along with existing legislation to develop initiatives for primary schools. At first I was told that Stonewall had not lobbied for legislation and had simply worked with an existing framework. Stonewall may not have *directly* lobbied for legislation in relation to its

⁵² For example, Stonewall claim that 65-98% of pupils experience homophobic bullying in Britain’s schools at one time or another (Stonewall, 2007: 3).

primary school work but as an organisation Stonewall had previously lobbied for legislation which would in time have a bearing on the trajectory of its primary school work.

In an interview with Stonewall's Senior Education Officer (11/5/12) I was told that Stonewall 'had a relatively strong legislative framework to start with [so] in our education work we haven't been lobbying for legislative change'. However, at a later stage in the interview the Senior Education Officer conceded that 'at that time we didn't have the Equality Act but as an organisation we were lobbying around that'. As it turned out the Equality Act 2010 would have a significant bearing on Stonewall's primary school work. According to Stonewall's Senior Education Officer:

[T]he bulk of our work in the context of legislation is about the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Duty [this] puts a duty on all public bodies, including schools, to foster good relations, advance equality of opportunity and tackle discrimination and that is a very strong lever for us to work with because that puts a responsibility on schools to be preventing homophobic bullying as well as tackling it when it happens so we really work with that [...] that is our major piece of legislation

Interview with Stonewall's Senior Education Officer (11/5/12)

These comments were reiterated in a separate interview with Stonewall's Primary Education Officer (12/6/12) who reaffirmed that this legislation 'requires schools to be proactive [...] they can't just not discriminate, they have to be proactive and foster good relations'. Convincing primary schools that homophobic bullying is relevant to them was therefore an 'easier sell' for Stonewall once this legislation came into force with its emphasis on 'proactive approaches' justifying Stonewall's preventative measures. However, before this Stonewall had lobbied for another piece of legislation which would turn out to be crucial for its primary school work. The legislation in question is the Civil Partnership Bill 2004, which became the Civil Partnership Act 2005. As noted earlier, this legislation was significant for primary schools in terms of the work they do around families but it is important to note that it only achieved widespread significance when Stonewall utilised it to inform a major strand of its primary school work. As Stonewall's Senior Education Officer recalls:

[W]e didn't have our education campaign when we were lobbying for Civil Partnerships but having that in place does give an awful lot of gravitas to the work we do now around Different Families, now we have legal recognition for same-sex couples

we can talk in primary schools about the fact that some children are brought up by parents who are in Civil Partnerships ... that has much more gravitas now than it would have had had we tried to do that work in the 1980s when we had no legislation whatsoever

Interview with Stonewall's Senior Education Officer (11/5/12)

Despite scepticism amongst LGB and queer groups about assimilation and collusion (see 2.3.2a) Stonewall led the campaign for the Civil Partnership Act 2005, and more recently the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013 (MSSCA 2013), with subsequent legislation informing Stonewall's 'Different Families' initiative. The Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty 2011 have since consolidated Stonewall's primary school work more generally with Ofsted's endorsement bringing extra credibility. As Stonewall's Senior Education Officer explains:

[S]chools are very mindful of two things, they're very mindful of parents and they're very mindful of Ofsted, and if Ofsted says they have to do something then they'll make sure they're striving to do that

[I]t's really encouraging moving forward [...] because schools that wanted to do this work but were struggling to do this work now have the lever that they need, well Ofsted will be inspecting us on this [...] we've looked at Ofsted reports prior to January 2012 and I struggled to find any reference to homophobic bullying and already we've found a handful

Interview with Stonewall's Senior Education Officer (11/5/12)

Ofsted's endorsement has been a significant development and as Stonewall's Senior Education Officer revealed:

[W]e've been lobbying and working with Ofsted for many years on this [so] we're delighted that they've made sure that this is included

Interview with Stonewall's Senior Education Officer (11/5/12)

It is clear to see how Stonewall's 'Different Families' initiative has also been incorporated into Ofsted's inspection framework. One of three inspection considerations is whether:

Pupils have had any lessons about different types of families (single parent, living with grandparents, having two mummies or two daddies)

Ofsted, 2012c: 3

In the next section I will analyse Stonewall's 'Different Families' initiative and other strands of their primary school work.

4.3.4 Stonewall's 'Primary School Champions' programme

Throughout the course of our [Education for All] campaign we have been doing some work with primary schools, talking about issues of difference and how to celebrate that but it was only in 2009 when we did the Teachers' Report which found that more than 2 in 5 primary teachers say that children, regardless of their sexual orientation, experience homophobic bullying that we had that real lever that we needed to be able to go and say nationally this is a problem for primary schools as well ... it isn't just a secondary school issue

Interview with Stonewall's Senior Education Officer (11/5/12)

Stonewall's in-road into primary work came on the back of such reports, which Stonewall either commissioned or produced themselves. Stonewall's Primary Education Officer expands upon the importance of this groundwork and how it laid foundations for preventative measures in primary schools:

We are building on what we've been doing with secondary schools for a number of years now ... the Education For All campaign started in 2005 and since then we've produced resources for teachers to upskill them to tackle and prevent homophobic bullying, talk about different families and lesbian, gay and bisexual issues in class.

[W]e basically knew that homophobic bullying was an issue in primary schools from teachers telling us and saying that actually when children come to secondary school they already use 'that's so gay' or 'you're so gay' as a derogative term and we knew some parents whose children were prevented from making two Mother's Day cards, for example, that kind of thing, but it wasn't really until we published our Teacher's Report that we had some statistics and an evidence base. [This] showed that 2 in 5

primary school teachers [have] witnessed homophobic bullying happening in their schools

Interview with Stonewall's Primary Education Officer (12/6/12)

The second research report alluded to is *Different Families: the experiences of children with lesbian and gay parents* (2010). When combined with *The Teacher's Report* (2009) and the *School Report* (2007) it is clear to see how this research contributed to what Stonewall describe as the 'strong evidence base'⁵³ that they can draw on to develop primary work. Stonewall's development of primary work relied on this evidence with legislation, from this point on, taking a background role. As Stonewall's Senior Education Officer explains:

We always had the legislation in the background [...] we don't over-focus on the legislation [instead] we try and focus on ... this is a good thing to do to make everybody feel included in your school and to stop bullying and then if it gets difficult well you have a legal responsibility to do this

Interview with Stonewall's Senior Education Officer (11/5/12)

Stonewall's Primary Education Officer expands upon the implications of the *Different Families* (2010) report below and how this warrants the 'Different Families' approach. Even more significant is the way Stonewall's second strand of primary work emerges in the 'Different Families' context:

The other research was interviews with children who have lesbian, gay, bisexual parents and that showed that they often feel their families are never talked about, that they feel they are being excluded [and] negative use of the word gay isn't tackled by teachers. [U]ntil they go to a setting where that's the case they don't see their families as any different from other people's families, maybe a part from the fact that they have a dog and their friends family doesn't [but when] those differences are pointed out by other children [...] they have to answer a lot of questions about their family [and this] can then make them not want to talk about it anymore

Interview with Stonewall's Primary Education Officer (12/6/12)

⁵³ Interview with Stonewall's Senior Education Officer (11/5/12).

The two strands of Stonewall's primary work are thus entwined with the 'homophobic language' aspect becoming available in and through the 'Different Families' framework. What this means is that the homophobic language strand is foregrounding the 'Different Families' approach, which becomes the central pillar of the primary work. It could be argued that such a narrow conceptualisation of homosexuality for primary schools is problematic, but for now it is important to acknowledge how the 'Different Families' stance is compatible with work that primary schools already do around the family. In this sense the 'Different Families' approach could not be better placed to be incorporated into primary schools with the 'Different Families' resources simply included in discussions that primary schools already have around the family. Thus, Stonewall are not necessarily asking schools to give this work special attention. They are simply asking schools to be more inclusive when discussing families, as Stonewall's Senior Education Officer points out:

Schools are very good at talking about families, primary schools do it all the time, they use circle time and they have a very close involvement with their parent community. We knew that children who are brought up by gay people, who have gay brothers and sisters [have] their lives [...] left out, they were being excluded and we know the impact that that has on children.

If you don't see your life reflected [or] when you see your life reflected a bit negatively it is not going to have any positive impact on you whatsoever, so we really used what schools were already doing but looked at what they were leaving out and sort of built the different families materials

Interview with Stonewall's Senior Education Officer (11/5/12)

An awareness of the primary curriculum, and how their work could simply 'slot in', was another important consideration for Stonewall when developing the primary work. Stonewall would make its initiatives as accessible as possible so resources would be easily incorporated into primary schools and so the 'Different Families' stance was favoured when the importance of the strategic connection to families was fully realised. This would allow Stonewall to pursue sensitive work in a non-threatening way with the overarching anti-bullying justification legitimising such work. As careful as Stonewall had been with how it packaged primary sexualities education there was still a danger that this relatively bland work (DePalma and Atkinson, 2009c; Nixon, 2009; Rofes, 1997; Youdell, 2011) could be misinterpreted once it entered the public realm. Indeed, Stonewall describe how they sat back and observed other

initiatives - like *No Outsiders* (2006-2009) - encounter 'all sorts of problems'⁵⁴ with media headlines like, 'Primary schools 'should celebrate homosexuality'' (Telegraphy, 2008) and 'Teach the pleasure of gay sex to children as young as five, say researchers' (Daily Mail, 2009) generating a 'moral panic' (Cohen, 1972; see DePalma and Atkinson, 2009c). Stonewall report that they did not implement the 'Different Families' approach until they were sure that this stance would not be misconceived. As Stonewall's Senior Education Officer explains:

We spent about a year risk assessing, you know, what are the dangers of doing work in primary schools [because] other organisations have attempted to do other initiatives in primary schools, some of which have gone well, some of which haven't gone so well [so] we wanted to make sure that we didn't face the same challenges that they did so we spent about a year thinking about how we want to do this

Interview with Stonewall's Senior Education Officer (11/5/12)

Stonewall concluded that previous initiatives left themselves open to criticism by not being *absolutely clear* about an anti-bullying rationale. As far as Stonewall were concerned initiatives like *No Outsiders* reignited earlier fears that had been associated with addressing sexuality in an SRE context, namely that if you're talking about gay and lesbian people you're talking about gay and lesbian sex with sexual identity automatically associated with sexual acts (Sears, 1999). This brings us back to DePalma and Jennett's contention that the 'hyper-sexualisation of gay and lesbian sexualities clashes strongly with the widespread myth in primary schools of the asexual and naïve child' (2010: 19). Such discursive understandings of childhood innocence were prominent in Section 28 debates, as I noted earlier, and these discourses were evoked once again in press coverage of *No Outsiders*. Thus, as far as Stonewall were concerned the 'Different Families' stance would have to be rationalised and delivered through an anti-bullying framework. As Stonewall's Senior Education Officer remarks:

I think it was the apprehension that parents, teachers and governors would have about what this work is and making them understand that this is about bullying, this isn't about sex [and] I think that's one of the things they (teachers) get anxious about, that I'm going to have to talk to five year olds about lesbianism ... well no they're not, you're going to have to talk to them about the diversity of the world with a focus on stopping bullying.

⁵⁴ Interview with Stonewall's Senior Education Officer (11/5/12).

[S]o we spent a long time just thinking about what do we want to talk about, what don't we want to talk about, how do we want to message it, how don't we want to message it. [We] then spent some time thinking about the kind of resources we wanted to make, once we realised that it was really about different families. We then worked with some designers [...] to come up with our 'different families same love' range of materials

Interview with Stonewall's Senior Education Officer (11/5/12)

Once Stonewall settled on the 'Different Families' approach they turned their attention to the 'Different Families' resources, which I will analyse below. Before then it is worth noting how Stonewall gave as much attention to the implementation strategy as it had given the 'Different Families' approach. Unlike its secondary school approach, Stonewall decided that the implantation of its primary resources would have to be measured and controlled and so it strategically released resources through established channels once it had provided schools with a training DVD. As Stonewall's Senior Education Officer recalls:

It was very important to us that we developed a staff training DVD as early on as we could. We also decided that [unlike] our secondary school work [...] we didn't want to take such a large scale approach [...] so we started working with primary schools that were in local authorities that we already worked with. That way we had the support of the local authority and we could [...] make sure that we [gave] them all the support they needed ... we didn't just want to send the DVD to a primary school and say good luck, we wanted to make sure that we had the buy-in from the local authority [and] the head of the school.

[S]o over the last two years we've sent out our primary school DVD, the posters and the stickers to about 8, 000 primary schools across the country [but] we thought very carefully about how we were going to do that. [W]hen we launched the school champions programme in November we decided to send the materials to those primary schools [first] because we're working directly with them so if they do face any challenges we could say don't worry, we will help you through this. [After all] all it takes is those DVDs getting into the hands of an angry media, an angry parent and mis-communicating about what that DVD is for and it could really jeopardize the good work that we're doing

Interview with Stonewall's Senior Education Officer (11/5/12)

Stonewall's Primary Education Officer reiterates the importance of the strategic release of the training DVD and the 'Different Families' materials, and adds that the former was particularly crucial as it encouraged a 'whole school' approach that must be adopted if this work is to be effective. The fact that the training DVD is only 28 minutes long and can therefore be incorporated into broader training is also touched on:

We basically knew that the first thing to do is to upskill teachers which is why we produced the Celebrating Difference 28 minute DVD for primary school staff because it should be a whole school approach. The DVD comes with a discussion guide, a little leaflet which basically allows schools to do INSETs for themselves, in a twilight session or over lunch time [so] it doesn't have to be a whole training day, they can just fit that in wherever

Interview with Stonewall's Primary Education Officer (12/6/12)

The ability of the training DVD to just 'slot-in' alongside other training resonates with the broader aim of the 'Different Families' work: to sit alongside other anti-bullying work that primary schools do anyway. In this sense the 'Different Families' resources are simply incorporated into the schools' broader anti-bullying agenda. As Stonewall's Primary Education Officer observes schools:

Find the DVD really useful, especially seeing the way children talk about these issues. They see colleagues who are doing this work saying it doesn't have to be difficult and actually it is really important you do this. Also, for many schools it is the first time they've approached these issues although they know how to tackle other forms of bullying [but] homophobic bullying is often something they haven't really thought about

Interview with Stonewall's Primary Education Officer (12/6/12)

Of course homophobic bullying is not like other forms of bullying, as Stonewall's Primary Education Officer later acknowledges, although Stonewall strategically positions its primary work alongside other forms of bullying. For instance, a primary school wouldn't challenge homophobic language in the same way as racist language because, unlike racist language, it is deemed appropriate to use the words gay and lesbian when referring to same-sex

relationships. In the context of the 'Different Families' work it is considered relevant to recognise 2 dads as gay and 2 mums as lesbian as this is not pejorative use of these terms. A comment like "you're so gay" or "that's so gay" would be challenged but unlike racist language it would then be necessary to explore when it is appropriate to use these terms. As Stonewall's Primary Education Officer explains:

Teachers would talk about the use of the word gay in a context of different families because it is not as easy as say racist language. [With] racist language you can have a list of words that you shouldn't be using [however] with the word gay it is different because you will have to explain to children that it can be used in a positive way, in a certain context or in an accurate way but it shouldn't be used in a derogative way. [T]hat's when you start talking about well actually you know some children have two dads and they would call themselves gay and that's ok and therefore we shouldn't be using it as a derogative term or as a put down

Interview with Stonewall's Primary Education Officer (12/6/12)

For Stonewall, eradicating⁵⁵ homophobic bullying thus involves challenging homophobic language in the context of Different Families with the former evoking the latter. Primary schools would deliver this work in topic weeks with 'National Anti-bullying Week' (NCB, 2004) proving popular amongst schools. However, as Stonewall's Primary Education Officer is keen to point out, 'successful schools' would only use these weeks as a starting point:

Schools like National Anti-bullying Week and they use that as a hook to do something around homophobic bullying. [While] schools quite like to have those topical days [...] I think the ones that are successful don't just do it for like one day but manage to thread it through and see it as part of everything they're doing

Interview with Stonewall's Primary Education Officer (12/6/12)

As far as Stonewall are concerned 'Anti-bullying Week' provides an introductory context for the 'Different Families' resources but ideally they would be used outside this week once the work had become established in school⁵⁶. Homophobic language, on the other hand, would be

⁵⁵ A militant verb often used in anti-bullying rhetoric (also 'eliminate').

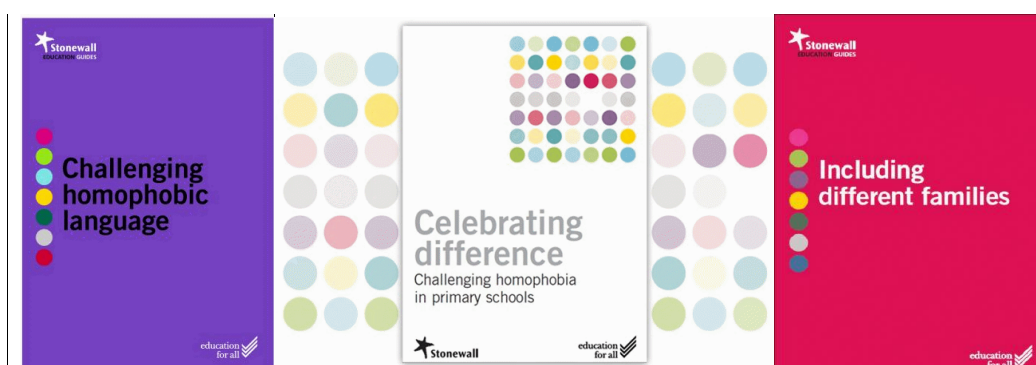
⁵⁶ As I go on to show, 'leading exponents' of Stonewall's 'Primary School Champions' programme, which include the two schools featuring in this study, integrate gender and sexuality education into their broader school curriculum but whether 'Anti-bullying Week' encourages(?) other schools to touch on

incorporated into school policy, particularly anti-bullying policy⁵⁷. Teachers would then challenge homophobic language upon hearing it and then make connections to the ‘Different Families’ work. The first resource produced by Stonewall for primary schools is therefore the ‘Challenging homophobic language’ education guide (see Figure 5). As Stonewall’s Senior Education Officer explains:

We have a challenging homophobic language guide which tells teachers [...] what the issue is [and] some of the reasons why it might happen [and] the impact it might have [so] these are the kind of responses that you might want to use. [However] we wouldn’t necessarily say sit down and do a lesson on homophobic language

Interview with Stonewall’s Senior Education Officer (11/5/12)

FIGURE 5 – STONEWALL EDUCATION GUIDES AND CORNERSTONE DOCUMENT



(From left) *Challenging homophobic language* (Education Guide)⁵⁸; *Celebrating difference: challenging homophobia in primary schools* (cornerstone document); *Including different families* (Education Guide).

Source: Stonewall

Stonewall’s three key publications for primary schools (as of June 2012) appear above. The first sets the scene for intervention by initiating a *reactive* approach to homophobic bullying while the final document takes a *proactive* approach. The middle document binds these two

sexism and homophobia/homophobic bullying in isolation - in order to satisfy government guidance and Ofsted inspectors - is up for debate.

⁵⁷ Again, the implication here is that what might have already been bland or ‘safe representations’ of lesbian and gay identity (see DePalma and Atkinson, 2009c; Nixon, 2009; Rofes, 1997; Youdell, 2011) contained within ‘Anti-bullying Week’ will be subsequently reduced to curtailing ‘homophobic language’, despite how problematic this might be (see McCormack, 2012; Monk, 2011).

⁵⁸ Now *Tackling Homophobic Language* (2013).

documents while providing an overview of Stonewall’s ‘Primary School Champions’ programme.

Instead of delivering a specific lesson on homophobic language Stonewall would want schools to use the ‘Different Families’ resources (see Figure 6) as a preventative response to homophobic bullying (see education guide above on *Including different families*). Stonewall would then hope that homophobic language would be prevented once the ‘Different Families’ work was underway. Stonewall’s publications accompany the ‘Different Families’ resources so when primary schools approach Stonewall - or are approached by Stonewall via Local Authorities - they receive the ‘Primary School Champions’ resource pack. This contains the three publications in addition to ‘The Teachers’ Report’ and ‘The Different Families Report’, both of which were discussed earlier. The resource pack also contains Stonewall’s ‘Different Families’ resources: the ‘Different Families’ posters, postcards and stickers (see Figure 6).

FIGURE 6 – STONEWALL’S ‘DIFFERENT FAMILIES’ RESOURCES



(From top left) *Different Families – Same Love* poster; *Families equals Love* poster; *Different Families – Same Love* stickers; *Different Families – Same Love* postcard (2 dads); *Different Families – Same Love* postcard (2 mums).

Stonewall's 'Different Families' resources are included in the 'Primary School Champions' education pack or can be ordered online.

Source: Stonewall

Stonewall's approach includes families with '2 mums' and '2 dads' alongside other family arrangements. I previously noted how Stonewall wanted these resources to be used alongside other materials when schools dealt with a topic on families and as Stonewall's Senior Education Officer acknowledged one of the key considerations when developing these resources was to communicate the idea of same-sex relationships in a non-threatening way:

Our main concern was to make sure that it is done in the most age appropriate and sensitive way and that's why [...] we've done it in a way that could never be seen as offensive to everyone, it is not just a load of pictures of gay people, it is pictures of loads of different make-ups of family

Interview with Stonewall's Senior Education Officer (11/5/12)

This approach allowed Stonewall to make a valuable connection to an existing school topic and feedback that Stonewall has received has been overwhelmingly positive, as Stonewall's Senior Education Officer reveals:

Schools say this isn't just good for our children, this is good for the staff in our schools as well because we have gay staff in our schools and we have single parent members of staff [and] this is making sure they're all included as part of the school community. It sends out a really positive message to our parent community as well about just how much we value each and every one of them, whatever background and so the responses have been overwhelmingly positive to those resources

Interview with Stonewall's Senior Education Officer (11/5/12)

While it is encouraging to hear that these resources have been well received a tension emerges here between those left out of such a narrow conceptualisation of lesbian and gay identity and those who are set to gain from this favourable endorsement of monogamous nuclear relationships. While on the one hand it is been significant to make sexuality education available to primary schools on the other hand 'safe representations' of lesbian and gay

identity could be seen as a trade-off (see DePalma and Atkinson, 2009c; Nixon, 2009; Rofes, 1997; Youdell, 2011; and 2.3.5). Is this colluding with heteronormativity? Has primary school knowledge of lesbian and gay sexualities become too conservative? Are these merely 'vanilla strategies' - safe and approved sexual practice and fantasy (Silverstein and Picano, 1993) which pander to gay rights discourse and foreclose queer praxis (Nixon, 2009)? Either way, Stonewall has developed the 'non-threatening' 'Different Families' approach as part of a broader - culturally accepted - anti-bullying agenda with non-statutory government guidance legitimising proactive measures that challenge homophobic bullying and, as a result, primary schools are engaging with it. However, given these criticisms, to what extent are restrictive, prevailing discourses of childhood sexuality being challenged, subverted or reimaged in what appears to largely remain an enduring 'cultural greenhouse' and what might be the implications of this? I return to these issues in the conclusion.

4.4 CHAPTER CONCLUSION

This chapter has addressed the first research objective – to examine existing UK government legislation, guidance and support for primary gender and sexuality education, and to understand how these initiatives are mobilised by the non-profit sector - by drawing on ethnographic research/ interview data and utilising textual/ discourse analysis. In 4.1 I analysed childhood discourses circulating in society that inspired Section 28 of the 1988 Local Government Act and I illustrated how these discourses have shaped contemporary UK government legislation and guidance. In 4.2 I examined 'post-Section 28' UK government legislation and guidance for primary gender and sexuality education and in paying particular attention to 'conditions of possibility' (Foucault, 1974) I showed how anti-homophobia and anti-bullying have emerged as a desexualised policy paradigm, leading to an essentialising curriculum (Ellis, 2007; Monk, 2011). In 4.3 I examined how Stonewall secured government support and mobilised these initiatives to create gender and sexualities curriculum for English primary schools. In the next chapter I explore how gender and sexualities curriculum is implemented in primary schools.

CHAPTER 5: THE IMPLEMENTATION OF GENDER AND SEXUALITY EDUCATION

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5.0 CHAPTER INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 4 I established that childhood discourses circulating in Section 28 debates have influenced post-Section 28 government legislation and guidance for gender and sexuality education with anti-homophobia and anti-bullying approaches dominating these initiatives. I also explored how Stonewall gained government support to operationalise gender and sexuality education and how they have, in turn, reinforced a homophobic bullying agenda. In this chapter I address the second research objective (reproduced below) by focusing on schools as specific local expressions of the education institution:

To explore how social actors within specific English primary schools interpret national government policy, and to understand how gender and sexualities education is subsequently incorporated into the broader school curriculum and delivered in lessons.

First, I explore how social actors (school governors and senior management)¹ within specific primary school settings interpret national government policy. In line with Holloway *et al.* (2000; 2010) schools are considered to be institutional spaces, ‘precarious geographical accomplishments in time and space’ (Philo and Parr, 2000: 517) and sites of social agency. Therefore, policies and practices will be variously interpreted, contested and (re)produced within (different) institutional spaces (also see Holt, 2007). Schools (theorised as porous rather than bounded) are also located within places and embedded within wider sets of social relations (Holloway *et al.*, 2000; Holt, 2007; Massey, 1993; Massey and Jess, 1995). These wider geographies will also be considered. In the second part I explore how gender and sexuality education is incorporated into the broader school curriculum (initially by senior management and subsequently by classroom teachers) and delivered in lessons (mainly by classroom teachers although senior management take occasional classroom lessons and assemblies). This will involve analysing schemes of work, lesson plans and accompanying resources with gender and sexualities syllabus conceived as a governmental document (Davies, 2006). In order to contextualise pupil’s responses in the final analysis chapter I focus on subjection and the curriculum (*ibid*).

5.1 PERFORMING HOMOPHOBIC BULLYING AT CUTLERS PRIMARY SCHOOL

In this section I explore how homophobic bullying as an educational discourse becomes performativity constituted through a key social actor at Cutlers primary school. In particular, I explore how this anti-bullying discourse has been enacted to rationalise the implementation of gender and sexuality education. I begin by showing how the school’s deputy head teacher adopted a similar approach to Stonewall by gathering strategic evidence from pupils on the extent of homophobic bullying and language in order to legitimise proactive interventions and justify these to staff. While Monk (2011) and others (i.e. Ellis, 2007; McCormack, 2012; Quinlivan, 2006) have critiqued the homophobic bullying agenda, particularly broad definitions of what constitutes homophobic bullying (including construing use of the word gay as constituting homophobic bullying) in this section I demonstrate how crucial this was for allowing staff to get on-board with gender and sexuality education. This is not to discredit critiques of homophobic bullying outlined in the previous chapter but to show how this notion can be applied strategically to engage teachers, governors and subsequently parents. In the

¹ While both schools elect children to represent their classes on the School Council, current members had not been involved in decisions over earlier equalities/anti-bullying policy and as I understood it the School Councils tended to create their own projects (i.e. charity events) rather than debate specific aspects of school policies.

remainder of the section I explore how gender and sexuality education is subsequently incorporated into the broader school curriculum through an anti-bullying framework.

5.1.1a Overview of Cutlers primary school

Cutlers is a co-educational maintained community primary school located in a socially and economically diverse part of South-East London. The school has a two form entry and as of November 2011 it had 441 pupils on roll (ages 3-11), which according to Ofsted makes it a large school with a broad mix of pupils (Ofsted, 2011). In the most recent inspection report Ofsted notes that about half of the pupils are White British although the percentages of pupils from minority ethnic communities with English as an additional language is higher than average (*ibid*). The report also notes that the proportion of pupils known to be eligible for a free school meal is above average² while the proportion of pupils with special educational needs is considered 'very high'. This includes a wide range of often severe difficulties, from physical disabilities to speech and communication difficulties. The school received an overall grade of 'good' during its most recent Ofsted inspection and the extent to which pupils feel safe was regarded as 'outstanding' (Ofsted, 2011). Reflected in this grade was the acknowledgment that 'a significant strength of the school is its commitment to equalities', which is demonstrated through 'its work on anti-bullying particularly in relation to tackling homophobia' (Ofsted, 2011: 5).

5.1.1b Staff and management structure

There are 21 members of teaching staff at *Cutlers* and all are female. There are also five cover supervisors³ for Years 1-6 and all are female. Teaching staff in Years 1-6 are supported by 26 teaching assistants (TAs) and all but one are female. During fieldwork there was one male PGCE student on placement and he was in Year 5. Richard⁴ has been the school's only head teacher and has been in position for over 18 years. Assisting Richard is Chris, the school's openly gay deputy head teacher. Chris was often in charge when I was at the school and he was the person I liaised with. Chris initiated the school's work around homophobic bullying and signed the school up for Stonewall's 'Primary School Champions' programme. Assisting Chris is Sara, the school's assistant head. Sara was there to meet me on my first day and liaised with me when Chris was away. All three report to the school's governing body, which is

² Free school meal entitlement is an accepted proxy for socio-economic status (see Hobbs and Vignoles, 2007).

³ Cover supervisors relieve teachers for mornings or afternoons and fill in for them when they are ill.

⁴ All names are pseudonyms.

comprised of parent-governors, staff-governors, local council representatives and local community representatives.

With the exception of the schools deputy head teacher (Chris), there were no openly LGBT staff or governors in the school. The staff were mainly of white, British descent although two teachers were non-native New Zealanders and a few others were second/third generation immigrants (governors were of white, British descent). There were no clear religious affiliations amongst the staff and governors, although it is possible that some held 'private' religious beliefs.

5.1.1c Classes and children

There are 15 classes in the school with two per year group, except in Nursery where there is one larger class. All have a standard class size of 30 pupils with mixed abilities, although children move between classes in any one year group for subjects like literacy and numeracy. This creates polarised year group classrooms with a 'top set' and 'bottom set'. Children would be further sub-divided within these higher and lower ability groups and seated accordingly. The children did not tend to cluster into same-sex groups when sat at tables as each child had an allocated place. However, this changed when children were asked to sit on the floor where gendered clusters would form.

As indicated in 5.1.1a, about half of the pupils are of White British descent with the remainder coming from minority ethnic communities in (mainly) Eastern Europe and South Asia (as of 2011). As Ofsted (2011) noted, the percentages of pupils from minority ethnic communities with English as an additional language is higher than the national average. The children came from culturally diverse families where a range of religious beliefs were held. These included Christianity, Sikhism and Hinduism. There were no known same-sex parents and no openly gay pupils; although the deputy head teacher revealed that some gay pupils have returned to the school to visit.

5.1.2 Performing homophobic bullying as a national education discourse

This is not about me, this is about bullying

Chris, Cutlers deputy headteacher (23/11/11)

Cutlers commenced work around homophobic bullying in November 2010. From the outset the school has been very clear about the fact that work around gender and sexuality is about

preventing and challenging bullying and Cutlers has maintained this firm anti-bullying stance ever since. Unlike Weirwold, Cutlers had not been involved with the *No Outsiders* project (2006-9) or any other initiative prior to becoming a Stonewall 'Primary School Champion' so Cutlers implemented Stonewall's anti-bullying and 'Different Families' initiatives having not previously engaged with this work in any other way. Cutlers starting point was therefore a bullying survey, which would at once establish the extent of homophobic bullying and language and justify subsequent interventions (see Sue K, 2010a; Samara and Smith, 2008). As Chris recalls:

I was driven by what the kids were telling me [and] you can't argue with that [...] it is not what I'm saying it is what the kids are telling me ... if kids say we're being bullied over something you've got to sort it out ... it would be negligent if you don't ... end of story

Interview with Chris, Cutlers deputy headteacher (23/11/11)

This strategic justification for anti-bullying work relies on the existence of homophobic language whereby remarks like "you're so gay" and "that's so gay" can be construed as homophobic bullying (Stonewall, 2007; 2012; Warwick *et al.*, 2004; Woods and Wolke, 2003). The prevalence of such remarks, which are often dismissed provide a compelling case for introducing work around homophobic bullying (see Annie, 2010; DePalma and Jennett, 2010). Subsequent work around homophobic bullying would not have materialised had this evidence not been there, as Chris reiterates:

I involve the children in it [...] how's it happening, is it still happening [if so] where do we need to go next? [...] I use them to drive it [and] that's my kind of opening gambit when I talk to people at Stonewall Conferences [...] this isn't being driven by Stonewall, it is not being driven by ... *my issues*, from what happened to me when I was a kid, it is being driven by what the kids are telling me [and] that's the journey I've been on ... but it wasn't a journey I would have taken had the evidence from the children not suggested it cos I would have stitched myself up ... it would have looked like a personal agenda [so] it had to be there from the kids

Interview with Chris, Cutlers deputy headteacher: 23/11/11

Firmly grounding work around gender and sexuality in an anti-bullying context doesn't just provide a much needed rationale for this work, then; it also avoids the insinuation that this could be a 'personal agenda' (see DePalma and Atkinson, 2009c; Mark, 2010). This appears to be particularly important when you have openly gay members of staff are initiating this work, as the opening quote and the following quote testify:

The first training day I did here I didn't refer to myself at all [...] I did do a slide where I put a picture of me as a kid up and then I basically listed all the negative experiences that I'd had [but] that was so self-indulgent ... and it could run the risk of me looking like, *Hello, I'm fucked up, I've got issues ... let's sort them out ...* and I just didn't want it so I took it out

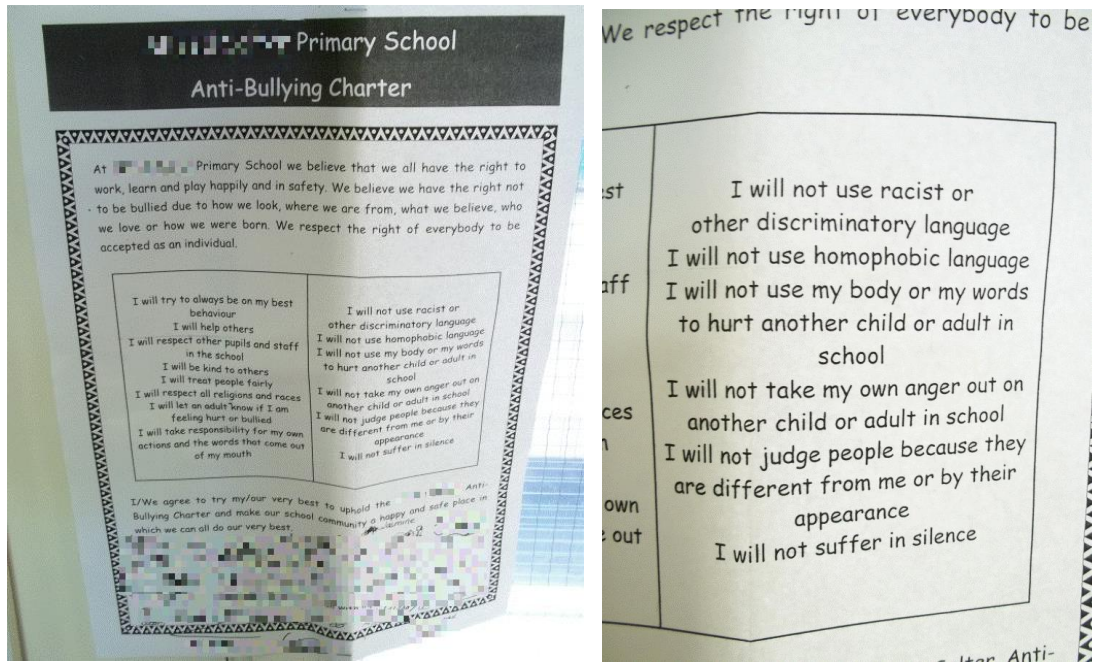
Interview with Chris, Cutlers deputy headteacher: 23/11/11

An anti-bullying stance thus serves two functions and both of these were equally important for Cutlers. Hence the school utilised this strategy to incorporate work around gender and sexuality into school with homophobic bullying, as another form of bullying, subsequently incorporated into school policy, particularly anti-bullying policy (see Figure 7). As Chris reveals:

It is now on the web-site [and in] all the policies and home-school agreements and parent handbooks it is there from the outset ... we're a Stonewall School Champion [and] if it is in policies [...] and agreements [...] it will be sustainable

Interview with Chris, Cutlers deputy headteacher: 23/11/11

FIGURE 7 - CUTLERS ANTI-BULLYING CHARTER



Each child in every class signs up to the school's Anti-Bullying Charter and in doing so they agree to uphold values introduced during 'National Anti-bullying Week'. The Charter is displayed in each classroom, like the one shown in the photograph so that staff can refer back to it. Photograph was taken November 2011.

Source: Author's own photograph

Embedding and defining work around gender and sexuality in this way was also a result of lessons learnt from previous initiatives, particularly *No Outsiders* (2006-9). For Cutlers, a low key approach and insistence on anti-bullying was vital. Chris continues:

I've been over there (Weirwold) and observed lessons [...] cos he (Mark, deputy headteacher) was involved with *No Outsiders* [so] it was really useful to go through some of the things that could go wrong upfront and pre-empt it

Interview with Chris, Cutlers deputy headteacher (23/11/11)

For Chris, a clear-cut anti-bullying initiative would allow work around gender and sexuality to materialise once it had been framed in terms of homophobic bullying. Couching the work in this way, Chris believed, would enable every member of staff to get on-board with it as 'everyone can relate to bullying' (Chris, Cutler's deputy headteacher: 23/11/11). Interviews

with teachers and governors revealed as much with the anti-bullying justification regarded as essential. While one teacher remarked that 'it doesn't have to be taught because of the need' (Year 4 teacher at Cutlers: 25/11/11) other staff needed the work to be situated in an anti-bullying context. This way they could understand the importance of it and feel able to get on-board with it. As the following extract illustrates, staff hadn't realised that remarks like "you're so gay" could constitute homophobic bullying, but once the connection was made explicit they could see how it was:

They (teachers) hadn't thought of it in that context, not that they'd ignored anything [they] just hadn't thought of it as a form of bullying until it was sort of pointed out to them and then oh yeah of course it is [...] a lot of children did feel they were being homophobically bullied ... by those sort of comments ... they also felt it was as bad as any other form of bullying ... racism or anything like that, which I must admit surprised me [that] even very young children could think that way

Interview with Cutlers Cover Supervisor/ Staff Governor (23/05/12)

Teachers I interviewed confirmed this and reiterated the importance of the results from the bullying survey that required the school to take action. As one teacher recalled:

Chris did an anti-bullying survey [and] the biggest thing that was coming out was children saying "you are so gay", implying something was stupid or dumb or silly and that came out in the survey quite glaringly that this was an issue we had to deal with

Interview with Cutlers Year 5 teacher (20/11/12)

Referring back to the bullying survey as the origin and stimulus for work around homophobic bullying was a reoccurring theme in teacher interviews and it was cited at the very earliest opportunity. The results of the survey, for the teachers, were something to fall back on when rationalising the work and it was clear how important this had been for them (see Sue K, 2010b). Training teachers to re-conceive remarks like "you're so gay" as constituting homophobic bullying has therefore been a key strategy for engaging teachers. In addition to situating gender and sexuality education in an anti-bullying context Chris stresses how staff had to get over 'the hump' and be given the opportunity to work through prejudices and misunderstandings before they were in a position to get on-board with the work (see John, 2010; Sue E, 2010; Van de Ven, 1996; Warwick *et al.*, 2004). As Chris explains:

At the end of the day I said to my staff I recognise that you might have a problem with some aspects of this work but you can still express it because right up until I was about 30 I had problems with that ... so if I had problems with that as a gay man how can I expect you to understand it ... I can't just click my fingers and for you to suddenly be alright and understand it all [...] you have to recognise that prejudice and fear happens for a reason and work around that

[S]o everyone was there (at the training) [even] Rob (site manager) [and] Michael (IT support) [...] cos it is every level, so there was 100 or whatever people there [and] I walked around and just listened and some of the conversations people were having ... if I was a sensitive soul I would be like heartbroken, you know, they were like oh yeah but don't they like children and all this sort of stuff but that needed to happen cos then what happened is other people were going well they're wrong that's not right and they corrected each other [so] we got all that shit out and then we were at a level where we could move on together

Interview with Chris, Cutlers deputy headteacher (23/11/11)

An anti-bullying initiative got underway at Cutlers following staff training and work around homophobic bullying has since become established in school. Now that a 'whole school' approach (see Annie, 2010; Warwick *et al.*, 2004) has been adopted new members of staff that have since joined the school have felt obliged to support the school's work, as the following extract illustrates:

If I'm going to be working in this school then I need to be aware of it and I need to be on-board with it [...] I'm here until February so I need to be aware of it and how to deal with it

Interview with PGCE student on placement (20/11/12)

The school has maintained this firm anti-bullying stance when communicating with parents and they have encouraged them to regard homophobic bullying in the same way as other forms of bullying. Positioning this work amid broader anti-bullying work in many ways allowed the school's specific work around homophobic bullying to go largely unnoticed as it wasn't going to be something that would attract unwanted attention. As such, work around gender and sexuality was subsumed within a general anti-bullying context. As Chris explains:

I sent a general letter about anti-bullying and then there was one paragraph about homophobic bullying [that this] is a really big issue and this is what we want to explore [so] it was just there buried amongst everything else so we could have been accused of not [...] informing the parents but it would only jump out if they had a problem with it and nobody did

Interview with Chris, Cutlers deputy headteacher (23/11/11)

As well as relying on an anti-bullying justification and the results of the children's questionnaires the school also refers to government legislation and guidance to further legitimise its anti-bullying work (see Samara and Smith, 2008; Smith *et al.*, 2008; Woods and Wolke, 2003). As Chris continues:

I've tried to say to parents [that] we've been told we've got to do this [...] it says here in black and white [that] we must be proactive in advancing equality for all [...] and out of all the protected characteristics you could argue that the most vulnerable in terms of schools are LGBT children

Interview with Chris, Cutlers deputy headteacher (23/11/11)

Government legislation, in this instance, is brought in to add additional weight to the school's work around homophobic bullying. The revised Ofsted inspection framework hadn't come into force at the time of the interview but this has since been used in the same way to validate the work while distancing the school from having voluntarily introduced the work. This approach puts the school in a very strong position should there be any objections, e.g. from religious parents (see Sue E, 2010). As Chris explains:

I fully respect if someone has an opinion on it [and] I'm not asking them to change it [so] if you've got a religion that says that you deserve to burn in hell of course you're going to think that [and] I respect that, *however*, when children are being bullied I'm negligent if I'm not dealing with that [and] you can't argue with that [because] it might be your child being bullied for being a Christian or Muslim [and] you would expect me to do the same ... even though I am not Christian or Muslim

Interview with Chris, Cutlers deputy headteacher (23/11/11)

Teachers I interviewed also report that parents who are uneasy about the depth that the school goes into with this work are, nevertheless, reassured when they find out how it is being done and why it is being done. As a Year 4 teacher explains:

Parents are perhaps surprised by the depth of the work but once they see how it is done and why it is being done they're reassured

Interview with Cutlers Year 4 teacher (25/11/11)

Now that work around homophobic bullying has become established in school staff believe that it will be sustained as part of the school's anti-bullying work and over time will become part of the school ethos:

It is going to become engrained in the school ethos and it will be something that won't just be done [...] as one week we are going to talk about this [...] it is just going to become part of normal life ... that we'll just discuss it if the situation crops up, whether it is in the media or in school or wherever

Interview with Cutlers Cover Supervisor/ Staff Governor (23/05/12)

Having outlined how Cutlers rationalised and implemented gender and sexuality education I shall now turn my attention to how this work was incorporated into the broader school curriculum.

5.1.3 Utilising National Anti-bullying Week to incorporate gender and sexuality education into the broader school curriculum

This section explores how gender and sexuality education is incorporated into Cutlers broader school curriculum via 'National Anti-bullying Week' (see NCB, 2004). Both schools use topic weeks to integrate their work into the school curriculum and at Cutlers Primary School this has been achieved through broadening the remit of its anti-bullying work so that work around sexist and homophobic bullying becomes an extended part of its 'whole school' programme for anti-bullying week (see Annie, 2010). This parallels Stonewall's 'Different Families' approach which was discussed in section 4.3 where instead of attempting to introduce something entirely new Stonewall broadened an existing topic on families to include recognition of same-sex

relationships. In similar vein, the deputy headteacher of Cutlers did not ask staff to do something that they were not already doing, in this case anti-bullying work. Rather, Chris broadened what this work included by extending its remit to include recognition of sexist and homophobic bullying. This strategy allowed such work to slot in next to existing anti-bullying work. Incorporating this work into the school's programme for 'National Anti-bullying Week' means that it will receive regular coverage as it becomes a part of annual curricula (see Van de Ven, 1996). As discussed earlier, this ensures that the work is not simply a one-off, isolated event but is embedded within the school curriculum (Annie, 2010; Mark, 2010; Sue K, 2010a). As one teacher remarks:

[W]e do anti-bullying week every year so as soon as [it] comes up we start by discussing the different kinds and they are really aware of cyber bullying which is obviously on the rise with the use of mobile phones and the internet and then they always, *always* will bring up homophobic bullying ... it is not something which would have ever been mentioned previously, as a form of bullying

Interview with Cutlers Year 5 teacher (20/11/12)

Including sexist and homophobic bullying in this teaching context puts it on par with other forms of bullying. So in this instance where children are listing various forms of bullying at the start of anti-bullying week sexism and homophobia are immediately raised, such are the connections that children make between different forms of bullying. Hence, children recall sexism and homophobia when thinking about bullying with this generic, everyday term evoking quite specific understandings.

Integrating sexism and homophobia into the school programme for 'National Anti-bullying Week' also ensures that these issues are incorporated into a range of statutory National Curriculum subjects, such as literacy, numeracy, ICT (Information and Communications Technology), music, art and drama, as well as Philosophy for Children⁵ and the broader non-statutory framework of Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE)⁶. This is achieved through use of 'The Creative Learning Journey': a popular web-based tool that supports the thematic

⁵ Philosophy for Children is a discussion-based session in which children ask and debate philosophical questions arising from a chosen stimulus (e.g. images of males/females transgressing gender norms) (See Philosophy4children, 2014).

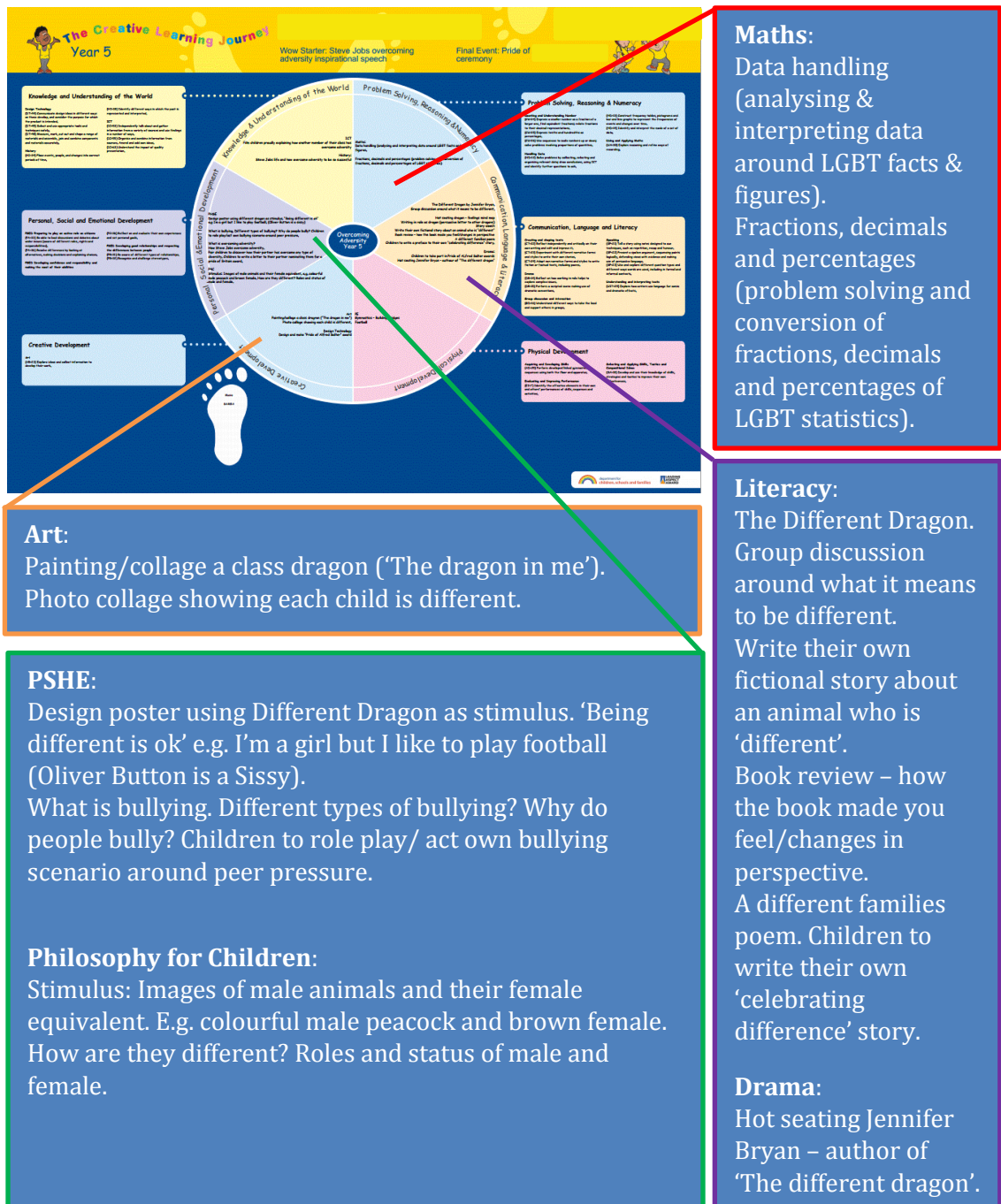
⁶ The Labour Government introduced legislation to make PSHE (including SRE) a statutory subject for *both* maintained schools and academies, although this legislation was dropped after Labour's 2010 electoral defeat (Vanderbeck and Johnson, 2015; Macdonald, 2009).

design of a school curriculum by allowing teachers to make connections to themed weeks⁷. Thus, when presented with topics like anti-bullying and corresponding themes like sexist and homophobic bullying, teachers use this tool to make connections in lessons by utilising the extensive thematic database.

For example, one Year 5 teacher used 'The Creative Learning Journey' during anti-bullying week (2011) to link six subjects to sexist and homophobic bullying (see Figure 8). As illustrated, maths, literacy, drama, PSHE, Philosophy for Children and art made connections to themes of sexism and homophobia with each subject supporting learning within and across the different areas of 'The Creative Learning Journey'. For instance, in literacy the class used the book *The Different Dragon* (Bryan and Hosler, 2011) to critique heteronormative masculinity (see 5.3.2c) with this theme supported elsewhere within Communication, Language & Literacy as well as in other areas of 'The Creative Learning Journey', like Creative Development (i.e. art) and Personal, Social & Emotional Development (i.e. PSHE and Philosophy for Children). Subjects like maths provided further opportunities to consolidate understandings with LGBT facts and figures used to explore hate crime.

⁷ The Creative Learning Journey integrates the National Curriculum with SEAL, the Every Child Matters programme and the principles and values of Excellence and Enjoyment. It enables cross curricular links to form between subjects, which helps children to make connections with their learning (see Creative Learning Journey, 2014).

FIGURE 8 - YEAR 5'S CREATIVE LEARNING JOURNEY WHEEL



The Different Dragon themed anti-bullying week Creative Learning Journey Wheel with relevant text reproduced in boxes.

Source: Cutlers primary school

Having outlined how Cutlers incorporate gender and sexuality education into the broader school curriculum via 'National Anti-bullying Week' I now want to turn my attention to how this work is supported outside of anti-bullying week.

In section 4.3 I quoted a Stonewall representative who claimed that 'successful schools' only use weeks like 'National Anti-bullying Week' as a starting point for this work. According to this view, while such weeks provide a much needed incentive to introduce this work, 'successful schools' would not just do it in isolation but would see it as part of everything they do:

[S]chools like National Anti-bullying Week and they use that as a hook to do something around homophobic bullying. [While] schools quite like to have those topical days [...] I think the ones that are successful don't just do it for one day but manage to thread it through and see it as part of everything they're doing

Interview with Stonewall's Primary Education Officer (12/06/12)

While Stonewall's Primary Education Officer conceded that resources like the 'Different Families' materials would probably receive most attention in anti-bullying week, it was hoped that once such work had become established it would not be confined to this context. Indeed, in my first interview with the deputy headteacher I asked how this work would evolve over time. In 2011 Chris envisaged that it would simply become part of everyday teaching, although Chris stressed that anti-bullying week was crucial for bringing this work 'up to speed' and would continue to play a key role:

[M]y next steps would be to ensure that it isn't just happening when I bang on about it ... that it is happening right across the curriculum ... all the time [...] my vision is for this work to just slot alongside everything else every day ... so if a teacher is looking for a role model or whatever they might choose somebody who's gay [...] we've had to make a fuss and a song and a dance but once the dust has settled I don't want to hear about it anymore (laughs) ... not here ... I will just look for evidence of it when I'm observing literacy and numeracy and other lessons ... it will just become part of something we look for ... we'll still do anti-bullying week because it is good to just re-spin fate but I just want it to be part of natural life

Interview with Chris, Cutlers deputy headteacher (23/11/11)

In the years that passed, leading up to the final school visit in May 2013, I observed how aspects of the school's work around sexist and homophobic bullying had been threaded

through the syllabus to reinforce the message of anti-bullying week. In 5.1.2 I noted how the school's stance on sexist and homophobic language is sustained through school policy, particularly anti-bullying policy, with specific references to sexist and homophobic remarks in documents like the Home-School Agreement⁸ and class Anti-Bullying Charters. Indeed, when visiting the school outside anti-bullying week (some 6 months later) children would recall understandings developed during this week in surprising detail, and they would even reflect on work from previous years and relate this back to work done in subsequent years, so it was clear that this work was being supported outside of anti-bullying week. However, it was immediately evident to me that school policies alone were not responsible for this sustained engagement; indeed, themes of sexism and homophobia were gradually filtering through the anti-bullying curriculum into everyday practice.

First of all, on a return visit in May 2012 I noticed how posters used during November's anti-bullying week, like Stonewall's 'Different Families' posters now had a permanent presence in classrooms and corridors alongside other anti-bullying and equalities posters (see Figure 9). In the case of Stonewall's posters, these were annotated and discussed in class during anti-bullying week and children would produce their own interpretations of these posters. Displaying these posters around school therefore provide a constant visual reminder of work undertaken around 'Different Families' during anti-bullying week, including specific recognition of same-sex relationships. Indeed, I observed teachers' referring to these posters in passing when dealing with a topic on heritage, which is a themed week delivered in May. Cross-curricular links were obviously starting to form between separate units of work and throughout this week I also noticed how teachers carried over gender neutral language which had been given specific attention in anti-bullying week and I observed how teachers would regularly encourage and praise gender transgressive acts.

⁸ The Home-School Agreement outlines the aims and values of the school and requires parents/ carers to acknowledge these by signing up to a partnership agreement which ensures consistency between school and home.

FIGURE 9 - POSTERS ON DISPLAY THROUGHOUT THE SCHOOL YEAR AT CUTLERS PRIMARY SCHOOL



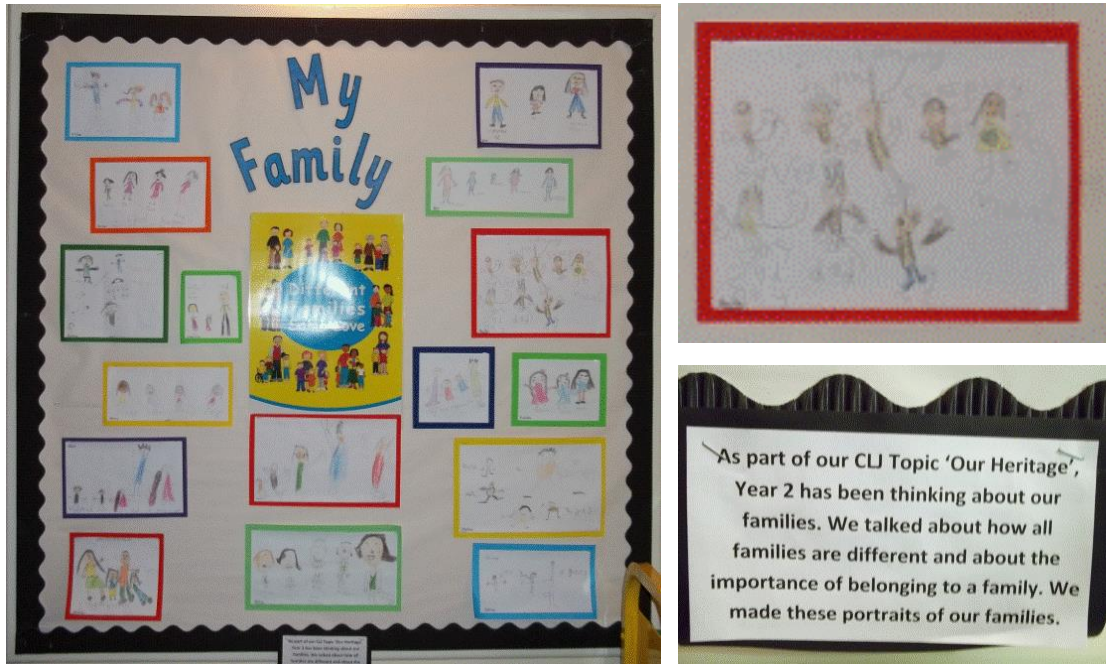
Stonewall's 'Different Families' posters and Out For Our Children 'Real Families Rock!' poster on display in classrooms and corridors alongside other anti-bullying and equalities posters. These photographs were taken in May 2012.

Source: Author's own photographs

Aspects of the school's anti-bullying initiative had further filtered through the syllabus by May 2013 and understandings emerging out of this curriculum were being implemented in everyday practice. For instance, the school's work around 'Different Families' no longer needed to be situated in anti-bullying week with this unit of work subsequently incorporated into the 'Our Heritage' topic (see Figure 10). This has consolidated cross-curricular links with understandings introduced in anti-bullying week now developed in the 'Our Heritage' topic. Likewise, other units of work once covered entirely within anti-bullying week have subsequently been incorporated into other topics, like 'Overcoming Adversity' and 'Fairy tales and Fantasy'. In the former case, a unit of work on Harvey Milk and inspirational gay role models has resurfaced in this context to extend understandings introduced in anti-bullying week, and in the latter case 'alternative' fairy tales⁹ used during anti-bullying week now reappear in this context juxtaposed with 'traditional' fairy tales.

⁹ E.g. The Paper Bag Princess (Munsch, 1980); Princess Smartypants (Cole, 1996); Prince Cinders (Cole, 1997) and King and King (De Haan and Nijland, 2002).

FIGURE 10 - 'OUR HERITAGE' WALL DISPLAY AT CUTLERS PRIMARY SCHOOL



Stonewall's 'Different Families' work incorporated into the 'Our Heritage' topic with insert showing how each child celebrates their own family arrangement.

Source: Author's own photograph

Connections have therefore started to form between the anti-bullying curriculum and other themed weeks. This means that these ideas are reinforced consistently with sustained engagements throughout the school's broader curriculum. Anti-bullying week played a crucial role in putting this work on the agenda and getting it up and running, and remains important for concentrated work, however, more significantly it has allowed work around sexism and homophobia to be brought up to speed so that it may exist outside of Anti-bullying Week and be incorporated into everyday practice. As alluded to earlier, this includes teachers' own pedagogical practices which have been transformed as a result of engaging with this curriculum. Thus, teachers' exposure to this work has consciously or unconsciously informed their own everyday practices, particularly when it comes to making assumptions about children's future destinies, like assuming that they will desire the opposite sex or eventually get married some day with absence of this talk noticeable. In fact, I observed teachers' deliberately making a point of using gender neutral language, as discussed above, and teachers' being inclusive - more generally - when talking about relationships or referring to family arrangements.

5.2 RESISTING HOMOPHOBIC BULLYING DISCOURSE AT WEIRWOLD

In this section I explore how Weirwold rationalised and implemented gender and sexuality education into school through an inclusion and equalities framework. I also explore how this work is incorporated into the school's broader curriculum via 'Diversity Week', which takes place during *LGBT History Month* in February.

5.2.1a Overview of Weirwold primary school

Weirwold is a co-educational maintained community primary school located in an ethnically diverse part of East London. The school has a one form entry and as of March 2012 it had 265 pupils on roll (ages 4-11), which according to Ofsted makes it an average-sized primary school (Ofsted, 2012d). The Ofsted report notes that the proportion of pupils who have English as a second language is above the national average, as is the number of pupils who come from ethnic minority backgrounds. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for a free school meal is also above average (*ibid*). The school received an overall grade of 'good' during its most recent Ofsted inspection with 'behaviour and safety' considered 'outstanding'. Reflected in this grade was the acknowledgment that 'pupils have an excellent understanding of different types of bullying, including cyber-bullying and homophobic and emotional bullying, such as name calling and making others feel isolated' (Ofsted, 2012d: 7).

5.2.1b Staff and management structure

There are nine members of teaching staff at Weirwold and all but one are female. Four are Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) and the remainder are experienced members of staff. A teaching assistant (TA) is assigned to each teacher and all of these are female. During fieldwork there were two PGCE students on placement. One of these was male and the other was female. Linda, a former teacher at the school has been head teacher since 2003. Assisting Linda is Mark, the school's openly gay deputy head teacher. Mark joined the school in Easter 2006 and signed the school up for the *No Outsiders* project (2006-2009). Mark is responsible for the school's diversity and equalities work and more recently signed the school up for Stonewall's 'Primary School Champions' programme. Mark was my contact at the school and I always liaised with him. Both Mark and Linda report to the school's governing body which is comprised of parent-governors, staff-governors, local community representatives and a Local Education Authority (LEA) appointed chair.

With the exception of the schools deputy head teacher (Mark), there were no openly LGBT staff or governors in the school. The staffs were mainly of white, British descent although two teachers were White South Africans and another two were second generation immigrants (all but two of the governors were of white, British descent). Two teachers held strong Christian beliefs but the rest of the staff had no clear religious affiliations, although it is possible that some held 'private' religious beliefs.

5.2.1c Classes and children

In the final year of my fieldwork (academic year 2012/13) there were 9 classes in the school, with two Year 1 and Year 2 classes. Each had a standard class size of 30 pupils with mixed abilities, although children would often be seated according to academic ability from Year 2 onwards. Children would therefore move around the classroom at different times of the day depending on the subject being taught with five tables set up in each class for group work. While children were allocated tables they got to decide who to sit next to and from Year 2 onwards there were clear gender divides. This was also apparent when children were asked to sit on the carpet where gendered clusters would form.

As indicated in 5.2.1a, the school is located in an ethnically diverse part of East London with the proportion of pupils who come from ethnic minority backgrounds/ have English as a second language above the national average. The majority of the children are second and third generation immigrants with their parents originally from the Caribbean (particularly Jamaica), East/West Africa and Western Asia. As such, the children came from culturally diverse families where a range of religious beliefs were held (Christianity and Islam were the main religions). A child with same-sex parents had previously been at the school but there were no known same-sex parents when research was undertaken at the school and no openly gay pupils.

5.2.2 Rationalising and implementing gender and sexuality education through an inclusion and equalities framework

While Cutlers has always been firm about the anti-bullying rationale underpinning its work, Weirwold has always been ambivalent about such an approach and has avoided defining its work in this way. Unlike Cutlers, Weirwold has had longstanding engagements with this work having been part of the *No Outsiders* project (2006-2009). *No Outsiders* was the first major initiative to explore how primary schools in England might challenge heteronormativity, but unlike Stonewall's subsequent initiative *No Outsiders* did not prioritise an anti-bullying approach (see DePalma and Atkinson, 2009c). Instead, *No Outsiders* encouraged schools to be

open about how they might frame this work, justify it and incorporate it into the curriculum. An anti-bullying approach was one option available to schools but this was one approach amongst many. After all, *No Outsiders* was a Participatory Action Research (PAR) project with diverse personnel (including university researchers, practitioners and teachers) so no single approach was favoured (see DePalma and Atkinson, 2009c).

Weirwold has therefore not been obliged to adopt an anti-bullying stance with its Stonewall involvement coming at a much later date. As an excerpt from an interview with the deputy headteacher reveals, Weirwold chose to approach the work from an equalities and inclusion standpoint, although Mark now finds himself citing anti-bullying rhetoric to justify this work:

JH	Would it be fair to say that <i>No Outsiders</i> encouraged schools to be open about how you might frame, justify and incorporate work into school?	Interview with Mark,
Mark	Yes	Weirwold's
JH	Did you use an anti-bullying framework when first justifying and incorporating work into school?	deputy headteacher
Mark	No, initially it was more of a diversity thing	(8/2/13)
JH	Do you find yourself using the anti-bullying justification more now?	
Mark	I think more now ... initially we didn't need to justify why we were doing it	

The culture of Weirwold was such that Mark did not have to utilise an anti-bullying framework when justifying and implementing work in school with Weirwold's school ethos allowing, if not encouraging, this work to prosper (see Sue E, 2010). As governor interviews reveal, work around sexism and homophobia was considered a 'natural development' of equalities and inclusion work, which extended - rather than undermined or compromised - the school's existing values. It was therefore not deemed necessary to gain approval from governors to do this type of work given how it would complement the school's values:

To me it just seemed to be a natural development of the work that was going on in school [...] I don't think it was a big issue with governors, I mean I'm not at all sure that I can remember any big discussions about it ... to me it just sort of seemed to be a natural development of equalities

Interview with Weirwold's Chair of Governors (16/05/12)

It just felt like another step, you know, sort of taking a stronger step from things that we felt we valued anyhow

Interview with Weirwold's Parent Governor (15/05/12)

Mark used *LGBT History Month* to support the school's emerging work and within this month Mark devised 'Diversity Week'. While *Diversity Week* is still used by the school it subsequently dropped *LGBT History Month* when it became apparent that this broader framework triggered anxieties amongst parents and teachers as to what was behind the work. In contrast to Cutler's anti-bullying work, which prompted no adverse reaction from parents or teachers, inclusion and equalities work at Weirwold provoked unprecedented outrage amongst parents and teachers with both parties having failed to grasp the underlying logic of this work when couched in this particular way. The adverse reaction stemmed from a wall display in the entrance hall that Mark put up for *LGBT History Month*. Unbeknown to Mark, the display would rekindle dormant discourses associated with Section 28 debates. As Mark recalls:

I'd been here for roughly two terms and at the start of my third term we did LGBT History Month and I made a big display in the entrance hall, which is what we were doing for all our months [so] let's have a big display for LGBT History Month [but] that's when I think it kind of got home to parents cos we had a few parents saying, I'm really not sure about this work, I don't really believe that you should be doing this

Interview with Mark, Weirwold's deputy headteacher (24/11/11)

Reflecting on this incident at a later date Mark adds:

At the time I thought why wouldn't we do that because we make a big display for Black History Month [so] why wouldn't we do this for LGBT History Month [but] I think as

soon as you mention sexual orientation or sexuality or bisexual all the parents see is sex, you're teaching our children about sex, you're teaching our children about gay sex

Interview with Mark, Weirwold's deputy headteacher (8/2/13)

This misinterpretation of *LGBT History Month* was not helped by the fact that the school approached this work through SRE (Sex and Relationships Education), despite how this provides 'an amazing platform to deal with discrimination and prejudice' (Interview with Mark, Weirwold's deputy headteacher: 24/11/11). Hence, when it came to *LGBT History Month* Mark considered SRE to be the ideal vehicle for raising awareness of homophobia and discrimination faced by lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered people. However, combining the two proved to be counter-productive:

In my first job I was coordinator for Sex and Relationships Education [and] I've kept that up with every school I've gone to ... I've fought to be the SRE coordinator [because] it just gives you such an amazing platform to deal with discrimination and prejudice [and] then to take it up a notch and say, you know, gay and lesbian, not that I'm teaching anybody about sex [but] of course you get people who ... we do in our place ... sexual relationships education, oh, sex ... I'm not sure about that ... ok, I can cope with that but then you talk about lesbian and gay and *immediately* it is sex ... it is not about something up here, it is about what we do in bed [and] that's all lesbian and gay people are about

Interview with Mark, Weirwold's deputy headteacher (24/11/11)

Sears (1999) acknowledgement that talk of sexual identity automatically evokes notions of sexual practice reverberates once again with the popular misconception of 'learning about gay sex' rubbing up against the equally popular misconception of the asexual/ sexually naïve child (DePalma and Jennett, 2010). As the following extracts show, it was this discourse that overshadowed the work for some parents:

One parent wrote a letter saying all the men at this school are gay activists and they're wanting to brain wash our children and you've got a hidden agenda and all this kind of stuff [and] of course we [also] had one delightful parent *governor* who was going round telling all the parents that we're teaching gay sex in year one with puppets

Interview with Mark, Weirwold's deputy headteacher (24/11/11)

As a parent governor recalls:

There was talk in the playground from other parents [...] that this was Mark's project and this is what Mark's brought in [but] what it is about [is] he trying to push his issues on the school [...] there was a feeling of that, there was talk in that way

Interview with Weirwold's Parent Governor (15/05/12)

Despite being viewed as a 'natural development' of the school's equalities work lack of a strategic rationale threatened this new work. Where Chris had managed to bracket off his own gay identity and distance himself from Cutler's initiative through utilising an anti-bullying framework Mark found that a less holistic approach brought his personal motivations into question (see DePalma and Atkinson, 2009c). This clash of the personal with the professional was considered inappropriate and dangerous in an educational setting where discourses of 'childhood innocence' still endure (Epstein, 1999). This wasn't just limited to parents and a parent governor, however, with some teachers also sharing these sentiments:

Two members of staff came to see me [and] one stood in my office and said my core belief is what you are doing is wrong, your lifestyle is wrong, your lifestyle choice, which really got my back up, is wrong [and] I don't believe that we should be doing this work with our children [so] I put in a formal complaint cos I thought I'm not being spoken to like that ... about me, about my sexuality and really about what the school believes in ... this is the school ethos ... that we accept difference

Interview with Mark, Weirwold's deputy headteacher (24/11/11)

As this particular teacher understood it, Mark was promoting his lifestyle in a setting where children are believed to be easily influenced, which resonates with Section 28 debates around 'the age of fixation' (see Epstein, 2000a; Epstein *et al.*, 2000). However, what I want to focus

on is the last part of the extract where Mark defused opposition. This varied depending on whether Mark was communicating with parents, in which case he found himself citing anti-bullying rhetoric, or whether he was ensuring that staff were on-board with what the 'school believes in'. With regard to the latter he would question the extent to which staff were buying into the ethos of the school with the understanding that any individual should not be working at a school if they could not buy into the school's ethos. As Mark explains, the approach he took with oppositional and disengaged staff was to simply reiterate the school ethos which had, after all, allowed the work to emerge in the first place, and crucially it is the ethos of the school that the staff must respect in order to work at that school. Referring to the new Teachers' Standards Mark explains that:

One of the Teachers' Standards that every teacher has to meet is this whole thing of buying into the ethos of the school so if [teachers] don't like the fact that we deal with diversity and difference in this way then they should go and find another school

Interview with Mark, Weirwold's deputy headteacher (8/2/13)

A school's ethos can therefore have a double-affirming effect. Depending on the values of a school, a school ethos can at once legitimise work broader than homophobic bullying and sustain it through values that first made it available. In this sense schools do not necessarily have to use an anti-bullying framework to justify and implement this work. Furthermore, as new teachers' standards are more widely understood incoming teachers will be more aware of their duty within a school like Weirwold. As interviews with Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) show, the ethos of a school and how they would see themselves as being able to operate at that school would have a magnetic effect. As NQTs explained:

It is part of the ethos of the school to teach the kids about the wider world [so] I wasn't surprised that the school did this work because it is the kind of school it is and it is the kind of school I wanted to work in

Interview with a Newly Qualified Teacher (8/2/12)

I don't think you could work in this school if you didn't buy into the school ethos

Interview with a Newly Qualified Teacher (10/2/12)

While Mark was able to use the school ethos to validate the work a different approach would be required for parents. Even though Mark initially chose not to rationalise the work through an anti-bullying justification he eventually found himself citing anti-bullying rhetoric when communicating with parents. As Mark concedes:

You have to put it in a way that is palatable and understandable by everybody [so] on a basic level it is anti-bullying work [that's] the frame of reference for a lot of people [it] carries a lot of weight because it is what people know about, everybody has got an experience of bullying in some form or another and parents don't want their child going through that

Interview with Mark, Weirwold's deputy headteacher (8/2/13)

Hence when advising a Newly Qualified Teacher about how she should justify the work to new parents Mark advised her to frame it in an anti-bullying context:

I pointed her in the right direction of using inclusion and anti-bullying and all that kind of stuff as much as the whole duty of care issue and the fact that we have the equality act ... we have a duty to prevent homophobic bullying and we do it through diversity week

Interview with Mark, Weirwold's deputy headteacher (8/2/13)

While Mark didn't need to justify the work initially to implement it in school his hand has been forced more recently when communicating with parents. Mark resists over-emphasizing anti-bullying but now tactically cites anti-bullying rhetoric when communicating with parents. Therefore, while the school continues to approach this work from an equalities and inclusion standpoint, it has found an anti-bullying justification necessary strategically. Such findings resonate with arguments made in preceding chapters, particularly Chapter 4 where I examined the significance of anti-bullying rhetoric in shaping the development of post Section 28 legislation during a time of heightened parental anxieties (see Zoe *et al.*, 2010). It was therefore interesting to find that the school had turned to an anti-bullying framework, if only to legitimise its work for parents, and prior to this it was also interesting to learn how the school had experienced backlash from parents, teachers and a school governor when it had launched Diversity Week under the banner Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender History Month.

Having outlined how Weirwold rationalised and implemented gender and sexuality education I shall now turn my attention to how this work was incorporated into the broader school curriculum.

5.2.3 Weirwold Primary School and Diversity Week

Weirwold used 'Diversity Week' to integrate work around sexism and homophobia into the school curriculum via a range of statutory National Curriculum subjects and the broader non-statutory framework of PSHE (see 5.3.1), and it is this process that I turn my attention to now.

The statutory literacy curriculum was pivotal both in terms of gaining support from the head teacher and as a key context for delivering gender and sexuality education. Recalling how he pitched the *No Outsiders* project to the head teacher Mark notes how he focused on literacy in order to appeal to the head teacher's interests in this area:

I said to the head there is this project I think will be good for the school ... it involves story books, and she's *very much* literacy based [and] as soon as she heard story book she said yep, let's do it!

Interview with Mark, Weirwold's deputy headteacher (24/11/11)

The school's equalities and inclusion ethos supported the introduction of such work, but the question of how to operationalise was always going to be crucial. However, the literacy curriculum ensured that all year groups engaged with gender and sexuality in their literacy work. Literacy therefore became the framework for implementing a gender and sexualities education with 'Diversity Week' used to integrate this work into the school's broader curriculum.

Weirwold's gender and sexualities education centred on a range of children's books which collectively challenge heteronormative- masculinity/femininity and (hetero)sexism¹⁰ (see Figure 11). As Mark explains, a 'core book approach' proved to be vital when demonstrating how a gender and sexualities education could be delivered in an 'age appropriate' way. Indeed, this was vital not only for the headteacher but other teachers, not to mention parents who would be reassured having seen what this work consists of:

¹⁰ These resources will be analysed in section 5.3.

- Mark All the work had been done on a core book approach ... it was absolutely vital for the success of the project that it was based on books and that we were given £250 worth of books up front to do with what we wanted so there was the tie of the literacy and the creativity element that really helped us sell it to her [the headteacher]
- JH Would it have been more difficult to sell it to her had there been no books?
- Mark Yes, it would have been a lot more difficult, yes ... I think from the point of view of not knowing how to do the work, how we would tackle it, how it was going to be age appropriate, how it would be meaningful for the children and the staff ... I suppose having the books there was the anchor
- JH So not only for the headteacher but other teachers as well?
- Mark Yes, absolutely [and] I think it is less frightening for the parents because they can actually see the physical resources in front of them, there are no surprises [...] the parents can see that there is nothing controversial, that its age appropriate stuff [and] it is easier for the staff, they can just pick up a book and go with it [also] the kids are so used to this whole core book approach that using one whole book for a week's worth of activities is nothing different to them so it has been quite easy to slot it into the usual work that we do

Interview with Mark, Weirwold's deputy headteacher (8/2/13)

FIGURE 11 - A SELECTION OF CHILDREN'S BOOKS USED DURING DIVERSITY WEEK



Emotional literacy is the backbone of Weirwold's gender and sexualities education. Featured above is a selection of children's books used during Diversity Week.

(From top left) Oliver Button is a Sissy (DePaola, 1979); The Paper Bag Princess (Munsch, 1980); And Tango Makes Three (Richardson and Parnell, 2005); King and King (De Haan and Nijland, 2002); Something Else (Cave, 1998); Prince Cinders (Cole, 1997).

Source: Author's own collection

Having children's books as tangible resources proved to be crucial in launching a gender and sexualities education at Weirwold with literacy used to frame and direct work around sexism and homophobia. Each teacher selects one of the books in preparation for 'Diversity Week' and uses the accompanying lesson plan¹¹ to structure activities. This includes activities within and outside of literacy with thematic connections made throughout the week between literacy and other lessons, like PSHE, ICT, Art and drama. Thus, a gender and sexualities education emerges through literacy and filters into other areas of the school curriculum. This ensures that themes introduced in literacy are developed elsewhere with understandings consolidated throughout 'Diversity Week'.

¹¹ Lesson plans that accompany the books are produced by Mark, the school's deputy head teacher. I will return to the lesson plans in section 5.3.

Using literacy and a 'core book approach' as an existing framework for introducing new topics has therefore allowed a gender and sexualities education to 'easily slot in' to school (to paraphrase Mark). Hence, each year since 2006 the school has undertaken concentrated work around sexism and homophobia during 'Diversity Week'. Like Cutlers, Weirwold has threaded this work through the school syllabus so that aspects of its gender and sexualities education appear elsewhere in the school year, albeit in a condensed form. This has ensured that understandings developed during 'Diversity Week' are sustained in a variety of ways in other topic areas, from school clubs to behavioural policy. Thus, once a gender and sexualities education became established in school it filtered through the syllabus.

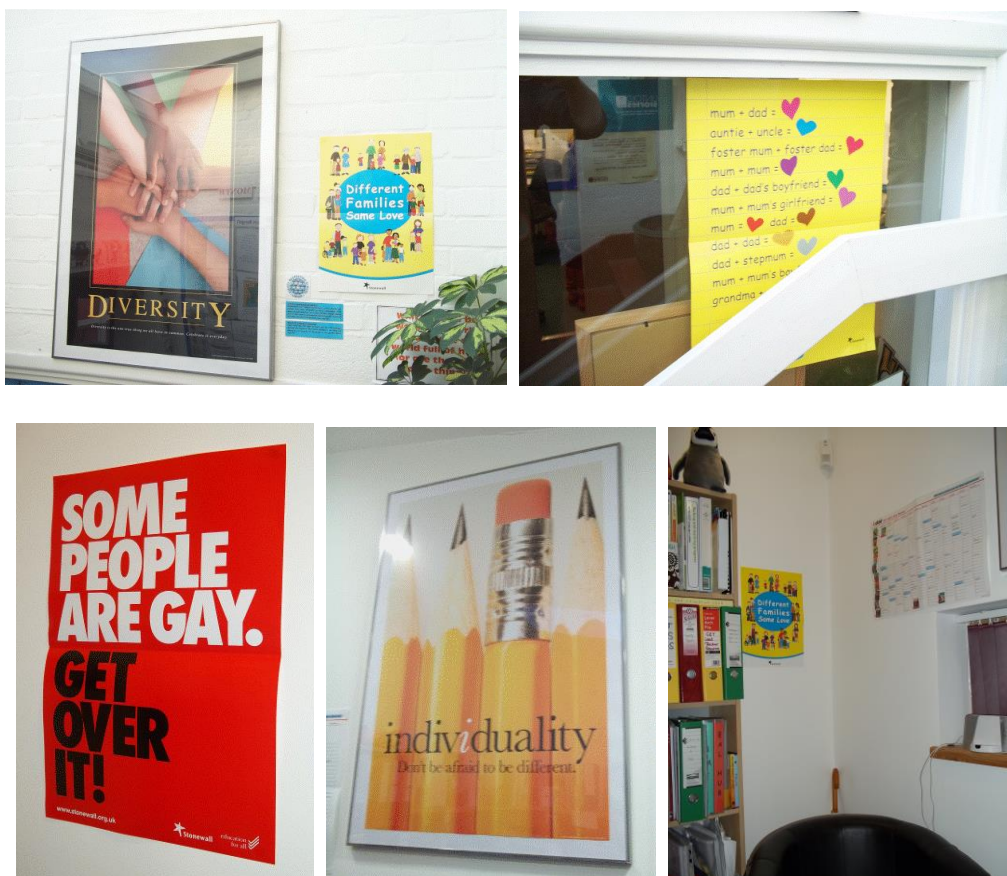
On a return visit in May 2012 I noticed how posters used during February's 'Diversity Week', like Stonewall's 'Different Families' posters, remained in classrooms and corridors alongside other equalities and inclusion posters (see Figure 12). Like Cutlers, teachers' at Weirwold referenced Stonewall posters in class during 'Diversity Week' and pupils referred to them when discussing different types of families in class. Displaying these posters around school throughout the year provides visual reminders of the concentrated work undertaken during 'Diversity Week'. While teachers' had not yet incorporated 'Different Families' into other topics, like teachers at Cutlers had done, I actually found that interviewing one teacher about this encouraged her to reflect on thematic connections that could be made in other units of work and by May 2013 she had followed-up on this:

JH Are Stonewall's 'Different Families' resources mainly used this week?

Jenny Yeah, to be honest we don't really ... I don't know where in the curriculum it could come up apart from, well ... in PSHE and SEAL which is usually going for goals, new beginnings, say no to bullying, getting on and falling out and it is good to be me ... so next term it is good to be me for their theme topic and I suppose I could incorporate different families and relationships and changes so next term this might be an opportunity to reintegrate these resources into my planning and I think that would be brilliant ... yes ... that's just given me an idea actually to carry on using these resources for lesson plans in PSHE and SEAL

Interview with Jenny, Weirwold's Year 1 teacher (9/2/12)

FIGURE 12 - POSTERS ON DISPLAY THROUGHOUT THE SCHOOL YEAR AT WEIRWOLD



Stonewall's posters on display in classrooms and corridors alongside other equalities and inclusion posters. Photographs were taken in May 2012.

Source: Author's own photographs

As follow-up actions demonstrate, cross-curricular links have formed between separate topics for the 'Different Families' work and when I interviewed Mark about this in May 2013 he said that other cross-curricular links had formed elsewhere for other aspects of the school's gender and sexualities education:

Year 5 do a topic called 'The Power of Words' so they study important speeches so they've done Martin Luther-King, they've done Eva Perón and they've done Harvey Milk [and] you think yep, that's how it should be [...] it shouldn't just be one particular month, it should be celebrated and included wherever but obviously we're way down the road on this ... I'm sure there is other schools that are not quite as far so that's why the months are important but for us we do it at different times of the year

Interview with Mark, Weirwold's deputy headteacher (8/2/13)

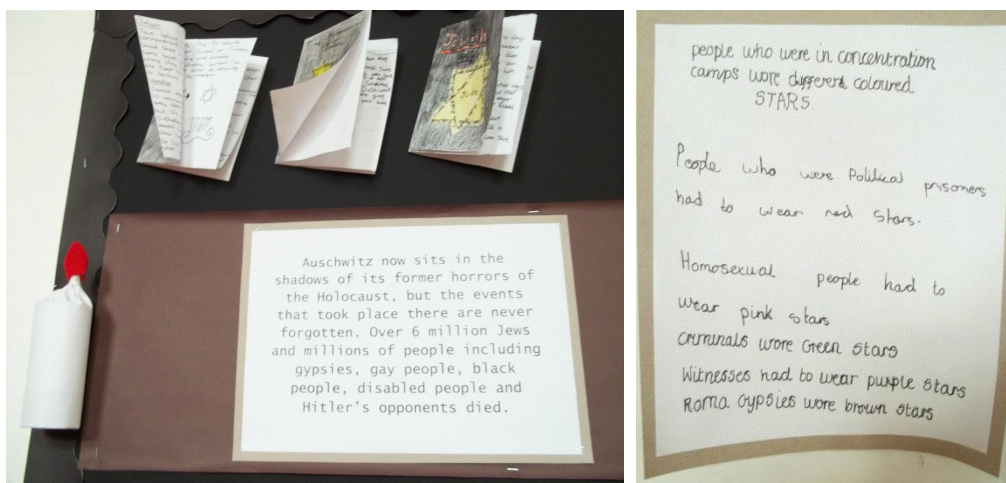
In addition to the Year 5 topic Mark revealed how a 'whole school' topic on the Holocaust had been revised in light of the school's work (see Kate, 2010a). The school's display was still up in the assembly hall when I visited in May 2013 (see Figure 13) and it was clear to see how the school had taken sexuality into account by referencing the persecution of gays and lesbians amongst other minority groups. As Mark explains:

We do Holocaust Memorial day every January and again that's something I'm really passionate about because to me that is the embodiment of prejudice and I *always*, you know, when you trot out these lists ... black, Asian ... gypsies, Jews dee, dee, dee ... *and gay and lesbian people as well* ... anybody who was different ... and there is never any kind of tittering or oh, he said gay, you know, which is showing how far I think we've come on the journey and that kids are used to hearing those words without issue which is fantastic

Interview with Mark, Weirwold's deputy headteacher (8/2/13)

FIGURE 13 - SCHOOL HOLOCAUST DISPLAY IN ASSEMBLY HALL





Weirwold's 'whole school' topic on the Holocaust recognises the persecution of multiple minority groups, including gay people.

Source: Author's own photographs

As Mark acknowledges in the first excerpt, equalities and inclusion – whether gender, sexuality or otherwise – should not just come to the forefront in one particular month. Instead, it should be integrated throughout the school curriculum so that a culture of acceptance is cultivated in school throughout the year (see DePalma and Jennett, 2010). However, as Mark recognises, it takes themed weeks like 'Diversity Week' to establish some topics on the curriculum. Once this has been achieved, aspects of this work will filter through the syllabus so that understandings are reaffirmed. As I have already noted, themes of sexism and homophobia have been incorporated into other topics but in addition to this the school has also developed these themes in afterschool drama and music clubs.

For instance, in 2007 the music and drama clubs put on a production of *And Tango Makes Three*¹², which was the school's *No Outsiders* output. The production was performed several times in school in front of staff, parents, governors, Local Education Authority personnel, Stonewall representatives and pupils from each year group. The school also performed at a local secondary school whose drama department put on a production of 'Romeo and Julian' as a follow-up to Weirwold's contribution. Both schools have since worked together on a joint production of 'West Side Story' which was modified to include a lesbian storyline, and in June 2012 they performed in front of staff, parents, governors, Stonewall representatives and other pupils from the secondary school. As Mark explains, this has allowed Weirwold pupils to see

¹² The production of *And Tango Makes Three* is based on the book of the same name.

that the school's work around sexism and homophobia is not done in isolation but is maintained at the local secondary school:

Now we have got this link with Cromwell's [...] I am more than happy to do whatever we can to maintain it because I think that the more of our kids that actually go there knowing that they do a lot of diversity work and that Emma (the drama teacher) is there doing plays like Romeo and Julian and all that kind of stuff ... I am a lot happier knowing that some of our kids are going there knowing that the work we started at Weirwold is being carried on

Interview with Mark, Weirwold's deputy headteacher (8/2/13)

In this section I have shown how Weirwold incorporated a gender and sexualities education into its broader school curriculum through a literacy framework. Moreover, I demonstrated how 'Diversity Week' ensured that a 'whole school' approach was adopted year on year for themed literacy work around sexism and homophobia. I then illustrated how this work filtered through the school curriculum once it had become established in school. I noted how cross-curricular links have formed between the school's 'Diversity Week' topic and other topics that are delivered throughout the year and I explored how themes of gender and sexuality have further filtered through the syllabus into afterschool clubs. This has ensured that understandings introduced in 'Diversity Week' are reinforced elsewhere in the curriculum and as a result a culture of acceptance has been cultivated at the school.

5.3 SUBJECTION AND THE CURRICULUM: SCHEMES OF WORK, LESSON PLANS AND ACCOMPANYING RESOURCES

Particular disciplines, regimes of truth, bodies of knowledge, make possible both *what can be said* and *what can be done*: both the object of science and the object of pedagogic practices. Pedagogic practices [...] are totally saturated with the notion of a normalised sequence of child development, so that those practices help produce children as the objects of their gaze. The apparatuses and mechanisms of schooling which do this range from the architecture of the school and the seating arrangements of the classroom to the *curriculum materials* (my italics) and techniques of assessment

Walkerline, 1984: 154-5

The previous section explored how both schools have rationalised and incorporated work around gender and sexuality into their broader school curriculum via anti-bullying/ literacy frameworks and two contrasting topic weeks: 'Anti-bullying Week' and 'Diversity Week'. As I illustrated, these weeks allowed both schools to deliver concentrated work around sexism and homophobia, although I also noted how aspects of this work have since been incorporated across the curriculum - something Fassinger, 1993; Berrill and Herek, 1990; and Van de Ven, 1996 regard as an important development for gender and sexuality education - with cross-curricular links to other topics (i.e. 'Our heritage' at Cutlers and the Holocaust at Weirwold). This ensures that understandings developed during 'Anti-bullying Week' and 'Diversity Week' are reaffirmed throughout the school year and not just during those weeks – something DePalma and Jennett (2010) and Van de Ven (1996) advocate - although as both deputy head teachers argue, topic weeks are still important even when schools have managed to thread these themes through the curriculum.

In the remainder of this chapter I will focus on these topic weeks and schemes of work, lesson plans and accompanying resources used during 'Anti-bullying Week' and 'Diversity Week'. As the opening quote suggests, I conceptualise the syllabus as a 'governmental document' which 'contains and shapes the 'conditions of possibility' available to school students' (Davies, 2006: 430). In this respect I approach syllabi from a Butlerian standpoint with schemes of work, lesson plans and accompanying resources understood to be performative insofar as they present the terms of submission for students and what students are to become: tolerant and accepting 'neoliberal' citizens (see 2.3.6 and 2.1.2). Understanding the curriculum in this way allows me to distinguish in the next chapter between a self that cites recognisable liberal pluralistic equalities discourse, as made available through national neoliberal government policy and the school curriculum, and a schooled subject that is simultaneously compelled to perform and recuperate heteronormative- gender/sexuality in order to achieve viable subjecthood (Youdell, 2006a).

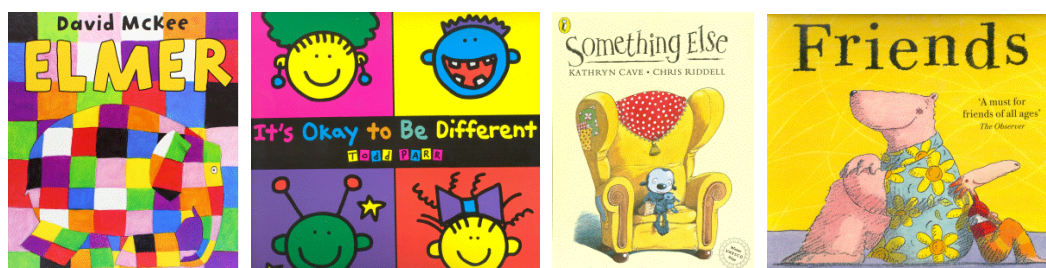
5.3.1 Overview of schemes of work

Three schemes of work were identified during ethnographic research at both schools (November 2011/12 and February 2012/13). The first takes direct inspiration from Stonewall and shall be referred to as 'Different Families' (5.3.2a). This scheme of work was implemented in Nursery (Cutlers), Reception and Year 1 (ages 3/4 to 6). The second scheme of work revolves around 'Alternative fairy tales' (5.3.2b). This was implemented in Years 2 and 3 (ages 6 to 8).

The third scheme of work was concerned with 'Challenging heteronormative masculinity and homophobic language' (5.3.2c). This was implemented in Years 4, 5 and 6 (ages 8 to 11).

In addition to these overarching schemes of work both schools delivered generic anti-bullying/ equalities and inclusion work which fed into more specific work around gender and sexuality. For instance, Nursery (Cutlers), Reception and Year 1 explore a theme of 'Otherness' alongside 'Different Families' and use books like *Elmer*, *It is Okay To Be Different*, *Something Else* and *Friends* (see Figure 14). Likewise, Year's 2 to 6 explore a theme on 'stereotypes' by using books like *The Lion Who Wanted To Love*, *Giraffes Can't Dance*, *Cock-a-Moo-Moo* and *It is A George Thing* (see Figure 15). For example, *The Lion Who Wanted to Love* encourages children to reconsider what a lion might be capable of (caring and loving) despite what we think they are like (vicious and tough). While not specifically about gender or sexuality such work supports broader schemes of work.

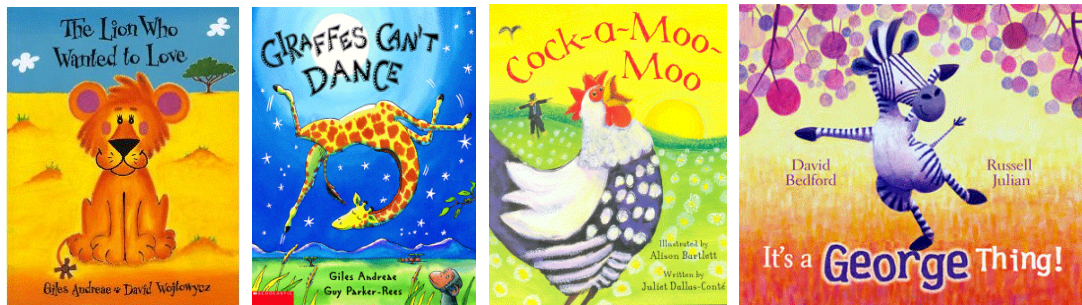
FIGURE 14 – A SELECTION OF BOOKS EXPLORING OTHERNESS



From left to right: *Elmer* (McKee, 2007); *It is Okay to Be Different* (Parr, 2009); *Something Else* (Cave, 1998); *Friends* (Cave and Maland, 2005).

Source: Cutlers primary school collection

FIGURE 15 – A SELECTION OF BOOKS EXPLORING STEREOTYPES



From left to right: *The Lion Who Wanted to Love* (Andreae and Wojtowycz, 1999); *Giraffes Can't Dance* (Andreae and Parker-Rees, 2001); *Cock-a-Moo-Moo* (Dallas-Conte, 2002); *It is a George Thing* (Bedford and Julian, 2008)¹³.

Source: Cutlers primary school collection

Both schools' deputy head teachers also acted as openly gay role models within school. This was considered an important factor in de-mystifying non-heterosexuality and challenging in-school homophobia (see DePalma and Atkinson, 2009c; Herek, 1990; Van de Ven, 1996). As the deputy head teacher at Weirwold affirmatively stated:

Being a daily visibly out and positive gay man with good relationships with parents, with other teachers, and with the kids [shows children that] there is nothing to be disgusted by [...] there is nothing for them to be afraid of and if they identify as LGBT themselves then hopefully they will have a good reference point

Interview with Mark, Weirwold's deputy headteacher (8/2/13)

For Mark and Chris, the daily visibility of an openly gay male teacher represented a physical disruption to the conventionally heteronormative landscape of the school (Allan *et al.*, 2008) with their own non-heteronormative bodies representing a space in itself - 'the geography closest in' (Rich, 1986: 212) - which stood to challenge enduring conceptualisations of 'gay male' and 'primary school' space as fundamentally antithetical. Again, this is something Stonewall encourages teachers to do (as long as they receive the support to do so) as 'out' and visible gay members of staff can be equally as powerful in transforming attitudes and opinions as schemes of work (Stonewall, 2008; also see Herek, 1990; Van de Ven, 1996). Such is the

¹³ Cover from *It is a George Thing* written by David Bedford and illustrated by Russell Julian. Illustration copyright © 2008 Russell Julian. Cover design copyright © 2008 Egmont UK Limited. Published by Egmont UK Limited and used with permission (see Appendix E).

importance placed on gay role models within schools that charities like *Diversity Role Models*¹⁴ have been created so that openly gay role models can go into schools where there are no out and visible gay, lesbian or bisexual members of staff to deliver workshops and speak to the children.

Although the presence of gay role models in school has extra-curricular relevance in the remainder of this chapter I focus on the three schemes of work and associated lesson plans/resources. Before going any further it is important to note that these lesson plans are produced by schools themselves and not Stonewall, although Stonewall does facilitate on-line sharing between schools (see Stonewall, 2014b). That said Stonewall encourages schools to use these for guidance only as they do not want to suggest that these could be simply used without taking into account the unique dynamics of individual schools. As Stonewall's Senior Education Officer explains:

I think it is very important for me to point out that we deliberately don't write lesson plans for schools because we're not teachers. [...] I don't want to write for 5 minutes you must do this; and we find that they (teachers) respond much better to that. [W]hat we will do is produce resources. [W]e ask schools to send us their lesson plans and if they want us to put them on the website we will, but like I said before, we are very particular about not creating lesson plans because we'll send a school a lesson plan and they'll say what do you know about our school, are you in school from 9 to 5 every day. [S]o what we say is here's what some schools are doing, here's some resources that are available on Amazon [and] here's some resources that we've made - hopefully this will give you the information that you need to go and do this work

Interview with Stonewall's Senior Education Officer (11/5/12)

I followed this up in a later interview with Stonewall's Primary Education Officer who expanded upon the above by revealing a key source for online lesson plans – a former *No Outsiders* school in Birmingham:

¹⁴ Diversity Role Models is a Stonewall endorsed charity that operates on a national scale. The charity recruits LGBT/ LGBT-supportive volunteers from all walks of life who go into schools to deliver workshops (see Diversity Role Models, 2014).

There are some great resources that have come out of Birmingham Council [...] they've produced some lesson plans together with a teacher

Interview with Stonewall's Primary Education Officer (12/6/12)

Thus, while Cutlers and Weirwold have produced some of their own lesson plans it is important to note that others have come from other schools, including this school in Birmingham. It is also important to note that Weirwold and Cutlers deputy head teachers have visited each other's school and exchanged lesson plans so the lesson plans I refer to in the next section have multiple points of origin but remain the product of a small group of schools.

5.3.2a 'Different Families' (Nursery, Reception and Year 1)

The Stonewall-inspired 'Different Families' scheme of work is the most recent of the three schemes of work to emerge in English primary schools. As noted in 4.3, 'Different Families' was the flagship initiative for Stonewall's 'Primary School Champions' programme and was launched at their annual 'Education For All' conference in July 2011. Drawing on interview data I revealed how Stonewall had monitored the earlier *No Outsiders* project with 'Different Families' coming as a Stonewall response to the difficulties that that project faced (i.e. parental and media backlash over introducing discussion of sexualities in primary schools; see Daily Mail, 2008a; 2008b; The Sun, 2007). Thus, in developing the 'Different Families' approach I noted how Stonewall strategically positioned this work within an anti-bullying context, like earlier secondary school work (see Stonewall,2014c). Also, rather than specifically focusing on sexuality, Stonewall simply included same-sex relationships in resources for an existing school topic on families¹⁵. While Stonewall did not officially launch its 'Primary School Champions' programme until July 2011, Weirwold and Cutlers had already trialled Stonewall's 'Different Families' resources so this scheme of work has evolved in both schools since 2010. As Weirwold's deputy headteacher explains:

So along comes Stonewall with its different families project which was brilliant [and] I thought yeah, this is just a natural progression from No Outsiders, No Outsiders in the positive ... the positive results of it laid the foundations for different families

Interview with Mark, Weirwold's deputy headteacher (24/11/11)

¹⁵ Capitalising on the rise of 'reconstituted families' (see 2.4).

While books like *And Tango Makes Three* (Richardson and Parnell, 2005) and *If I had a Hundred Mummies* (Carter, 2007) have been used by schools prior to Stonewall's 'Different Families' initiative to introduce children to the idea of same-sex relationships in a familial context Stonewall's initiative transformed this approach into a major scheme of work. For instance, Weirwold based it is *No Outsiders* opera on the book *And Tango Makes Three* and used this resource to explore same-sex relationships. However, Stonewall's 'Different Families' initiative has encouraged schools to use such books as part of an existing topic on families (see above). This means that the idea of same-sex relationships is not simply addressed in the context of one book but is threaded through a topic on 'Different Families'.

As with other schemes of work, 'Different Families' takes various forms and is delivered in different ways in a range of lessons; however, the linchpin of this scheme of work is always Stonewall's 'Different Families' posters (see Figure 16). As lesson plans reveal, other resources and associated activities either follow-on from these posters or builds towards them. For instance, Weirwold's Year 1 lesson plan uses the *Angry Birds Annual* (Pedigree Books, 2013)¹⁶ as its core text for commencing work around 'Different Families' in literacy (see Appendix C). Once the book has been read children discuss how all the birds are different and how they all belong to different families, and on the back of this various activities take place in art and PSHE. For example, in art children produced a personal coat of arms to show how they are all different (see Figure 17). These subsequent activities ultimately lead to Stonewall's 'Different Families' posters. These are introduced with discussion and activities already underway so more ways in which families can be different (i.e. same-sex parents) is incorporated once initial groundwork has been done.

¹⁶ Angry Birds is a popular computer game that has recently been made into a book. Angry Birds features a diverse range of cartoon birds that each have different appearances and skills. However, each belongs to a family that share similar characteristics.

FIGURE 16 – STONEWALL'S 'DIFFERENT FAMILIES' POSTERS



Stonewall’s posters depict a range of ‘reconstituted families’ (see 2.4) with same-sex relationships one of many different types of family arrangements.

Source: Stonewall

FIGURE 17 – MY PERSONAL COAT OF ARMS ACTIVITY

Knowing me, knowing you 7

15 My personal coat of arms

Ⓟ Purpose
To enhance self-confidence.
To provide an opportunity for self-reflection.

> Suggested age range
Any age.

📄 Materials needed
Photocopy of coat of arms for each participant (see p.70–71)

🕒 Approximate timing
30 minutes.

▶ What else it relates to
Who am I?
ABC of personal qualities
A collage of me

👥 Numbers involved
Whole class.

What to do

The teacher distributes the coat of arms to each participant and then brainstorms, or suggests, a list of the categories that might be illustrated on them. The teacher explains that the point of this is to generate a list of ideas which can be drawn on the coat of arms, to inform other people about each participant: for instance, 'The most important things that have happened to me', 'The things I am good at', 'The things that make me happy', 'Words that describe me'.

The children then draw their personal image on each coat of arms and these are displayed around the classroom.

This activity is taken from the SEAL (Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning) unit 'Knowing me, knowing you'. Children used the coat of arms on the right to recognise how they are 'unique and special'.

Source: SEAL

When using Stonewall's 'Different Families' posters teachers discuss, annotate and elaborate on each type of family and facilitate discussion amongst children (see Figure 18). The two depictions of same-sex parents are handled with care but teachers do not shy away from elaborating on the nature of the relationship and inform children that these two relationships are known as gay and lesbian. As Weirwold's Reception teacher explains:

At this level you're just exposing them to the language of it, so you're just exposing them to gay and lesbian [...] children at this age will have key vocab and across the whole early years curriculum, even in Math's it is about introducing them to the vocab ... even just hearing it [so] all this conversation and talk we're doing will form the backbone of the writing that will follow in Summer when they begin to write their own story [so] Sarah's character might be a lesbian because she's heard the word and then I will look through that [and] remind her what a lesbian means

Interview with Weirwold's Reception teacher (11/2/13)

Ensuring that children know the meaning of the words gay and lesbian, and that it is 'correct' to use these terms when referring to same-sex relationships, despite how this reinforces binary essentialism (Butler, 1990; Edwards, 1998; see 2.1.3) is a good example of how Stonewall's 'Different Families' initiative works against pejorative use of these terms as a 'performative utterance' (Butler, 1997b; see 2.1.3). Thus, teachers make a distinction here between appropriate and inappropriate use of language¹⁷ by raising the issue early and

¹⁷ 'Poststructuralism asserts that all meaning and knowledge are constituted through language, and that language is the key to how we create meaning as socially constructed individuals' (Blaise, 2009: 455).

situating it in a 'Different Families' context. Lesson plans instruct teachers to 'challenge any negativity the children may have around the use or understanding of these words' (see Appendix C) so teachers are encouraged to be proactive at this stage so as to prevent later misuse of 'gay' and 'lesbian' (see 5.3.2c).

In the case of Weirwold's Year 1 lesson plan (see Appendix C), initial discussion of Stonewall's 'Different Families' posters fed into art where children produced their own family tree (see Figure 18). Children were encouraged to reflect on how each of their families is different (some children were brought up by one parent or extended family members and some were adopted or fostered). The teacher then referred back to Stonewall's 'Different Families, Same Love' poster (see Figure 16) to identify which families on that poster were represented in the class and which were not. This provided an opportunity to acknowledge other kinds of families not accounted for in class. In this instance same-sex relationships were recognised and discussed again as the teacher explained how some children are brought up by same-sex parents¹⁸.

FIGURE 18 - ANNOTATED 'DIFFERENT FAMILIES' POSTER AND CHILDREN'S OWN FAMILY TREES



Stonewall's 'Different Families, Same Love' poster annotated in Year 1's lesson and children's own family trees. From February 2013 visit.

Source: Weirwold primary school

Other lesson plans followed a similar course to this one although the core text varied and activities were incorporated into different lessons. Other core texts included *And Tango Makes*

¹⁸ See 4.3 for critiques of introducing sexuality in the context of monogamous, heteronormative nuclear relationships (see also 2.3.2a).

Three, *The Family Book*, *The Great Big Book of Families*, *If I had a Hundred Mummies* and *Spacegirl Pukes* (see Figure 19). For instance, *And Tango Makes Three* (Richardson and Parnell, 2005), which was read to Reception during assembly at Cutlers (November, 2012) tells the ‘true story’ of two ‘gay penguins’ in a New York zoo who incubate an abandoned egg and rear the chick¹⁹. This and other stories (i.e. *If I had a Hundred Mummies* and *Spacegirl Pukes*) revolve around same-sex parents but the other books, much like Stonewall’s ‘Different Families’ posters simply present same-sex parents alongside other ‘reconstituted families’ (see 2.4). While each class was designated a core text, teachers would usually use several of these books over the course of the week.

FIGURE 19 – A SELECTION OF ‘DIFFERENT FAMILIES’ BOOKS



(From top left) *And Tango Makes Three* (Richardson and Parnell, 2005); *The Family Book* (Parr, 2010); *The Great Big Book of Families* (Hoffman, 2010)²⁰; *If I had a Hundred Mummies* (Carter, 2007); and *Spacegirl Pukes* (Watson and Carter, 2006).

Source: Cutlers primary school collection

¹⁹ This story is heavily critiqued by Youdell (2011) and others (i.e. DePalma and Atkinson, 2009c; Reiss, 2009) for the way it ‘cites and inscribes the normative status of heterosexuality, monogamous adult coupling, homemaking and the rearing of young as the coveted prize of couplings entered into by enduring, self-evident, natural subjects’ (Youdell, 2011: 67; see also footnote 15).

²⁰ Cover from *The Great Big Book of Families* by Mary Hoffman and Ros Asquith, published by Frances Lincoln Ltd, copyright © 2010.

Having outlined the 'Different Families' scheme of work I shall now turn my attention to the second scheme of work: 'Alternative fairy tales'.

5.3.2b Alternative fairy tales (Years 2 and 3)

The second scheme of work can be referred to as 'alternative fairy tales'. As noted earlier, this scheme of work takes its name from a group of books known by the same name and is used here to describe the overarching scheme of work as it revolves around these books. Alternative fairy tales reverse the usual roles of male and female characters in 'traditional' fairy tales, which I take to be Grimm's fairy tales²¹ (i.e. The Frog-Prince, Snow White, Cinderella and Rapunzel). These present children with heteronormative ideals of what it means to be a girl or a boy (or a man and a woman) and perpetuate (hetero)sexism (Davies, 1989b; Zipes, 2006). Thus, 'alternative' fairy tales attempt to subvert these discourses and present children with new possibilities (see Davies, 1989a; 1993; Epstein, 2000b).

Like 'Different Families', this second scheme of work took various forms and was delivered in different ways in a range of lessons; however, alternative fairy tales were always the linchpin of this scheme of work (see Figure 20). As lesson plans illustrate, associated activities were closely tied to specific themes in individual stories. As such, it is difficult to generalise as each lesson plan is unique. However, they can be broadly divided into two groups: mostly gender-focused lesson plans and mostly sexuality-focused lesson plans. I will analyse each type below.

²¹ Grimm's Fairy Tales are a collection of German household tales aimed at children. They were published in 1812 by the Grimm brothers, Jacob and Wilhelm, and have become a cornerstone of children's literature (see Zipes, 2006).

FIGURE 20 – A SELECTION OF ‘ALTERNATIVE FAIRY TALES’



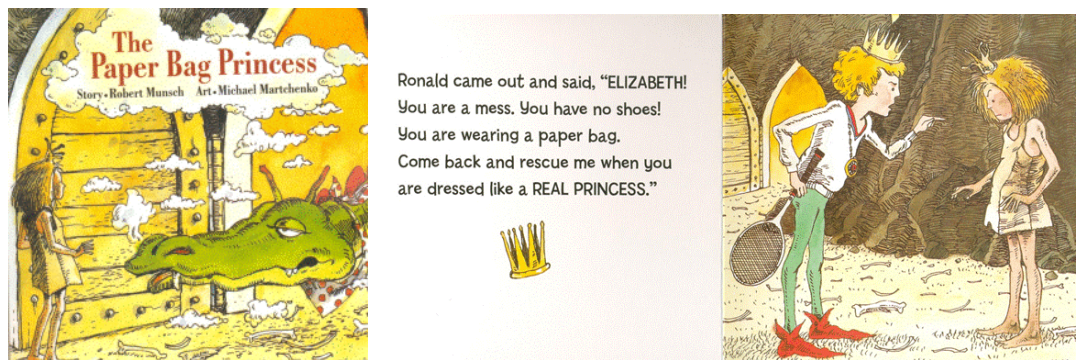
From left to right, top to bottom: King and King (De Haan and Nijland, 2002); The Paper Bag Princess (Munsch, 1980); Prince Cinders (Cole, 1997); and Princess Pigsty (Funke and Meyer, 2007).

Source: Author's own collection

The example I use of a mostly gender-focused lesson plan revolves around the book *The Paper Bag Princess* (Munsch, 1980; see Figure 21). I choose this lesson plan as it was used in Year 2 at Weirwold (February 2012 and 2013) and Cutlers (November 2012). The lesson plan (see Appendix C) begins with the book being read to class during literacy. In the lesson I observed at Weirwold (February 2012) the teacher paused at significant moments in the story to emphasise the subversive trajectory of this narrative, like when the prince was taken by the dragon and not the princess, and the teacher would continuously reaffirm the legitimacy of this alternative narrative in which the 'heroic princess' went on an adventure²².

²² Despite these efforts numerous commentators critique alternative fairy tales and simple role reversal as they do not account for desire and fantasy thereby creating a set of conflicts and contradictions for girls (Walkerdine, 1984; see 2.3.2a).

FIGURE 21 – FRONT COVER AND PENULTIMATE PAGE OF THE PAPER BAG PRINCESS



This story uses the narrative structure of Rapunzel (passive female held captive in a tower waiting to be rescued by a heroic prince) but reverses gender roles. In this story a 'passive prince' is held captive in a tower waiting to be rescued by a 'heroic princess'.

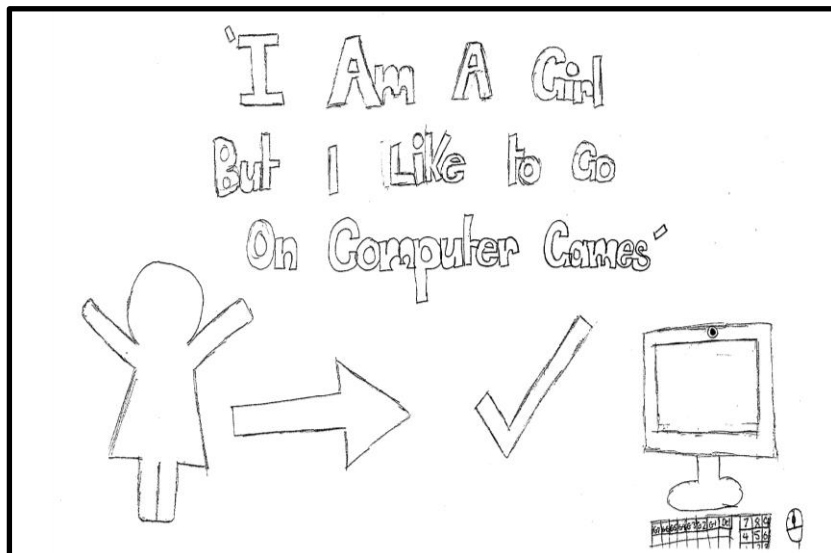
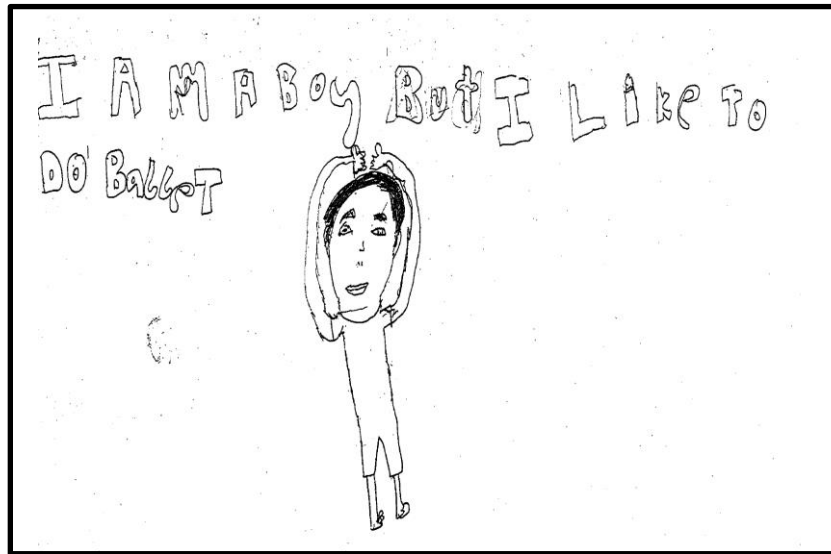
Source: Author's own collection

The first literacy activity involved children thinking about what adjectives they could use to describe the three main characters in the story: Princess Elizabeth, Prince Ronald and the dragon. This encouraged the children to reflect on how the princess had been 'courageous' in this story, and the prince 'ungrateful' (Prince Ronald is dismayed at the end of the story when Princess Elizabeth rescues him; see Figure 21). The children constructed sentences using the format 'Princess Elizabeth/ Prince Ronald is ... because she/he ...' and as a group they chose a suitable gender-neutral name for the dragon reflecting the fact that in this story the dragon had not been described as male or female. These exercises reinforced gender subversive themes from the story and problematised binary gender as well as sexist discourses circulating in 'traditional' fairy tales (see Davies, 1989a; 1989b; 1993; Epstein, 1995).

Other themed activities in art, drama, PSHE and Philosophy for Children unfolded on the back of this lesson. For example, in art children designed and made a more suitable - but not stereotypically feminine - outfit for the princess and in PSHE the children produced posters challenging gender norms (see Figure 22). These activities continue to challenge binary gender and heteronormative- masculinity/femininity²³ (Butler, 1990). The final literacy activity involved re-writing the part of the story where Prince Ronald was 'rude' to Princess Elizabeth (see Figure 23) and writing the next part of the story following the ending 'they didn't get married after all'. This unorthodox ending, which questions heterosexism, encouraged the children to reflect on alternative possibilities (Davies, 1993).

²³ Heteronormative masculinity receives specific attention in the next scheme of work but builds on work like this from this scheme of work.

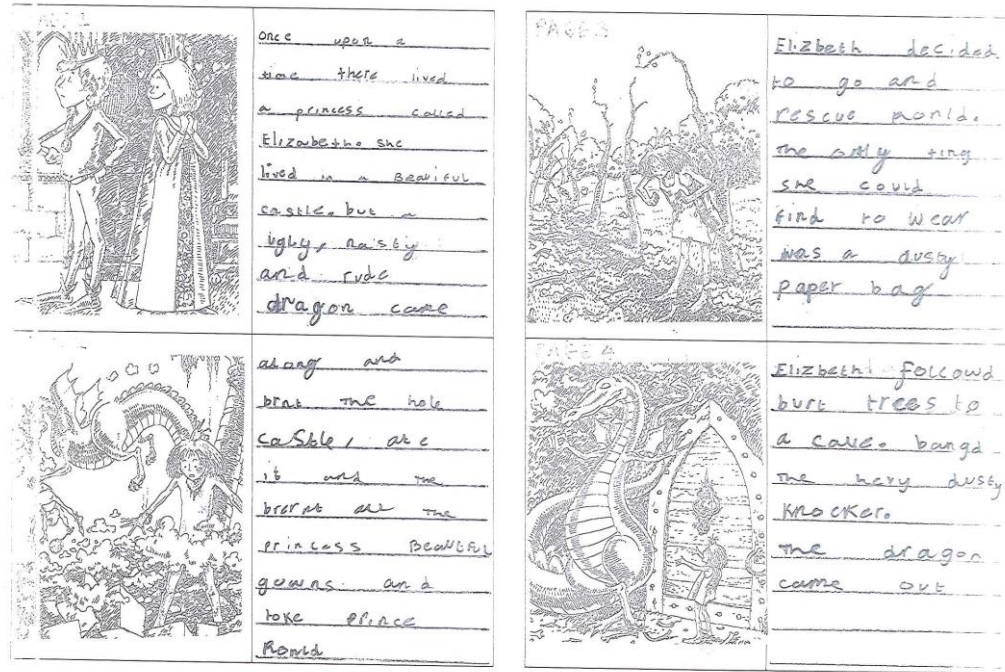
FIGURE 22 – POSTERS CHALLENGING GENDER NORMS



Posters produced by pupils in Year 3 during a PSHE lesson at Cutlers. Children were encouraged to recognise and celebrate gender transgressions. From November 2011 visit.

Source: Cutlers primary school

FIGURE 23 – REWRITING THE STORY OF THE PAPER BAG PRINCESS



Pupils rewrite the story of the Paper Bag Princess in Year 2 literacy at Weirwold. Particular attention is given to the moment where Prince Ronald is ‘rude’ to Princess Elizabeth upon rescuing him. In this story the prince is more appreciative. From February 2012 visit.

Source: Weirwold primary school

The example I use of a mostly sexuality-focused lesson plan revolves around the book *King and King* (De Haan and Nijland, 2002; see Figure 24). I did not observe this lesson plan (see Appendix C) being delivered in either school although I understand that it has been used in Years 2 and 3²⁴. As with the example above, the book juxtaposes ‘traditional’ fairy tales in which the prince inevitably marries the princess (see Zipes, 2006). Rather, the class have discussion before, during and after the book is read about what usually happens in these stories and what has happened in this one. The idea that males and females do not always fall in love with each other is explored as the story unfolds with key moments, like when the prince asks the other prince to marry him emphasised and endorsed by the teacher²⁵.

²⁴ I did, however, observe a lesson where this book was read to Weirwold’s Reception class (February, 2013).

²⁵ Youdell, in particular, critiques this story for the way it cites normative discourse and ‘inscribes hetero-normative romantic love and marriage, a citation that rests on an impossible replica *at the same time* as it insists on the legitimacy of particular sorts of homosexual subjects and relationships’ (2011: 67).

FIGURE 24 – FRONT COVER AND MIDDLE PAGE OF KING AND KING



The story takes inspiration from Cinderella. However, rather than settling for the princess whose foot fits the slipper the Prince in this story falls in love with the princess's brother.

Source: Author's own collection

Several activities take place on the back of initial discussion with follow-up work in PSHE, art, drama and literacy. For instance, in PSHE children explore all the ways in which we are different (i.e. skin/eye/hair colour, height, body shape and sexuality) with the latter leading on to more specific discussion of different types of relationships, including same-sex relationships. Again, the terms gay and lesbian are used to describe these relationships even though this reinforces binary essentialism (Butler, 1990; Edwards, 1998).

As mentioned above, themes explored in these lesson plans vary depending on which core text is used although collectively this scheme of work challenges (hetero)sexism (see Davies, 1989a; 1993; Epstein, 1995). For instance, in another mostly gender-focused Year 3 lesson plan (see Appendix C) the book *Prince Cinders* (Cole, 1997)²⁶ is used to explore body image and assumptions about male and female occupations. Children also rewrote 'traditional' fairy tales in literacy (see Figure 25) and created non-normative fairy tale characters in art (see Figure 26). This lesson plan used the book's ending 'they lived happily ever after' to explore marriage in PSHE (i.e. if you have to get married or marry the opposite sex to live 'happily ever after'). Civil Partnerships²⁷ were discussed in this context (see Sue K, 2010a) with same-sex relationships recognised and endorsed by the teacher even though this is said to reinforce the patriarchal and heterosexist institution of marriage (Cullen, 2009; DePalma and Atkinson, 2009b; see 2.3.2a).

²⁶ This story is based on Cinderella with gender roles reversed.

²⁷ This discussion took place in February 2012, prior to the introduction of the Marriage (Same Sex Couple) Act 2013 (MSSCA 2013).

FIGURE 25 – REWRITING ‘TRADITIONAL’ FAIRY TALES



Suddenly the clock struck
twelve out. Suddenly the Prince had no
time to kiss Jackerella because
secretly the prince was madly
in love with him.

'Jackerella' was written by a group of Year 3 children during literacy at Weirwold. The story is based on Cinderella with gender roles reversed. In this story the prince falls in love with another prince. From February 2013 visit.

Source: Weirwold primary school

FIGURE 26 – CREATING NON-NORMATIVE FAIRY TALE CHARACTERS



A group of Year 3 children at Weirwold created this non-normative fairy tale character in art. The characters the children created were used in the alternative fairy tale they wrote in literacy (see above figure). From February 2013 visit.

Source: Weirwold primary school

Having outlined the 'Alternative fairy tales' scheme of work I shall now turn my attention to the third scheme of work: 'Heteronormative masculinity and homophobic language'.

5.3.2c Heteronormative masculinity and homophobic language (Years 4-6)

The third scheme of work challenges heteronormative masculinity and homophobic language more specifically. The latter is a Stonewall-inspired initiative concerned with pejorative use of the word 'gay' - as in "you're so gay" and "that's so gay" - which Stonewall claims is 'endemic' in schools (see Stonewall, 2007; 2009; 2012 and 4.3). Given how gender and sexuality are often conflated when boys transgress gender norms, the labelling of such boys as 'gay' is taken as the starting point for this work²⁸ (see DePalma and Atkinson, 2008b; Epstein, 1995). This involves challenging heteronormative masculinity and the supposedly stable relationship between sex, gender and sexuality where effeminate males are associated with homosexuality (Butler, 1990; see 2.1 and 2.3.5). Like 'Different Families', challenging homophobic language also involves discussing same-sex relationships and knowing when it is 'correct' to use the terms gay and lesbian. This recognises how meaning and knowledge are constituted through language with 'performative utterance' (Butler, 1997b) open to challenge, redefinition and reinterpretation (Blaise, 1999; MacNaughton, 2005; Weedon, 1997; Youdell, 2006a; see 2.1).

As with other schemes of work, 'challenging heteronormative masculinity and homophobic language' took various forms and was delivered in different ways in a range of lessons; however, a core book approach remained an important component of this scheme of work (see Figure 27). During fieldwork (2011-13) I observed lessons using four of these books²⁹ as the basis for lesson plans with two used at both schools: *The Sissy Duckling* in Year 4 and *Oliver Button Is a Sissy* in Year 5. I observed the former being delivered at Cutlers in November 2011 and November 2012, although it has previously been delivered at Weirwold, and I observed the latter being delivered at Weirwold in February 2012, although it has previously been delivered at Cutlers. I shall therefore focus on these two lesson plans.

²⁸ Girls are often labelled 'tomboys' for transgressing gender norms but this subject position does not conflate gender and sexuality (see Epstein, 1995; Renold, 2008; also see 6.3.1).

²⁹ *The Sissy Duckling*, *Oliver Button is a Sissy*, *The Different Dragon* and *The Boy with Pink Hair*.

FIGURE 27 – A SELECTION OF BOOKS CHALLENGING HETERONORMATIVE MASCULINITY AND HOMOPHOBIC LANGUAGE



From left to right, top to bottom: *The Sissy Duckling* (Fierstein and Cole, 2005); *Oliver Button is a Sissy* (de Paola, 1979); *The Only Boy in Ballet Class* (Gruska and Wummer, 2007); *The Different Dragon* (Bryan and Hosler, 2011); *The Boy with Pink Hair* (Hilton, 2012); *William's Doll* (Zolotow and du Bois, 1991).

Source: Cutlers primary school collection

Cutlers Year 4 lesson plan for *The Sissy Duckling* (see Appendix C) was delivered over a two week period during 'Anti-bullying' and 'Overcoming Adversity' Week. It began with generic anti-bullying work (i.e. creating a working definition of bullying) before moving on to consider specific themes from the book. At first children undertook PE (Physical Education) and literacy work around a theme of ducks. In PE children mimicked the movement of ducks and in literacy they brainstormed adjectives to describe ducks. These activities built towards reading the book, which was initially read and discussed in literacy (see Figure 28). Like other teachers, the Year 4 teacher made a point of emphasising key moments in the story, like when Elmer's mum insisted that 'sissy is a cruel way of saying that you don't do things the way others think you should'³⁰. The teacher endorsed gender transgression throughout and noted how the term 'gay' is usually used instead of 'sissy' in the UK³¹ but insisted that this word should not be used in this context. Rather, like lesbian, the teacher insisted that 'gay' should only be used to

³⁰ This passage in the book was highlighted in the lesson plan.

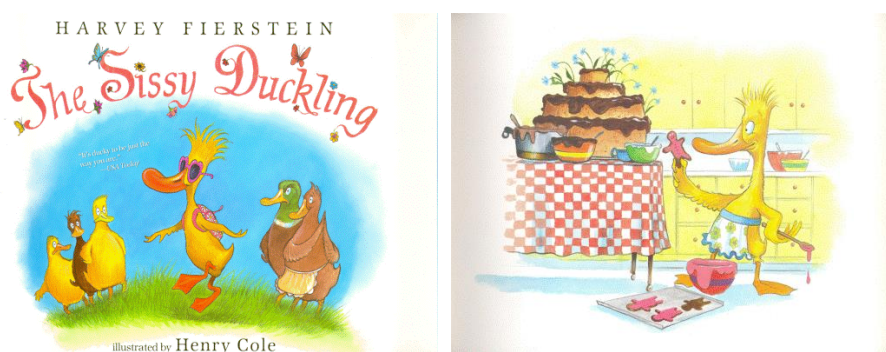
³¹ The author of *The Sissy Duckling* (Harvey Fierstein) is American and the book is published in the US.

describe same-sex relationships, which the teacher discussed and endorsed. As this teacher commented:

You do see them change ... whether it is even just the fact that they become used to hearing the words gay and lesbian [but] it needs to be used again and again to almost dull down the shock affect [...] we were hearing, three or four years ago “you’re so gay” in a negative way in the playground [but] if we said that now they would react with oh no, we don’t use gay [...] so it has completely reversed and turned around their perceptions and options I think

Interview with Cutlers Year 4 teacher (25/11/11)

FIGURE 28 – FRONT COVER AND FIRST PAGE OF THE SISSY DUCKLING

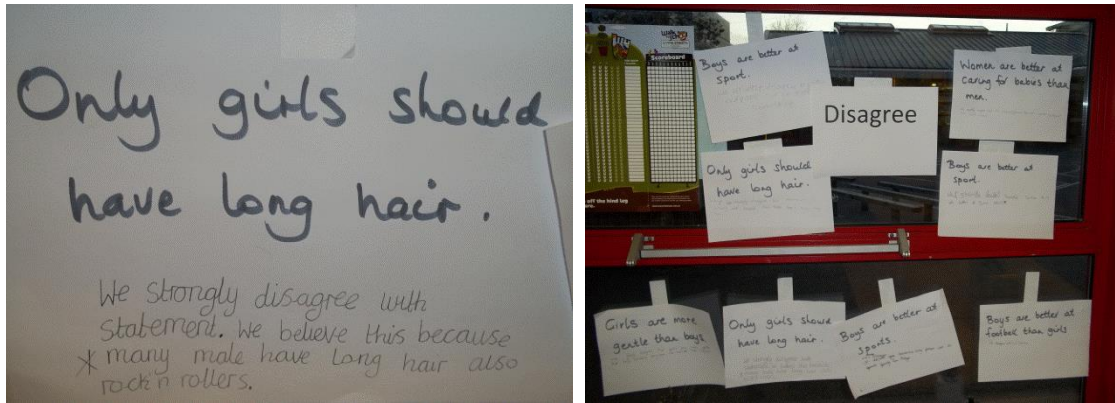


This story takes inspiration from *The Ugly Duckling*. It revolves around a duck (Elmer) who is ‘different’ to all the other drakes because of his interest in fashion, cooking and his dislike of rough sports.

Source: Author’s own collection

Several activities in PSHE, Philosophy for Children, literacy, art and drama unfolded on the back of this work. In PSHE children discussed various sexist statements, like the one shown in Figure 29, and would decide individually if they ‘agree’, ‘disagree’ or were ‘not sure’ about each statement before debating the most controversial in Philosophy for Children. This encouraged the children to reflect on gender norms and challenge binary gender (see Davies, 1989b). In literacy children wrote poems/ raps about bullying and retold the story of *The Sissy Duckling* (see Figure 30), and in art they produced posters challenging gender stereotypes (see next section). This continued to reinforce gender subversive themes from the story while grounding sexism and homophobia in an anti-bullying context.

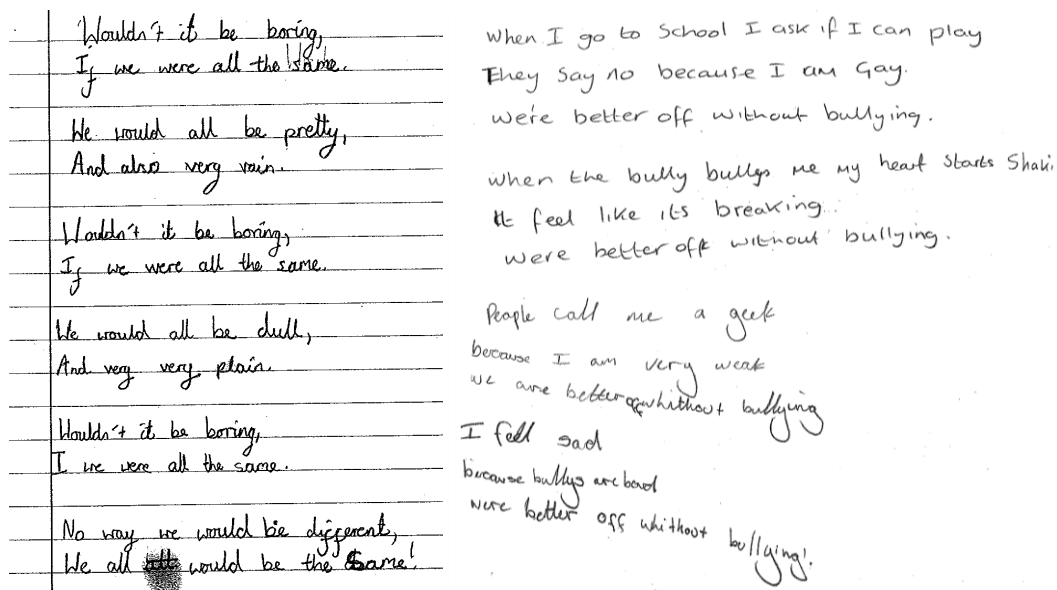
FIGURE 29 – CHALLENGING SEXISM



From left: Statement chosen by the class to debate in Philosophy for Children and remaining statements the children disagreed with ('Boys are better at sport', 'Women are better at caring for babies than men', 'Girls are more gentle than boys' and 'Boys are better at football than girls'). Photographs were taken in November 2011.

Source: Cutlers primary school

FIGURE 30 – POEMS/ RAPS ABOUT BULLYING AND RETELLING THE STORY OF THE SISSY DUCKLING



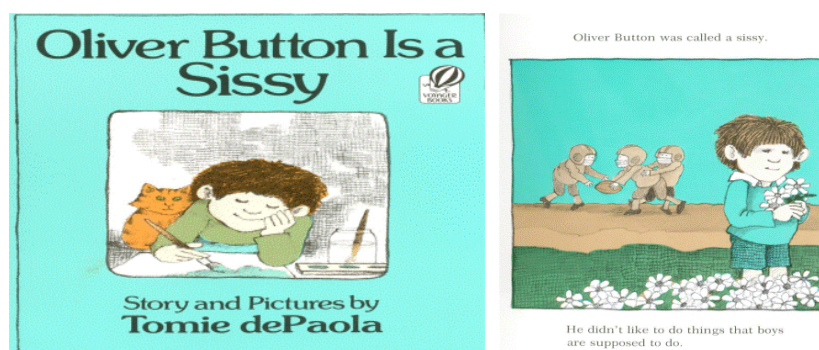
This story begins with the sup^{er} shining particularly on one person who changed my life completely.
This was Elmer. Elmer was not like any other ducks. I thought he was a sissy. He dressed in pink and he baked cookies when the other ducks and I were playing football. He made puppet shows when we were playing basket-ball. He really was different and I loathed him.

From left, top to bottom: a poem entitled 'Wouldn't it be boring if we were all the same', a rap about 'homophobic bullying' and retelling the story of The Sissy Duckling. From November 2011/ 2012 visit.

Source: Cutlers primary school

Weirwold's Year 5 lesson plan for *Oliver Button is a Sissy* (see Appendix C) began with the book being read to the class during literacy (see Figure 31). As other teachers had done, the Year 5 teacher paused at significant moments in the story and emphasised key events, like when other boys at school wrote 'Oliver Button is a sissy' on the wall. In accordance with guidance notes, which read 'when using this book please explain that 'sissy' is not a nice word to use and draw parallels between the negative use of 'sissy' and 'you're so gay' as insults' (notes on PowerPoint slide) the teacher explored the meaning of the word 'sissy', and other 'put downs' and why they are used against people. This included racist terms as well as pejorative use of 'gay' and 'lesbian' (see 5.3.1). The class discussed all of these 'put downs' and made connections between homophobic/ sexist language and racist language. All were deemed unacceptable.

FIGURE 31 – FRONT COVER AND OPENING PAGE OF OLIVER BUTTON IS A SISSY



This story is similar to *The Sissy Duckling*. It revolves around Oliver, a boy who is 'different' to all the other boys because of his interest in skipping, art, dressing up and dance.

Caption on opening page: Oliver Button was called a sissy. He didn't like to do things that boys are supposed to do.

Source: Cutlers primary school collection

Several activities in art, literacy and PSHE took place on the back of this initial lesson. In art children listed what is traditionally associated with each gender and then produced posters acknowledging how their interests span, and thus challenge, rigid gender norms (Davies, 1989b; see Figure 32). These posters fed into a broader discussion about gender stereotypes and sexism in which children debated gender expectations and assumptions (see previous section). As the teacher commented:

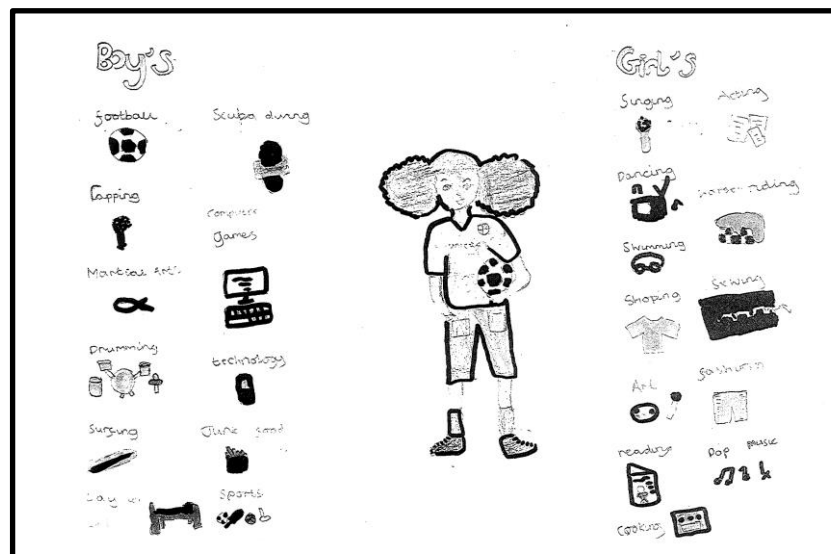
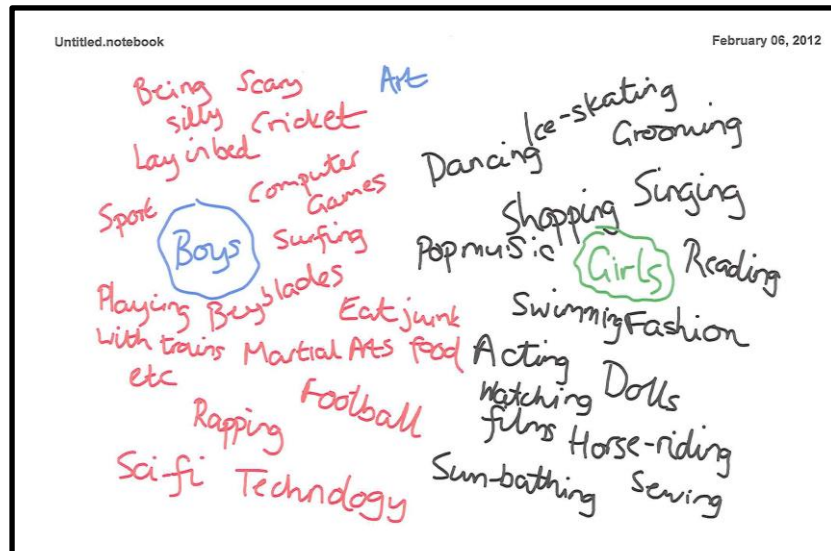
We did the boy, girl posters as well ... I think there was a very good reaction actually, it really worked for the kids ... it made them much better cos we were having problems with boys being boys [but] when we started looking at it a lot of the boys were like actually I quite like a lot of those things on the girls side [and now] I don't even think it is thought about any more, it is just not an issue ... a few of the boys have done sewing and biscuit making and all these things now, for Golden time, and it is just not mentioned

Interview with Weirwold's Year 5 teacher (14/2/13)

In addition to challenging sexism the class looked at gay and lesbian role models (see DePalma and Atkinson, 2009c; Herek, 1990; Van de Ven, 1996; and 5.3.1) and discussed same-sex relationships in PSHE (see Figure 33). This was linked back to the earlier discussion on challenging pejorative use of 'gay' and 'lesbian' and included discussion of prejudice and

discrimination. Throughout the teacher endorsed same-sex relationships and used the terms gay and lesbian, which the teacher insists are 'correct' to use in this context (see opening section paragraph and 5.3.1). The lesson plan concluded with activities in art where children produced posters recognising how 'We are all different. We are all special'.

FIGURE 32 – QUESTIONING GENDER NORMS



Top to bottom: screen-shot of interactive white board listing pupil’s responses to what constitutes ‘boys things’ and ‘girls things’ and a poster produced by a pupil challenging binary gender.

Source: Weirwold primary school

FIGURE 33 – GAY AND LESBIAN ROLE MODELS



Screen-shot of slide on interactive white board for PSHE lesson on gay and lesbian role models.

Source: Weirwold primary school

5.4 CHAPTER CONCLUSION

This chapter explored how both schools rationalise and implement gender and sexuality education. At Cutlers primary school this was achieved through an anti-bullying framework while at Weirwold primary school this was achieved through an inclusion and equalities framework. I also explored how each school incorporated this work into their broader school curriculum via two contrasting topic weeks. At Cutlers this was achieved through 'National Anti-bullying Week' and at Weirwold this was achieved through 'Diversity Week' in *LGBT History Month*. In the second part of the chapter I examined schemes of work, lesson plans and accompanying resources. I established how both schools deliver three schemes of work: 'Different Families', 'Alternative Fairy Tales' and 'Challenging heteronormative masculinity and homophobic language' (the former and latter being Stonewall-inspired schemes of work). Analysis of lesson plans and accompanying resources revealed an essentialising curriculum – tactical yet limiting essentialism (see Ellis, 2007). In the next chapter I explore how children respond to this curriculum in the context of everyday life.

CHAPTER 6: THE RECEPTION OF GENDER AND SEXUALITY EDUCATION

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6.0 CHAPTER INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 5 I explored how gender and sexuality education is implemented in school. In this chapter I address the third research objective (reproduced below) by examining children’s responses to gender and sexualities education and everyday ‘doings’ of gender and sexuality within and across primary school:

To investigate how pupils respond to gender and sexualities education in the context of everyday school life

The chapter is divided into two parts:

Part One – performative selves and performative subjects – explores children’s contradictory responses to the three schemes of work identified in the previous chapter: ‘Different Families’ (6.1); ‘Alternative Fairy Tales’ (6.2); and ‘Heteronormative masculinity and homophobic language’ (6.3). To conceptualise children’s contradictory responses I draw on subjectivity theory and performativity theory after Butler (1990; 1993; 1997) where a performative self that cites recognisable liberal pluralistic equalities discourse and performs acceptance in ‘formal’ school space in order to be a ‘good student’ can be distinguished from a performative subject that is simultaneously compelled to perform normative (hetero)gender/sexuality and recuperate heteronormativity in the face of subversion in order to achieve viable subjecthood (also see Youdell, 2006a). The former is understood in light of *Subjection and the curriculum* (5.3) where the syllabus was conceived as a ‘governmental document’ which ‘contains and shapes the ‘conditions of possibility’ available to school students’ (Davies, 2006: 430). From a Butlerian standpoint schemes of work, lesson plans and accompanying resources were regarded as performative insofar as they present the terms of engagement for students and what students are to become: tolerant and accepting neoliberal citizens. The latter is to be understood in light of how subjection works on, and in, the psychic life of the subject (Butler, 1997; see 2.1.2 and 2.1.3) where processes of identification also require the rejection (abjection) of other identities with rejection constituting the subject as much as identification does (Butler *et al.*, 2000; Nayak and Kehily, 2006).

Part Two – spatializing subjectivity – foregrounds the spatiality of performative selves and performative subjects. Here I develop earlier notions of children performing acceptance *in ‘formal’ school space* (i.e. classrooms and assembly hall) by considering how space is ‘brought into being through performances and [is itself] a performative articulation of power’ (Gregson and Rose, 2000: 434). ‘Formal’ school spaces, in this respect, are not only *configured through* ‘progressive’ gendered and sexual performance but also *configure* the resultant performances of their inhabitants: in this case, the children. As such, 6.4 explores how ‘formal’ school space regulates un/acceptable attitudes towards gender and sexual diversity, and how some children treated focus groups as an extension of ‘formal’ school space in which to perform acceptance of gender and sexual diversity. However, on other occasions the relational work of the inhabitants allowed focus groups to be produced as a private space in which dissent could be articulated more fully. This created space for performative subjects whose spatial expression had been more evident in ‘informal’ school space (i.e. playground, corridors and toilets) where gender/sexual difference was regularly reinstated through children’s everyday spatial practices (6.5). This extends beyond the school, as I illustrate in 6.6, which indicates why neoliberal

programmes, such as this one, do not always succeed in changing people's subjectivities as these are 'performed moving through multiple spatial-temporal domains' Pyckett *et al.* (2010: 489).

PART ONE

PERFORMATIVE SELVES AND PERFORMATIVE SUBJECTS

The previous chapter established that national government policy makes available a gender and sexualities education that consists of neoliberal ideals of diversity. Despite this I found that pupils are not unaffected by liberal pluralism and would cite socially acceptable discourses and display the 'right' values that the schools were teaching (see Hemming, 2011a; see 2.2.5). This influences pupils' senses of themselves: they identify strongly with liberal pluralistic norms of valuing and respecting diversity (see Thomas, 2008). At the same time, however, the pupils – as with all subjects – have deep investments in marking and maintaining gender and sexual difference (Davies, 2004). As Thomas explains, this is because 'identifying with certain social categories – and disidentifying with others – are the only ways that they have become viable social subjects' (2008: 2866). To understand pupils' contradictory responses to gender and sexuality education I therefore draw on Butler's theory of subjectivity and performativity (Butler, 1990; 1993; 1997; see 2.1.2) which, in accounting for the paradoxical conditions through which the accomplishment of subjecthood is made possible, distinguishes between a self and a subject: 'an 'I', with a conscious sense of self, and a subject with unconscious (dis)investments in social norms, qualities, differences, and valuations' (Thomas, 2008: 2866; see Butler, 2004; also see Davies, 2004; 2006).

6.1 DIFFERENT FAMILIES

In this first section I examine children's contradictory responses to the 'Different Families' scheme of work. First I revisit literature on 'the family' from 2.4 and 2.3.2a in order to provide a conceptual framework for the empirics. This includes sociological literature on reconstituted families (2.4) and educational literature critiquing the use of the heteronormative nuclear model in an attempt to render gay and lesbian sexualities legitimate (2.3.2a). The first sub-section, 6.1.1, draws on the first body of literature and argues that recognising the complexity of 'families' allows '2 mums' and '2 dads' to become intelligible. This results in children citing liberal pluralistic equalities discourse as they come to understand same-sex families as simply another type of family. The second sub-section, 6.1.2, draws on the second body of literature to conceptualise children's simultaneous recuperation of heteronormativity. In this sub-section

I illustrate children's compulsion to restabilise heteronormativity by heterosexualising the relationship between '2 mums' and '2 dads'. As outlined above, I comprehend these contradictory accounts through a broader feminist poststructural framework where I understand subjectivity to consist of both a self and subject (Butler, 1997). Thus, while some children cite liberal pluralistic equalities discourse and perform acceptance in 'formal' school space in order to be a 'good student', others feel compelled to perform normative (hetero)gender/sexuality and recuperate heteronormativity in the face of subversion in order to achieve viable subjecthood.

6.1.1 "Loads of people have two mums and two dads": reconstituted families and the intelligibility of '2 mums' and '2 dads'

The appropriation of the term *family* is not an assimilationist strategy of finding respectability in general society. *We are not degaying or delesbianizing ourselves by describing ourselves as family.* In fact, we are Queering the notion of family and creating families reflective of our life choices. Our expanded pluralist uses of family are politically destructive of the ethic of traditional family values

Goss, 1997: 12

In 2.4 I outlined sociological literature on reconstituted families which recognises how families are not homogenous or monolithic institutions, but instead are increasingly diverse - with young people now growing up in a variety of family forms and experiencing living in more than one household (Stacey, 1993; Valentine, 2008a; Valentine *et al.*, 2003). As such, the power that the notion of 'the family' (narrowly regarded as conventional nuclear families) has over the modern imagination has been problematised for the way it conceals this complex and diverse array of household forms which encompasses lone-parent households, cohabiting partners (with or without children) who are not legally married, queer family arrangements, part-time relationships and reconstituted families (Gillis, 1996; Stacey, 1990; Morgan, 1996; Weeks *et al.*, 2001). According to these commentators it is time we abandoned the idol of 'the family' and begin validating a greater variety of families (Gillis, 1996; Stacey, 1990). This does not entail replacing 'the family' but rather recognising *alternative families* and the pluralisation of family forms (Weeks, 1991; Weeks *et al.*, 2001).

In 4.3 I explored how Stonewall strategically developed the 'Different Families' approach for introducing the idea of same-sex relationships to children in primary school. This would not involve asking teachers to do something that they were not already doing, since family is a

well-established primary school topic. Stonewall simply wanted schools to be more inclusive when discussing families with lesbian and gay parents incorporated into this discussion. In 5.3 I illustrated how the Stonewall-inspired approach has become a broader scheme of work in primary schools, with Stonewall's materials combined with other resources and activities. This provides a basis for discussion and exploration of diverse family arrangements and, as the first vignette demonstrates, opening up the concept of 'the family' (see Stacey, 1990; 1993; Valentine, 2008a) and recognising differences in family composition allowed children to appreciate a range of 'postmodern families' (Stacey, 1990; see also Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2002).

In this first extract Year 1 children discuss what they have been learning about in class during 'Diversity Week':

SCHOOL: WEIRWOLD

- JH Who can tell me what week it is been this week in school?
- Sophie Diversity Week
- JH What does that mean?
- Sophie It is about families
- JH What have you learnt about families?
- Muna There are different kinds of families
- JH What do you all think about that?
- ALL Good!
- JH Why is that good?
- Muna Because it doesn't matter whoever looks after you because whoever looks after you still loves you

- JH Have you seen this poster this week? (I hold up Stonewall's Different Families, Same Love poster)
- NUMEROUS Yeah
- JH Who can tell me what this poster is about?
- Ruth Three children ... and one mum, one dad (points to corresponding image)
- Jeana And that's a grandma and granddad and a brother and a sister
- JH Is that a family as well?
- Jeana Yeah

Robert	And that is a mum and a dad but the dad's a different colour
Jeana	And that's a mum and a mum
JH	A mum and a mum?
ALL	Yes
JH	Is that a family as well?
ALL	Yes
Ruth	And a dad and dad
JH	And is that a family?
ALL	Yeah

JH	What did you do in class after you saw this poster?
Muna	We made a family tree and drew us in the middle ... and our brothers and sisters and mums and dads
JH	Did everyone in the class have the same type of family?
ALL	Different
Salma	Some people have step mums, like Teo, he's going to get a step mum
JH	Did anybody else have a different type of family?
Salma	Different families/
Sophie	And not the same family

Focus Groups with Year 1 (14/2/13)¹

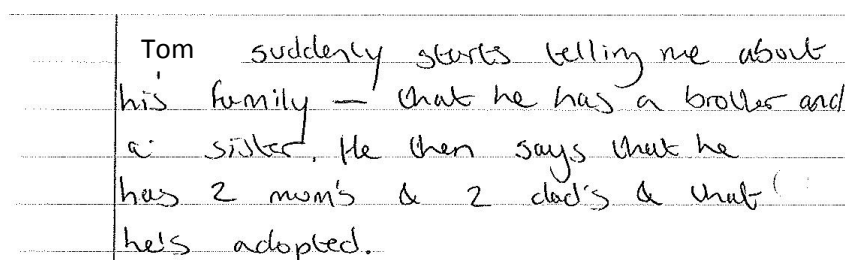
Throughout these excerpts it is clear that children latched onto the idea of pluralising notions of 'the family' (Weeks, 1991; Weeks *et al.*, 2001) beyond a singular, conventional nuclear model. Indeed, children did not even hold up this conventional nuclear model as a superior family form to others, with every family arrangement regarded as no more different from the last. As the middle extract demonstrates, children recognised a range of families on the Stonewall poster and would point these out, but as far as the children were concerned each variation remained a legitimate family and this included those with '2 mums' and '2 dads'. Even when Muna described how they had drawn a family tree in a follow-on activity with themselves in the middle and their brothers, sisters, mums and dads around the edge other children were quick to point out that not everyone in the class had this type of family. As they

¹ See Appendix D for Key to transcripts.

remarked, everyone had 'different families' and this was 'good'. After all the poster says, 'it doesn't matter whoever looks after you because whoever looks after you still loves you'.

In these vignettes children first recognise variance within heterosexual family arrangements (i.e. children living with grandparents, children whose mum/dad are 'a different colour' and children who have stepparents). This first disruption to the idealized, 'imagined family' (Gillis, 1996), I want to argue, opens up conceptual space in which '2 mums' and '2 dads' become intelligible. In particular, recognising step-parents legitimises the possibility of some children having '2 mums' or '2 dads' (a biological mum/ dad and a step mum/ dad) even if '2 mums' and '2 dads' are not conceived as same-sex parents.

For instance, take the following extract from my field notes as an example of how one child legitimised the idea of '2 mums' and '2 dads' by making it relevant to his own situation:



Tom suddenly starts telling me about his family - that he has a brother and a sister. He then says that he has 2 mums & 2 dads & that he's adopted.

Weirwold field notes (Year 3 - 7/2/12, time not recorded)

For Tom, the notion of '2 mums' and '2 dads' was applicable to his situation and helped him to make sense of his circumstances when producing a 'personal coat of arms' (see 5.3.2a). While '2 mums' and '2 dads' may have been appropriated here (and elsewhere) as a way of understanding reconstituted (heterosexual) families (see Stacey, 1990; 1993; Valentine, 2008a), children were, nevertheless, making this notion relevant and meaningful by either applying it to their own situation, as Tom had done, or those of friends, as Salma had done (third extract). Far from being an unusual family arrangement, children with '2 mums' and '2 dads' was therefore considered fairly common. With this in mind, a former Weirwold pupil who actually had same-sex parents² was not regarded as being any different from other children who also have '2 mums' and '2 dads'. After all, as one child proclaims in the next extract, 'loads of people have two mums and two dads':

² Weirwold's deputy head teacher verified this.

SCHOOL: WEIRWOLD

- JH I've heard the name Luke mentioned today, was Luke someone who used to be in this class?
- NUMEROUS Yes
- JH What was different about Luke's family/
- Moira I know, he had two mummies and one dad
- JH Ok, what do you think about that?
- Mike It is alright cos loads of people have two mums and two dads
- Natasha I've got two dads cos one of my dad's died and I've got one now

Focus Group with Year 3 (9/2/12)

It would appear that the applicability of '2 mums' and '2 dads' to reconstituted (heterosexual) families (see Stacey, 1990; 1993; Valentine, 2008a) provides a means through which same-sex parents can be rendered intelligible, with children able to comprehend same-sex relationships when situated in a 'Different Families' context (see 5.3.2a). Opening up the concept of 'the family' (see Stacey, 1990; 1993; Valentine, 2008a) and encouraging children to recognise diverse family arrangements, therefore appears to provide a basis for performing acceptance of lesbian and gay sexualities. Indeed, when making hypothetical families during a focus group activity (see 3.3.3) the children whose words are reproduced above not only volunteered to make families with '2 mums' and '2 dads' but also recognised these parents as potentially lesbian and gay. While this focus group is marked Year 4 it is actually with the same group of Year 3 children from above (a year later):

SCHOOL: WEIRWOLD

- JH One at a time I would like you to make a family
- Umran This is a woman ... (adds a man) ... and a child ... and they have a baby boy
(Children agree that this could be a family)
- Mike The mum and the mum and the baby and the son
- JH What do you all think about this family?
- Umran It is possible
- Natasha The two women, I think they're lesbians ... and they have two children

Umran Joe, we had this boy in our class, his name was Luke and he had two mums

NUMEROUS Oh yeah

[...]

JH I'm going to put some of these characters together and I want you to tell me if it could be a family/

Umran No one's done a gay family ... like two men

JH So what's this family Umran?

Umran There is two men, they're gay, and after they adopted that child

JH Does everyone agree that this could be a family?

ALL Yes

JH What do you all think about this family compared to the others?

Hayley He is much handsomer

ALL (laugh)

Mike I think it is ok

Umran Yeah I think it is ok because you can have family like that/

Natasha And they've adopted two children ... I think it is ok because some people ... it doesn't matter if some people are gay or not they can still have a family and they can be together for the rest of their lives

Focus Group with Year 4 (15/2/13)

Children in this focus group demonstrated how previously 'wounded identities' (Youdell, 2011) can be rescued and made visible, intelligible, and legitimate in a familial context (see Weeks, 1991; Weeks *et al.*, 2001). On only the second go Mike chose to make a family with what were regarded as lesbian parents and before I had a chance to make a family with '2 dads'³ Umran recognised how 'a gay family' had not been included. In both instances children endorsed lesbian and gay sexualities and when asked how the latter family compared to other 'postmodern families' (Stacey, 1990) Hayley - rather comically - remarked how one of the dad's was 'much handsomer' than the rest. This performance of acceptance concluded with Natasha citing recognisable liberal pluralistic equalities discourse: 'it doesn't matter if some people are gay [...] they can still have a family' would appear to challenge Butler's (1991)

³ If children had not made families with '2 mums' or '2 dads' during the focus group activity I would do so and encourage discussion (see 3.3.3).

assertion that emulation of a normative and idealized heterosexual nuclear family will always fail given that the homo is the necessary Other of the hetero (see also Butler, 2002). However, as I will demonstrate in the next section, heteronormativity was more often recuperated in response to the subversion of the conventional nuclear family.

6.1.2 Recuperating heteronormativity: heterosexualising the relationship between '2 mums' and '2 dads'

In 2.3.2a I outlined literature in sociology of education which, after Butler (1991; 2002), critiques a homosexual emulation of the heteronormative nuclear family for rendering gay and lesbian sexualities intelligible (i.e. DePalma and Atkinson, 2009c; Nixon, 2009; Rofes, 1997; Youdell, 2011; also see 2.3.5). As Youdell (2011) explains, representations of gay life as 'just like' heterosexual life (exemplified in the book *And Tango Makes Three* – see 5.3.2a) are part of a performative politics *and* a citational chain that reinscribes heteronormativity. As such, emulation of a normative and idealized heterosexual nuclear family will always fail (Butler, 1991; 2002).

When outlining sociological literature on reconstituted families in 2.4 I acknowledged how the demise of the modern nuclear family led to antifeminist profamily appeals with nostalgia for the modern family (Stacey, 1990). As Stacey (1990) has shown, the idea of 'postmodern families' has provoked an uneasiness amongst profamily campaigners, what Gillis (1996) refers to as 'self-appointed legislators of family values', as it implies the end of - or radical transformation of - a familiar pattern and the emergence of new, unknown patterns. As such, 'imagined families' we live *by* (the image of the relationships we aspire to) still remain a powerful force in shaping how we live our lives even though this is little more than an ideological, symbolic construct (Gillis, 1996).

Despite earlier engagement with recognition and discussion of 'alternative families' (Weeks *et al.*, 2001) in the majority of focus groups, children focused almost exclusively on conventional nuclear families when making fictitious families⁴. Even when children made families that broke the conventional nuclear mould, which would always be towards the end of the activity (if at all) subsequent discussion would recuperate heteronormativity, as the following vignettes demonstrate:

⁴ Children would vary male and female characters chosen to be the mum and dad and varied the number of children.

SCHOOL: WEIRWOLD

- JH Ramha, can you make a different family
- Ramha That's the dad ... a baby girl/
- Joseph Can't forget a mum
- Ramha And that's the mum ... and that's the girl
(The children agree that this could be a family)
- JH Ok, Ayliah, can you make a different family
- Aayat A baby boy ... a boy ... a girl and a mum
- JH Why have you put that there? (Joseph has added a dad)
- Joseph Because the dad keeps going to a different country

- JH Could this be a family (I make a family with a dad and children)
- Matthew A dad can look after babies ... with a mum (adds a mum)
- JH So we can have that but we can't have this (I remove the mum)
- Matthew That (reintroduces the mum)
- Gabi Well you can if the mum died or if she went on holiday but you
can't have it like that forever

Focus groups with 2D and 2A (14/2/13)

In these excerpts children reject the feasibility of lone-parent households as a way of 'doing' families (Stacey, 1990; Morgan, 1996; Weeks *et al.*, 2001). More crucially though, they feel compelled to heterosexualise single parents and reinstate a familiar, conventional nuclear family. According to developmental literature (see 2.2.2) it could be argued that this is because young children are simply not able to extrapolate beyond their own circumstances⁵ (see Valentine, 1997b; Walkerdine, 1984). However, given the diversity of children's own families it was surprising to find how powerful the notion of 'imagined families' we live *by* remains (Gillis, 1996). This compulsion to recuperate heteronormativity continued as children discussed the possible relationship between '2 mums' and '2 dads'. As discussed earlier, if children had not made families with '2 mums' or '2 dads' in this exercise I would do so and encourage discussion (see Footnote 2 and 3.3.3). While some children suggested that these could be partners this possibility was all too easily dismissed in favour of elaborate explanations, as the following examples demonstrate:

⁵ In Piaget's 'pre-operational' stage (approximately 2-7 years old) children are said to experience great difficulty de-centring themselves from any one aspect of a situation (Shaffer and Kipp, 2010).

SCHOOL: WEIRWOLD

JH (I make a family with two dads and two children) Could this be a family?
NUMEROUS No!
JH Why?
Gina It could if these two are boyfriends
Matthew They can't
JH Why can't they Matthew?
Matthew Because they're two dads ... you need a mum
Gina It could still be this one because they could be friends ... or the mum went on holiday/
Gabi Or both of the mums went on holiday and this guy didn't want to stay on his own so he went with this guy ... he called his friend of the other wife and they just stayed together

[...]

JH (I make a family with two mums and two children) Could this be a family?
Gina They could be girlfriends
Matthew It can be a family because they're not real because we need a dad and that would make a really good wife (swaps a mum for a dad) ... now you make a family
JH So who could these 2 mums have been?
Gabi Child-minders

JH Could this be a family? (I make a family with 2 mums and 2 children)
NUMEROUS No!
JH Why not?
Nadiv It could/
Joseph That could be the sister/
Nadiv And that could be the aunty
Aayat That could be the mum and that could be the grandma
JH What about this ... could this be a family (I make a family with

	two dads and one child)
Ramha	This could be the uncle, this could be the dad ... and this could be the kid
Joseph	These could be brothers ... and a nephew

Focus groups with 2D and 2A (14/2/13)

Earlier I suggested that notions of '2 mums' and '2 dads' were conducive in opening up conceptual space in which same-sex parents could be conceived as intelligible, with some of the children's own reconstituted families normalising these notions. However, in other focus groups heterosexualised explanations for '2 mums' and '2 dads' would prove to be more compelling than the possibility that these could be same-sex parents (see Epstein, 2000b). As the first extract demonstrates, children preferred to search for explanations that reinstate conventional nuclear families than allow this idealised model to be disrupted (Gillis, 1996; Stacey, 1990). While Gina initially suggested that the '2 dads' could be 'boyfriends', after Matthew's repudiation Gina is coerced into performing heteronormativity. Gabi then takes up this discourse and does so again in the second extract to deny the legitimacy of families with same-sex parents. This compulsion to heterosexualise the relationship between '2 mums' and '2 dads' reoccurs in the third extract where an abundance of alternative possibilities for '2 mums' and '2 dads' are provided to recuperate heteronormativity (see Epstein, 2000b). In this last exchange the possibility that '2 mums' or '2 dads' could be same-sex parents isn't even entertained despite this possibility being endorsed in class. In the next extract the terms gay and lesbian are used by some children in recognition of same-sex relationships, but once again these identities are disavowed by other children who reinstate the centrality of conventional nuclear families:

SCHOOL: WEIRWOLD

1. JH Hura, can you make a family
2. Hura This/
3. Salam It is got to be a man and women!
4. Lucy It could be gay ... it could be gay
5. Salam It can't be a gay family (replaces one of the men with a woman)
6. JH What have you just done ... you've swapped one of the/
7. Salam Yeah ... man and a man can't have a baby
8. Lucy Yeah, they've adopted the babies

9. JH So can that be a family if these two have adopted
(Mixed: yeah/ no)
10. Lucy Because they love each other that's why/
11. Hura It doesn't matter who you marry ... you might like a boy and you
wanna marry that boy/
12. Usman Urh! (Looks disgusted)
13. Hura It doesn't matter ... and you might want to adopt some children
14. Usman They're both male!
15. Lucy Yeah, if they're male then they can find a lady and be like oh, I
want to get married and then they can get a kid and then go (in a
high pitched voice) GO AWAY, I HATE YOU, I WANT A DIVORCE!

[...]

16. JH Usman, can you make a family
17. Haleem Mum and dad ... and children ... that's the aunty ... the uncle ...
that's the gran and that's the granddad
18. JH What does everyone think about this family?
19. Usman It is correct ... it is good because it makes sense
20. JH Niyanthri, can you make a different family
21. Niyanthri That one ... and this one ... they're gay couple/
Lesbian
22. Lucy Lesbian
23. Niyanthri And they have these babies
24. JH What does everyone think about this family?
25. Haleem It is silly ... it is not a good one, the best one was here (points to
where his had been)
26. Usman It made sense
27. JH So what's wrong with this one?
28. Haleem These two ... how can they have children ... it has to be a man
and a woman to have children
29. Lucy This lady could have this one with a man and the other could
have had that one with another man

Focus group with Year 3 (15/2/13)

In this example it is interesting to see how those defending the legitimacy of same-sex relationships are again coerced into recuperating heteronormativity by the end of the

exchange. In response to Salam's instruction that each family must contain a man and a woman (3) Lucy initially declared that Hura's fictitious family with '2 dads' could be gay (4). Lucy later backed up this assertion by undoing a socially constructed incommensurability that Salam was perpetuating (two men can't have a baby) (7) when she suggested that children can be adopted (8). Lucy also insisted that this could be a family 'because they love each other' (10). However, in response to persistent acts of repudiation Lucy finds herself undermining the legitimacy of 'gay dads' by conceding that they 'tricked' a woman into having a baby (15). This coercion occurs again when Lucy responds to Haleem's assertion that two women can't have children (28). This time Lucy concedes that each woman had a baby with another man (29).

Throughout these exchanges gay and lesbian sexualities are rendered unintelligible in a familial context where conventional nuclear families are idealised (Gillis, 1996; Stacey, 1990). As discussed earlier, Butler (1991) has argued that emulation of a normative and idealised heterosexual nuclear family will always fail given that the homo is the necessary Other of the hetero (also see Butler, 2002). Introducing gay and lesbian identities in a familial context and attempting to make these 'damaged subject positions' legitimate and intelligible by representing gay life as 'just like' heterosexual life constitutes heterosexual life as the ideal, Youdell adds, and it 'risks disavowing lives that do not look like this idealized heteromonogamous nuclear family' (2011: 67; also see DePalma and Atkinson, 2008b; 2009b; Nixon, 2009; Rasmussen, 2006 and 2.3.2a; 2.3.5). Children's responses in this section have illustrated this with children simultaneously compelled to perform normative (hetero)gender/sexuality and recuperate heteronormativity when conventional nuclear families are subverted. This can be clearly seen in the final vignette when the story *And Tango Makes Three* (Richardson and Parnell, 2005) is read to Reception:

Reception assembly in small hall

Chris has arranged a special assembly for Reception this morning in which he will read 'And Tango Makes Three'. Chris starts by asking the children who has been to a zoo and seen penguins. The majority of children's hands go up. Chris points to the front cover and tells the children that this is a story about two penguins who didn't think they could have a family.

As Chris reads the story he points out how lots of different families are going to the zoo to see animals that all have different families of their own (this is repeated throughout) and Chris notes how Ray & Silo are both boys. When Chris has finished reading the story he reiterates how lovely it was because the two penguins didn't think they could have a family.

Chris asks the children what they enjoyed about the story and the first child replies 'the chick' before a second child states 'the chick & the mummy'. Chris reminds the children that the chick didn't have a mummy in this story.

Cutlers field notes (Reception - 22/11/12, 9.15am)

When deconstructing this story, which was often used as part of the 'Different Families' scheme of work (see 5.3.2a), Youdell notes how the male penguins' incubation of the egg and rearing of the chick 'cites and inscribes the normative status of heterosexuality, monogamous adult coupling, homemaking and the rearing of young as the coveted prize of couplings entered into by enduring, self-evident, natural subjects' (2011: 66/7). For Youdell, 'it is a tale of heterosexual, reproductive sex in the context of emotional attachment and normative family arrangements' (2011: 67). As such, Youdell regards this book as a 'relatively conservative

inscription of enduring unitary subjects [and] the normative heterosexual nuclear family, even as it asserts the legitimacy of a homosexual emulation of it' (*ibid*). The second child's response⁶ to this story, like others in this section, reveals the enduring power of normative heterosexual nuclear families and its ability to erase lesbian and gay sexualities when introduced in a familial context (see Cullen and Sandy, 2009). In the next section I explore the subversive potential of 'alternative fairy tales' by considering children's contradictory responses to this second scheme of work.

6.2 ALTERNATIVE FAIRY TALES

This second section examines children's contradictory responses to the 'alternative fairy tales' scheme of work. First I revisit literature on 'feminist tales' from 2.3.2a and 2.3.2b in order to provide a conceptual framework for the empirics. This includes studies that have previously explored children's ability to engage with anti-sexist stories (i.e. Davies, 1989a; 1993; 2004; Epstein, 2000b; Walkerdine, 1981; 1984). In the first sub-section (6.2.1) I explore how alternative fairy tales can open up discursive space in which some children dismantle (hetero)sexism and reimagine heteronormative gender and sexuality. This results in children citing liberal feminist pluralistic equalities discourse. While these responses demonstrate how alternative fairy tales have the potential to shift prevailing heteronormative discourses in the second sub-section I examine data which shows how heteronormativity is simultaneously recuperated. In this sub-section I therefore demonstrate how alternative fairy tales are 'rescued' from feminist interpretations and re-scribed in sexist discourse (Davies (1989a; 1993).

As outlined at the beginning of this chapter, I interpret these contradictory accounts through a broader feminist poststructural framework where I understand subjectivity to consist of both a self and subject (Butler, 1997). Thus, while some children cite liberal feminist pluralistic equalities discourse and perform acceptance in 'formal' school space in order to be a 'good student', others feel compelled to perform normative (hetero)gender/sexuality and recuperate heteronormativity in the face of subversion in order to achieve viable subjecthood (Butler, 1997; Youdell, 2006).

⁶ Again, I acknowledge developmental literature which suggests that young children cannot extrapolate beyond their own circumstances or experience (see 2.2.2). However, as I have indicated already, children came from a diverse range of families and had experienced the diverse families curriculum prior to giving these responses.

6.2.1 Reimagining heteronormative gender and sexuality: opening up discursive space in which children dismantle (hetero)sexism

In 2.3 I outlined several studies that have been concerned with children's ability to make sense of 'feminist tales' (i.e. Davies, 1989a; 1989b; 1993; 2004; Davies and Banks, 1995; Epstein, 1995; 2000b; Evans, 1998; Walkerdine, 1981; 1984). While these studies overwhelmingly found that children overlook, misread or reject anti-sexist stories (see 6.2.2) some claim that they can provide alternative discourses for those seeking them (Davies, 1989a; 1993; Epstein, 1995; see 2.3.2b). According to Epstein, 'children are active agents in making their own meanings and in (re)constructing sexism; certain kinds of work can, to a more or less limited degree, shift children's positionings within sexist and heterosexist discourse' (1995: 62). In this section I build on these latter studies by exploring how 'alternative fairy tales' opened up discursive space in which some children dismantled (hetero)sexism and reimagined heteronormative gender and sexuality. In a Foucauldian sense the hegemonic status of heteronormative knowledge (Gramsci, 2003) came under review with the circulation of school-sanctioned same/equal 'rights' discourses offering children new possibilities for thinking otherwise (Davies, 1989a; 1993; Epstein, 1995; see 5.3.2b). These neoliberal discourses challenged an existing 'regime of truth' and provided children with a new form of 'power/knowledge' which some adopted and used (Foucault, 1980; see 2.1.4).

In this first part I focus on Year 2 accounts of *The Paper Bag Princess* (Munsch, 1980) which was discussed in 5.3.2b. While children's previous exposure to traditional fairy tales initially overshadowed this story (see 6.2.2), examples presented here demonstrate how some children were able to apply critical ideas introduced in the text. As Davies (1989a; 1993) and Epstein (1995) have suggested, not all children will engage with progressive feminist discourse, however, some children demonstrated a remarkable ability to deconstruct traditional fairy tales and imagine new possibilities. In this first vignette a group of girls challenge gender inequality, and the usual passive subject position occupied by females in traditional fairy tales, in light of new possibilities made available in the alternative fairy tale:

SCHOOL: WEIRWOLD

1. JH Do you think Princesses should be able to rescue princes or do you think princes should rescue princesses?
2. Gabi Both
3. Gina Both should have a chance

4. Gabi And they both have to be strong
5. Gina And they can do whatever they want, no one can control their live
6. JH What about princesses going on adventures? Do you think they should or should it just be princes?
7. ALL Both!
8. JH Why?
9. Gina They both need to have a chance of doing everything/
10. Gabi They should have chances to do the same thing

[...]

11. Gina It is very good cos then all of the girls that watch fairy tales they'll be like oh my, I know the prince is going to go on an adventure and the girl won't and if they read this they would say the same thing but then they'll go wow, I love that
12. JH Would you like this if it was a movie?
13. Gina Yeah/
14. Gabi Or maybe if it was on DVD people make it famous
15. Gina Or they might even do part 2 or part 1, 2 , 3, 4 and maybe up to 100!
16. Gabi If there was another one like this it would be good ... if there was a DVD we could all watch it
17. Gina I would buy a 100 of the part 1, 2, 3 ,4 ... if it was up to 100 I would get a 100 of all of them!
18. Gabi I would definitely watch it ... with me in it

19. Niyanthri I think that is was very good
20. JH Why was it very good?
21. Niyanthri Because ... you know the traditional stories with the prince saves the princess, I thought they are getting a bit old and boring but when the princess saved the prince I was like wow, that's ecstatic!

Focus Groups with Year 2 (14/2/13; 15/2/13)

As Gina (11) identifies, girls bring a set of expectations with them when confronted with the fairy tale genre (also see 21). Well-established heteronormative discourses dictate that the prince is an active agent that goes on adventures and rescues princesses (see Davies, 1989a; 1993; Zipes, 2006), something that the girls are all too familiar with (see 6.2.2). However, in this story ‘subjugated knowledges’ that challenge an existing ‘regime of truth’ (Foucault, 1990; 1991) are made available to the girls and in the discursive space opened up for them they began perpetuating same/equal ‘rights’ discourses (3, 9-10) whilst reimagining new possibilities (4-5, 15-18). This continued as other subversive elements of the story were introduced to the children, not least the final part of the story where the prince and princess defied convention and did not get married after all:

SCHOOL: WEIRWOLD

- JH What about the ending, do you think they should have got married?
- Gabi It is a good ending/
- Gina They shouldn’t/
- Gabi She could live with all other princesses in their castles/
- JH Will she eventually marry a prince?
- Gina No ... she could do whatever she wants
- JH What would you do if you were Elizabeth?
- Gina I would say sorry to the dragon and say do you want to build a house with me and then we could go on adventures
- Gabi I would just have a pet

- JH What do you think about the ending?
- Jonah That’s really good
- Nadiv It feels quite different because they normally marry each other and then in this book they don’t
- Joseph The ending was quite good cos the prince wasn’t appreciative
- JH Do you think Elizabeth should have to get married?
- Jonah No

Focus Groups with Year 2 (14/2/13 – 10.45am; 14/2/13 – 11.35am)

In the first extract the same group of girls take up a progressive liberal feminist discourse in challenging ‘compulsory heterosexuality’ (Rich, 1980) and the patriarchal institution of marriage (Cullen, 2009; DePalma and Atkinson, 2009b). While Walkerdine (1984) came to the conclusion that alternative literature and images create a set of conflicts and contradictions for girls because they do not account for desire and fantasy, in this highly relevant exchange it appears as though alternative fiction can provide some girls with a vehicle for an alternative vision (although see 6.2.2). Indeed, in putting themselves in Princess Elizabeth’s position both girls endorse the intelligibility of non-heterosexual destinies when they state that they would reject the prince and live with the dragon or a pet. This subversive moment may have been fleeting but as Davies (2004) remarks, once occupied subject positions are more easily occupied again in the future. This applies to the two boys in the second extract who also legitimise Princess Elizabeth’s decision not to marry Prince Ronald. As Joseph remarked, the unorthodox ending ‘was quite good cos the prince wasn’t appreciative’ and, as Jonah reiterated, Princess Elizabeth shouldn’t have to get married.

These liberal feminist attitudes remained the same for the final subversive element in the story which challenges feminine ideals. In this story the princess does not wear a gown (the dragon burns this at the beginning of the story) but, as the Year 2 teacher would insist, Princess Elizabeth was still beautiful and didn’t need to wear a dress to make this so (see ethnographic notes below). As the following vignettes demonstrate, children mobilised this discourse in focus groups and in class and in doing so they disrupted ‘hyper-femininity’ (Renold, 2005):

SCHOOL: WEIRWOLD

- | | |
|-------------|--|
| JH | What about the fact that Elizabeth wasn’t wearing a dress ... do you have to wear a dress to be beautiful? |
| Gina & Gabi | No! |
| Gina | She’s still beautiful/ |
| Gabi | Still beautiful [...] he (Prince Ronald) should have said/ |
| Gina | You look beautiful |

Focus Groups with Year 2 (14/2/13 – 10.45am)

The Year 2 teacher asks the class to describe the three main characters in the story. They describe the princess as 'beautiful'. The teacher asks the children if she is beautiful despite not wearing a dress and the children collectively say she is.

Each table has a large piece of paper with the name of one of the three main characters on it. The table that have Princess Elizabeth have chosen 'pretty' as their favourite descriptive word. I ask even without a dress and one child replies - "she's pretty even though she doesn't have a dress".

Weirwold field notes (Year 2 - 6/2/12, 1.10pm)

In the first extract the same group of girls clearly problematise this hyper-feminised notion that in order to be considered beautiful women must wear dresses. As both girls insist, Princess Elizabeth is 'still beautiful' and Prince Ronald should have told her that rather than demanding that she conform to a feminine stereotype by dressing like a 'real princess' (penultimate page in the book; see 5.3.2b and Figure 21). Again, it is interesting to see how keen these girls were to reaffirm this in front of each other. Likewise, it was interesting to find that the group in class had maintained this stance amongst themselves in a follow-on activity. In both cases, children continued to perpetuate liberal feminist discourse made available through the 'alternative fairy tale' scheme of work (see 5.3.2b) and this extended into Year 3.

In Year 3 children demonstrated a similar ability to challenge and reimagine heteronormative gender when reflecting on the occupations activity discussed in 5.3.2b. In focus groups I asked children what they thought was the point of this activity and what stood out for them. In keeping with Year 2 responses groups of children would latch onto equalities discourses made available through this scheme of work. To illustrate how children reconceived heteronormative gender I present an excerpt from a focus group supplemented by posters drawn by two of the pupils:

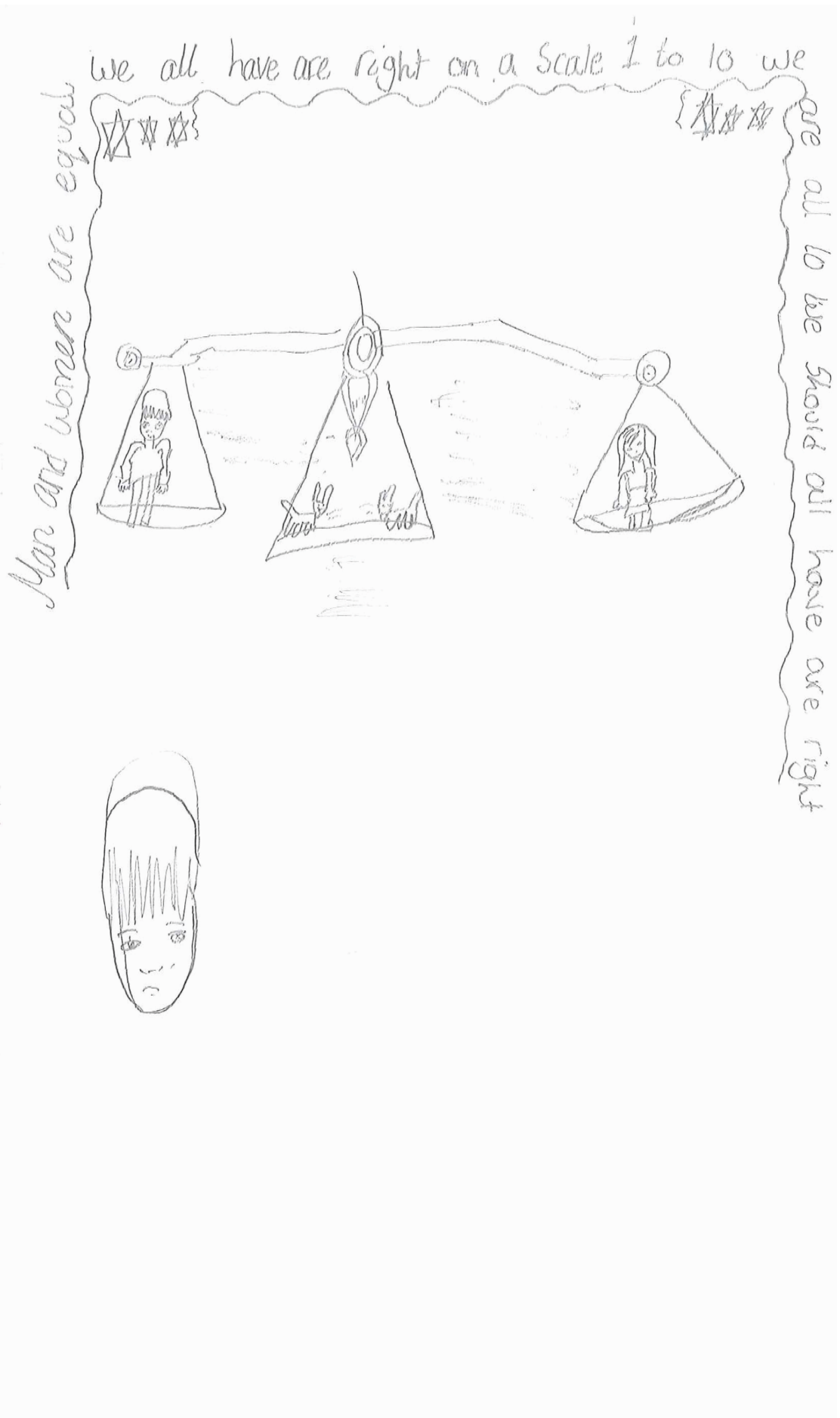
SCHOOL: WEIRWOLD

JH What do you all think was the point of that activity?
Shaka That men can do a woman's job and women can do men's jobs
Natasha And man and woman are equal

[...]

JH (I ask the children to draw something that stands out from that
 week)
Nella Man and woman being equal ... there is a girl and there is a boy
 and they're both equal, and it says that we all have our rights
Natasha So what's happening in your picture Keela?
Keela Well, the man with a baby
JH Is that funny to see?
Keela No, Nick the Nanny
JH Who usually looks after children?
Keela A baby sitter... it is usually girls but now it is Nick!

Focus group with Year 3 (17/5/12)

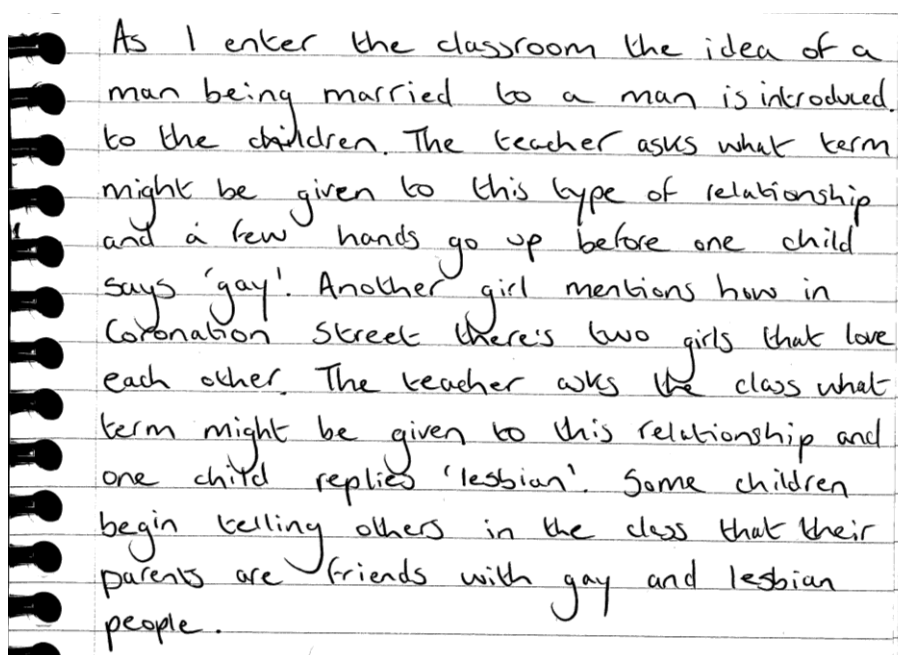


Man NICK the Nany, WOMEN



As discussed at the start of this section, school-sanctioned same/equal 'rights' discourses had been circulating in class throughout the week and during this activity this new form of 'power-knowledge' (Foucault, 1980) was taken up by this group of children. Children critiqued well-established notions of gendered vocations by drawing on equalities discourses to assert that men and women are equal with this standpoint allowing a previous 'unassailable truth' (Foucault, 1980) to be challenged and reimagined. As the poster and excerpt demonstrate, 'Nick the Nanny' (male-femininity) was conceived as legitimate and intelligible in the context of same/equal 'rights'. Thus, when I asked Keela if it was funny to see a man with a baby she replied - rather matter-of-factly - 'no, Nick the Nanny [...] it is usually girls but now it is Nick!', as if to suggest that this possibility was now acceptable.

This was taken a step further later in the week when one of the final activities in the Prince Cinders lesson plan was implemented (see 5.3.2b and Appendix C). This took the ironic 'lived happily ever after' fairy tale ending as a basis for discussing marriage and Civil Partnerships⁷ with lesbian and gay identities introduced in this context. This means of introducing lesbian and gay sexualities is similar to the 'Different Families' approach where lesbian and gay relationships were legitimised through a heteronormative social institution (Cullen, 2009; DePalma and Atkinson, 2009b). Again, same/equal 'rights' discourses were present in such discussions and were drawn on to legitimise same-sex relationships, thereby rendering them intelligible. As the first vignette illustrates, once same-sex relationships had been introduced in this context, children confirmed the legitimacy of gay and lesbian identities:



As I enter the classroom the idea of a man being married to a man is introduced to the children. The teacher asks what term might be given to this type of relationship and a few hands go up before one child says 'gay'. Another girl mentions how in Coronation Street there's two girls that love each other. The teacher asks the class what term might be given to this relationship and one child replies 'lesbian'. Some children begin telling others in the class that their parents are friends with gay and lesbian people.

Weirwold field notes (Year 3 - 8/2/12, 11.25am)

⁷ This discussion took place in February 2012, prior to the introduction of the Marriage (same Sex Couple) Act (2013).

This example demonstrates how children built on understandings of same/equal 'rights' and applied them in this context when thinking about same-sex relationships. While the same debates surrounding the desirability of emulating heteronormative social structures remain (see Butler, 1991; 2002; 2.3.2a and 2.3.5) it would appear that utilising the recognisable social institution of marriage allowed same-sex relationships to be seen on par with heterosexual relationships, as the next extract confirms:

SCHOOL: WEIRWOLD

- | | |
|---------|--|
| JH | What happened in today's lesson? |
| Shaka | We were talking about marriage |
| JH | Ok ... so what did you talk about? |
| Natasha | Well, I was going to say ... people get married because they fall in love and they get kind of romantic |
| JH | Ok ... so who can get married? |
| Umran | Erm, men and men, women and women, and that relationship is called ... for men, a gay relationship and when a women and a women get married ... lesbian relationship |

Focus group with Year 3 (9/2/12)

Regardless of how gay and lesbian identities have been rendered intelligible it appears that children have been able to undo a socially constructed incommensurability between 'love and romance' on the one hand and 'same-sex intimacy' on the other. Indeed, it is promising to see how Umran, the Muslim boy introduced in 6.1 could acknowledge how two men or two women could love each other and get married given Natasha's earlier response that 'people get married because they fall in love and [...] get kind of romantic'. Whichever way you look at it children have been able to challenge heteronormative sexuality and recognise the legitimacy of gay and lesbian sexualities. This is a huge achievement given the history of these 'damaged identities' (Youdell, 2011). However, as I will demonstrate in the next section heteronormativity was more often recuperated in response to the subversion of (hetero)sexism.

6.2.2 Recuperating heteronormative gender and sexuality: 'rescuing' alternative fairy tales from feminist interpretations and re-inscribing them in sexist discourse

As noted earlier, previous studies concerned with children's ability to make sense of 'feminist tales' have overwhelmingly found that children overlook, misread or reject anti-sexist stories (see Davies, 1989a; 1993; 2004; Davies and Banks, 1995; Epstein, 1995; 2000b; Evans, 1998; Walkerdine, 1981; 1984 in 2.3.2b). As Epstein explains, 'children are active in the making of their own meanings [therefore] anti-sexist intentions do not always succeed, in part because of the very complexity of social relations and in part because of the inherent difficulty of challenging dominant discourses' (1995: 57). According to Epstein (1995), the point of Judith Butler's (1990) argument about the need to understand gender and, by inference, children's attachment to stereotypical gendered difference through the 'heterosexual matrix', is that limits of what is permissible for each gender are framed within the context of 'compulsory heterosexuality' (Rich, 1980). Thus, while alternative fairy tales present children with new possibilities children are – to a large extent - already hetero- gendered and sexualised beings. Therefore, the potential effectiveness of feminist tales in offering genuine alternatives in the face of 'master narratives' of compulsory heterosexuality has long been disputed (see Cullen and Sandy, 2009; Epstein, 2000b).

In addition, Davies (1989b) has argued that the idea of dualistic oppositional maleness and femaleness in the stories children usually hear preclude a feminist hearing of the text. As Davies explains, 'the story is heard as if it were a variation of a known story line in which males are heroes and females are other to those heroes' (1989b: 231). As such, children tend to hear these stories 'not as feminist stories, but as traditional stories in which the counter-stereotypical princess somehow 'got things wrong'' (Davies and Banks, 1995: 45). According to Davies (1989a; 1993), most children will therefore 'rescue' anti-sexist stories from feminist interpretations and re-inscribe them in sexist discourse.

In 6.2.1 I demonstrated how alternative fairy tales allowed some children to challenge (hetero)sexism and reimagine new possibilities even though exposure to traditional fairy tales initially overshadowed these feminist tales. In this section I show how other children remain constrained by traditional fairy tales and wider 'master narratives' of 'compulsory heterosexuality' (Rich, 1980). As a result, they feel compelled to recuperate heteronormativity by 'rescuing' alternative fairy tales from feminist interpretations and re-inscribing them in sexist discourse (Davies, 1989a; 1993). The first vignette presented below corresponds with Year 2's book *The Paper Bag Princess* (Munsch, 1980). Children's initial responses to this alternative fairy tale demonstrate how firmly established heteronormative ideals have become

in popular culture, and children's literature more specially, with hetero- gender and sexuality positioned as both natural and desirable. Children therefore greeted this particular story with much scepticism and were only able to regard this subversive text as 'weird' and 'usual':

SCHOOL: WEIRWOLD

JH What usually happens in fairy tales?
Usman The prince saved the princesses *not the princess save the prince*
Haleem The prince normally discovers ... the boy normally discovers, *not the girl* (spoken quietly)
Sabina When I see different kinds of movies the boy normally saves the woman from the other man

[...]

JH Was there anything else which was different?
Haleem The prince kills the dragon
JH But in this story the dragon was tricked by a girl ... what do you think about that?
Sabina It is weird that he got tricked by a girl, not a boy
JH Why is that weird?
Sabina Because normally girls won't be able to do things like that

JH What usually happens in fairy tales ... is it usually the prince or the princesses that go on adventures?
Jonah Prince
JH So what do you think about this story?
Jonah It was a bit weird because it is the wrong way round because the princes have to save the princesses
Nadiv And the princesses have to be taken by dragons
Jonah Yeah

[...]

JH	So what do you think about the princess saving the prince in this story?
Nadiv	A bit weird
Jonah	Some princesses might not be strong enough
Nadiv	Boys are usually stronger than girls like when they have races boys win

Focus groups with Year 2 (9/2/12; 14/2/13 - 10.45am)

Throughout the discussion the 'heterosexual matrix' (Butler, 1990) is called upon to legitimise (hetero)sexism and the 'natural' continuation of gender (masculinities/ femininities) from sex (male/female). For instance, when I asked children what they thought about a princess saving a prince, Jonah questioned the feasibility of this as princesses would probably not be strong enough. Nadiv then justifies how 'boys are usually stronger than girls' by resorting to boys 'natural' ability to win races. Heteronormativity was most profound, however, in the penultimate extract where children insisted that 'princes have to save the princesses' and 'princesses have to be taken by dragons'. 'Heterosexual hegemony' (Butler, 1993) reinforces this citational chain because without repeat performances of hetero- gender and sexuality, normative heterosexuality loses its hegemony. Thus, children are compelled to continuously inscribe and re-inscribe heteronormativity, especially in the face of subversion.

Year 3 accounts consolidated this notion of heteronormativity still further - children in this year group also regarded their alternative fairy tale (*Prince Cinders*) as 'a bit funny', 'strange' and 'dumb' because apparently - when compared to the original (Cinderella) - 'nothing makes sense'. Again, children identified that it would be a male's prerogative to ask a woman to be their wife and they would usually 'live happily ever after'. Again, children know what to expect from conventional stories, yet alternative fairy tales rub up against long-standing heteronormative norms:

SCHOOL: WEIRWOLD

JH	What usually happens in a fairy tale?
Shaka	Usually the men ask them to be their wife ... and they live happily ever after
JH	So what do you think to this story?
Natasha	It was very weird and strange

JH What do you think about this story compared to Cinderella?
Keela It is a bit funny
JH Why's it a bit funny?
Keela Because when the fat boy turns into a fairy they have dresses on

Haleem It was boring
JH Why was it boring?
Haleem Its dumb ... nothing makes sense

Focus groups with Year 3 (9/2/12; 17/5/12; 15/2/13)

Here again, long-standing heteronormative discourses frame understandings of alternative texts. This discussion demonstrates how familiar children are with traditional (hetero)sexist stories; it also shows how this familiarity influences how they talk about alternative fairy tales (see Davies and Banks, 1995). For instance, the story of *Prince Cinders* is regarded as 'very weird and strange' because it opposes more familiar narratives in which men ask women to be their wives and live 'happily ever after'. Likewise, the story is regarded as 'boring' and 'dumb' because when compared to traditional fairy tales 'nothing makes sense'. While some children were initially hindered by these prevailing heteronormative discourses but could later reimagine new possibilities (6.2.1), the majority could not move beyond these initial responses. Thus, alongside a theme of 'challenging and reimagining heteronormative gender and sexuality', I identified a theme of 'recuperation' whereby children would 'rescue' alternative fairy tales from feminist interpretations and re-scribe them in sexist discourse (Davies, 1989a; 1993).

Again, I begin with Year 2 accounts that centre on the book *The Paper Bag Princess* and associated activities (see Appendix C - The Paper Bag Princess lesson plan). In this first extract children discuss the part of the story where Princess Elizabeth tricks the dragon. In class it had been established that Princess Elizabeth was 'brave' and 'clever' for tricking the dragon rather than slaying it, as a prince would usually do (see 5.3.2b). However, when I discussed this with children in focus groups this part of the story was reinterpreted, as the following extract demonstrates:

SCHOOL: WEIRWOLD

- JH What do you think about the princess tricking the dragon?
- Usman It is brainless [...] the dragon is brainless because he got tricked
- Haleem I don't think the dragon should be tricked
- JH What do you think about a girl tricking the dragon?
- Haleem I wish it was a boy
- Usman Yeah
- Haleem Boys are the best/
- Usman No boy's rule!
- JH What do you think about that Sabina?
- Sabina (shakes her head)
- Haleem Yeah, two against one!
- Usman Well three, you'd agree as well
- JH No, I think that it was good that the girl tricked the dragon
- Sabina (smiles) Draw!
- Usman Only the kids [...] look, look ... we're both on this side, they're
both on that side

Focus Group with Year 2 (9/2/12)

At first Usman rejects what had become an established pattern in class by insisting that the dragon was 'brainless' for being tricked. Haleem supports this assertion when he adds that he didn't think the dragon should be tricked. In doing so Usman and Haleem deny Princess Elizabeth credit as an active female agent - even though they later confess that they wish the hero had been a boy. Equally interesting is how I am interpolated into the discussion when Usman assumes that as a male I would not like the dragon being tricked by a girl, and that 'boys rule'. When I disagree my vote is no longer valid and Sabina and I are abjected. As I established at the beginning of this chapter, this is all necessary for the boys' to achieve viable subjecthood as supposedly unitary non-contradictory beings (see Davies, 1989b and 2.1). These deep investments in heteronormative gender and sexuality preclude feminist readings of these texts and overshadow other paradigms established in class, as the next vignette demonstrates:

SCHOOL: WEIRWOLD

- JH Is Princess Elizabeth still beautiful even though she's not wearing

a dress?

Matthew No!

JH Do you have to wear a dress to be beautiful?

Matthew Yeah

JH Is she (Princess Elizabeth) still beautiful even without a dress?

NUMEROUS No!

JH Why?

Joseph Because she's messy/
Jonah And her crown is bent/
Nadiv And she has ashes all over her

JH What do you think about the princess not wearing a dress in this story because didn't your teacher say that she's still/
Haleem She's not beautiful ... she's not beautiful
Usman No
Usman & (laugh)
Haleem
Haleem She felt ugly
JH Why?
Haleem Cos she wears a paper bag and she's naked!
Usman & (laugh)
Haleem
JH What about if she had a dress on?
Haleem But she'd still be kind of ugly
JH Why?
Haleem Because she's a girl!
Usman Yeah!
(Haleem and Usman talk between themselves before laughing)
Sabina It doesn't really matter what you're wearing/
Haleem Narr!
Usman (laughs)

Focus Groups with Year 2 (14/2/13 – 10.45am; 14/2/13 – 11.35; 9/2/12)

Despite challenging ‘heterosexualised femininity’ (Renold, 2005) in class and establishing that Princess Elizabeth was still ‘beautiful’ and ‘pretty’ even though she wasn’t wearing a dress (see 5.3.2b and 6.2.1) in the majority of focus groups these understandings were rejected. For instance, in the first extract Matthew asserts that Princess Elizabeth would have to wear a dress to be considered beautiful and in the final extract Haleem insists that even then ‘she’d still be kind of ugly [...] because she’s a girl!’ (see discussion above). In a Butlerian sense, by not performing ‘hyper femininity’ (Renold, 2005) Princess Elizabeth had placed herself beyond a heterosexual framework of desirability and was therefore not a ‘proper’ princess - as a ‘proper’ princess would not be ‘messy’, have a ‘bent crown’ or have ‘ashes all over her’ (see Davies, 1989b). Thus, despite articulating liberal feminist attitudes in class (6.2.1) the ‘heterosexual matrix’ (Butler, 1990) ultimately curtails understandings of gender and sexuality (see Epstein, 1995). This is evident in the next vignette where children perpetuate sex-gender binaries in relation to the dragon:

SCHOOL: WEIRWOLD

- | | |
|---------|---|
| JH | Was the dragon a boy or a girl or don’t we know? |
| Gina | A boy |
| Matthew | It is a boy because it looks like a boy |
| JH | How does it look like a boy? |
| Gina | Because it blows fire/ |
| Gabi | Because if it was a girl it would have eye lashes and it would have pretty wings/ |
| Gina | And it might even have lipstick |
| Gabi | Yeah because in Sleeping Beauty they have a dragon and you can easily tell that it is a girl dragon because it has eye liner and a bit of lip stick |

Focus group with Year 2 (14/2/13 – 10.45am)

In this exchange children draw on ‘unassailable truths’ (Foucault, 1980) about heteronormative gender that are legitimised through ‘the heterosexual matrix’ (Butler, 1990). In doing so they consolidate sex-gender binaries by insisting that the dragon’s masculine traits, and lack of feminine traits, makes it a boy. This occurs despite an activity which revolved around choosing gender-neutral names for the dragon (whose sex is deliberately unknown - see Appendix C – Activity 1, task 4 in The Paper Bag Princess lesson plan). Again, despite

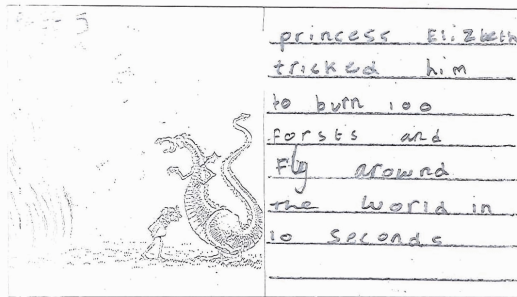
articulating liberal pluralistic discourses in class, where the dragon was given a gender-neutral name like 'Alex' (see 5.3.2b), in focus groups children reinstated heteronormative gender and sex-gender binaries (see Davies, 1989b). The same occurred when children discussed the final part of the story in focus groups and wrote 'alternative endings' in class (see Appendix C – Activity 5, task 2 in The Paper Bag Princess lesson plan). This time they recuperated heteronormativity by reinstating heterosexism, as the following vignette and 'alternative ending' illustrate:

SCHOOL: WEIRWOLD

- JH What do you think about that ending, that they didn't get married after all?
- Jonah If they fight they separate and then the boy comes and says sorry first and then the girl says sorry and then they just get married
- Nadiv Yeah, they should get married
- Joseph They should still get married and if he still doesn't like her she should go and find another prince

- JH What do you think Princess Elizabeth should do now?
- Nadiv Find another prince
- Ramha She's going to find another prince then she's going to marry the prince ... if she likes it or if she doesn't like it

Focus groups with Year 2 (14/2/13 – 10.45am; 14/2/13 – 11.35am)



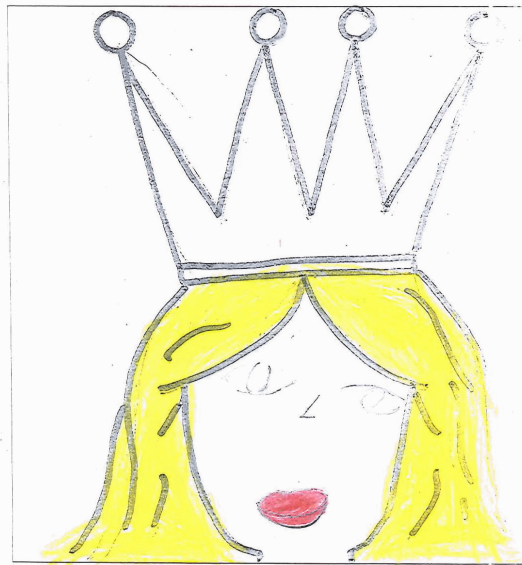
Name _____

Date Wednesday 13th February 2013

WALT write an alternative ending to the Paper Bag Princess

WILF: I can write an alternative ending

→ This is a good try
 → Have you read through your work?
 The dragon was very tired and went to sleep. Elizabeth released Ronald. But he was a disrespectful princess. Elizabeth called him a big fat ugly rook and ran towards the sunset. Elizabeth kept her paper bag and married the dustbin tag Prince.



'Alternative ending' to *The Paper Bag Princess* (Weirwold, Year 2 - 13/2/13)

Although some children stated that it was 'good' that Princess Elizabeth didn't marry Prince Ronald because he was 'rude' and 'unappreciative' when she rescued him (see 6.2.1), here children believe that they should have still got married. There is even a suggestion that the princess might not be fortunate enough to marry the prince now, despite how he treated her. Regardless of whether Prince Ronald is prepared to have Princess Elizabeth back or not one thing remains certain – she will 'find another prince [and] marry the prince if she likes it or if she doesn't like it' (Nadiv/ Ramha). This strong compulsion to (re)assert normative heterosexuality was most pronounced in focus groups but traces were also found in children's class work. As in the example above, children's 'alternative endings' to *The Paper Bag Princess* overwhelmingly reinstated heterosexism - with Princess Elizabeth inevitably marrying another prince. While some children articulated liberal feminist attitudes and resisted the inevitability of heterosexual destinies (see 6.2.1), children more often re-established heteronormative sexuality and 'heterosexual hegemony' (Butler, 1993; see 2.1.3).

In February 2013 I had the opportunity to re-form focus groups with some of the Year 2 pupils from 2012 who had since moved into Year 3. As well as exploring how they responded to this year's 'alternative fairy tale' scheme of work⁸ (see 5.3.2b and Appendix C) I explored children's

⁸ As earlier responses indicate, *Prince Cinders* (Cole, 1997) was received in much the same way as *The Paper Bag Princess* had been.

recollections of *The Paper Bag Princess* from the year before. It was interesting to find that heteronormativity was further recuperated, with the final part of the story completely reinterpreted. Heterosexism was also more pronounced, as the final extract reveals:

SCHOOL: WEIRWOLD

JH Can you remember what happened in a similar story you read last year?

Haleem The prince left the princess because she was rank

Usman He said that he didn't want to marry

Lucy He said come back when you're wearing better clothes [...] next time she should go to the closest supermodel shop and buy some nice clothes

[...]

Haleem The man got this sword after the girl called him a bum and stabbed her in the heart!

Usman Yeah!

Haleem (laughs)

JH Why would he do that?

Haleem Because she called him a bum ... rude

[...]

Niyanthri I think that she went to this man web-site/

Lucy Match.com

Niyanthri Match.com were you date people and have babies

Hura She looked for a guy

Lucy I think she went on match.com and she saw this man and went on a date

Focus group with Year 3 (15/2/13)

Over the preceding 12 months, the story of *The Paper Bag Princess* had been completely 'rescued' from feminist interpretations and re-inscribed in sexist discourse (Davies, 1989a; 1993). In the children's recollections, the heroic deeds of Princess Elizabeth had been erased and instead she had been remembered as an unintelligible princess that the prince had rightly

decided not to marry. Haleem even reinterprets the part of the story where Prince Ronald had been 'rude' to Princess Elizabeth upon rescuing him (see 6.2.1), with Princess Elizabeth now understood to have been 'rude' for calling Prince Ronald a 'bum'. Perhaps the most concerning responses come at the end of the exchange though. Here a group of girls feel compelled to reproduce heterosexual destiny *despite* Princess Elizabeth's decision to 'go it alone' at the end of the story. These responses are perhaps not surprising given Walkerdine's (1984) remarks that feminist tales create a set of conflicts and contradictions for girls because they do not account for desire and fantasy. According to Walkerdine (1984), we need to note how such texts operate at the level of fantasy and how they may fuel resistance to the feminist alternative. If these texts do not map onto crucial issues around desire, Walkerdine (1984) warns, then we should not be surprised if they fail as an intervention (see 2.3.2b).

Having outlined children's responses to the 'alternative fairy tales' scheme of work I shall now examine children's contradictory responses to the final scheme of work which involves challenging heteronormative masculinity and homophobic language.

6.3 HETERONORMATIVE MASCULINITY AND HOMOPHOBIC LANGUAGE

This final section in Part One of this chapter examines children's contradictory responses to the 'heteronormative masculinity and homophobic language' scheme of work. First, I establish why homophobic language goes hand-in-hand with challenging heteronormative masculinity and why this receives specific attention in the final scheme of work. Having established this I examine children's contradictory responses to this scheme of work. In the first sub-section (6.3.1) I explore how children challenge heteronormative masculinity and homophobic language. This shows how children problematise binary gender and sex-gender binaries (Butler, 1990; 1993) by taking up liberal pluralistic equalities discourse and performing acceptance. In the second sub-section (6.3.2) I explore how children simultaneously recuperate heteronormative masculinity and homophobic language. This second set of responses indicates how difficult it is to undo a socially constructed opposition between males, femininity and homosexuality given the centrality of the 'heterosexual matrix' (Butler, 1990; Youdell, 2011). Thus, while some boys take up liberal pluralistic equalities discourse and perform acceptance in 'formal' school space, ultimately they are compelled to perform normative (hetero)gender/sexuality and recuperate heteronormativity in order to achieve viable subjecthood (Butler, 1997; Youdell, 2006).

Before I get underway I want to establish why homophobic language goes hand-in-hand with challenging heteronormative masculinity and why this receives specific attention in the final scheme of work. I do this to contextualise children's responses throughout this section since it is clear from the examples below that boys are likely to be labelled 'gay' if they transgress gender norms (see DePalma and Atkinson, 2008b; Epstein, 1995). The same cannot be said for girls with the subject position 'tomboy' allowing girls to transgress gender norms without bringing their (hetero)sexuality into question (see Epstein, 1995; Renold, 2008). Children's confirmation of this justifies why it is so important to challenge heteronormative masculinity and homophobic language, although these responses also indicate how difficult it is to undo a socially constructed opposition between males, femininity and homosexuality given the centrality of the 'heterosexual matrix' (Butler, 1990):

SCHOOL: WEIRWOLD

- JH Is there an equivalent of sissy for a girl?
- Jody A tomboy
- JH Is that the same as a sissy?
- Jody Not really because people don't go *Ruby's a tomboy* (chanting)
do they
- Kael People don't say tomboy in a rude way, they only say sissy in a
rude way/
- Melissa Yeah, I don't think it really applies
- Kael Cos tomboy is a girl that likes doing boys things but no one ever
bullies someone because they're a tomboy
- Jody I think it is more that people bully boys

SCHOOL: CUTLERS

- Ruth When there is something that a boy wants that's a girl's thing
they get called names like gay but when a girl wants something
that's a boy's thing they don't get called names ... they just get
called a tomboy
- JH Is there a male equivalent for tomboy?
- Ruth Not really
- Annabel Well there isn't really another way round but you could get called

	gay
JH	How are tomboys regarded in this school?
Annabel	No one really minds

Focus groups with Year's 5 and 6 (18/5/12; 24/5/12)

The preceding extract demonstrates children's understandings of the relationship between gender non-conformity and sexuality and how this differs between boys and girls. It clearly illustrates what is at stake when boys transgress gender norms and what little room they have to work in within the confines of the 'heterosexual matrix' (Butler, 1990). Having established this, I also want to argue that while some boys cite liberal pluralistic equalities discourse and perform acceptance in 'formal' school space by demonstrating an ability to accept differences in others (often fictional boys who do not perform 'hegemonic masculinities' (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005)), ultimately boys are compelled to perform normative (hetero)gender/sexuality and recuperate heteronormativity in order to achieve viable subjecthood (Butler, 1997; Youdell, 2006).

6.3.1 Challenging heteronormative masculinity and homophobic language

This sub-section explores how children challenged heteronormative masculinity and homophobic language. First I examine children's liberal attitudes towards two books that were used as part of this scheme of work: *The Sissy Duckling* (Fierstein and Cole, 2005) and *Oliver Button is a Sissy* (de Paola, 1990). I demonstrate how children's responses to these books reveal a thorough understanding of lesson objectives (see 5.3.2c) and an ability to take up what theorists would label liberal pluralistic equalities discourse by performing acceptance of gender transgression in 'formal' school space. In the second part I show how children continue to cite liberal pluralistic equalities discourse and perform acceptance of gender transgression when undertaking follow-on activities (those outlined in 5.3.2c). In particular, I demonstrate how some children's responses to these activities reveal an ability to move beyond lesson objectives to critique (hetero)sexism more broadly. The final part explores how children challenge homophobic language and take up liberal pluralistic equalities discourse when discussing gay and lesbian identities. This allows lesbian and gay sexualities to be rendered intelligible and legitimate to these children.

In this first part I focus on children's liberal attitudes towards the books *The Sissy Duckling* and *Oliver Button is a Sissy*. As noted in 5.3.2c, these books challenge heteronormative masculinity

and homophobic language by disrupting the supposedly stable relationship between sex, gender and sexuality (Butler, 1990). In these stories boys transgress gender norms and are subjected to homophobic language, but the books and lesson plans (see Appendix C) challenge binary gender and the conflation of gender with sexuality (*ibid*; see 2.1 and 2.3.5). In this first vignette Year 4 children discuss *The Sissy Duckling* and demonstrate a thorough understanding of lesson objectives (see 5.3.2c) as they challenge binary gender by taking up liberal pluralistic equalities discourse:

SCHOOL: CUTLERS

- Emily It was about a duckling called Elmer and he got bullied a lot at school ... he got called a sissy because he was different to all the other drakes
- Ana Because he liked girl's things [...] like on the front cover of the book it has him wearing pink sun glasses
- Tahseen And just because he likes sand castles and puppet shows

- Callum A sissy was basically when other people think you should behave different/
- Abigail To what you normally behave/
- Callum In a different way to how you are behaving
- Abigail Like a sissy means when you want someone to do something differently to how they behave so you don't think it is correct

[...]

- Emily I think it (the book) taught you a lesson
- JH What lesson was that?
- Ana It told us that it is good to be different
- Emily Yeah, even if you're different you're special and you don't have to try to be like everybody else

- JH What do you think was the key message in the book?

- Elly Don't judge someone just because they're different because everyone's special and unique
- Tahseen It doesn't matter if you're a sissy [...] it doesn't matter if you're different because you're unique in your own way
- All Yeah
- Abigail You should be confident and you should be happy that you're who you are ... and it would be boring if we were all the same

Focus groups with Year 4 (25/11/2011; 25/5/2012; 25/11/2011)

In these exchanges children latch onto recognisable 'diversity phrases' introduced in class ('it is good to be different', 'everyone's special and unique' and 'it would be boring if we were all the same'; see 5.3.2c) and use these understandings to challenge heteronormative masculinity and binary gender (Butler, 1990). For instance, in the final excerpt Tahseen remarks that 'it doesn't matter if you're a sissy (a boy who likes 'girls things') because you're unique in your own way'. While this liberal pluralistic equalities discourse does not question, or disrupt, the binary itself (the 'natural' categorisation of 'boys things' and 'girls things') it legitimises gender transgression nonetheless and provides children with a new form of 'power/knowledge' (Foucault, 1980; see 6.2.1 and 2.1.4). This is also the case in Year 5 accounts of *Oliver Button is a Sissy*, although here children begin to problematise this notion of 'boys things' and 'girls things':

SCHOOL: WEIRWOLD

- JH Who wants to tell me what that book was about?
- Kael It was about a boy who liked doing things that like girls do ... but I wouldn't call them girl's things because boys like them too
- Husaam I think it is perfectly fine ... everyone should do what they like and it doesn't matter if a boy likes something that a girl does more
- Folami Well you shouldn't really call them girl's things because they're not really girl's things, he's been doing things girls *like to do*

- Melissa When he was at school everyone teased him because they all

thought, well stereotypically, from their point of view, he was a sissy because he was doing stereotypically what a girl should do

Focus groups with Year 5 (10/2/2012; 18/5/2012)

At the very earliest opportunity Year 5 children were keen to show how they were able to move beyond notions of 'boy's things' and 'girl's things'. As Kael points out, the book was 'about a boy who liked doing things that girls do [but he] wouldn't call them girl's things as boys like to do them too'. These sentiments were echoed by Folami and Melissa who also begin to question, and disrupt, binary gender by challenging the supposedly stable relationship between sex and gender (Butler, 1990). Melissa, in particular, demonstrates a sophisticated awareness of gender discourse when she articulates how 'they all thought, well stereotypically, from their point of view [that] he was a sissy because he was doing stereotypically what a girl should do'. This astute response came several months after the delivery of this scheme of work, as did the next set of responses to some of the activities which took place on the back of these books. Also included below is a poster produced in a Year 6 focus group:

SCHOOL: WEIRWOLD

- | | |
|-------|---|
| Ibrah | We did pictures of ourselves ... I'm a girl [but] I like "boys stuff" and I'm a boy but I like "girls stuff" |
| JH | Why do you do that (hand gesture indicating scare quotes) ... what does that mean? |
| Helen | Because I don't want to be rude and say that's traditional girls stuff to do, that's traditional boys stuff to do, so I go that's "boy's stuff" and that's/ |
| All | "Girls stuff" |
| Aksa | We don't have to say I'm a girl, I'm supposed to do skipping ... I'm a boy, I'm supposed to do football and play games |
| Jody | It is a bit sexist |
| Klara | I think that girls stuff and boys stuff are just basically stuff |

SCHOOL: CUTLERS

Kate I remember the ballet one ... we had to write a newspaper report

JH What did that involve?

Kate I think it was about ... like ballet is normally classed as a girl's thing

JH Do you all agree with that?

ALL No!

Ruth People label it as a girl's thing and sometimes it is what girls like to do but sometimes boys like to do it as well

JH So what was the point of that activity?

Kate I think it was to realise that you shouldn't label things because it is for both genders

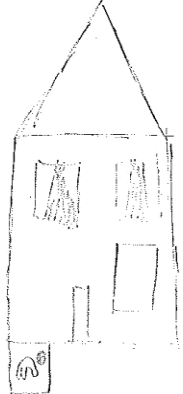
JH Does everyone agree with that?

ALL Yeah

Focus groups with Years 5 and 6 (18/5/2012; 24/5/2012)

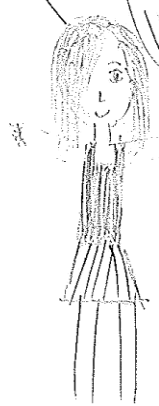
TOYS 'R' US

Girls toys



Play house

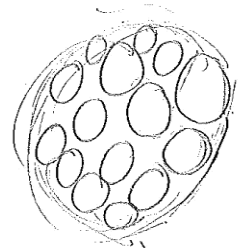
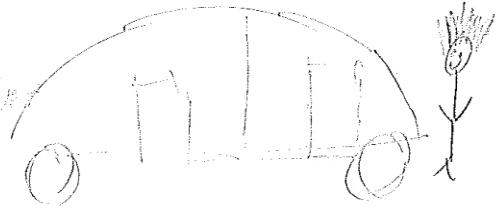
Barbie



Boys toys



Toy car



Football

Class work relating to the first extract can be seen in 5.3.2c (Figure 32). As Ibrah recalls, the activity involved Year 5 children producing personal posters which showed how their interests complicate simplistic notions of binary gender. The activity problematised this binary and the heteronormative relationship between sex and gender (Butler, 1990; 1993). In the extract children clearly demonstrate an ability to do this with the hand gestures (“scare quotes”) indicating a profound understanding of gender discourse. As Helen remarks, she didn’t want ‘to be rude and say that’s traditional girls stuff to do [and] that’s traditional boys stuff to do so I go that’s “boys stuff” and that’s “girls stuff”’. Other children do the same and remark how they don’t feel compelled to do something just because they’re a girl or a boy. This ability to refute sex-gender binaries is evident in the second extract where children recognise how ‘people label’ activities like ballet ‘as a girl’s thing’ when in fact ‘it is for both genders’. Again, children take up liberal pluralistic equalities discourse here as they assert that ‘you shouldn’t label things’. These understandings are applied more broadly in the third extract when a child critiques ‘boys’ and girls aisles’ at *Toys R Us* (a high street toy retailer). As this child (from the above Year 6 focus group) recalls, class activities around *challenging gender stereotypes* (see 5.3.2c) ‘made me think about why people separate girls’ and boys’ toys’ and this led to her questioning the gendered arrangement of toys at *Toys R Us*.

In these extracts children challenge and disrupt binary gender and heteronormative masculinity. In doing so they question the supposedly stable relationship between sex and gender where masculinity is exclusively associated with males and femininity with females (Butler, 1990; 1993). However, as outlined at the beginning of this chapter, when challenging sex-gender binaries and rendering maleness and femininity intelligible, it is also important to address the conflation of gender with sexuality given how boys who transgress gender norms are often labelled as ‘gay’ (see DePalma and Atkinson, 2008b; Epstein, 1995). In 5.3.2c I outlined what work around ‘homophobic language’ consists of and in this final extract I show how children challenge derogatory use of ‘gay’ and ‘lesbian’ as a ‘performative utterance’ (Butler, 1997) while drawing on liberal pluralistic equalities discourse to render gay and lesbian identities intelligible and legitimate:

SCHOOL: CUTLERS

- | | |
|---------|---|
| Abigail | It is not bad to be gay or lesbian but when you use it in a bad way or like meaning it bad then it is but really it is not bad if you’re lesbian or gay because you’re different and it is fine |
| Callum | If we were all the same wouldn’t that be boring |

- Harry I think they say it in American, they say a sissy and it is kind of like when you say oh, you're so gay
- Merlin If someone says you're gay ... maybe they are gay but it doesn't give you the right to take the mickey out of someone
- William If someone is gay it don't matter, it is what they want ... it is not what other people want them to do
- Merlin Yeah, it doesn't mean they have to go out with a girl

SCHOOL: WEIRWOLD

- Jody We looked at this slide show about gays and lesbians
- JH What do those two words mean?
- Helen It basically means a boy or a man who likes another boy or a man and then a lesbian is a lady who likes another lady or a girl who likes another girl and it isn't wrong at all

- Melissa Being gay ... it doesn't really matter ... as long as you're happy ... and it doesn't matter if you're a lesbian either ... if people don't like who you are then just ignore them because at least you're being yourself [and] it is important that we value people being lesbian and gay because everyone has the right to love who they want to love

Focus groups with Years 4, 5 and 6

(25/5/2012; 22/11/2012; 10/2/2012; 14/2/2013)

In the first two extracts Year 4 children demonstrate how the 'performative utterance' (Butler, 1997) of homophobic language is open to challenge, redefinition and reinterpretation (see MacNaughton, 2005; Weedon, 1997; Youdell, 2006; also see 2.1.3) when they reject derogatory use of 'gay' and 'lesbian' while rendering these identities intelligible and legitimate. As Abigail remarks, 'it is not bad to be gay or lesbian but when you use it in a bad way [...] it is'.

These sentiments are reinforced by the group of boys in the second extract who recognise how sissy equates with ‘you’re so gay’. Yet by endorsing this identity (‘if someone is gay it don’t matter’) they repudiate derogatory association. In the final extracts Year 5 children discuss a lesson on ‘gay and lesbian role models’ (see 5.3.2c and Figure 33). Once again, they draw on liberal pluralistic equalities discourse to legitimise gay and lesbian identities as they assert that ‘at least you’re being yourself’ and that ‘everyone has the right to love who they want’. While such performances of acceptance were widespread throughout Years 4, 5 and 6 in the next sub-section I show how heteronormative masculinity and homophobic language was simultaneously recuperated in response to the subversion of (hetero)sexism.

6.3.2 Recuperating heteronormative masculinity and homophobic language

In this sub-section I show how children simultaneously recuperate heteronormative masculinity and homophobic language when responding to this scheme of work. As outlined at the beginning of this chapter, this second set of responses indicate how difficult it is to undo a socially constructed incommensurability between males, femininity and homosexuality given the centrality of the ‘heterosexual matrix’ (Butler, 1990; Youdell, 2011). Thus, while some boys take up liberal pluralistic equalities discourse and perform acceptance in ‘formal’ school space by demonstrating an ability to accept differences in others (often fictional boys who do not perform ‘hegemonic masculinities’ (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005)), ultimately they are compelled to perform normative (hetero)gender/sexuality and recuperate heteronormativity in order to achieve viable subjecthood (Butler, 1997; Youdell, 2006). This can be seen in the first extract where Year 4 children reveal alternative readings of *The Sissy Duckling*:

SCHOOL: CUTLERS

- | | |
|---------|--|
| JH | Who can tell me what you’ve been doing this week? |
| Abraham | We were reading the Sissy Duckling cos he’s been doing like not natural stuff for a boy |
| JH | What do you mean by that? |
| Abraham | His dad wanted him to do baseball and all that but the sissy duckling didn’t want to so he did everything like cooking and that wasn’t natural for a boy |

JH	How did everyone else in the class react to the book?
Callum	Menouse was laughing his head off
Emily	I thought that the class kind of acted like ... like talking about it and joking around about the fact that they were using the word sissy

Focus groups with Year 4 (22/11/2012; 25/5/2012)

Despite challenging and disrupting binary gender and sex-gender binaries (Butler, 1990) this first extract suggests that heteronormative masculinity continues to be regarded as 'natural'. As Abraham states, 'his dad wanted him to do baseball [but instead] he did cooking and that wasn't natural for a boy'. While children may have drawn on liberal pluralistic equalities discourse to sanction gender transgression this response suggests that heteronormative masculinity is still considered more appropriate for boys. This would appear to be the case in the second extract where the subject position 'sissy' is treated with humour. As Emily recalls, 'the class [were] joking around about the fact that they were using the word sissy' with this subject position not taken seriously. Indeed, as the next extract illustrates, this would not be a legitimate subject position for boys in school:

SCHOOL: CUTLERS

JH	What would happen if Elmer (the sissy ducking) came to this school?
Brandon	I would just burst out laughing
JH	You think he'd get laughed at?
Brandon	No, if he doesn't tell them his secret

Emily	If Elmer came to this school I think people would be surprised if he was a boy and he was wearing pink ... I think people might tell him off
Ana	People might laugh if he wants to stay in and do some painting or drawing ... aw look, he's a boy and he's doing this

Merlin I think some people would take the mick out of him because he likes girls' stuff and some people wouldn't let him join in games

JH Does anyone else think that would happen?

Abraham Yeah

Alex Boys would be rude but the girls could be rude too because they would be like why is this boy doing stuff like us

Julia I agree with Alex ... a few of the girls would be mean to him

Ben I think some of the boys might bully him

Focus groups with Year 4 (24/11/2011; 25/11/2011;
22/11/2012 – 10.10am; 22/11/2012 – 1.45pm)

Children's reaction to this hypothetical scenario suggests that while they may cite liberal pluralistic equalities discourse and perform acceptance of non-hegemonic masculinities in 'formal' school space, transgressing heteronormative masculinity would actually be untenable in practice. Here children recognise the compulsion to perform normative (hetero)gender/sexuality in order to achieve viable subjecthood within the confines of the 'heterosexual matrix' (Butler, 1990). This makes non-normative performances of gender unintelligible and would require heteronormativity to be recuperated. As children reveal, 'people would be surprised if he was a boy and he was wearing pink' or 'if he wants to stay in and do some painting or drawing' and would 'be rude', 'take the mick out of him', 'bully him', and 'tell him off' 'because he likes girls' stuff'. This would not happen, however, 'if he doesn't tell them his secret'. Thus, despite challenging and disrupting binary gender and sex-gender binaries doing this in practice is another thing. What these accounts illustrate is that children's ideal selves do not match the circumstances they find themselves in, or, as I show in Part Two, the spaces they create and adapt themselves to (see Thomas, 2005; 2008; 2011). This is evident in the next extract where children discuss activities which unfolded on the back of literacy:

SCHOOL: CUTLERS

Merlin Our group had a picture of a ballet dancer and we were saying how you felt and Mila (a pupil on his table) said he was disgusted by a boy doing ballet

Merlin I think the boy can sing, they can dance and they can play with dolls if they want to but I don't think they really would

Focus groups with Year's 6 and 4 (25/11/2011; 22/11/2012)

In the first extract children are encouraged to say how they *feel* about a boy doing ballet during a Year 6 PSHE activity on 'gender stereotypes'. As Merlin remarks, another boy on this table felt 'disgusted' by a boy doing ballet. Here a clear distinction emerges between what children know as the 'right answer' and what they might actually feel (see Youdell, 2011). In this instance, where children are encouraged to say how they feel, the performative subject reveals itself (Youdell, 2004) and the act of identification requires the rejection (abjection) of other identities which are expelled in order to achieve viable subjecthood (Butler, 1997; Butler *et al.*, 2000; Nayak and Kehily, 2006; Youdell, 2006; see 2.1.2 and 2.1.3). The second extract provides another example of how liberal pluralistic equalities discourse can be drawn upon to perform acceptance – 'the boy can sing', 'dance' and 'play with dolls' – but in practice 'I don't think they really would'. Again, transgressing heteronormative masculinity in practice is considered untenable by these boys.

In addition to recuperating heteronormative masculinity children would circumvent efforts to challenge homophobic language. This was particularly clear at one of the schools where pejorative use of the word 'gay' persisted in the playground and boys' toilets. Whilst many teachers were convinced that this was no longer a feature of their school's peer group culture (see interview extract with Cutlers Year 4 teacher in 5.3.2c) children confessed to almost constant use within (particularly male) peer group space:

SCHOOL: CUTLERS

JH Have these words been banned?
Callum Yeah, we're not allowed to say gay or sissy/
Abigail Or lesbian
JH Do people still use these words?
Callum Not as much ... gay's used
JH In the playground?
Callum Yeah, but if you told a teacher they would be in Chris's office

(deputy head teacher)
JH So you'd be in trouble?
Callum Yeah but no one tells, that's the problem ... the word gay has been banned but people use it in the boys' toilets whenever you go in

Focus group with Year 4 (25/5/12)

Butler (1997) warns that attempts to censor speech may propagate the very language it seeks to forbid, and this would appear to be the case here. While I had not observed pejorative use of the word 'gay' during ethnographic research in the playground (see 6.5) this limited use, in the boy's toilets in particular, demonstrates not only their understanding of homophobic language as spatially regulated, but also the malleability of school space, where in this instance, the boys' toilets were (re)configured as an informal space within which established school discourses could be resisted and challenged. I will return to this in the next section. For now I simply want to note how children, and boys in particular, perform normative (hetero)gender/sexuality and recuperate heteronormativity by continuing to use homophobic language as a 'performative utterance' (Butler, 1997). In doing so they police heteronormative masculinity *in practice*, despite citing liberal pluralistic equalities discourse when presenting their ideal selves (see Thomas, 2005; 2008; 2011).

Having outlined children's responses to the schools various schemes of work, I now foreground the spatiality of performative selves and performative subjects.

PART TWO

SPATIALIZING SUBJECTIVITY

In this next section I foreground the spatiality of performative selves and performative subjects. Here I develop earlier notions of children performing acceptance *in 'formal' school space* (i.e. classrooms and assembly hall) by considering how space is 'brought into being through performances and [is itself] a performative articulation of power' (Gregson and Rose, 2000: 434). 'Formal' school spaces, in this respect, are not only *configured through* 'progressive' gendered and sexual performance but also *configure* the resultant performances of their inhabitants: in this case, the children. As such, 6.4 explores how 'formal' school space regulates un/acceptable attitudes towards gender and sexual diversity, and how some children treated my focus groups as an extension of 'formal' school space in which to perform

acceptance of gender and sexual diversity. However, on other occasions the relational work of the inhabitants allowed focus groups to be produced as a private space in which dissent could be more fully articulated. This created space for performative subjects whose spatial expression had been more evident in 'informal' school space (i.e. playground, corridors and toilets) where gender/sexual difference was regularly reinstated through children's everyday 'spatial practices' (6.5 - see Pile, 2008; Thomas, 2005; 2008; 2011). These practices extend beyond school, as I illustrate in 6.6, which indicates why neoliberal programmes, such as this one, do not always succeed in changing people's subjectivities as these are 'performed moving through multiple spatial-temporal domains' (Pyckett *et al.*, 2010: 489). Such appreciation of children as 'multiplaced persons' (Pallotta-Chiarolli, 1999) who are simultaneously members of 'multiple lifeworlds' (Cope and Kalantzis, 1995) recognises the complexity of children's lived experience.

6.4 FORMAL CURRICULA AND THE SPATIALITY OF CHILDREN'S SIMULTANEOUS ACCEPTANCE AND RECUPERATION OF GENDER AND SEXUAL DIVERSITY DISCOURSES

Children's simultaneous acceptance and recuperation of formal gender and sexualities education needs to be understood in relation to two contrasting sites which gave rise to these accounts: 'formal' spaces in the school (classrooms and assembly halls) in which ethnographic research took place (6.4.1) and what might be termed 'liminal' space (resource areas) in which focus groups took place (6.4.2).

6.4.1 'Formal' school space and ethnographic research

'Formal' school space, as Fielding (2000) and others (see 2.3) show, has been historically produced to structure relationships between teachers and pupils - with pupils expected to submit to the authority of teachers. While these relationships have been negotiated and reconfigured over time, pupils have invariably remained subjects of education who are compelled to perform as 'good learners' in formal educational spaces in order to succeed as 'good students' (Youdell, 2011). Teachers' delivery of a formal gender and sexualities education in formal school space, which reconfigures these spaces as sites within which acceptance of gender and sexual diversity is celebrated, therefore requires that pupils submit to equalities and anti-homophobia/homophobic bullying discourses in order to continue to be the 'good student' - even if this only entails 'surface acting' (Hochschild, 1983; see also Hemming, 2011a; 2011b). 'Formal' school spaces, in this respect, are not only *configured*

through 'progressive' gendered and sexual performance but also *configure* the resultant performances of their inhabitants: in this case, the children.

Just as gender and sexuality are performativity constituted – through citation, repetition and social interaction – space too can be understood to be 'brought into being through performances and [itself] a performative articulation of power' (Gregson and Rose, 2000: 434). Children's predominant classroom performance of acceptance, as captured during ethnographic research, should therefore take account of the power of 'formal' school space to regulate un/acceptable attitudes towards gender and sexual diversity. This is not to deny children's competency as social actors and negotiating subjects, however, as it was clear with my case study schools that children sometimes contested gender and sexual diversity discourses in micro-informal spaces which they created within 'formal' classroom space. Such covert enactments of dissent in these micro-informal *peer* spaces not only reveal children's ability to recognise and negotiate spatiality (a major theme developed in this section) but also the unboundedness of school space and its openness to reconfiguration (Allan *et al.*, 2008), which I return to later. Thus, while ethnographic research largely captured children's performance of acceptance in 'formal' school space, instances of dissent - surfacing in micro-informal spaces within classrooms - were apparent and would provide contrasting insights into children's emerging gendered and sexual subjectivity.

6.4.2 Focus groups as a 'liminal' research space

Instances of dissent, which were rarely documented in 'formal' school space, frequently came to the fore within the less formal space of the focus group which, as I have suggested, could be thought of as a type of 'liminal' space that defies formal/informal categorisation (see Matthews, 2003). Carving out a private space within school where children could relax and discuss issues freely provided a context where micro-cultural interactions could be amplified – and where previously contained micro-informal spaces of dissent opened up in a non-judgemental space. The physical location of focus groups in resource areas which are spatially distinct from classrooms and associated with less formal adult-child interactions⁹ certainly contributed to the construction of the focus group as a 'liminal' space, but it was also the relational work of the inhabitants that produced this social space as receptive to all views. My prior commitment to a 'least adult' role (Mandell, 1988) during ethnographic research allowed

⁹ Resource areas in primary schools are commonly used by teaching assistants or other non-teaching staff for extra-curricular activities or less formal school work, like art-based projects or musical workshops. This often gives rise to less formal adult-child interactions and this certainly appeared to be the case in the schools I visited (see Barker and Weller (2003).

me to position myself as a non-authoritative figure in each school¹⁰ and this enabled me to access children's social worlds and establish meaningful rapport in anticipation of the focus groups. As well as promising anonymity and reaffirming that 'no topic was off limits' (Renold, 2005: 13) such relational work transformed adult-child, and pupil-pupil, relations such that children felt able to air a variety of opinions (see 3.2.3 and 3.3).

The importance of the relational work of the inhabitants (the pupils) in transforming adult-child relations within the social space of the focus group was evident in instances when minimal familiarity had been established prior to the focus group. Despite greater emphasis on empowering research relations, these focus groups were comparatively stilted and awkward, with children appearing to convey 'right on' equalities rhetoric whilst exchanging knowing glances, nudges and whispers that hinted at an undercurrent of dissent. While conducted in the same physical location as other focus groups, the socio-spatial dynamic was strikingly different and prior associations of this space with less formal adult-child interactions didn't seem to make much of a difference either. In fact, my lack of prior rapport appeared to motivate the children into positioning me as an adult/authority figure to whom they would usually perform the 'good student' to. As a result, these focus groups were configured by pupils as relatively formal spaces which reflected the expectations and regulations of the classroom.

Notwithstanding these rare instances of unintended formality, focus groups largely provided great depth of insight into children's peer group negotiations of gender and sexuality and – in the most part – were characterised by a striking disjunction with formal classroom discussions. While not denying the presence of micro-informal spaces of dissent it was clear that these were contained within classroom space that was dominated by 'progressive' discourses of equality and anti-homophobia/homophobic bullying. As such, it was only within 'liminal' research space that children were able to fully disclose classroom dissent and articulate what was behind it. In turn, this provided a window onto the 'informal' social worlds of the children where heteronormative- masculinity/femininity and sexuality was regularly recuperated. Thus, focus groups provided a context in which children could elaborate on classroom dissent and reveal deeper ambiguities, they also allowed exploration of everyday understandings and 'doings' of gender and sexuality, particularly as per/formed in the 'informal' - peer-orientated - space of the playground. Such insights deepened my ethnographic understandings of how gender and sexuality featured in the daily lives of school children who had been exposed to 'progressive' formal school discourses of equality and anti-homophobia/homophobic bullying

¹⁰ As discussed in 3.3, on occasions staff and children would position me in a more formal role but on the whole I managed to negotiate such instances and reaffirm my 'least adult' role.

(with consideration of the hidden geographies of the 'third curriculum' providing a useful counter-point).

6.5 HIDDEN GEOGRAPHIES OF THE "THIRD CURRICULUM": CHILDREN'S HETERO-GENDERED/SEXUALISED SPATIAL PRACTICES AND EVERYDAY INSTITUTIONAL PRACTICE

Sociologists of education and children's geographers in particular have often explored the hidden geographies of the "third curriculum" while undertaking an ethnography of formal school curricular (see 2.2.5). Thomas (2011), in particular, is a useful study that examines both the 'formal' and 'informal' spaces of schooling. Thomas researched multicultural initiatives in US High Schools and students' responses to this curricular in formal school space (classrooms) compared to students' everyday ethnic interactions in informal school space (dining hall and school yard). Thomas found a disjuncture between students' positive talk of multiculturalism in the classroom and the ethnic segregation in the dining hall and school yard where students would not mix and 'get along' as they had claimed. Accounting for the 'informal lessons which students learn, enforce, reject and rewrite in schools' follows Holloway *et al.*'s (2010: 588) call for examining formal curricular (design, administration and the shaping of subjectivity) while also appreciating how children's identities are reworked through socio-spatial practices within different learning spaces (see Kraftl, 2013) such as the playground. While I have focused on formal curricular and children's responses to it, playground ethnography has been a supplementary feature of this research. Thus, following Thomas (2011) and others (see Collins and Coleman, 2008) I accounted for children's 'informal', everyday understandings and 'doings' of gender and sexuality, which enhances an appreciation of children's multiple and conflicting in-school identity work.

As discussed in 2.2.5, playgrounds have been the focus of much geographical and sociological research – whether complementing studies of formal school curricular (e.g. Coleman, 2007; Hemming, 2011a; Holt, 2007; Thomas, 2011) or as sites in their own right (e.g. Gagen, 2004a; Renold, 2005; Thompson, 2005; Thorne, 1993). In all cases, play is viewed as children's serious real-life work of constructing, organising and shaping social orders, and as Renold (2005) has demonstrated in a primary school context, playgrounds are both a space for children's self-directed play and identity formation, and a site for the (re)production through play of (hetero)sexist and (hetero)normative discourses and relations of power (also see Epstein and Johnson, 1998; Thorne, 1993). While my playground ethnography and children's focus group reflections on play do not replicate the magnitude of previous studies (i.e. Renold, 2005;

Thorne, 1993), considerable time was still invested in understanding how gender and sexuality were per/formed in this 'informal', peer-orientated space (see 3.2.2 and 3.2.3).

As outlined in 3.2.1, my 'insider' perspective into playground peer culture was achieved through performing a 'least role' role (Mandell, 1988) so, like Renold (2005) and others, I continued to relinquish power and authority in this space to gain access to children's informal social worlds¹¹ (also see Holt, 2007). This led to the production of rich ethnographic accounts which revealed the continued power of normative hetero- gendered/sexualised discourse to delimit children's identity constructions and cultures, despite the 'progressive' gendered and sexual values of the 'formal school'. Perhaps the clearest way in which heteronormative discourse was recuperated through informal play was through children's constructions and regulations of 'masculine' and 'feminine' playground space. As I shall illustrate, distinct groups of boys *produced* and *maintained* masculine space through repeated enactments of hegemonic (hetero) masculinity: the assertion of physical supremacy and repudiation of 'girlhood'. Likewise, distinct groups of girls *produced* and *maintained* feminine space through repeated enactments of (hetero)sexualised femininity: hetero-romantic fantasy play and the policing of 'boyhood'.

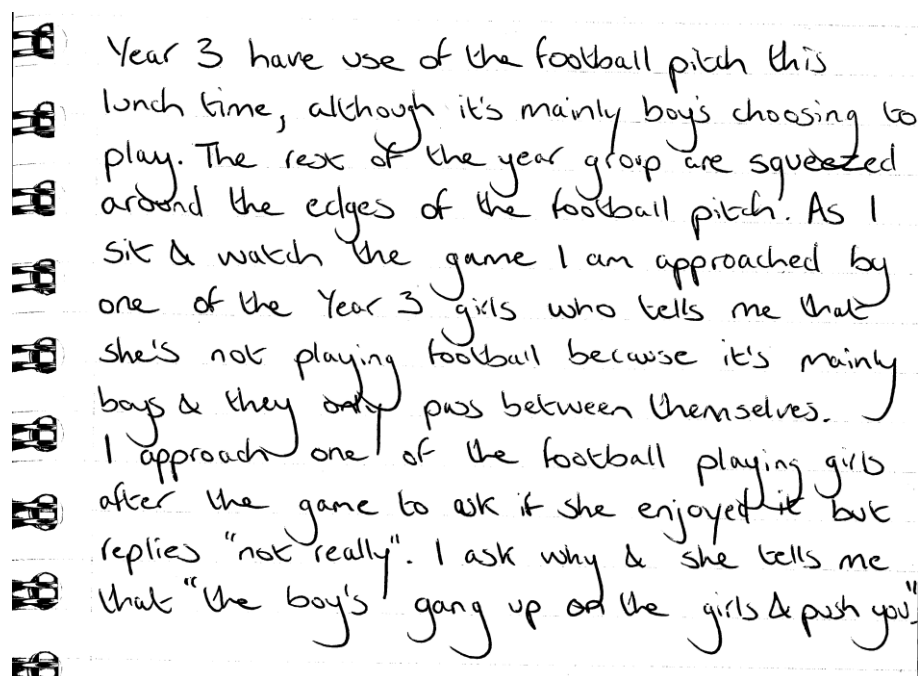
6.5.1 Performing hegemonic (hetero)masculinity in the playground

In 2.2.5 I identified territoriality as a major theme in previous research which has been concerned with children's sociospatial playground practices. I noted how this is often encapsulated in the spatial dominance of football-playing boys who monopolise central playground space and who, by physical and verbal intimidation, force girls and other boys to the margins (Catling, 2005; Newman *et al.*, 2006; Thompson, 2005). I also drew on Arnot (1994) who argues that within male-dominated societies, and, indeed, their microcosmic representations (i.e. playgrounds), while femininity is ascribed, by contrast masculinity, and ultimately manhood, have to be *earned* through a process of 'struggle and conformation'. Failure to properly embody and per/form (hetero)masculinities in primary school playgrounds has severe implications, as Renold (2005) and others have demonstrated, with anything other than aggressive interaction between boys construed as a sign of weakness (Askew and Ross, 1988; Mac an Ghail, 1994). Despite 'progressive' gendered and sexual values of the formal school the assertion of physical supremacy and repudiation of 'girlhood' remained a pervasive feature of boys' peer group cultures. Informal sport was almost entirely male-dominated at

¹¹ While I had to continually negotiate a formal, authoritative role ascribed to me in school I found that there was less pressure or expectation on me to perform as teacher/teaching assistant in the playground, notwithstanding a few rare instances when children asked me to intervene in disputes. Managing to avoid an adult/authority role in the playground for the most part brought with it moral dilemmas (see 3.3).

both schools and playground space was often physically monopolised by boys' ball games. Girls and boys failing to live up to hegemonic masculine ideals were largely excluded from these games on grounds of their supposed inferiority and when they did attempt to join in they often found themselves subjected to exclusionary rule-breaking and aggression.

Unmonitored football at Weirwold (see Figure 34) provided an abundance of instances where hegemonic (hetero)masculinity could be enacted (or reasserted?) through the spatial dominance of football-playing boys. In accordance with previous research, it was clear that groups of boys would monopolise central playground space for football matches which they would turn into an exclusive space for the performance of (hetero)masculinities. This was achieved, at first, through forcing girls to the margins through intimidation, which guaranteed that these masculine spaces would ultimately be occupied by boys:



Year 3 have use of the football pitch this lunch time, although it's mainly boys choosing to play. The rest of the year group are squeezed around the edges of the football pitch. As I sit & watch the game I am approached by one of the Year 3 girls who tells me that she's not playing football because it's mainly boys & they only pass between themselves. I approach one of the football playing girls after the game to ask if she enjoyed it but replies "not really". I ask why & she tells me that "the boy's gang up on the girls & push you."

Weirwold field notes (KS2 playground – 15/5/12, 12.10pm)

FIGURE 34 – KEY STAGE 2 FOOTBALL PITCH AT WEIRWOLD



The imposing football pitch at Weirwold occupies the largest surface area in the Key Stage 2 playground and dominates the central landscape.

Source: Author's own photographs.

Ejecting girls from self-defined spaces of 'boyhood' was a continuous endeavour and after spending prolonged periods in the playground – on numerous visits (see 3.2.2) – it became apparent that such segregation was a common feature of children's informal peer group cultures. On numerous occasions I witnessed exclusionary practices like those outlined above and several conversations with disgruntled football-playing girls confirmed that boys were unduly isolating girls and limiting their participation. While football proved to be a key site and mechanism for dividing the sexes other games involving balls also appeared to provide opportunities for groups of boys to (re)assert their (hetero)masculine status:

● A group of girls invite me to join their basketball game and tell me that it's boys against girls. I agree to play for the girls' team but the boys are monopolising the game and holding onto the ball.

● They are aggressive in their behaviour, intercepting the ball and taking it from the girls. The girls soon get bored and irritated with this and leave the game. After about ten minutes, only boys are left playing.

Weirwold field notes (KS2 playground – 15/5/12, 12.30pm)

As with many other playground games, teams often formed based on a male-female binary which allowed boys' to dispel girls from ball games through their collective enactment of hegemonic (hetero)masculinity. In the example above, heteronormative-masculinity is mutually-constituted through exclusionary rule-breaking and aggression with boys' shared desire for (hetero)masculinity realised through mutual reiteration of masculine norms. Thus, while girls and boys had been eager to perform acceptance of gender equality in the classroom, and in Year 5 focus groups in particular, boys' playground performances revealed that hegemonic (hetero)masculinity was reproduced outside. When I asked Year 5 children about playtime specifically, and how girls and boys interacted in this 'informal' school space I found that playground observations were enriched through children's reflections of play:

SCHOOL: WEIRWOLD

- | | |
|--------|---|
| Helen | Every time we play football or a game the boys always say I want Ibrahim or I want Santez because they're really good players and normally all the girls are left out |
| Husaam | All the boys chose the boys |
| Klara | The boys take over |
| JH | How do they take over? |
| Klara | Every time girls try and play basketball they come and get our ball and start throwing it in the hoop |
| Rita | Basically the boys take over [...] I'm not saying you three though (looking at the only boys in the focus group) but yeah, like taking over and being boss and then us girls get left out and bossed around so we don't really get to do anything ... even though we tell them they carry on doing it |
| Helen | Sometimes the boys boss the other boys around |

Focus group with Year 5 (18/5/12)

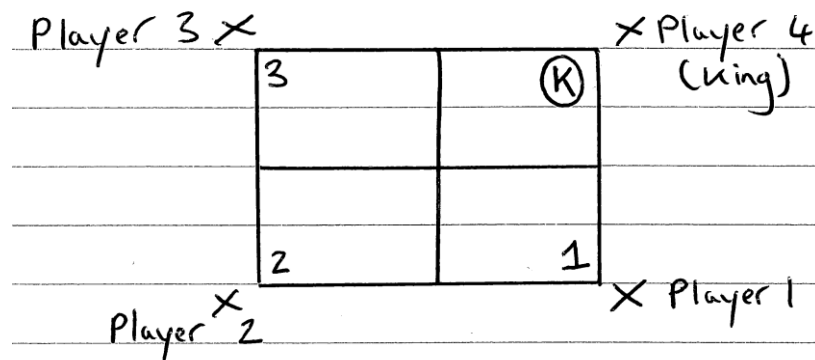
The male-female binary is shown to be *actively (re)produced* here, with boys enforcing a rigid divide between the sexes. As the exchange suggests, those boys who embody hegemonic (hetero)masculine ideals, in this case sporting prowess, will be chosen first by other boys. Hence, in this context at least, boys value hegemonic (hetero)masculinity and devalue femininity/ other non-hegemonic forms of masculinity. Of course, boys are not a homogenous group so while the embodiment of hegemonic (hetero)masculine ideals gives rise to a

'superior status' on the playground not all boys manage to pull this off and those that do must constantly struggle with themselves and others to maintain this status (Renold, 2005; Thorne, 1993). Thus, as Helen reveals, hegemonic (hetero)masculine boys do not just boss girls around, they boss other boys around too. Yet, by unwittingly partaking in a hierarchical (hetero)sexist peer group culture all boys are legitimising hegemonic (hetero)masculinity as a desirable subject position. This occurs despite the formal school discourses which promote equality and challenge heteronormative masculinity.

Interestingly, at Cutlers football didn't figure as a mechanism for dividing the sexes and allowing masculine space to be *produced* and *maintained*. Football was not less popular at Cutlers, however, unlike Weirwold football was continuously monitored by teachers in a self-contained part of this school's playground. Children's productions and maintenance of masculine space in this school was therefore not as 'obvious', and existed at smaller-scales, but they were no less powerful in spatially segregating children according to gender. Such unmonitored sites (as the football pitch had been at Weirwold) were scattered across the central part of the playground and came into being through a ball game called 'champ' which had several designated grids. 'Champ' was a four player game which involved stopping a bouncing ball from leaving your corner of the grid. Those who could not keep the ball in play were 'out', and all players would move round towards the corner marked 'K' (King). The aim of the game was to become King and to hold this position for as long as possible.

'Champ' was a popular game amongst the children and on several occasions I would be invited to play. It was not long before the gendered dynamics of this game became clear, as the following extract illustrates:

I am asked to join a game of 'champ' involving Year 4 pupils. There is only one girl playing who is a head of me in the queue. This girl is knocked out instantly & returns to the queue where she tells me that the boys gang up on her. Sure enough on her next go the boys target her & she is out again. A dispute unfolds on her third turn after it is not clear who is out. The girl is adamant that she's not out but a vote is taken after a short debate & everyone votes her out. She leaves the game disgruntled.



Cutlers field notes (KS2 playground – 21/5/12, 12.30pm)

Singling out girls' in this way was a common feature of the male dominated game of 'champ'. Indeed, the more I participated, the clearer it became that boys would subtly communicate between themselves, usually non-verbally, in a bid to form an alliance against a girl. This mainly consisted of discrete gestures although on occasions boys would whisper in the queue if a girl had managed to remain in the game. It also became apparent that boys' would defend other boys' corners if a girl was playing so as not to lose a team mate. It was through such strategies that boys managed to monopolise these games and ultimately eliminate girls:

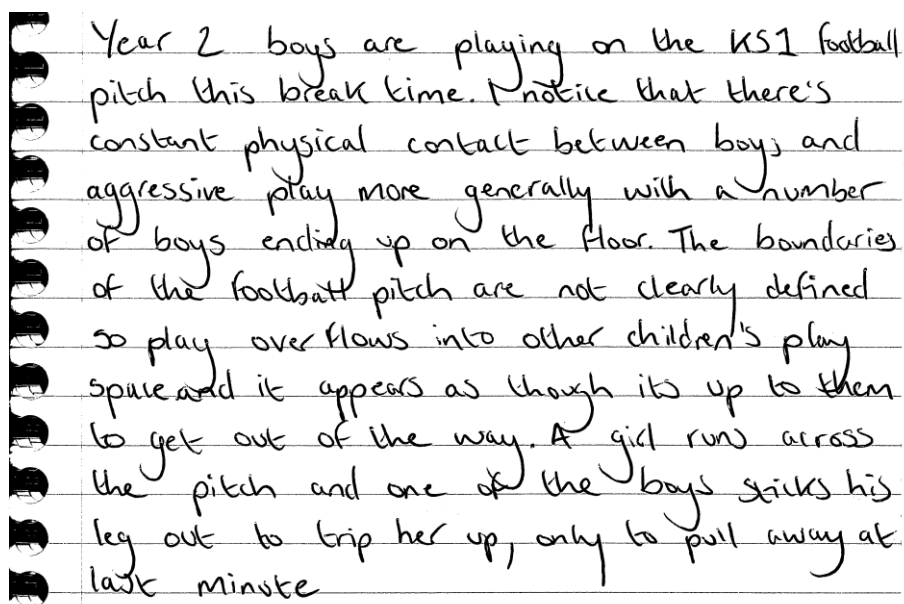
Boys continue to dominate ball games this lunch time although there are a few girls playing 'champ' on various grids. However, its not long before only boys are left playing with all girls now on the grass hill in the corner of the playground.

Cutlers field notes (KS2 playground - 24/5/12, 12.45pm)

Therefore, in spite of (or possibly as a result of) formal school discourses promoting gender equality and challenging heteronormative masculinity, boys (re)asserted (hetero)masculinities in the informal peer space of the playground. Whilst spatial segregation was perhaps the clearest outcome of boys ordinary (hetero)gendered performances in both school's playgrounds (see Valentine *et al.*, 2014) this should not obscure how boys also competed between themselves in these masculine spaces to embody hegemonic (hetero)masculine ideals (see Renold, 2005; Thorne, 1993). As subsequent extracts demonstrate, boys continuously struggled with each other to accomplish hegemonic (hetero)masculinity, despite 'progressive' gendered and sexual values of the school. Performing aggression and embodying a 'rough boy' persona still mattered, even though heteronormative masculinity had been debunked in the classroom and focus groups:

A Year 2 boy invites me to play football with 6 other Year 2 boys on the KS2 football pitch. It immediately becomes apparent that a lot of emotion is invested in this game and that the football match is just an excuse for the boys to be aggressive with one another. The game is constantly disrupted with outbursts between boys on the same and opposing teams and a number of disputes remain ongoing. Encounters between the boys are intense and intimidating, sometimes resulting in players leaving the football pitch only to return moments later for revenge. Physical contact is common and boys end up on the floor after a lot of these clashes.

These fierce encounters between boys¹² surfaced within the masculinised space which the boys had carved out in the peer-orientated space of the playground. While such behaviour would have been unthinkable in formal school space, it found expression in this micro-cultural space that was continually *produced* and *maintained* as masculine space. Indeed, such vivid (hetero)gendered performances, which were not uncommon on the football pitch, further imbued this site with (hetero)masculine ideals which the boys' collectively enacted through citation, repetition and social interaction. While such encounters between boys were 'contained' within the parameters of the Key Stage 2 football pitch, this was not the case in the Key Stage 1 playground (see Figure 35) where aggressive, football-induced spaces of (hetero)masculinity would encroach on other children's play spaces and engulf them. As the following extract demonstrates, the Key Stage 1 playground was subjected to an over-spilling of hegemonic (hetero)masculine performances:



Year 2 boys are playing on the KS1 football pitch this break time. Notice that there's constant physical contact between boys and aggressive play more generally with a number of boys ending up on the floor. The boundaries of the football pitch are not clearly defined so play over flows into other children's play space and it appears as though its up to them to get out of the way. A girl runs across the pitch and one of the boys sticks his leg out to trip her up, only to pull away at last minute

¹² I reflect on this incident in 3.3 when considering my ethical obligations as an adult in the playground.

FIGURE 35 – KEY STAGE 1 FOOTBALL PITCH AT WEIRWOLD



The limitless football pitch occupying a prominent position in the Key Stage 1 playground.

Source: Author's own photographs.

The same patterns were evident on Weirwold's playground. While this did not occur on the same scale at Cutlers, central playground space was equally dominated by (hetero) masculinities - with ball games providing opportunities for some boys to (re)assert heteronormative masculinity in the face of formal school subversion. As noted earlier, ball games provided the clearest examples of the extensive endurance of heteronormative masculinity in 'informal' school space but other instances, like the one below (see Figure 36), highlighted how pervasive heteronormative masculinity remained *across* the playground:

A group of Year 4 boys are standing on the balance board on the Trim trail stopping others from completing the circuit. They hold on to one another & fight off other boys who are trying to gain access to the board. When one boy is knocked off another boy replaces him & the new group continue to fend off other boys.

Weirwold field notes (KS2 playground – 17/5/12, 10.30am)

FIGURE 36 – TRIM TRAIL AT WEIRWOLD



The trim trail and balance board in the Key Stage 2 playground at Weirwold Primary School.

Source: Author's own photographs.

Accounts of the continued pervasiveness of heteronormative masculinity in shaping play spaces and boys' (hetero)gendered performances in the playground supports previous ethnographic research (e.g. Catling, 2005; Newman *et al.*, 2006; Renold, 2006b; Thompson, 2005; Thorn, 1993) even though these schools challenged heteronormative masculinity and promoted gender equality through formal school curricular. The contextual contingency of children's gendered and sexual performances within and across the institutional space of the primary school is clear with consideration of the hidden geographies of the "third curriculum" enriching the research as a whole. This is pushed further in the next section which considers hetero-romantic fantasy play and spaces of heterosexualised femininity in the playground.

6.5.2 Performing heterosexualised femininity in the playground

In 2.3.1 I reviewed previous research on femininities and primary-aged girls. This suggested that the most dominant way of 'doing girl' was through accessing and projecting a heterosexualised femininity (Ali, 2003; Reay, 2001). I cited Renold (2005), in particular, who has shown how heterosexual desirability is produced and reproduced in the context of the primary school, with particular constructions of gender heterosexualised through notions of the complementarity of masculinities and femininities. In this respect, being a 'proper' girl necessarily involves investing in a heterosexual identity and projecting a coherent and abiding heterosexual self. Renold showed how this was maintained, if not enforced, within peer groups (see also Renold, 2000; 2002; 2006). In 2.2.5 I focused on the playground more specifically, citing Epstein and Johnson (1998) who have shown how primary-aged girls partake in playground rituals which position heterosexual romance as an object of desire. This section

builds on Epstein and Johnsons' previous research by identifying the continued pervasiveness of heterosexualised femininity as this emerged through hetero-romantic fantasy play in the playground. Like ball games and hegemonic (hetero)masculinity, this was the most prominent feature of girls' (hetero)gendered performances.

Much like the compulsion to perform and embody hegemonic (hetero)masculinities in masculinised playground space, heterosexualised femininity was routinely spatialized through performances of hetero-romantic fantasy play which shaped social inter/actions in specific places. The Key Stage 1 'playhouse' (see Figure 37) was a particularly rich site for hetero-romantic fantasy play, with heterosexualised femininity performed in and around the 'mock home'. This was apparent every break and lunch time with the 'playhouse' proving to be a popular venue for the continuous enactment of heterosexualised scenarios and fantasy play. Each time I visited the 'playhouse' it was nearly always be occupied by girls¹³ and I would be encouraged to partake in (hetero)familial scenarios which involved being taken care of by groups of self-proclaimed 'mums'. This highly stereotyped role play - enacted in and facilitated by the domestic space of the playhouse - performativity constituted these girls as hetero-feminised subjects within established gendered discourses of domesticity where to be 'female' is to perform 'associated roles' of caring, cooking and feeding. These prior cultural understandings of 'womenhood' were projected onto this social space and through collective enactment these ideals were routinely upheld.

The following extract is indicative of many encounters with these mums in the 'play house' as they took turns to bring (hetero)familial home to life:

¹³ I only ever saw one boy in the playhouse at any one time and boys would always be waited on, rather than active in the kitchen.

Once again, I am invited into the playhouse as I pass through the Key Stage 1 playground. This time a Reception girl is waiting outside and she encourages me to come in. Three other Reception girls are inside tending to a Reception boy who is sat in the corner with a plate of plastic food. I am greeted by one of the girls at the door who tells me to sit down. There is not much room inside so I squat on the veranda. Another girl brings me a tea pot and a basket of plastic food and encourages me to eat. At this point the boy inside gets up and leaves, much to the disappointment of the girls. One girl chases after him while the others tend to me.

Weirwold field notes (KS1 playground - 14/5/12, 12.10pm)

FIGURE 37 - PLAY HOUSE AT WEIRWOLD



The 'play house' in the Key Stage 1 playground at Weirwold equipped with kitchen appliances and utensils.

Source: Author's own photographs.

Collective performances of 'emphasised (hetero)femininity' (Connell, 1987) continuously marked the social space of the 'playhouse' as the girls space. This (re)produced familiar (hetero)familial discourses (see Blaise, 2005a; Epstein, 1995; Renold, 2005). It was the shared meanings and understandings that the girls brought with them that (hetero)sexualised this space (see Brooker, 2006; also see Valentine, 1999). Boys' (and my) participation, whether

unintended or not, was also essential in allowing these girls to perform heterosexualised femininity - and so active recruitment of male counterparts was a continuous labour for these girls. Performing (hetero)gender therefore required much perseverance and dedication, but these girls managed to *produce* and *maintain* a space for accomplishing heterosexualised femininity through repeated stereotypical enactments of (hetero)familial life. Such overt (hetero)gendered performances were performed in and around the playhouse. Several variations of the 'kiss-chase' game (see Renold, 2005) were evident in this site but perhaps the most popular was the 'Barbie game':

I ask one group of girls what game they are playing and they tell me they're playing the Barbie game. I ask what this entails and one of girls tells me that it involves catching, and tying up, the boys and putting them in the playhouse. They're wanting me to play but I say that I'll just stand back and watch, but I do encourage them to show me what happens.

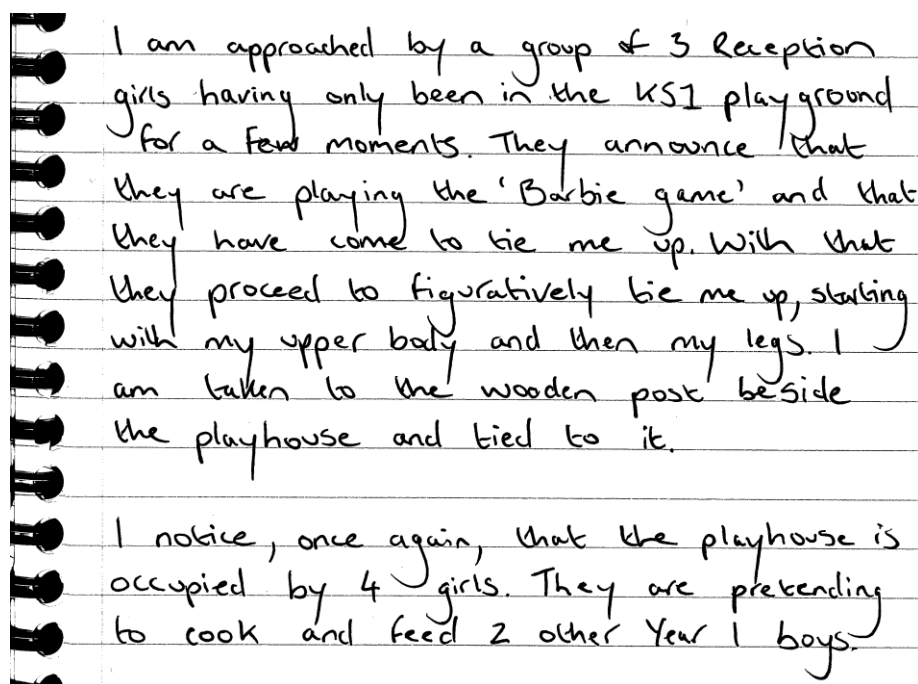
Weirwold field notes (KS1 playground - 15/5/12, 12.20pm)

I had observed this group of girls playing 'mums' in the playhouse and the 'Barbie game' appeared to be a continuation of this (hetero)gendered play. While many feminist scholars have critiqued the hyper-feminised and (hetero)sexualised Barbie product (i.e. Messner, 2000; Pearson and Mullins, 1999; Toffoletti, 2007¹⁴), a popular commercial doll marketed to young girls, the Barbie brand and its imaginary ideals of girlhood remain desirable (see Toffoletti, 2007). Indeed, in creating the 'Barbie' game and naming it as such the girls are both acknowledging and (re)producing hetero-feminised ideals associated with Barbie. Once again, these girls would actively seek out boys (who were often none the wiser¹⁵) and forcibly bring them back to the playhouse. The sexualised acts of chasing, capturing and tying up the boys appeared to be the most enjoyable part of the game for the girls, who exercised control and

¹⁴ Toffoletti (2007) provides a particularly interesting account of 'simulated realities' (after Baudrillard) in relation to Barbie dolls by considering how the posthuman is represented in popular culture.

¹⁵ When I spoke to those boys captured they often knew very little about the game and were certainly not actively engaging in the game themselves.

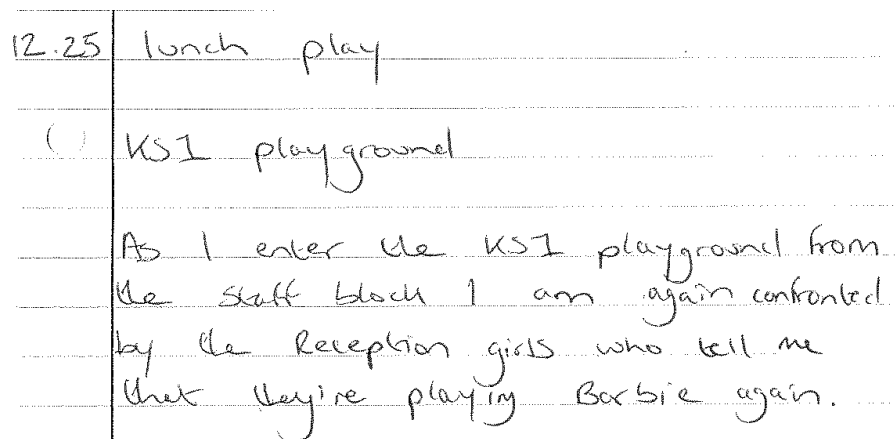
exerted power in such instances (see Renold, 2005). However, these laboured endeavours would ultimately be painful and damaging for the girls who often became visibly frustrated when boys escaped. Nevertheless, they continuously felt compelled to engage in this (hetero)sexualised exchange which positioned them as desiring heterosexual subjects within established gendered discourses of romance. Once again, I was reluctantly incorporated into this game when I passed through the Key Stage 1 playground and I found it difficult to abstain on this and other occasions, as the excerpts demonstrate:



I am approached by a group of 3 Reception girls having only been in the KS1 playground for a few moments. They announce that they are playing the 'Barbie game' and that they have come to tie me up. With that they proceed to figuratively tie me up, starting with my upper body and then my legs. I am taken to the wooden post beside the playhouse and tied to it.

I notice, once again, that the playhouse is occupied by 4 girls. They are pretending to cook and feed 2 other Year 1 boys.

Weirwold field notes (KS1 playground – 16/5/12, 10.30am)



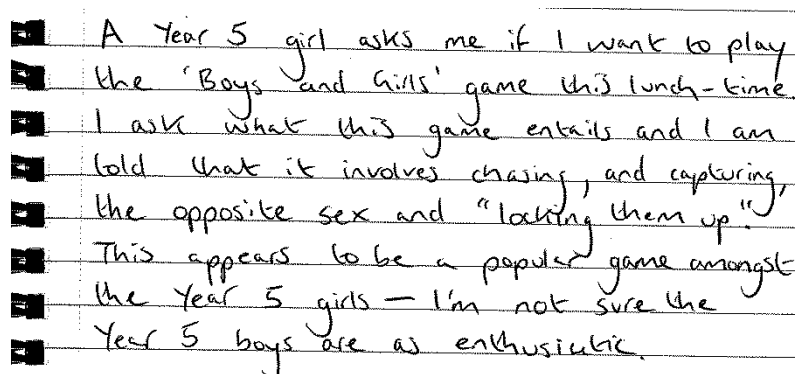
12.25 lunch play

(1) KS1 playground

As I enter the KS1 playground from the staff block I am again confronted by the Reception girls who tell me that they're playing Barbie again.

Weirwold field notes (KS1 playground – 16/5/12, 12.25pm)

These and many other recorded observations of the 'Barbie game' revealed how important hetero-romantic fantasy games were to these young girls who invested considerable time and energy performing this heterosexualised femininity (Renold, 2005). The girls used this heterosexualised space they had created to position themselves as disempowered subjects within romantic discourses of heterosexuality (Blaise, 2005a; Epstein, 1997; Renold, 2005). They opened and retained space for rehearsing heterosexuality in a school that officially endorsed discourses of gender and sexual diversity. The pervasiveness of boyfriend-girlfriend culture – exemplified through routine (hetero)sexualised playground games – reveals the significant 'power of the heterosexual matrix to [underscore children's] gender identities and social interactions (Renold, 2005: 118), and this did not diminish in senior years with girls' constant talk of boyfriends¹⁶ and continued (hetero)sexual play found to be an enduring feature of 'informal' peer culture:



A Year 5 girl asks me if I want to play the 'Boys and Girls' game this lunch-time. I ask what this game entails and I am told that it involves chasing, and capturing, the opposite sex and "locking them up". This appears to be a popular game amongst the Year 5 girls – I'm not sure the Year 5 boys are as enthusiastic.

Weirwold field notes (KS2 playground – 15/5/12, 12.45pm)

I observed the 'boys and girls game' on numerous occasions. While boys took more of an active role in this particular game, the girls initiated play and, on the whole, they appeared to enjoy this game more than the boys (who often brought this game to a close). This (hetero)sexual game was not located within an identifiable location like the playhouse, rather, it engulfed space on the outskirts of the Key Stage 2 football pitch. It was within this remaining space that children practised and (re)instated normative (hetero)sexuality.

¹⁶ Weirwold's Year 5 teacher revealed that she was privy to girls' constant talk of boyfriends, which revolved around the boys they said they 'fancied' in class. As a male researcher I didn't have access to this gossip (see section 3.4 on positionality) but this secondary account highlighted the centrality of boyfriend-girlfriend culture for Year 5 girls (there was a notable absence of this talk amongst boys and teachers confirmed that boys did not confide in them).

6.5.3 Lessons from the playground: learning normative hetero- gender/sexuality in everyday spaces of play

While ‘formal’ school space has been infused with ‘progressive’ discourses of gender and sexual diversity, it was clear that heteronormative understandings of gender and sexuality persisted in ‘informal’ peer spaces in the playground. These hidden geographies of the “third curriculum” figured as powerful sites in which heteronormative social relations were continually inscribed and reproduced through children’s everyday play. This ranged from performing and embodying hegemonic (hetero)masculinity on the football field to accomplishing heterosexualised femininity through (hetero)familial role play and hetero-romantic fantasy games in and around the playhouse. While some groups of boys and girls invested in (hetero)gendered/sexualised practices more than others, it was clear that enacting hegemonic (hetero)masculinity or heterosexualised femininity implicated everyone - with those performing hegemonic (hetero)masculinity or heterosexualised femininity relying on others to imitate, or unwillingly participate, in these enactments. Thus, while ‘formal’ school space was largely marked by performances of ‘acceptance’ of gender and sexual diversity discourses, ‘informal’ school space was largely marked by heteronormative performances of gender and sexuality.

Consideration of ‘formal’ and ‘informal’ spaces of learning illustrates how children’s gendered and sexual performances are both constituted within, and constitutive of, the spatiality of the school. Being a ‘good student’ in the classroom involved performing ‘acceptance’ of gender and sexual diversity discourses while in the playground being a ‘good/ conforming peer’ involved recuperating heteronormativity. Thus, children find themselves caught up in competing discourses of gender and sexuality that find expression within and across the institutional space of the primary school. My focus groups revealed children’s ambivalence towards multiple and conflicting understandings of gender and sexuality. Children’s reflections on peer interaction in focus groups also revealed how ‘informal’ spaces in school had been shaped by heteronormative understandings of gender and sexuality. Corridors and boys toilets were often places where heteronormative social relations framed children’s everyday social inter/actions (see Renold, 2005).

Corridors proved to be rich sites for hetero- gendered/sexualized play with numerous corridor games disclosed during focus group discussions. The game discussed below, which children played when lining up in corridors, is illustrative of the many games that children played which (re)instate binary gender:

SCHOOL: CUTLERS

- Kate We have these silly games where basically we say boy germs or girl germs/
- Annabel That's just joking around
- JH What happens in these games?
- Kate If a boy touches a girl/
- Annabel They say girl germs/
- Kate And you have to cross your fingers to not get girl germs
- JH Show me
- Kate Like this (shows a crucifix) ... for protection
- Annabel Basically, if a boy goes back to a girl they pass it on and the girl goes back to someone else
- JH When do you play this game?
- Ruth When we're lining up
- Annabel And when we're bored we start pushing and getting rough ... oh, I touched a boy, oh I touched a girl

Focus Group with Year 6 (24/05/2012)

In this particular example, any physical contact with the opposite sex would lead to contamination with disease central to children's psychoanalytical 'borderwork' (Thorne, 1993). As Walkerdine (1990) and others have shown, metaphors of disease are often used to police the 'boundary maintenance' between boys (masculinity) and girls (femininity) and in many of the children's corridor games disease and infection were invoked to symbolise children's fear of opposite-gender proximity (see Renold, 2005). Like most other classes, these children also segregated themselves into same-gender groups once in the classroom - with seating arrangements reflecting the gender differentiation that had been going on in the corridor and playground¹⁷. Thus, children's 'informal' heteronormative relations would also leak into the classroom and shape peer interaction in this context.

The boys' toilets were another key site for (re)instating heteronormativity in school¹⁸. While teachers often remarked that pejorative use of the word gay was no longer heard in the

¹⁷ For Renold, lining up, seating arrangements and gender differentiation in the playground were 'key organisational features in which the spatiality of boy/girl dichotomies became most visible' (2005: 84).

¹⁸ I did not have access to the children's toilets so here I reflect on children's focus group accounts.

playground¹⁹ boys revealed that it was still commonly used in the toilets, away from surveillance. Thus, while homophobic language had largely become spatially confined, it had not lost currency in school:

SCHOOL: CUTLERS

- JH Have these words been banned?
- Callum Yeah, we're not allowed to say gay or sissy/
- Abigail Or lesbian
- JH Do people still use these words?
- Callum Not as much ... gay's used
- JH In the playground?
- Callum Yeah, but if you told a teacher they would be in Chris's office
(deputy head teacher)
- JH So you'd be in trouble?
- Callum Yeah but no one tells, that's the problem ... the word gay has
been banned but people use it in the boy's toilets whenever you
go in

Focus group with Year 4 (25/5/12)

Boys clearly understood the spatial regulation of homophobic language and used the toilets – the most prominent gender segregated space in school²⁰ - as a 'private' space to resist and challenge formal curricular and to (re)assert normative (hetero)sexuality. Thus, a place already demarcating binary gender is utilised to repudiate homosexuality and police the boundaries of 'boyhood'.

6.5.4 Everyday institutional practice

The toilets are but one institutional space where binary genders and segregation of schoolchildren are naturalised (Epstein and Johnson, 1998; Hinton, 2008; Kehily, 2002). Other,

¹⁹ Even though (hetero)gendered/sexualised play was widespread in the playground teachers saw curbed use of the word gay as an indication of the success of gender and sexualities initiatives.

²⁰ There were no gender segregated changing rooms for Physical Education (PE), although in other schools these would be another prominent gender segregated space. Children got changed together in classrooms for PE at both schools, apart from in Years 5 and 6 where two separate (supervised) classrooms would be used (see section 6.5.4 for further discussion of pop-up gendered spaces in school).

more subtle aspects of an institution's "third curriculum" include schools' highly gendered dress codes²¹ (see Monk, 2011; O'Flynn and Epstein, 2005; Shilling, 1991); although at *Cutlers* and *Weirwold* no specific gendered dress code is given²². In addition, everyday institutional practice in schools' has been shown to reinforce heterosexual assumptions about gender and sexuality (see Epstein and Johnson, 1998 in particular). As well as locating the multiple ways in which children produced, regulated and transgressed gendered and sexual identity and space within and across school I identified a number of circulating discourses that revealed how school culture operated as a heteronormalising institution (Quinlivan, 2006). Thus, children were not only having to contend with multiple and conflicting understandings of gender and sexuality between 'formal' and 'informal' school spaces, but also with adult discourses which institutionalised the 'heterosexual matrix' (Butler, 1990; see Renold, 2005).

Despite challenging blatant forms of (hetero)sexism via formal school policy and curricular subtle, everyday forms of sexism persisted in both schools. What Valentine *et al.* (2014: 409) refer to as 'the ordinariness of everyday sexism' which is 'not normally seen [in] everyday lives because it is a habitual way of being' existed in many forms, much like children's heteronormative understandings. While often obscured by its ordinariness, everyday institutional practice such as requiring that children line up boy-girl-boy-girl, get changed for PE in separate rooms (from Year 5) and have separate - gender exclusive - sports teams naturalised gender differentiation further by institutionalising binary gender (see Costello and Duncan, 2006). This was further compounded through everyday language - 'the most intense and stubborn fortress of [hetero]sexist assumptions' (Sontag, 1973: 186) – with remarks like 'can four strong boys carry this table' (Head teacher, *Weirwold*) and 'girls, that's not very lady like' (Teaching Assistant, *Cutlers*) reinforcing gender inequalities (see Epstein and Johnson, 1998). Such expressions were widespread but perhaps the most telling example of how sex-gender binaries were reinforced through everyday language was an exchange between *Weirwold's* Head teacher and Reception teacher:

²¹ Phoenix *et al.* (2003) identify schools' highly gendered dress code as being a critical factor in homophobic bullying since gender performance is connected to heteronormativity.

²² In both schools' 'Parent Handbook' there is no differentiation between boys' and girls' dress code. However, only girls took up the option to wear an ear stud in each ear and only girls would wear skirts, dresses, and blouses. Likewise, teachers' 'choice' of dress conformed to gendered expectations in terms of clothing (only female teachers wore skirts, dresses, and blouses), hair length (no male teachers had long hair) and adornment (with the exemption of female teachers, only *Weirwold's* openly gay male deputy head teacher wore visible jewellery and piercings).

I am eating lunch in the staff room talking with some of the other teachers when the Head teacher walks in. She takes a seat and addresses us all. She announces that the new boy in Reception has long hair and may be mistaken for a girl but that people should be on top of this for his sake so that he doesn't get upset. With that the Reception teacher informs the Head teacher that when it was time for the children to put their coats on she called his name and told him to put his coat on "like all the other boys". Later the Reception teacher declares - "my class might still wet themselves but at least they know whether they are a boy or girl"

Weirwold field notes (Staff room - 6/2/12, 12.50pm)

The head teacher raises the matter of the Reception boy again - something which seems to be a pressing concern for her. The Reception teacher replies - "all the children in my class know he's a boy" (she's been making this clear)

Weirwold field notes (Staff room - 8/2/12, time not recorded)

SEAL Assembly

The new Reception boy is chosen for special recognition. The Reception teacher declares that "he has been a really good Boy", "HE has been playing with all the other BOY'S really nicely" (this is in front of the entire school).

This on-going exchange captures a professional compulsion to institutionalise the 'heterosexual matrix' (Butler, 1990) in the face of 'progressive' discourses of gender and sexual diversity with its clear boundaries between boys (masculinity) and girls (femininity). This complements (and somewhat legitimises) children's compulsion to (re)assert heteronormative social relations through everyday social inter/actions within and across school, although this only recognises 'hidden' institutional expectations to conform to normative (hetero)gender/sexuality. As noted in 2.2.6, attempts should also be made to understand the complexities of children's lives inside and outside school, since spaces of schooling and education both reflect and contribute to the communities of which they are a part. Thus, a 'values mismatch' between home and school (Hemming, 2011a) could further undermine formal curricular with spaces of 'the family' yet to be considered.

6.6 BEYOND SCHOOL GATES: (RE)SITUATING CHILDREN IN FAMILIAL CONTEXTS

A lot of it is from the home, I think, when it is nurtured that way where you've got
gender activities

Interview with Weirwold's Reception teacher (11/2/13)

Pyckett *et al.* (2010: 489) argue that neoliberal programmes do not always succeed in changing people's subjectivities as these are 'performed moving through multiple spatial-temporal domains' and are not solely shaped within particular institutions such as schools (see 2.2.6). In 2.4.1 I noted how 'the family' has received relatively little attention from geographers despite how pivotal 'families' are in everyday life with home(s) as key sites where young people spend prolonged periods with various 'family members' (see Vanderbeck, 2007). As Valentine *et al.* (2003b) argue it is within the often neglected space of the home where many individual biographies and *expectations* are rooted, with children increasingly believed to reproduce their parents' identities (see 2.4.3). As such, it has been suggested by Seymour (2011) and others that children should not be isolated from their families since children's bodies demarcate the 'public world of the school' and the 'private world of the home' (see 2.2.6). It is beyond the remit of this thesis to incorporate home research visits (see Lyttleton-Smith, 2013), but in this final section I want to acknowledge how spaces of 'the family' also shape children's gendered and sexual subjectivities in ways that complement and contradict values of the formal school

curriculum. Such appreciation of children as ‘multiplaced persons’ (Pallotta-Chiarolli, 1999) who are simultaneously members of multiple lifeworlds (Cope and Kalantzis, 1995) recognises the complexity of children’s lived experience.

In Chapters 5 and 6 I drew on interviews with senior school management, teachers and governors (including a parent governor) in order to explore how parents responded to each school’s gender and sexualities education and how both schools engaged parents. In light of a ‘moral panic’ stemming from an LGBT History Month wall display at Weirwold I noted how both schools had increasingly come to rely on homophobic bullying as a framework and rationale for supporting the implementation of gender and sexualities education. Much like Section 28 debates (see Chapter 4), homophobic bullying rhetoric is seen to appeal across the diverse school community and has allowed multiple stakeholders to engage get on-board with the schools’ gender and sexualities education, but just like in school, children encounter conflicting and complementary discourses as they move between sites outside of school - with the home being the most crucial site of all (see 2.4). This became apparent at one of the schools in particular, after several complaints from parents highlighted how significant spaces of the family can be for children’s understandings of gender and sexuality:

I think after this last week there is plenty of discussion going on at home [...] kids do talk about what goes on at school, obviously different in different year groups and with different families [...] you get some families who value the work that goes on at school and don’t just see it as baby minding just as much as you get families who don’t value what we do [...] but I would certainly say that the events of the last week have really shown how much discussion does go on at home

Interview with Weirwold’s Year 5 teacher (8/2/2012)

In this particular instance parents had objected to explicit use of language and depth of discussion, which they thought contravened the parameters acceptable at home. Thus, by continuing class discussions at home, children had been made aware of the spatially-distinct characteristics of home life and school life which they would have to negotiate. Of course, not all children encountered a ‘values mismatch’ (Hemming, 2011a) between home and school, but some were very aware of dissonance between school and home:

SCHOOL: WEIRWOLD

Melissa At our house we talk about Diversity Week [and] we all agree in my house

JH What do you say?

Melissa I just say we did this and my mum's like great [...] she thinks it is really good because she's a PSHE coordinator

JH Does anyone else talk about Diversity Week at home?

Hanna Every day I always tell them what I've done in school ... when it is Diversity Week I particularly tell them and they agree a lot

[...]

JH So would you say the schools values around diversity are the same or different to home?

Melissa Same

Numerous Same

Helen Sometimes I talk to my parents about [same-sex relationships] and stuff ... and my family say the same as what school says about it

JH Have you talked about Diversity Week at home?

Kaia My mum's quite frustrated because she ... say about me talking about married couples or things like that because last time I think we were talking about lesbians ... gay/

Kalea That was in circle time/

Sabra Yeah

JH So your mum didn't like that?

Kaia She didn't like it because/

Umran Because she doesn't want her Year 3 child to know about that/

Kaia Yeah

JH What about everyone else?

Kalea I haven't told my parents

JH What about you Sabra?

Sabra Nope

For the first group of children 'home' represented a site wherein values of the school's formal gender and sexualities education were re-affirmed. Knowing that class discussions would not be out-of-place in the home, these children actively discussed lessons with parent(s) from whom they received validation with the home *produced* as a space receptive to gendered and sexual values of the formal school. For the second group of children, home represented a site of conflicting values where discourses of gender and sexual diversity would be out-of-place. Like other children, this group were reluctant to broach class discussions with family possibly knowing, as Kaia did, that their parent(s) weren't in favour of the school's gender and sexualities education (see Vanderbeck, 2007). While this second group of children were fairly receptive to gender and sexual diversity themselves, other children who stated that they wouldn't talk about lessons at home, possibly reproduced their parent(s) identities and family expectations (see 2.4). As one teacher remarked, children will often bring parent(s) views into school with those that were sniggering or smirking possibly having 'something different going on at home':

Emma It is also really nice getting an idea of how parents perceive ...
 how open minded they are ... it obviously challenges them as well
 ... when the children go home and tell parents children often
 bring back parents' thoughts and views

JH Do those views from home conflict with the schools?

Emma Yes, sometimes ... I think our parents especially are very open
 minded to it, we've been very lucky ... they're surprised at how
 much detail we go into with homophobic bullying, the words we
 use, gay and lesbian ... transgender, all those ... they are
 surprised ... at first there is a bit of resistance [...] but generally
 they're really good and I really enjoy it ... especially when you see
 the adults change

[...]

Emma There might always be a very small fraction of parents that are
 slightly uncomfortable [...] it may be something at home that isn't
 discussed or they're not prepared or as comfortable or it could

be a religious or cultural thing and we need to respect that as well [...] those children that were sniggering or smirking may have something different going on at home

Interview with Cutlers Year 4 teacher (25/11/2012)

While some children's home lives may have prevented them from engaging fully with the gendered and sexual values of the formal school there is also the possibility that parent(s) views might change as a result of home-school exchange. Indeed, as a parent-governor remarked:

It sparked a conversation in him and with me [...] it wasn't something we had talked about before but once the school had initiated that discussion I was able to talk a bit more openly and deeply [...] if the school has got that going on we can take that into our own families

Interview with Weirwold's parent-governor (15/5/2012)

Thus, home-school exchange can be a two-way process with some parent(s) willing to reconsider gender and sexual values at home and/or have open discussions, in the same way that schools take families' religious and cultural values into account. However, as the following teacher interviews demonstrate, dissonance between home and school persists in some quarters - with cultural and religious friction escalating from conflicting home-school values:

JH Earlier you mentioned that there are a lot of Muslim children in your class and that you wasn't sure about doing some of the gender work/

Sharon Err, yes ... I'm very frightful of doing gender [...] in their families it is quite common for the mum to be at home

JH So you didn't want to undercut home values/

Sharon Yeah, yeah ... without them like going home and going to their mum, why don't you go to work [...] the only thing I don't want to do is cause any offense ... to parents [...] some of my kids will go home tonight, some of the Muslim children might go home and say this is what we did at school today and their parents perhaps wouldn't be quite so pleased about it [...] I know that some of our

Muslim parents have some issues with the messages

- JH Do you have a sense of whether any of this work contradicts what they are told at home/ [...]
- Molly Yeah, DEFINITELY ... definitely [...] I think a lot of it contradicts with what goes on at school ... children have very, very strong opinions that they've been brought up with [...] there are a few children in my class that feel very strongly and are very opinionated but they wouldn't express themselves
- JH Would they go home and express views from school?
- Molly No, to be honest I don't think they dare
- Molly A couple of the children come from very conservative families ... one's from north-west India but they're Muslim ... their families are very close and they marry into their religion [so] those families find it very ... they like everything else about the school but I don't think they like that

Interviews with Weirwold's Year 5 and Year 1 teachers

(8/2/2012; 13/2/2013)

While Valentine *et al.* (2014) show how arguments about perceived gender inequality can often be used to justify Islamophobia, in the instances encountered here distinct gender and sexual values can be distinguished between home and school. As Molly remarks, she doesn't think some children would dare express school views at home as they would contract home values with some families known to have 'issues with the [school's] messages'. Some children have to negotiate multiple lifeworlds as they move between sites within and outside of school, invested with conflicting and complementary discourses of gender and sexual diversity (Cope and Kalantzis, 1995; Pallotta-Chiarolli, 1996; 1999). Children's geographies of playing, living and learning are thus inseparable (Seymour, 2011; see 2.2.3) and I would argue central to children's interconnected understandings of gender and sexuality.

6.7 CHAPTER CONCLUSION

This chapter has drawn on Butler's (1990; 1993; 1997) theory of subjectivity and performativity to conceptualise children's contradictory responses to gender and sexualities education. In doing so I distinguished between a performative self that cites recognisable liberal pluralistic equalities discourse and performs acceptance in 'formal' school space in order to be a 'good student', and a performative subject that is simultaneously compelled to perform normative (hetero)gender/sexuality and recuperate heteronormativity - in the face of subversion - in order to achieve viable subjecthood. The former was understood in light of *Subjection and the curriculum* (5.3) where the syllabus was conceived as a 'governmental document' which 'contains and shapes the 'conditions of possibility' available to school students' (Davies, 2006: 430). From a Butlerian standpoint, schemes of work, lesson plans and accompanying resources were regarded as performative insofar as they present the terms of engagement for students and what students are to become: tolerant and accepting neoliberal citizens. The latter was understood in light of how subjection works on, and in, the psychic life of the subject (Butler, 1997) where processes of identification also require the rejection (abjection) of other identities with rejection constituting the subject as much as identification does (Butler *et al.*, 2000; Nayak and Kehily, 2006).

In the second part of the chapter I foregrounded the spatiality of performative selves and performative subjects by considering how space is 'brought into being through performances and [itself] a performative articulation of power' (Gregson and Rose, 2000: 434). I explored how 'formal' school space (i.e. classrooms and assembly hall) regulates un/acceptable attitudes towards gender and sexual diversity, and how some children treated focus groups as an extension of 'formal' school space in which to perform acceptance of gender and sexual diversity. However, on other occasions I noted how the relational work of group members allowed focus groups to be produced as a private space in which dissent could be more fully articulated. This created space for performative subjects whose spatial expression had been more evident in 'informal' school space (i.e. playground, corridors and toilets) where gender/sexual difference was regularly reinstated through children's everyday spatial practices. This extends beyond the school, as I illustrated in the final sub-section, which indicates why neoliberal programmes, such as this one, do not always succeed in changing people's subjectivities as these are 'performed moving through multiple spatial-temporal domains' Pyckett *et al.* (2010: 489).

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

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7.0 CHAPTER INTRODUCTION

This thesis examined the formation of gender and sexualities education and its implementation and reception in two state-funded English primary schools. In doing so it identified: the nature and form of existing UK government legislation, guidance and support for primary gender and sexuality education; how Stonewall, a leading Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual third-sector organisation and two pioneering English primary schools used these initiatives to create and implement a gender and sexualities education; how children (5-11 years old) respond to this curriculum in the context of everyday school life. As such, this study addressed the following research objectives:

1. To examine existing UK government legislation, guidance and support for primary gender and sexuality education, and to understand how these initiatives are mobilised by the non-profit sector
2. To explore how social actors within specific English primary school's interpret national government policy, and to understand how gender and sexualities education is subsequently incorporated into the broader school curriculum and delivered in lessons
3. To investigate how pupils respond to gender and sexualities education in the context of everyday school life

In this final chapter I tie together the various issues raised in the analysis chapters whilst reflecting on the research objectives. First, I provide a synthesis of the empirical findings and discuss their theoretical implications (7.1). Second, I outline the policy implications of key empirical findings (7.2). Third, I identify future research directions that respond to the

limitations of this study whilst acknowledging existing trends (7.3). Finally, I conclude by reflecting on the overall significance of the study (7.4).

7.1 EMPIRICAL FINDINGS AND THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

The main empirical findings are chapter specific and were summarised within the respective empirical chapters: The formation of gender and sexuality education (Chapter 4); The implementation of gender and sexuality education (Chapter 5); The reception of gender and sexualities education (Chapter 6). This section will synthesize the empirical findings to answer the study's three research objectives (RO). It will also explore the theoretical implications of the empirical findings.

RO1: To examine existing UK government legislation, guidance and support for primary gender and sexuality education, and to understand how these initiatives are mobilised by the non-profit sector.

This thesis identified how childhood discourses circulating in Section 28 debates influenced the trajectory of 'post-Section 28' UK government legislation and guidance for primary gender and sexuality education. Following Ellis (2007) and Monk (2011), I demonstrated how anti-homophobia and anti-bullying emerged as a desexualised policy paradigm following societal debates in which the myth of 'childhood (sexual) innocence' (see Epstein, 1999; Renold, 2005; Robinson, 2008) was preserved. Denying 'childhood sexuality' keeps normative heterosexuality intact and so 'post-Section 28' UK government legislation and guidance for primary gender and sexuality education has been constrained by this prevailing discourse. Ultimately, this paved the way for an essentialising curriculum which can only have limited success. This prompted me to ask (in Chapter 4¹) if 'safe representations' of lesbian and gay identity (encapsulated in Stonewall's 'Different Families' resources) were a trade-off that colluded with heteronormativity with primary school knowledge of lesbian and gay sexualities becoming too conservative (see DePalma and Atkinson, 2009c; Nixon, 2009; Rofes, 1997; Youdell, 2011). Either way, Stonewall gained government support to operationalise the 'non-threatening' Different Families approach as part of a broader – culturally endorsed – anti-bullying agenda. However, these 'vanilla strategies' – safe and approved sexual practice and fantasy (Silverstein and Picano, 1993) – will do little to disrupt prevailing discourses of childhood sexuality that continue to cast the primary school and the primary school child as 'protected spaces'. As

¹ See section 4.3.4 in particular.

such, much needed – but highly restricted – *critical* interventions informed by queer praxis (see DePalma and Atkinson, 2009c) continue to be denied.

RO2: To explore how social actors within specific English primary schools interpret national government policy, and to understand how gender and sexuality education is subsequently incorporated into the broader school curriculum and delivered in lessons.

This thesis found that social actors within specific English primary schools interpret national government policy in different ways. While one school utilised prevailing discourses of homophobic bullying to rationalise and implement a gender and sexualities education the other resisted this approach and instead utilised an equalities framework. These decisions had contrasting outcomes for the two schools. While the former school did not experience any adverse reaction the latter encountered numerous objections, mainly on religious grounds. This is perhaps not surprising given Johnson and Vanderbeck's (2014) observation that religious interests often undercut equalities-based claims when it comes to sexual orientation. Thus, despite resisting a homophobic bullying approach both schools now frame their gender and sexualities education in terms of anti-bullying. While this logic may appeal to a diverse school community, like Monk (2011), I am concerned about the *politics of progress* (see 2.3.2b). This is apparent in the second part of Chapter 5 where the syllabus was conceived as a 'governmental document' which 'contains and shapes the 'conditions of possibility' available to school students' (Davies, 2006: 430). From a Butlerian standpoint, schemes of work, lesson plans and accompanying resources were regarded as performative insofar as they present the terms of engagement for students and what students are to become: tolerant and accepting neoliberal citizens.

RO3: To investigate how pupils respond to gender and sexualities education in the context of everyday school life

This thesis exposed a socio-spatial underpinning to children's simultaneous performances of acceptance and recuperation of heteronormativity. In examining children's responses to gender and sexualities education in the context of everyday school life I distinguished between a performative self that cites recognisable liberal pluralistic equalities discourse and performs acceptance in 'formal' school space in order to be a 'good student', and a performative subject that is simultaneously compelled to perform normative (hetero)gender/sexuality and recuperate heteronormativity - in the face of subversion - in order to achieve viable subjecthood. These contradictory responses were conceptualised through Butler's (1990;

1993; 1997) theories of subjectivity and performativity. I extended these theorisations of the paradoxes of personhood by drawing on Gregson and Rose (2000), Pile (2008) and Thomas (2005; 2008; 2011). This allowed me to spatialize subjectivity and foreground the spatiality of performative selves and performative subjects. The latter focused on how gender and sexual difference was regularly reinstated through children's everyday spatial practices. This extends beyond the school and indicates why neoliberal programmes, such as this one, do not always succeed in changing people's subjectivities as these are 'performed moving through multiple spatial-temporal domains' Pyckett *et al.* (2010: 489).

In the next section I will discuss the policy implications of key empirical findings.

7.2 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Much education policy does not understand students as both constructed and embodied. It does not understand them as building their identities in the best ways they know how in conditions of possibility and constraint, pleasure and pain, risk and certainty

Kenway, 1996: i

After Section 28, a policy for sexualities education in England that combines an anti-homophobia strategy with a curricular critique of heteronormativity is vital

Ellis, 2007: 26

Recognising the spatialities of gendered and sexual subject formation and the complementary and contradictory discourses circulating within and beyond school space challenges an exclusive curricular focus on homophobia, homophobic/ gender-based bullying and gender inequality. As numerous scholars have argued, focusing on the above as discrete topics individualises 'the issue' and masks institutional forms of (hetero)sexism (DePalma and Jennett, 2010; Ellis, 2007; Monk, 2011; Ringrose and Renold, 2010; Quinlivan, 2006). Yet, UK Government legislation, guidance and support has compartmentalised gender and sexuality in this way with schools defining and implementing gender and sexualities education in a context of discrimination, despite how this overlooks the dominance of wider heteronormative relations (also see Hubbard, 2000; Valentine *et al.*, 2014). Thus, this thesis supports Ellis's (2007) call for a combined pedagogic focus on heteronormativity since 'compulsory heterosexuality' (Rich, 1980) and mundane sexism (Valentine *et al.*, 2014) create the very conditions in which homophobia and gender inequality are produced (see also DePalma and

Atkinson, 2009a; Quinlivan, 2006; Van de Ven, 1996). As such, normative constructions of (hetero)sexuality - (re)produced in the playground and through everyday institutional practice – would need to be recognised and critiqued as a first step towards *critical* intervention.

Children's normative (hetero)gendered/sexualised play

Epstein (1995: 63) notes how 'doing is learning [...] when children play in gendered ways they are actively creating themselves as gendered, learning to interpret and understand the world in the same moment as they are playing and indeed changing their immediate world by their play'. What this means in practice is that children will not simply accept alternative meanings offered to them, as illustrated in Chapter 7, although these may well provide alternative discourses for those seeking them (also see Davies 1989a; 1993; Troyna and Hatcher, 1992). Rather, children need to be able to act on the world in alternative ways in order to be able to experience it differently and this requires organisation of school space in such a way that alternative and oppositional discourses and discursive practices are available to the children (DePalma and Atkinson, 2009a; Epstein, 1995). This goes hand-in-hand with the need to intervene in strongly enculturated forms of hegemonic (hetero)masculinity and heterosexualised femininity, which would involve eradicating the association of maleness with masculinist concepts of competition, aggression and violence and the association of femaleness with 'hyper-sexualised femininity' (Renold, 2005; Van de Ven, 1996).

Mundane (hetero)sexism

As Valentine *et al.* (2014: 401) argue, 'while the development of equality legislation has contained the public expression of the most blatant forms of gender [and sexual] prejudice, [hetero]sexism persists and is manifest in subtle ways. As a consequence, it can be difficult to name and challenge with the effect that patriarchy as a power structure which systematically (re)produces gender [and sexual] inequalities is obscured by its ordinariness'. Thus, as we develop habitual ways of seeing some dimensions of difference become salient and others less visible or invisible with mundane (hetero)sexism, lived as habit and enacted as embodied everyday practices, frequently passed over or read as 'normal' (Al-Saji, 2009; Cooper, 2004; Ringrose and Renold, 2010). As such, 'traditional, so-called 'common-sense' arguments about 'natural' embodied gender differences remain a socially sedimented way of seeing' (Valentine *et al.*, 2014: 407), yet this creates the very conditions in which homophobia and gender inequality are produced (Ellis, 2007; Quinlivan, 2006; Van de Ven, 1996). While the structure of schools can curtail collective reflection, active critique and democratic participation (Fine,

1991; Skrtic, 1995) this would be required in order to interrogate and deconstruct how macro-school culture operates as a heteronormalising institution (Quinlivan, 2006).

Policy and curriculum development in light of recognising children as ‘multipositioned’ persons inhabiting ‘multiple lifeworlds’

As Trinh Minh-ha (1991: 107/8) writes, ‘multiculturalism does not lead us very far if it remains a question of difference only between one culture and another [...] to cut across boundaries and borderlines is to live aloud the malaise of categories and labels; it is to resist simplistic attempts at classifying; to resist the comfort of belonging to a classification’. Thus, ‘in order to achieve a far more inclusive curriculum [...] multicultural education needs to incorporate sexuality [and gender] issues and sexuality [and gender] education needs to incorporate multicultural perspectives’ (Pallotta-Chiarolli, 1996: 53). Consideration of ‘multiple marginalities’ would transcend ‘homosexual/gender equality-ethnic’ binaries and examine multiple sites of connection and tension with individual identities presented as sites of various intermixtures of ethnicity, sexuality, gender, class, religion and so on (see Pallotta-Chiarolli, 1996). This would respond to Ellis’s concern with pedagogic strategies that pathologise difference where ‘difference becomes objectified in discrete categories that offer single and mutually exclusive opportunities for identification’ (2007: 20). As well as dealing with intersectionality (see below) the dangers of ‘homonormativity’ (Stryker, 2008) should also be considered in relation to representations of ‘sexual dissidents’ in children’s literature, for example, with ‘inclusion’ for some sexual minorities (i.e. those conforming to heteronormative ideals of monogamous nuclear relationships) created through exclusion of Other sexual minorities (i.e. those sexual sub-cultures that reject heteronormative tendencies) (see Bell and Binnie, 2000; Browne, 2004a; Nast, 2002).

The next section provides some recommendations for future research.

7.3 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

In recognising the limitations of the present study and future trends I propose the following as recommendations for future research:

The embodied materiality of embodying ‘openly gay’

Although I briefly touched on the extracurricular importance of openly gay role models in the schools (5.3.1) further research should explore the embodied materiality of embodying ‘openly

gay'. As noted in Section 4.2.1, *The Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations* (2003) allowed non-heterosexual teachers' to be 'out' in school without fear of discrimination (Warwick *et al.*, 2004) and this has resulted in more openly gay role models in schools (DePalma and Jennett, 2010; Jackson, 2007). However, the essentialising risks of such strategies have yet to be fully explored (DePalma and Atkinson, 2009b) and would benefit from engagements with material feminisms (Taylor and Ivinson, 2013).

Intersectionality and state-funded faith schools

This research partly explored how religious identity intersects with understandings of gender and sexuality (Chapter's 4, 5 and 6) but this should be explored in greater detail (see Collins, 2006; Hemming, 2011c; Hemming and Madge, 2011; Valentine and Waite, 2012). More generally, an intersectional approach would enhance future research when examining gender and sexuality with other axes of social identity (see Brown, 2012; Valentine, 2007). In addition to this, future research should explore the curriculum of state-funded faith schools with respect to teaching about homosexuality (see Johnson and Vanderbeck, 2014). This would include, but not be limited to, examining the negotiation of equalities legislation in these settings (*ibid*) and the implementation of recent *Church of England* guidance on 'Challenging Homophobic Bullying' (see CoE, 2014).

Beyond school boundaries: spaces of the family

While I partly accounted for the influence of familial intergenerational relationships on children's emerging understandings of gender and sexuality (6.6) this should be explored more fully in future research. I would propose combining institutional research with home visits in order to gain deeper understandings of children's experiences and identities (see Littleton-Smith, 2013). This would respond to calls to reintegrate children in familial contexts (Holt, 2011; McNamee, 2007; Seymour, 2011; Valentine and Hughes, 2011) and would take account of intergenerational geographies², particularly 'the intergenerational transmission and contestation of values within families' (Vanderbeck, 2007: 203; see 2.2.6 and 2.4).

² This could be taken further to explore under-researched 'extrafamilial intergenerational relationships' (Vanderbeck, 2007) in other sites where children's gendered and sexual subjectivities are negotiated in relation to older children, youth and adults (for instance, youth groups and sports clubs).

'Alternative' geographies of education and beyond the global north

This research has focused on the implementation and reception of gender and sexualities education in 'mainstream' educational settings in the global north. Further research in mainstream educational settings in the global south and in 'alternative' learning spaces³ would extend this study (see Ansell, 2002; Kraftl, 2013). This is not to discount continuing research in mainstream educational settings in the global north; particularly UK Church of England schools given recent guidance on challenging homophobic bullying in this context (see CoE, 2014). Rather, research into gender and sexuality education should not simply focus on maintained state schools in the global north.

7.4 CHAPTER CONCLUSION

This thesis examined the formation, implementation and reception of gender and sexualities education in state-funded English primary schools. In doing so it identified: the nature and form of existing UK government legislation, guidance and support for primary gender and sexuality education; how a leading LGB charity (Stonewall) and two pioneering English primary schools used these initiatives to create and implement a gender and sexualities education; how children (5-11 years old) respond to this curriculum in the context of everyday school life. As such, the study provides the first comprehensive overview of primary gender and sexuality education in the UK, from its inception to its reception, and has highlighted the possibilities - as well as the limitations - of neoliberal equalities programmes based around anti-homophobia and anti-bullying. This extends existing academic literature where there are only isolated and fragmented accounts of government legislation and guidance (Elizabeth A *et al*, 2010; DePalma and Atkinson, 2008c; 2009c; Ellis, 2007; Monk, 2011) and the delivery and reception of gender and sexuality education in individual lessons (Atkinson and DePalma, 2010; Cullen and Sandy, 2009; Davies, 1989a; 1993; Epstein, 2000b; Evans, 1998).

³ For instance, Steiner/ Montessori/ Forest schools and homeschooling where 'alternative' pedagogy and challenges to neoliberalism are abundant (see Kraftl, 2013).

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A – Consent Forms and Letters

Institutional/ Organisation Consent Forms (names removed, signature retained)

DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY, UNIVERSITY OF HULL
CONSENT FORM – For Institutions/ Organisations

I, of Stonewall hereby give permission for my organisation to be involved in a research project being undertaken by Joe Hall (PhD student at the University of Hull).

What?

I understand that the purpose of the research is to explore the emergence of work around homophobia in English primary schools. With respect to Stonewall, I understand that the focus will be the role of the non-profit sector in making this work available to schools.

How?

I understand that this project will involve the researcher being present at Stonewall, during agreed dates, and that the research will involve interviewing Stonewall representatives. I agree to allow the researcher to hold interviews with staff - pending additional consent.

Why?

Gaining insight into Stonewall's role in creating and operationalising gender and sexualities curriculum will be extremely useful for understanding the current context of gender and sexualities education in England.

There are no immediate risks or hazards associated with this research.

I understand that

1. the aims, methods, and anticipated benefits, and possible risks/hazards of the research study, have been explained to me.
2. I voluntarily and freely give my consent for the institution/organisation to participate in the above research.

3. I am free to withdraw my consent at any time during the study, in which event participation in the research will immediately cease and any information obtained through this institution/organisation will not be used if I so request.
4. I understand that aggregated results will be used for research purposes and may be reported in scientific and academic journals.

I agree that

5. Conversations MAY/MAY NOT be audio recorded for the researchers own purposes. Additional consent would be gained from Stonewall representatives to audio record interviews.
6. The institution/organisation MAY be named in research publications or other publicity.
7. ***I / We DO / DO NOT require an opportunity to check the factual accuracy of the research findings related to the institution/organisation.***
8. ***I / We EXPECT / DO NOT EXPECT to receive a copy of the research findings or publications.*** _____

Signature:



Date:

11.5.12

The contact details of the researcher are:

Joe Hall
Postgraduate PhD student
Department of Geography
University of Hull
HU6 7RX

01482 465313
j.j.hall@2005.hull.ac.uk

The contact details of the Ethics Officer are:

Dr Lewis Holloway
Department of Geography
University of Hull
Cottingham Road
Hull
HU6 7RX

01482 465320
l.holloway@hull.ac.uk

DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY, UNIVERSITY OF HULL
CONSENT FORM – For Institutions/ Organisations

I, Mr. M. J. ... (head teacher/ deputy head teacher) of
Primary School hereby give permission for my school to be involved in a research project
being undertaken by Joe Hall (PhD student at the University of Hull).

What?

I understand that the purpose of the research is to explore how work around homophobia and homophobic bullying is taking shape in English primary schools. Further, I understand that the aims of the research are to explore how this work is being delivered by primary schools and how pupils are receiving and responding to it.

How?

I understand that this project will involve the researcher being present in school, during an agreed time period, and that the research methods to be used will include a combination of the following: observation, conversation and interaction (with staff and pupils). Field notes will be taken to keep a record of these various observations and conversations. I also agree to allow the researcher to hold focus groups with the pupils in school. These two methods correspond to the two research aims.

Why?

Gaining an overview of the range of work being done by English primary schools around homophobia and homophobic bullying will be extremely useful. Likewise, exploring how children receive and respond to a variety of work in different schools will be helpful as this type of work becomes more common in primary education.

There are no immediate risks or hazards associated with this research. For some, a subject of homophobia may be considered a sensitive topic for a primary school; however, I will not be introducing a discussion of homophobia into your school. It should already be an established topic. Further, the conversations that I have with pupils about homophobia (what they have learnt about it in school) will not be at a level that is not already considered suitable by the head teacher.

I understand that

1. the aims, methods, and anticipated benefits, and possible risks/hazards of the research study, have been explained to me.
2. I voluntarily and freely give my consent for the institution/organisation to participate in the above research.
3. I am free to withdraw my consent at any time during the study, in which event participation in the research will immediately cease and any information obtained through this institution/organisation will not be used if I so request.

4. I understand that aggregated results will be used for research purposes and may be reported in scientific and academic journals.

I agree that

5. Photographs MAY / MAY NOT be taken for the researchers own purposes. NO photographs will be taken of the children, only photographs of displays and posters around the school.
6. The institution/organisation MAY / MAY NOT be named in research publications or other publicity without prior agreement.
7. I / We DO / DO NOT require an opportunity to check the factual accuracy of the research findings related to the institution/organisation.
8. I / We EXPECT / DO NOT EXPECT to receive a copy of the research findings or publications.

Signature:

ant

ant

Date:

15/12/11

The contact details of the researcher are:

Joe Hall
Postgraduate PhD student
Department of Geography
University of Hull
HU6 7RX

01482 465313

jj.hall@2005.hull.ac.uk

The contact details of the Ethics Officer are:

Dr Lewis Holloway
Department of Geography
University of Hull
Cottingham Road
Hull
HU6 7RX

01482 465320

l.holloway@hull.ac.uk

DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY, UNIVERSITY OF HULL
CONSENT FORM – For Institutions/ Organisations

I, (head teacher/ deputy head teacher) of
Primary School hereby give permission for my school to be involved in a research
project being undertaken by Joe Hall (PhD student at the University of Hull).

What? I understand that the purpose of the research is to explore how work around homophobia and homophobic bullying is taking shape in English primary schools. Further, I understand that the aims of the research are to explore how this work is being delivered by schools and how pupils are receiving and responding to it.

How? I understand that this project will involve the researcher being present in school, during an agreed time period, and that the research methods to be used will include a combination of the following: observation, conversation and interaction (with staff and pupils). Field notes will be taken to keep a record of these various observations and conversations. I also agree to allow the researcher to hold focus groups with the pupils in school - pending additional consent from parent(s)/ guardian(s) and the children concerned. These two sets of methods correspond to the two research aims.

Why? Gaining an overview of the range of work being done by English primary schools around homophobia and homophobic bullying will be extremely useful. Likewise, exploring how children receive and respond to a variety of work being done in different schools will be helpful as this type of work becomes more common in primary education.

There are no immediate risks or hazards associated with this research. For some, a subject of homophobia may be considered a sensitive topic for a primary school; however, I will not be introducing a discussion of homophobia into your school. It should already be an established topic. Further, the conversations that I have with pupils about homophobia (what they have learnt about it in school) will not be at a level that is not already considered suitable by the head teacher.

I understand that

1. the aims, methods, and anticipated benefits, and possible risks/hazards of the research study, have been explained to me.
2. I voluntarily and freely give my consent for the institution/organisation to participate in the above research.

3. I am free to withdraw my consent at any time during the study, in which event participation in the research will immediately cease and any information obtained through this institution/organisation will not be used if I so request.
4. I understand that aggregated results will be used for research purposes and may be reported in scientific and academic journals.

I agree that

5. Photographs ~~MAY~~ ~~MAY NOT~~ be taken for the researchers own purposes. Photographs taken of pupils who do not have photographic consent from their parent(s)/ guardian(s) will be destroyed before the researcher leaves the school and this can be done in front of a school representative.
6. Conversations ~~MAY~~ ~~MAY NOT~~ be audio recorded for the researchers own purposes. Additional consent would be gained from parent(s)/ guardian(s) to audio record focus group discussions featuring school pupils. Informed consent would also be gained from the pupils concerned, once an appropriate description of the research had been given to them.
7. Video recording ~~MAY~~ ~~MAY NOT~~ take place. This would not feature any pupils who have not given school consent for this, or who have opted out.
8. The institution/organisation ~~MAY~~ ~~MAY NOT~~ be named in research publications or other publicity without prior agreement.
9. ***+ / We DO / ~~DO NOT~~ require an opportunity to check the factual accuracy of the research findings related to the institution/organisation.***
10. ***+ / We EXPECT / ~~DO NOT EXPECT~~ to receive a copy of the research findings or publications.***

Signature:

7. 7.

Date: 17.01.12.

The contact details of the researcher are:

Joe Hall
Postgraduate PhD student
Department of Geography
University of Hull
HU6 7RX

01482 465313
j.j.hall@2005.hull.ac.uk

The contact details of the Ethics Officer are:

Dr Lewis Holloway
Department of Geography
University of Hull
Cottingham Road
Hull
HU6 7RX

01482 465320
l.holloway@hull.ac.uk

Sample of Interview Consent Forms (names removed, signature retained)

DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY, UNIVERSITY OF HULL
CONSENT FORM: INTERVIEWS

I, _____ of Stonewall

Hereby agree to participate in this study to be undertaken

by Joe Hall (PhD Researcher)

and I understand that the purpose of the research is to explore the emergence of work around homophobia in English primary schools. For the purposes of this interview, I understand that the focus will be the role of the non-profit sector in making this work available to schools.

I understand that

1. The interview will be audio recorded for the researchers own purposes.
2. A transcript will be produced and that my name and address kept separately from it.
3. Any information that I provide will not be made public in any form that could reveal my identity to an outside party ie. that I will remain fully anonymous.
4. Aggregated results will be used for research purposes and may be reported in scientific and academic journals.
5. Individual results **will not** be released to any person except at my request and on my authorisation.
6. That I am free to withdraw my consent at any time during the study, in which event my participation in the research study will immediately cease and any information obtained from me will not be used.

Signature:



Date: 12/06/2012

The contact details of the researcher are: Joe Hall, PhD Researcher, Department of Geography, University of Hull, Cottingham Road, Hull, HU6 7RX, tel. 01482 465313, email. j.j.hall@2005.hull.ac.uk.

The contact details of the Geography Ethics Officer are: Department of Geography, University of Hull, Cottingham Road, Hull, HU6 7RX, tel. 01482-465320.

DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY, UNIVERSITY OF HULL
CONSENT FORM: INTERVIEWS

I, _____ of _____

Hereby agree to participate in this study to be undertaken

by Joe Hall (PhD Researcher)

and I understand that the purpose of the research is to explore the emergence of work around homophobia in English primary schools. For the purposes of this interview, I understand that the focus will be the role of the governing body in making this work available in school.

I understand that

1. The interview will be audio recorded for the researchers own purposes.
2. A transcript will be produced and that my name and address kept separately from it.
3. Any information that I provide will not be made public in any form that could reveal my identity to an outside party ie. that I will remain fully anonymous.
4. Aggregated results will be used for research purposes and may be reported in scientific and academic journals.
5. Individual results **will not** be released to any person except at my request and on my authorisation.
6. That I am free to withdraw my consent at any time during the study, in which event my participation in the research study will immediately cease and any information obtained from - me will not be used.

Signature: 

Date: 15th May 2012.

The contact details of the researcher are: Joe Hall, PhD Researcher, Department of Geography, University of Hull, Cottingham Road, Hull, HU6 7RX, tel. 01482 465313, email. j.j.hall@2005.hull.ac.uk.

The contact details of the Geography Ethics Officer are: Department of Geography, University of Hull, Cottingham Road, Hull, HU6 7RX, tel. 01482-465320.

Sample of Parental Letter and Consent Form (names removed, signature retained)



Joe Hall
Researcher
University of Hull
HULL
HU6 7RX

01482 465313

j.j.hall@2005.hull.ac.uk

7th February 2013

Dear Parent/ guardian

I am a research student at the University of Hull and I am writing to ask for your permission for your child to take part in a research project I am running at Primary School. The research aims to understand how children are responding to work being delivered by the school during 'Diversity Week', which is taking place week-commencing 11th February 2013.

The research involves children taking part in focus groups, also known as group interviews. These would be held in school towards the end of 'Diversity Week'. In the focus groups we would talk about the various activities which the children would have been involved in and I would be trying to understand what they had taken from the week. The focus groups would be audio recorded but your child's name would not appear in any report.

The results from the study will be made available through the school should you wish to see them. It is hoped that the results will be of equal use to the school as they will be for the research project. Knowing what children have understood from the week will benefit any future work that the school may go on to do and it will also be of much use to education professionals, both within and outside of academia.

Ethical approval for this research has been granted by the Department of Geography at the University of Hull. If you require further information regarding the ethical aspects of this study please contact:

The Ethics Officer, Department of Geography, University of Hull, Cottingham Road, Hull, HU6 7RX.
Email: geo@hull.ac.uk; Tel. 01482 465320.

If you require any further information about the study please feel free to contact me. Otherwise please find enclosed a consent form that I would like you to sign if you are happy for your child to participate.

With best wishes

Joe Hall

DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY, UNIVERSITY OF HULL
CONSENT ON BEHALF OF A MINOR OR DEPENDENT PERSON

I,
Hereby give consent for my child
to be a participant in a focus group facilitated by Joe Hall (University researcher).

What?
How?
Why?

I understand that the purpose of the research is to understand how children are responding to work being done by the school during 'Diversity Week'.

I understand that focus groups will be used to elicit children's views and that these will take place in school.

It is important to know how children are responding to this work if we hope to improve future work.

There are no risks or hazards associated with this research.

The head teacher at your child's school has agreed to facilitate this research and they have been provided with an additional information sheet.

Prior to commencing research the school will see a recent CRB check. This will confirm that I am able to work with children.

I understand that

1. the aims, methods, and anticipated benefits, and possible hazards/risks of the research study, have been explained to me.
2. I voluntarily and freely give consent for my child to be a participant.
3. I agree that the focus group can be audio recorded for the researchers own purposes.
4. I understand that aggregated results will be used for research purposes and may be reported in scientific and academic journals.
5. Individual results **will not** be released to any person including medical practitioners.

6. I am free to withdraw my consent at any time, during the study in which event my child's participation in the research study will immediately cease and any information obtained will not be used.

Signature: 

Date: 08-02-2013

In addition to giving your consent I ask that you let your child read the following summary so that they too can understand what the research is about before proceeding.

I would like to invite you to take part in some research with me. I am interested in what you think about some of the activities you'll be involved in at school during 'Diversity Week'. I would like you to take part in a focus group, which will be like a group interview. This will be held in school with your friends. I don't know who your friends are so I would like you to list who you would like to be in a group with, assuming you want to take part in the research. If you don't that's fine.

My name is and I would like to take part in this research.

My friends are:

_____ (first name) _____ (last name)

_____ (first name) _____ (last name)

_____ (first name) _____ (last name)

_____ (first name) _____ (last name)

Don't worry if you do not need all the spaces provided above.

Thank you for your time and I look forward to meeting you soon.

Please take this form back to school with you

APPENDIX B –Questionnaire and Transcripts

Pupil Focus Group Questionnaire

School: *Weirwold Primary School* Date/ time: _____ Focus Group no: ____

Self-completion Questionnaire

I would like to know a little bit more about you. Please complete this questionnaire answering as many questions as you like. Don't worry, it's not a test.

Name: _____ Age: _____ Gender: _____

Ethnicity: _____ Religious beliefs: _____

Are you currently on free school meals: Yes No Verified

Have you previously been on free school meals: Yes No

Who do you live with at home? _____

How do you get to school? _____ How long does it take you? _____

Looking at the map below, do you live within the boundary or outside of it?

I live within the boundary

I live outside the boundary

School: *Weirwold Primary School* Date/ time: _____ Focus Group no: ____

Removed to ensure anonymity

Did you enjoy the focus group? Yes No

Why? _____

Would you like to see a summary of our conversation? Yes No

Sample of Focus Group transcript

Weirwold Primary School (15/02/2013; 11.30am) – Year 3 (page 6)

JH: [I explain the game and ask the children to identify the groups of characters] One at a time I would like you to make a different family

Jarood: This/

Musa: It's got to be a man and women! (said assertively)

JH: I said it can be a different family/

Sarah-Jane: It could be gay ... it could be gay (sounding optimistic)

Musa: It can't be a gay family! (said assertively)

JH: So who are these two people?

Musa: That's a gay couple

Niyanthri: That's the mum and that's the dad ... they're both boys yeah ... that's the dad and that's the dad

JH: So they're both dads are they?

Niyanthri: Yeah, they're gay

JH: Does everybody agree that could be a family?

(Mixed: no/ yes)

Musa: (replaces one of the men with a woman)

JH: So what have you just done there ... you've swapped round one of the/

Musa: Yeah ... man and a man can't have a baby (sounding astonished) ... they have to adopt one/

Sarah-Jane: Yeah, they've adopted the babies

JH: So they've adopted ... so can that be a family if these two have adopted?

(Mixed: yeah/ no)

JH: Why could this be a family?

Sarah-Jane: Because they love each other that's why (said firmly)/

Jarood: It doesn't matter who you marry yeah ... you might like a boy and you wanna marry that boy/

Amaar: Err (pulls a face)

Jarood: It doesn't matter yeah ... and you might want to adopt some children

Sarah-Jane: It doesn't matter who you are, what you are, a male or female if you/

Amaar: They're both male! (sounding astonished)

Sarah-Jane: Yeah, if they're male then they can find a lady and be like oh, I want to get married ... and then they can get a kid ... and then go away I hate you, I want a divorce

Sample of Interview transcript

Interview with *Stonewall's* Senior Education Officer (11/05/12) – Page 3

JH: Is there any legislation that you are pushing for now to strengthen the rationale for doing this work in primary school or are you relying on the Civil Partnership Act and the Education & Inspectors Act to provide a rationale?

SEO: Well, the bulk of our work - in the context of legislation - is about the Equality Act 2010 and The Public Duty ... so the Equality Act 2010 brought together various pieces of equalities legislation which meant, for example, you could not be turned away from any service, be it private or public, on the grounds of your sexual orientation ... it also meant that you couldn't be discriminated against at work on grounds of sexual orientation and the government also introduced The Public Duty, which puts a duty on all public bodies, including schools, to foster good relations, advance equality of opportunity and tackle discrimination and that is a very strong lever for us to work with because that puts a responsibility on schools to be preventing homophobic bullying as well as tackling it when it happens so we really work with that piece ... that is our major piece of legislation but a lot of our work isn't so much ... we don't go around school wagging fingers saying the law says you have to do this, therefore you must do this ... what we try and do is ... we try and take a carrot, rather than a stick, approach ... stopping bullying in your schools makes happier students, happier students means more productive students and productive students gives you good grades ... schools want to do well in the league tables and get good Ofsted reports and of course that brings us on to Ofsted ... we know that schools are very mindful of two things, they're very mindful of parents and they're very mindful of Ofsted and if Ofsted says they have to do something then they'll make sure they're striving to do that so working with the Equality Act and The Public Duty and Ofsted ... they're our main legislative and policy leaders that we use but we try not to focus ... I mean when we're doing work with schools, when I'm training trainee teachers I will talk to them for an hour and a half about homophobic bullying, what it looks like, what you can do and I'll spend 15 minutes on the legislation because they don't need to know about the ins and outs of the Equality Act 2012 ... they need to know bullying happens and these are things you can do to stop it in your schools

JH: So is legislation mainly for governors and head teachers/

SEO: Yes/

JH: So they can justify the work to parents/

SEO: Absolutely

JH: How important is that legislation for the senior management team?

SEO: Yeah, you're right ... it's much more important to senior managers ... the Education and Inspectors Act 2006, for example, puts a duty on school governing bodies to promote the well-being of all children and young people in their care so school governing bodies need to know about that ... senior managers all need to know about the Equality Act and The Public Duty and what their requirements are to publish equality objectives, for example, and they have to lead on that so yeah, for the school senior management ... they need to know about that and that is a great recourse for them if a parent comes into school and says why the bloody hell are you talking to my kids about this ... well actually it's part of our anti-bullying work which we have a legal responsibility to do and its making our school a safer place ... I think teachers, in the work that we do with teachers, we don't bang on at them so much about that because what they need is the tools to be

APPENDIX C – Lesson plans

Weirwold's Year 1 lesson plan for 'Different Families'



"Angry Birds Annual"

Read these books as well during "Diversity Week" as they also deal with families and family groups.

"We Belong Together"; "The Family Book"; and "It's Okay To Be Different" by Todd Parr; "Something Else" by Kathryn Cave; "Daddy's Roommate" by Michael Willhoite; "King and King and Family" Linda de Haan and Stern Nijland; "Spacegirl Pukes" by Katy Watson and Vanda Carter; "And Tango Makes Three" by Justin Richardson and Peter Parnell; and "Who's In A Family?" by Robert Skutch.

Activity 1

- 1) Look at selected pages from "Angry Birds".
- 2) Discuss the different coloured birds and their specific skills.
- 3) Discuss the skills the children have.
- 4) Create pieces of work based on "Knowing Me, Knowing You" Activity #14 "ABC of personal qualities"/#15 "My personal coat of arms"/#18 "We're All Different".
- 5) Can the children create an entirely new bird with new skills?
- 6) Create large pictures of the different birds. Write the birds' personal attributes on post-it notes or small pieces of paper. Stick these next to the bird they are written about.

Activity 2

- 1) Explore how an "Angry Birds" family might be made up.
- 2) Explore different families (use the Stonewall posters)
- 3) Draw a family tree - each child draws their own family. This could just be the people they live with. Children should be allowed to opt out if this is too intrusive. In this case they could draw a fictitious family they have made up or even a family such as "The Simpsons".
If the child is the trunk of the tree, s/he can decide which way the roots and the branches of the tree will grow and how they will be labelled. This more flexible structure validates many different kinds of families, leaving space for step-parents, birth parents etc. Extend this by looking at the Stonewall "Different Families" posters.

- 4) Following on from point 5 above, which new bird would the children include in their family? (Explore the idea of adoption. What does this mean?)

Activity 3

- 1) Look at Activity #19 "Qualities I Look For In People".
- 2) What is admirable about the different abilities of the Angry Birds?
- 3) Ask the children which Angry Bird would they like to have in their family? Why?
- 4) Vote to find the most popular Angry Bird. Which is most popular and why?

Activity 4

- 1) Children create self-portraits. Put a blank piece of paper under each displayed picture. Encourage the other children and adults to write positive comments under the pictures.
- 2) This can be extended to having an envelope with a child's name on in which others are encouraged to place positive comments written on small pieces of paper. The child whose envelope it is, takes the comments out at the end of the day, reads them either alone or to the class and then keeps them. The comments can either be stuck in a special book or taken home.
- 3) Write a "Me" poem:
Line 1: first name
Line 2: four things that describe you well
Line 3: brother/sister/daughter/son of
Line 4: who loves (3 people or ideas)
Line 5: who needs (3 things)
Line 6: who wonders about (3 things)
Line 7: who would like to see
Line 8: resident of (street name, town/area, city, country)
Line 9: last name

Activity 5

- 1) Make paper-bag, papier-mâché or finger puppets of their family. Use the puppets to create a dialogue or play.
- 2) Make paper-bag, papier-mâché or finger puppets of the Angry Birds. Use the puppets to create a dialogue or play.

Weirwold and Cutlers Year 2 lesson plan for 'Alternative fairy tales'



"The Paper Bag Princess" by Robert Munsch/Michael Martchenko

Read these books as well during "Diversity Week" as they also deal with similar themes.

"Giraffes Can't Dance" and "The Lion Who Wanted To Love" by Giles Andreae; "The Boy with the Pink Hair" by Perez Hilton and Jen Hill; "The Different Dragon" by Jennifer Bryan; "The Sissy Duckling" by Harvey Fierstein; "The Princesses Have a Ball" by Teresa Bateman; "Princess Smartypants", "Long Live Princess Smartypants" and "Prince Cinders" by Babette Cole; "Girls Will Be Boys Will Be Girls Will Be..." by Jacinta Bunnell and Irit Reinheimer; "Jump!" by Michelle Magorian; "It's A George Thing" by David Bedford and Russell Julian; "William's Doll" by Charlotte Zolotow; and "Oliver Button is a Sissy" by Tomie dePaola.

Activity 1

- 1) Read "The Paper Bag Princess": what is the story all about?
- 2) There are three characters in the story: Princess Elizabeth, Prince Ronald and the dragon. Think of adjectives to describe the three characters; write them on post-it notes and stick them on to pictures of the three characters.
- 3) Write sentences including these adjectives e.g. Princess Elizabeth is because she..... etc.
- 4) Everyone in the story has a name except for the dragon. What would be a good name for the dragon? Is the dragon male or female? Should the dragon have a gender-specific name, a gender-binary name or a gender-neutral name?

Activity 2

- 1) Paper bags are probably not the best material to use for clothes. Why? Which materials would be better? Design a suitable outfit for the princess to wear on her adventure to find the dragon and Prince Ronald.

- 2) Make an outfit for the princess using material swatches.
- 3) Write sentences to go with the materials to explain choices.

Activity 3

- 1) In the story, it is the princess who takes on the role of the prince in traditional fairy stories i.e. it is usually the prince who does the journeying and rescuing. Examine gender roles: make a poster of things that only girls can do, things that only boys can do and things that both boys and girls can do. Discuss. Repeat this activity for jobs that the different genders do. Discuss.
- 2) Debate: boys should get paid more than girls for the jobs they do even if they do the same job.

Activity 4

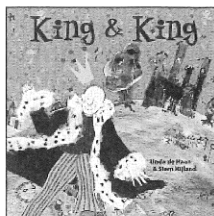
- 1) Prince Ronald was quite rude to Princess Elizabeth when she rescued him. Why was he rude to her? What should he have said? Rewrite this part of the story.

Activity 5

- 1) "They didn't get married after all." What happened to the prince and princess after the story ended? Did they have a relationship afterwards? If so, who with? Discuss relationships: they could've remained single; they could've lived with someone; they could've got married to someone; they could've had a same sex relationship. When discussing same sex relationships, use the correct terms i.e. gay and lesbian; ask the children what they understand by these terms. Show pictures of married couples including same sex couples.
- 2) What happened after the storybook ended? Write the next part of the story.

Activity 6

- 1) Create a piece of art/poster with the title "Wouldn't it be boring if we were all the same."



"King and King"

By Linda de Haan and Stern Nijland

Read these books as well during "Diversity Week" as they also deal with similar themes as "King and King".

"King and King and Family" by Linda de Haan and Stern Nijland; "Daddy's Roommate" by Michael Willhoite; "Hello Sailor" by Ingrid Godon; "The I Love You Book", "It's Okay to be Different" and "We Belong Together" by Todd Parr; "Who's In A Family?" by Robert Skutch; "Princess Smartypants" and "Long Live Princess Smartypants" by Babette Cole; "The Paperbag Princess" by Robert Munsch; "Friends" and "Something Else" by Kathryn Cave

Activity 1

- 1) Read "King and King"
- 2) What is the story about?
- 3) Reference similar traditional fairy tales e.g. Cinderella, Princess and the Pea, Sleeping Beauty - virtually any fairy tale where the princess marries the handsome prince!
- 4) What are the similarities and differences between traditional tales and "King and King"?

Activity 2

- 1) Brainstorm the ways in which we are all different: skin/eye/hair colour; height; body shape (be sensitive); talents and abilities; gender; sexuality (using age-appropriate language)
- 2) Make a poster which explores the gender-typical/traditional roles that children/adults take e.g. boys play football, girls do sewing; men go out to work; women stay at home and look after the children.
- 3) Explore how attitudes have changed e.g. not so long ago, married women couldn't be teachers; only men were senior managers

Activity 3

- 1) How do we show and tell our friends that they are our friends? What do we do if we fall out with our friends?
- 2) Draw a picture of your best friend. Write some describing words next to your picture e.g. happy, caring, special, etc. The picture caption could be "My Best Friend is called... S/He is..."
- 3) Share the pictures with the whole class and display them.
- 4) What kinds of things do we like doing with our best friends? Another caption with the picture could be "I like...with my best friend."

Activity 4

- 1) How do we show people we love them? How does this change for the different people in our life?
- 2) Discuss different relationships including when two people of the same sex love each other in a romantic way, we call them gay or lesbian. Explain the difference between two friends of the same sex who love each other and two friends of the same sex who love each other in a romantic way.

Explore these activities from "Knowing Me, Knowing You"

- #13 Who Am I?
- #14 ABC of personal qualities
- #15 Personal coat of arms
- #16 A Collage of Me
- #17 Different Parts of Me
- #18 We're All Different
- #20 Personal Tags
- #34 I enjoy being...



Planning for LGBT History Month

YEAR THREE: "Prince Cinders" by Babette Cole

This book deals with the Cinderella story but with a male central character. It deals with traditional and non-traditional gender roles with underlying themes such as body image.

Activity 1:

- ✓ MONDAY
 - 1) Read "Prince Cinders"
 - 2) Discuss: What should a prince/princess look like? Ref. "small, spotty, scruffy and skinny" or "...big hairy..."
 - 3) What should a prince own? Explore needs and wants - use PFEF resources on N: drive and in staffroom cupboards. Explore child's own needs and wants. Imagine if you were a prince or princess, how would your needs and wants be different/similar?
- ✓ TUES
 - 4) Explore traditional and non-traditional gender roles/emotions. Male: working, the "breadwinner"; Female: stay at home looking after the children, cleaning the home etc. Male emotions: don't show any(!); Female emotions: caring, loving, supporting. How are these different/similar these days? *DO ABC of JOBS ACTIVITY*
- ✓ ~~WED~~ ~~THU~~
 - Starts Discussion for THU.
 - 5) Explore body image. Prince Cinders wanted to be big and hairy like his brothers. Is this what it means to be a man? What if you're not big and hairy? Does this mean you're less of a man? Similarly with girls. We hear a lot more about body dysmorphia amongst girls and not so much about boys. Why? What about those boys who are addicted to body building/implants/silicone injections?
 - 6) Literacy: Write your own royal decree. Ref. Princess Lovelpenny's decree.
 - 7) Do you have to get married to "live happily ever after"? What about those people who choose not to get married? Are they any

less happy? Why do people choose to get married/choose not to get married? (Ref. civil partnerships for same sex couples.) Here you might want to look at the book "We Do" containing images of same sex couples. I'm also happy to bring in photos of my CP ceremony.

- ✓ 8) Compare "Prince Cinders" to the original (and far more gruesome) Grimm fairy tale.
- ✓ 9) What would have happened to Prince Cinders if the trousers hadn't fitted? Could he have resorted to doing something like the Grimm ugly sisters?
- ✓ 10) What is special about you/the clothes you wear/the way you act/the things you do?
- ✓ 11) On an A3 sheet of paper create a personal profile. Write down "Some of the boyish things I like doing are..." and "Some of the girlish things I like doing are...".
- 9 12) Activities: from "Knowing Me, Knowing You" (adapt as necessary)
 - Who am I?
 - ABC of personal qualities - *starter?*
 - My personal coat of arms
 - A collage of me — *adapt to make a cube for display, perhaps in a box, or suspend.*
 - We're all different
 - Qualities I look for in people
 - I enjoy being... - *Friday*.
 - ABC of jobs

		<p>important as everybody else. Prince Cinders was no less a man than his hairy brothers. Chn should not feel pressure to be like anyone or everyone else.</p> <p>EAL and SEN: Children supported by TA. Extend the children with open-ended questioning on issues.</p>	
Thursday			
<p>PSHE (Diversity Week) (60 mins)</p>	<p><u>WALT</u> Recognise that we are all different</p> <p><u>WILF</u> Useful contributions in class discussion</p>	<p>Ask chn what is a typical ending to a fairy story when a prince rescues or helps a princess or beautiful girl? Identify the typical 'happily ever after'. Discuss the 'happy ever after' ending to Prince Cinders.</p> <p>Ask chn <u>if you have to get married to live happily ever after?</u> What do you think happens? What happens when people decide not to marry? <u>What happens when men marry men or women marry women?</u></p> <p>Identify words gay and lesbian relationship.</p> <p>Discuss how <u>all relationships, where two people who love each other and have decided to live together and support each other for life, are equal.</u> May introduce <u>civil partnership.</u> Does anyone know people who have a civil partnership?</p> <p>Explain all families are important. Everyone's will be different - you have different rules, traditions, bed times to other people. There will be different types of people in your own household. Everyone's families is equally important and loving.</p> <p><u>Activity</u> Personal Coat of Arms. Show chn traditional coat of arms images and explain brie history. Chn will be creating their own personal coat of arms with: <u>My family</u> <u>My favourite activity</u> <u>Things I'm good at</u> <u>My favourite food</u></p> <p>EAL and SEN: Children supported by TA. Extend the children with open-ended questioning on issues.</p>	<p>Draft outline of coat of arms of card - NB name in the centre</p>
Topic	WALT Review our topic and	Introduce that we are going to review our topic from this term. Recap on what chn have	Topic review sheets

Cutlers Year 4 lesson plan for 'Challenging heteronormative masculinity and homophobic language'

<p>KS2 Literacy Unit Planner Autumn/Spring/Summer Term 2011/2012</p> <p>CLASS: 4 YEAR: 4 WEEK BEGINNING: 19 November 2012 UNIT FOCUS: Anti-Bullying and Overcoming Adversity weeks</p>	<p>INITIAL STIMULUS Drama - role play the behaviour and character traits of a duck Short video clip of The Sissy Duckling</p> <p>AUDIENCE+PURPOSE FOR WRITING Their peers.</p> <p>SPELLING/WORD/GRAMMAR/SENTENCE FOCI FOR UNIT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topic based vocabulary <p>UNIT LENGTH ___2___ weeks</p> <p>This is Week ___1___ of the unit</p>
<p>MAGPIE BOOKS</p> <p>Magpie books should be kept to hand at all times when reading and writing for pupils to 'grab' ideas for their own writing. In particular please 'grab' examples of well constructed complex sentences and well used connectives and allow them to generate models in a similar fashion during red/green pen slots in their Magpie books. Further guidance on Magpie books can be found on shared space.</p>	<p>GUIDING READING Targets and assessments are recorded on the agreed format and stored in a reading records file. Please indicate allocation of time on timetables for the teaching of handwriting strategies/spelling (Grammar for Writing= GFW Support for Spelling = SFS Nelson Handwriting =NH)</p> <p>RESOURCES - Scanned book on ppt of 'The Sissy Duckling' by Harvey Fierstein</p> <p>KEY ASSESSMENT FOCI FOR UNIT (APP) (IF REQUIRED)</p> <p>TERMLY LITERACY FOCUS Autumn-Reading Spring - Writing Summer - S+L</p> <p>FINAL OUTCOME FOR UNIT The children will create performance poetry based on the Anti-bullying and Overcoming adversity weeks theme - "Words can hurt".</p>

OBJECTIVES	AFL STRATEGIES	TEACHER NOTES/CLJ LINKS
<p>Week 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To understand and clarify the terms 'Anti-Bullying' and 'Adversity' - To create clear definitions - To understand what makes me special - To understand and explore a character <p>- To read and comment on 'The Sissy Duckling'</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To question what is right and what is wrong <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To examine gender roles - To discuss gender stereotypes <p>WEEK 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To react in role as a character being bullied - To write a diary entry about being bullied - To retell a story from a victim's point of view - To read poems about different situations - To collect words for a poem/rap of my own - To write my own poem/rap - To edit my poem/rap - ready to perform - To consider my voice, eye contact and body movement in my performance 	<p>AFL STRATEGIES</p> <p>Spellings</p> <p>Group 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> kind unkind duck stuck truck luck <p>Group 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> male female right fright wrong belong <p>Group 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> bullying anti-bullying special gender friend support <p>Group 4</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> adversity definition racial stereotype separate collaborator 	<p>TEACHER NOTES/CLJ LINKS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CLJ - links to the wheel - DRAMA - role plays, hot - getting into the role of the character. - PE - warming up; move like ducks. - HISTORY - people from the past who have 'Overcome Adversity'. - ART - creating a poster.

PLEASE REMEMBER A COVER SUPERVISOR OR SUPPLY TEACHER SHOULD BE ABLE TO TEACH FROM YOUR PLANS

WEEK 1	WHOLE CLASS WORK	ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES/SUCCESS CRITERIA	FOCUS OF PLENARY
<p>WEEK 1</p> <p>WHOLE CLASS WORK</p> <p>Key Questions & Activities</p>	<p>Indicate differentiated learning intentions</p> <p>Indicate guided focus groups and use of support staff by initial.</p> <p>Indicate SEN/EAL by child's initial if work is significantly differentiated (link to IEPs)</p>	<p>ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES/SUCCESS CRITERIA</p> <p>(May include teacher questioning/self-peer assessment/marking ladders/mini-plenaries etc)</p>	<p>FOCUS OF PLENARY</p> <p>Key questions (Return to objective/reflect on unit)</p>

<p>M O N D A Y</p>	<p>Child friendly Main Objective: To understand and clarify the terms 'Anti-Bullying' and 'Adversity' To work as a group and write a clear definition T explains to the chn that this week and next week are Anti-Bullying and Overcoming Adversity weeks. Tell the chn that these are key terms and they will hear them all week, perhaps in all lessons. Explain that by the end of the two weeks we want the chn to be very clear about their meaning so they can use the terms themselves later on in the future/life if they need to. T revisits the work the chn may already have done around Anti-Bullying the prev year. Asks the chn to 'talk to the person beside them' and explain what they remember 'Anti-Bullying' to mean. Brief T assessment. T scribes ideas for working wall. T displays LO. Tell the chn to help us write definitions for these, we first need to have clear understanding of what 'Bullying is'. Illicit ideas from the chn. Using small whiteboards ask the chn to work in groups of 2/3 to write what they think 'Bullying' means. Give the chn 5 mins to note ideas, key words, phrases. Come back together. As a whole class write a definition of 'Bullying'. T models writing a clear definition talking it through as he/she goes. T explains the 'jobs/role' of each person to enable the group to work well together and therefore write a successful definition. (Use badges made by Jill). Weekly spelling - T explains to the chn what their spelling words will be for the week, goes through any unknown words or misconceptions. Briefly discuss this week rule/spelling patterns. Chn practise 'look, cover, say, write, check' for 10 mins - quiz each other or use other strategies taught/known. This week: topic based.</p>	<p>In same ability groups chn write a definition to be used all week. Chn work in groups, first in pairs to note key points that should be included in the definition. Then chn get into 'group' role, share ideas and come to an agreement on large pieces of sugar paper for their definition. G & T/MA to write definition for 'Overcoming Adversity', given a wide range of dictionaries and definitions from other sources - chn to write own definition in own words. Ave/BA to write definition for 'Anti-Bully'. Given child friendly dictionaries and other sentence based phrases to explain Anti-Bullying, chn use ideas to write their own definition. SEN to create a poster for 'No bullying zone'. (On laptop - where appropriate).</p>	<p>Guided writing/group work T works with G & T to stretch. Learning objective: - To be a good group member - To help write a definition Main Teaching/modelling T uses small white board and lists chn ideas to begin with. Then has chn work in pairs and look up dictionaries and notes ideas from each pair. As a whole group, T models pooling ideas to one common definition and models writing this.</p>	<p>Mini plenary after 10 minutes. Stop the chn and asks what they are being asked to do. Revisit the LO and correct any misconceptions. T explains remaining time and revisits the success criteria. SUCCESS CRITERIA: - I can work well as part of a group - I can aid in writing a definition - I can understand what..... means</p>	<p>- what work do you remember doing/learning about 'Anti-Bullying'? - what activities or role plays did you take part in? - what did you learn? - how could you define/explain 'Bullying' to a younger child? - do we know what a 'definition' is? - what might be another word we could use instead of definition? - what do you have to do to make sure you meet the LO/have a successful lesson? PLENARY: Chn share their ideas from the sugar paper. As a whole class come together. Look for similar phrases, terms used and write 2 definitions the class can own and use for the next two weeks. Show the chn: Overcoming adversity/Anti-bullying clip. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nWJut7KQh14&feature=related</p>
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<p>T U E S</p>	<p>Child friendly Main Objective: To understand what makes me special Revisit prev days lesson, remind chn of our definitions for 'Anti-Bully' and 'Overcoming Adversity' and what we learnt. T tells the chn that to be brave and stand up to a bully it helps if you feel courageous and strong on the inside and good about ourselves first. T displays LO and explains that today we are going to remind ourselves about how special we all are. Ask the chn if they have been involved in other circle time or P4C sessions when they have discussed what they are good at or what makes me special. Brief class discussion. Ask the chn to 'think, pair, share' about how we, people, children, in general, can be 'unique' or 'special'. Give the chn 5 mins for this. Then have the chn share their ideas and T scribes on flipchart for working wall. T then explains that we are going to make this more exact and discuss ourselves. Have the chn stand in a circle and explain that we are going to play a memory game. Remind the chn of P4C rules, e.g. all contributions are valued, we don't laugh or put down others ideas etc. Have the first child turn to the person beside them and say one positive/nice thing about that person. E.g. you are good at football/drawing or you have pretty hair/eyes/smile. The next child has to say what was said about the person on their left and make a positive comment about the person on their right. This continues. T then models writing 3 statements about him/herself - I am really good at I can..... really well!</p>	<p>Chn write 3 positive statements about themselves. Chn use target cards to maximise sentence quality.</p> <p>Guided writing/group work T works with lower ability group, focus on group targets. <u>Learning objective:</u> - To write positively about myself <u>Main Teaching/modelling</u> T models thinking of all the things he/she enjoys in life and then questions if he/she enjoys them, does this mean he/she is good at it or just enjoys it. T models writing sentences on white board.</p>	<p>Mini plenary - after 10 mins stop the chn refer back to the teacher modelled writing on the board. Ask a child to read the LO and ask others what they have been asked to do. T clarifies what is being asked of the chn if needed. Tell the chn how much time is remaining and ask for volunteers who would like to share their 3 statements at the end of the lesson - the plenary. SUCCESS CRITERIA: - I can explain what is special about myself in 3 different statements.</p>	<p>-what did we learn in our last lesson? - what new words did we discuss/learn about? - what makes a person unique? -what makes a person special? - who can tell me something that makes..... (an adult) unique? - how is (an adult) special? - what is the person beside good at? -what is positive/nice about that person? - can you tell me something positive about their personality, work, behaviour in the playground? - what are you good at? - what makes you special/unique? PLENARY: Have chosen children share their statements or if whole class would like to, have the chn stand in a circle and share 1 statement each - "I am special because....."</p>
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<p>W E D</p>	<p>Child friendly Main Objective : To understand and explore a character T revisit prev days lesson and explains to the chn that for the next 2 weeks they will be reading a new text, a picture book by a man call Harvey Fierstein. T tells the chn that this particular text is a story about a special character. This special character is a duck. Ask the chn what do we know about ducks? Give the chn 'talk time' - talk to the person next to you. T or child scribes chn's ideas on IWB or flipchart for working wall. In hall, if possible, have the chn spread out and T asks them to pretend they are ducks. T calls out a specific duck like action e.g. waddling down the street, flapping their wings, quacking when communicating or hissing when angry etc. T models a general mind map of what he/she knows already about ducks: movements, habits, personality traits, likes/dislikes (like swimming & diving for fish/like the water).</p>	<p>In mixed ability groups the chn create a thought shower around what they already know about ducks.</p>	<p>Guided writing/group work <u>Learning objective:</u> To create a thought shower of what I already know Main Teaching/modelling T uses a small whiteboard and models the thought process of using adjectives under the headings: look, feel, smell and move , to describe ducks.</p>	<p>Stop the chn after 10 mins and refer them back to the LO and what has been modelled on the board already. Tell the chn how much time they have remaining and what they need to have completed for them to have a successful lesson. SUCCESS CRITERIA: - I can create a thought shower to show what I know about a character</p>	<p>- how do ducks behave? - what do we know about what ducks like/dislike? - how would you describe a ducks personality? - are cats naughty/playful/loving/kind.....? - show me how a duck may let you know he/she is angry, happy, impatient.... - give me an adverb to describe how ducks move, communicate etc..... PLENARY: T revisits LO and have Chn share their ideas. T scribes new ideas (with those from beginning of the lesson) for working wall. Have chn self assess using thumbs up/down method against the LO. Show chn: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LbOOPK8g0YA</p>
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<p>T H U R</p>	<p>Child friendly Main Objective To read and comment on 'The Sissy Duckling' To question what is right and what is wrong T explains to the children that as part of Anti-Bullying and Overcoming Adversity weeks we will be reading a specific book about a character who was bullied and overcome adversity. Introduce the story "The Sissy Duckling". Show the chn the front cover on IWB. Ask the chn what they think the story may be about. Ask the chn to 'think, pair, share', discuss the cover and what they think the word 'sissy' may mean. Give chn a chance to share their thinking. Tell the chn that this is a story about a duckling, Elmer, who is teased and who suffers discrimination (teacher explains discrimination to chn) simply for who he is. T reads the first 3 pages. Stop at this point and ask the chn "do you think Elmer is happy playing on his own?". Have the chn give the reasons behind their thinking. Ask the chn to clarify what types of things Elmer likes to play and ask the chn if they like to play/do the same sorts of things. T finishes reading the story. Ask the chn what they thought and what they now think the word 'sissy' means. T explains and corrects any misconceptions. Clarify "what Elmer's mother said and what we believe at". "<i>Sissy is a cruel way of saying that you don't do things the way others think you should</i>". T asks the chn 'why is Elmer proud of being a 'big sissy?' 'when does Elmer, if ever, feel bad about himself?'</p>	<p>As a whole class: T has 3 notices pinned up around the class or in the hall. 'Agree', 'Disagree', 'Not sure'. T reads out statements from IWB and asks the chn to stand by a sign that reflects how they feel. e.g. "women are better at caring for babies than men", "boys don't cry", "men are stronger than women", "boys are better at football than girls", "girls are better at ballet than boys". Differentiated statements for classes.</p>	<p>Guided writing/group work T to work with Ave chn <u>Learning objective:</u> To question if a statement is right or wrong about ourselves Main Teaching/modelling T works with chn and encouraged the group to discuss why they chose that position and see if they can persuade others to change their minds. Can the chn think of other statements.</p>	<p>Stop chn and remind them of a good quality sentence, using a connective, appropriate punctuation etc. Check understanding and correct any misconceptions. Remind chn what they need to have completed to have a successful lesson. SUCCESS CRITERIA: - I can question what I think, is right and what is wrong and give explanations to support my thinking</p>	<p>- what might this book be about? - why do you say that? - what do we think the word 'sissy' means? - is Elmer happy playing on his own? Why?/why not? - why have you moved to the 'agree' area? - can you explain why you disagree with the statement I read? PLENARY: T revisits LO, and asks the chn how they think they meet this today. Give chn the opportunity to 'talk to a partner' and decide what they now think is meant by the term 'sissy'. Tell the chn that they 'theme' of Anti-Bullying and Overcoming Adversity week is "Words can hurt". Ask the chn to think about Elmer being called a sissy. Do we think this hurt his feelings? Would it hurt our feelings? T refer to the LO. Is it right to use this word this way? Show chn: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V6IQYVoHfM Did this match the story we read today? Is it giving the view the same message? Would Harvey Fierstein have liked this version? Why?/why not?</p>
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<p>F R I</p>	<p>Child friendly Main Objective To examine gender roles To discuss gender stereotypes T revisits prev lesson and reminds the chn that this week and the next week are Anti-Bullying and Overcoming Adversity weeks. Remind the chn of the character we read about in the prev lesson (Elmer) and how he overcame adversity. Ask the chn to 'talk to a partner' about who else they can think of/have been discussing this week, who has overcome adversity in their life. Revisit what 'sissy' means. T asks the chn what other words have they heard that people use to put people down who 'don't do things the way others think you should'. E.g people who are different. T scribes ideas on flipchart and discusses words and meanings. Remind the chn that at our school or outside of school we don't use words (or do thing to others) to put them down whatever their differences. Discuss how fortunate/lucky we are to be in a school that celebrates differences and 'includes' everyone. (If the chn haven't already said it, include the words gay/lesbian etc.) T refers to the words on the flipchart and poses the question 'why do some people use these words as a put down?' Give the chn 'think, pair, share' time and come back as a class to discuss. Tell the chn the author of Elmer, Harvey Fierstein, is gay. Ask the chn if they think this could have helped him write the story? Ask, 'What experiences may he have had that led him to create this story?' T then refers to statements from previous day. Introduce or revisit the word 'gender' and the idea of gender roles. Discuss the place gender roles had in the past. E.g. women were expected to and it was expected men Say to the chn 'Elmer did a lot of things that are traditionally associated with girls. What are those things?' Can boys do those things as well? Why are boys labelled 'sissy' if they do things that girls 'usually' do? What label do we give girls who do things that boys 'usually' do? T explains that this is called 'stereotyping'.</p>	<p>G & T: Chn to work in mixed ability pairs and create points for a debate. "Boys should get paid more than girls for the jobs they do even if they do the same job." Other chn: Make a poster of things only girls can do, things only boys can do and things both boys and girls can do.</p>	<p>Guided writing/group work T to work with SEN <u>Learning objective:</u> - To discuss gender stereotypes Main Teaching/modelling T works with chn to reinforce the idea of equality and the idea of stereotyping. T models using key words correctly.</p>	<p>Mini plenary. Stop chn after 10 minutes and revisit the LO. Remind the chn of the key vocabulary that we are using today. T re-models using the vocab correctly and correct any misconceptions. Tell the chn of the remaining time and what they have to do to have a successful lesson. Britta's class: Tell the chn that we will be coming together to see what we have found out/learnt from our debate. Emily's class: Tell the chn they will be discussing their posters and seeing if they can agree on jobs/things that only boys or only girls can do. SUCCESS CRITERIA: - I can discuss roles of men and women in today's society.</p>	<p>- what other words can 'hurt'? - why do some people putdown others? - how do you think the author felt about these types of putdowns? - does anyone know that the word gender means? - what jobs/things can only boys/do? - what label/name do we give to girls who are good at things boys 'usually' do? - is that fair? - would this word hurt that girl/boy? Why? PLENARY: Come back together as a class and discuss what they have learnt today. Revisit the LO and assess their own progress against it. T shows chn a ppt of a variety of famous people who have overcome adversity - fought gender stereotyping. WEEKLY OUTCOME The chn will have a clear understanding of the terms 'adversity' and be able to discuss people or characters who have overcome adversity in their lives.</p>
WEEKLY SPELLING TEST					

M O N D A Y	<p>Child friendly Main Objective To react in role as a character being bullied To write a diary entry about being bullied</p> <p>T recaps prev week and reminds the chn that these two weeks are 'Anti-Bullying and Overcoming Adversity' weeks. Show the chn 'The Sissy Duckling' on the IWB and briefly sum up the story. T recaps that Elmer is different and unique (slides 3,4 and 5) and likes doing things that are not so different from what we like to do. Skip ahead on the IWB to the page where Drake Duckling starts to bully him. Have a child re-read slide 12 and 13. Discuss what is happening on these pages. (Elmer is being teased and bullied). Ask the chn 'is there a difference between being teased and being bullied? If so, what? Do the victims of teasing have the power to change the part of themselves that is the focus of the teasing? Could Elmer change who he was or what he liked to do?</p> <p>Remind / revisit the part in the story where Elmer tried to play base, to try to please his father. (slides 8 and 9).</p> <p>T explains to the chn that they are now going to try to get into role of Elmer and Drake etc and find out exactly how he was feeling.</p> <p>T organises chn into groups of 3/4 and explain they will need to be Elmer, Drake, a bystander and a collaborator. T models, or have a child model behaviours for each character e.g. the bully - 'threatening the bullied - being timid or intimidated the bystander - frowning, hands on hips, shaking head the collaborator - joining in with the bully and jeering</p> <p>Weekly spelling - T explains to the chn what their spelling words will be for the week, goes through any unknown words or misconceptions. Briefly discuss this week rule/spelling patterns.</p> <p>Chn practise 'look, cover, say, write, check for 10 mins - quiz each other on use other strategies taught/known. This week: recognise and spell suffixes ship, hood, ness and ment.</p>	<p>In mixed ability groups the chn take on the role as one of the 4 characters mentioned and act out the bullying scene from the story.</p> <p>SEN/EAL - given a copy of the book to follow. (Visual cues/prompts) TA to record their responses - their feelings.</p>	<p>Guided writing/group work</p> <p><u>Learning objective:</u> - To take on the role of a character</p> <p><u>Main Teaching/modelling</u> T discusses the characters with the group. Give chn 2 mins to decide which role they will take. Discuss the LO with the chn and illicit ideas from the chn about how bullies behave and how the chn who are bullied react - T scribes the descriptive language.</p> <p>Using this language T models ideas for each character and asks the chn for various other ways each character could react.</p>	<p>Stop chn after 10 minutes and remind them of the LO. Remind the chn of the teacher/child modelling on the carpet.</p> <p>Revisit the success criteria and have different chn explain what they need to have done or be doing to have a successful lesson.</p> <p>Give the chn the time they have remaining.</p> <p>SUCCESS CRITERIA: - I can react to a character in a bullying situation</p>	<p>- what is happening here/on this page? - is Elmer being teased or bullied? - what is the difference? - what would you have done if you were Elmer and Drake was bullying you? - would you react like Elmer did? - can the victims of teasing/bullying change what the thing that is causing the attention? - did Elmer want to change being him? - how do you think Elmer felt in these situations? - did Elmer react the right way? - how do you think his parents felt when he left home?</p> <p>PLENARY: Have chn write a list of words to describe how they or someone in their group felt - share with the class. T scribes ideas for next lesson.</p> <p>View as many of the role plays as possible. Have the chn assess their progress against the LO with a 1 - 10 rating or thumbs up/down.</p>
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<p>T U E S</p>	<p>Child friendly Main Objective: <u>To retell a story from a victim's point of view</u> T revisits prev lesson and re-reads the list of 'feelings' that were generated from the role plays. As a whole class revisit why bullying/teasing happens and what the consequences are on the victim. T has chn sitting in a circle and explain that they are going to retell the story, using sound effects to help them. T tells the chn that they are going to use 'pop' as a full stop and 'whoosh' to turn the page and/or move to something new. T models by beginning with "There was once a very special duckling called Elmer". Pop. The chn retell the main points of the story. (SEN have a copy of the book to support). T tells the chn that they are now going to retell the story so far using main events. Emily's class - T models using pictures from the text to order and retell the story. Remind the chn of 'chronological events' - ensure their retelling is in order of when the events happened. Britta's class - T uses 3 sentences on IWB to order and retell the events so far. Ask the chn to write 3 more ideas on small whiteboards to continue the retelling. Focus the chn on 'chronological events' - ensure their retelling is in order of when the events happened.</p>	<p>In same ability groups, chn order the story from the main points. G & T - retell from Drake's view point AA - to retell from Johnny's view point Average gp - to use 5 sentences to order and aid retelling, then add their own BA - given short sentences to read and order - with visual cues SEN/EAL - given pictures with few words to order - chn can physically go into the playground and order pictures.</p>	<p>Guided writing/group work <u>Learning objective:</u> To retell a story Main Teaching/modelling T uses pictures, sentences or words and asks the chn to help him/her to put the story into order. T illicit words from the chn that describe each phase of the story so far. Child scribes these words. T then uses the words and models retelling the story from a character's point of view.</p>	<p>Mini plenary. Stop chn after 10 minutes and revisit the LO. Remind the chn of the teacher modelling on the flipchart. Remind the chn of the 'main events' discussed and what can help them to order the story. T reminds chn of success criteria and the time they have remaining. SUCCESS CRITERIA: - I can retell and order a story</p>	<p>- what is a 'main' event? -what may come next? - what happened after that? - how did the character react to that? - what noise tells us to stop for a full stop? - is that the end of a main event? - what does 'chronological order' mean? PLENARY: Come back together as a whole class and use another sound, e.g. a whistle to represent the change of events and retell the main events, from a different character's point of view. Discuss how telling the story from different characters points of view may change the retelling slightly.</p>
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Weirwold's Year 5 lesson plan for 'Challenging heteronormative masculinity and homophobic language'



Planning for Diversity Week w/b February 6th 2012

YEAR 5: Oliver Button is a Sissy

Activity 1:

- 1) Read "Oliver Button is a Sissy": what is the story all about?
- 2) Why is Oliver Button called "a sissy"?
- 3) Brainstorm the names we have all heard to put someone down; brainstorm the names we have all heard to describe someone who does things differently to the way people think they should i.e. not gender-typical things. Explore the meanings of these words. Why do people say them? Explore the use of racist terms (be sensitive!). Explore use of the words "gay" and "lesbian" as a put down. Why? Why is it more acceptable to use homophobic language than racist/sexist language? (Is it?)
- 4) Compare with "The Sissy Duckling".

Activity 2:

- 1) Make a poster which explores the gender-typical/traditional roles that children/adults take e.g. boys play football, girls do sewing; men go out to work; women stay at home and look after the children.
- 2) Explore how attitudes have changed e.g. not so long ago, married women couldn't be teachers; only men were senior managers

Activity 3:

- 1) Make a personal poster: on an A3 piece of paper, write your name in big letters in the top middle; underneath either do a self-portrait or stick a photo. On the left-hand side write "Some of the boyish things I like doing are..." and on the right-hand side write "Some of the girlish things I like doing are..."

Activity 4:

- 1) Explore ways we include/exclude people from our groups in class/ playground. Why do people usually get excluded? Oliver Button was frightened to go to school. Why might some people also be frightened to go to school or work or walk down the street?
- 2) Explore stereotypes (activity from "Knowing Me, Knowing You"). Show the class pictures of Gareth Thomas (gay rugby player); Martina Navratilova; Graham Norton; Sue Perkins; Clare Balding; Justin Fashanu.

Knowing Me, Knowing You: 38. Picture triggers
- 3) Explore ways in which people try to fit in e.g. dressing alike; wearing clothes that identify us as a particular group; school uniform. Why do people try to fit in? What happens if you don't fit in? Maybe explore why gays/lesbians choose to "hide" their sexuality. Why might it be more difficult for a sportsperson to come out than a TV presenter? (Message: all forms of bullying are wrong)

Activity 5:

- 1) Create a graffiti wall. (Ref. "Oliver Button is a ~~sis~~ star!") What could we write to show how talented/clever etc. people are?

Activity 6:

- 1) Create a piece of art/poster with the title "We are all different. We are all special!"

APPENDIX D – Key to transcripts

...	brief pause
/	when a speaker is interrupted by another speaker
(comment)	background information (including body movement, tone of voice, emotion etc)
<i>Italics</i>	to emphasise a word or phrase
***	to signal that the following transcript is from another interview/ focus group
[...]	when material is edited out

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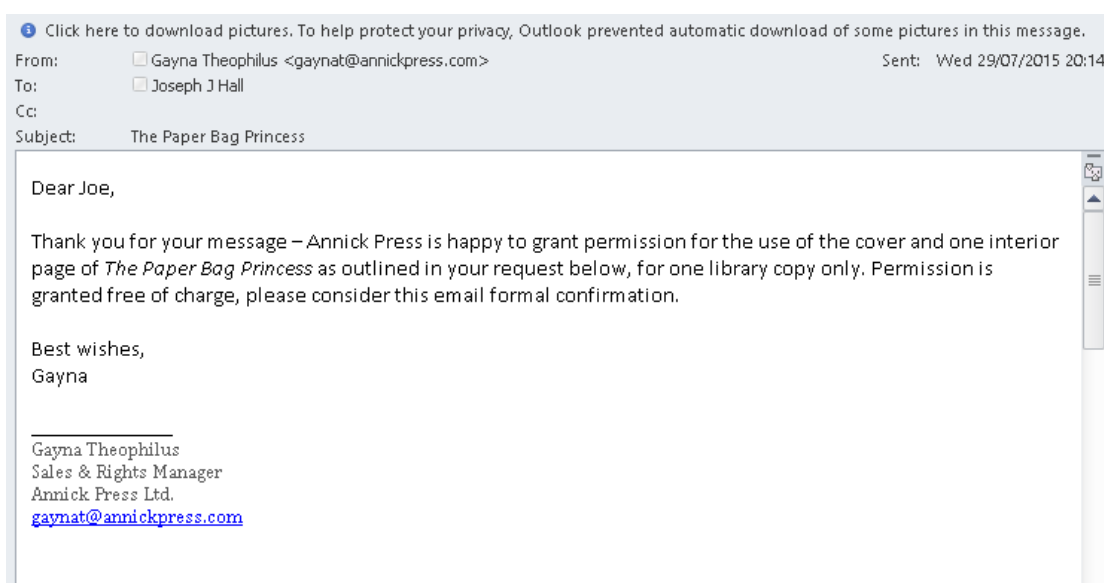
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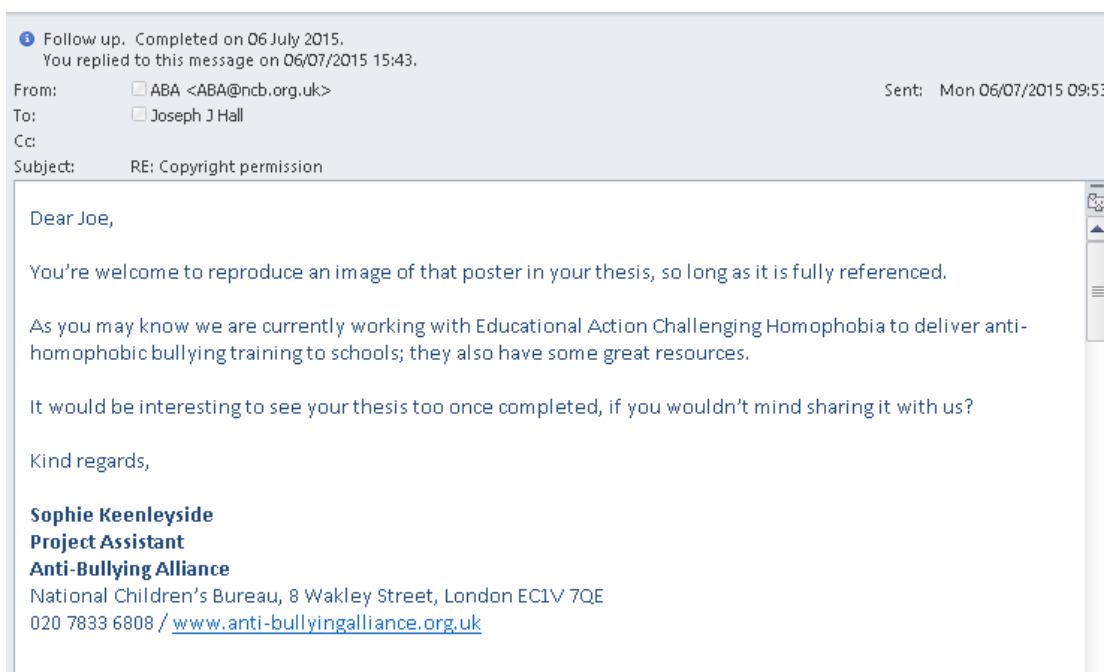
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