Teachers' awareness of Pupil Premium students through their lesson planning and delivery

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This thesis results entirely from my own work and has not been offered previously for any other degree or diploma.

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Abstract

This thesis reports on a series of case studies which examined how far the introduction of the Pupil Premium policy in English schools had affected the extent to which teachers considered social justice issues through their practice (DfE, 2010). The purpose was to examine how the policy was experienced in the classroom in order to explore the most effective ways to maximise its potential to address disadvantage. Five case studies of secondary school teachers, their lesson planning and the secondary data available to them were developed to explore the following concerns: the extent to which knowledge of Pupil Premium influenced planning of the observed lessons, how far the participants evaluated the impact of their teaching in relation to social difference, the role played by Pupil Premium in the participants' approach to homework and underlying thoughts and feelings about the national and local policies. The study found that, despite additional funding and explicit identification of need based on disadvantage, the policy had limited impact on teachers' classroom practice. The five case studies highlighted conflicts created by compelling teachers to examine pre-existing understandings about the nature of justice and fairness regarding students from socially disadvantaged backgrounds. Several deficiencies in current Pupil Premium policy were also highlighted including issues of identification, accountability and lack of information. Practical recommendations were proposed to help improve educational inequality through more effective use of funding. These included greater information and training for teachers, improved interaction with parents and a re-evaluation of the primacy of examination attainment data to measure the success by school leaders and policy makers. Little attention has been given to secondary teachers' experience of Pupil Premium policy particularly in schools whose few eligible students appear to be making good progress based on attainment data.

Contents

Acknowledgements

I wish to express thanks for assistance given in preparation of this research to the teachers and schools who participated in the study.

List of Abbreviations

CATs	Cognitive Ability Tests, England
CPD	Continued Professional Development, England
DfE	Department for Education, England
DWP	Department of Works and Pensions, England
EEF	Education Endowment Foundation, England
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education, England
INSET	In-service training for teachers, England
SATs	Statutory Assessment Tests, England
SIMS	Student Information Management System, England

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Chapter 1 Introduction

This thesis reports on several case studies which examined how far the introduction of the Pupil Premium policy had affected the extent to which teachers consider social justice issues in the classroom (DfE, 2010). The Government describes the Pupil Premium as, "additional funding for publicly funded schools in England …designed to help disadvantaged pupils of all abilities perform better, and close the gap between them and their peers" (DfE, 2018a, p. 1). Schools receive Pupil Premium funding for each pupil registered as eligible for free school meals (FSM) at any point in the previous 6 years. FSM is a statutory benefit available to school-aged children from families who receive other qualifying welfare benefits such as Income Support (DWP, 2013). FSM eligibility is often used as an indicator of pupils whose family income suggests that they are living in poverty (Gorard, 2012). Pupil Premium funding currently stands at £1,320 per year for pupils in reception to Year 6 and £935 per year for pupils in Year 7 to Year 11. In addition, schools receive a higher rate of £2,300 per year for any pupil who has been in local authority care or those identified as having left local authority care because of adoption, a special guardianship order, a child arrangements order or a residence order (DfE, 2018a). In 2017-18, over 1.9 million children were eligible for some form of Pupil Premium funding, 99,000 of these at the higher rate (Foster & Long, 2018).

Five case studies of secondary school teachers were developed which explored the following areas: the extent to which knowledge of Pupil Premium influenced planning of the observed lessons, how far the participants

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evaluated the impact of their teaching in relation to social difference, the role played by Pupil Premium in the participants' approach to homework and underlying thoughts and feelings about the national and local policies. The case studies were established from lesson observations, planning documentation, semi-structured interviews and official documents. These case studies were used to highlight deficiencies in the current practice and to suggest practical methods to help improve educational inequality.

Educational inequality based on income continues to be a significant issue in English secondary schools (Ball, 2013, 2010; Feinstein,1998; Gillborn, 2000; Goodman & Burton, 2012; Reay, 2012, 2017; Whitty, 2016). According to United Kingdom (UK) government figures, there are significant differences in educational achievement between students from low income families and everyone else. At General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) level, attainment was lower for disadvantaged pupils compared to all other pupils across all headline measures in 2017. The gap in GCSE attainment between students identified as disadvantaged and all others stood at approximately 27% in 2015 (DfE, 2015a). The way in which this gap is quantified has changed but even using the government's own measure of Average Attainment 8 score by pupil characteristic, the gap between disadvantaged students and all others remains significant. Attainment 8 is a complicated method designed to encourage schools to offer a broad and balanced curriculum. It measures the average GCSE achievement in up to 8 qualifications by giving each student a score calculated by converting examination grades into points and dividing by 10. Some subjects are given

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greater value with English and mathematics worth double points. The average points score for disadvantaged pupils in 2017 was 37 in comparison to the average for all other pupils which stood at 49.8 (DfE, 2018). Students from less well-off backgrounds are disadvantaged right across the education system. They are more likely to start school unable to read and are less likely to go into higher education than students from more affluent backgrounds. As someone who qualified for free school meals (FSM) during my own education, I would be considered as disadvantaged by the government data. As such, I have retained a keen interest in the link between socio-economic background and educational achievement. Trying to do something to address such inequality was one of the reasons I became a teacher. It also played a part in motivating this research. As a teacher, I am aware of the opportunities afforded to those on the front line of education to counter issues of social injustice. Indeed, many teachers describe altruistic reasons for entering the profession linked to making a difference by improving lives (Fullan, 1993; Heinz, 2015; Manuel & Hughes, 2006; Spear et al., 2000). However, I am interested in suggestions that, rather than combatting inequality in schools, teachers compound the issue. By tempering approaches based on unconscious perceptions of socio-economic background, teachers could adversely affect student progress. It is also possible that deliberate differentiating of teaching behaviour in response to prior knowledge of material disadvantage could have the opposite effect and help to bridge the gap in achievement.

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Educational inequality is identified as a top UK government priority and the Pupil Premium initiative represents a significant compensatory measure (DfE, 2010). Introduced in 2011, the policy was designed to provide additional school funding for children classed as having a deprived background, and those who had been looked after by a local authority for more than six months. A 'deprived background' was defined as students who currently qualified for free school meals (FSM) or had received them at any time during the previous six years. Although such definitions are somewhat arbitrary, they proved useful during the research for establishing a link between being identified as Pupil Premium and social deprivation. In the financial year 2017 to 2018, secondary schools received £935 additional funding for each pupil who had qualified for free school meals at any time during the previous 6 years. In addition, schools were given £1900 for every pupil in local authority care or those who had moved out of local authority care due to changing circumstances (DfE, 2018a). The purpose of the funding was to help raise the attainment of disadvantaged pupils, but it was left to the individual schools to decide how to spend this money. However, schools had to show evidence that they were using the funding effectively (DfE, 2014). Students from poorer backgrounds were highlighted by the scheme and schools were encouraged to improve attainment for this group. The role which teachers were expected to play in this was of particular interest to me as a classroom practitioner. The situation that the policy created was at the heart of this research.

This study explored how teachers' understandings and knowledge around pupil economic backgrounds influenced their lesson planning as well as how

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much impact they felt that the UK government's Pupil Premium policy was having on their classroom practice. What follows is an outline of the research questions as well as a review of literature relating to teacher perceptions of social justice and fairness, planning for disadvantage, implementing policy and specifically the Pupil Premium scheme. The methodological approach is discussed before the findings, recommendations and conclusions are detailed. It is hoped that this study will prove valuable in highlighting and improving teaching approaches to disadvantaged students as well as evaluating the effectiveness of the Pupil Premium policy.

1.1 Research Questions

The research addresses the following questions:

1. Has the introduction of Pupil Premium and its explicit identification of disadvantaged students affected teaching and planning?
   - Do teachers evaluate the impact of their teaching in relation to social difference?
   - What impact do they perceive their interventions are making?

2. To what extent do teachers take social difference into account when planning lessons and homework?
   - Do teachers feel this is necessary or desirable?
   - What form does such planning take?
   - Do they feel that they do enough in this regard?

3. What practical lessons can be learnt about identification and planning to improve attainment?

As a relatively recent initiative, Pupil Premium and its potential impact on students from poorer backgrounds is an area ripe for research. However, enough time has passed for the scheme to be sufficiently embedded to allow closer scrutiny of how it has affected teacher perceptions and planning. This study aimed to give voice to practitioners at the 'chalk face' who see the effects of the scheme first-hand. Since Pupil Premium identifies students from disadvantaged backgrounds, teachers can be more proactive in addressing issues of educational achievement linked to difficulties at home. This combination of government requirements and social responsibility should encourage teachers to do more to help their students who are most in need. The extent to which this actually occurs is explored below. The findings may be used to help other teachers get the most out of the scheme and, more importantly, to shape school policy towards an approach which will maximise the effectiveness in bridging the gaps of attainment and opportunity for children from poorer backgrounds.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

This study explores the extent to which teachers tailor and adapt their teaching to the socio-economic circumstances of individual pupils as well as how far this was influenced by specific government policies. Every week, secondary teachers in the UK see many students all with different and distinct educational needs. It is the teachers' task to ensure that the educational experience of all their students is as fair and effective as possible. Teachers are required to "plan and teach well-structured lessons" as well as being able to "adapt teaching to respond to the strengths and needs of all pupils" in addition to understanding factors that can inhibit pupils' ability to learn (DfE, 2013, p. 11). These factors can include ability, gender, ethnicity as well as the students' preferred methods of learning. Awareness of these issues and how they are manifest, both outside and within the school, play a significant role in teaching approaches. This study focused specifically upon teacher understandings and knowledge relating to pupil economic disadvantage and how far this influenced their lesson planning and practice. However, many other areas of research were utilised to inform the final conclusions.

As the research questions offered opportunities to investigate numerous avenues of social justice at play in the classroom, constructing the parameters of the literature review was challenging in terms of refining the scope. It was necessary to keep key thematic areas in sharp focus. These areas were informed by the research questions, in the first instance, and latterly by the initial analysis of the research data. The key areas of literature review identified included social justice in education, teacher perspectives of class,

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home/school interactions as experienced through homework and the Pupil Premium policy itself. The approach to reviewing literature relating to each theme took on a slightly different aspect.

Analysis of relevant literature, keywords and phrases on the themes of 'social justice' and 'education' was used as a starting point for the literature review. This was further refined to focus primarily on literature which also concerned 'equality' and 'social class'. Narrowing such broad themes into workable searches proved challenging. Therefore, searches using variations on common themes were undertaken and those which appeared most regularly and with most citations were given priority. Within the wider area of education and social class, 'teacher perceptions' and 'expectations' were used as key phrases to highlight literature which informed my research into the reactions of the participants to the Pupil Premium policy. This developed to include 'social justice' and 'fairness' in the classroom and is detailed below under the heading 'social class and teacher responses'. Further refinements were used to identify research on the themes of 'homework' and 'parental involvement' which suggested links between achievement and social class which were at the heart of my research. A second strand of the review which gave context to many of the more theoretical works was research concerned with the implementation and translation of education policy by teachers. Policy research relating to social class and disadvantage was reviewed which developed to include specific research into the Pupil Premium policy. This included motivations and justifications of the scheme as well as investigating how it had been evaluated previously.

In providing context for the entire study, it was important to ensure that I knew as much as possible about the Pupil Premium policy itself. As a result, I endeavoured to identify and review all policy documents and academic articles relating to the subject. With a finite amount of literature produced on this particular area, the task of selecting relevant works to review was relatively straightforward. I decided to focus exclusively on UK-based research and documents relating to the UK policy rather than equivalent policies in other countries as the case studies were grounded very much in their own context. Voucher systems in the USA and other such compensatory measures may well have influenced the architects of the UK Pupil Premium policy, but for the purposes of this research, I was much more interested in how it was experienced in the five case study schools rather than its antecedents.

As a government scheme, there was a lot of official information about the Pupil Premium policy. By searching within government websites, the main policy papers were highlighted several times. An initial search of the GOV.UK search engine threw up 456 results. By using the site's filter tool, it was possible to restrict the search to governmental bodies linked to education such as the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted), the Department for Education (DfE) and the National College of School Leadership (NCSL). Press releases and speeches were discarded due to the lack of depth and objectivity. With still a large amount of data, and since the study related to secondary education, documents exclusively concerned with primary and

early years provision were also excluded. Many of the documents were advice and specific instructions for schools as well as templates for recording data. Familiarisation with this work was important for context but did not provide much insight. It proved more challenging maintaining workable searches for the more general themes underlying this research.

Numerous searches including online databases, hand-searching journals and library catalogues were utilised to explore relevant research. In addition to the University of Lancaster library catalogue, the following databases were employed; ProQuest Central, Taylor & Francis Online, JSTOR Journals, SAGE, Directory of Open Access Journals and Wiley Online Library. An integrative literature review was conducted for the purposes of interpreting and synthesising peer-reviewed work (Booth et al., 2012). Initially, literature was limited to work carried out in UK and the United States of America (USA), but this was later extended to include work from other English-speaking countries. There appeared to be sufficient similarities in educational structures to justify the inclusion. Work of a qualitative nature was also prioritised although, through the course of research, findings from quantitative studies were used for further illustration.

After compiling a workable sample, the literature was evaluated in a systematic manner to assess relevance. Initially, this was through a review of available abstracts to remove studies of limited value to my own work. Those which remained were critically appraised for significance and quality. The search was further refined to prioritise studies from the UK, those from the

21st century and those focused upon the responses of teachers. Focussing primarily on work from the UK allowed for greater specific insight into the educational environment within which my own study was set. Since the study concerned the introduction of a relatively new policy, more recent research into policy implementation appeared to have greater relevance. To ensure academic quality and value, peer-reviewed articles were given precedence and the frequency of citations were considered where these data were available. Once initial reviews and reading had taken place, a certain amount of "snowballing" took place (Greenhalgh & Peacock, 2005). That is, identifying references using reverse citation tracking to find articles that cited works already deemed relevant. However, with a research project which touched upon so many areas of educational research, it was necessary to continue adding to as well as refining the literature as the project developed.

Refining the scope of literature reviews into social justice and education proved much more challenging. The volume of research in this area made the task of creating a manageable approach to the review paramount. By basing criteria for consideration on number of citations in peer-reviewed journals, initial research highlighted highly-regarded and well-debated key studies such as Rist (1970) and Hollingshead (1949). However, to further refine the review, the timeframe and location was augmented to focus upon work carried out over the last three decades in English speaking countries. Within these parameters, studies within the UK were given precedence. This was to ensure greater relevance in terms of educational as well as geographical context to the case studies of English teachers in English

schools. A similar approach was taken with the review of literature into home/school relationships and homework, as well as teacher perceptions of class. Although priority was given to qualitative studies, quantitative research was also considered, not least, since it could often provide convenient overviews of theory from a distinct perspective.

It was also necessary to limit the focus primarily to studies focused on teachers rather than schools or students since teacher perceptions and experiences were at the forefront of the study itself. For the same reason, the related concepts of school culture and ethos were not prioritised. It would have been interesting to look at student reactions and responses to compensatory measures and teacher input, but this would have been outside the remit and scope of these case studies. The focus had always been teachers rather than students and it was partly because of this that the schools were prepared to participate in the first place. Even with the literature relating to policy implementation, the focus was on teachers as policy actors rather than how the schools interpreted and implemented policy. The focus here was very much on the individual experiences and, as such, studies based on personal testimony and interviews were prioritised. In many school-based situations, and with the Pupil Premium policy in particular, the effect of school culture, ethos and management style would undoubtedly inform the nature of policy implementation. However, not only would this represent a significant move away from the main focus of the research as expressed through teacher perception, but also the nature of the schools chosen to participate, and the evidence provided from their policy documents suggested

a commonality in approach which may have limited the significance of such considerations. The five case studies provided such rich insight into the lived experiences of classroom practitioners trying to make sense of government policy, that the main challenge of the literature review was to manage the scope and volume of supporting research.

2.1 Social Class and Teacher Responses

General theories of 'social justice', 'fairness' and 'equality' were initially considered to help provide a framework within which to understand the issues under investigation (Apple, 2012; Fraser, 1997, 2007; Freire, 1972; Gewirtz, 1998; Rawls, 2001; Smith, 2012; Young, 1990). Different theories had their relative merits but lacked something of the practical application required to understand the processes and experiences explored in my research. While undoubtedly thought-provoking, Rawls's imagined agreement of fairness from behind a 'veil of ignorance' appeared incongruously philosophical besides my own real-life study of educational policy and teacher practices. I would also agree with theorists, such as Fraser, who would argue that Rawls gives insufficient consideration to issues of recognition, wherein justice is denied those whose culture or background is denigrated by a dominant culture. Fraser suggests that social justice cannot be understood exclusively through redistribution of resources but also through dimensions of recognition and representation. These ideas proved useful in highlighting the interconnectedness of these dimensions, not least since the Pupil Premium policy could be interpreted as redistribution based on recognition. However, in giving each dimension of justice equal status, Fraser underplays the

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primacy of economic factors in shaping the reasons behind cultural

misrecognition and political misrepresentation. Like Fraser, Young challenges

the reduction of social justice to primarily matters of redistribution and

highlights many interesting ideas about social justice. However, the focus on

marginal excluded groups, who I had little chance of observing or identifying

in my own study, tempered the appropriateness of Young's work here.

Moreover, Young relies on an understanding of theory and discourse which

may have been beyond the scope of many teachers when it came to

application of ideas to influence improvements. Freire provided more

insightful ideas about education particularly identifying teaching as a political

act. However, his writings are clearly situated in Freire's own historical

context. The oppressive model of authoritarian educational systems or

'banking education' appeared quite far removed from the interactive teaching

and learning approaches witnessed in the participant schools. Furthermore,

his proposed alternative emancipatory model felt impractical in the modern

UK situations studied. As Gewirtz (2006) suggests, questions of social justice

in education need to be understood in context rather than at a purely abstract

level. By using Bourdieu as a conceptual lens through which to view the Pupil

Policy in context, it was possible to effectively interpret and understand the

findings of this research.

During the initial literature review, I began to realise how theorists in the area

of social justice were often reliant on Bourdieu's ideas about social capital and

habitus (Bourdieu, 1977, 1985, 1989, 1990, 2004). It could be said that

Bourdieu's ideas about social reproduction project a pessimistic outlook for

addressing inequality. If we are to accept that an individual's cultural capital is determined by their class habitus or social framework rather than education, then any changes to education policy may have little additional effect. Moreover, Bourdieu has a quite negative take on the role of education in general and he doubts its ability to affect change. He sees educational systems as agents of social reproduction which promote the ideas of the dominant class rather than serving society as a whole. Such ideas ran counter to my own feelings about the power of education to affect positive societal change. Indeed, although the attainment gap between economically less well-off students and their peers remains unacceptably high, the fact that the gap continues to narrow could be said to contradict social reproduction theory. Some of Bourdieu's concepts can be hard to quantify and this appears to leave plenty of room for different interpretations. Despite this, there was a lot about Bourdieu's approach which appealed, and I found his theories a most effective lens through which to understand the manifestation of social inequality at play in the classrooms studied in this research. So much of what Bourdieu describes seemed apparent in the observations, policy documents and teachers' perspectives which made up the case studies. His ideas provided a useful basis for understanding how social capitals are inter-related, such as the link between academic success and economic status. Subsequently, Bourdieu's work was able to provide a practical foundation which informed the nature of recommendations which resulted from the study's findings.

Looking more widely at injustice in the context of education, Gewirtz (1998) provided an accessible overview through her critical analysis of prominent theories and traditions. Smith (2012) also gave brief overviews and definitions of key topics and their application to education. Like Apple (2012), Smith detailed methods and ideas about the extent to which education policy and practice in the UK can lead to a more socially just society. The review offered by Ayers et al. (2009) looked at numerous areas including pedagogy which complemented the practical classroom approaches to social justice discussed by Arshad et al. (2012). However, rather like the extensive list of characteristics for socially just teaching offered by Kaur (2012), there is an emphasis on an ideal which may be difficult to replicate in the real world on a daily basis. Kaur suggests that teachers should engage learners in critical thinking, care about students and foster relationships with them and their families, make learning meaningful, challenge injustices in education and society, understand and interrogate their own beliefs and attitudes as well as their own role in sustaining the status quo (p. 486). These represent noble aspirations but the day-to-day pressures, particularly relating to examination results, expressed by the participants in this study, suggest a difference between what the teachers ideally should, and would, like to do and the reality of their situation. The gap between the ideal and the lived experience was relevant to this study, particularly when it related to issues of fairness. Deutsch's work on equality, fairness and inclusive teaching proved useful in understanding the research participants' own approaches (1975, 1985). Deutsch, like Welch (2000), explores how multiple definitions of fairness can challenge preconceived teacher assumptions. However, the dimensions of

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difference described relate primarily to SEN which may be more apparent than socio-economic status. Even so, this work on inclusive practices in SEN highlighted the significance of relevant knowledge and understanding in the classroom.

Teacher understanding of social class and responses to disadvantage have been widely identified, defined and researched. Whitty (2001) claims that social class has dominated the sociology of education in the UK in recent years. Nevertheless, it proved challenging to restrict investigations into research which appeared immediately relevant. Many well-renowned, classic studies have looked at variations of educational experience based on social class (Hollingshead, 1949; Rist, 1970; Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968). Although these studies took place in the USA quite some years ago, they still retain relevance for research into the interactions based on class which occur between teachers and students in the UK today. The idea raised in these studies by Rist and others that teachers label, prejudge or even single students out for differential treatment according to social class is certainly compelling. As such, the findings of these studies have been debated ever since. However, the world is unquestionably a different place now and it would be difficult to draw too many parallels between post-war USA and present-day UK. Yet Rist provides useful insights into how issues of class and the inner workings of the classroom can be investigated through the use of observation and interview. The luxury of time as well as the access to school and home which Rist was able to secure would certainly help in any such study. However, Rist's analysis of teacher judgements of ability based

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on appearance and/or class provided a suitable starting point for my own research into teacher perceptions and reactions.

Much research is critical of the role played by teachers in relation to disadvantage. Hargreaves (2006), Becker (1970) and Keddie (1973) conducted studies which suggested that teachers initially evaluate pupils in relation to their own stereotype of the ideal pupil. Hurrell (1995) notes that the popular consensus in the 1990s was that teachers discriminate against pupils on the basis of social class, ethnicity, and gender. However, she continued that the research in this area has frequently failed to demonstrate whether teachers respond to some pupils more than others because of their social attributes or as a reaction to their behaviour. In fact, Hurrell suggested that evidence of social discrimination by teachers is quite limited. Whether teachers do treat children in line with their preconceived expectations has long been debated (Claiborn, 1969). Brophy's work on self-fulfilling prophecy and teacher expectations also questions the extent of the effects (1983, 2010). Brophy makes a persuasive case that whatever expectancy effects exist, they would be minimal for most teachers. Rubie-Davies (2007, 2010) suggested class can influence teacher expectations but the limited manner in which she operationalised different types of teacher creates a sense of artificiality. This is similar to much of the work on teacher expectancy viewed through the lens of psychology. Namrata (2011), using more qualitative methods, still found evidence that learner outcomes are shaped by the expectations of the teacher: expectations which may be based on false assumptions. Many of these studies were conducted in primary school

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settings where teachers have more interaction and, therefore, possibly more effect on individual pupils than those in secondary schools. It was interesting to investigate if, after so much research highlighting the negative effects of labelling, the Pupil Premium scheme could have the opposite effect by encouraging proactive approaches based on perceptions of socio-economic background. Deliberate differentiating of teaching behaviour in response to prior knowledge of material disadvantage to help to bridge gaps in achievement was a key issue in this research project.

Gillborn and Youdell's (2001) study was useful in positioning ideas about the negative aspects of expectations in the context of recent school policies. They proposed that teachers' perceptions have a negative effect on student progress as they often consider working-class students to have less ability. As a result, these students were put in lower-setted classes and were consequently denied the knowledge and opportunity to get the best grades. However, my own knowledge and experience of the processes at play within schools and the myriad methods teachers use to set students makes such assertions difficult to justify. Dunne and Gazeley (2008) agreed that schools are complicit in creating working-class underachievement because of teacher assumptions. This research is quite critical of the teachers in the study, suggesting that they are more inclined to look at factors external to the school rather than their own practice when it comes to explaining uneven class achievement. However, despite their conclusions, the excerpts used by Dunne and Gazeley suggest that it is as much a lack of specific information

about background which creates difficulties rather than the ingrained prejudices they propose.

Prejudicial views about working-class parents are expressed by staff in several studies (Gewirtz et al., 2005; Wood & Warin, 2014; Wood, 2018). However, there remain opportunities to examine if this is consistent in all contexts and if greater understanding can be drawn from more in-depth analysis of teachers' perceptions. Reay (2006) proposed that the lack of value attached to working-class culture may be the result of a prevailing focus in education on internal school processes (as represented by Pupil Premium) at the expense of understanding the influence of the wider economic and social context on schooling (p. 289). If correct, this has significant implications for the Pupil Premium policy and its associated student identification which could result in more explicit challenging of working-class culture. This, and subsequent work by Reay (2017), is especially insightful at investigating the processes experienced by teachers as it offers wider context in terms of national education strategy. Ingram too raises concerns about harmful effects of the misinterpretation and vilification of working-class culture in schools (2009, 2018). It was interesting to explore if a lack of recognition of these wider influences will inevitably lead to national policies such as Pupil Premium being unsuccessful as Archer and Yamishita (2003) suggest.

Teachers and their understandings of social justice face significant criticism in the literature due to the negative effects their prejudices can have on learners. However, there are limited instances in the literature where the teachers can

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address this. From my own experience as a teacher and through the case studies described below, the criticism does not always seem justified. Of the teachers observed in this study, there appeared to be a significant amount of confusion as well as underdeveloped or unquestioning understandings of socio-economic differences. However, all the participants were broadly aware of issues of inequality caused by social difference. Also, as self-identifying caring professionals, they tried to address these problems to some extent. Often the deficiencies in approach were contextual rather than theoretical. This study aims to address the gap which exists in the literature for teachers' voices to be heard in order to explain the processes which inform their practice.

2.2 Home/School Relationships Experienced Through Homework and Parental Involvement

A lot of criticism aimed at teachers suggests a lack of appreciation of poorer students' home situations. To investigate how teachers' perspectives of economic disadvantage might influence student attainment, I researched relationships between home and school through planning, homework and parental involvement. Much literature explores the link between homework and achievement including meta-analysis by Aries and Cabus (2015). Despite reservations about the validity of some of the studies reviewed, they highlighted consistent evidence for a positive influence of homework on achievement as did Cooper et al. (2006) and Driessen, Smit and Sleegers (2005). However, rather like the research compiled by Eren and Henderson (2008), Paschal et al. (1984) and Trautwein (2007), there remains an

overreliance on statistical data. All underline a positive correlation between homework and achievement, but they are unable to fully explain why this happens in practice and how it might be affected by social class. Marzano and Pickering (2007) also use meta-analysis to claim that homework is an effective means of developing good study habits and fostering positive attitudes which complements the research on parental involvement in homework by Hoover-Dempsey et al. (2001). They offer suggestions for schools to utilise parental involvement in homework more effectively but focus on the perspective of parents rather than teachers. Solomon et al. (2002) point out that the relationships between homework, parental support and achievement is not clear cut. Their interviews with families show greater understanding of the issue than much of the quantitative research, showing how, despite positive effects, homework can also lead to conflict and anxiety within the home. The grounded approach taken by this study allowed the researchers to investigate different perspectives of the same events and experiences of both the parents and teenagers interviewed. However, within the constraints of a smaller scale study, greater structure and focus as to the line of questioning was more appropriate for my own research.

An interesting aspect considered by Holmes and Croll (1989) was the link between homework and achievement of pupils from different social backgrounds. Although completed some years ago, the research is still relevant and revealing. They suggested that the relationship between the effects of time spent on homework and performance was stronger for pupils from working-class families. The self-reporting aspect of the study posed

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questions about the validity of student responses but the link between social class and the effectiveness of homework in improving attainment presented a significant avenue for further investigation. Daw (2012) found that higher income students gain more knowledge from their homework time than their poorer counterparts. This US study relied a great deal on statistical models to prove correlations rather than spending too much time on trying to investigate the links first-hand. However, it does propose that homework has the potential to increase the socio-economic achievement gap further. It seems that, through homework, the better-off students can take greater advantage of the resources available to them. These could be material resources such as access to a computer or space in which to work as well as social capital linked to parents' desire, ability or availability to support students with homework. This highlights the importance of teachers considering possible different outcomes by setting similar tasks to students from different backgrounds.

A lot of research has been undertaken on the extent to which parental involvement, not just with homework but education in general, affects achievement. Lareau (1987) looked at family-school relationships in white working-class and middle-class communities in the USA. At that time, Lareau felt there was a lack of research into parental involvement in schools although this is no longer the case. Despite the age of both the study and the first-grade participants thereof, the research highlights some interesting ideas. In a similar vein to Crozier and Davies (2007), Lareau claimed that schools had a standardised view of the proper role of parents in schooling and, due to the unequal resources resulting from social class, it was difficult for some disadvantaged parents to comply with teachers' ideals when it came to

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participation. The importance of parental networks was highlighted as a

central dimension of social capital wherein middle-class parents could work

collectively in interactions with the school in a way poorer parents could not

(Horvat et al., 2003). The knowledge of the system as a resource unavailable

to disadvantaged families was considered in greater depth by Lareau (2015).

Despite the focus on US students, these issues remain significant for the

classroom teacher when interacting with students from disadvantaged

families.

Huat See and Gorard (2015) produced a review of relevant studies to explore

the link between parental involvement and attainment. Their meta-analysis

concluded that intervening to improve parental involvement could be effective

in improving student attainment. However, the study could be criticised for

reverting to many of the assumptions which they originally set out to test and,

as with all meta-analyses, the depth of insight can appear superficial. Cairney

(2000) was to prove more important to my own research as he considered the

nature and historical context of the relationship between home and school and

explored responsive models for developing partnerships between the two.

Krashen (2005) underlined the idea that social class does not necessarily

ensure that, as a result of various deprivations, the poorer students are

destined to achieve less well. He suggested that hard work, when it came to

homework, coupled with the requisite family values, can act to overcome the

effects of poverty on attainment. However, this quite specific study of

immigrant families to the USA in the late 1970s may have limited relevance

here.

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Parental support for extra-curricular activities was investigated by Weininger et al. (2015). As an area for which Pupil Premium funding has been earmarked in many schools, the study was timely and relevant. They explored how far participation can be linked to lack of material resources or cultural constraints. Although identifying the difficulty of observing cultural orientations, they use a significant amount of qualitative data to reach the conclusion that maternal education has a consistently larger effect on participation than social class. This concurs with the findings of West et al. (1998) who concluded that mothers' educational level is a better predictor of involvement than social class. These studies reveal an interesting area of debate but, within my own small-scale study, it was not possible to have access to information about parents. However, it does suggest questions about the exclusive significance of material deprivation in explaining the achievement gap and the role of Pupil Premium funding in being able to address this.

Cassen and Kingdon (2007) found that parental education and employment levels were significant contributing factors in explaining student attainment. However, they acknowledge that additional school expenditure on students as envisaged by Pupil Premium may have a positive impact. The study utilised statistical data from numerous sources including the National Pupil Database and Ofsted to identify correlations, but they appear to misunderstand some of the situations they described. Siraj-Blatchford (2010) suggested that the quality of the home learning environment was indeed the most significant

factor in predicting children's learning outcomes when other background factors were taken into account. However, the research was reliant on statistical modelling and the validation of contemporary governmental policies was not always convincing.   Siraj-Blatchford also suggested that aspirations as well as home environment are an important link between socio-economic status and achievement. However, it is often lack of cultural, social or economic capital which restricts poorer families rather than a lack of aspiration (Archer, DeWitt, & Wong, 2014; Hart, 2013; Ingram, 2009). Therefore, efforts by schools to improve aspirations without considering wider contributors to social exclusion are unlikely to succeed. None of this literature really explores how far teachers take these wider social issues or home life into account when planning and delivering lessons. Using the Pupil Premium policy as a vehicle within my own subject schools, I attempt to do just this.

2.3 Policy Translation and Implementation in the Everyday Experiences of Teachers

Pupil Premium is one of many government schemes designed to close the gap in terms of academic achievement between those from disadvantaged backgrounds and their school peers. Whitty (2016) provides an overview of recent education policy landscape as well as questioning some of the assumptions and practices apparent in educational research. They highlight the importance of research which investigates education policy's success in relation to context. This, along with questions about the nature of a just education system and teacher responses, proved most influential. A great deal of literature considers teacher reactions and interpretations of education

policy (Adams, 2016; Ball, 2012; Bell & Stevenson, 2015). The pace and variety of change in the UK education system is so striking that even work reviewing policy little over a decade ago seems to be dealing with a very different landscape (Thrupp & Tomlinson, 2005).

Interpretations of the process by which theories or political ideas become educational policy proved useful background to the context within which Pupil Premium has been implemented. Bell and Stevenson (2015) offered a model for conducting analysis into the nature of policy, particularly how it is derived from political ideology and how this comes to shape public education. This suggested an interesting insight, but the perspective is very much from a management point of view rather than the classroom teacher. Understanding the workings of policy within school only goes as far as the organisational setting, rather than the actual day-to-day application of the policy. Tomlinson's review of UK education policy since 1945 provided historical understanding as well as highlighting the prevalence of the effects of class within the system (2001). Debates about the nature and direction of education policy are discussed but Tomlinson clearly has reservations about the neoliberal managerial direction which was at the forefront of government thinking at the turn of this century. Ball (2013) has a similar perspective in this regard but from a position of greater hindsight. The critical stance taken by both authors against a great deal of educational policy could easily engender cynicism in practitioners and researchers alike. Such negativity may also lead to a subsequent lack of objectivity when it comes to investigating newer government initiatives such as Pupil Premium.

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Maguire et al. (2013) considered why government schemes become subject to change and dissipation due to the different objectives of those charged with implementation.   This builds on work by the same authors which investigated four schools to highlight the numerous and varied policy initiatives they encountered (Braun, Maguire & Ball, 2010). By putting the policy actors at the forefront of the research, the authors gave a sense of how teachers experienced the policy in a manner which proved appealing. However, their level of access to large numbers of participants is not easily replicated. By grounding their work in the everyday experience of those involved in the study, they offered more practical application than the theoretical work on cognitive perspective discussed by Spillane et al. (2002). Here, theories are offered on how teachers as 'implementing agents' come to interpret policy in such a way that may alter beliefs and attitudes (p. 387). This has parallels with Ball's ideas on the terror of performativity in which the teacher can adapt an inauthentic self in order to meet the demands of ever more policy initiatives (2003). However, the study by Spillane et al., based on empirical literature, lacked the immediacy of interviews with the groups under discussion. The role and reactions of those tasked with interpreting and implementing educational policies is better explored by Ball et al. (2011). The strength of this approach is that they spent time researching in schools wherein they could place teachers as both policy subject and policy actors. Both those to whom the policy is directed as well as those who are supposed to oversee the implementation are considered. In addition, the role of resources in shaping responses to policy is also analysed. It is suggested that the more staff have

the materials, time and money to put policy into practice, the more likely they will engage fully in its implementation. This research is complemented by Braun et al. (2011) who highlight the negative consequences of schools being forced into policy interpretation and translation by initiatives which can contradict individuals' own beliefs. Moreover, they underline the pervasive pressure brought to bear on schools by Ofsted and its demands for improvements in data. Although not quite the grounded analysis that the authors claim, this work proved useful in exploring how teachers react to everyday situations created by policy implementation. A gap exists to investigate how this is experienced through the Pupil Premium scheme.

2.4 Origins, Motivations and Justifications of Pupil Premium

It was necessary to explore how Pupil Premium policy was perceived in terms of the definitions and aims of its authors. Moreover, it was essential to look at how social disadvantage was identified and interpreted and what conclusions the policy made in terms of good practice. By analysing literature on the topic, it was possible to explore the possible effects of the policy on teachers and their practice in addition to the more general consequences of the scheme. As a result, an overview of the research used to investigate Pupil Premium and teacher responses to social disadvantage was developed.

As a relatively new policy, Pupil Premium represents an area of research that has still to be fully mined. Prior to the election of the Conservative/Liberal Democrat coalition in 2010 and their subsequent adoption of the policy, much was written about the possibility of a Pupil Premium. *Economic Affairs*

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devoted significant space to the idea with several commentators, including the then government opposition spokesmen for education, David Laws and Michael Gove justifying the idea and suggesting how it might work (2008). With two of the major political parties adopting the policy, Marshall (2008) seemed vindicated in suggesting that it was *an idea whose time has come*. Arguments in favour were further emphasised by Freedman (2008). However, their suppositions were mainly based on secondary evidence which was used to make the apparent point that extra government education spending on disadvantaged students would help increase attainment. With the purpose of shaping political opinion in such a concise manner, the work in *Economic Affairs* lacks nuanced balance yet it does provide an insight into the origins of the policy as well as the initial aims and justifications. Much of the debate was focused on justifying the scheme in straightforward political terms as well as evaluating the economic cost. Such financial considerations were also explored by the Institute of Fiscal Studies (Chowdry et al., 2010; Sibieta, 2009) as well as by the Sutton Trust (2010). Although the Sutton Trust suggested a figure nearly double what was eventually allocated per pupil, most of their recommendations, particularly about impact and accountability, were taken up by the government. In assessing the workability of Pupil Premium before implementation, the potential to focus more resources on poorer pupils was roundly praised. However, all this literature was written before the policy was introduced, so the justifications and analysis were understandably speculative. Once the policy was put into effect, more evidence-based research was published. This was categorised in the literature review as research carried out by official government bodies and

more independent quantitative and qualitative research. However, in both cases there exists a distinct lack of discussion about the envisaged role of teachers or what they would make of the policy. Debating issues without this most important group of policy actors was a motivating factor in addressing this gap to discover how teachers felt about the idea of Pupil Premium and how it affected them.

2.5 Evaluations of Pupil Premium Policy Based on Official Documents

To explore how the effects of Pupil Premium policy on the participants in my research compared to government data, the literature review focused upon prior evaluations of the scheme. The DfE (2018b) set the scheme's role in the wider policy context and how it was supposed to work to help disadvantaged children. Ofsted, however, offered more in terms of evaluation with the publication of three substantial reviews into how Pupil Premium funding was being spent (Ofsted, 2012, 2013, 2014). The 2012 review, based on telephone-interview questionnaires with school leaders, was supplemented by individual Ofsted reports. Questions were asked about what schools were doing and how effective it was at raising pupil attainment. The criteria were clear but also quite narrow. By basing success on stark attainment figures, the Ofsted research tried to suggest a direct correlation between use of the funding and student achievement. Although unable to justify these assumptions, it highlighted some interesting cases. These included some schools putting on breakfast sessions, appointing specially designated school governors and employing a member of the local community to help improve attendance. The review of 2013, based on inspectors' visits to 68 primary and

secondary schools, investigated how schools were spending their additional funding. Inspectors for the 2014 report asked headteachers about Pupil Premium spending then evaluated how effectively their planning and implementation was working. They did this by looking at achievement data and a range of other documentation, including: monitoring and evaluation documents; talking with staff, pupils and governors; and observing different activities on which the school had spent their funding. The report referred to encouraging signs suggesting that the policy was making a positive difference. However, by establishing success criteria focused on pupil achievement data, Ofsted's report conceded that it was difficult to make full judgements about the effectiveness of the scheme after such a relatively short space of time (Ofsted, 2014, p. 4). However, 'weak leadership' and ineffective analysis of performance data were identified as obstacles to further improvement (p. 15). This suggests a conceptual leap in that the inadequacies of individual schools rather than wider social issues are the main stumbling blocks in counteracting problems of socio-economic educational disadvantage. All three of the reports were based on clear assumptions about the link between success and attainment figures. Since the judgements of Ofsted inspectors were measured against government criteria for success, those schools following the guidelines were identified as successful despite inconclusive evidence, even by their own standards. There was little discussion on the theoretical frameworks for success or of alternative measures. The nature of the Ofsted evaluations appeared to have a significant influence on the official documents used in the case studies of the participant schools. However, schools' own policy documents seemed to

play only a small role in the Ofsted evaluations. Despite having access to such a wealth of data, the political as well as practical nature of the government reviews offer only a superficial assessment of the scheme using debateable criteria for success. Practically speaking, it is understandable why there was minimal input from classroom teachers, but the reviews did not highlight this as a concern. Nor did they highlight the impression management inherent in Ofsted inspections. Even when teacher voice was alluded to in these reviews, it was limited not just in terms of volume but also validity since it represented the positive face used by teachers during inspections to create the most favourable impression. This lack of valid input from a group so invested in the policy is a significant omission in much of the research into Pupil Premium. My own study attained greater validity in this respect through a closer interaction with classroom teachers to investigate their experiences by utilising an insider status unavailable to the compilers of government studies.

The Department of Education, as well as providing justification of the scheme and advice on best practice (DfE, 2010; 2014), also commissioned an evaluation of Pupil Premium by Carpenter et al. (2013). It focused upon what individual schools had been doing with their funding as well as how they perceived impact and success. Again, there was no discussion of the relative merits of the scheme but there was also no prescribed model for success either. The methodology was identified as a mixed approach, but the study relied heavily on quantitative data. Despite this, individual teacher voices are heard through the selection of 'vignettes'. How representative these voices

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are, is highlighted as a concern. Unsurprisingly, the survey found that most schools thought they were making good use of the funding. However, the real impact of success, once again, was to be measured by the schools' ability to close the attainment gap. As much of this official research focused upon measuring impact on academic achievement, the effect that the scheme has had on teaching approaches and teacher perceptions is not fully considered. Schools must demonstrate to Ofsted that they are using the funding wisely and inspectors will look for evidence showing 'differences made to the learning and progress of disadvantaged pupils' (Ofsted, 2015).   As a result, teachers are increasingly expected, by their schools, to show awareness and consideration of this when planning lessons*.* How far this is being done and to what effect are areas which my own research intended to explore further.

The limitations of research into the effectiveness of Pupil Premium may have led many schools to follow government advice by utilising the 'toolkit' provided by the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) under the auspices of the Sutton Trust charity (Higgins et al., 2016). The websites of the Sutton Trust and the National Foundation for Education Research (NFER) with which it is linked, proved fruitful areas to pursue additional information about Pupil Premium. The EEF toolkit provided meta-analysis of a range of school-based interventions for which the funding could be used. This toolkit offered evaluations relating to impact on attainment, the strength of the supporting evidence and cost. Strategies were only included if there existed, 'a quantifiable evidence base' of the impact on raising achievement. However, there was limited justification for their approach or discussion of alternatives.

This may have been to ensure ease of use for education professionals but the reliance on quantitative evidence limited the depth of insight. The EEF toolkit tried to provide practical advice and examples for teachers but so many of the conclusions are drawn from studies which might appear abstract to the classroom practitioner. One thousand six hundred teachers participated in a follow-up survey published by Cunningham and Lewis (2012). However, the authors asked teachers about policies and strategies implemented at a higher level than themselves, thereby representing only the teachers' impression of the priorities of their school leaders. In the following year's NFER survey, nearly a third of the responding teachers suggested a lack of knowledge about their school's Pupil Premium priorities (Ager & Pyle, 2013). Yet these surveys were beginning to get closer to the lived experiences of those at the forefront of the policy. However, it was still a long way from the level of understanding of teacher perceptions which I wanted to investigate through my own research.

The judgements on effective learning strategies outlined by the EEF toolkit was used almost unquestioningly as the basis for investigating the differences between schools in the performance of pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds in Macleod et al.'s research for the DfE (2015). In doing so, it accepted official policy about the most effective use of Pupil Premium funding. The study compared official attainment data from over 1,300 schools and conducted telephone interviews with senior leaders in 49 schools. The representativeness and validity of the responses could be questioned when considering the types of school most likely to cooperate, however, the study

raised some interesting issues. While acknowledging that there is no 'one size fits all' solution to closing the attainment gap, they boldly state that between one and two-thirds of the variance between schools in disadvantaged pupils' attainment can be explained by several school-level characteristics (p. 13). Use of quantitative data, frequent assessment and quality of teaching were highlighted as the key areas of focus. It could be argued that factors outside school which may affect pupil attainment were beyond the remit of the study, however, by focussing only on internal factors, the work does seem to exist in something of a vacuum. In the identification of the types of schools that do well, it could be suggested that additional in-school focus and extra funding through Pupil Premium has a negligible impact (p. 11). However, the main audience for the study appears to be school leaders and the focus is on whole-school solutions. As such, not only are wider societal factors underdeveloped, so too is the role of the classroom teacher in implementing Pupil Premium.

The same could be said for Hutchinson et al. (2016) who used their own report based on government data to analyse how the disadvantage gap in attainment develops across school phases. Since the report relied upon similar statistical data, by and large, they agree with the findings of Ofsted, the DfE and the Sutton Trust. Their research re-emphasised the variety of schools, their approaches as well as their levels of success. To show how their findings can have practical applications, they also described examples of schools who had successfully closed the attainment gap for their disadvantaged students using Pupil Premium funding. Although interesting,

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much of this research was based on official statistical data which appeared distant from more local experiences. However, in my own research, I was interested to understand if the official picture matched what was going on in schools. Subsequently, a review of research into Pupil Premium outside government influence was developed.

2.6 Quantitative Evaluations and Research

To investigate previous research undertaken beyond official governmental auspices, several studies were analysed which reviewed the efficacy of the Pupil Premium initiative in the wider context of education policy using statistical data. Gorard (2016) used information from the National Pupil Database for England to investigate the types of children who were eligible for free school meals and, by extension, Pupil Premium. He concluded that the characteristics of those who no longer qualify for FSM but do receive Pupil Premium funding (due to the six-year qualifying time-lag) was significantly different to those who continued to qualify. Gorard's cautionary note highlighted a potential problem. We cannot expect the same results from schools with more pupils from a permanently poor background as from schools with many pupils on the threshold of poverty or those who move in and out of poverty during their school careers. It appears that the somewhat arbitrary nature of the qualifying criteria may preclude many students who justifiably need help while, at the same time, identifying some students as disadvantaged who may not be. This consideration of contextual factors and potential issues is not a feature of official evaluations but is something deserving of greater focus. The potential unfairness of Pupil Premium would

be significant in a study investigating the impact of the scheme but Gorard's reliance on quantitative data used to categorise students, as well as their achievement on a broad scale, does not really explore how the policy is experienced in the classroom or indeed, how this unfairness is manifested.

Such aspects were also missing from West's (2015) study which relied rather more on description of how Pupil Premium worked than analysing the real effectiveness of the scheme. The narrative is useful in giving wider context to the scheme as part of the government's broader plans. However, the omission of views from those affected by the policies, particularly students and teachers, mean that there was little exploration of the personal impact. The work of Lupton and Thomson (2015) provided a measure of impact from a different perspective using policy documents and administrative data. However, the analysis provides mainly quantitative data. They assert that Pupil Premium has had no noticeable effect on educational inequalities but concede, as do many other studies, that it is still quite early in the life of the policy to make definitive judgements. This underlines the fact that more analysis of the Pupil Premium scheme is still necessary.

To fully understand the potential impact of Pupil Premium, the review here includes literature which considered similar education policies. Giving measurable data for assessing the success of policies centred on additional government funding for education are taken up by Machin and McNally (2012). They investigated the impact of school-level policies and their potential for reducing the socio-economic gap. Using a large amount of

secondary data, they showed how the achievement gap linked to social background developed during the educational life of different groups, before trying to identify links between government spending and improved attainment. They admit that since additional school resources are often disproportionately allocated to disadvantaged students, trying to find a significant correlation between resources and attainment data can be easily obscured. Moreover, their attempts to translate examination success into potential wage earnings merits greater justification. The authors' predisposition to use quantitative data to conduct a 'Cost-Benefit Analysis' means more interpretative measurements of success are not considered (p. 19). However, their review does seem to suggest that the Pupil Premium could be effective based on the statistical evidence that the effects of increased governmental expenditure are significant for economically disadvantaged students even if, as Holmlund et al. (2010) suggest, this is not always apparent for all students. Therefore, the studies seem to conclude that increased school resources, such as those available due to Pupil Premium funding, can help to reduce attainment gaps. Gibbons et al. (2012) also showed links between increased resources and improving educational attainment. Moreover, they posit that this could have direct implications for the Pupil Premium policy. Reiterating the link between spending and success, they acknowledge that they are unable to explain how the link works and therefore cannot give any conclusions as to how schools should be advised on the best use of funding. This lack of explanation underlines the significance of my own research questions. Moreover, the economic approach, while considering a wider context, has limited use when

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investigating the potential success from a school-based and individual teacher perspective. Economic data can seem less revealing than conversations with those people charged with policy implementation. Like much of the research based mainly on attainment data, it is difficult to get a sense of how the policy was experienced by those in the classroom.

2.7 Qualitative Evaluations of Pupil Premium

The thematic review of literature on the Pupil Premium policy revealed a clear distinction between statistics-based evaluations and those which favoured more qualitative methods. Durrant (2014) used surveys and interviews to investigate how some schools were using their funding and measuring its impact. The data suggested a great deal of variety in how the money was spent including residential trips, learning mentors and afterschool activities. Durrant presupposes that some impression has been made but he makes the whole interaction appear very business-like. However, he is open to the idea that others may perceive impact differently. The mixed methods approach is justifiable from a practical point of view but by focusing on the thoughts of senior members of staff and special needs coordinators, a distinct version of the workings of the policy is produced which may not reflect practice in the classrooms. The findings also seem vague insomuch as every school appears to have a different approach to utilising the funding as well as measuring the impact. One could argue that this is unsurprising with such an open-ended policy. This explains my own more focused approach looking in-depth at classroom practice in a smaller number of schools.

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Abbott et al. (2015) utilised more localised data from semi-structured interviews with significant stakeholders to investigate the variation between schools and Ofsted judgements about the use of Pupil Premium. The intention was to find out what worked and to disseminate this to improve Ofsted reports. In doing so, it could be interpreted as an investigation into the nuances of Ofsted gradings rather than an exploration of how additional funding could be best utilised to close the gap for less well-off students. The study by Burn et al. (2016) took a more flexible approach to the use of the policy and how it informed student-teachers' appreciation of the relationship between young people's socio-economic status and their attainment. Case studies were used to explore the perspectives of both experienced teachers and trainees but, in setting it within the context of evaluations of both aspects of the Post Graduate Certificate of Education (PGCE) course and individual schools' policies, the analysis of Pupil Premium itself was slightly diminished. The anecdotal presentation of the findings read more like a report and thereby lessened the impact of the comparative analysis. However, the study represented a useful example of research in schools exploring the effects of the policy on those tasked with its implementation.

Shain (2015) considered Pupil Premium as part of a wider analysis of compensatory policies. He found five schools who were using Pupil Premium funding to offset wider budget cuts and, in some cases, had narrowed the attainment gap. Shain's research also reiterated assumptions of cultural deficiencies from some staff which would be interesting to compare to different contexts, including secondary schools. Barrett (2018) used Pupil

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Premium in schools to investigate socio-economic equality duties which have been introduced by law to address persistent inequality. The research was primary school based, and it focused on legal aspects which were not immediately relevant to my own study. However, the methodology and consideration of wider context proved informative. By raising ideas about how understandings of inequality can be influenced by the school setting, Barrett identified context as a key issue in exploring how the policy was enacted. This suggests that the approach to Pupil Premium in primary schools could be very different to secondary schools. How and why this may be the case suggested an area in which to develop my own research. Pupil Premium policy enactment in a single secondary school was explored by Craske (2018) using semi-structured interviews and analysis of policy documents. Craske suggested that the policy was being used to underline an increased neoliberal agenda in schools. He highlighted how Pupil Premium forced staff to re-evaluate the concept of disadvantage within their school and how the policy was being used to shift the responsibility for social inequality on to schools and away from national government. However, there was much greater focus on policy implementation, enactment and adaption in general rather than on the policy itself. Those policy actors, who were the focus of the research, were fully engaged with the Pupil Premium because of their specialist roles within the school as senior leaders and support staff. Like so much of the research reviewed above, the ways in which the policy was being experienced in lessons by the classroom teacher were not fully addressed.

Most research evaluating Pupil Premium is based on statistics which rely heavily upon attainment data as their measure of success. This presupposes that such stark figures can fully address how the policy is being enacted. Many of these studies are sponsored or informed by policymakers responsible for both the scheme and the limited success criteria. Without deeper exploration, it is impossible to understand the processes at play within the implementation of the policy and whether the assumptions inherent in the scheme work to address disadvantage. Several studies take a more qualitative and localised approach but there remains a gap in the research related to teachers in secondary schools. To develop a full evaluation of the policy, research must focus on the perspectives of teachers, who, as policy actors, are expected to utilise the policy. This would build upon the substantial literature into the implementation and evaluation of UK education policy. However, so far, little research has been conducted into policy enactment, specifically looking at this particular scheme. Although there exists a great deal of research about the effects of socio-economic status on educational achievement, where teacher voice is heard, it is often used to highlight negative impact rather than understanding their actions. Subsequently, there remains an opportunity to explore the lived experiences of the classroom teacher as well as the extent to which research informs teaching. This represents an important area of investigation since such experiences can reveal a variety of theoretical understandings about fairness and inequality at work in the classroom. Understanding more about how policies aimed at improving achievement for the less well-off are interpreted and implemented by teachers can help make policy work better. Without

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eliciting appropriate data from classroom practitioners, the disconnect between the practical and theoretical remains. This thesis attempts to address these gaps in the literature by focusing on teacher perceptions of socio-economic disadvantage, fairness in the classroom and how far the introduction of Pupil Premium had affected these perceptions.

Understandings of the links that teachers observe between their practice and differences in achievement based on class are also explored, as are their thoughts on the desirability and necessity of making allowances in this regard. The Pupil Premium policy provides a useful vehicle to facilitate observing and investigating these issues in a manner which the present literature has yet to address. Without this greater insight, it is unlikely that the policy can be utilised to its full potential to address educational disadvantage.

Chapter 3 Methodology

3.1 Theoretical Understandings and Practical Influences

The aim of this research is to offer insight into a specific educational policy initiative directed to enhance social justice in the UK. Moreover, the research gives voice to actors who have been charged with implementing this policy and the extent to which they feel it could, or indeed should, affect their approaches to teaching. Research questions were developed to explore the extent to which the participants evaluated the impact of their teaching in relation to social difference and whether they felt this was necessary or desirable. There was also investigation into whether the introduction of Pupil Premium and its explicit identification of disadvantaged students had affected the participants' teaching and planning. In addition, the research questions considered practical implications by looking at what was done well and what could be improved in order to disseminate findings and advise future practice. Five case studies in four schools were undertaken to gain a real-world sense of what was happening, as well as valuable insights into the workings of the policy. Below, the justification for this approach is outlined alongside my own value perspectives. A review of the essential characteristics of critical realism and case studies explains the rationale for the methodology. Description of the research design including reflections on interviews, observations and the use of documents follows, in addition to an outline of the process of analysis. Practical and ethical considerations inherent in this type of research are addressed together with further discussion of motives and objectives for this piece of research.

Understandings of reality and value perspectives were influential in the choice of research topic and methods. I do not believe that social phenomena exist independently from social actors therefore, ontologically, I would favour foundationalism. However, the rigidity of positivism with the preponderance on quantitative statistical data would produce a type of educational evaluation that would not be appropriate for this topic. Too much of the meanings which people attach to phenomena can be lost through trying to use a scientific method to analyse human interactions. As a result, I favour more interpretivist approaches which rely on analysing qualitative data. This allows for greater emphasis on the 'situated interrelatedness' of different features and causes within a particular phenomenon (Bazeley, 2013, p. 5). Moreover, such a mode of enquiry provides the researcher much more freedom with its emergent and evolutionary processes (Saldaña, 2011). However, I agree with Scott (2005) that the dualisms between quantitative and qualitative methodologies can be unhelpful, therefore, I approached the study from the point of view of what Grix (2004) describes as post-positivism or critical realism.

Bhaskar (1998, 2013) positions critical realism as an alternative to positivism and interpretivism but which uses elements of both to provide new approaches to understanding. Robson's (2011) definition provided a more appropriate understanding for this real-world research in to a value-based profession such as teaching. I recognise the role played by teachers' subjective knowledge of what they experience as well as the existence of independent structures which influence their understandings. Critical realism

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provides detailed explanations of this in terms of both actors' interpretations and the structures within which they interact. This represents a pragmatic approach but also one which suggests that dominant discourses should be challenged (Mack, 2010). Critical realism can be systematic while also incorporating the perceptions and intentions of participants in a way that advances critical values such as social justice (House, 1991). Scott's (2000) examples of realist approaches have proven particularly useful in framing my own research, not least by highlighting fallacies to avoid. Crucially, critical realism allows for what Robson (2011) calls 'embeddedness' (p. 39). In this case, being able to get close to the participants; to really understand what was being observed in the lessons and described in the interviews. While accepting that established structures affect and are affected by social actors, I do not believe that either teachers or their students are victims of deterministic structural forces. Rather through their interactions they develop meanings to make sense of their behaviour. What took place in the classroom and the interactions between the teacher and learner were just as important as the external obstacles linked to economic disadvantage.

Economic disadvantage is, of course, only one of many dimensions of difference at play in the classroom (Pollard, 2014). Others include ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and disability, many of which interconnect to compound inequality. Difference based on income, as represented by FSM and the associated Pupil Premium status, is not only arbitrary but also limiting. To try and make sense of the situations studied in this research, the theories of Bourdieu proved a useful lens through which to observe (Bourdieu, 1977,

1985, 1989, 1990, 2004). His concepts of capital and habitus represent a more nuanced way to understand the processes at play in the reproduction and reinforcement of disadvantage. According to Bourdieu, different types of capital interact, with one compounding the effect of another. For example, economic capital can be linked to social and cultural capital wherein students who possess more of these qualities are likely to achieve better in educational outcomes than those who have less. A lack of, and compensation for, different types of capital including educational, economic or cultural were central to the study. So too was the role played by the dominant culture or habitus of the school in trying to interact with these issues.

The study was also influenced by what Ball (1997) refers to as 'policy sociology', that is, sociological concepts, ideas and research which are used as tools for making sense of education policy. Ball is representative of an important corpus of research which examines the reality of social situations like the 'everyday reality' of the school or the classroom and, as such, provides interesting examples to explore (Pring, 2004). Ball describes a tension at the heart of education policy research between a commitment to the pursuit of efficiency and a commitment to the pursuit of social justice. This tension became apparent in my own study (1997, p. 257). Much research relating to education policy and planning for social justice has focused on pupils with special educational needs (SEN). However, much less research has been carried out regarding material disadvantage and planning. This may be because teachers have historically been more informed about specific issues relating to SEN than students' economic backgrounds which might

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necessitate appropriate additional support. With the introduction of Pupil

Premium, this may no longer be the case. The schools encouraged their

teachers to identify and plan accordingly for pupils who, through this scheme,

are identified as less well-off. They may also have financial resources

available to help improve attainment.

Being aware of the introduction of the Pupil Premium policy and the

possibilities it could bring in terms of social justice, I felt that it would be an

area ripe for further research. Through my own experience teaching in

school, I was also conscious of a disconnect between what was expected of

the policy, both at school and national level, with what was actually happening

in the classroom. Although by no means a personal crusade, there was an

element of what Silverman (2013) refers to as a 'sense of social obligation'

behind my choice of topic (p. 80). The study could offer real insights into this

policy which was principally directed to enhance the social justice agenda.

The issue was one of personal interest and, as a relatively new policy with

both a local and national aspect, it felt particularly relevant. As a practising

secondary school teacher, I had the required expertise to understand the

policy and how it was being implemented by the various actors, as well as

how it might affect teacher/student interactions. Moreover, I believed that my

position would assist in getting access to the schools and teachers. What

underpinned my interest in this area was a desire to have the most effective

social justice policies in education as possible. I suspected that Pupil

Premium had the potential to do good if implemented effectively and I was

anxious to investigate how this could be achieved. After dissecting the main

topic area, I selected the aspects of most personal interest, that being the effect that the policy has had on classroom practitioners' approach to teaching. From this point, it was possible to formulate research questions which matched the objectives I had identified for the research. I was interested in using the Pupil Premium policy to explore the extent to which teachers conduct on-going evaluations and reflections regarding social difference and how they measure their own success. In addition, I hoped to investigate their feelings about this as well as looking at the practicalities of planning specifically to address social disadvantage (see section 1.1 Research Questions).

3.2 Research Design

Critical realism is compatible with a wide range of methods and, in this instance, it was decided that case studies would offer the most useful method to investigate the research questions (Sayer, 2000, p. 19). Practical implications, relating to available time and money, meant that the research would have to be conducted on a relatively small-scale over two years. The case study approach proved ideally suited to the needs and resources of the small-scale researcher such as myself (Blaxter & Hughes, 2010). I felt that case studies could produce the depth of insight necessary to understand the phenomena under investigation, while at the same time presenting a model of small-scale research which could be repeated in other schools, academy chains or local authorities. Case studies proved particularly useful for developing ideas which 'illuminates policy and enhances practice' (Bassey, 1999, p .57). The case study approach also allows for what Yin (2009) calls

analytical generalisation of the data using an accepted set of principles or theory. In this instance, the theory is provided by Bourdieu and his ideas about cultural capital. In accepting the compensatory principle of Pupil Premium, there appears to be acknowledgement of the unfairness inherent in the school system towards those with less economic capital. How this is addressed by the schools and their teachers can indicate the extent to which middle-class habitus dominates the discourse and if the policy is as redistributive as it appears. The case studies consider Bourdieusian theory while providing insight into the teachers' lived experiences. The value of case studies is often understood by this generalising to theory. Although not as immersive as an ethnography, the case study approach can shine a light into some of the more hidden processes of the reproduction of cultural capital (Warin, 2015).

Observations, planning data and policy documents made up important aspects of the case studies, but to explore teacher perceptions fully, I had to elicit opinions in such depth that could only come through face-to-face interviews. While data could have been garnered from a much larger cohort through questionnaires, I did not believe that enough teachers would have the time or inclination to engage with the research in the required depth. This, along with time and geographical constraints, influenced me to seek out a smaller number of participants to interview and research. It was this level of depth about the teachers' perceptions and understandings which had been absent from much of the previous research into Pupil Premium. Without being able to engage fully with the lived experiences of the teachers, it would

have been difficult to understand the effects of Pupil Premium in the classroom. To discover the context within which each of the teachers was working, national and local documents were analysed, as well as those produced within the schools themselves. I also observed the participants at work in the classroom by way of embedding myself with the participants and to offset the effects of impression management (Goffman, 1970). In addition, this provided evidence in the form of planning documents and class data. I was able to follow up on matters arising through subsequent email conversations. When these proved insufficient to garner the appropriate response, I used telephone conversations from which I kept notes. This allowed me to double-check and confirm the validity of my initial interpretations. Such various forms of evidence, based around a small cohort of participants, suggested that the case study approach would be most effective in this instance. The data were analysed using NVivo software for thematic qualitative analysis. Theoretical assumptions were re-evaluated as the analysis proceeded, revealing insight which explained the phenomena under investigation. The cases were similar enough to be seen as examples of the same phenomenon, yet were distinct enough that comparisons could be made between them (Mack, 2010). I observed the characteristics of the individual teacher in order to analyse intensively the classroom interactions and teacher interpretations, as well as establishing common themes (Cohen et al., 2011).

By triangulating findings from the policy and planning documents, lesson observations and semi-structured interviews for each teacher, the case

studies developed. This enabled me to dig deeper, into what initially seemed

routine, by looking at processes and interpretations in evidence. This rich

data provided in-depth insights into participants' lived experiences within their

particular teaching context. Building on the insights revealed by these first-

hand practices and experiences contributed to suggestions for improving

policy. The aim, rather than formal generalisation, was to present a rich

portrayal of a single setting to inform practice, establish the value of the case

and to add to knowledge of this specific topic (Simons, 2009, p. 24). The

depiction of the classroom setting also established both the value and

limitations of current approaches to Pupil Premium. The case studies acted

more to refine understanding rather than to transform it (Stake, 2006).

The five case studies of secondary school teachers, including lesson planning

and their opinions of Pupil Premium and social justice were undertaken over

one academic year. This was to minimise the disruption to the teachers'

working lives, thereby making participation more attractive but also to allow

the whole research process to be completed over a two-year period. This

timetable had been set with a view to practical and financial implications.

3.3 Sampling

Participants were chosen to reflect a variety of subjects and types of school

within the geographical area within which I worked. This allowed for the

experiences of Pupil Premium to be viewed in a distinct setting. As the

schools were rural and some distance away from major cities, the effects and

extent of the policy would reflect these local circumstances. The schools

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involved were selected as they were either judged 'good' or 'outstanding' in their most recent Ofsted inspections, all of which praised some aspects of their provision for Pupil Premium students. The sample schools had fewer Pupil Premium students than average but were chosen because Ofsted felt aspects of their approaches to Pupil Premium, as outlined in the policy documents, were commendable. This made them exceptional in their county which has been heavily criticised for not doing enough to address the attainment gap between students on FSM and their peers. It was felt that the participants would provide appropriate evidence of how Pupil Premium was experienced by teachers in schools free from Ofsted requirements to improve.

Schools with higher than average numbers of Pupil Premium students were not approached nor were schools identified by Ofsted as requiring improvements in how they used their funding. Since such institutions would prioritise Pupil Premium, the extent to which they took social difference into account when planning lessons, as well as the effects of the introduction of the policy, would be much more influenced by Ofsted rather than by the teachers' own understandings. Carpenter et al. (2013) suggest that schools with high numbers of Pupil Premium students tend to provide much more support than schools with low Pupil Premium numbers. The suggestion that schools with less than average numbers of these students have distinctly different approaches to the policy was an important aspect of this investigation. By focusing on a specific, carefully selected sample of local schools with many common characteristics, it was hoped that insights into the implementation and practice could be investigated in environments which

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were not under explicit pressure to improve standard practice. One might expect that schools judged successful by Ofsted with clear policies and records relating to Pupil Premium available on websites, would be staffed by teachers fully conversant in the policy at both national and local level. Certainly, if this were the case, causal links could be explored between the teaching and the attainment of Pupil Premium students. However, it was also possible that schools which seem to have 'ticked all the boxes' as far as Ofsted are concerned, may in fact be more complacent towards provision for their Pupil Premium students. It is also possible that classroom practice in such schools does not reflect their published policies but rather the documents exist solely for Ofsted rather than to inform teaching. In such cases, it would be pertinent to investigate how they were able to succeed, regarding Pupil Premium, without explicit direction. After all, if success is achieved by schools with minimum input where schools with focused strategies fail, questions could be asked about the efficacy of this funding policy.

3.4 Engaging Participants

The participants were initially approached to measure interest before permission was sought from their schools. This proved challenging as many teachers seemed reluctant to take part in classroom observation voluntarily. Moreover, the benefits of involvement in educational research, improving student outcomes and sharing good practice, were perceived to be so abstract as to hold little immediate appeal. The limitations of insider status are discussed elsewhere, but it was only through utilising established

relationships within the local secondary school community that I could secure the participation of the teachers involved.

Where possible, I tried to engage teachers who are regularly recognised as 'good' or 'outstanding' by their schools. This represents an arbitrary measurement but taking such an approach was intended to allow for greater focus on the processes without having to consider other difficulties the teacher may regularly face. This was not to affix value judgements on the type of teachers involved but to ensure that observations and planning were free to focus on learning and teaching rather than classroom management. I felt that if the research focused upon teachers who were reasonably confident in their abilities as educators, then they may also be confident in expressing accurate and insightful opinions. Interestingly, it was only teachers recognised as either 'good' or 'outstanding' based on internal appraisals and historic Ofsted observations, who were willing to volunteer. All were teaching within a 30-mile radius to allow ease of contact and communication. Partly because of the practical issues involved in attracting participants but also to minimise the impact on my own teaching, I utilised two colleagues from my own school in the study. As Blaxter et al. (2010) point out, there are numerous pros and cons attached to researching in your own workplace but in this instance, it allowed me a great deal of flexibility in negotiating access as well as finetuning the research process. My insider status acted to minimise the disruption to how my colleagues usually worked as well as creating an effective vantage point from which to observe their practice.

Once provisional agreement was gained from the teachers, school leaders were contacted to confirm approval. One school intimated an interest but subsequently declined to take part. Two others took a little persuasion. I decided first to contact the teachers to gauge interest rather than approaching the school directly as I felt it was a quicker and more efficient way to gather participants. The teachers could then persuade their school leaders of the appropriateness of participation by expressing willingness as well as vouching for my good intentions. This caused an issue with one headteacher who expressed surprise that I had not asked him first. However, when I explained my method, he acquiesced. In an age of the marketisation of education and the consequent competition which this entails, it was easy to understand a certain amount of suspicion on the part of the schools and empathise with their reluctance (Gewirtz et al., 1994; Whitty & Power, 2000). As a practising teacher, the headteachers possibly looked on me, not merely as an objective researcher, but as someone who represented a rival institution. Therefore, it was necessary to stress the academic benefits of taking part as well as emphasising the practical advantages, such as the potential for increased pupil outcomes and more reflective teaching. In addition, by taking part in the research, the schools could show evidence to Ofsted that they were looking beyond the mainstream when it came to their commitment to Pupil Premium students. My own school was the most enthusiastic of the four, possibly because they, unlike the others, could be sure that there was no hidden agenda. No doubt professional standing within the school helped as did the prestige of having a member of staff involved in such research. It seemed that the willingness of the teachers to participate influenced the schools'

decisions. This re-emphasised the advantage of insider status but did open-up the possibility of being beholden to the goodwill of educational professionals whose priorities could change at any time.

3.5 Developing Case Studies

From the participants, 5 case studies in 4 schools were developed. The names of the schools and participants were changed to maintain anonymity. The case studies involved one English teacher, one mathematics teacher, one geography teacher and one history teacher. However, due to the limitations of mutual timetables in conjunction with identifying a class which had the requisite number of Pupil Premium students, I observed the history teacher deliver lessons in his second subject, geography.

Table 3.1 outlines the data gathered for each case study. More detail on the individual teachers is provided in section 4.2 (Case Studies).

Participant	**Angela**	**Brian**	**Charlotte**	**Dawn**	**Eddie**
School	Cheseton	Cheseton	Trafalgar	Lakeside	Coastal
Electronic (SIMS) data	X	X	X	X	X
Teacher mark book	X	X	X	X	X
Lesson plans		X	X		
Scheme of work	X	X		X	X
Seating plan	X	X	X	X	X
Notes on students		X			X

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Participant	Angela	Brian	Charlotte	Dawn	Eddie
School Pupil Premium policy	X	X	X	X	X
Ofsted report	X	X	X	X	X
Lesson observation 1	X	X	X	X	X
Interview 1	X	X	X	X	X
Lesson observation 2	X	X	X	X	X
Interview 2	X	X	X	X	X
Follow-up (email or telephone)	X	X	X	X	X

Table 3.1 Documentation provided by each participant and additional case study data

Initial analysis of the policy documents was conducted using Bourdieu as a conceptual starting-point from which to explore perceptions of disadvantage. The documents were authentic representations of what the schools had published and, as such, were useful in highlighting and giving meaning to the priorities described (Scott, 1990). However, the aim was not to evaluate the quality of the policies but to investigate what the schools were doing and what was expected from the teachers. All four schools had utilised and adapted a template provided by the DfE and many of the strategies detailed were justified with support from EEF data (Higgins et al., 2016). The documents

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revealed a variety of approaches which had the potential to address

economic, educational and cultural capital (see Table 3.2). Interestingly, a

great deal of the funding seemed to be going to whole-school projects with

more specific Pupil Premium focused strategies at a minimum. There exists

within the literature a certain lack of clarity as to whether allowing non-Pupil

Premium children to benefit from the Pupil Premium money is permitted or not

(Carpenter et al., 2013; Ofsted, 2012; 2013). However, the schools'

documents suggested that they did not perceive this as being an issue. The

policy documents added context to the case studies and helped to ascertain if

the teachers were following or even aware of their school's policy.

	Cheseton	Trafalgar	Lakeside	Coastal
Additional leadership provision	WS		WS	
Additional teaching staff			WS	
Alternative/vocational curriculum			WS	
Attendance Officer		WS		
Careers		WS		WS
Computers/net books/ipads		**PP**		**PP**
Conversations with Parents	**PP**			**PP**
CPD on Teaching and Learning	WS	WS		
Data Tracking/Analysis	WS	WS		
Feedback	WS	WS		
Incentive scheme			WS	WS
Independent study facilities		WS	WS	

	Cheseton	Trafalgar	Lakeside	Coastal
Introducing a House system		WS		
Literacy		WS		
Mentoring	WS		**PP**	WS
Music lessons	**PP**	**PP**		
Personalised Plan		WS		
Quality Assurance of Teaching	WS			
Restructuring pastoral system		WS	WS	
Revision sessions	WS		WS	
Specialist staff			**PP**	
Summer schools				WS
Teaching assistants			WS	
Transport		**PP**		**PP**
Trips	**PP**	**PP**		
Uniform		**PP**		**PP**
PP denotes strategies specific to Pupil Premium students WS denotes whole school strategies utilising Pupil Premium funding which may support Pupil Premium students.				

Table 3.2 Uses of Pupil Premium spending at each school as detailed in their policy documents.

After studying the documents, a meeting with the participating teachers was convened to agree a workable timetable for two observations, each followed by a semi-structured interview. Emails and telephone calls were used for clarification and further development where necessary after the interviews. The participants were asked to provide medium and longer-term plans recording details of lesson topics and set homeworks for at least one class, which included two or more Pupil Premium students. Teacher mark books

were also requested to record how well each of the students approached the lessons. The nature and quality of mark books differed between the participants but they all used them and were prepared to permit access to the contents. In some instances, the mark books provided notes on several of the students including those identified as Pupil Premium. As I was anxious that participants should not be deterred from taking part in the study by additional paperwork, the mark books represented an accessible source of data as well as providing insight into the approach of individual teachers.   Participants also provided copies of electronic school generated data on each of the classes. The source of this information came from the Student Information Management System (SIMS) from each school.   This included a variety of data such as academic progress, SEN and attitude to learning. In addition, most participants also produced seating plans for the observed lessons which highlighted the location of the Pupil Premium students but also included additional information about several of the students. Eddie had a computer-generated seating plan and mark book combined which, in addition to relevant data, also included photographs of each student in the class. This was a whole school strategy which was extremely useful for the observer as well as the class teacher.

After the observations an interview followed to explore the teachers' 'in-flight' thinking during the lesson as well as discussing planning and the performance of Pupil Premium students (Paterson, 2007). Initial analysis of interview transcripts alongside more detailed scrutiny of the planning documents and fieldnotes from observations informed individual interview schedules for the

second part of the research. The process of providing attainment data, observation and interview was repeated several weeks later to explore whether even greater consideration of social disadvantage led to any discernible impact in either their own teaching, planning or student outcomes based on the study.

3.6 Interviews

The interviews were semi-structured in that there was a pre-prepared interview schedule focused on specific issues for investigation, but questions were also informed by planning documents, attainment data and the lesson observations.

Interview schedule

1. The Lesson

How do you feel the lesson went?
Probe – what do they consider a good lesson? How does it compare to usual lessons (those not observed)?

Did it follow the plan you had envisaged?
Probe – using observation notes on how the lesson progressed.

How do you think the students responded to the lesson? Did they achieve what you had hoped?
Prompt – was there any measurable progress? Were the students enthusiastic and engaged?

How do you think the Pupil Premium (PP) students did?
Probe – what would their criteria for success be? Do they usually evaluate the comparative success of different groups?

How does this compare with non-PP students?
Prompt using participant's criteria for success from previous answers.

2. Lesson Planning

Had you planned anything specific/differentiated for PP students in the lesson?
Probe - Ask respondent to give reasons why/why not

Did you take PP into account when you planned the lesson?
Probe - Ask respondent to give reasons why/why not

Do you think it does/would make a difference?
Probe – why/why not?

What type of strategies do you/could you use?

How effective have you found them?
OR
How effective do you think they would be?

3. Homework

Was PP taken into account when setting homework task(s)?
Probe - Ask respondent to give reasons why/why not

Will it be taken into account when marking?
Probe- Ask respondent to give reasons why/why not

Do you envisage the PP students having any significant difficulties/disadvantages when it comes to completing the work?
Prompt – access to resources, home environment, attitudes to learning

4. Recorded data

Based on your attainment records, how well do you feel the PP students are doing in relation to students who are not PP eligible?
Probe- Ask respondent to give reasons why/why not
Prompt – use own observations from data previously provided by participant

> Is the comparative attainment of PP students in relation to non-PP students something you and/or your school take particular note of?
>
>
> ### 5. <u>**PP in general**</u>
> Do you think PP intervention/identification has helped you in your teaching or improved outcomes for less well-off students?
> *Probe- Ask respondent to give reasons why/why not*
>
> What do you think about the policy in general and how it is implemented at your school?
>
> Close with general questions about school life.

Figure 3.1 Interview schedule

Discussion took place about the extent to which Pupil Premium students' needs were considered when setting and marking tasks. Subsequently, the relationship between teachers' perceptions of disadvantage and their lesson delivery and planning practices were explored. It was hoped that these discussions might inform even more focused and differentiated examples of tasks for Pupil Premium students in the future. However, even from the first interviews, it was clear that there were difficulties and differences in the extent to which the teachers felt they could, or indeed, should be making explicit differentiated approaches exclusively for these students.

The interviews were a powerful element of the case studies by gathering rich data on how the participants interpreted and made sense of their world as well as how they acted within it (Cohen et al., 2013; Gray, 2004). They offered insights into the participants' values, aspirations, and attitudes in a manner

rarely achieved through other methods such as surveys (Forsey, 2012, p. 364). The interviews allowed for clarification and elaboration with ideas investigated in depth and responses probed and followed up (Bell, 2014, p. 135). The choice of semi-structured interviews benefitted from the advantage of scaffolding discussions within predetermined parameters relating to Pupil Premium funding and the effects that this might have had on classroom practice. This still allowed for exploration of opinions, feelings and experiences of what was a potentially sensitive issue using the participants' privileged information on how the policy was working in their sphere (Denscombe, 2007, p. 175). By avoiding a completely structured approach, participants were able to respond to questioning on their own terms, while at the same time ensuring more comparability than that of an unstructured interview (May, 2011, p. 135). There were potential problems associated with interviews relating to participants using avoidance tactics or holding back. Also, there could be issues with meaning as well as trying to bring all aspects of the encounter within rational control (Cicourel, 1964). However, it was still a most effective way to capture the uniqueness of this particular situation.

I tried to make the interviews as positive and beneficial an experience as possible as well as reassuring the participants of their own worth and the importance of the topic (Cohen et al., 2013). Locations were chosen to minimise the chances of being disturbed as well as places in which the participants felt comfortable. I considered that the surroundings could have the effect of making the participants feel relaxed and therefore more forthcoming. However, practicalities meant that this was not always the case.

Some participants suggested that the classroom in which observations had taken place were the most appropriate venues for follow-up interviews. This extension of their own teaching domain could act to put the participants at ease, but I was conscious of the extension of the working space acting to reinforce the connection between the lesson, observation and subsequent interview as an arduous task. Because of timetabling clashes, some interviews were conducted in free office space and two interviews were conducted in the participant's home. It proved almost impossible to follow Saldaña's advice and chose a time for the interviews when the participant did not feel in some way rushed or fatigued (2011, p. 35). I was grateful that the participants had been able to find any time to accommodate me at all in circumstances which seemed particularly pressured. Most interviews took place within two of hours of the observation, usually after the school day had finished. This allowed time to review observational notes and prepare for the interview. A greater time lapse may have been more beneficial in terms of formulating specific lines of inquiry; however, the participants were limited as to when they could engage with the research. One school had strict policies about unaccompanied visitors on the school site, hence the need to conduct the interview at the participant's home at a later date. Both the initial and subsequent interviews followed a similar routine.

Stimulated recall methods were used to explore the teachers' 'in-flight' thinking (Calderhead, 1981; Patterson, 2007). Participants commented on their actions and decision-making processes during the lesson with prompts from observational fieldnotes. Incidents were highlighted during the

interviews and the participants elaborated on their experience of what happened. Rather than make notes, I used an electronic recording device during the interviews. This meant that I could concentrate fully on the conversation rather than spending time looking down and detailing what was being said. This allowed me to focus on listening and interpreting the responses while also trying to build a rapport with the participants.

The development of a rapport built on mutual trust was important, not just in helping the flow of the interview but also in eliciting more valid responses. I hoped that since I shared with the participants many of the same day-to-day experiences, that they would be encouraged to open up and discuss their thoughts in-depth. After all, 'the more closely researchers are involved with the researched, the more likely it is that they can be responsive and adaptable' (Mertens & Ginsberg, 2009, p. 569). The greater the extent of this 'embeddedness', the greater depth of understanding I hoped to gain (Robson, 2011). With two of the participants this was perhaps easier, since not only were we fellow teachers but we also worked within the same school. However, this insider status could act as a double-edged sword when it came to accuracy, consistency and validity.

3.7 Insider Status

I was concerned with the extent to which my status within school was a factor in getting the teachers to participate and subsequently give answers which they thought I wanted to hear. However, the proximity allowed me to closely monitor the process and work through any difficulties which the other

participants might face. Powney and Watts (1987) suggest that expectations, in terms of loyalties, are crucial to the way in which the interviewer is perceived but I felt that this could actually work in my favour (p. 40). After all, the main strength of being known to some of the participants was that I already had significant credibility based on a relationship built up over several years. This allowed me to create a level of rapport which engendered a greater level of openness than would otherwise be the case. However, there existed a danger of unspoken power dynamics within the interview wherein I was perceived as possessing some kind of expert status (Saldaña, 2011, p. 350). Being aware of this, I tried, as far as possible, to put the participants at ease.

As an insider, in terms of ethnicity and class, I could never take on what Delamont (2012) calls the standpoint of the 'other', nor indeed do I think that this would have been advantageous in this instance. I was able to utilise a level of privileged insider status to which few researchers could have access. This provided considerable credibility and rapport which led to a greater level of openness than would otherwise be the case. I had freer access and a shared frame of reference but also a shared history, of differing degrees, which may have created preconceptions on both the part of the interviewer and interviewee (Mercer, 2007, p. 13). Such issues were unavoidable but great pains were taken to keep them at the forefront of my mind and to ensure that, as far as possible, they did not infect the interview data. I was careful not to use leading questions and I endeavoured to keep my own opinions out of the conversations. I was also very aware that the participants should not

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feel that I was making any immediate value judgements based on their responses. Such considerations and a similar approach were also utilised during the lesson observations.

3.8 Observations

Taking on board Seidman's suggestion that interviews are best used as part of a suite of techniques, lesson observations were also fully utilised as part of these case studies (2013, p. 6). By drawing on direct evidence of events first-hand, the lesson observations provided a platform for gathering rich insights as well as allowing me to see things from the subjects' point of view. Compared to the interviews, there was also a greater chance of retaining the naturalistic setting of the situation through observation. There are hazards in utilising observations, not least the preconceptions and prejudices of the observer. While impossible to observe, describe and interpret phenomena in any way other than through one's own perceptions, it was always my intention to be constantly on-guard against being judgemental. Selective interpretations may be inevitable, particularly in observing an activity so familiar to myself. However, if this is taken into consideration, the evidence from observations can offer valuable insights (Cohen et al., 2013; Denscombe, 2007). I was particularly keen to use lesson observations to discover whether the participants did what they say they did or indeed the extent to which their claims differed from reality (May, 2011; Robson, 2002). This was not because I did not trust the participants but because I felt by being present in lessons, I would have greater contextual understanding of issues discussed in the subsequent interviews. Unlike ethnographical

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approaches, the observations did not take precedence over the interviews. However, the interviews alone could not give the fuller understanding achieved by witnessing first-hand what was being discussed (May, 2011, p. 158). This fuller understanding based on a variety of evidence was further justification for the case study approach.

Although not entirely reluctant to be observed, none of the participants were particularly enthusiastic about the prospect. Undoubtedly, lesson observations are obtrusive, but they are such an intrinsic part of a teacher's life that the participants were, at least, used to having their work scrutinised in such a manner. Despite their ubiquity, lesson observations can still significantly affect what ordinarily occurs in classrooms. I was aware that some of the naturalness of the situation could be lost due to teachers' familiarity with the conscious and formal observation process (Weade & Evertson, 1991). I am personally well-used to the stresses of observation and, as such, tried to put the participants at ease using a positive and supportive rapport. In doing so, I hoped to avoid having to break down the impression management used by teachers to manipulate other people's perceptions (Goffman, 1970). Despite the possibility of seeing only the participants' very best classroom performance, this type of participant observation is unmatched in the opportunity it provides for seeing the authentic classroom interactions. There were several examples during the observations when the participants went 'off script' for practical reasons which would have been unusual in an official observation since it hints at a lack of appropriate planning.

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3.9 The Role of the Observer

As a mentor and trainer, I have seen first-hand the negative atmosphere which an observer can create in a formal observation setting. Trainees who have shown confidence, charisma and excellent classroom practice can regress significantly during official observations. I was keen to avoid a similar situation as I was much more interested in classroom events rather than reactions to being observed. As ubiquitous as classroom observations are, they represent a variety of forms and purposes (O'Leary, 2014, p. 3). Wragg (2002) suggests it is important that the methods of classroom observation should suit its purposes to avoid negative responses. The agreed method for lesson observation was informed by my experience of being both subject and observer of numerous lesson appraisals by Ofsted, school management and as an initial teacher trainer. I was clear with the participants that this process was not about judging the lesson but rather to chronicle what was happening to make sense of the teachers' approaches to social disadvantage. I did not want the observation to be seen as an evaluation because of the negative connotations which this might bring (Lieberman & Miller, 1984, p. 9). Being observed teaching is undoubtedly intrusive so I tried to be as sympathetic as possible. Although I asked the teachers to provide only the documents they would ordinarily prepare for an observed lesson, I was not prescriptive so that the observation was as informal as possible. This was also useful in revealing what information the teachers judged necessary for their lesson as well as what they considered important for me to see.

The observations could be described as non-participatory, as I positioned myself out of the way and I attempted not to engage with either the students or teacher once the lesson began. I followed what Denscombe (2007) might refer to as 'participation as observer' as I tried to fade into the background as much as possible (p. 218). This proved quite difficult because, as a teacher, I found it frustrating not to become involved and support the learning of the children in the class. In some of the lessons, due to lack of space, it was not always possible to be completely inconspicuous. Even in instances where I had to sit within the eyeline of several students, the aim was still to be suitably unobtrusive so that what was being observed was as close to normal classroom interactions as possible. Understandably, trying to retain the authenticity of the setting was difficult just by my very presence in the classroom. I could never be a completely objective observer since all the participant teachers were known to me and, in a few cases, so were the classes being observed. As I wanted the teachers to be as relaxed as possible, I left it up to them to decide how my presence was explained to the students. In most cases, the teacher chose not to acknowledge the observation. It seemed that the classes were so used to observers appearing unannounced in their lessons that a protocol of beneficent ignoring was adopted. How much influence I had on the observed lessons was raised in the subsequent interviews. However, as discussed below, there appeared little consistency in the teachers' perceptions of the effect that my presence had on them, the lesson or the students.

Although the observations were much more than stimulated recall for the interviews, fieldnotes were useful to identify incidents to reflect upon and questions to ask the teacher afterwards (Emerson, Fretz & Shaw, 2011). However, the notes also provided evidence of social disadvantage influencing planning and delivery as well as conspicuous examples of the effects of Pupil Premium policy. Rather than using a strict content analysis system (Flanders, 1970; Hill et al., 2012), I used a version of what Silverman (2015) refers to as 'headnotes' and 'jottings' to describe the situations within the classroom (p. 46). I made specific records of what I considered significant instances as well as noting down possible follow-up questions for the later interviews. I looked particularly for evidence of anything which could be interpreted as differentiation based on Pupil Premium status as well as opportunities where this could have been addressed. This semi-structured approach seemed most appropriate as I had a general view of what I was looking out for but, at the same time, I did not want to inflict my own ideas and priorities onto how the lessons should be managed. A structured observation schedule could have restricted my focus and I was much more interested in seeing how the lessons developed organically. Initially, the notes were recorded in a nondescript notebook to be as unobtrusive as possible. They were later transferred to a proforma based on my own schools' lesson observation sheets which helped with later analysis alongside the planning documents, school Pupil Premium policies and interview transcripts.

3.10 Analysis

Bourdieu's theories were used as a conceptual lens through which to interpret, understand and generalise the findings. Such utilisation of established theory can be beneficial to a case study approach (Yin, 2009). However, it was the data rather than the theory which was of primary importance initially. Once the interviews and observations had taken place, it was possible to start analysing the results in conjunction with the written documents. Through on-going reflection upon the data, it was possible to start to formulate a sense of the broader picture in terms of what was being experienced. It became clear that a constant process of review and re-evaluation was needed as well as regular changes in focus in what Wield (2002) refers to as a feedback loop. Initially, the data were analysed as separate types before later being addressed as individual cases. Constantly revisiting the data led to further exploration of pre-existing studies into aspects of educational research and social justice. Interpreting and evaluating what was becoming apparent allowed for a process of initial categorisation based on data of types relating to each of the five individual case studies. With an ever more comfortable grasp of the issues, it became possible to begin coding the data by identifying significant aspects of the component parts. Coding, in this instance, refers to the process of assigning categories, concepts or 'codes' to segments of information by way of conceptually or thematically indexing them, rather like annotating and highlighting text (Friese, 2014, p. 24).

Computer-assisted (or computer-aided) qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) has been referred to as one of the most significant developments in qualitative research in the last twenty years (Bryman, 2012). It certainly proved invaluable in the analysis of these qualitative data by removing many of the arduous tasks associated with the manual coding and retrieval of data. Rather than expending energy on 'boring clerical work', more time could be devoted to creative and intellectual tasks and less immersed in routine (Seale, 2013, p. 269). Another advantage, suggested by Seale, is an improvement of rigour and the avoidance of anecdotalism. Rather than selecting only anecdotes supporting a particular interpretation, careful use of coding to highlight the frequency of phenomena, as well as demonstrating that negative instances have been considered, can offset accusations of researcher bias (p. 277). As much as I may have sensed that the participants adapted their teaching and responses in the second phase of the research in response to the first, there was not sufficient evidence from the coding analysis to bear this out. This was important in highlighting the dangers of basing judgements on a superficial impression rather than full analysis of the data.

Nvivo was the CAQDAS software I used because of its well-developed support for structured qualitative data and the incorporation of materials from other IT applications. It allowed me to systematically work through the data as well as helping to identify and uncover emerging themes (Wiltshier, 2011). It also offered sophisticated and flexible tools for easy coding, searching and retrieval of data. The coding provided a means of organising areas of interest from the data relating to the research questions. Silver and Lewins (2014)

underline the importance of being flexible in how you engage with such software, selecting only appropriate aspects while at the same time being prepared to be creative. It proved extremely helpful in developing a systematic coding strategy for generating robust analysis. The cross referencing of links between documents allowed for an audit trail of how the coding developed over time. For example, feelings of 'frustration', 'guilt' and 'fairness' which appeared across several interviews and observations could be identified and collated for further analysis. This approach forced me to be explicit and reflective when it came to describing the analysis.

As Ritchie et al. (2014) suggest, analysis is a continuous and iterative process (p. 296). Through familiarisation with the data, it was possible to generate a list of topics and then categorise them into a hierarchy of themes and subthemes to construct a thematic framework for use in analysing the whole data set (p. 298). The contents of the framework were entered as 'codes' or 'nodes'. The interview transcripts, fieldnotes, plans and documents were labelled with the teacher's name and analysed using open coding. The case studies were developed using the data and codes for each teacher which were then organised into categories, provisionally based on the main research questions and, subsequently, on the interview schedule. After exploring the commonalities and differences, it became possible to determine themes across the teachers. Categories were regularly updated, renamed or incorporated into other categories as greater depth of analysis was undertaken. For example, what was first highlighted as teacher evaluations of their own lessons were subsequently sub-divided into positive and negative

responses. With further analysis, these categories had to be reassessed to address issues such as false modesty and unjustified pride. It was also necessary to isolate distinct teacher evaluations of success based on Pupil Premium policy since this was not always at the forefront of the teachers' judgements. In the end, numerous categories were refined to a more focused and manageable number. Through sorting, combining, and grouping the codes within these master categories, key concepts and themes began to emerge relating to the research questions concerning the possible impact of Pupil Premium on planning for social disadvantage.

Elements of the interview responses, lesson observations and documents were coded to reflect how they related to thoughts on social difference, the perceived effects of Pupil Premium and practical lessons suggested by the study as set out in the research questions. Sub-questions were later incorporated into the coding process as were the more focused and specific interview questions. Once coded, connections became apparent within the data which allowed for a deeper understanding of how the teachers were making sense of their experiences with the policy. However, as with the raw data itself, it was necessary to engage in a process of regular review and refinement with the different codes as new and more interesting aspects presented themselves from the analysis. With a focus on the participants' perceptions and a desire to elicit teacher voice as well as practical improvements, particular themes began to dominate. From a theoretical point of view, but also from the position as a fellow teacher, it became apparent that the participants had the greatest insight to offer the five main areas. These

were categorised as: perceptions of disadvantage, influences on lesson planning, how far Pupil Premium was used in success criteria, Pupil Premium and the use of homework, thoughts on the national and school Pupil Premium policy. These categories were used to inform the nature and organisation of the findings.

3.11 Ethical Considerations

Qualitative research, of the type undertaken here, can be viewed as inherently problematic from an ethical point of view. Asking participants to allow the researcher so much access to their working lives and opinions represents a balancing act 'between our own needs as researchers and our obligations toward care for, and connection with, those who participate in our research' (Etherington, 2007, p. 614). There are potential pitfalls, not just for the participant teachers but also for their students. I felt that it was vital that no students should be disadvantaged because of this study and, on reflection, I am confident that, due to the nature of the methods employed, this did not occur. I tried to be as open and honest about the nature of the project from the very beginning.   As well as reassuring the participants that the research would not be onerous or in any way detrimental, I could also point out that it might lead to improved educational outcomes. Despite Silverman's guidance that researchers need to avoid 'contaminating' their study 'by informing subjects too specifically about the research questions to be studied' (2000, p. 200), I was more inclined to follow the advice of Powney and Watts (1987, p. 147) who argue that research benefits from interviewees being 'fully informed from the start of what the researchers and the interviewees are trying to

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establish' (see Appendix 1, Participant Information and Consent Form). In

doing so, I was confident that all those involved were reassured of both my

integrity and the value of the research (Bell, 2014, p. 37) .

Further ethical dilemmas related to reporting on what I found through the

research. It would be potentially unpleasant to chronicle findings which were

overtly critical of either respondents or schools who had been so helpful in

accommodating my study in the first place. This would be especially true for

my own workplace wherein I had to remain balanced and objective lest I

should be overly critical or too lenient. However, I also felt compelled to

report issues just as I interpreted them to present a valid picture of what I had

experienced. Both the schools and the participants were well-aware of all

aspects of the study and they were given ample opportunity should they wish

to pull out. Moreover, the teachers and their schools have been anonymised

in the study for reasons of confidentiality. A report of the findings will be

issued to the schools for review and comment before the final research is

published.

As a small-scale study focusing on the experiences of just five teachers, it

could not be suggested that this study reflects a representative sample of

professionals engaged in this context. Rather the intention was to offer

deeper insight, on a local level, into how the Pupil Premium policy was

experienced and how it could be improved. Much evaluative research into

educational policies could claim to be more representative with significantly

larger sample sizes, but the validity of such research can be debated. The

respondents do not always reflect the 'rank and file' of ordinary teachers and the data captured tends to be statistical figures based on questionable criteria which can often be manipulated for political purposes. If a school can show that they have narrowed the statistical attainment gap between their Pupil Premium cohort and other students, this can be used to justify the policy in general as well as the approach taken by the specific school. However, such correlations do not offer sufficient analysis of the context to fully explain the processes at work.   In addition, such large-scale evaluations can miss valuable detail through a broad-brush approach. Success locally and nationally in terms of implementation of policy and subsequent results usually offer up a pass/fail framework of measurement. This dichotomy can often prove false as the true lived experience of those involved can be much more nuanced. This smaller scale approach also allowed for investigation into how far issues of social class informed the daily practice of these teachers. While not being representative of the whole profession, the participants in the study could be viewed as regular teachers within their own geographical setting.

Chapter 4 Findings

4.1 Background

In this section, the focus placed on Pupil Premium in lesson planning and delivery is analysed for each of the individual case studies in turn. This is followed by analysis and comparison across the participants. The findings are investigated, including the extent to which knowledge of Pupil Premium influenced planning of the observed lessons. To assess how far the participants evaluated the impact of their teaching in relation to social difference, the teachers' criteria for success were explored in relation to Pupil Premium. So too was the role played by Pupil Premium in the participants' approach to homework and feelings about national and local Pupil Premium policies and how these influenced the participants. These areas of analysis were also explored in relation to the teachers' wider understandings of social inequality using Bourdieusian theory as a guide.

Despite the variety of approaches and scarcity of formal plans, each participant provided evidence of acute awareness relating to pupil characteristics including specific needs linked to learning. All Pupil Premium students were identified and highlighted by each participant, sometimes in several different documents. How this identification was used in the planning and delivery of the lesson was different in each case.

4.2 Case Studies

4.2.1 Angela

Angela taught geography at Cheseton, a large secondary academy in the North West of England on the outskirts of a small tourist town. The school had approximately 1,265 pupils aged between 11-18 years, with 9% Pupil Premium students. Angela had been teaching for 10 years. Although she had worked as a teaching assistant in a previous school, she had spent her entire teaching career at Cheseton. Two of Angela's geography lessons were observed with the same mixed-ability Year 8 class (the school has mixed-ability classes for humanities subjects, music and art. They are setted in core subjects such as mathematics, English and science). Within the class of 31, there were 5 pupils who were identified as Pupil Premium.   The lessons were several weeks apart and covered business in China and development in the Antarctic. In both instances, Angela was interviewed later in the same day. Of all the participants, Angela's appraisal of her lessons most closely matched my own observations. There were areas of the lessons which did not always go well but Angela was prepared to admit this rather than put a positive spin on it. Instead of justifying how the first lesson developed in terms of abstract learning objectives, Angela admitted that, since her class were getting on quietly, "they might as well just carry on with what they were doing."   As well as explaining her ideas, Angela was prepared to admit that there were gaps in her knowledge and understanding of Pupil Premium. However, she still provided a great deal of reflection and thoughtful opinion in both interviews. A lot of focus was given to description, justification and evaluation of the classroom strategies which had been outlined in her plans and observed in

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her lessons. In this respect, it was very much in the manner of a performance management observation used in schools to assess teacher effectiveness. In such observations, there are pre-existing understandings of what should happen and the context within which all actions of the teacher should be justified. This did highlight the importance Angela attributed to being a reflective and evaluative teacher but also the inherent preconceptions about what lesson observation feedback should focus upon. She also emphasised that nothing special had been undertaken because of the observations. This underlined the recognition that there were many elements which could have gone better. Possibly because of our relationship as colleagues, Angela could utilise the assumed shared understanding that lessons often play out very differently in reality compared with the abstract. Despite being aware of the focus of the research, Angela was quite open in her ambivalent and, at times, cynical opinion of Pupil Premium as an educational strategy.

How understandings and knowledge of Pupil Premium influenced lesson planning

Angela's information about which students were Pupil Premium was based on a list of all the Pupil Premium students at the school which she received at the start of the year. Apart from the student's name and form group, no other information was provided on this list. Angela also had access to a class list and electronic mark book which identified a range of indicators, including SEN status. This list also gave each pupil's Key Stage 2 Statutory Assessment Test (SATs) scores and progress levels. The SATs were examinations taken by the students when they were eleven years old. The data provided

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evidence of attainment and anticipated future achievement for each student. In addition, Angela had access to the school's Pupil Premium policy which outlined the school's aims, roles and responsibilities as well as uses of the funding and methods of monitoring. This document highlighted that the class teacher was expected to "support disadvantaged groups of pupils in their class through differentiated planning and teaching." However, Angela was not aware of this and acknowledged that, although she knew this policy document existed, she admitted, "it's not something that I've ever read." Angela highlighted Pupil Premium students on the register in her own mark book. She suggested that the list was useful in that it offered a vague indication that some form of action needed to take place in her lessons. However, she admitted that she was not always sure as to the form this action should take. Angela appeared to have a general awareness of the way in which a lack of economic capital interacts with educational capital to entrench social disadvantage. She also felt that she had a good understanding about what Pupil Premium meant. However, she admitted that it was difficult for her to know what she should be doing as a classroom teacher.

"I suppose because as Pupil Premium they're identified as less likely to succeed in education, for whatever circumstance it is. So just the very nature of that, I perhaps should, as a teacher, be paying a bit more attention to those individuals, to make sure that they don't fall into that category. That's why I perhaps think, well, they've been identified as such, so there's got to be a reason for that. Maybe I should do something."

Angela may have thought it appropriate to do something for the Pupil Premium students, but she did not appear to plan for, or include anything in the lesson specifically to raise their attainment. It seems that this was not just the case for the observed lessons. "I haven't ever done anything different because of Pupil Premium." The reason for not doing more seemed to be that she did not have enough information about why the students were identified as Pupil Premium and therefore had little context beyond a very broad definition on which to base any specific interventions. "There are different reasons why students can be Pupil Premium, and I think unless you know the reason it's very difficult to know what you need to do differently for them…The fact that they're Pupil Premium doesn't really say a lot to me as a teacher about doing anything differently for them…any intervention would only be a bit of a shot in the dark."

This was a concern shared by many of the participants. Although the government places responsibility on the school to identify Pupil Premium students and to try and improve their attainment, specific reasons why students qualify are not shared. In many cases, it may be possible for the schools and their teachers to speculate with a degree of insider knowledge but there is still an unsatisfactory element of guesswork.

Despite not knowing why some students were identified as Pupil Premium, Angela felt she knew the class very well as learners. During the interviews, she described in detail many of their attributes including individual learning

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needs. Angela described one student as, "not necessarily the brightest…but she's probably the hardest working... She's one of the only ones in that class that's on an ATL-5." ATL referred to the student's 'attitude to learning' with five representing the highest achievable level. Angela was effective at using this available data to support her observations although she could not always recall progress levels without reference to her mark book. There was little evidence in either observed lesson of targeted differentiation for anyone in the class, be it Pupil Premium or SEN. Activities tended to be open-ended which allowed for differentiation by outcome. Angela was quite candid about this approach. "I don't do anything differently for anybody in that class. They tend to all get the same activity, and they will work at different paces, get different amounts done." Angela suggested it may be because she lacked sufficient knowledge as to why students were eligible for Pupil Premium which limited her ability to plan specifically for them. However, there was little evidence of personalised provision for students whose specific needs were more apparent.

If Pupil Premium identification did have a noticeable effect on Angela's approach to planning and delivering lessons, it was subtle. "I suppose it does flag up to you that there's an issue there somewhere. I suppose it makes you mindful of who those students are. I wouldn't necessarily say I would actively do anything different, but maybe subconsciously you just pay a little bit more attention to what they're doing and how they're getting on."

To what extent was Pupil Premium considered when assessing the success of the observed lessons?

Angela was satisfied with how the observed lessons proceeded, particularly the first. She was happy with progress in general although her judgements were based on the quantity of work completed and student behaviour. When pushed to assess the extent to which different individuals and groups made progress, Angela suggested that this was difficult to measure during the lesson but would be highlighted when work was marked. The only group she felt confident in making judgements about were the small number of students identified as 'gifted and talented'. This was because she had concrete expectations of what they could achieve. The greatest difficulty expressed in assessing the progress of the Pupil Premium students, as a group, was the disparate nature of the individuals as learners. One of these students was 'gifted and talented' while another was identified as having special educational needs. Since there was little to link the 5 Pupil Premium students, in terms of their learning, trying to assess and address their progress as a group would be understandably challenging.

"I don't think as a group in a class there are necessarily any similarities… If I look at that group there are different effort levels. There are different attainment levels. Their personalities are different. The way they interact in class is different. There's no similarity between them…the Pupil Premium are so different that there's nothing coherent about them that brings them together."

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With these problems in assessing progress within the lesson, it could be easier to understand why provision for such students in the planning stage would be difficult. However, without anything specifically targeted at the Pupil Premium group during the lesson it would be unlikely that the intervention of the class teacher would have much impact on improving the attainment of these students in line with school policy and government expectations.

How was disadvantage conceived and catered for in the use of homework?
There was no reference to homework in the planning documents of either of Angela's lessons, however, as it transpired, homework tasks were set in both. These tasks were in-flight reactions to the lessons and did not include any specific provision for Pupil Premium students. Although, when discussing issues of social disadvantage and homework, Angela suggested it was something which she usually considered significant. Moreover, Angela made connections between the quality of homework and clues about the students' home life. "I suppose, you get an impression of how things are at home and what sort of work they do at home, based on the homework that they do."

However, Angela pointed out that she would not consider singling out economically disadvantaged students as to do so might imply that she was making assumptions without evidential basis. This reluctance to prejudge would avoid the harmful effects of misinterpretation highlighted in several other studies and suggests a consideration of an individual's feelings (Gewirtz et al., 2005, Wood & Warin, 2014). "I don't like saying… if they're Pupil

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Premium they might have less supportive parents at home, because that's not necessarily the case…I wouldn't want to judge that to be the case, because I think that might be a stigma that might even be attached to it." This issue of stigma and being 'singled out' appeared more important to several of the participants than the delivery of personalised provision. It seemed that the teachers were more focused on the students' emotional needs rather than purely academic progress. However, even when academic attainment was a consideration, Angela felt that the different ability levels of the Pupil Premium students resulted in very different approaches to homework.

What feelings were expressed about the national policy and its explicit identification of disadvantaged students?

Angela's approach to the national Pupil Premium strategy was ambivalent, bordering on the cynical. Since she was not convinced by the potential positive outcomes, it did not have an explicit impact on her teaching. However, she was not closed off to the issues raised by the policy and, as the research progressed, Angela admitted giving it more consideration. Yet there were still enough obstacles preventing it having practical implications on how Angela planned and delivered lessons. She felt that the lack of information given about why students were classified as Pupil Premium offered no assistance in planning how they should be taught. Moreover, using her insider knowledge of the students identified as Pupil Premium, Angela questioned the validity of the criteria applied by the government for labelling students as disadvantaged. Since no data were available to her beyond the identifiable status, she was unable to substantiate this. Angela felt that extra

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funding for disadvantaged students was a creditable idea if only the identification criteria were more precise. Yet she recognised that to do so, in a genuinely beneficial and accurate way, would be difficult, particularly if it were based on parental income such as Pupil Premium status linked to FSM eligibility. Interestingly, even though she was not convinced of the efficacy of the policy, she suggested that it would still be appropriate to measure the impact it was having. However, again she suggested that this would be difficult and would not necessarily be apparent from individual student's academic progress.

Thoughts on how effectively Pupil Premium policy was used in school
Angela felt that Pupil Premium was mentioned a great deal around her school and that it was considered important, although not necessarily a "priority". The relative progress of Pupil Premium students was highlighted in the policy document and to all staff during a general in-service training day (INSET) at the start of each academic year. The document claimed that the school's aims were to ensure that Pupil Premium students have, "a positive experience of the school and can optimise the opportunities to develop and succeed." However, Angela suggested that the motives were not always purely altruistic; "I think that's because the school's judged on the progress of those students, rather than the fact that the school necessarily cares about them…I think the reason it's so important is because we are judged on the progress of those students."

This had the effect of making Angela feel accountable for something over

which she considered she had no real control, not least because Angela could not remember ever having training or guidance on how she was expected to approach Pupil Premium students and the funding attached to them. Even if she had, Angela still felt that this training and guidance might not necessarily be effective if it proposed a group-wide approach.

"I think there probably has been [training], but I can't really remember, which would suggest that it wasn't particularly useful even if there was…I know it's been mentioned in INSETs before, but I wouldn't say there's particularly any advice as to how you can support them…I still think that, anyway, it would come down to the individual child. You know, even advice about Pupil Premium students would still come down to your individual judgement as a teacher of the students themselves."

During follow-up conversations, Angela confirmed that she had no record of receiving training about Pupil Premium. Interestingly, however, she said it had been an agenda item on a subsequent staff meeting. Angela felt that this may be because the school had appointed a senior member of staff with specific responsibility for Pupil Premium. Angela did not feel the meeting had added much to her understanding or approach to the policy. A lack of clarity was also apparent in Angela's understanding of the requirements on her to be aware of the school's policy or indeed how relevant it would be to her everyday practice. "If you had asked me whether there was a policy, I probably would have said yes but it's not something that I've ever read. I'm sure if I read it, I would learn something from it but I think if I was wanting to

improve or if I wanted to make progress as a teacher there are other things that I would find more important to read than that."

The practicalities of taking time out from a busy teaching life appeared to limit the extent to which Angela was willing or able to engage with policy documents, the policy itself or even wider considerations of social inequality. However, Angela felt she had a vague understanding of the legal obligations attached to the school policy as well as a sense of how effectively it was working. Yet she appeared so disconnected from the policy itself that Angela felt comfortable to concede that the school was probably taking an appropriate, if not very inspiring, approach to disadvantage using Pupil Premium identification but one which had little effect on her own practice.

Angela frequently reiterated that the identification process for Pupil Premium was essentially flawed in that it identified some students who may not actually be disadvantaged. Also, many students who could be considered economically disadvantaged were not highlighted by the scheme. Therefore, without exploration or scrutiny of the individual reasons for students being identified as Pupil Premium, the teacher is restricted in what they can do for the individual. Having accepted this limitation, but at the same time acknowledging that progress must be measured, the teacher is placed in an unfortunate position. While paying lip-service to the policy as well as trying to find ways to show improvement in statistical data, they are not able to engage with and/or improve the underlying problems caused by socio-economic

problems. This unusual predicament seemed to be at the heart of Angela's ambivalence. There was a suggestion that she was open to the idea of compensatory measures to combat the unfairness caused by inequalities in economic, education and social capital. However, the prescriptive measurement system and the arbitrary identification process appeared to have caused a feeling of isolation from the policy. When the policy was not being disregarded completely, it seems to have engendered a sense of cynicism in Angela.

4.2.2 Brian

Brian taught English in the same school as Angela. It had approximately 1,265 pupils aged between 11-18 years, with 9% Pupil Premium students. Brian had been a teacher in the school for eight years, after teaching at another local school for just one year before that. Two lessons were observed several weeks apart with Brian teaching the same mixed ability Year 8 English class. As a core subject, English was taught in sets based on ability. Various data were used to set the students including SATs, Cognitive Ability Test (CAT) scores, baseline tests and continuous teacher assessment. Pupil Premium was not used to inform decisions on setting. The class had 26 students, two of who were identified as Pupil Premium. Brian provided a lot of lesson documentation for the first observation but less so for the second because he had been too busy. Interviews took place straight after both lessons in the same classroom as the observations.

How understandings and knowledge of Pupil Premium influenced lesson planning

Brian's information about Pupil Premium students was based on the same list which Angela received. The list included no information about the students other than identifying them and giving their name and form group. Also, like Angela, Brian had a class list and electronic mark book which identified a range of indicators for each student, including SEN status, SATs scores and interim progress levels. Brian also had access to the school's Pupil Premium policy but, again, he was unsure if he had read it. Pupil Premium students were identified in his own mark book along with records of class tasks and pieces of homework completed.

Brian claimed that he was aware of the Pupil Premium students in his class and acknowledged that they were one of his priorities. However, they were only one of many priorities which he identified. Brian suggested that he considered other students' needs and backgrounds to the same extent as he did with those identified as Pupil Premium. He admitted that in the classes which were observed, there was a reasonably limited amount of discrete planning for any kind of difference. However, he felt he was producing tasks that everyone could access and work on at their own rate. Brian referred to this as "differentiating by task." He also used seating plans, pre-assigned groups and scaffolding of tasks to allow access for all learners. Seating plans were informed by the level and nature of support needed by each student. However, Brian acknowledged that there was a limited amount of focus in terms of planning for Pupil Premium. He felt specific consideration could only

be viewed as a "back covering" exercise, reacting to what the school expected rather than something he saw as necessary for its own sake. Brian suggested that he was likely to treat Pupil Premium students on the basis of their needs as individuals rather than because of their status. Although he taught only a few such students across all his classes, he suggested that Pupil Premium students often responded better to flexibility and creativity as they were able to shape the direction of the tasks and their own learning in an independent manner. This implicitly informed Brian's approach to these students in a manner which would not be possible without the identification that Pupil Premium status brought. Brian suggested this made him helpfully more aware before they even came into the class. He said this made him more likely to keep a close eye on what might be going on with them socially and in terms of the development in their work.

Brian, like Angela, showed commendable knowledge and understanding of his students' preferred methods of learning and academic characteristics. He was particularly familiar with the specific needs of the Pupil Premium students. However, this appeared to be because of the particular challenges that each individual posed which kept them at the forefront of his mind. Alice, a Pupil Premium student, was identified as having significant behavioural issues. As such, Brian felt it was necessary to speak to her outside the classroom before the first observed lesson. He explained how she was positioned within the classroom so that she was in his direct eye-line for the majority of the lesson. Although not mentioned in the planning documents, Brian suggested that he manipulated the situation in the lesson to give Alice a

sense of achievement at the start of the lesson with focused questioning. Zach, the other Pupil Premium student in the class, was highlighted as being prone to day-dreaming. He also had SEN identification. According to Brian, it was important that Zach was able to verbally access work before he could produce anything written to stop him "floundering" or going off task. It was difficult for Brian to determine whether his focussed efforts were motivated by the pupils' status or simply because they posed more issues than the rest of the class. "It's hard to know because they were the first people I noticed on the register, so I noticed them early and I noticed what their characteristics are. I don't know if I've noticed them because of Pupil Premium and they got picked out before I ever saw them or whether or not their characteristics have meant that I've picked them out and they're one of the eight or nine that I'll keep a close eye on in that lesson, every lesson."

Keeping a discreet watch rather than explicit planning appeared to characterise Brian's approach so, at the very least, the Pupil Premium students were experiencing more attention than their peers. This appeared to originate from Brian's notions of the justice behind giving specific students preferential treatment. As Brian put it, "my overriding thing with the whole class is fairness." However, this fairness is then used by Brian to justify that allowances are made for no-one since to do so would be unfair to everyone else. Brian's definition of fairness was not about redressing academic imbalances caused by lack of capital but rather to treat everyone the same. For Brian, greater awareness and specific planning for the two Pupil Premium students in this class could be considered unfair.

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To what extent was Pupil Premium considered when assessing the success of the observed lessons?

Brian appeared very self-critical in the interviews. He was keen to do what was right for his students, but he felt he was not always responding correctly. It may have been false modesty linked to impression management, but Brian was not very positive when reflecting on the observed lessons. Despite this, in both instances, Brian was able to identify key objectives that the lesson had achieved. His criticism of the lesson appeared focused on his delivery rather than student progress. Brian felt that Zach actually had one of his better lessons during the first observation; he contributed to discussion and completed focussed written work. That was good, according to Brian, in terms of social development and the explicit target of effectively utilising persuasive language. Brian was less positive about the progress made by Alice who he felt was not fully engaged. Brian claimed that he was aware of this during the lesson, but he felt that there were other students worthier of his assistance, despite her Pupil Premium status. An example was given of a student who not only struggled more academically but, in Brian's opinion, came from a more socially disadvantaged background despite not having the official status. This echoed Angela's concerns about the validity of the identification process predicated as it is on proof of parental income.

Brian was aware that the Pupil Premium students in this class were under-performing based on statistical data. He described his frustration but was unsure whether this lack of progress was due to social disadvantage or

academic ability; "Is that because of a potential autistic spectrum issue? Is that because of a home life issue and the kind of barriers that you get before you ever enter a school?" Despite this, Brian effectively summarised the various attributes and skills the students had utilised and improved upon during class. There was every indication that he could have done so for every member of the group, but he suggested that it was something he was more aware of because of the Pupil Premium status.

How was disadvantage conceived and catered for in the use of homework?
Homework did not play a significant part in either of the observed lessons nor any of the planning documents provided. Brian suggested that he often set shorter homework tasks which were straight-forward and aimed at being attainable for all. These tended to be finishing off class work or what he termed 'thinking homeworks'. These required students to consider something in preparation for the following lesson. As Brian pointed out, "getting students to turn up with ideas that they can productively throw into a group discussion or throw out at the beginning of a lesson is something that Pupil Premium can access as well as anybody else." In this sense, the Pupil Premium students should not be disadvantaged in terms of material resources at home or lack of parental support. However, Brian pointed out that more formal homework was an area in which Alice excelled. In fact, Brian suggested that her best work was completed at home rather than in the classroom. This raised an interesting issue about the reasons why Pupil Premium students underperform in comparison to their peers. Often external factors, such as parental attitudes, have been proposed to explain it but, in this instance, it

does not seem to be the cause. Brian suggested that Alice had very

supportive parents who were genuinely interested in her efforts and were

quite disappointed when she did not reach her full potential. This underlined

the importance of school-based effects on her progress. Zach, on the other

hand, did not do so well with homework but Brian felt that this was due to

learning difficulties rather than a reflection of his home life. Brian felt that

Zach struggled with understanding the nature of the activities he was being

asked to do. This poses questions about how much help he would receive at

home to make sense of his work. Interestingly, neither Brian or Angela attach

blame for lack of progress on the students' home life. This contrasts with their

schools' policy documents which highlights 'lack of parental support' as a

significant barrier to the achievement of Pupil Premium students.

Brian was increasingly open to the idea of reflection upon social disadvantage

when setting homework. There appeared to be a sense of guilt that he had

not previously considered it. Brian admitted, "I haven't done anything

structurally to help…there should be [something] and I haven't done it." This

lack of reflection about issues of disadvantage and homework was highlighted

several times by the different participants. Many different ideas were

expressed but often it seemed like this was not something they had felt

inclined to consider regularly. Brian identified a link between the way he

approached differentiation in homework for the less academically able and

possible strategies for the future. He felt a range of homework tasks which

could be accessed at several levels would be much more appropriate than

specific Pupil Premium homework which might have the negative

consequence of 'dumbing down' or 'singling out'. However, such approaches could be utilised to lessen the impact on less socially advantaged students when they see others producing homework which has clearly been undertaken with a great deal of parental guidance. One sticking point was the issue of more formal homework not being completed at all. Here, it seems that Brian may have subconsciously taken disadvantage into account as he suggested that he was less strict on the two Pupil Premium students in this regard. This act of leniency could also have a negative impact if it lessened academic challenge. Moreover, Brian was aware that this could expose himself and the Pupil Premium students to resentment; "taking into account anybody's background is quite complex if you're trying to justify fairness to a bunch of Year 8s who don't want to do their homework and if you're administering homework punishments."

What feelings were expressed about the national Pupil Premium policy and its explicit identification of disadvantaged students?

Brian was very positive about the role that Pupil Premium identification could provide as an indicator of possible obstacles to the students' progress. He felt that having such prompts acted as a reminder, albeit in a general sense. Pupil Premium helped Brian consider various possible reasons that might explain why some of his students did not always access the curriculum effectively. Moreover, it could suggest that problems experienced in school may have more deep-seated origins. "Pupil Premium often in my head rings a few bells and makes me think, hang about, what else is going on? You can see other things going on that may be related to what's given the Pupil

Premium status. So, you can sometimes [think], oh, hang about, she needs looking after. Forget the lesson today, she just needs looking after. Perhaps Pupil Premium just gives you a head start in looking at them and noticing them to start with." In addition, Brian showed awareness of the inequality at play within the school system and he agreed wholeheartedly with government funding being used to 'level the playing field.' However, he also highlighted several problems with the scheme when utilised in the classroom, not least because the cohort are quite individual when it comes to learning needs. "Pupil Premium seems to reflect a colossal range of circumstances that lead to a child being disadvantaged in certain ways. Of that very, very complex tangle, do those children react in similar ways despite the complex and diverse needs and pressures that they have?"

Brian highlighted the difficulties placed on teachers to know the best way to provide for their Pupil Premium students. This becomes a bigger issue when the progress (or lack of) made by the Pupil Premium group, in comparison to their peers, is made the responsibility of the individual teacher. Brian described the policy as "a rod with which to beat teachers" to focus on attainment targets rather than the more complicated social needs of this disadvantaged group. He felt teachers were expected to address issues which resulted from the students' identification as Pupil Premium without knowing the specific reasons or where the associated funding was being allocated. Details of how the funding was being used was published on the school's website but with Ofsted as the intended audience, rather than the

classroom teacher. Whether this was an accurate account or not, this policy document was not effective in disseminating details to the teaching staff.

Thoughts on how effectively Pupil Premium policy was used in school

It is worth remembering that Brian and Angela teach at the same school, but their experiences of the policy appeared significantly different. While both suggested an element of cynicism, Angela appears to be able to largely ignore edicts on how to approach the issue.   This may reflect the relative professionalism of both teachers, but I was more inclined to conclude that it was due to Brian teaching English which as a core subject may have been more highly prioritised than Angela's geography. In addition, Brian taught his class three times every week while Angela only saw her class once. Consequently, Brian may have known his class much better. Both teachers had access to the same data, but Brian would have had much more opportunity to learn about his class through the experience of watching their progress in action as well as having more time to converse with them.

Brian disliked the way with which the scheme was used to monitor his own teaching and progress. This was not something Angela described experiencing. Also, Brian felt that since he saw none of the financial resources which Pupil Premium brought into the school, it was difficult to be able to do much about it beyond what he provided to all students as a matter of course. However, he felt pressured to do something. He was optimistic that the use of the funding to appoint a member of senior staff with Pupil

Premium responsibility might address some of his concerns. However, there remained a certain amount of confusion and uncertainty.

It was understandable how, through a lack of sufficient explanation, Brian could become cynical about the school's methods and motives. He perceived the focus to be on examination success with much greater interest taken in students taking their GCSEs than their younger counterparts. His judgement on the school could be quite scathing:

"I think Pupil Premium…as a system, is a target, numerical target, that the senior team are worried about ensuring doesn't fall below certain thresholds to achieve funding. I don't think it has much to do with the kids…I think there is a numerical back-covering fear around Pupil Premium at a higher level." Brian felt it was "fear-driven" rather than "student-driven."

Such attitudes against any new policy in education are not unusual but it does suggest a serious disconnect between what the government and school want from the policy and how the classroom teacher feels able to implement it. As an interesting aside, Brian did discuss his experiences at a previous school where the level of students on free school meals was nearer 38%. He felt that the constant collation of data and reflection on practice was much more justifiable in this instance since the cohort was a significantly higher proportion of the school population. Subsequently, he felt more meaningful interventions could be made since they were affecting a larger group than his single figure population.

4.2.3 Charlotte

Charlotte, a mathematics teacher, had been working at Trafalgar School for 19 years. The school is a 11-18 mixed voluntary controlled comprehensive with 1,250 students on roll. It is in a small market town surrounded by countryside. The school has a very mixed intake of students but continues to enjoy a good local reputation. Sixteen per cent of students are identified as Pupil Premium and it was rated outstanding during its last Ofsted inspection.

Charlotte was observed teaching the same Year 7 class on two separate occasions. There were 30 students in the class of which five were identified as Pupil Premium. The group were a higher ability class who had been put into sets based on their SATs. The lessons were several weeks apart and focussed upon the area of cuboids and Pythagoras's theorem. After each observation, Charlotte was interviewed in her classroom. Observation notes record how the lessons were impressively managed and would have met many Ofsted criteria for outstanding lessons. The students were compliant with class procedures, including gathering resources silently as they entered the classroom. They appeared extremely focused and keen to learn. Charlotte gave clear objectives at the start of her lesson which she referred to several times to ensure progress. There was a sense that observations were second nature in this school and that Charlotte had prepared accordingly. She provided substantial planning documentation and data for the first observation but much less for the second. Charlotte explained that this was because she had been very busy.

How understandings and knowledge of Pupil Premium influenced lesson planning

Charlotte's knowledge about students identified as Pupil Premium came from the computer-generated data provided by the school. This school subdivided these students into 'disadvantaged' and 'services pupil' in recognition of the government's changing identification criteria for those eligible (DfE, 2018b). This gave the impression that the school was 'ahead of the curve' in this study since the other schools had not yet adopted this new approach. As it transpired, none of the Pupil Premium students in the observed class were characterised as 'services pupil' but no additional information about their status was given. Charlotte had access to her school's Pupil Premium policy but she admitted that she had not read this. Information about students' SATs, CATs, predicted grades and attitude to learning were recorded on the computer-generated mark book. Pupil Premium status was also logged in Charlotte's mark book along with recordings of how each student had approached various tasks throughout the year. CAT range, the frequency of different target levels and Pupil Premium status was also recorded on Charlotte's lesson plan. However, no reference was made to these in the outline of the planned lesson which followed.

Charlotte expressed satisfaction with the way the lessons successfully reflected what she had planned to achieve. Considerations for differentiation related to time taken to complete tasks with the more able given an increasing number of more complicated calculations. Charlotte suggested this approach

was allowing for diversity of challenge based on ability. She felt that since all the students in the class were 'able', no separate planning was necessary. This held true for Pupil Premium students who, she was keen to point out, were not planned for specifically as it did not seem appropriate to single them out. She suggested that it was only by facing the same challenges, that they would make as much progress as everybody else. Moreover, she claimed that this is how the students preferred it. Charlotte did not seem to recognise a connection between economic and educational capital. Therefore, she could not see how Pupil Premium status might imply that some students were academically disadvantaged in any way which would justify specific differentiated planning.

One reason was because there was nothing distinct about these students beyond their identified status. "The fact that they're Pupil Premium doesn't join them as a group. They're very, very different from each other. I just treat them the same as everybody else in the group." This approach reflects a type of 'blind social justice' intimated by several of the teacher participants. Charlotte was judging the students based on their mathematical abilities and, since they were largely meeting expectations, she felt that to interfere would lessen the appropriate challenge and could have a negative impact on attainment. When planning, Charlotte did not consider that these students were starting from a lower point due to their identifiable social disadvantage, so no accommodations were made. She did not make any allowances for Pupil Premium students and held them to the same high standards as everyone else. As such, the specific identification seems to have had little

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effect on Charlotte's teaching. Despite this, Pupil Premium was something of which she was clearly aware.

To what extent was Pupil Premium considered when assessing the success of the observed lessons?

Charlotte was pleased with both observed lessons since the whole group met her planned learning objectives with the desired level of understanding. As discussions about the observations were prior to any formal marking, Charlotte's judgement was informed by the performance she witnessed during the lesson. She appeared to know the relative abilities of the students and was observed circulating around the class to monitor how key individuals at the extremes of the ability scale were progressing. Some of those at the higher end were Pupil Premium. Charlotte recounted, in detail, how these students had progressed during the lessons with focused reference to prior knowledge of their individual characteristics. However, she did not think it was appropriate to make judgements on the Pupil Premium students as a distinct group within the class, such was the variety of abilities and approaches. "I just know the kids as individuals, and I know what they are capable of doing and what they're not capable of doing. If they're progressing as they should be I don't think of them like that. I just think of them as their own person." Charlotte was effusive in her praise of how well the whole group was progressing and she included most of the Pupil Premium students in this. Interestingly, one of the Pupil Premium students who Charlotte felt was furthest from his ideal was described as 'messy', 'chatty', 'lazy' and

'disorganised'. However, Charlotte was not convinced that this was connected to his identification of disadvantage but rather as a common characteristic of a 'certain type' of Year 7 boy. Her assumptions appear to be based not so much on class, but on typifications relating to her teaching experience. She described how these negative characteristics were addressed by using school sanctions in the same way as anyone in the class, whether Pupil Premium or not. To make allowances for late, incomplete or substandard work and/or behaviour, she felt, would not address inequality but would be unfair on the rest of the class. Charlotte suggested it would be doing the student in question a disservice in allowing him to accept lower standards than his peers.

How was disadvantage conceived and catered for in the use of homework?
Homework was used primarily to reinforce learning from the lesson but, once again, there was no consideration of disadvantage or specific differentiation for Pupil Premium students. Charlotte described giving a variety of tasks to ensure a range of skills were addressed. At the end of the first observed lesson, Charlotte set a problem-solving activity linked to a national venture called the UKMT Individual Challenge. She suggested that it gave the students who she felt were "naturally bright, but not necessarily doing well in tests," the opportunity to shine. Charlotte felt that they would find it challenging but recognised the power of parental involvement by suggesting that success could be linked to the amount of support that they received at home. However, Charlotte did not feel that this was necessarily linked to social disadvantage. She could not envisage any particular problems that

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Pupil Premium students might face which would distinguish them from the rest of the class. Charlotte felt that since help was available at school, it came down to the nature of the student's individual characteristics, rather than background factors, which informed success. She was not open to suggestions that individual characteristics may have been shaped by background habitus. Some discussions took on a contradictory element as Charlotte described how some of the Pupil Premium students seemed to do poorly at home whereas some of the non-Pupil Premium students did well. However, a point was raised that not all the Pupil Premium students did badly with homework so to make allowances based on this characteristic, seemed misguided to Charlotte. After the second observation, a review how the class had performed with the UKMT Individual Challenge homework revealed that the Pupil Premium students had all excelled.

What feelings were expressed about the national Pupil Premium policy and its explicit identification of disadvantaged students?

Charlotte was the least enthusiastic of the participant teachers in relation to Pupil Premium. Being aware of this fact, I was extremely grateful that she had agreed to take part in the study. She had always stated that Pupil Premium and social class was not something she spent a lot of time thinking about. I sensed some resentment as she felt she was being judged inadequate in her approach.   This was not a view I had expressed nor was it one I was in a position to make. However, it explains something about the nature of Charlotte's often guarded responses.

"I've not thought about it [Pupil Premium], because I just treat the kids as kids, as the individuals. I don't like labelling them. Other kids might not be Pupil Premium but have other problems, for whatever reason. I don't want to label them and think of them as that. I just know what works for each child."

Charlotte showed awareness of the negative implications of explicit labelling and the merits of treating her class as individuals. However, in doing so, she also provided justification for not engaging with wider social justice issues.

Pupil Premium policy seemed to be intruding on Charlotte's hitherto successful approach to teaching her classes. As a teacher in an outstanding school who regularly receives recognition for her classroom practice, it appeared that Charlotte was unable, or unwilling, to see any additional social justice benefit from the policy. Subsequently, she did not see any reason to behave differently. Since she felt that *all* her charges were already equally and appropriately challenged and supported, the policy held little relevance for her. That is not to say that Charlotte ignored the significance of social and economic disadvantage to academic success and the importance of identifying and supporting those in need. However, she remained unconvinced that Pupil Premium identification was the most effective way to address these issues. Although a little confused as to the actual criteria used for deciding upon qualification, she felt that discrepancies existed. Using her own insider knowledge, she was able to propose, with some conviction, that several students who were identified as Pupil Premium were not actually economically disadvantaged despite meeting FSM criteria based on income.

Charlotte felt that there were others whose backgrounds were worse but did not qualify for funding. Her faith in the policy was undermined as a result. Not only did she question why the policy should be utilised, she raised doubts about how the funding could be used, "other than giving them a calculator, or giving them a revision guide, I don't think there's a lot more that the classroom teacher could do."

Thoughts on how effectively Pupil Premium policy was used in school.

There appeared to be less personal responsibility placed upon Charlotte in comparison to her peers in the other schools. This may well have been because her students were making appropriate progress in all her classes. It may also be because her school recognised that the causes for attainment gaps between Pupil Premium students and their peers may not be addressed solely from the classroom. Of the 17 strategies proposed by Trafalgar school in their Pupil Premium policy outline, 11 could be categorised as being outside the remit of the classroom teacher. However, of the remaining strategies, Charlotte was not entirely aware of the role she was expected to play. Despite the suggestions in the school's documentation, Charlotte could not recall having any specific training or indeed being directed to read the school's policy. This may be because the school was not explicit with the teachers about what measures were being undertaken but there were clearly aspects of which Charlotte remained ignorant. She assumed that her head of department ensured that all policies were correctly followed on her behalf. Since Pupil Premium was rarely discussed either within the department or with other members of staff, Charlotte did not consider a deficiency in her

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approach. However, having taken part in this research, she was able to reflect on some areas which she found problematic.

Significantly, Charlotte felt that there was not enough information given to staff about why a student might qualify for Pupil Premium funding. Without sufficient detail, she felt it would be difficult to effect any changes to the individual's attainment. While accepting that there existed significant issues of confidentiality and safeguarding, she thought it was unusual that the school did not always know why the students were Pupil Premium. Another question she had but felt unable to ask was the extent to which the students knew they qualified. Charlotte believed that the stigma attached to such a label might have just as negative a consequence on academic achievement as economic disadvantage. She felt this was further justification for not treating Pupil Premium students differently to anyone else.

4.2.4 Dawn

Dawn is a geography teacher at Lakeside Community School, an 11-18 mixed foundation school with 1,369 on roll. The school was judged 'good' during its last Ofsted inspection but was given several areas in which to improve. Lakeside is one of two schools in the town, the other being a selective grammar. Rivalry with the neighbouring school for the most academic students is considered to affect the make-up of the Lakeside's student population. Dawn had been teaching at her present post for five years.

Dawn was observed teaching one middle set Year 9 class and one higher set Year 7. There were 30 students in the Year 9 class, of whom two were Pupil Premium. The Year 7 class had 20 students including three Pupil Premium. The observations were several weeks apart but interviews were held directly after each lesson in Dawn's classroom. Dawn was extremely generous with her time and she engaged fully with the research. She was reflective on her own teaching and was eager to consider issues raised by the study. Unusually for the participants, there were tangible differences in approach observed between the two separate lessons. Dawn appeared to have followed up the initial interview with limited investigations of her own.

How understandings and knowledge of Pupil Premium influenced lesson planning

Dawn supplied print-outs of the school's computer-generated data which highlighted SEN status, ethnicity, current and anticipated attainment targets as well as Pupil Premium identification. During the first lesson, a seating plan and copy of the teacher's own mark book were provided. Detailed lesson plans were not given for either lesson, but Dawn referred to the departmental schemes of work which furnished her with medium and long-term plans as well as ideas for teaching and learning activities.

There was no evidence of specific differentiation for anyone in the class, including Pupil Premium students. However, Dawn was sensitive to possible issues raised in her lessons because of social disadvantage. Apparently, she tried to avoid using the local town as a geographical example, particularly

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when discussing deprivation, as to do so could cause discomfort for those from less affluent areas. Similar considerations were taken when discussing immigration, which she suggested was much more effectively addressed in the abstract rather than using local examples. There were expectations of all the students to be supportive in the classroom, but this could not be guaranteed. Dawn particularly wanted to avoid 'throwaway comments' during unconnected lessons. That is not to say she felt that she was ignoring important issues, rather these were addressed explicitly through wide-ranging discussions in other, more focused lessons. While this suggested awareness and sensitivity, Dawn explained that it was not necessarily planned for with specific students in mind:

"I certainly wouldn't plan to avoid anything, and I wouldn't plan anything specifically around Pupil Premium either, because my understanding of what it means isn't just a lack of finance. I have, in my GCSE class…a couple of young carers who are also Pupil Premium, and I wouldn't plan anything different for them, neither would I have any lower expectations of them to produce homework or anything like that. I might have more of an understanding about it, but I wouldn't lower my expectations."

Understanding while not making academic allowances for background disadvantages, was something Dawn felt was due to all her students but was not influenced by Pupil Premium status. Yet this consistency of approach seemed to ignore the interrelationship between background and academic achievement. Classroom resources were available to be utilised without question, meaning that the deprived and the forgetful were equally equipped for the lesson without comment or judgement. Monitoring, tracking, and

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completing homework was deemed more important than planning anything specific. However, during the observation, Dawn took time out to speak individually with several students many of whom were Pupil Premium. While suggesting that they were not singled out on purpose, Dawn was able to explain in depth the specific challenges to learning that each student faced. The issues, in her opinion, were distinctly academic rather than social. However, when discussing these students' progress, Dawn did use her knowledge of students' backgrounds to justify her approach. This suggests that, perhaps subconsciously, Dawn was being influenced, if not by Pupil Premium status specifically, at least by a general awareness of the importance of social background to academic achievement. She linked the progress of one Pupil Premium student explicitly with a lack of parental support as perceived by non-attendance at an open evening. However, Dawn appreciated the limitations of her approach since she did not actually know a lot about what was really going on at home; "I think I could make a lot of assumptions, but I probably don't." Dawn deliberately avoided the potential harm caused by misrecognition through assumptions of cultural deficit. However, that is not to say that she would not have preferred more knowledge to ensure assumptions would not be necessary.

This lack of knowledge seemed important to Dawn's thoughts on provision for Pupil Premium students. She admitted that the idea of implementing targeted interventions had crossed her mind between the two observations. "I thought about it and I was trying to work out whether I owed the kids more because they're Pupil Premium. I came to the conclusion that, actually, unless I knew

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specific circumstances about those kids then I couldn't plan for each of them just because they're Pupil Premium". Like Charlotte, Dawn felt she taught *all* her students in a fair and understanding manner based on the limited knowledge she had about them. Since she did not have specific information about what problems the Pupil Premium students may be facing, she did not treat them differently in a further example of equality of provision rather than equity.

To what extent was Pupil Premium considered when assessing the success of the observed lessons?

Dawn described the observed lessons as 'normal' in that there were mixed levels of success. The successes related to student engagement and her own sense of enjoyment. Dawn also felt most of the academic objectives were met. When prompted, Dawn suggested that the progress made by the Pupil Premium students was in line with everybody else. Some examples were given of Pupil Premium students over-achieving and some not quite hitting their targets. Dawn was able to describe at length the relative strengths and weaknesses of the Pupil Premium students; however, there was little which connected them as a group when it came to subject specific ability or their attitude to learning. Dawn gauged the level of success by using prior experience of the students along with reference to their statistical attainment targets. The validity of such judgements could be debated since I had to take Dawn at her word, just as much as she had to take the statistical data provided by the school as an accurate and valid measure.

How was disadvantage conceived and catered for in the use of homework?

Dawn suggested that homework was taken very seriously and was informed by the geography department's schemes of work. There were clear policies in place about the frequency of homeworks and sanctions for non-completion. However, Dawn confessed that the homework set at the end of the first lesson was 'off-the-hoof'. As with the lesson itself, Dawn suggested that she was sensitive to individuals' home circumstances without making allowances which would lessen the academic impact or sense of fairness in regard to the whole class.

However, she did describe special arrangements made for Chris, one of her male Pupil Premium students with poor organisational skills. "He never has the right equipment, ever. So…I make sure he has written his homework in his planner and he has his homework sheet." Dawn felt that, although Chris completed homework, it was rarely done well. However, she did not make allowances based on his disadvantaged situation as intimated at by the Pupil Premium status. In fact, Dawn admitted that most of the time she did not even think about Chris being Pupil Premium. Despite being given additional guidance at the start of the homework process, the student was held to the same standards as everyone else. What seemed to be emerging was deeply held ideas about equality based on the same standards and expectations.

What feelings were expressed about the national Pupil Premium policy and its explicit identification of disadvantaged students?

Dawn confessed that she did not know much about Pupil Premium but had felt compelled to find out more about it because of this research. Before the first visit, she had discussed the issue with colleagues to reassure herself that she was not doing something wrong. Her colleagues suggested that they did not plan or act any differently because of Pupil Premium identification. While this reassured her in the short term, she still expressed dissatisfaction because doing nothing was not going to address issues of disadvantaged students' underperformance. Dawn admitted that taking part in the research had made her question and consider the policy and its implications in a lot more depth.

It was widely accepted by all the participants, including Dawn, that additional school funding for disadvantaged students was socially just. Paying for resources would be helpful but Dawn questioned how effective other uses of the funding might be. She worried that since schools had to show that they were doing something, it could become tokenistic. Dawn felt that the funding given to schools with small numbers of qualifying students might be less effectively used than in areas of higher deprivation. She saw much more merit in holistic approaches rather than in individual strategies for individual pupils. Certainly, whole school policies based on economies of scale seem to work successfully in schools with a much higher proportion of Pupil Premium students (Carpenter et al., 2013). However, as with all such strategies, it does not seem to be universally the case.

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As with many of her peers, Dawn expressed reservations about students experiencing a variety of different issues being classed as one distinct group for the purposes of assessing educational attainment. "Lumping them all into one group and just putting Pupil Premium in front of them and trying to do all of them the same, I just think it's ridiculous." Moreover, Dawn also raised issues of being uninformed about what led to the students' identification in the first place. "If you really want to make a difference…you've got to understand what their problem is. What is holding them back?"

Thoughts on how effectively Pupil Premium policy was used in school
It appeared that Dawn had a general awareness of the school's Pupil Premium policy without significant knowledge of the specifics. She felt that, historically, the progress of Pupil Premium students had been one of the school's 'vulnerabilities' when it came to inspections. Consequently, it was considered a school priority, but Dawn was unsure how this was working in practice. The progress of all students was evaluated and discussed regularly within departments and, during those discussions, the relative achievement of distinct groups was considered. However, Pupil Premium students only made up a small part of these discussions.

Dawn suggested that she had probably spent less than an hour discussing Pupil Premium during staff training. A lot more training time had focused on

safeguarding wherein issues affecting students outside the classroom were discussed at length. There were elements of crossover here with some Pupil Premium students also identified as 'at risk'. All staff members were expected to have read and to be familiar with the content of the school's safeguarding policy; Dawn was unsure if the same applied to the school policy on Pupil Premium. However, she admitted that, even if she had been directed to read this policy, time constraints and a lack of motivation meant that she had not done so. Pupil Premium was described as 'one of those things on the mark sheet' which you see at the start of the year and look at now and again. Dawn acknowledged that the school may be doing a great deal of intervention as specified in the policy document, but she was not aware of it.

Despite reservations about the shortcomings of the school's approach, Dawn refused to be entirely cynical. While acknowledging that the motivation to address Pupil Premium attainment may have been due to Ofsted purposes, she was keen to point out that the close and caring relationships established between staff and students was at the core of the school's identity. As such, she could not envisage the school being so mercenary as to use the funding as published in the policy documents just to pass an inspection. Neither did she think special identification was necessary for the school to provide the best provision they could for their students, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds. Dawn did not know how the funding was spent or how most of resources were deployed, although the policy document was available on the school's website. Rather than having to refer to this, she was prepared to assume that the school leaders were acting appropriately. The

one area she felt could be improved was the dissemination of information about the Pupil Premium students which would be relevant to the classroom teacher. However, Dawn remained adamant that even if she were to be given more specific information, she would not make allowances which would undermine the sense of equality in the classroom or lessen the high levels of challenge for all. Despite Dawn's appreciation of issues associated with disadvantage, she was still reticent to countenance allowances which might redress inequality imbalances due to a distinct understanding of fairness in the classroom.

4.2.5 Eddie

Eddie had been a humanities teacher at Coastal Academy for 3 years. He was a history specialist, but he also taught geography and sociology. Prior to taking up this post, he had been at another nearby school for 14 years. Coastal was an 11-18 mixed sponsor-led academy with 1,159 students on roll. Approximately 19% of these students qualified for Pupil Premium funding. This was the largest proportion of any of the schools taking part in this research. At the time of the first lesson observation, the school was considered 'good' by Ofsted. Soon after the second observation, the school achieved 'outstanding' status. It may have been because of, or despite, the school's focus on pursuing national recognition but it seemed that, during the research, Eddie was not particularly content at the school. By the time of the second observation, Eddie had successfully applied for a position in another school. He was very open in both interviews but there was a sense of relief the second time I spoke to him, coupled with greater cynicism. Eddie was

observed teaching the same Year 7 geography class twice. The class, which contained 15 students, was identified as a lower ability set based on prior academic attainment in English and mathematics. Of these, 7 were identified as Pupil Premium. One non-Pupil Premium student was supported by a teaching assistant. For such an experienced teacher in a school notorious for its observation routines, Eddie seemed uncomfortable during the observed lessons. He provided lesson resources and an impressive computer-generated seating plan which included photographs of the students as well as relevant data about their status and progress. Coastal Academy was strict on security so after the observations, I was unable to remain in the building unaccompanied while Eddie was teaching. Consequently, the follow up interviews took place at Eddie's home a few days later.

How understandings and knowledge of Pupil Premium influenced lesson planning

Eddie felt that he should put more energy into planning, specifically for his less disadvantaged students as identified by Pupil Premium. However, he was unsure what form such interventions should take. He suggested he would like to do more but time constraints frustrated his efforts. Not only did he feel that specific planning was necessary and desirable, but he also tried to implement these strategies where possible. He suggested initially that his failure to consider it more was influenced by practical, rather than the theoretical justifications given by other participants. However, this may be because of the specific pressures exacted by leadership at his school compared to the others.

Although there was little evidence of specific Pupil Premium differentiation in the observed lessons, Eddie was particularly open to the idea, in principle, during the follow-up discussions. Echoing Freire (1972), Eddie suggested with such a small and academically less able group, he would like to consult his students as to how they would like to learn about a given subject, thereby allowing him to be sensitive and responsive to all their needs as learners. This would be particularly useful if their disadvantaged background was acting as an obstacle to progress. However, Eddie felt that he did not have the time for this and he worried that it would be criticised, considering the school's drive for measurable academic progress. He also felt that it was something that would be so far removed from what the class were used to that they would struggle to reach a consensus or be able to take such an approach seriously. Moreover, as quite passive learners, he felt that the students might not have the contextual understanding to make such choices. However, he did suggest it would be something he would try in the future since he acknowledged the value of student-specific planning.

What was distinct about Eddie's lessons was the small class size and the high proportion of Pupil Premium students. The group size was determined by their relative low ability rather than this status, but this posed questions as to how far these issues were linked. Eddie suggested that this was not always the case as he had high achieving Pupil Premium students in other, larger classes. He did, however, feel that the high number of Pupil Premium

students in the observed class had both a conscious and subconscious effect on his approach to lessons. Consciously, because of the targets and pressure that schools and teachers were under to improve attainment for these students. Subconsciously, in shaping his perception that they require more help or expectations as to the limitations of what they could achieve. He was not convinced that these influences were always positive and may have resulted in too much differentiation and scaffolding which acted to stifle challenge and originality. Even with such a small class, Eddie found the idea of personalised provision difficult, particularly when it came to Pupil Premium students. He described the idea of specific planning for Pupil Premium as 'impossible' without knowing the specifics of their situation. Eddie pointed out that there is a great deal of advice about how to address the specific needs of dyslexic students, but no such advice existed which suggested how to teach Pupil Premium students which was any different to how their peers are taught. He did not feel that Pupil Premium students' lack of achievement was based on provision in the lesson since theirs was not always an educational need but rather something more significant in their home lives.

"We've got a label and we've got a section of the school population that we have to focus on, but actually I still don't really understand why or what they would need that would be different."

Eddie showed a lot of sensitivity when discussing certain issues with the class, but he felt that manipulating content because of an abstract fear of

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excluding more disadvantaged students would be an example of imposing

values which could be seen as patronising. This was considered much more

important than designing lessons which catered specifically for Pupil Premium

students' needs. However, it is somewhat intangible and could be perceived

as much an imposition of meaning on the students as is Pupil Premium

status. Moreover, avoiding being patronising could become a justification for

not doing anything to address issues of social disadvantage.

How was disadvantage conceived and catered for in the use of homework?
Homework did not play as important a part in the observed classes as it did

with other groups, according to Eddie. If homework was ever set, it was

voluntary and open-ended. This could be seen as differentiation based on

outcome and in response to students' individual circumstances. However,

Eddie confessed that it was as much in response to the poor quality of

previously set formal homework tasks. He suggested it was difficult to

ascertain if this was the result of ability, attitude or background but sometimes

it was Pupil Premium students who completed the best work outside the

classroom.

It appeared that Eddie did a lot of work for the Pupil Premium students as a

result of pressures to improve their attainment grades. Rather than helping

them, it seemed that he might be removing an element of challenge and

independence. During the observations, Eddie appeared to be completing

some of the students' tasks himself. This would provide evidence of work to a

certain level which would not reflect the students' true ability. In this instance, the Pupil Premium identification could be said to be having a negative effect even if their progress grades were being maintained.

To what extent was Pupil Premium considered when assessing the success of the observed lessons?

Eddie was relatively happy with the observed lessons and the progress his students made. He was pleased with the range of ways in which all students were able to access the class activities about tourism by using their own interests. One student was able to focus on shopping, while another focused on his own interest in mountain-biking showing examples of Eddie's planning and sensitivity towards the needs of all the students. Eddie also monitored and evaluated written work during the lesson. He felt that the quality produced reflected a full range of attainment which was appropriate for the class and that there was no discernible difference between Pupil Premium students and the others. The main criteria for success was student engagement, which observation fieldnotes suggested Eddie had achieved for the majority of the class through his approach and choice of topic. Subject content did allow for consideration of social disadvantage, but it was the same approach for all. In addition, when the data is inspected it would still show that the Pupil Premium students were underachieving in comparison to their peers. So what Eddie might consider successful and what the Pupil Premium students might find engaging could not be said, on this very small scale, to have had the type of measurable impact on their academic progress required by the school.

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What feelings were expressed about the national Pupil Premium policy and its explicit identification of disadvantaged students?

Eddie became impassioned when discussing the Pupil Premium policy in general. He suggested deep understandings of social justice and felt the scheme was only 'scratching the surface' of much wider problems. He felt it was unrealistic to assume that, "somehow, at the age of eleven, you can redress and rectify issues that may even date back to in the womb, in terms of emotional, physical, linguistic development." The extra funding, he felt, was very welcome and could be put to positive use by the schools. Eddie highlighted the benefits to the Pupil Premium students of being able to go to see a show in London as a positive life experience which might otherwise have been denied them. However, Eddie understood this had a negligible measured effect on attainment data. Their experience may have been bettered through increased cultural capital, but it may not lead to the desired immediate statistical improvement. Moreover, Eddie suggested that this identification based on socio-economic factors as well as being difficult to address though teaching, could also lead to quite upsetting stigmatisation. This, as Pollard (2008) highlights, can also form a barrier to inclusion (p. 436). Eddie was not even sure if the students were officially supposed to know they had a distinct identification and this was not mentioned in the policy documents. He recalled being flustered when asked by a student why his name had been highlighted on the register.

The main issue Eddie identified was the assumption that Pupil Premium students were a generic group. This, he suggested, caused governments and schools to try to take generic approaches which would struggle to succeed.

"Generally, since the phrase Pupil Premium has been used…it's been homogenised, it's generic and no one's actually stood up to think; what actually is Pupil Premium? What does it mean? Again, with dyslexia it's easy, it's diagnosable…dyslexia is a cognitive state of mind…it's emotional, autism; there are biological and cognitive reasons for that potential barrier to learning. For Pupil Premium it's a monetary badge, it's about your monetary status and your social class."

Thoughts on how effectively Pupil Premium policy was used in school
Possibly due to the nature of Coastal Academy and their focus upon Pupil Premium achievement as a priority, Eddie had a lot more prior knowledge regarding the strategies employed by the school than the other participants. Moreover, he was generally more positive about the local rather than the national strategies. He referred to information and training given on the subject as well as several well-received uses of funding and resources such as free iPads. However, underlying this were several references to what he termed 'lip service'. Eddie felt that a lot of dedicated members of staff were focused on improving the progress of Pupil Premium students, but he also felt that much of it was motivated by Ofsted inspections. He was regularly asked to evaluate his classes' performance against data targets and try to identify

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why Pupil Premium students were underperforming. However, he experienced difficulties in identifying specific issues because of the disparate nature of the cohort. This caused frustration since he felt that his efforts were considered inadequate. The frustration was exacerbated by a lack of practical advice. What he did find empowering was when the leadership team asked classroom teachers what practical steps they thought would represent suitable use of the funding. However, his created issues about which subject received which funding for which students and the initiative was never fully implemented. Eddie suggested this may also have been because the questions to teachers were simply a response to Ofsted. The school, in his opinion, often assumed that it was the students' 'Pupil Premiumness' that was limiting their progress, when actually it could be a 'whole variety of things' linked to a lack of social and economic capital.

The schools' relationship with Ofsted clearly affected the strategies adopted and this was felt by Eddie more acutely in the run up to, and aftermath of the inspection in which he was involved. Eddie sensed an element of threat in the way Pupil Premium progress was discussed, insinuating that the classroom teacher must do more. He recognised a moral desire by the school to level the playing field, but the timing of the pressure seemed to have added to his sense of dissatisfaction. Moreover, Eddie pointed out that, even after five years of focused school-led strategies using Pupil Premium funding, the attainment gap remained essentially static. Eddie felt it was noteworthy that by the standard measurements, the school's interventions, such as incentive

schemes, mentoring and a staff coordinator, were not having much impact, regardless of the motivation.

4.3 Overview of Cross Case Study Findings

When considered together, the case studies reveal a great deal in relation to the research questions. The findings suggest that the participants did not put social disadvantage to the fore when planning lessons and homework. In some cases, the participants inferred that to do so was not always practical, necessary or desirable. They felt that it would take up a disproportionate amount of time and energy without improving their current practice. It could instead, lead to stigmatisation. However, these judgements were made despite little evaluation of the impact their teaching had in relation to social difference. Interestingly, the introduction of the Pupil Premium policy did influence them to consider these issues in greater depth than they might previously have done. However, despite the explicit identification of disadvantaged students which resulted from the policy, the findings reveal significant inadequacies. Participants suggested that there were too many flaws, obstacles and contradictions in the scheme for it to have made a significant impact on their approach to teaching and planning with issues of disadvantage in mind. Moreover, the findings highlighted a failure by teachers to understand or address social class to the extent that it became invisible. The findings did, however, highlight many significant issues which could act to inform future practice.

The teachers expressed implicit theories about fairness and equality which were not only incompatible with Pupil Premium but were also unlikely to reduce the gap in attainment between less well-off students and their peers. There was limited appreciation of how cultural capital works through the relationship between families and education or how different forms of capital operate to entrench social disadvantage. This highlighted deficiencies in the wider understanding of social justice and the need for training designed to improve teachers' theoretical understandings. Teachers also seemed unclear about the policy itself as well as having a lack of information about the students and their backgrounds. In addition, several problematic issues were raised about the policy, including a lack of justification, guidance and problems relating to arbitrarily identifying disadvantaged students as a homogenous group of learners based solely on family income.

4.3.1 Teachers' understanding of fairness and the safety net of 'blind' social justice

"There has to be some level of equity across the board. There has to be some level of fairness" – Dawn

When considering disadvantage and social justice arising from the policy, the participants often raised the idea of fairness. However, it appeared to have been a very distinct understanding of the concept. Many of the understandings expressed by the participants did not always consider the wider context relating to student economic disadvantage and, as such, related

much more to equality rather than need (Deutsch, 1975, 1985). For example, one of the key aspects of the Pupil Premium policy was informing classroom teachers that certain students would qualify for additional funding to help narrow the attainment gap between the most disadvantaged and their peers. Through the process of policy translation and enactment, many of the participants felt that this implied special, potentially preferential, treatment for the Pupil Premium students which went against their own personal philosophy regarding equality in the classroom. Charlotte and Dawn highlighted how they felt it was necessary to treat everyone in the group equally and avoid allowances which might diminish academic challenge. To make such allowances, according to Eddie, could be patronising to the students identified for special treatment or might lead to stigmatisation in an example of fairness through equality rather than equity. The participants seemed closed off to the idea that the Pupil Premium students could achieve parity with their peers if they were the subject of compensation for the inequity of their socio-economic background. To take positive discriminatory measures was actually seen as unfair. Brian, who proposed that fairness was at the heart of his lessons, described being conscious of the rest of the class's reaction if Pupil Premium students were given preferential considerations. Without highlighting to the whole class that certain students were disadvantaged due to economic disadvantage, Brian may be correct that the rest of the class might perceive this as unfair. This could undermine his authority or create negative feelings within the class. It seems that those who were disadvantaged, and therefore identified as Pupil Premium, may be treated equally but not necessarily fairly

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in terms of equity since in comparison to their peers they are starting from a worse position due to their socio-economic status.

It seems that the teachers' closed-off ideas of fairness and justice were limiting their ability to look beyond their normal practices and challenge injustices relating to socio-economic disadvantage. However, were they to embrace the conflict at the heart of these issues rather than dismissing them, the teachers may have found a way to address the contradictions causing them frustration. Mouffe (2013) uses the concept of Agonism to suggest that there is value in contesting pre-existing interpretations of democratic discourse such as fairness. By accepting that there are differing but also valid ideas which contest their own, the teachers might consider more fully their own role in perpetuating unfairness in the classroom. Deutsch (1975) acknowledged that any discussion about fairness would be complicated by multiple meanings and understandings of the concept. The appropriate type of fairness required in any given situation, be this fairness through equality, equity or need would have to be informed by context.   However, such a variety of definitions and contexts may well challenge what Welch (2000) refers to as teachers' 'naïve' ideas with respect to fairness. Gorard (2012) suggests that students are acutely attuned to what they perceive as unfairness from teachers but that they can distinguish between the appropriate deployment of discriminatory rather than universal aspects of fairness depending on the situation. An example would be with the acceptance of additional support for SEN children. This may prove more problematic if the class do not know why these students were given special

treatment. After all, in most of the classes studied, not even the Pupil Premium students themselves were aware that they were specifically identified.

Rather than 'levelling the playing field' (a phrase referred to in several interviews and one of the policy documents), the teachers felt that treating everyone the same was the most practical and justifiable method to take, despite being aware of those who were disadvantaged due to their socio-economic situation. This approach has similarities to what Apfelbaum et al. (2010) describe as a colour-blindness sometimes employed by teachers wherein they ignore or downplay cultural or ethnic differences in the name of greater equality and inclusivity. However, this belief that treating all students the same is being equal and fair could be seen as naïve or even "potentially damaging and discriminatory" (Arshad, 2012, p. 7). The 'blind' social justice approach can be understood from several theoretical perspectives but on a practical level, it requires minimal input from the class teacher. To treat everyone the same meant that the teachers did not have to make specific personalised plans or reflect on every potential interaction. Such methods, which may have the best intentions, instead highlight a lack of sensitivity towards difference by the teacher while also justifying not having to change anything about their teaching. However, this may be doing a disservice to the participants in this study for whom personalised provision based on SEN or gifted and talented was taken for granted. Throughout the interviews and observations, it was reiterated on numerous occasions how sensitive the participants were to the individual needs of their classes and their desire to do

what they could to help their charges fulfil their potential. Yet it could be

argued that to be truly just and fair, the teacher must reflect on both individual

needs and how structural realities, such as capital imbalances, can affect

student learning. By not doing so, it could be argued that the teachers are

doing the students a disservice by failing to acknowledge or respond to their

disadvantage. The sense of guilt expressed by some participants may reflect

dissatisfaction with the status quo. There were also several aspects of the

Pupil Premium policy which could explain why the participants felt compelled

to adopt a blanket 'blind' social justice approach.

The teachers appeared to want to do the 'right thing' for all their students but

were unable to do so because they did not always have sufficient knowledge

and understanding about either their Pupil Premium students or the policy. As

a result, they took a default position of treating everyone the same. Since the

participants were not told why their students were identified as Pupil Premium,

they could only respond in a general manner. If the teacher does not know

the specifics or the extent to which the students are disadvantaged, then it

seems appropriate to them to treat everybody the same. There are other

implicit beliefs which were also challenged by Pupil Premium which may

explain some of the more guarded comments from the participants. The

introduction of explicit identification of disadvantaged students who are more

likely to underachieve than their peers, suggest that some intervention in

schools may be possible to address the issue. This seems to have informed

many of the approaches described in the policy documents. However, this

infers that if the remedy exists at classroom level then perhaps this is also the

origin of the deficiency. Yet if the teacher assumes that they are already doing their best for everyone in their classes, to suggest that more can be done may undermine their sense of identity as a successful teacher. No doubt the frustration would be exacerbated by the fact that they received little specific training to indicate what they should be doing differently to address the issue even if they believed they could make a difference. This could be perceived as the teachers being resistant to criticism. However, it appeared to be more a case that if they were to be criticised, they needed to understand why. The participants were all experienced practitioners who were held up as examples of good or outstanding teachers based on Ofsted criteria. However, they still appeared unprepared to fully embrace the Pupil Premium policy, despite its potential to address social inequality, because they were not wholly conversant with what it was trying to achieve and why.

4.3.2 Teachers need more theoretical understanding of social justice

It appeared from the interactions with the participants that there existed a need for greater theoretical understanding which would help to explain the conflicting situation in which they found themselves. They seemed keen to do what they could to address social injustice, however, there was a certain confusion as to the best way to achieve this. During the interviews, few of the participants could remember having any specific training about the policy or related social justice issues. In fact, Pupil Premium focused training did not feature in any of the reviews or plans outlined in the schools' policy documents. The only training referred to focused on improving general

teaching and learning strategies. Eddie, whose school had the highest proportion of Pupil Premium students, remembered some training but, even here, he felt that the theory behind the policy was not addressed. Further investigations suggested that in fact, Pupil Premium had not played a significant part in staff training in the other three schools. It was highlighted several times by Brian that there was a lack of discussion about the 'pros and cons' of the policy in favour of highlighting attainment data which provided easily measurable impact. Even if the teachers had reservations about some aspects of the policy at national and/or local level, a better understanding of the positive social issues underlying it would have doubtless proven helpful. However, none of the participants suggested they had a consistent or well-developed understanding of theory relating to social justice.

Barriers undoubtedly exist in motivating busy teachers to consider detailed philosophical theoretical perspectives which may not have immediately apparent real-life practical lessons. Much could be drawn from consideration of different and sometimes conflicting approaches to social justice but within the confines of the present school context, it seems unlikely to find much space in teachers' busy schedules (Fraser, 1997; Freire, 1972; Rawls, 1972; Young, 1990). However, Bourdieusian theory could be an accessible starting point from which teachers could begin to address broader understandings of social disadvantage as well as considering the implications and practicalities of the Pupil Premium policy in the classroom (Bourdieu, 1977, 1985, 1989, 1990, 2004) . Not only would this invite the teachers to acknowledge the injustices of the education system but also provide a method to understand

how this operates and the tools with which to address the issues. His theories concerning different capitals linked to achievement would provide a useful framework for understanding how economic, cultural and academic aspects of life are inter-related in a way which can be seen demonstrated in schools. Moreover, as Bourdieu's approach has been used as the basis for a great deal of research, useful practical examples could be identified of how injustice can become manifest in schools and how this might be addressed (Archer et al., 2018; Ingram, 2011; Lareau, 2015; Mills, 2008; Warin, 2015; Wood, 2018).

By addressing the idea that schools, as institutions, tend to recognise a dominant middle-class culture and ignore or devalue the culture of socially disadvantaged students as inferior, teachers might be more open to positive interventions. With ineffective teacher input, the students may accept, as natural, a negative perception of education and their position within it leading to subsequent underachievement. By intervening in this process, the teacher could improve the life chances of their disadvantaged students as well as showing the measurable narrowing of the attainment gap demanded by the schools and government. Mills (2008) suggests Bourdieu's theories can also be used by teachers to combat the negative side of cultural capital if they are trained to recognise fully the inequalities that exist between their students. Warin (2015) highlights the transformative potential in Bourdieu's theories which could empower teachers to become agents of change rather than reproducing inequality. However, such transformation can only take place following sufficient teacher training (p. 704). The difficulty would be in convincing teachers that to engage with the theoretical could be of benefit to

them. This would be exacerbated by time pressures and suggestions that,

prior to additional training, there may have been deficiencies in their

approach. The underlying question would remain; how far do teachers want

to investigate and then respond to inequities in students' backgrounds?

4.3.3 The need for greater clarity about what Pupil Premium status means

Social injustice implications represent only one area of the policy in which the

teachers would have benefitted from more information. An obstacle to a more

proactive approach to planning for disadvantage was that the teachers did not

know enough about the Pupil Premium students' backgrounds to be able to

address associated issues with any degree of confidence. This related to the

specifics of the students' background as well as a lack of knowledge and

empathy. However, since the teachers had very little specific background

information about their Pupil Premium students, any differences could seem

quite abstract. This lack of knowledge possessed by the class teachers and

the minimal information provided by their leadership teams appeared

significant. This contrasts with how much data they had on student attainment

in addition to how well each of the participants felt they knew their students as

learners. However, not knowing why a student might be identified as Pupil

Premium could explain some of the feelings of disconnection with the policy

expressed by the participants. Without this knowledge or a justification of the

policy, it is understandable why, at times, the staff seemed ambivalent

towards the whole scheme. Angela described feeling both restricted, while at

the same time being held accountable for something over which she had no control, and which was rarely discussed. Greater explanation of what the policy was trying to achieve and why, at both national and local level, could combat this ambivalence.

Schools are not necessarily party to specific background information which explains why a student may be identified as Pupil Premium. They know that the student's family income will be small enough to have qualified for free school meals in the last six years or are considered 'looked after' such as being in Local Authority care (DfE, 2017). However, they may not know specific details about a student's background. The school organisation would have some indication based on general knowledge of student background but there would always be an element of speculation as to the individuals' eligibility. Even if the school were relativity confident as to why a student was identified as Pupil Premium, they may find disseminating this information to classroom teachers difficult due to safeguarding and data protection issues. As a result, not only were the participants in this study unable to see the broader justifications of the policy, they were also uninformed as to the nature of the socio-economic issues which might be preventing their students from succeeding. As a result, they felt that any intervention would require an element of guesswork based on the limited evidence in their possession. This does beg a question as to how much knowledge a classroom teacher should and/or could have about a student's background and how far this would influence the planning and delivery of lessons and homework. However, it

seems that being totally ignorant of the home situation was a significant issue for the participants.

Angela recognised a connection between home life and homework but was wary of making assumptions based on surface impressions. Dawn too felt she could, at best, make assumptions about the effect home life was having on the progress of her students. This supported Eddie's point that it was impossible to make personalised provision without sufficient knowledge. Brian and Charlotte, as teachers of core subjects, saw their classes more often than the others but still felt that they did not know enough about their students' backgrounds to make specific interventions based on Pupil Premium. Greater knowledge would not guarantee improved outcomes and may, indeed, provide greater opportunity for teachers to misrecognise the issues of socio-economic disadvantage or impose dominant class views and thereby exacerbate the problem. Any additional knowledge, therefore, would have to be manageable but also sufficient to avoid counter-productive demonisation of parental values and practices based on preconceived ideas about deficiencies in working-class homes (Gewirtz et al., 2005; Ingram, 2009; Reay, 2006; Wood & Warin, 2014).

Charlotte dismissed the connection between homework and a student's home situation as inconsequential, suggesting instead it was related more to individual characteristics than background. It is interesting that, unlike some of the other participants, she did not see a potential link between poor attitudes to work and disrupted home life. Some correlations were suggested

between parental support and student progress but, as it did not appear uniform even within their own classes, it represented something of a dead-end for the participants within the study. The lack of specific knowledge about home acted to justify a lack of personalised provision as well as keeping their interactions with the students firmly in the sphere of the classroom. The teachers' understanding of the Pupil Premium students' needs as learners might be improved if they were more inclined to engage with their out of school circumstances, including greater communication with parents and/or guardians. This was not highlighted as an expectation of the teachers in any of the schools' policy documents. This is understandable since it may prove impractical to possess detailed knowledge of hundreds of students' backgrounds. It may also be difficult to get the parents and/or guardians of the most disadvantaged to engage in such interactions. This may be as a result of the working-class habitus and the link between parents' social status and the difficulties experienced when interacting with teachers (Harris & Goodall, 2008, p. 286). It may also be that schools communicate superior attitudes towards parents thereby creating barriers for collaboration (Crozier, 1997, p. 327). A genuinely welcoming, two-way relationship would be preferable but this may also prove problematic based on some of the ill-informed views and preconceptions highlighted during this and other studies (Reay, 2006; Wood & Warin, 2014). The Pupil Premium policy documents from some of the participant schools also appear to suggest prejudicial ideas about their disadvantaged families. One identified 'poor parenting' among their barriers to learning while another blamed an 'inward-looking community with low aspirations'. This echoes the findings of Wood and Warin (2014),

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wherein staff interpretations of previous educational policy were influenced by their perceptions about the pupils' parents. They found that such perceptions linked to social class complement the practices of middle-class parents at the expense of minority-ethnic and working-class people (p. 937). Therefore, greater interaction with home could be considered as a potential strategy, not just to improve outcomes for the Pupil Premium students but also to address preconceptions from within the schools. It still appears that teachers require training focused on avoiding the type of unconscious bias directed at working class students which Rist (1970) observed over forty years ago.

Increased knowledge of the Pupil Premium students' situations could also act to address another 'unfairness' which several of the participants identified within the scheme. Angela and Brian expressed concerns about the eligibility criteria being used and Charlotte suggested that some students had been misidentified. "I don't think all Pupil Premium are disadvantaged money wise, I think it's wrong to think that, because I know for a fact it's not true. I think there's lots of kids who aren't Pupil Premium who have got equal disadvantages with money".

They all questioned the process since some students who they felt were disadvantaged were not identified on the Pupil Premium list, whereas some of those who were, did not seem to merit inclusion. There were clearly discrepancies between what the government defined as disadvantaged in the policy with what the teachers experienced in the classroom. However, regarding this 'undeserving' subset of the Pupil Premium students, it was

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unclear why the teachers felt that they had sufficient knowledge to make

these judgements whereas in other areas, they felt uninformed. It seemed

based simply on their understanding of the students' economic situation

influenced by the same superficial knowledge which was used to justify not

adopting a more personalised approach. Moreover, there were suggestions

that, within the observed classes, there were non-Pupil Premium students

who were more deserving of help than their Pupil Premium peers since they

were making more effort and had more positive attitudes. This, of course,

ignores the wider reasons behind these differences which could well find their

origins in issues based around social disadvantage. Clearly, a more

intersectional approach would be appropriate, based on understandings of

how social disadvantages associated with various dimensions of difference

may be compounded by the disadvantages associated with another (Pollard,

2008, p. 411). Crenshaw (2017) too highlights how a student's different

overlapping social identities, including class and ethnic background can lead

to a compounding of discrimination in education. If the teachers knew more,

they might be more sensitive but some suggested that to do so, may not be a

wholly acceptable position. Dawn, Charlotte and Eddie all intimated that to

make allowances for background issues would not only be patronising but

may also lead to greater gaps in attainment due to a lesser degree of

challenge. This seemed plausible but would be difficult to substantiate. It is

true that some methods used to engage working-class students have been

found to perpetuate patronising assumptions and low expectations which

impede rather than address social justice (Francis et al., 2017). Moreover, if

the teachers made allowances which led to lower expectations based on their

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circumstances, we would be seeing the type of phenomena described by Rosenthal and Jacobson (1968) among others (Gershenson et al., 2016; Rist, 1970). However, if allowances were characterised by personalised provision based on individual needs, challenge could remain high and care could be taken to avoid patronising the students. This ambiguity underlines a need for greater depth of knowledge as well as more theoretical understanding. Teachers need to know about individual students in their classes and how their specific situation impacts upon learning. Without such knowledge, they are forced to make decisions based on the Pupil Premium cohort as a whole.

4.3.4 Problems inherent in the Government policy

A homogenous group has been created by the policy to measure impact

One of the main issues with the national and local policy which was highlighted throughout the research was that Pupil Premium students were often considered a distinct and homogenous group. The teachers in this study found this difficult to accept, particularly as there was an expectation that they would improve attainment of the Pupil Premium students in line with their peers. Angela described finding this very difficult, since her Pupil Premium students represented a disparate group of varied personalities and abilities. The only thing the group had in common was their FSM status, which itself is based on an arbitrary measure of what the Government considered sufficient family income to live outside poverty. Since the group

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had no academic characteristics in common, Brian suggested that a significant range of reactions would be needed to address the range of circumstances presented. They were, as Charlotte described, so very different to each other, one could understand Dawn's conclusions that 'lumping them together' was 'ridiculous'. The issue could be negated somewhat when dealing with relatively small numbers (as many of the participants were) if the teacher could use their specific knowledge of the individual students to try and improve their performance, rather than taking a uniform approach to engaging all the Pupil Premium students. The teachers would claim to be doing this already, regardless of Pupil Premium status. Eddie felt that with his much larger proportion of Pupil Premium students, trying to take the same route to improve the outcomes of such a varied group would be extremely difficult but not impossible. Clearly an individualised and personal approach would be preferable for *all* students but especially those, such as the Pupil Premium students, who are having to make up the gaps related to their background situation. Greater theoretical understanding would facilitate this from the point of view of the teacher but the grouping of the Pupil Premium students as a homogenous group is more of an issue for the national and local policy. If schools were allowed to create individual criteria for success based on prior knowledge about each student as learners, they would be able to set their own targets and measure subsequent impact. This would require a greater degree of trust by the Government in schools to monitor their own processes. This seems unlikely to happen in the current low trust policy environment (Ball, 2012). It would also require schools to justify such trust.

The justification behind the policy is not made clear to teachers

Grouping the students together as one measurable sub-group can be used as evidence that the Pupil Premium policy may not be as well thought-out or as altruistic as it might appear. The reductive nature of the policy seems predicated on an identifiable statistical anomaly in school attainment figures which highlights that disadvantaged students, based on FSM eligibility, do not achieve as highly as their peers. This situation is universally identified as unacceptable by the participants in the study. However, the Government policy and, to a lesser extent, the school policies seem focused on reducing the attainment gap without necessarily addressing the reasons why it exists. The Government passes responsibility for reducing the gap to the schools and they pass on some of this responsibility to the classroom teacher. However, there exists a vagueness in the policy about how to improve outcomes which has resulted in the focus falling on teaching and learning.

The Government's guidance for measuring the impact of Pupil Premium funding refers schools to the 'evaluation tool' produced by the Education Endowment Foundation (DfE, 2014). This government-sponsored advice continues to highlight quality of teaching as the 'biggest driver' of pupil attainment, therefore it is here that greatest emphasis is needed (EEF, 2018). In doing so, there appears to be an inference of deficiency in approaches currently undertaken by the classroom teacher as well as

suggestions that they must improve in order to counter the problems and reduce the attainment gap. However, since the characteristics which join the Pupil Premium students are linked to parental income rather than academic factors, the teacher finds it difficult to address, in a meaningful manner. This resulted in confusion and resentment as well as the feeling that the Pupil Premium group were considered by the Government and, in some cases, the schools, as statistics rather than individuals. The lack of clarity and justification acted to undermine the compensatory potential the scheme could have in redistributing funding. The pressured atmosphere of Ofsted inspection scrutiny ensures that schools do all they can to close the gap in attainment between Pupil Premium students and everyone else. If this is managed successfully, it justifies the Government's approach. However, if it fails, the quality of teaching can be blamed.

Pupil Premium policies do not offer sufficient guidance

All the participants agreed that additional school funding based on the numbers of disadvantaged students was a positive concept. They recognised that the gap which existed between the less well-off and their peers was not acceptable. However, the discussions with these participants highlighted significant issues with the national policy as experienced by the classroom teachers in this study. In giving schools the funding to deal with this social justice issue, there was a sense that the Government was passing responsibility for this inequality onto the schools themselves rather than

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addressing more fundamental societal issues of disadvantage. In this sense, the Pupil Premium policy represents what Reay (2006) highlighted as a prevailing focus within education policy on school-based processes at the expense of understanding the wider influence of social and economic context (p. 289). Craske (2018) goes further in suggesting that this is part of a distinct strategy to shift responsibility for social issues onto schools and, in doing so, to make the teachers feel responsible. If this is the case, then it seems to be working in the four schools studied in this research. However, assumptions that schools and their teachers can solve wider reaching societal problems is misguided. Schools may be able to make some small impact but certainly not all the difference (Francis et al., 2017; Whitty, 2016). The Pupil Premium policy could be accused of identifying an issue, highlighting that the Government is doing something but then passing the problem on to schools to deal with. The vagueness of purpose can be seen within the policy itself which gives schools very little guidance as to how the funding should be used (DfE, 2018c). This could be seen as a positive aspect as it frees the schools from prescriptive Government practices. However, the school is still expected to show effective use of the funding by closing the gap between the less able and everyone else. This element of contradiction may be responsible for some of the confusion expressed by the participants. Their schools were not always clear about what they wanted the teachers to do because the Government was not very clear about much beyond the desired outcomes in terms of narrowing academic achievement.

However, this does not exonerate the schools from their role in this unsatisfactory situation. The participants described a sense of having to 'jump through hoops' in examples of 'back covering' rather than actually addressing issues of social justice. It created the appearance that the schools cared more about attainment targets, league tables and Ofsted implications than they did for the students. Yet, this is not the impression given in the extensive information presented in the policy documents available on the school websites. Clearly, the schools studied here have spent a great deal of time and energy deciding upon the best use of their funding as well as justifying these approaches. However, while this information is widely available to the public, as well as Ofsted inspectors, it was not being disseminated effectively to classroom teachers. The schools could do with implementing what Weare (2015) refers to as a 'whole school approach', which builds a sense of connectedness, focus and purpose, and which ensures that all parts of the school organisation work coherently together. The teachers must take some personal responsibility but if the schools could engender a shared sense of mission among their staff, then the Pupil Premium funding could be put to much more effective use. Without justifying the school's approach to the teaching staff, the impression was created that the policy documents existed only to fulfil legal obligations rather than as a framework with which to address serious social justice issues. In doing so, the Pupil Premium students become statistics rather than individuals in need of support and the schools seem to reinforce and reproduce many of the failings seen at national level.

4.3.5 Overview

This study set out to explore how school teachers' practice and perceptions of social disadvantage had been affected by the introduction of the Pupil Premium policy. The policy has been in place for 8 years with minimum changes, suggesting that the Government is relatively satisfied with the outcomes so far. However, the small-scale study into the five cases discussed above emphasised several key findings which suggest that there are significant areas in need of review, particularly in schools with low numbers of Pupil Premium students. Research into the workings of the policy at classroom level in these cases has highlighted an apparent lack of consideration of social disadvantage as a cause of educational underachievement in these schools. The introduction of the policy in the participant schools reveals that, despite greater awareness of the socio-economic status of some students, very little accommodation was made to address it. This appears to be because of the vague nature of the aims and justifications of the policy beyond narrowing a statistical gap in attainment data. Without specific advice and guidance, the teachers in the study reverted to a type of 'blind' social justice wherein not taking specific approaches to address social disadvantage was justified on the grounds of equality. For practical and theoretical reasons, the teachers fell back on what could be described as a default position since nothing in the justification or implementation of the policy could explain why different approaches might be more appropriate. In doing so, a policy which had the potential to address

serious social justice issues, instead entrenched practices which maintained a status quo which could unfairly disadvantage the less economically well-off. The teachers did not change their approach despite knowing that some of their students were from disadvantaged backgrounds. Subsequently, they were doing nothing to address inequalities caused by socio-economic status, either because they felt it was unnecessary or because it would represent unfair positive discrimination. It could also have been that they just did not know what to do. Either way, the reproduction of social disadvantage through education was maintained. The identification of students as Pupil Premium often appeared to represent little beyond a label to the teachers and their schools. Since they had insufficient knowledge about the individual students' situations, they felt unable to make any significant personalised arrangements which might improve their academic progress in line with their peers. The issue was exacerbated by grouping Pupil Premium students together as a homogenous group of learners for the sake of attainment data when, in fact, they often had little in common academically. The flaws identified in the policy justified, to some extent, why the teachers did not take it as seriously or approach it more proactively. There was little in the dissemination of information to teachers from the schools or the Government which acted to convince them of a more worthwhile, socially just explanation for adopting different and personalised approaches.

Chapter 5 Recommendations and Conclusions

5.1 Recommendations

This thesis contributes to our knowledge and understanding of the issues experienced by secondary school teachers when utilising Pupil Premium as a vehicle to narrow the attainment gap between disadvantaged students and their peers. More specifically, it illustrates that through the identification of Pupil Premium students and the implementation of the policy, teachers may use entrenched practices relating to fairness and equality to justify making no specific changes to classroom provision. This is caused by vague, weakly justified and sometimes contradictory advice provided by government and school leadership. The thesis aims to demonstrate, using Bourdieu's theories as a conceptual lens, how Pupil Premium has potential to improve the life chances of disadvantaged students, but more often results in teachers strategically ignoring the specific issues which may be causing disadvantaged students to underachieve.

The case studies into the practices of five school teachers in four secondary schools have addressed many of the original research questions as well as highlighting some unanticipated findings. It appears that, in these schools, the Pupil Premium policy does not work as effectively as it could to address issues of social disadvantage in schools. Moreover, the teachers in this study did not consider such issues to any great extent during their daily practice. This research did suggest that teachers could become more engaged with social justice if they had more time, motivation and justification. The case studies also highlighted issues regarding home/school relationships and

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implications for working with parents to combat obstacles to achievement for less well-off students. The findings have allowed for significant conclusions as well as several practical and policy-based recommendations.

One of the advantages of using small-scale case studies based on opportunistic sampling was that it allowed for highlighting recommendations which could be translated into impact in the participant schools. What follows are recommendations focused upon improving practice at a school and classroom level followed by some wider policy recommendations. Schools and policy makers may view the evidence and outcomes detailed in this research to consider how it fits with their own understanding and context. Throughout the study, many original and effective classroom practices were employed by the participants which may have improved academic outcomes for their students. However, there was only limited evidence of practice centred upon planning for social disadvantage such as consideration of topics and differentiation of some approaches to homework. There was a lot of anecdotal evidence of original and thoughtful strategies employed in all four schools, but it was difficult for the participants to judge, with any degree of confidence, how successful these strategies had been. Future studies could be established to explore what effective practice for planning and delivering socially just lessons, specifically for the disadvantaged, would look like.   Also, strategies employed to help narrow the gap in attainment in schools with small numbers of Pupil Premium students could be investigated. The EEF's meta-analysis toolkit currently offers Government-backed advice to schools about which teaching strategies have the biggest impact on learner attainment

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(EEF, 2018). However, the toolkit does not consider the effectiveness of strategies relative to the different socio-economic status of students. Previous studies into Pupil Premium have tried to find connections between original uses of funding and a narrowing of the attainment gap (Macleod et al., 2015; Ofsted, 2013, 2014). Some infer that if attainment gaps have been narrowed then whatever has been tried, must be working (Carpenter et al., 2013; Cunningham & Lewis, 2012; Hutchinson et al., 2016). However, the correlation between these strategies and improved examination results is not apparent and even if it were, such approaches may not be appropriate in schools with fewer Pupil Premium students. If the potentially positive compensatory aspects of the policy are to be utilised effectively in schools with relatively few Pupil Premium students, more work is required to ensure that everyone involved in the implementation understands the scheme's justifications. There are certain contradictions and ambiguities within the policy which create confusion. The Government suggests that there is no prescribed method in which a school should spend their Pupil Premium funding but at the same time demand that schools show Ofsted that any spending is effective. Without any other guidelines, effectiveness can only be measured in attainment data, which seems to dehumanise the process and cannot really claim to meet the Government's aims of improving lives. Greater understanding of the scheme can only be achieved through increased consideration at all levels which takes time to justify the policy and procedures in much greater depth. Without greater justification of the approach currently adopted, the policy lacks the moral authority needed to motivate teachers to modify their classroom practice.

5.1.1 Practice

School leadership

If the policy is to be utilised effectively then the onus is on school leaders to take a central role in convincing their staff of the merits of the scheme and of their own specific Pupil Premium strategies.   This study in four good and outstanding schools as judged by Ofsted with small numbers of Pupil Premium students suggests that teachers would benefit from knowing a great deal more about the policy, its potential benefits as well as a deeper understanding of the role they can play in effecting social justice in their classrooms. Therefore, more in-school training would be required. Some of the schools investigated as part of the case studies detailed using Pupil Premium funding for staff training. However, this was aimed at whole school teaching and learning rather than anything specific for Pupil Premium. Effective training should emphasise the justifications and understandings of the policy and the effective use of the additional funding. Training should also focus upon greater understanding of social justice issues to combat inherent prejudices as well as addressing wider issues about fairness, equity and equality. As the scheme has potential for addressing social inequality through redistribution of funding, it may be possible to convince teachers of the necessity and benefits of the policy and thereby ensure they are fully informed and willing actors in its implementation. Initial explanation of the aims and procedures of the policy could play a major part during in-service teacher training at the start of each academic year and updates could be planned throughout the rest of term. Moreover, new staff could have sessions focused

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upon Pupil Premium, the many dimensions of difference in the classroom and the intersectionality of social disadvantage as part of their induction training. Unfortunately, this seems to be an area which is taking less of a priority in teacher training (Boylan & Woolsey, 2015; Burke & Whitty, 2018). Therefore, time should be allocated during training to engage in discussions about fairness and inequality. The work of Bourdieu could prove a useful vehicle with which to engage. By utilising the work of Bourdieu, schools could highlight why these problems exist and give those in positions of authority opportunities to act upon it with greater understanding of the issues rather than just following government edicts. It is unlikely that this would lead to a universally enlightened approach nor indeed should that be the goal. However, it could lead to effective consideration of the issues and bring thinking about social disadvantage more closely to the fore. In doing so, it may be that the life chances of the less well-off students could improve through more focused provision. In addition, the teachers may find reaffirmation of their professional vocation.

One way to ensure that teachers do not forget the very different lifestyles experienced by the less well-off members of the school community might be to organise visits to the most deprived areas in the catchment area. Gomez (1994) proposed that the most effective way of preparing teachers to work with children from backgrounds different from their own was to 'interrupt, challenge and change' the way that teachers think about themselves and others by placing them in situations where they had to deal with those different than themselves (p. 325). Getting teachers involved in community

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projects might act to combat prejudices as well as provide significant outreach implications for parents who feel alienated from education. They could see first-hand the processes of capital exchange between schools and families described by Bourdieu (1997). Teachers would also benefit from considering wider implications of the social impact of their work.

To ensure this training is effective and useful would require professional oversight. Fortunately, as the policy documents showed, schools increasingly have Pupil Premium coordinators to administer the policy and its associated funding. Additional training provision and its accompanying justification would seem an appropriate extension of their responsibilities. It would be the role of this coordinator to ensure that all staff are as informed about the wider context of each Pupil Premium student as possible. The teachers in the study complained about trying to make interventions in the academic progress of Pupil Premium students without having enough information about the students' specific obstacles to learning. It is acknowledged that often the schools themselves do not know exactly why some students qualify for Pupil Premium status and sometimes the reason must remain confidential. However, by adopting more reflective approaches which compel the teachers to consider social issues in more depth, whatever background knowledge is available would help in improving outcomes for disadvantaged students. Of course, this greater knowledge would be of little benefit if it were used only to reinforce prejudices and perpetuate problems for the less-well off. Teachers' practices would only benefit from greater individual knowledge about their

Pupil Premium students, their backgrounds and the potential obstacles to achievement if this was provided in a sensitive and thoughtful way.

Some of the school documents revealed that they had administrative assistants paid for through the funding who shared responsibility for implementing Pupil Premium policy. These members of staff should be encouraged to gather optimal knowledge about the Pupil Premium students through proactive engagement with their families. This increased interaction may also have the benefit of improving family attitudes towards the school and may complement classroom interventions in improving attainment. By sharing understandings of the students' situations with the classroom teachers it may become a more realistic proposition to create greater personalised provision for these students including appropriate homework tasks which acknowledge differences in capital. Some may argue that too much interest in home life and pastoral issues is an impossibly wide remit, as argued by Ecclestone and Hayes (2009). However, in this study, the participants struggled to identify the impact of their own inclusive practices because they felt they had too little information. Those staff charged with gathering this information would also have to act as gatekeepers in deciding the extent of the shared data. It would not be appropriate to pass on confidential issues or anything which could cause embarrassment or stigma. Moreover, it would be important not to overwhelm the teaching staff with too much information as to do so could render the plan both unpopular and unworkable if it were to add significantly to teacher workload. The coordinators would be the first point of contact for all stakeholders involved in

the education of the Pupil Premium students. Gathering and disseminating information on this scale may only be workable in schools with small numbers of Pupil Premium students, such as those involved in this research.

Dealing with smaller numbers would allow for a more focused, personalised approach. This would inform greater specific understanding which would allow for discreet provision without lowering levels of challenge or expectation. Knowing how and why a student might be unfairly disadvantaged could further motivate teachers to help them close the attainment gap. With clear justification, this need not be onerous for the teacher as they can immediately see and appreciate the potential benefits of their interventions. If the highest quality teaching for all remains an expectation, the effect on the attainment gap may not be immediately apparent since all students, regardless of background, should be making optimum progress. There must be recognition of the limits to what schools can do and a 'one size fits all' approach would not be appropriate. However, schools with fewer than average Pupil Premium students could be better placed than most in that they could focus on a bespoke strategy based on local factors.

Teachers

This is not just a matter for school leaders since teachers are in the best position to tailor the educational experience of their charges to ensure an equitable system. This would be achieved by becoming a more reflective practitioner who acknowledges differences within the classroom and actively works to ensure equity for all (Pollard, 2014). To play a more effective role in

the implementation of Pupil Premium policy, teachers must consider carefully the implications of socio-economic status in their classrooms. To adopt a 'blind' social justice approach which treats everyone the same, irrespective of background, misrecognises the many obstacles faced by students from less well-off backgrounds including the limiting potential of cultural capital. While on the surface it may appear both practical and fair, in reality it acts to reinforce inequality. It is vital that teachers familiarise themselves with models of equality, equity and fairness in a way which they may not have done since their initial training. For some, this may represent another unwanted initiative to add to a teacher's significant workload. However, the ideas of fairness, implicit in SEN policy which has been widely and readily accepted over the last 30 years, suggest that considerations of socio-economic fairness can become just as ingrained in school culture. Keeping reflections on social justice to the fore, rather than as an afterthought during the arduous teaching day, may have a more positive effect on student outcomes. Moreover, it could create an atmosphere within schools of healthy debate and one in which everyone is reminded of the overriding aims of providing the best opportunities for all students.

With greater familiarisation of social justice issues, teachers should continue to provide the highest quality teaching for all students with appropriate challenge and engagement. In addition, with greater knowledge of the background of individual Pupil Premium students, it should be possible to plan greater personalised provision which considers background factors but does not lessen opportunity or challenge. It would be wrong to avoid difficult topics

in class which might resonate much more with less well-off students, but with greater knowledge of student background, teachers would be able to tackle issues in a sympathetic but focused manner. Homework would be one area where greater individual provision would be particularly beneficial. Since the Pupil Premium status reflects factors external to the school, where the two situations interact most is through homework. Teachers could use their knowledge of their individual Pupil Premium students to create homework activities which allow extended learning, challenge and opportunities for all, irrespective of background. This might include tasks which include differing approaches and interpretations, or tasks created with individual characteristics in mind. The danger here would be the possibility of embarrassment on the part of the Pupil Premium student or a sense of unfairness from the rest of the class. In this case, it would be necessary to use all the teachers' skills to find a discreet and sympathetic way to address the issue without avoiding personalised provision entirely.

Such sensitivity would also be required when working with parents. If the school is to work to remove obstacles to Pupil Premium students' achievement, it must be done in conjunction with the family. Two of the participant schools identified meetings with parents as a use of Pupil Premium funding. However, the same documents showed prejudicial opinions in regard to parental attitudes suggesting the meetings might not be wholly effective. Crozier and Davies (2007) found that it was often the assumptions by the schools which made it hard for them to reach some parents. Since FSM and the associated Pupil Premium status highlights material deprivation

based on parental income, schools should use this knowledge to help offer even greater support rather than to perpetuate prejudice. Parents from poorer backgrounds often have negative feelings towards education based on their own experiences which may create alienation from the school. At the very least, schools could work on inclusive strategies to help such parents understand what they are trying to achieve. The additional funding also offers opportunities to discuss with parents what they believe are the biggest obstacles to their children's progress. This could be resources like a laptop, a desk or help with transport costs. It might be about identifying outside agencies or providing advice to support the students. With both personal and professional expertise working together, it should be possible to identify more effective personalised uses of the Pupil Premium funding. Moreover, by building positive relationships, both parents and teachers would feel more comfortable with regular two-way communication to address student progress. This would be preferable to the limited opportunities for interaction provided by annual reports and parent evenings which they may not attend.

It is important that teachers do not underestimate the power they possess to affect positive change. Teachers represent a frontline role model who can act to plug some of the deprivation gaps that students face throughout their education. It would be unrealistic to think that teachers (or indeed schools) alone can make all the difference, but a joint approach based on reflection and empathy may go some way to improving life chances. Teachers can encourage a sense of learning for its own sake rather than just a pathway to economic capital through qualifications for jobs which may appear out of

reach. The Pupil Premium policy offers a vehicle to consider these things on a more regular basis, since an aspect of students' socio-economic status is highlighted to all classroom teachers. Moreover, the additional funding for schools depending on the number of Pupil Premium students they have may not be a huge amount, but it does allow for focused and innovative approaches to be adopted in schools and their classrooms.

5.1.2 Policy

What is unusual about the Pupil Premium policy is that it is at the same time both vague and prescriptive (DfE 2018b). There exist numerous guidance and templates to help schools formulate Pupil Premium policies, the impact of which are used as evidence during Ofsted inspections (Ofsted, 2015). The DfE and Ofsted suggest that how the funding is used is up to individual schools, yet there remains an expectation that schools should show improvements in the gap between the disadvantaged and their better-off peers in attainment. It seems that the Government policy's success criteria only require statistical evidence of narrowing attainment gaps. This appears quite cynical to some of the teachers interviewed who variously describe it as a 'box-ticking' exercise or something only for the benefit of Ofsted. There is relatively little prescription on how closing the gap could be achieved beyond advice on improving classroom practice which, in theory, should improve attainment for all learners and therefore have little effect on the disadvantage gap. However, by pursuing such narrow and arbitrary statistical targets, the root causes of the disadvantage gap are not being addressed. Also, since the use of Pupil Premium funding and the extent of the attainment gap in schools

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are used to inform judgements for Ofsted inspections, schools may be tempted to ignore the reality of social disadvantage and focus instead on statistical outcomes rather than concrete issues. This would be especially counterproductive if teacher time and energy is spent on what is sold as an essentially worthwhile endeavour, but which does not really have the best interests of the student at heart.

Rather than addressing wider societal issues which create inequality based on economic background, the Government is placing the emphasis on statistics which may, or may not, reflect an improvement in life chances based on improved academic achievement. It could be argued that improved academic attainment could lead to greater future prosperity in line with Bourdieu's theories of different capitals (1997). However, this does not necessarily represent the only, or indeed the most effective, way of addressing inequality based on socio-economic disadvantage. Perhaps a better approach would be to see improved attainment grades (and the potential for increased economic capital) as a consequence of school-based initiatives to address inequality rather than the determining factor. This may go some way to addressing what seems to be something of an image problem experienced by Pupil Premium policy.

It is unquestionably a positive move to weight funding based on economic deprivation since schools with more deprivation have a more difficult job. Subsequently, it makes sense to give additional funding to all schools based on the proportion of disadvantaged students that they have. If greater funding

results in better education then it could be suggested that eventually the gap between the less well-off and their peers should decrease (Gibbons, 2012; Machin & McNally, 2012). However, this represents only one way to address social injustice. It would be a mistake to think that by funding education in this manner that the Government can pass on responsibility for inequality in attainment exclusively to schools and their teachers. The Government could help schools in addressing wider social issues if it were to move away from the culture of accountability through attainment targets. There needs to be a recognition that low attainment grades are a reflection of disadvantage rather than the cause. In addition, the Government must recognise that schools alone cannot draw students out of poverty and that closing the attainment gap is not going to solve society's problems. At best, a reduction in the attainment gap will justify the Government's approach by papering over the cracks: the gap may be smaller but social inequality will remain. Economically disadvantaged students who already achieve highly enough to go to university may still experience problems relating to funding, admissions to top universities and cultural questions about the appropriateness of university (Bathmaker, Ingram & Waller, 2013; Ingram, 2009; Reay, 2017).

The lack of prescription can be seen as a positive aspect of Pupil Premium funding, but the Government could go further by letting schools establish their own criteria for success based on local knowledge rather than putting the main emphasis on attainment targets. Free from the threat of Ofsted inspection, the schools should be trusted to use their funding in more focused and context specific ways to help tackle disadvantage in their own areas. It is

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counterproductive to use the policy as a stick for government to beat schools or for schools to beat teachers. Instead, using the funding as a vehicle for genuine change in the life chances of the most economically disadvantaged students would be of far greater value to society. The most effective way to make the policy work in both implementation and outcomes seems to be to move away from the crude statistical measurements currently employed to show impact. That is not to say all quality assurance should be dispensed with. To ensure that the funding is not wasted, a more formative, rather than summative, assessment approach to data might be more appropriate for government measurements. This would allow for recognition of developments over time in the progress of the Pupil Premium cohort which might not be immediately visible from attainment data. It could lessen the constraints enforced on schools and permit more interpretative and focused interventions for Pupil Premium students in schools with smaller eligible cohorts. The schools may find that the biggest changes they make lie outside the classroom and would not therefore show immediate measurable impact. Until this happens, schools and teachers as policy actors will have to continue to interpret the policy as best they can. This may be achieved by focussing on areas which might not necessarily show impact in closing the gap in attainment data. To do so, a school would invite greater government scrutiny and accountability through Ofsted inspections. However, if schools and the Government were brave enough to go beyond the confines of assessment data, they may find that the funding could have a much greater positive effect on improving lives. This may also have the serendipitous effect of also increasing attainment for socially and economically disadvantaged students.

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5.2 Limitations

The scope, timeframe and resources available for this research necessitated careful consideration when making sampling decisions (see section 3.3). These were informed, if not entirely limited, by the willingness of participant schools and teachers within a specific geographical area to engage with the study. To ensure access to lessons and availability for interviews, it was necessary to identify schools for the study within approximately 30 miles from my own workplace. The schools had to be close enough that my visiting them would not cause too much disruption to my own teaching. Had these limitations not been necessary, I may have had a wider sampling frame from which to identify possible participants. The schools were chosen because they had been identified by Ofsted as either good or outstanding. Although the validity of such judgements could be debated, I felt it should offer some degree of reassurance that what I would observe would involve a high standard of teaching practice. Schools who were not judged good or outstanding were excluded as the pressures of not meeting inspection targets would no doubt result in the schools having quite narrow foci for improvement which could influence the nature of school strategies, teaching practices and perspectives relating to Pupil Premium policy. I was interested in experiences in schools who were not under any additional specific pressures resulting from Ofsted advice. These criteria acted to further limit the range of schools suitable for the study. Furthermore, within the identified sample, I had to find at least four schools who would be willing to take part in the research. I believed this would be the minimum amount to get a valid picture of the

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phenomenon under investigation. Had more suitable schools been prepared to take part in the study, I would also have included them. However, no more schools were prepared to participate.

The sampling criteria for the schools naturally informed decisions relating to the case study participant teachers. As with the schools, I was interested in teachers who were not overburdened by worries relating to specific Ofsted advice on how to improve. This way I hoped to achieve a more valid insight into opinions about the Pupil Premium policy. The number of possible schools in the sample limited the possibilities for willing participants. As far as possible, I had intended to include within the research teachers who were considered good or outstanding within their own schools. This again, was an arbitrary and debateable measure, but the schools could identify staff who they felt fell into this category. The reason for this proviso was to ensure that when the lessons were observed, and the teachers interviewed, the focus could be on the specific issues of the research rather than worries about classroom management. I felt that this might be more of an issue for less confident teachers. In three of the schools, I had to take their judgements on teacher capability at face value but at my own school, I was able to use my insider knowledge to ensure less confident practitioners could be excluded from the sample if necessary. As it transpired, only teachers who were considered good or outstanding by their schools were prepared to participate. These prior judgements about the potential quality of teaching were useful in suggesting a degree of uniformity across the participants which allowed for a greater focus on the research questions rather than the quality of teaching.

However, despite the number and characteristics of the participants meeting my requirements, it may have been helpful to have had a wider pool from which to choose. Unfortunately, no other schools or participants were forthcoming.

The parameters of the study, particularly the focus on teacher perspectives, did not allow for a great deal of reflection on the importance of school culture in the effective implementation of the Pupil Premium policy. Although recognised as a complex and important educational concept (Hargreaves, 1995; Stoll, 2000; Stoll & Fink, 1996), the nature of the research did not necessarily allow for exploration of the culture domain in which these schools were situated or how far they were from the ideal based on Hargreaves's and Stoll and Fink's typologies of effective schools. The schools' policy documents were useful in gauging priorities and identifying strategies; however, in the most part they were generic reflections of the advice and guidelines provided by government. It was difficult to assume that they gave a valid representation of the school culture. The schools shared many characteristics as a result of the sampling process but as Stoll acknowledges, schools with similar contextual characteristics can have a very different mindset and culture (Stoll, 2000, p. 11). Such considerations would no doubt influence the manner in which the policy was implemented in each school and how it would be developed in the future. The participants themselves did acknowledge that on occasions they were guided by what they perceived to be a culture in their schools motivated by meeting government targets. However, it was not possible, given the timeframe and focus of this study, to

judge the extent to which these perceptions were based on reality. Moreover, since the study prioritised the teachers' point of view it was difficult to develop a broader picture of the whole organisation.

The time available and timing of the research also had an impact on the study. The observations and interviews were to take place within one academic year. This limited the available opportunities to visit the different schools on the two required occasions. Timetabling issues for both the participants and myself further limited the available times insomuch as occasions had to be found where the participants were teaching the correct class when I was also free. The pressures on time also meant that the final observations had to take place towards the very end of the academic year. This appears to have influenced both Charlotte and Brian in particular, both of who inferred that they felt under-prepared for the second observation because of additional work pressures. Had resources allowed, it would have been interesting to conduct the research over a longer period of time. Not only may this have provided opportunity for even more evidence to support the research, it may also have allowed for more time between interactions with the participants. With less pressure on time, it might have been possible to induce even more potential participants to volunteer.

5.3 Conclusions

The introduction of the Pupil Premium policy had not significantly affected the teaching practices of any of the participants in this research. The numbers of eligible students were relatively small, and the teachers felt that they were

already delivering the highest standards of provision to their charges. This could be supported by Ofsted inspections, examination results and other documentary evidence. The schools were all successful in narrowing the attainment gap slightly over several years and, while differences endured, three out of the four schools had smaller gaps in attainment than schools with similar pupil characteristics. Yet, as the policy was never fully justified by either their schools or the Government, the participants became confused, frustrated or ambivalent. Without deeper understanding or incentive to do otherwise, they saw no reason to make changes to their practice other than to improve school data. This did not prove a strong enough motivator to do anything other than interpret the policy to fit implementation into pre-existing approaches.

Subsequently, three significant conclusions can be drawn from the study;

1. If these cases are more generalised, the Pupil Premium policy, in its current form, is largely ineffective.

2. The policy could be improved and made to work if teachers had more knowledge about the policy and understanding of issues at the heart of addressing educational inequality based on socio-economic status.

3. Greater understanding of issues of social disadvantage would be gained through increased interaction between schools and parents of disadvantaged students.

As detailed above, there are many limitations attached to Pupil Premium, but extra school funding based on economic disadvantage cannot help but be

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perceived as a positive move. However, such funding cannot be used as a type of misdirection to put the responsibility and any subsequent blame for social problems solely at the door of education. The Government needs to accept this, and schools need to challenge the dominant narrative by refusing to 'jump through hoops'. Instead, schools could aim to take a more socially just approach which genuinely puts the needs of the less advantaged members of the school community at the fore even if this means it is harder to measure. Continuation on the current course may lead to data which shows statistical improvement, but this may mask what can be achieved through cynical manipulation of the figures. Rather than addressing real problems, it would ensure that the policy is perceived as nothing more than an annoying irrelevance in the classroom and one which has done nothing to translate millions of pounds of government funding into any substantial improvements in the life chances of the most disadvantaged.

The Government's guidance for measuring the impact of Pupil Premium accepts that the overall effect of funding may be modest since it represents such a relatively small portion of a school's overall budget (EEF, 2018). However, impact in this instance refers to pupil attainment which the advice suggests is driven mainly by quality of teaching. Distinctions are not made here between disadvantaged students and their more advantaged peers. Therefore, by suggesting only that schools should focus on improving teaching methods across the board, the advice does not propose anything specific for Pupil Premium students. As the teachers in the study already felt they were providing the highest quality teaching they could, this advice, Pupil

Premium identification or indeed the additional funding would not compel them to do anything differently thereby making the policy superfluous. The identification and funding are the results of a distinct difference in attainment, but the advice appears to focus on improving teaching. Even if this were possible or necessary, it would impact on all students not just Pupil Premium students, therefore the attainment gap which plays such a central role in the debate would most likely remain constant. Schools are advised, somewhat vaguely, to be clear about the issues facing disadvantaged pupils and to 'think hard' to identify and implement solutions to address the attainment gap. However, the advice proposes that schools themselves are in the best position to decide how to use the funding effectively. This seems somewhat disingenuous since it is accompanied by the caveat that they must show effective use of the funding during inspections. Allowing the schools to use their funding without artificial measurements of impact might allow for more effective and holistic uses of Pupil Premium.

A more radical approach might be for Government to simply give the funding directly to families with children in receipt of FSM. This could go some way to lifting them out of the deprivation causing their academic underachievement. Moreover, it would give the opportunity for the families to decide on more personalised uses of the funding. There would still be a role for the school in helping to identify resources to support learning and parents would have to develop abilities which would allow appropriate decisions in this regard. These practical considerations aside, such a radical departure seems unlikely

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due to political expediency. Despite the socially just motivations, such a policy would not be universally popular. In times of austerity, it might prove more popular to remove the funding completely if it is found to be ineffective. However, both radical approaches would mean that the positive aspects of Pupil Premium would also be lost. The current additional funding distributed in proportion to a school's relative population of disadvantage can act to address inequality between schools. Moreover, the focus that Pupil Premium identification puts on social inequality in the classroom deserves to be retained. It is how this is utilised by teachers which needs developing.

Many teachers hold implicit understandings of social justice which may explain why they chose to become educators in the first place. Fullan (1993) found that teachers often cite their reason for teaching was 'to make a difference' to the lives of their students (p. 12).   Similar sentiments were also expressed by the teachers in this study; however, such ideals may not be at the forefront of their teaching on a daily basis.   As social justice was rarely discussed or challenged, it seems that teachers fall back on default concepts which can reveal prejudices and ideas of 'blind' social justice which fail to consider nuanced dimensions of difference. It is my belief that teachers would be willing to do more if they were guided and encouraged to do so by school leaders and policy makers. As caring professionals, teachers would be willing to do their best for the students if they were convinced by the arguments about what that constituted. Teachers have shown over the last two decades that they are willing and able to address issues of difference when it comes to SEN (Ainscow, Booth, & Dyson, 2006; Paterson, 2007).

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Indeed, the consensus narrative is such that personalised provision in this regard has become almost second nature.

Increased personalised provision as well as understanding of issues of social disadvantage would be gained through increased interaction between schools and parents of disadvantaged students. For many Pupil Premium students there exists a significant gulf between school and home which could be explained by the differing habitus prevalent in both spheres. However, this study suggests that Pupil Premium identification can be used to address this disconnect through greater interaction. This could be on a small-scale through greater planning for homework as well as through teachers engaging more with individual families and the communities in which they live. These interactions would have the consequence of improving academic attainment and therefore opportunities for the students. They would also compel teachers to consider social issues in more depth and find focused methods to overcome inequality.

These case studies into the lived experiences of five teachers in four schools have shed significant light onto how the Pupil Premium policy is enacted in good or outstanding institutions (as judged by Ofsted) with relatively low numbers of eligible students in the north of England. While by no means representative, the study has shown in separate circumstances that the policy falls short of its potential in many areas. The unique insights offered into the experiences of these five teachers suggest similarities which resonate more widely as well as specific issues highlighted through the documents,

observations and interviews. The cases indicate that, if the findings are generalised more widely, Pupil Premium policy cannot be wholly successful in combatting injustice unless there is more discussion, both nationally and locally, about what the policy intends to achieve above improving statistical data. This is true in both schools such as those with low numbers of Pupil Premium students as well as those with a greater proportion.   Without such discussion, the policy could become a significant wasted opportunity which may meet statistical attainment targets but fail to address or improve wider social issues. Even the limited resources and information which are forthcoming through the policy could prove more effective in all schools if clearer justifications for the policy were given. Failure to do so may lead to classroom teachers approaching this policy as a necessary evil to be endured rather than fully engaged with. Yet on the positive side, there is suggested in this study an underlying sense of fairness from the teachers and a belief that more could be done to address social problems. However, if there is not a genuine expression of political will from those in positions of power, it is likely that the teachers will retain their usual practices with the implicit notions of social justice rather than anything specifically directed by policy. If policy makers, schools and teachers have a clear shared understanding of what can and should be achieved by Pupil Premium, the policy still has the potential to be extremely successful as part of wider social policy focused on addressing social disadvantage. Additional funding and careful student identification could allow for greater resources being focused on those most in need if all policy actors were party to, and in agreement with, a set of genuinely altruistic goals which did not use arbitrary statistics as the sole evidence of impact.

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Appendix One

Participant Information and Consent Form

Lancaster University

Participant information sheet

Hello, my name is Tony Foody and I am a PhD student at Lancaster University. I would like to invite you to take part in a research study about how far the introduction of Pupil Premium funding has affected the extent to which teachers consider social justice issues when planning lessons.

Please take time to read the following information carefully before you decide whether or not you wish to take part.

What is the study about?

This study aims to explore:

- the extent to which teachers take Pupil Premium into account when planning lessons and homework;
- Potential improvements in pupil identification and planning to increase attainment through the Pupil Premium scheme.

Why have I been invited?

I have approached you because as a secondary school teacher at the very 'chalk-face' of education you will be in a position to help me understand how teachers consider issues related to the Pupil Premium when planning lessons and homework.

I would be very grateful if you would agree to take part in this study.

What will I be asked to do if I take part?

If you decided to take part, this would involve the following:
recording brief details of lesson topics and homeworks for at least one of your classes over one half term. These classes will need to include at least two

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Pupil Premium students. You will be asked to record the nature of the tasks and how well each of the Pupil Premium students approached it. You may use your own established recording methods for doing this.

The following half term I would like to observe you teaching one of the chosen classes with the data you previously recorded on homework tasks as a focus. Afterwards, I would like to conduct an informal interview to discuss your planning and the performance of Pupil Premium students from the homework logs. With your permission I would like to record to record these interviews to refer to later. This process of planning log, observation and interview will be repeated later in the year (term 3) to explore if we have seen any discernible impact in teaching, planning or student outcomes.

What are the possible benefits from taking part?

Taking part in this study will allow you an opportunity to share your best practice in this area as well as considering different approaches which may inform future teaching. It may even improve attainment for some of your students.   Moreover, if you take part in this study, your insights will contribute to our understanding of how well the Pupil Premium scheme is working in practice.

Do I have to take part?
No. It's completely up to you to decide whether or not you take part. Your participation is voluntary.

What if I change my mind?
If you change your mind, you are free to withdraw at any time during your participation in this study. If you want to withdraw, please let me know, and I will extract any data you contributed to the study and destroy it. Data means the information, views, ideas, etc. that you and other participants will have shared with me. However, it is difficult and often impossible to take out data from one specific participant when this has already been anonymised or pooled together with other people's data. Therefore, you can only withdraw your contributions up to 6 weeks after taking part in each research stage of the study.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

It is unlikely that there will be any major disadvantages to taking part. It will mean giving up 30-60 minutes for a couple of interviews as well as agreeing

to allow me to observe lessons. You will also need to record planning and attainment data, although I know that many teachers do this as routine.

Will my data be identifiable?

After the interview and observation only I, as the researcher conducting this study will have access to the data you share with me. The only other person who will have access to the data may be a professional transcriber who will listen to the recordings and produce a written record of what you and others have said. The transcriber will sign a confidentiality agreement.

I will keep all personal information about you (e.g. your name and other information about you that can identify you or your school) confidential, that is I will not share it with others. I will anonymise any audio recordings and hard copies of any data. This means that I remove any personal information.

How will my data be stored?

Your data will be stored in encrypted files (that is no-one other than me, the researcher will be able to access them) and on password-protected computers.

I will store hard copies of any data securely in locked cabinets in my office.

I will keep data that can identify you separately from non-personal information (e.g. your views on a specific topic).

In accordance with University guidelines, I will keep the data securely for a minimum of ten years.

How will we use the information you have shared with us and what will happen to the results of the research study?

**I will use the data you have shared with only in the following ways:
I will use it for academic purposes only. This will include my PhD thesis and possibly other publications, for example journal articles. I may also present the results of my study at academic or practitioner conferences.**

When writing up the findings from this study, I would like to reproduce some of the views and ideas you shared with me. When doing so, I will only use anonymised quotes (e.g. from our interview with you), so that

although I will use your exact words, you will not be identified in publications.

Who has reviewed the project?

This study has been reviewed and approved by the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences and Lancaster Management School's Research Ethics Committee.

What if I have a question or concern?
If you have any queries or if you are unhappy with anything that happens concerning your participation in the study, please contact myself on t.foody@lancaster.ac.uk **or telephone 07715340910. You can also contact my supervisor Dr Steven Dempster,** Educational Research: , County South, Lancaster University, LA1 4YD: Tel: 01524 592884 s.dempster@lancaster.ac.uk

If you have any concerns or complaints that you wish to discuss with a person who is not directly involved in the research, you can also contact:

Professor Paul Ashwin – Head of Department, Educational Research, County South, Lancaster University, **, Lancaster, LA1 4YD, UK.Tel: (0)1524 594443 p.ashwin@lancaster.ac.uk**
Thank you for considering your participation in this project.

CONSENT FORM

Lancaster University

Project Title: How far has the introduction of Pupil Premium (PP) affected the extent to which teachers consider social justice issues when planning lessons?

Name of Researcher: Tony Foody   **Email:** t.foody@lancaster.ac.uk

Please tick each box

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily ☐

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time during my participation in this study and within 6 weeks after I took part in the study, without giving any reason. If I withdraw within 6 weeks of taking part in the study my data will be removed. ☐

3. I understand that any information given by me may be used in future reports, academic articles, publications or presentations by the researcher, but my personal information will not be included and I will not be identifiable. ☐

4. I understand that my name/my organisation's name will not appear in any reports, articles or presentation without my consent. ☐

5. I understand that any interviews or focus groups will be audio-recorded and transcribed and that data will be protected on encrypted devices and kept secure. ☐

6. I understand that data will be kept according to University guidelines for a minimum of 10 years after the end of the study. ☐

7. I agree to take part in the above study. ☐

_____   _____   _____
Name of Participant   Date   Signature

I confirm that the participant was given an opportunity to ask questions about the study, and all the questions asked by the participant have been answered correctly and to the best of my ability. I confirm that the individual has not been coerced into giving consent, and the consent has been given freely and voluntarily.

Signature of Researcher /person taking the consent_____ **Date** _____ Day/month/year

One copy of this form will be given to the participant and the original kept in the files of the researcher at Lancaster University **Signature of Researcher /person taking the consent**_____ **Date** _____ Day/month/year

One copy of this form will be given to the participant and the original kept in the files of the researcher at Lancaster University