

Institution: Newman University
Unit of Assessment: 25 – Education
Title of case study: Understanding the Impact of Pupil Exclusion, Vulnerability and Risk – An Exploration of Children and Young Peoples’ Perspectives
<p>1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>Impact is demonstrated through the ways in which research findings have been utilised by schools and Alternative Provision (AP) providers, to evaluate and remodel educational policies and practices. Evidence is presented to support the assertion that by seeking out the perspectives of children and young people, schools can become more critically aware of the complex educational, social, cultural and economic factors that serve to increase pupil exclusion, vulnerability and exposure to risk. An increase in professional understanding and awareness is demonstrated with reference to examples of personalised pastoral interventions, which respond directly to the needs of alienated and disaffected pupils.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>The research projects, from which the impact evidence is generated, were developed in response to a series of Ofsted reports (Ofsted: 2005, 2006, 2008, 2011) highlighting links between learning and discipline, improving pupil behaviour and safety in schools. Consideration was also given to the national inquiry on school exclusion undertaken by the Children’s Commissioner for England (2011, 2012), the Byron Report (2011) into children’s use of the internet and the Steer (2009) and Taylor (2012) reports on school exclusion and management practices, SEN and the quality of AP.</p> <p>A research report commissioned by the Titan Partnership Ltd in 2012, a consortium of schools working to raise attainment in inner-city communities in Birmingham, was produced following increased levels of concern on the part of partnership schools about the behaviour and educational performance of pupils, and increased use of temporary and permanent exclusions in Year 9. The research employed approaches designed to promote pupil voice (Fielding, 2004) as a way of increasing agency and offering insights into young people’s life-worlds. It was governed by the principle that young people should be considered as ‘reliable witnesses’ (France, 2004) whose views need to be valued as social actors in their own right (O’Kane, 2000). The journal article arising out of the Titan research (Tucker, 2013) employed an ethnographic approach, through which interviews were conducted with a sample of 49 pupils in Year 9, eight behaviour co-ordinators from seven secondary schools and two AP staff. It is asserted from the research report and peer-reviewed article that failed transition experiences, school management practices, pupil and teacher behaviours and approaches to learning and teaching, are all potentially significant factors in explaining an increase in behavioural referrals and exclusions. Findings also point to the need for secondary schools to adopt comprehensive and appropriately resourced pastoral care policies and practices that have the capacity to both formally and informally respond to the needs of vulnerable young people.</p> <p>Published work by Trotman, Martyn and Tucker (2012), involving 97 participants from primary and secondary schools in Birmingham and the Black Country, sought to explore children and young people’s perceptions of risk and their impact on: behaviour inside and outside school, option choice and decision-making, relationships with peers and teachers, and the avoidance of risk likely to produce ‘humiliation’ and ‘ostracism’. The findings challenged dominant adult perceptions of risk for children and elements of ‘moral panic’ around grooming and ‘cyber-stalking’. Curriculum deficiencies were highlighted particularly in relation to the generation within schools of opportunities for creative risk. A strong link was established between risk and vulnerability - for example, peer-labelling of perceived ‘effeminacy and homosexuality’, unprotected sex, relationship choices and ‘loosing face’. Risks connected to school exclusion were discussed.</p> <p>The elements of the case study combine to demonstrate how pupil voice research can significantly</p>

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add to understanding of the factors that can lead to increased levels of vulnerability, risk and exclusion. The methodological approach adopted was designed to promote dialogue that has the potential to significantly improve policy and practice outcomes in schools.

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

Trotman, T., Martyn, M., Tucker, S. (2012) 'Young people and risk', in *Pastoral Care in Education: An International Journal of Personal, Social and Emotional Development*. Volume 30, No.4, p.p. 272-285, DOI: 1080/02643944.2012.702779.

Trotman, D., Tucker, S., and Martyn, M. (2012) *Pupil Behaviour and behaviour Referrals: A Report for the Titan Partnership*. Birmingham: Titan Partnership, Limited.

Tucker, S. (2013) 'Pupil vulnerability and school exclusion: developing responsive pastoral policies and practices in secondary education in the United Kingdom', *Pastoral Care in Education: An International Journal of Personal, Social and Emotional Development*, DOI 1080/02643944.2013.842312

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

The primary intention was to raise awareness of young people's perceptions of the impact of school exclusion, vulnerability and risk on their lives. It was envisaged that the research would inform the evaluation and development of policy and practice across both the secondary sector. Impact details are presented below. Evidence cited relates to matters concerned with behaviour referral and school exclusion, pastoral curriculum policy and practice, the development of active learning opportunities and the provision of appropriate personal support mechanisms.

At a national level, following a request from the Children's Commissioner for England, the *Titan Partnership pupil behaviour and school exclusion* report was submitted as evidence to the Schools Exclusion Inquiry Year 2 (Children's Commissioner for England, 2013, Appendix B). The National Association for Pastoral Care in Education (NAPCE) in reviewing the research outputs associated with the case study said that they provided '*valuable guidance to schools on how to establish a culture and ethos where children have confidence in adults that they will listen to their concerns*', and that '*the outcomes from the research were thought provoking for all professionals interested in how giving young people a voice can ensure they are safe in school*' (Mr Phil Jones, Chair of NAPCE – letter: 01/06/2013).

At an international level, Trotman and Tucker have used their research findings to shape policy and practice developments for serving teachers and school managers in Sibiu, Romania. Following the delivery of a series of linked training sessions on behaviour management, risk and special educational needs, the Inspector General Constantin Gorun wrote: '*the presentation of your research findings on behaviour management, change management and Special Educational Needs has been well received by teachers.... Your work is now making an important contribution to helping teachers in Sibiu re-examine their approaches to these areas in their schools.*' (Letter: 12/06/2013). An audit of records of attendance reveals that over 200 people attended the training sessions.

At a regional level, the evidence cited below lends support to the assertion that the impact of the research has been significant in changing specific policies and practices at both regional and individual school levels. A view endorsed by the Executive Director of the Titan Trust; the commissioning organisation for the research report entitled *Titan Partnership pupil behaviour and school exclusion*:

Research undertaken by Newman Colleagues has contributed significantly to the understanding of behavioural issues and has presented us with an opportunity to review our strategies. Also, as a result of the research accredited professional development has been introduced... the research report was also shared with colleagues from the Local Authority Behaviour Support Service.

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(Letter: 16/04/2013)

The research findings were presented to 15 behaviour co-ordinators from Titan partnerships schools in November 2012 and to their head teachers in December of the same year. Following the presentations, Joanne Mawby, Director – North West Network Behaviour Strategy, Birmingham, made further comments on the regional impact with reference to the 15 secondary schools in the network. She argued that the research was *'pivotal in instigating a discussion about the place of pastoral care, the impact of exclusion, and the development of a more effective approach to transition... the research has 'kick started' a process of analytical reflection amongst key leaders from those schools'*. (Email: 25/02/2013)

At a school level, the article on perceptions of risk has proved to be particularly influential. For example, Kevin Rodgers, the Senior Vice Principal at Shenley Academy Birmingham, points out that, *'in response to this article we have expanded our active learning opportunities which address such issues as bullying, gender issues, stereotyping, homophobia and racism through our Learning for Life programme and immersion days.... The pastoral and welfare teams [now] take a proactive approach in researching how best to support students with complex or potentially isolating issues'*. (Letter: 17/06/2013). While Gordon Higginson, the Deputy Headteacher from Holte School in Birmingham, acknowledges that *'pupil voice generally is an area of school that requires on-going attention and development to empower young people'* and notes the impact of the research as it relates to *'facilitat[ing] hearing, listening, and responding to the things that people say so that they feel comfortable, cared for.... confident'* (Letter: 07/06/2013).

In reviewing the overall impact of the research it is essential to acknowledge how a research methodology underpinned by 'pupil voice', can be used to significantly add to professional understanding of pupil exclusion, vulnerability and risk. The strength of the case study lies with the way in which the collective voices of young people have been used to influence educational evaluation, policy formulation and pedagogic practice and innovation.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

1. Chair, National Association of Pastoral Care in Education
2. Director, Titan School Partnership Ltd, Birmingham
3. Head of Centre, City of Birmingham School
4. Senior Vice Principal, Shenley Academy and Sixth Form, Birmingham
5. Deputy Headteacher, Holte School, Birmingham