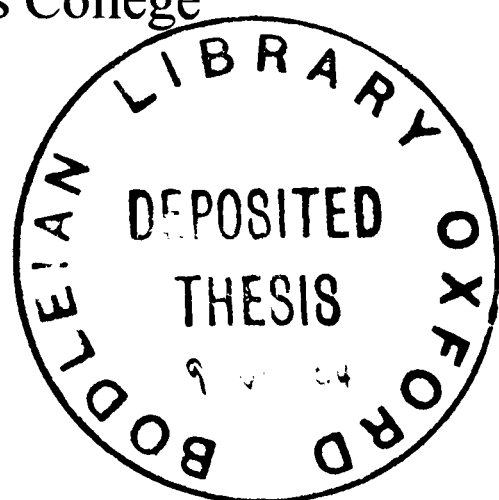


Bangladeshi Pupils: Experiences, Identity and Achievement

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Abstract

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This thesis focuses on the experiences of Bangladeshi pupils attending schools in England in the context of their perceived underachievement in the English school system. Statistical studies in the 1970s and 1980s established that Bangladeshi pupils were doing very poorly in school while later surveys in the 1990s continued to show Bangladeshi pupils as low achieving. The study explores ‘What is it in the lives, backgrounds and schooling experiences of Bangladeshi pupils that helps and hinders them in learning and achieving in the English school system?’ The study also questions the appropriateness of considering pupils in terms of their ethnicity in relation to achievement.

An ethnographic case study approach was adopted so that the micro-processes of learning and being a pupil could be examined. Six Bangladeshi children were identified in one predominantly white, rural county. The six children were attending three different schools in the same city. The research was thus conducted in three different classrooms over the period of one year. Data were collected through unstructured observations and in-depth semi-structured and unstructured interviews. Families, teachers and other children in the classrooms were included in the research.

The case studies show how the children’s teachers came to assess the case study children and their learning needs through the ways in which the children took part in teacher-pupil classroom interaction. Each case study shows how these teacher assessments affected each child’s access to resources such as support and to opportunities for using language and learning in the classroom. The case study pupils were particularly vulnerable because their under-resourced teachers rarely recognised their English as an Additional Language (EAL) needs. As a result ‘within-child’ explanations, often connected to mistaken assumptions about the child’s home, culture or Muslim identity, were then called on to explain poor work or inattention. The case study children were also vulnerable because their teachers only considered their academic performance in relation to other Bangladeshi or EAL pupils and not in relation to the other White English language background children in the classroom. Where pupil needs were recognised and provided for the focus of support was on modifying behaviour so that pupils behaved like an ‘ideal pupil’ rather than on developing the appropriate English language needed for accessing the curriculum and becoming or remaining an achieving pupil. Other kinds of support resulted in ‘fragmented’ learning

experiences and being placed in supported lower sets from which movement into higher sets was not possible.

The case studies also show how some of the case study children took part in reading interactions with their teachers and appeared as successful readers although they were not able to read for meaning. These particular case studies demonstrate that learning the interaction patterns of reading in the Early Years classroom is not enough to allow a pupil to become a successful reader and that what counts as reading in different contexts and literacy practices needs to be given attention.

The case studies also reveal how some of the case study children were hindered in their learning and achievement in school by their lack of access to resources outside school. These included having someone at home to help them with their English school reading and homework as well as their access to pre-school education

The study concludes by suggesting that to focus on achievement in terms of ethnicity conceals the language needs of many Bangladeshi pupils and the role that these play in achievement. To this end a trajectory of what needs to be acquired in terms of language and literacy to be a successful pupil in English schools is provided. The question of why Bangladeshi pupils have been one of the lowest achieving pupil groups in England is then addressed and it is concluded from the data provided by the study that having few economic, social and cultural resources can make it difficult for a pupil to achieve in school, as can being an EAL pupil with unmet language needs or being a pupil with home literacy and learning practices that are different to the literacy and learning practices of English schools. Taken alone none of these situations necessarily predicates underachievement, yet some of the pupils in this study found themselves disadvantaged by all three situations.

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Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 The Study

This study is a consideration of the experiences of Bangladeshi pupils in the context of the perceived underachievement of Bangladeshi pupils in English schools. The study seeks to explore, through using case studies, what is going on in the lives, backgrounds and schooling experiences of a small group of Bangladeshi pupils, in a predominantly White city, that helps and hinders them in learning and achieving in their English schools.

1.2 Personal Background to the Research

The study arises out of a professional interest. Between 1995 and 1998 I worked as a co-ordinator and teacher on a project to raise the achievement of Bangladeshi children in a large, predominantly rural Local Education Authority (LEA). Bangladeshi parents in the county were able to refer their children to the project if they felt their children were underachieving in school. As project worker I was regularly faced with deciding what was going wrong for a particular child and doing something about it.

One of the first things I discovered when looking for professional resources was the lack of literature about Bangladeshi pupils and school and about Bangladeshi pupils and learning. I had to make do with guidelines for working with English as Additional Language (EAL) pupils; professional in-services on teaching literacy to monolingual English children and statistical analyses, from LEAs with large Bangladeshi populations, which confirmed that Bangladeshi pupils were struggling elsewhere and achieving poorly in their examinations.

The second thing I discovered was that there was limited research available that could provide me with information about what might be going on that caused so many difficulties for Bangladeshi children. Why were they struggling so much in school? Why did Bangladeshi pupils require more support, and support over a longer period of time, than any of the other groups of EAL pupils in the county? The LEA studies mentioned above suggested that ethnic minority underachievement was linked to social class, length of stay, English fluency and so on but these things also affected other groups of pupils and did not come close to explaining the complexity of the things I heard, experienced and observed as I moved from school-to-school, pupil-to-pupil, in my working week.

When I finished working for the project in 1998 I was left with the question 'What is going on here? A question that then developed into the study's main research question which was 'What is going on in the lives, backgrounds and schooling experiences of Bangladeshi pupils that helps and hinders them in learning and achieving in the English school system?'

The question stayed with me. Partly because I could not answer it when it was asked (as it frequently was). Partly because I was grappling with finding a way of describing what went on in classrooms everyday and how children went about learning and teachers went about teaching. Partly because I encountered other people's very confident explanations of Bangladeshi underachievement (which to me seemed too simple, too anecdotal and often judgmental) and partly because I was uneasy with considering children in such blanket terms as 'Bangladeshi', 'underachieving' and so on.

This study then arises from this starting point: a desire to say something about what is going on in the day-to-day lives of a group of Bangladeshi school pupils. Something that can shed light on what helps and hinders such pupils in school. Something that can offer an insight

into how these pupils go about learning in school and how their teachers go about teaching them and whether being 'Bangladeshi' has anything to do with it.

1.3 Definition of the term 'Bangladeshi'

I have alluded above to an unease with considering children as 'Bangladeshi'. This comes about in two ways.

Firstly, through a recognition that the categories people are offered with which to define themselves are socially, historically and politically produced. Such categories may not allow people to express (or recognise) facets of identity that may have (or could have) importance for them and the categories offered may not be the categories that people themselves would choose to define themselves with .

However, I have chosen to use the term 'Bangladeshi' as a starting point in this thesis as this is an ethnicity, a group identity, that is offered and which is used by contemporary institutions in Britain at the end of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first. Educational policy makers, Local Education Authorities, researchers, statisticians, government ministers, school advisors and teachers speak of 'Bangladeshi' pupils. Census forms, ethnic monitoring, equal opportunity and school admissions forms all offer 'Bangladeshi' as an ethnic category. For those of us aligned with educational institutions and education-speak 'Bangladeshi' pupils exist. In tension with this, however, is a recognition that the 'Bangladeshi' pupils, friends and families I have come to know over the last eight years rarely speak of themselves as 'Bangladeshi' but as 'Muslim', 'Bengali', 'British Bengali', 'half-half' and so on. Yet, despite a variation in how to name or describe oneself all of these 'Bangladeshi' friends, their children and the pupils I have worked with and researched have a clear, and consistent, idea of who is 'like them' and who is 'different',

who is and who is not what I have chosen to term 'Bangladeshi'. By choosing to use this term I appear to be aligning myself with educational discourses and institutions and ignoring the nuanced, dynamic facets of identity. This is not my intention and the use of 'Bangladeshi' is a means of *beginning* to be able to speak about the subjects and issues of this research.

My second unease is a simple one. By constituting children as Bangladeshi (or Indian, English or Japanese) it is easy to begin to believe that all such children share something that makes them the same as each other in terms of their experiences as pupils in school, or as siblings or as members of their families. Confident explanations I was offered about Bangladeshi underachievement often took this line. Throughout the research I have endeavoured to consider what make the research children different to each other as well as to consider what they might share.

For the sake of clarity, at this juncture, I define as a 'Bangladeshi' pupil any pupil who comes from, or who has a parent who comes from, Bangladesh (or East Pakistan). Nearly all of the Bangladeshis referred to in this research, like the majority of Bangladeshis in England, come from, or have a parent who comes from, the Sylhet region of Bangladesh. When this is not the case this is explicitly stated in the thesis.

Other categories to describe ethnicity and to describe issues to do with ethnicity appear in the thesis. I have chosen to capitalise the terms 'white' and 'black' to indicate that they are also ethnic labels and have social, political and historical meanings attached to them; they are not terms which simply describe skin colour. Terms such as 'race' always appear in inverted commas to indicate an awareness of their roots in the social, historical and political world rather than in some biological or physical reality. The term 'ethnic minority' is used when this is the term used in the literature or in the discussions of the time. Otherwise the term

‘minority ethnic’ is used, as has become the norm, to signal that all citizens belong to an ethnic group and that ethnicity is not something that only ‘belongs’ to non-White people.

1.4 Definition of the term ‘achievement’

The term achievement appears in the title and throughout this thesis, as do the terms underachievement and attainment.

Achievement and underachievement are not neutral terms especially when used in connection with groups of minority ethnic pupils. Some have claimed that their use can have damaging effects on pupils either by perpetuating negative stereotypes and low expectations of ethnic minority groups or through judging pupil worth and success only by exam and test marks (Troyna, 1984). Others are concerned that considering ‘underachievement’ in terms of minority ethnic pupil groups can lead to the creation of a hierarchy of minority ethnic groups based on assumptions about inherent ability (Gillborn & Mirza, 2000). The term can also be used without consideration for the different, contested, meanings of what achievement is and who it is for (Walters, 2001).

I am choosing to use the terms achievement (and underachievement) in this thesis with the above in mind. Despite the difficulties of using the terms, they can be useful ways of talking about what is happening to children and their learning and success within the education system and to this end I link achievement and underachievement very much with the curriculum and curriculum work. For example, I consider a child to be achieving if they have reached the expected Key Stage Level for their age and year of school and underachieving if they have not. It should be quickly added that to speak of the achievement or underachievement of a child in this way is not to speak of their worth, potential or their ability but only of where they have reached at a particular moment in time in relation to the

curriculum and the expected stage posts along the way which they and their teachers are obliged to follow. I choose to use the term ‘achievement’ in this way because, in my professional work, I found that schools and teachers often avoided considering the pupils I supported in terms of achievement as the term somehow challenged an assimilationist expectation that all that was required of the education system was to help minority ethnic children settle in and be happy in school. To ignore the needs of minority ethnic pupils in this way, to consider achievement as the extent to which a child is happy or well settled in class or a success on the football pitch, is to ignore the right of all children to have access to the curriculum and the opportunity to gain qualifications that will allow them access to other important resources in society.

Although I stick to quite a narrow definition of what achievement and underachievement are, I also recognise that other people hold other meanings and that children and pupils achieve in many ways. This research study was open to these other meanings and achievements.

The term attainment is used interchangeably with achievement in this thesis.

1.5 Outline of thesis

Chapter Two and Three of the thesis provide a context for the study through a review of the literature pertaining to the issue of underachievement amongst certain pupil groups.

Chapter Two begins with an overview of the ‘achievement’ research which established ethnic minority underachievement and, more specifically, the particular underachievement of Bangladeshi pupils as an issue in England. The chapter then considers three different areas of research. Firstly, qualitative research which has looked at ethnic minority pupils’ experiences of school. Secondly, research which has looked at EAL and bilingual pupils’ experiences of school and thirdly, research which has looked at non-mainstream pupils’

experiences of school in the early years. Each of these three areas of research has considered what the issues and factors are that have led to poor achievement and has put forward explanations for such poor achievement for the pupils considered. Although the focus in this research has not been on Bangladeshi pupils, Bangladeshi pupils are ethnic minority pupils, EAL pupils and non-mainstream pupils and so this research provides a context for a consideration of what is helping and hindering them in the English education system.

Chapter Three provides an overview of the small amount of research that has actually focused on Bangladeshi pupils at school and situates the current study within that research and the research considered in Chapter Two.

Chapter Four presents the research question, the methodology and the research design used for this study and discusses issues concerning research with children and being a White researcher.

Chapter Five introduces the three research sites and provides some contextual information about how the research classrooms were organised. The case study children and their teachers are also introduced.

Chapter Six presents the six case studies and considers how the case studies answer the research question.

Chapter Seven explores some of the key themes and issues arising out of the case studies in relation to the research question. The chapter is organised into a series of sections entitled:

- Taking Part
- Assessing and Supporting English as an Additional Language
- Reading at Home and at School
- Lives in and Out of the Classroom.

Chapter Eight returns to considering some of the explanations put forward by other researchers for the underachievement of particular groups of pupils and considers these anew in the light of the case studies and the issues discussed in Chapter Seven. The implications of the study for practice and policy are also discussed. The chapter also considers what role ‘being Bangladeshi’ actually comes to have in school achievement and underachievement.

Chapter Two

A Review of the Literature: Underachievement and the Contexts for the Research

2.1 Introduction

There is very little research that specifically examines the experiences of Bangladeshi children or their apparent underachievement in comparison with other groups of pupils in English schools. What little research there is considered in the next chapter.

The purpose of this chapter is first to present those studies and reports which established the underachievement of ethnic minority pupils, and particularly Bangladeshi pupils, in English schools as an issue for policy makers, commentators and for researchers. Included in this section are the statistical studies and government reviews that were conducted in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s. These were all influential in establishing the idea of ethnic minority underachievement and the specific ‘problem’ of Bangladeshi underachievement. The studies which highlighted Bangladeshi underachievement are discussed as well as the limitations of the studies and the explanations that were put forward.

The chapter then goes on to present three areas of research that provide a context for this study. These three areas of research overlap in some respects to provide insights into (and explanations for) underachievement and descriptions of particular groups of pupils’ experiences of school. These three areas of research are:

- Research about ethnic minority pupils. These studies, conducted in the 1980s and 1990s, used qualitative methodologies to examine the experiences of ethnic minority pupils in English classrooms (in contrast to the statistical studies that established ethnic minority underachievement as an issue). They focused on what went on inside schools and classrooms and attempted to examine the complex processes and interactions that affected the achievement of ethnic minority pupils. The reasons why qualitative methods were used are discussed as well as the explanations put forward by these studies for ethnic minority underachievement. None of these qualitative studies focused on Bangladeshi pupils but they are included here as they offer insights into the complex processes of classroom life which have implications for achievement.

- Research about English as Additional Language (EAL) pupils. These studies considered bilingual and EAL pupils learning English in the mainstream classroom and the reasons why such pupils were often underachieving. Again, none of these studies focused on Bangladeshi pupils but this research is included here as Bangladeshi pupils are also EAL pupils and the research provides another context for thinking about Bangladeshi pupils, their experiences of school and their achievement in school.

- Research about ‘non-mainstream’ pupils. The third area of research to be considered is that which addressed the ways in which language and literacy are differently acquired and practised in different locations, and cultures, and the implications of this for children, (both monolingual and bilingual/EAL) entering ‘mainstream’ classrooms with different practices and different expectations to those of the home and community. This research is included in this review as it, together with the EAL research, offers some explanations for why certain groups of ‘non-mainstream’ children may experience difficulty in the ‘mainstream’ classroom. Such reasons also provide a context for the research.

Even though the research discussed in this chapter rarely refers to Bangladeshi pupils, each of these three areas, in its own way, encompasses or could encompass Bangladeshi pupils. Bangladeshi pupils are ethnic minority pupils, EAL pupils and ‘non-mainstream’ pupils. These areas of research are rarely brought together and yet together they illuminate and provide a context for considering the complexities of achievement and the lives of ‘non-mainstream’ learners in English schools.

They are presented here because they provide a context for the initial study and for the things I wanted to be aware of as I began the fieldwork. They also provide a context for my thinking, my analysis and the discussion of the findings at the end of this thesis.

Much of this research was read and reviewed before the study was designed and carried out¹ but a substantial amount of this reading was undertaken both during the fieldwork year and after the fieldwork was completed. This ongoing reading has meant that the way of organising these research studies and my thinking about them has changed during the research period. The literature has informed my study but it has also been informed by the study.

2.2 Ethnic Minority Pupils and Underachievement: Statistical Studies and Government Reviews

2.2.1 The underachievement of ethnic minority pupils

For the past thirty years statisticians have been demonstrating that certain ethnic minority groups underachieve or under-perform in the English education system.

¹ and can be found in the Literature Review for the MSc dissertation which reported on the pilot study for this doctoral research (Walters, 2001).

New Commonwealth immigration into the United Kingdom flourished in the fifties and sixties. By the 1970s, Select Committee Inquiries were considering race relations, the employment and educational levels of immigrants and the disadvantaged position of West Indian pupils² (Mabey, 1986). Early concerns were with 'immigrant' versus 'non-immigrant'/'indigenous' groups. Studies appeared that considered the effects of the presence of 'recent arrivals' on the reading attainment of White children in the same school (Phillips, 1979; Mabey, 1981). Other studies were concerned with whether schools were able to provide for 'recent arrivals' and their needs and how such 'recent arrivals' were doing in school (Little, 1975). These studies, and those that followed, were obliged by the nature of their inquiry to look at the performance of different 'ethnic' groups in relation to each other.

The picture that emerged early on was that ethnic minority children were underachieving in school when compared with their 'White'/'indigenous' peers. Little (1975) in examining how 'recent arrivals' were fairing in school found that there were more 'immigrant' children, than would be statistically expected, in the bottom groups of a sample of streamed junior school classes in London and fewer 'immigrants' than expected in the top two groups. He also found that, whilst London school children were six months behind the national reading age, 'immigrant' children were one year behind. Phillips (1979) found that Afro-Caribbean and Asian pupils, in the West Midlands, scored below 'indigenous' pupils when tested at the end of Junior school for reading ability and vocabulary. A review by Tomlinson of studies of

²Afro-Caribbean people were, at this time, usually referred to as West Indian. In this chapter I will use the terminology for categories of people and pupils that the researchers themselves used. The naming and categorising of groups of people in terms of some notion of nationality, geographical origin, culture or skin colour is indicative of social, political and historical concerns of the time periods that produce them.

West Indian and Asian pupils' educational performance, in the sixties and seventies, also concluded that the achievement of immigrant children tended to be below that of 'indigenous' children (Tomlinson, 1980).

By the late 1970s concerns were focused on the Afro-Caribbean child in relation to other ethnic groups and White pupils. In 1979 a Committee of Inquiry into the Education of Children from Ethnic Minority Groups was set up in response to concerns about the educational achievement of Afro-Caribbean pupils (Gillborn & Gipps, 1996). The findings of the Committee were published as the Rampton Report (1981) and the Swann Report (1985). Two sample surveys, conducted on behalf of the Committee, on the exam achievement of Afro-Caribbean, White and Asian children in London, showed that, at the age of eight, Afro-Caribbean achievement was significantly lower than the achievement of the other groups (Mabey, 1981). This finding was confirmed by another survey in 1986 which showed that at school leaving age, Afro-Caribbean children were still achieving at a significantly lower level than their white peers (Mabey, 1986).

Other studies in the 1980s continued to reveal that Afro-Caribbean and other ethnic minority pupils were not performing as well as White children in school (Craft & Craft, 1983; Mabey, 1986; Mortimore et al., 1988; Smith & Tomlinson, 1989).

The picture produced of ethnic minority underachievement became increasingly complex as studies began to consider the effects of socio-economic status and gender upon achievement statistics.

Work by Brent LEA (1994), Lambeth LEA (1994), Sammons (1994), Tizard (1988) Plewis (1991) (all cited in Gillborn & Gipps 1996), Drew and Gray (1990) and the ILEA (1990) amply demonstrated this. For example, Drew and Gray drawing their data from the Youth Cohort Study, confirmed the findings of previous researchers that there were differences in

exam achievements associated with ethnic background. When exam performance was considered White pupils were gaining more 'O' Level passes than Asians and Afro-Caribbean pupils and more A-C/CSE grade 1 passes (although the gap between Whites and Asians was very small) (Drew & Gray, 1990: 111-112). However, when gender and socio-economic group were introduced into the picture they found that there was a relatively high performance of Asian pupils (especially males) from intermediate and manual backgrounds in comparison with White pupils and Afro-Caribbean pupils (Drew & Gray, 1990: 113). Mirza has drawn attention to how studies during this period often failed to consider gender when analysing and presenting statistics regarding the underachievement of particular ethnic minority groups and the particular invisibility of the high achievement of Black girls in English schools (Mirza, 1992). Even when the high achievement of Black girls was recognised in some research the implications of the findings were not explored as, according to Mirza, this would have challenged dominant explanations about ethnic minority underachievement which located the reasons for underachievement either within the home or within the child and not within the structural constraints of English society.

Socio-economic status was also, at this time, considered as a factor in the differing performance of Asian pupils in different studies. In one study Asian pupils were underachieving when compared with Afro-Caribbean pupils and White pupils (Phillips, 1979), in other studies they were doing better than Afro-Caribbean pupils but worse than White pupils (Little, 1975; Thomas and Mortimore, 1994). Other studies found that Asian pupils were doing as well as, or better than, White pupils (Rampton, 1981; Driver, 1979; Brent, 1994; Kysel, 1988; Sammons, 1995). Gillborn and Gipps (1996: 23) suggest that this inconsistent picture may have come about because the research that found Asian pupils to be doing better than White pupils was conducted in London where the socio-economic status of White pupils was much lower than the status of White pupils outside London and that this may have reduced the attainment of White pupils.

Another level of complexity emerged as studies also began to consider increases in the overall levels of GCSE achievement for each ethnic groups and the progress that children made during their schooling (Brent, 1994; Birmingham, 1994; Camden, 1995; Southwark, 1994; Birmingham LEA, 1992-1994 all cited in Gillborn & Gipps, 1996: 13, 20-21, 29).

However, despite the complexities referred to above, during the eighties and nineties, when the Asian category was disaggregated³, Bangladeshi pupils consistently appeared as one of the most underachieving groups, fairing badly in school when compared with White pupils and when compared with pupils from other ethnic minority groups. Nearly every study which looked at Bangladeshi pupils as a category found that there were worrying levels of underachievement amongst them. These studies are now considered.

2.2.2 The particular underachievement of Bangladeshi pupils

The 1980s

The Swann Committee, established in the early eighties by the government to inquire into the causes of the underachievement of ethnic minority pupils, stated that although Asian pupils were on average showing achievement that resembled that of White children, 'Bangladeshis, it is clear, are seriously underachieving' (Swann, 1985: 84). In an Annexe of the Report figures were given for exam entry in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets in 1983⁴.

³The need for large numbers to gain secure results in statistical work often meant that Bangladeshi, Pakistani, East African Indian and Indian children were considered under the aggregate heading of Asian in statistical analyses.

⁴ A study conducted by Tomlinson revealed how this particular LEA, during the 1980s, failed to provide school places for a significant number of Bangladeshi pupils thus preventing many Bangladeshi pupils from attending school for a significant period of time (Tomlinson, 1992).

	Not entered for exams or only gained grade 4 or 5 in CSE ⁵	Gained exam passes at CSE level grade 3 level or above
Bangladeshis	79%	21%
African Asians	24%	76%
Other Asians	20%	80%
Pakistanis	16%	84%
Indians ⁶	9%	91%

Adapted from The Swann Report Annexe C (1985) p124

The House of Commons Home Affairs Committee First Report, Bangladeshis in Britain (1986-1987), echoed much of what the Swann Report had said about Bangladeshi pupils in Inner London schools when it claimed that 'there are alarming indications, not yet adequately backed up by research, of considerable underachievement, in marked contrast to other Asian pupils' (The House of Commons HAC, 1986 –1987, p xiii).

Research started to appear in the late 1980s which backed up the 'alarming indications'. An Inner London Education Authority (ILEA) study conducted by Kysel analysed 1985 public exam entries. She found that,

the achievement of some ethnic groups...was well above (the) average. African Asian and Indian pupils did particularly well. A quarter of the pupils in these groups obtained five or more O-levels ABC or CSE1 grades. Other groups whose achievements were above average were Pakistani, South East Asian and 'Other' pupils. In contrast, the achievements of Bangladeshi pupils were below average, only 4% obtained five or more O-levels ABC or CSE1, while 42% obtained no classified grades (Kysel, 1988: 84).

⁵Certificate of Secondary Education which, together with the General Certificate of Education (GCE) comprised the equivalent of today's GCSE. GCEs were intended for 'academic' pupils whereas CSEs were intended for the less academically minded. The lowest pass rate for a GCE, a C grade, was equivalent to a CSE grade 1. The rest of the CSE grades (2-5) were below a GCE pass.

Kysel analysed her data in another way to see what the picture was if the high goal of five or more O-levels ABC or CSE1 was replaced with a consideration of achievement in terms of all exam passes. When a score was allocated to each grade (e.g. O-level grade ABC/CSE grade 1 = 7 points, O-level grade D/CSE grade 2 = 6 points etc) Bangladeshi pupils gained an average score of only 8.7 points compared with 15.6 for all pupils, 21.3 for Pakistani pupils and 24.5 for Indian pupils (Kysel, 1988: 85).

Kysel was also able to analyse Verbal Reasoning scores from tests that the pupils in her cohort had taken at the end of their primary schooling. 53% of Bangladeshi pupils had scores in the lowest band (compared to 19.8% of Indian pupils, 19.9% of English, Scottish, Welsh and Irish pupils and 24.2% of Pakistani pupils) and proved to be the only group of pupils who did not go on to achieve better examination results than the VR scores would have predicted. They were also the only group who did not appear to have overcome their lack of English fluency and poor Verbal Reasoning by the time they reached their fifth year of secondary schooling (Kysel, 1988: 89)

Tomlinson (1990) also found that on entry to secondary school Bangladeshi pupils, together with Pakistani pupils, had the lowest scores in English and in Maths.

Another ILEA analysis of 1986 public exam entries found that Bangladeshi pupils were less likely to be entered for public exams than any other ethnic group: 36% of Bangladeshi pupils were not entered for 16+ exams compared to 10% of Indian and Pakistani pupils (ILEA, 1987 cited in Haque, 1999: 18).

⁶No figures are given for White pupils in the Borough.

An ILEA study of 1987 exam results revealed that this picture had changed little and that 34% of Bangladeshi pupils were not entered for exams and those that were performed considerably below average for ILEA schools (ILEA, 1990).

In another study of attainment at 16+ in Inner London it was found that the least successful group of pupils were Bangladeshis (Nuttall & Varlaam, 1990).

A Labour Force Survey (1988-1990) also presented evidence of Bangladeshi underachievement. It found that Bangladeshis aged between sixteen and twenty-four were the most poorly qualified of all groups. 54% of Bangladeshis in this age group had no formal qualifications (compared to 48% of Pakistanis, 22% of Indians and 15% of Indians). Bangladeshis were also the group with the fewest 'A' levels and the highest levels of unemployment (Jones, 1993).

A Social Trends survey a few years later found that only 6% of Bangladeshis had a higher qualification compared to 14% of Whites, 11% of West Indians and 16% of Indians (MacIntyre et al., 1993: 7).

Modood, a year later in 1993, found that Bangladeshis, especially women, were significantly under-represented in applications and admissions to Higher Education although most ethnic minority groups were over represented (Modood, 1993).

The 1990s

In 1991, a study which looked at the educational qualifications gained by school pupils in Oxford found the following when the exam scores of different groups were considered as the percentage on or above the median score for all pupils:

	% of pupils gaining exam scores on or above the median score for all pupils
Bangladeshi	19%
Chinese	89%
White	52%
Indian	42%
Pakistani	41%
Other	39%

Adapted from MacIntyre, Bhatti & Fuller 1993

Bangladeshi pupils were achieving significantly below other groups of pupils. It was also found that no Bangladeshi pupils were entered for 'A' levels that year (MacIntyre et al., 1993: 7). MacIntyre et al. did consider gender and found that gender did not make a difference to achievement in any of the groups except for White and Pakistani pupils (where girls were doing better than boys) (MacIntyre et al., 1993: 8)

In the mid-nineties statistics from various LEAs indicated the continuing underachievement of Bangladeshi pupils (Wandsworth, 1994; Birmingham, 1995; both cited in Gillborn & Gipps, 1996: 14, 23-24; Newham, 1995: 8).

In only one London Borough did Bangladeshi pupils appear to be doing well. Exam results in Tower Hamlet in 1994 showed a significant improvement for Bangladeshi pupils after a policy to target language needs was introduced. In 1994 GCSEs Bangladeshi pupils were gaining higher examination scores than Whites and Caribbean pupils (cited in Gillborn & Gipps, 1996: 26; Gillborn & Mirza, 2000: 11).

However, despite the improved results in Tower Hamlets in 1994, studies which appeared in the late nineties continued to indicate considerable underachievement elsewhere.

Research which looked back at examination results in Camden between 1993 and 1995 found that Bangladeshi pupils attainment had actually worsened and the percentage of Bangladeshi pupils with five GCSE grade A-Cs had halved (Amin et al., 1997).

In 1997, the Policy Studies Institute's report on ethnic minorities in Britain found that Bangladeshis were still the least qualified of all ethnic minority groups and that girls and women were less qualified than men (Modood & Berthould, 1997: 66).

The Youth Cohort Study in 1998 also found that underachievement among Bangladeshi pupils continued at GCSE level (Pathak, 2000: 4).

A report commissioned by the Department for Education and Employment on Minority Ethnic Participation in Education, Training and the Labour Market found that amongst adults although all ethnic minorities were now exceeding the achievement of White adults, Bangladeshi and Pakistani groups proved the exception and that qualifications amongst these two groups remained very low (Owen et al., 2000: 1).

Richardson and Woods review of Key Stage 2 and GCSE results for the summer of 1998 in approximately twenty London authorities showed that in most of the LEAs studied the achievement of Bangladeshi pupils was lower than that of White pupils (Richardson & Wood, 2000: 9).

A study in 2000, using the Youth Cohort Study data from 1996, confirmed that Bangladeshi pupils were part of what was referred to as 'the lower attaining cluster' (Demack et al., 2000: 126 –127). The report went on to say,

These results indicate relatively poor attainment and illustrate worrying trends within those ethnic groups which, in 1998, had relatively low attainment: Black, Pakistani and Bangladeshi pupils. Their position in 1998, combined with little or no subsequent improvement, has resulted in the much wider ethnic attainment differences seen at the end of the study period (Demack et al., 2000: 131)

The Youth Cohort Study of 2000 again found evidence of Bangladeshi underachievement. Their analysis showed that all ethnic groups saw a rise in the number of five or more GCSE A*-C grades 'with the exception of Bangladeshi and Pakistani 16 year olds'. It also showed that there was a fall in achievement amongst Bangladeshi pupils from 33% in 1998 to 29% in 2000 gaining such grades and that Bangladeshis constituted the largest group that were not in any education, training or employment after the age of sixteen (Youth Cohort Study, 2000: 1-4).

The Youth Cohort Study of 2002, looking at data from 1999, found that Bangladeshi pupils remained as one of the lowest achieving groups, although Bangladeshi girls achieved more highly than Black boys and Bangladeshi boys. Bangladeshi boys appeared below Black boys as the lowest achieving group (Youth Cohort Study, 2002).

2.2.3 The problems and limitations of the statistical studies

Although the above studies presented a clear case for the underachievement of certain ethnic minority groups and especially for the underachievement of Bangladeshi pupils it has to be acknowledged that the studies referred to above are not without their problems and limitations. These limitations could be summarised as follows:

- **Poor sampling:** Many of the samples for the studies were drawn from Inner London and that there was an absence of evidence from large, cross-sectional, nationally

representative surveys (Tomlinson, 1990; Gillborn & Gipps, 1996; Pathak, 2000; Demack et al., 2000). Tanna makes the same criticism claiming that such research relied on imperfect samples, nearly all from Inner London, where the population was generally of a poorer socio-economic status and where school standards were lower. As a result of this, statistics and findings could not be generalised to other parts of the UK, especially to non-metropolitan areas, with any confidence (Tanna, 1990: 352). Even where large national samples could be used such samples contained relatively few ethnic minorities from a non-manual background which made generalisation difficult (Gillborn & Gipps, 1996: 18). Troyna has also pointed out the dangers of such a tendency to generalise from small samples, in particular geographical locations, to other, very different, locations (Troyna, 1991).

- **A failure to consider socio-economic factors and class:**

There is an absence of a consideration of social class or socio-economic status in many studies and an overdependence on 'free school meals' as a way of measuring social class (Harris 2001; Richard & Wood, 2000: 13; Demack et al, 2000: 119).

- **A failure to consider gender:**

As noted above Mirza has drawn attention to the fact that gender was not considered by many of the statistical studies with the result that the high achievement of Black girls was made invisible and within-child and within-home explanations of underachievement could continue to dominate discussions and policy initiative rather than attention be paid to the structural disadvantages that ethnic minority groups had to deal with in English society (Mirza, 1992). With the exception of MacIntyre et al. (1993) and Modood & Berthould (1997) none of the studies which present Bangladeshi underachievement consider gender.

- **Inconsistent data collection and analysis:**

Gillborn and Gipps point out that trying to build up a picture of ethnic minority performance for their review of ethnic minority achievement was hampered not only by a lack of consideration of class but also by the inconsistent ways in which LEAs collected and analysed data (Gillborn & Gipps, 1996).

- **The categorisation of ethnic groups**

The categories used varied from survey to survey and made comparing survey results almost impossible and restricted understanding of ethnic minority achievement.

Gillborn and Gipps describe how the use of 'Asian', as we have already noted, ignores significant differences in the cultural, political and economic profiles of Indian, East African Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi pupils (Gillborn & Gipps, 1996: 18). They also critique the use of 'Black' in many studies as this is a term that is not used by many ethnic minorities to describe themselves, it is a term that makes South Asians invisible and which obscures the significant differences, experiences and achievements between those of an African ethnic background and those of a Caribbean ethnic background (Gillborn & Gipps, 1996: 26-27). These criticisms are echoed by Richards and Woods (Richardson & Wood, 2000) and Amin et al. (Amin et al., 1997: 5) Demie also rightly claims that it is necessary to remember that ethnic groups are not homogenous (Demie, 2001: 103) and likewise, Mirza points out that studies failed to consider differences within groups (Mirza, 1992: 12). Another weakness is the large numbers of pupils who appear as 'Other' in the survey results.

Other criticisms that have been made of the statistical work which looked at ethnicity and underachievement include the manner in which studies frequently used data collected well in advance of the publication date of the studies (Strand, 1999; Gillborn & Gipps, 1996), the fact that few studies were sensitive or longitudinal enough to consider how performance and achievement varied through school career (Sammons, 1995) and the fact that many studies

do not include in their measures pupil mobility (Goldstein, 2000). Hammersley has also recently written about the need for careful consideration of the way in which ‘gaps’ in achievement are measured and presented in studies (Hammersley, 2001: 295).

2.2.4 ‘Bangladeshi underachievement’

However, despite all of these identified problems with the statistical studies into ethnic minority attainment, the poor performance of Bangladeshi pupils in those parts of London and England that were studied cannot be simply dismissed as a statistical error or a consequence of poor data collection. The evidence of underachievement, for at least some parts of the population of Bangladeshi pupils, seems too compelling and too often found.

Policy makers and government departments certainly accepted that there were problems and Bangladeshi underachievement became an accepted reality in a range of official pronouncements from Ofsted and the DfEE.

For example, in 1999, in their report on raising ethnic minority achievement, and school and LEA responses to this, Ofsted made the following comments,

The performance of Bangladeshi and Pakistani pupils in the early years of schooling remains depressed....(Bangladeshis’) generally lower attainment in higher grades at GCSE remains a concern (Ofsted, 1999).

In 2000 the DfEE claimed that,

While pupils from certain minority ethnic backgrounds attain very well at school, results show that others have been consistently underachieving in relation to their

peers. Levels of attainment, particularly by Afro-Caribbean, Bangladeshi and Pakistani pupils, have been consistently below average.

(Jacqui Smith, 2000: 3)

and a very similar statement appeared on the Teachernet website:

Nationally, levels of attainment by Afro-Caribbean, Bangladeshi and Pakistani heritage pupils remain below the average.

(www.teachernet.gov.uk)

Mike Tomlinson, in his Annual Report as Chief Inspector of Schools in 2002 stated that,

My second concern is with those groups of pupils and students who are still not achieving as well as they should. Let me mention a few of these groups, although this list is by no means exhaustive. Disproportionate numbers of pupils of Afro-Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi heritage achieve relatively poor GCSE results, placing them at a disadvantage.

(Tomlinson, 2002: 2)

and in the published guidance to Ofsted inspectors in 2002 it was claimed that,

The 2001 White Paper 'Schools Achieving Success' highlighted the relatively lower levels of GCSE success achieved by Black, Pakistani-heritage and Bangladeshi-heritage pupils whether from manual or non-manual backgrounds, when compared with White or Indian-heritage pupils.

(Ofsted, 2002: 3)

Gillborn and Mirza in an Ofsted review of ethnic inequality in education also noted that Bangladeshi pupils had come to be seen as suffering some of the most pronounced educational disadvantage and were seen as one of the lowest attaining groups of pupils. Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant (EMAG) data reviewed showed that Pakistani and Bangladeshi pupils lagged behind their White peers in most of the submissions and that the gap between Bangladeshi and White pupils had remained almost static over ten years despite the fact that both groups had been improving (Gillborn & Mirza, 2000: 11, 14).

2.2.5 Explanations put forward for underachievement by statistical studies

The statistical studies and government reviews outlined above not only identified ethnic minority and Bangladeshi underachievement but also put forward explanations for it or sought to explore factors which affected achievement.

The House of Commons Home Affairs Committee, despite a lack of research evidence, concluded that the particular problems faced by Bangladeshi pupils in school were a result of their:

- difficulty with the English language
- late arrival in school after the start of compulsory schooling
- lack of adequate schooling in Bangladesh before arrival in the UK
- high number of absences from school
- poor economic status
- the effects of racism
- poor teacher expectation and high teacher turnover
- cultural differences which reduced pupils' capacity for learning
- parents' lack of education and knowledge of the British educational system which made it difficult to assist their children with their schooling

(The House of Commons Home Affairs Committee, 1987: 148).

Murshid (1990), whilst recognising that Bangladeshis often occupied a poor socio-economic position, explained Bangladeshi underachievement in terms of low teacher expectation and a benign neglect of Bangladeshi pupils in schools, low pupil self-esteem due to racism together with a pessimism about educational achievement and future job prospects and the poor education of Bangladeshi parents and the low value they attributed to education.

Kysel (1988) claimed that explanations for low attainment could be sought outside the education system and within it. Although her study was unable to explore explanations for poor achievement, she suggested that possible influences on achievement were poverty, social class and a lack of fluency in English, negative stereotyping and low expectations of pupils from particular ethnic groups by teachers, a lack of relevance of the curriculum to pupil needs and poor communication between home and school.

Kivi located the reasons for underachievement within schools themselves. Kivi claimed that the poorer educational performance of Bangladeshi and Afro-Caribbean pupils was due to the 'insidious racism' in schools, the ignorance of teachers and support teachers about the linguistic problems faced by pupils and the lack of training that teachers received, the cultural conflicts created by the curriculum and the fact that schools did not understand the needs of Bangladeshi and Afro-Caribbean pupils (Kivi 1991) .

A clear picture did not really emerge from the studies regarding the reasons why pupils underachieve. Explanations were either put forward without any real basis in empirical research or predictors are put forward regarding who was likely to underachieve or the relationship between different variables that may affect achievement was explored. In some cases different studies come to different conclusions. For example, while the Home Affairs Committee (1987), Sammons (1995), Camden (1996), Swann (1985), Sammons et al (1997) and Amin (1997) all believed that a lack of fluency in English was significant, Strand (1997)

found in his study that all the English as a Second Language pupils who had started school alongside their monolingual peers had all caught up with the monolingual pupils by the end of Key Stage 1 and that language was not an issue.

In this section I have attempted to show how studies through the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s came to establish ethnic minority underachievement as an issue and how Bangladeshi pupils came to be perceived as underachieving in the English education system. I have also outlined some of the weaknesses of this research and some of the explanations that the studies put forward for underachievement.

The next three sections consider research studies that have been undertaken which explore what some of the issues and factors are in the underachievement of ethnic minority pupils, EAL pupils and 'non-mainstream' pupils and provide a context to this study.

2.3 Ethnic Minority Pupils and Underachievement: The Qualitative Studies

2.3.1 Reasons for using qualitative methodologies

The statistical studies referred to above established ethnic minority performance in school as an issue and were influential in establishing 'the problem of Bangladeshi underachievement'. The studies' strengths lay in their ability to demonstrate differing achievement according to ethnicity and in the manner in which patterns and relationships between variables could be explored. However, such studies were not able, by their very nature, to consider the processes of learning and achieving for ethnic minority pupils. Most of the studies focused on achievement or performance as measured by test results, usually at the end of schooling and thus at one point in time and could not reveal anything about the processes of schooling and the school careers of pupils. This was noted by many of the researchers themselves

(Kysel, 1988; Tanna, 1990; Kivi, 1991; Amin et al., 1997; Drew & Gray, 1990; Demie, 2001; Gillborn & Gipps, 1996: 81).

In the 1980s and 1990s qualitative research studies began to appear which were able to focus on the processes within classrooms and on the experiences of ethnic minority pupils in English schools. Gillborn situates this work in relation to the statistical work of the seventies, eighties and nineties claiming that in such work data on ethnic minority pupils was often aggregated in ways which lost sight of significant historical, cultural, political and social issues resulting in only a partial, and possibly misleading, picture (Gillborn, 1995). Concerns were also expressed about the ease of stereotyping as a result of survey work (Connolly & Troyna, 1998). Statistical work could also be critiqued for its tendency to see particular ethnic groups as failing and locating the failure within deficiencies in the groups themselves rather than considering the structural processes, specifically of racism, which existed within society and within schools as the reason for ethnic minority underachievement (Gillborn, 1995; Mirza, 1992; Mac an Ghaill, 1992; Connolly, 1995). Troyna at the end of a review of the problems of statistical work, claimed that there had been a failure to,

find a framework for capturing the complex processes through which pupils were allocated to courses of different statuses...(there is) a need to dive beneath the surface and look at ethnicity and who goes where and gets what' (Troyna, 1991:363).

Qualitative research appeared in the late eighties and throughout the nineties and attempted to look at school processes, ethnic minority pupil experiences in school and 'who goes where and gets what'. Most of the studies showed either that different groups of pupils received differing amounts or kinds of attention from their teachers or that setting and banding arrangements in schools were key in creating disadvantage⁷.

⁷ Many of these studies, and their conclusions, were subject to a rigorous critique by other researchers and their findings disputed. This will be discussed more fully later in this chapter.

2.3.2 Explanations put forward for underachievement by qualitative studies

The Afro-Caribbean pupil dominated qualitative studies during the 1980s and was the focus, with the 'Asian' pupil of most of the studies conducted in the 1990s.

In the 1980s Green (1985) considered the social relationships between Afro-Caribbean, Asian and European children and their teachers. He measured the interaction of a White teacher with a mixed pupil group of West Indian, Asian and European children⁸. His analysis showed that Asian and European pupils were lumped together by the teachers to form a group with which West Indian children were contrasted. European boys were the group most favoured by teachers and West Indian boys were the least favoured group; West Indian boys received less individual attention than other children from their teachers, less praise and more orders.

Wright (1992) also found that there were subtle differences in the way White teachers treated different groups of pupils. In the four inner-city schools of her study, as in Green's study, Afro-Caribbean children were considered by their teachers to be the most disruptive group of pupils and they were the most criticised and controlled group in the school. They were also more likely than any of the other groups to feature in the school's sanction system.

As to Asian pupils, Wright found that,

the Asian children (particularly the younger children) were perceived as a problem to teachers because of their limited cognitive skills, poor English language and poor social skills and their inability to socialise within the classroom. However, there was

⁸ Green assessed and recorded classroom interactions using Flanders' systematic observation schedule. The study is thus not a qualitative study in the true sense of the term but it is included here as it is a study of what was happening in six specific classrooms. It is also frequently referred to by later qualitative studies.

also an assumption that Asian children were well-disciplined and hard working.

(Wright, 1992: 57)

She also found that Asian children were the group most likely to experience frequent racial harassment from White peers and to experience the most overt racism in the school (Wright, 1992: 58, 78). This was exacerbated by a 'child culture' within the school in which White children marked themselves off from certain ethnic groups and constructed a status hierarchy from which Asian children were excluded and the fact that the schools had an ambivalent response to this state of affairs.

An earlier study by Wright, which considered fourth and fifth year Afro-Caribbean pupils attending an Upper School, showed how antagonistic relationships between teachers and Afro-Caribbean pupils influenced teachers' professional judgements of Afro-Caribbean pupils' ability and that this may have led to such students being placed in low sets in school thus restricting such pupils' educational opportunities. Afro-Caribbean pupils had the highest average reading scores of all pupil groups, yet they completed school with fewer qualifications.

Mirza's study of Black girls in two comprehensive schools in South London also considered the interactions between teachers and pupils and whether pupils performed as well or as badly as their teachers expected. She rejected the explanation that teachers' low expectations of the Black girls in their classrooms (which existed) affected achievement. To the contrary, the teachers appeared to be unsuccessful in eroding Black female self-esteem or passing on their negative expectations (Mirza, 1992: 54). Mirza, left with the question 'How exactly does teacher-pupil interaction function to disadvantage the black child?', suggested that 'the process of discrimination operated by means of the teachers' access to physical and material resources, restrictions to which would result in the curtailment of opportunities' and that '..teachers (were) in a position to enforce their prejudices by restricting access to

information and educational resources, (Mirza, 1992: 56). Mirza also suggested that the girls' recognition of the negative assessments that their teachers held of them meant that the girls did not ask teachers for help and support as a means of challenging such assessments (Mirza, 1992: 83).

Another study which looked at relationships between teachers and pupils and pupils and pupils was Gillborn's detailed account of life in a large inner-city comprehensive over a period of two years (Gillborn, 1990). His interviews and classroom observations revealed, like Wright and Green's work, a complex situation where Afro-Caribbean and Asian pupils experienced school in different ways. Whilst ethnicity influenced choice of friends and teacher expectations, teacher stereotypes of Asian culture (a perception of Asian pupils as hardworking, well-disciplined and from stable home backgrounds which valued education) did not operate against Asian pupils in the way that teachers' stereotypes of Afro-Caribbean pupils worked against them. Asian pupils, Gillborn claimed, had a similar relationship with teachers as White pupils whereas Afro-Caribbean pupils experienced negative teacher expectations which transcended judgements about ability. Like Wright, Gillborn concluded that teacher judgements were the 'prime obstacle' to academic success for Afro-Caribbean pupils (Gillborn, 1990:100).

Whereas Gillborn found that only Afro-Caribbean pupils were assigned to low ability sets despite their ability because of 'teacher judgements', Troyna found that Asian pupils in his research school were less likely to be placed in high sets for English even though they were assessed as 'good' by their junior school teachers (Troyna, 1991). Whilst 91% of White pupils who were assessed as 'good' by their junior school teachers were placed in a high English set, only 82% of Asian pupils were and whilst 67% of white pupils who were assessed as 'weak' managed to gain a place in a middle English set only 20% of Asian pupils managed this. A similar picture emerged for Maths and Social Science. He also found that children were not moved up into higher sets even if they did well in their exams at the end of

their third year⁹ in school. Thus the allocation of pupils to sets on entry to school at age eleven had implications for their access to GCSE exam entry (and level of entry) as well as the resources available to them during their secondary school years. Troyna concluded that 'the ethnicity of the pupils played a mediating part in structuring their opportunities for placement in the higher ability sets' (Troyna 1991: 371) and that referring to Asian pupils as 'underachievers' was less appropriate and precise than referring to them as underrated¹⁰.

The above studies had begun to make a case for considering 'racism' and, to use Troyna's phrase, 'who goes where and gets what' (the amount and type of teacher attention, teacher stereotypes, racism and placement in bottom sets etc) as being key in considering and explaining the educational performance of different ethnic minority groups.

However, Foster's case study of an inner-city, multi-ethnic comprehensive school in 1990 came to different conclusions (Foster, 1990). Foster's study was specifically concerned with how current anti-racist policies affected classroom practices and how schools should provide for ethnic minority pupils but he also looked at racism, school differentiation and equal opportunities in the school. His particular account of pupil achievement restricted itself to Afro-Caribbean pupils. He found that Afro-Caribbean pupils did as well as their white peers in the school and suggested that Afro-Caribbean underachievement was to do with the fact that Afro-Caribbean pupils attended schools that were 'low achieving schools' in which all pupils did badly; that is Afro-Caribbean pupils were caught in a 'loop of disadvantage' and teacher racism was not a cause of their underachievement. In fact Foster claimed not to be able to find many examples of racist attitudes amongst the teachers in his study. He also

⁹ now referred to as Year 9. Pupils are between the ages of 13 and 14.

¹⁰ Troyna's article, in which he reports his findings about Jayleigh school and its allocation procedures, was the spark to an intense debate between himself and Gomm regarding the validity of his claims, the quality of his presentation of the data and its analysis and the nature of the role of researcher. (Gomm, 1993, 1995; Troyna, 1992, 1993).

claimed that he could not find any empirical support for the ideas and explanations that had been advanced by other researchers, and those involved in anti-racism work, namely that teachers had negative views and low expectations of Afro-Caribbean pupils, that the curriculum neglected and denigrated Afro-Caribbeans leading to low self-esteem, poor motivation and hostility to teachers and that teachers lacked the cultural competence to deal confidently and adequately with minority students. He did find that there might be some support for the explanation that evaluations and assessments were culturally biased but this was not something the teachers in the school could be held responsible for. He did find that older Afro-Caribbean pupils were 'more likely to be allocated to lower status groups in the school's system of differentiation' (Foster, 1990: 81) because of their poor behaviour which meant that they 'tended to be regarded less favourably' by teachers as they did not conform closely with their teachers' conceptions of the 'ideal' pupil.

Pilkington, in reviewing the heated debate that ensued concerning whether 'racism' was an issue within schools, pointed out that the key difference between Foster's findings and those reviewed above was that Foster saw teachers as responding appropriately to the behaviour of Afro-Caribbean pupils and playing no real part in generating their behaviour, whereas other researchers had seen teachers as implicated in causing the behaviour that excluded Afro-Caribbean pupils from top exam sets and upper streams in schools (Pilkington, 1999: 413).

Where Foster and his critics fundamentally disagree is over their explanations of 'bad behaviour'. For Foster, primacy is given to extra school factors. 'There may be a general tendency for Afro-Caribbean students on average to be less well behaved in schools' (Foster, 1991: 168) because of the adoption of a distinctive subculture consequent on a recognition on their part of poor post-school prospects and rejection of racism in the wider society. For the others, primacy is given to school processes, with some Afro-Caribbean pupils pictured as turning towards a distinctive

subculture in order to resist their differential treatment in schools.

(Pilkington, 1999: 414)

Connolly did respond to Foster's explanation that Afro-Caribbean boys behaved badly, and so got placed in lower sets, by claiming that it was necessary to consider where this behaviour came from. His year long ethnographic study of an inner city, multi-ethnic primary school looked at exactly this (Connolly, 1998b).

Connolly looked at the very complex and subtle ways that children drew on discourses of 'race' in the development of their gender identities, even at the age of five and six and how they reworked their knowledge of 'race', gender and sexuality to make sense of their experiences. He was at pains to explore the ways in which knowledges, perceptions and expectations from both inside and outside schools created particular teacher-child, peer-group relations and identities in the classroom. To this end he explored the ways in which broader discourses on 'race' and the inner city had come to influence the nature of the relationships between the people living on the estate that surrounded the school, how these discourses came to be taken up and reworked by teachers within the school and how these teacher discourses came to influence the ethos of the school, its organisations, social relationships and disciplinary modes (Connolly, 1998b: 63-64). He then went on to show how Afro-Caribbean and South Asian boys and girls in the school developed identities through the contexts provided for them by these discourses.

In relation to Afro-Caribbean boys he found that student-teacher relations and peer group relations in the school formed what he termed 'a continuous feed-back loop'. That is, Afro-Caribbean boys were over represented amongst those who were publicly disciplined by teachers and they thus developed 'a bad reputation'. This was often perceived by White boys as 'bad' and 'quintessentially masculine'; a reputation that the White boys perceived as a threat to their own masculinity. As a result of this, Connolly claimed, White boys were more

likely to publicly challenge Afro-Caribbean boys in order to reassert their own masculinity and this led to a situation in which Afro-Caribbean boys were more likely to be involved in confrontations which reinforced teachers' views that they were troublesome and badly behaved (Connolly, 1998b: 89).

In relation to South Asian boys, Connolly found that teacher discourses in the school (praising South Asian boys for hard work, for being quiet, describing them as 'little' and needing to be looked after) positioned them as 'effeminate' and a representation of what boys 'are not', they became 'the focus through which other boys were able to develop and reassert their own masculine status' (Connolly, 1998b: 126). As a result South Asian boys tended to be excluded from social activities in school and to suffer verbal and physical assaults.

South Asian girls in the school were represented by teacher discourses as 'quintessentially feminine' and were seen by teachers as 'model pupils' (Connolly, 1998b: 186–187). This had the effect of making South Asian girls invisible to teachers. However, South Asian girls were not invisible to other pupils in the school and as with South Asian boys, the girls were used by other pupils as a means of asserting their own gender identities by treating South Asian girls as a 'sexual Other' (Connolly, 1998b: 167).

Sewell, like Connolly, also looked at why Afro-Caribbean boys might behave the way they did in schools (Sewell, 1997). He challenged the notion that it was simply 'teacher racism' that led Afro-Caribbean boys to adopt a culture of resistance to schooling and claimed that both teacher and pupils were influenced by cultural representations of black males that existed outside schools in the wider society.

Summary

These qualitative studies then did change the focus of research about ethnic minority achievement from looking at test results and comparing the different attainment rates of different groups to looking at what went on within schools. They did manage to 'dive beneath the surface' of exam results and consider some of the subtle and complex processes to do with 'race' and gender that went on within classrooms and schools that affected the educational opportunities of pupils. Some studies were able to move beyond the dichotomy of 'within school' or 'outside school' explanations to show how both were linked and fed into each other.

Interestingly, what emerges from these studies (with the exception of Troyna's) is an emphasis on behaviour. These descriptions of classroom practices indicate that an important process within schools is the manner in which pupils gain an identity as a pupil and learner through teachers' experiences and expectations of their behaviour, through the type of interactions taking place between teacher and pupil, and that these had consequences for pupils' access to resources and opportunities in school and to placements in exam classes.

However, the focus of these studies is generally on the Afro-Caribbean pupil (most frequently on Afro-Caribbean boys) and except for Troyna none of these studies makes a link between how Asian pupils are perceived, the identities that become theirs and their academic achievement in the way that this is done for Afro-Caribbean boys. The explanations put forward concerning poor behaviour leading to placement in low sets (and thus a restriction on the number and type of exams that can be taken) can hardly apply to Bangladeshi pupils as in all of these studies, where they are included, Asian pupils are perceived as 'hard working and well behaved' by their teachers.

Although able to contribute to the debate about Afro-Caribbean boys' underachievement by describing where Afro-Caribbean boys' behaviour came from, Connolly's insights into the positioning of South Asian boys and girls in school did not develop into insights into why they may be underachieving in school.

Bangladeshi pupils are not considered in any of this research as a specific group. What this research does appear to offer is confirmation that Asian children have struggles in school. Wright's work suggests that Asian pupils suffer from more racism than other children, that they are excluded by 'child culture' and that they are perceived to be a problem to their teachers because of limited cognitive skills, poor English and poor social skills. Troyna's work suggests that Asian children (Pakistani and Bangladeshi pupils in his study) are placed in lower sets than White pupils despite their equal ability. However, there are limitations and problems with both studies in terms of what they can reveal about Asian pupils and their achievement in school.

Troyna's presentation of his study at Jayleigh was heavily criticised at the time of its publication regarding the validity of his claims and the quality of his presentation of the data and its analysis (Gomm, 1993; 1995). It was certainly the case that his claim that it was the **ethnicity** of the pupils that played 'a mediating part in the structuring of their opportunities for placement in higher ability sets' (Troyna, 1991: 371) was not adequately supported and demonstrated in the analysis in his article despite his claim that his data presented 'clear cut evidence' (Troyna, 1991: 373). He did fail to consider and adequately discount other explanations for the choices teachers made about which sets to place pupils in or to present the reasons teachers gave for their placements. Neither did he explore whether teachers were making choices based on other factors that might have been working behind ethnicity, for example the fact that the particular pupils were EAL pupils, assumptions about the quality of support at home and so on. Troyna did identify how ethnic minority pupils' achievement could be curtailed by set placements (this is true for all pupils), however, it was the rigid

setting and other school practices that needed unpacking as well as teacher expectations and assumptions of White and Asian pupil needs. Although making the case for qualitative research and the need for 'diving beneath the surface', Troyna ironically failed to include both teacher and pupil accounts of the choices they made in school in his presentation of his study and as a result his work offered less than it could have to an understanding of the processes of school and how setting decisions came to be made which had consequences for the achievement of Asian children.

Connolly's analysis of South Asian pupils in primary school, although rich in information about how the pupils came to be identified in particular ways, does not link his analysis of South Asian pupils with their achievement in school.

No clear picture emerges from this qualitative research regarding the experiences and underachievement of Bangladeshi pupils in English schools. The questions that emerge from this review of the research are:

- How are Bangladeshi pupils perceived by their teachers? What identities do Bangladeshi pupils acquire and is there a link between this and their achievement?
- What are teacher expectations of Bangladeshi pupils and are these linked with Bangladeshi pupils' achievement?

2.4 English as an Additional Language Pupils and Attainment

EAL pupils are those pupils who are learning English and learning the curriculum through English at the same time¹¹. Thus the category of EAL pupils includes most ethnic minority pupils (but not all) and also pupils who come from ethnic majority backgrounds (e.g. White pupils from countries such as France or Russia who speak French or Russian as their first language and are attending school in England). These pupils would not normally be considered as ethnic minority pupils and are not included in the ethnic minority research categories that were used in the statistical research reviewed above.

In this section some key studies that have emerged from the field of research into bilingualism, second language acquisition and English as an Additional Language are discussed. The focus here is on those studies which have looked at EAL pupils and attainment.

These research studies have been conducted inside schools to discover what some of the important processes and practices might be that influence the attainment of minority pupils who are learning English as an additional language. These studies are included in this Literature Review as Bangladeshi pupils are also EAL pupils.

¹¹ This is the difference in current usage between EAL and ESL (English as a Second Language). ESL is used to refer to pupils learning English but not learning the school curriculum through English at the same time. It should be also be noted that although EAL is usually used to indicate that a child has a mother tongue that is not English this is a rather simplistic picture (see Leung, Harris & Rampton, 1997).

2.4.1 Explanations put forward for underachievement by EAL studies

Toohey (2000) followed the same path as Connolly in arguing for the need to consider the context and the social locations of pupils and teachers in understanding what happens in classrooms (and vice versa). In the light of this she rejected, in her study, the usual remit of previous research into Second Language Acquisition which had looked at the individual psychological-cognitive processes involved in learning a second language and considered instead how learning and cognition were social and shaped by the position the learner occupied within the community of the classroom. Using the socio-cultural learning theory of Lave and Wenger (and the concept of 'communities of practice' and 'legitimate peripheral participation') she studied the social practices of Second Language learning in a Canadian school from kindergarten to the end of Grade 2 in a three year ethnography. She conceptualised classrooms as places that offered spaces for learners ('conversations' that they might be permitted to join) and focused on six children of minority language backgrounds¹² as they went about school.

She found that the children came to kindergarten as different kinds of children and soon became 'differently able' kinds of pupils as their teachers were obliged (by out-of-school institutions) to rank and identify children. One of the strengths of Toohey's ethnography was that it showed how the focal children came to look 'differently able' and how they became attached to identities in their Kindergarten year. These identities affected the children's access to class resources as classroom practices 'made different positions available to different children; (and) those positions had a great deal to do with what (the children) had access to and thus what they were able to learn' (Toohey, 2000: 72). Toohey claimed that,

¹²Toohey dislikes the use of EAL and ESL and uses the term 'children of minority language backgrounds' throughout her study.

The focal children's identities were constructed with regard to aspects of their academic, physical, behavioural, social and linguistic competence in their first year of school....Julie's, Randy's and Amy's identities were constructed so as to position these children in relatively desirable sites, although there were ambiguities in their constructions. They seemed able to interact with a variety of playmates, using a variety of resources; their behaviour was not problematic from their teacher's point of view; they were constructed as developing appropriate physical, academic and linguistic (English) competence. The situation for Surjeet, Martin and Harvey appeared potentially more ambivalent. For these children, interaction with peers seemed less comfortable than it was for the other three children. Surjeet, Martin and Harvey occupied more frequently subordinated positions. Their teacher was less confident of their 'normal' development of a variety of competencies.

(Toohey, 2000: 73-74)

Social relations in the classroom provided opportunities for some EAL pupils to practice using English and become good at what they were doing with English while denying other children the same opportunities. A key understanding of Lave and Wenger's socio-cultural theory is that all members of a 'community of practice' (in this case the members of the class) need access to the activities and the experienced members of the community as well as opportunities for participation in order to learn and to become a full member of the community. Toohey found that EAL children do not always get this access and opportunity. In the case of the children 'subordinated' by their peers, Toohey described how this meant that they were excluded by their peers from imaginative play and were therefore excluded from opportunities for English language learning and thus for getting better at English (Toohey, 2000: 74).

When the focal children moved into Grade One, Toohey describes how the teacher's decisions about the organisation of the classroom meant that they were separated from those

that they normally talked to and were discouraged from appropriating others' words in class (through injunctions not to copy or to use their own words, as if words were like things and were individually owned and not community resources) thus excluding the children from the conversations with their peers who are the 'experts' in English language use and through whom they could acquire and improve their English language. Toohey notes that in Grade One those pupils who had been seen as 'differently able' became seen as 'deficient' and that this 'systematically exclude(d) them from just those practices in which they might otherwise appropriate identities and practices of growing competence and expertise' (Toohey, 2000: 93).

In Grade Two, Toohey focused on teacher mandated and organised oral discussions in the classroom and how they related to differing opportunities for pupils to develop classroom voices and language. She found that the recitation sequences, employed by the teacher in the classroom, presented few possibilities for the focal children to engage in extended language use and that as a result the children 'could not easily construct meanings (or voices) of their own' (Toohey, 2000: 117). The brevity of the utterances that the focal pupils were able to contribute within the recitation sequence meant that 'the students got very little practice actually speaking English' and participation, according to Toohey, seemed primarily a question of guessing teacher meanings (Toohey, 2000: 118).

Thus Toohey's study suggested that classroom practices and organisation 'produced' the focal children as specific kinds of pupils and blocked their access to resources and to opportunities for appropriating English and becoming good users of English. In this way the focal children were denied learning opportunities. According to Toohey, the children needed access to the expertise of their peers in using English and opportunities to 'play' in the language so that they could appropriate the language that they needed in the classroom.

In other studies researchers have shown how conversational language is misinterpreted as indicative of pupils' academic ability.

Cummins has specifically addressed the debate concerning the underachievement of minority pupils and why some groups of pupils do better than others in school in the US (Cummins, 1989). Responding to those research studies and policy statements which posited a lack of language proficiency or fluency in English as the reason for poor achievement he made two points concerning the confusion educators made between a learner's proficiency with 'the surface or conversational aspects' of language and the 'deeper aspects of proficiency that are more closely related to children's conceptual and academic development' (Cummins, 1989: 21). He developed this point to describe how children who do not speak standard English (or a standard form of their first language) are thought to be 'language deficient', less capable of thinking logically and are understood by educators to be handicapped educationally. Many of these children end up in remedial programmes (Labov cited by Cummins, 1989: 22). In the case of EAL pupils, Cummins claimed that,

Children's good control over the surface features of English (i.e. their ability to converse adequately in English) is taken as an indication that all aspects of their 'English proficiency' have been mastered to the same extent as native speakers of the language. In other words, conversational skills are interpreted as a valid index of overall proficiency in the language....a close relationship is assumed between the two faces of language proficiency, the conversational and the academic'

(Cummins, 1989: 21-22)

He continued,

the presence of adequate surface structure leads teachers and psychologists to eliminate 'limited English proficiency' as an explanation for children's academic

difficulty. The result is that minority children's low academic performance is attributed to deficient cognitive abilities..or a lack of motivation to succeed academically.

(Cummins, 1989: 26)

Cummins drew attention to a number of large, longitudinal survey studies being conducted in the States, which suggested that while it took about two years for minority students to acquire conversation fluency (in English) comparable with their native-speaker peers, it took five years or more for minority students to acquire the academic aspects of language that were needed to achieve in school and which put them on a par with their native-speaker peers (Cummins, 1989: 27)¹³. As a result of educators' failure to recognise the language needs of the minority language pupils in their classrooms and their confidence that such pupils had attained fluency in English, many linguistic minority pupils, given IQ tests early in their school career, were found to be 'disabled' or 'retarded', with no awareness, on the part of educators, that the tests were showing language education need rather than disability. Cummins reported that as a result, in Texas, Hispanic students were over-represented by 300% in the category 'learning disabled' (Oritz & Yates, 1983).

In addition to this Cummins has written about a phenomenon that he refers to as the 'grade 4 slump' (Cummins, 2001) . Cummins describes this as,

¹³ Collier and Thomas claimed, after researching the impact of bilingual education programmes on achievement in the States, that it took language minority pupils 4 – 7 years to equal the reading performance of native-speaker peers if the language minority pupils had been in a bilingual programme where they were taught in both their first language and English, and 7 – 10 years without a bilingual programme (Collier & Thomas, 1997)

a phenomenon where children seem to be doing well in the first few grades, but when they reach Grade 3 or Grade 4, their attainment levels worsen dramatically. One of the reasons for this is that the curriculum suddenly becomes more inaccessible for a learner who has been used to a focus on discrete language skills, now having to cope with the uncontrolled vocabulary of mathematics, science, social studies and history'.

(Cummins, 2001: 39)

Newman & Hilditch describe how in Bradford they found that at the end of Key Stage One in 2000 there was hardly any disparity between the results of different ethnic groups of pupils. However, at the end of Key Stage 2 the gap between different groups had widened considerably and by the end of Key Stage 4 there were large differences between the attainment of different ethnic groups with Pakistani pupils doing particularly badly. They felt that the 'apparent success' of the pupils at Key Stage One was masking a lack of experience in using spoken English for certain groups and introduced policy and classroom practices to change this (Newman & Hilditch, 2001: 11).

Another study found that Pakistani boys lacked higher order reading skills because they had failed to develop these skills earlier in their schooling. This had not been picked up on by the boys' teachers, leading to the boys being very unresponsive in class and unable to use texts effectively for learning (Newman & Hilditch, 2001: 9-11).

Summary

All of the research referred to above examines closely what the 'lack of fluency' in English, referred to in the statistical studies, might mean and how this impacts on the opportunities for becoming a member of a class and developing enough (of the right kind of) language to take part in learning and to become a successful pupil in school.

In contrast to the qualitative studies of ethnic minority pupils, which demonstrated how behaviour (interactions between particular pupil groups and teachers and between different pupil groups), led to certain identities being formed that have consequences for access to resources and opportunities, these studies show how pupils can also acquire identities through their language 'performance' in the sense that in all these studies pupils are judged and evaluated by their teachers in terms of their facility with (English) language. Toohey's study in particular shows how pupils acquire identities as 'differently able' and then 'deficit' despite not having access to the practices which would enable them to develop the language and cognitive skills they need to take a full part in the learning in their classrooms. Their facility with English is misjudged and their poor performance in class and in tests is deemed to be the result of 'deficit' cognitive abilities. Thus through identities formed through judgements made about language, rather than behaviour, certain groups of children are restricted in their access to resources and opportunities for success in schools.

None of this research looks specifically at Bangladeshi pupils. Although the research describes how resources and opportunities can be inequitably distributed in classrooms there is nothing offered in the above research to explain why some EAL children are more disadvantaged than others in the classroom. Why do Bangladeshi pupils achieve less than Indian pupils when both groups have language needs in school?

These studies suggest that EAL pupils are often denied access to language through the practices and organisation of classrooms. To what extent is this the case for Bangladeshi pupils? It is also suggested that the language needs of children are not recognised by teachers. To what extent is this an explanation for the underachievement of Bangladeshi pupils? How aware are teachers in schools, how do they make judgements about, the language needs of their pupils and to what extent does this impact on Bangladeshi children

and in what ways. When is support used and not used? And if children's language needs are not met how are children coping?

2.5 'Non-Mainstream' Pupils and Attainment

'Non-mainstream' pupils are those pupils who come from backgrounds which are thought to be different in their culture, language and/or socio-economic status to the dominant culture of their society or the school. A body of research has emerged in the last forty years which explains underachievement in terms of either deficit, difference or discontinuity between the home life of pupils and the culture and practices of the mainstream classroom.

Studies of 'non-mainstream' pupils focus on monolingual, ethnic majority pupils (for example White working class pupils) as well as EAL and ethnic minority pupils.

2.5.1 Explanations put forward for underachievement

Deficit and 'linguistically disadvantaged' explanations for the poorer performance of working class children in school were common in the sixties and seventies (Tough, 1973). Some pupils were seen as having language with which they could only refer to what was immediately around them, as they were unable to use complex language and unable to respond to certain teacher questions as they had no experience of this use of language at home. They were considered to be 'unaccustomed' to the school's way of using language because they did not hear or use this language at home (Tough, 1973: 49). Bernstein (1971) referred to the 'elaborate code' of school language and the 'restricted' code of working class home language.

Other research showed how the practices of home, and the early learning experiences of the home, meant that certain pupils experienced a continuity between the learning practices of

home and school whilst other children experienced a discontinuity. Certain kinds of homes prepared children for school whilst others did not. Wells (1986), in a longitudinal research study in Bristol, found that working class and middle class children¹⁴ did not differ in their use of and range of oral language before school. He claimed that social class kicked in at the start of school and teachers heard differences in the way children spoke and subsequently provided different opportunities for pupils (Wells, 1986: 143). He also claimed that early years achievement in school was related to children having an orally stimulating home environment and most importantly, to a child's familiarity with and pre-school experiences of books, particularly story books.

.. it is growing up in a literate family environment, in which reading and writing are naturally occurring daily activities, that gives children a particular advantage when they start their formal education. And of all the activities that were characteristic of such homes, it was the sharing of stories that we found to be most important.

(Wells, 1986: 194)

According to Wells, such exposure to literacy before school, meant that children who had had this exposure understood much about literacy on entry to school and were able to cope with the literacy demands of the curriculum. Such children started school with some knowledge of writing and its conventions, with a familiarity with the kinds of questioning about text that teachers employed in the classroom and an ability to think in context-independent, abstract ways (Wells 1985). Children who had not had such exposure were disadvantaged from the start and as they progressed through school, and the curriculum became increasingly literate, they were increasingly disadvantaged and were subsequently judged to be intellectually limited.

¹⁴ All White monolingual pupils

In a similar vein, Heath (1982) in a study of what she termed 'mainstream homes' showed how such homes prepared their children for school by teaching their children to 'take' from books, to make meaning from text, and how schools expected to draw upon these literacy practices of 'mainstream homes'. According to Heath 'mainstream children' learnt the use of 'what-explanations', 'reason-explanations' and 'affective commentaries' at home from their families. These practices were an integral part of classroom life and familiarity with them affected progress through the curriculum once at school. Heath claimed that 'mainstream children' not only learnt how to 'take' from books at home but also how to talk about the process. At the start of school such children had already developed valuable experience as information givers,

They have developed habits of performing which enable them to run through the hierarchy of preferred knowledge about a literate source and the appropriate sequence of skills to be displayed in showing knowledge of a subject. They have developed ways of decontextualising and surrounding with explanatory prose the knowledge gained from selective attention to objects. (Heath, 1982: 79)

In addition to this, Heath claimed, they had also learnt appropriate cues, how to get certain services from parents and teachers when reading and how to operate in groups.

However, Heath, and many other researchers, have been instrumental in dismissing the idea of deficit in the home of 'non-mainstream families' as an explanation for poor school performance. They have shown instead that rather than homes being deficit in terms of their practices, homes are just different.

Heath (1983) demonstrated, through her ethnographic study of three communities in the United States, that there was not just one way of learning to talk, one way of being interactive with one's peers, family members and community or one agreed notion of what

story was. She showed that children in the three communities she studied grew up in different kinds of environments, learnt to talk, were spoken to and joined in activities in different ways according to their community practices. Her account usefully problematised other research accounts which assumed that these things were universal and constant within home environments and in child 'development' (most of which were based on white, ethnic majority, middle class children). In her detailed account of two of the communities she showed that both had strikingly different environments which surrounded children as they grew into language. In terms of literacy, Heath found that both communities had rich literate traditions but these were interwoven in different ways with oral uses of language and ways of negotiating meaning. Patterns of using reading and writing existed in both non-mainstream communities. Families were not deficient in these practices. However, these patterns were interdependent with ways of using space and using time and were not the ways which prepared the children for the school's ways with the written word or with sharing knowledge in the classroom. Unlike the children from 'mainstream families' the children from the two communities, the 'non-mainstream families', faced unfamiliar kinds of questioning in school, needed to learn content and interaction patterns that were alien to them as well as how to 'take meaning from reading' when they arrived in school. The children from these two communities generally scored very poorly in Reading Readiness tests and by the end of Grade 3 had low Language Arts scores. The only exception to this were those children who, according to Heath, had begun to adopt some 'mainstream' school behaviours.

Other studies have also shown how homes, rather than deficit in certain linguistic skills, have different linguistic and literacy practices and that school failure for certain 'non-mainstream' children arises, not from a linguistic or cognitive deficiency located within the child because of their poor home background, but out of the mismatch between the practices of home and school (Michaels, 1986; Luke and Kale, 1997; Cline & Abreu, 2001; Ulich & Oberhuemer, 1997).

Other researchers have also shown that 'non-mainstream' homes and families, in this case ethnic minority families, have rich language and literacy practices which are frequently unknown about, or ignored in school (Kenner, 2000; Gregory, 1993b, 1997). As a result teachers fail to realise that pupils have different practices at home and come to school with different expectations of how things are done and what things, such as reading, are in school. Teachers come to judge their pupils as unable or unwilling and provide them with limited opportunities to participate.

Both Drury (1997) and Gregory (1992a; 1992b; 1993a) have provided accounts of this taking place in early years classrooms.

Gregory studied the reading-together interactions of a teacher with nine of her five-year-old pupils during their first eighteen months in a multi-lingual, urban school (Gregory, 1992b). Her study revealed how the teacher, through the shared reading session, was attempting to show the children that reading was about knowing and relating to a story and gaining meaning and enjoyment from good stories and books. Adopting a role similar to that of a care-giver at home, the teacher intended to demonstrate to the children, through the group reading sessions, how they should go about reading and what reading was.

In the course of the shared reading the teacher moved in and out of the text as she read with the children by reading a little and then questioning the children on their lives and their responses to the story. The teacher assumed that the children understood they were reading a story and that they understood when references to 'life experiences' were called for and when they were not (Gregory, 1992b: 42).

The examples of the interactions that Gregory documented showed that the 'non-school orientated', monolingual pupils in the group were hardly allowed to enter the text of the story

at all. They were 'confined to life' in the sense that nearly all the interactions between the teacher and these children were outside the text. With these pupils the teacher stuck to life and the everyday experiences of the children as, Gregory claimed, she assumed that they were not familiar with story. Being keen to include them in the group sessions the teacher called on the only thing she felt they could contribute (Gregory, 1992b: 42).

However, the 'school-orientated', monolingual children in the group, those familiar with shared-reading at home, did not allow themselves to be taken away from the text, they ignored the 'life-sense' questions from the teacher or attempted to bring her back to the text. They knew, according to Gregory, how to position themselves during these reading interactions and because they knew how to 'stay with the text' and offer information and contributions during shared reading about the text, they received positive feedback and more information about the text from the teacher.

Because of the teachers mixed messages about what reading was, the fact that she was not explicit or even clear about what reading involved, the 'non-school orientated' children found it very difficult to position themselves in terms of taking part in the group and being readers. They attempted to copy what the teacher did but they got it wrong because they copied her references to life and things outside the text at inappropriate times, whereas the 'school-orientated' children knew that what was expected was 'staying with the text' and not 'staying in life'. Unlike the 'school-orientated' children, the 'non-school orientated' children did not 'stay with the text', were not able to offer appropriate information and contributions during shared reading and therefore did not receive positive feedback and more information from the teacher.

Gregory went on to claim that learning to read in school depended not so much upon children being familiar with stories from home but on a pupil's ability 'to initiated and participate in the special type of dialogue and pattern of turn taking' that constituted a

reading session with the teacher (Gregory, 1992b: 318). Although, as outlined above, knowledge of stories could facilitate such appropriate interactions with the teacher during reading, Gregory claimed that it was not a necessary prerequisite. She demonstrated this in two subsequent articles using first the example of Tony, a Chinese boy learning to read (Gregory, 1993a) and Tajul, a Bangladeshi boy also learning to read at the start of school (Gregory, 1994c).

Tony was a pupil struggling with learning to read and after three months at his English school had switched off from the task, much to the puzzlement of his teacher. His teacher, according to Gregory, knew nothing of his home literacy practices, nor of his family's knowledge and expectations of how children learn to read and how this is done in the Chinese school Tony regularly attended. Tony and his family expected to learn to read in a particular way (for example in his Chinese school Tony would have been expected to learn the words first and then be given a book to read) and Tony was therefore unable to position himself in his reading lessons in his English school and could not work out what was expected of him or what he should do.

On the other hand, Tajul was able to find a way of negotiating with his teacher to get her to provide the information and explicit guidance he needed in order to work out 'what counts as reading' in his English classroom compared to his Bengali school. Gregory showed how through questioning and appropriately challenging his teacher during shared reading, Tajul was provided with vital information about how to read and how to get meaning from text by the teacher.

Other writers and researchers who have also claimed that successful pupils in schools are those who have managed to learn the correct interactional patterns of the classroom and thus gain access to further opportunities to learn and to classroom resources are Conteh (2003) and Meehan (1979).

Gregory claimed in her early work (1992b; 1993a) that teachers' interactions with pupils, the choices and assumptions they make (consciously or unconsciously) are the reason for poor achievement. Teachers need to be more explicit in terms of what counts as reading in their English classrooms. Later, her claim shifted slightly to be that it is teachers' lack of knowledge of non-mainstream children's home literacy practices (and the subsequent difficulties that some of these children will have in making the bridge between the literacy practices of home and those of school) that cause problems. Non-mainstream children can be successful, according to Gregory, through negotiating with their teachers, by being supported by their home literacy practices, their siblings and by school teachers who are willing to find out what those practices might be and build on them (Gregory, 1994a) . However, Gregory never clearly defined what is to be understood as success.

Summary

The research in this section finds explanations for underachievement in the mismatch between home and school¹⁵. However, despite the richness of the research and the detailed portraits it presents of children in classrooms and in homes it does not directly link these portraits and the findings to the pupils' achievement in school. In none of this research are the children's actual formal achievements in school reported on. No key stage results are given for the children who are judged to have successfully entered the interaction patterns of the classroom, or who have negotiated the meaning of school reading with their teachers.

¹⁵ Some researchers are not entirely comfortable with the concept of discontinuity between home and school. Both Volk (1997) and Gregory & Williams (1998b) see some continuities between home and school that exist alongside the discontinuities. Recent work by Gregory & Williams (2001) and Kelly, Gregory & Williams (2001) attempts to demonstrate how older siblings blend practices from community, home and school in play with their younger brothers and sisters thereby bridging discontinuities between home and school.

To what extent are the children who are considered to be successful at reading able to be successful readers? Do their early successes continue? Is Tajul, the Bangladeshi boy described by Gregory, typical of Bangladeshi pupils in learning to read? If so why do so many Bangladeshi pupils appear to struggle with reading in school? Is joining in with the interaction patterns enough? To what extent are the explanations put forward by this research able to account for the struggles of Bangladeshi pupils in school?

2.6 Summary and Conclusions

In this chapter, after presenting the research studies that identified the issue of ethnic minority underachievement and the particular underachievement of Bangladeshi pupils, I have presented three areas of established research that look at ethnic minority pupils, EAL pupils and ‘non-mainstream’ pupils. These three research areas provide a context for the study. These three areas between them have provided descriptions of pupil experiences in school and a range of explanations for underachievement.

Qualitative studies of ethnic minority pupils experiences described what went on inside schools, considered the processes of schooling and ‘who gets what and goes where’ in relation to ethnic minority pupils.

These studies found that ethnic minority underachievement could be explained by:

- the different amounts of, or kinds of, attention that ethnic minority pupils received from their teachers
- that subsequent decisions about setting and banding (based on identities constructed through teacher understandings of pupil behaviour) that were key to creating disadvantage.

However, Afro-Caribbean boys were the main focus of these explanations and they do not hold for Bangladeshi in the sense that all the studies reported that South Asian pupils were perceived by their teachers as hard working, quiet and from stable families who valued education.

The studies do report that South Asian pupils:

- experienced more racism
- were socially excluded and often ‘invisible’
- were perceived to have poor cognitive ability
- were thought to be held back by poor English fluency

However, these insights about South Asian pupils were not linked to their achievement in school.

Although the qualitative studies offered rich insights into the subtle and complex processes that existed inside schools and demonstrated the strengths of qualitative methods there remains a need to consider school processes specifically in relation to Bangladeshi pupils and to link these insights to their achievement as pupils.

Studies of EAL and bilingual pupils suggested that the causes of underattainment for such pupils were:

- poor teacher judgement
- poor teacher knowledge of language development
- identities as poor, cognitively deficient pupils based on pupil’s language performance which restricted pupils’ access to learning and school resources.

However, these studies did not explore why some EAL pupils should be more affected by poor teacher judgement and lack of support than others.

The EAL studies suggest that there is a need to look at Bangladeshi pupils and consider these explanations in relation to their experiences in the classroom and their relationships with their teachers.

Studies of ‘non-mainstream’ pupils suggested that poor achievement amongst this group was the result of:

- discontinuities between home and school
- the need for ‘non-mainstream’ pupils to learn how to take part in ‘mainstream’ classrooms and overcome the differences between home and school

However, despite the insights offered, those studies that demonstrated pupils grappling with these discontinuities and differences and those that showed pupils learning how to take part, did not report on the achievement of those pupils nor on whether the children continued to be successful in taking part.

These studies of ‘non-mainstream’ pupils suggest that Bangladeshi pupils needed to be considered in terms of taking part in classroom life and in terms of their interactions with the teacher and that this should be linked to their achievement.

All three areas of research provide a context for this study and all three areas provide explanations for the underachievement of certain groups.

What is clear from this review of literature is that there is a need to research further the experiences of Bangladeshi pupils. How do Bangladeshis experience school? What are the links between how teachers experience them as pupils and their achievement in school?

How much do teachers know about language needs? How do Bangladeshi pupils get along in school?

There is a need to consider Bangladeshi pupils as learners, a need to see them in the classroom taking part in the daily life of school in order to address the question ‘What is going on in the lives, backgrounds and schooling experiences of Bangladeshi pupils that helps and hinders them in learning and achieving in the English school system?’

Before we turn to the study, can look at the small amount of research that does consider Bangladeshi pupils and their experiences of and achievement in school.

Chapter Three

A Review of the Literature:

Research About Bangladeshi Pupils

3.1 Introduction

None of the research considered in Chapter One looked specifically at Bangladesh pupils and what might lie behind their poor achievement in school captured in the statistical studies reviewed earlier. In this chapter the few research studies that do focus on Bangladeshi pupils are considered. This is research on learning to read by Gregory, Mace, Rashid and Williams (1996) and Blackledge (1999) and four research studies which consider Bangladeshi pupils and achievement (Anderton, 1992; Murshid, 1990; The Centre for Bangladeshi Studies, 2001; Haque, 1999, 2000).

What does this research tell us about the experiences of Bangladeshi children at school and what does it tell us about their achievement in school?

Gregory and her colleagues describe how Bangladeshi children struggle with learning to read in school if home and school literacy and learning practices are not recognised and combined. They also show how Bangladeshi homes support reading. Blackledge, on the other hand, shows how homes do not support reading.

The studies which consider Bangladeshi pupils' experiences of school and their achievement identify teachers' low expectations, pupils' lack of fluency in English and the levels of support in the home (or from friends) as important factors in Bangladeshi pupils' achievement or lack of achievement in school.

3.2 Bangladeshi Pupils and Learning to Read

Two studies, one conducted in Tower Hamlets, a district of London, by Gregory, Mace, Williams and Rashid (1996) and the other in Birmingham by Blackledge (1999) have included work on Bangladeshi pupils and learning to read at home and at school.

Some of Gregory's research with 'non-mainstream' pupils has been discussed in the previous chapter. The research reviewed here looked more specifically at Bangladeshi pupils at school, at home and attending community classes to learn Bengali and to study the Qur'an. The focus of the research was on home literacy practices and how these compared with the literacy practices of the schools the children attended.

One of the key findings of the research was that the Bangladeshi pupils did not read with their parents at home but with their older siblings. Gregory and her colleagues taped these reading sessions at home and showed how the older siblings were using specific strategies at home which were strategies they were familiar with from their community classes (and to some extent from their English schools) when hearing their younger brothers or sisters read.

These strategies are now discussed in some detail as they inform the Case Studies and much of the discussion in Chapters Seven and Eight.

The Bangladeshi children all attended these community classes (Qur'an school and Bengali school) after their English school had closed for the day. In the Qur'an and Bengali school, Gregory and her colleagues noted that the ways of teaching and learning to read were very different to the ways of teaching and learning in the children's' English school. The key features of the Qur'an and Bengali schools' classrooms were that the children read aloud, the teacher demonstrated the task before the child practised it through repetition, there were high expectations from the teacher and a lack of praise from the teacher. In the Qur'an school the children recited the text in unison and swayed together on the mat in time to the recitation.

In both schools there was a repetition of the task until the task was done correctly (Rashid & Gregory, 1997). Significantly, both classes shared a common pattern of interaction 'where the teacher demonstrate(d) the task which the child practise(d) through repetition before being tested' (Rashid & Gregory, 1997: 110). Examples of these practices are provided in Appendix One.

The reading interactions in both classes were characterised by a careful scaffolding in which the child repeated words or phrases, either singly or in chorus, after the teacher until they were ready to be tested. If they made a mistake, even when being tested, they were told the word or the phrase by the teacher until they got it right.

The taped home reading sessions between older siblings and their young brothers or sisters showed how the older siblings were using these strategies when hearing their younger brothers or sisters read at home. Gregory and her colleagues identified six strategies that the older siblings used, moving from strategy one through to strategy six:

Strategy 1: Listen and Repeat. In one version of this strategy the child repeats word by word after the older sibling. This may build up to repeating chunks of words. Occasionally the child predicts the next one or two words of the text. In another version the child tries to repeat longer chunks of the sibling's reading but often manages only telegraphic speech. In both versions there is a fast flowing rhythm and little insistence on accuracy.

Strategy 2: Tandem Reading. The child moves on to echo their older sibling's reading of the text. The reading by the child is usually at the level of telegraphic speech (ie short one or two word chunks).

Strategy 3: Chained Reading. The sibling begins the reading and the child continues reading the next 1,2 or 3 words until she needs help again. Then the sibling reads the next

word and the pattern recurs. Chained reading is typified by the way the child repeats the sibling's correction before continuing to read alone.

Strategy 4: Almost Alone. Here the child initiates and reads until a word is unknown; the sibling corrects the error or supplies the word. The child repeats the word correctly and continues until the next error is made.

Strategy 5: The Recital Reciting a complete piece (in a similar way to prayer recital in Arabic).

Strategy 6: Talk about Text. The sibling asks the child comprehension questions on the text in Sylheti (the children's mother tongue, a regional dialect in Bangladeshi, spoken by many Bangladeshis in England). This is typified by being very directed to the text itself. It also follows the reading of the text in English and only takes place only if the child is a competent reader. If the child is wrong, the correct answer is given and the child repeats it immediately.

Examples from the home reading sessions can be found in Appendix Two.

Gregory and her colleagues directed attention to the similarities between the reading practices at home and those of the community classes. The older siblings maintained a tightly structured interaction with a focus on text, rather than illustrations, mistakes were corrected¹, no praise was given and there was no talk about the text whilst the text was being read. The older siblings 'heard' reading by demonstrating the task which the younger child had to practice through repetition before attempting the task on their own.

¹ Although it is interesting to note that in the data presented for strategies 1B and 2 the older sibling does not insist on accuracy – see Appendix 2.

Having outlined in great detail the home literacy experiences of the Bangladeshi pupils in their study, Gregory and her colleagues went on to describe the English school classroom that the children attended during the day and how the organisation and practices in that classroom, with regard to learning to read, were very different to their home practices. They saw this as a source of difficulty for the Bangladeshi pupils in the study.

In the English classroom the children were encouraged to see learning to read as something that should be achieved through enjoyment. They were encouraged to voice opinions and choose books that interested them. Unlike the community classes 'there (was) no common pattern or ritual of repeating words correctly after the 'teacher' and so the Bangladeshi pupils (had) to learn a whole variety of new strategies in order to become a reader in this classroom' (Rashid & Gregory 1997).

These new strategies were:

- Independent reading rather than repeating after the expert

In the English school classroom when the teacher was hearing a child read, the teacher frequently repeated the last word a child had read to signal that it was read correctly. The unvoiced signal or message that lay behind the teacher's repetition was 'that word was right, well done, now carry on reading'. At home, and in their community classes, a repetition of a word by the older sibling or teacher signalled that the word was read incorrectly and must be repeated correctly before reading could continue.

Thus, in one setting a repetition of a word read by the teacher signalled correct and in another setting it signalled 'this is a correction'. According to Gregory, the practice in the English classroom caused great confusion for a Bangladeshi pupil learning to read and often left the pupil at a loss as how to continue (Gregory, 1998: 26).

- using phonic strategies to work out words or predict words

In the English classroom the teacher asked the pupils to look at the letters in a word to work out what a word 'said' by using their knowledge of letter sound correspondence. The teacher did not automatically provide a word a child was stuck on or stumbling over. Thus the Bangladeshi pupils in the class did not hear the word and were not able to repeat it as they had been able in their community school and with their siblings (Gregory, 1998: 27).

- interpret the text and relate the text to your own life experiences

In the English classroom pupils were asked to infer what was happening in a story or what a character was thinking or feeling. This was not a practice that the Bangladeshi pupils were familiar with from their home and community school practices. The children were also asked to give their opinions about what they were reading or to relate the text to their own life experiences. This was also unfamiliar for the Bangladeshi pupils. (Gregory, 1998: 27).

Gregory and her colleagues' research indicated some of the things the Bangladeshi pupils had to cope with and the kinds of things that could get in the way of Bangladeshi pupils as they begin to start learning how to read in school. As Gregory and her colleagues demonstrated, English classroom interactions and practices were confusing and teacher requests were hard for Bangladeshi pupils to decipher.

Gregory and her colleagues claimed that the children's teachers did not always realise that the children faced these problems in school because the teachers did not know about the home literacy practices of the children.

This research tells us something about the experiences of a small group of Bangladeshi pupils learning to read in Tower Hamlets. It effectively demonstrates that Bangladeshi pupils learn to read, in this context, in different environments and that people hear reading and teach reading in different ways in those different environments. The research also demonstrates how older siblings can be the key reading partners at home and how they go

about hearing and teaching their younger siblings to read calling on the familiar practices of their community classes².

The research suggests that Bangladeshi pupils' struggles with reading, and that teachers' perceptions of Bangladeshi children as lacking understanding, are caused by a failure of teachers to recognise the home literacy practices of their Bangladeshi pupils and incorporate these practices into their teaching.

Unfortunately the research did not link the Bangladeshi pupils' reading at home and at school with any information about their achievement as readers or as pupils in school. No data is provided about how the pupils were actually doing in school and whether the children studied were, or went on to be, successful readers.

Gregory and her colleagues skilfully demonstrated the practices of the community school and siblings at home but there would appear to be a lack of analysis of what the researchers 'count as reading'. Is the 'reading' of the Qur'an school anything like the 'reading' that children are being taught in their English primary school? If the Qur'an school, and the Bengali school, teaches 'recitation' does this have anything in common with the practice that is called 'reading' in English schools and mainstream British 'society'? The materials may be the same in the sense that both involve paper and print and eyes but what is done with the print would seem to be very different. If two entirely different meanings and practices are

² Gregory and her colleagues claim that the older siblings combine strategies for reading from community school and from English school and that English school strategies are used later by the older siblings when the younger child is confident enough to tackle them. However, the only evidence of the older siblings using an English school strategy would seem to be the asking of questions about what has been read after the reading (strategy 6), not during the reading as would be the norm in an English school classroom, and this may come from the children's Bengali lessons. From the evidence provided the only strategy that would almost certainly come from the siblings' English school experiences would be referring to the illustration in the reading book to ask a question (see strategy six in the table). Gregory and her colleagues refer to this mixing of home and English school strategies as 'syncretic literacy', a literacy practice in which strategies from more than one practices are blended (Gregory, 2001b). However, like Blackledge (see next section) I am not convinced from the examples provided that this actually takes place.

attached to these two activities both called 'reading' (Gregory and Rashid themselves point out that the Arabic word 'to read' in the Qur'an school actually translates as 'to recite') can children build on these home strategies to learn to be 'readers' (which we might think of as interpreters of text rather than reciters of text -both practices call on different positions and practices in their readers), and eventually independent readers where they can approach and read text without a teacher, in an English classroom? Is it possible for a child to begin reading through recital and then to acquire a 'reading for meaning' literacy? The children in this study are beginning readers, just like Tajul referred to in Chapter Two. What happens to pupils as they move past the beginning reader stage?

It also has to be said that we do not see a wider picture of the children in the classroom and their relationships with their teachers or their peers, except for the examples given of reading interactions with their teachers, and so we do not gain any insights into how their teachers come to assess them and provide for them in the classroom. Nor do we hear from the pupils or the teachers themselves about their understandings and thoughts about learning and teaching. The question of what experiences a child has who does not have an older sibling is not explored.

Whilst Gregory and her colleague's research on Bangladeshi pupils learning to read located the difficulties the pupils faced in the differences between the ways of learning to read in the home and in community schools versus the ways of the English classroom, Blackledge's research on Bangladeshi mothers and their relationship with their children's schools, conducted in Birmingham, concluded that a difficulty for Bangladeshi pupils with regard to learning to read was that they did not receive support in reading at home from their mothers or from their older siblings (Blackledge 1999). Blackledge draws particular attention to the issue of reading for meaning.

In Blackledge's sample, Bangladeshi children's mothers were unable to support their children because they could not read in English themselves and so could not 'explain the words' to their children. To understand the type of support older siblings were offering, Blackledge, like Gregory and her colleagues, taped older siblings hearing their younger brothers and sisters read at home. In his sample there were eighteen six-year-old pupils and their older siblings. Unlike Gregory et al., his analysis of the sessions concluded that reading at home consisted of an older sibling 'providing text' and little more.

In his study Blackledge found that the siblings relied very largely on providing the next word in the text when the subject child either hesitated because she or he could not read it, or read it incorrectly. Rahima's ten-year-old sister demonstrated a reading support strategy which relied on her reading each word, and six-year-old Rahima repeating it, as they read a version of *The King of Spain's Daughter*:

R:	nothing
RS:	would
R:	would it
RS:	bear
R:	bear
RS:	but
R:	but a
RS:	silver
R:	silver
RS:	nutmeg
R:	nutmeg and a
RS:	golden
R:	golden
RS:	pear
R:	pear

Rahima's sister intervened in this reading interaction 130 times, of which 100 moves were to provide the next word or phrase in the text. Despite this, it was clear that Rahima was able to read more fluently than she was allowed in the interaction with her sister. When she had an opportunity, she read:

opened the door to see that the King of Spain's daughter....

Also, during her recorded reading session with her teacher, Rahima read fluently as follows:

'I'm scared', said Little Bear, 'Why are you scared, Little Bear?' asked Big Bear. 'I don't like the dark', said Little Bear. 'What dark/' asked Big Bear. 'The dark (...) the dark all around us', said Little Bear. 'But I brought you a lantern', said Big Bear'
(Blackledge, 1999: 40-41)

As Blackledge notes, these data suggest that 'in her determination to help, Rahima's ten-year-old sister was restricting Rahima's reading' (Blackledge, 1999: 40-41).

Blackledge gives many more examples of this, each showing how the older siblings provide text as almost their only 'move' in the reading sessions taped at home (80.6% of interventions or moves of the older siblings were 'providing text', every other intervention or move accounted for less than 2% except for 'giving directions' which accounted for 9.35% Blackledge, 1999: 38). This led Blackledge to conclude, in opposition to Gregory and her colleagues, that older siblings',

attempts to support the English literacy learning of the younger children could not be said to be socially meaningful to the young readers.....The interactions were characterised by repetition of given words, and little attention to meaning. There was little sense of collaborative interaction or inquiry.
(Blackledge, 1999: 42)

Although Blackledge found a similar picture of reading between siblings at home as Gregory et al., he did not find a gradual, scaffolded process in place through which older siblings encouraged and supported their younger siblings as they began to read. Rather he found a situation in which he believed older siblings were both holding back their younger brothers and sisters in their reading and failing to provide them with useful ways of engaging with reading so that they could develop as independent readers of meaning in texts.

Again in this research Blackledge does not look at children as members of their class, only in relation to the teacher and in relation to reading with the teacher. His research is concerned more about the power relations between mothers and schools and so he, like Gregory and her colleagues, does not look at achievement in the sense that he does not report on how successful or otherwise the children were in becoming independent readers, whether some were successful and others not, nor how teachers provided for their pupils.

These two research studies come to very different conclusions about the kinds of support with reading Bangladeshi pupils received at home and neither included in their analysis how successful pupils were at reading or becoming independent readers. Nor did they address the wider questions of pupil experience in the classroom and their achievement as learners in school.

3.3 Bangladeshi Pupils and Achievement

An M.Ed study by Anderton, which considered the school experiences of Bangladeshi pupils in an inner-city secondary school, did attempt to explore the question of what it was about the experiences of Bangladeshi pupils that prevented the majority of them reaching their full academic potential (Anderton, 1992). Evidence was gathered through interviews and questionnaires with Bangladeshi pupils, their parents and their teachers as well as through classroom observation and an analysis of school documents.

In the study school, Bangladeshi pupils were doing the least well compared to the other ethnic minority groups of pupils. When points were allocated per each GCSE grade gained (7 points for a grade A, 6 points for a grade B etc), Bangladeshi pupils had an average score of 7.5 points whereas Pakistani pupils had an average score of 12.4 points and Indian pupils 16.9 points (Anderton, 1992:169).

Anderton claimed that the causes of Bangladeshi underachievement were teachers' low expectations of Bangladeshi pupils, limited support from parents and racism.

The school's teachers did not see their Bangladeshi pupils 'in a positive way' (Anderton, 1992: 169). The teachers often claimed it was their Bangladeshi pupils' lack of self-esteem that held them back in school but Anderton found no evidence of a lack of self-esteem amongst the pupils she interviewed and observed. (This reflects Mirza's finding in her study of Black female secondary school pupils, Mirza 1992) Nor did the pupils suffer from a lack of motivation (Anderton, 1992: 73). She claimed that the teachers she interviewed had low expectations of Bangladeshi pupils. 91% of the teachers saw Bangladeshi pupils as low achievers and 66% saw them as more likely than other pupils to need teacher support. The reasons given by the teachers for low achievement were 'lack of competence in English' and 'cultural deprivation' (for example, Bangladeshi pupils hadn't played at home as small children, the children had only been exposed to oral stories at home and not written-down stories (Anderton, 1992: 173). 97% of the teachers said that they felt that their Bangladeshi pupils had weak English and they expressed concerns about their own ability to meet their pupils' English as an Additional Language (EAL) needs. 67% of the teachers wanted more training and 83% wanted more collaboration with an EAL specialist (Anderton, 1992: 180). This concern of the teachers was not recognised by the senior management of the school. Anderton referred to this as evidence of teachers' low expectations' of their Bangladeshi pupils and that this was a key factor in holding Bangladeshi pupils back at school. However, such evidence, in relation to English fluency, could also be interpreted as the teachers' recognition of the needs of their pupils and their lack of confidence in being able to provide for those needs.

Anderton did conclude that she could not demonstrate a link between teacher attitudes and academic outcomes but she hypothesised that the pupils spent a lot of emotional energy coping with the poor regard that came their way which could have been used to further their

academic studies (Anderton, 1992: 250). (This was also suggested by Mirza in her study, see above. Mirza 1992). Interestingly, Anderton found no evidence of Bangladeshi pupils being treated differently in their classrooms in their interactions with teachers (Anderton, 1992: 176).

The other factor that Anderton concluded was key to understanding the underachievement of the pupils she studied was the limited degree of support that parents were able to provide their children. Although parents spoke of wanting their children to do well and continue with their education, most elder sons were expected to go out to work when they reached sixteen so that they could financially support the family and most daughters were restricted in their study or work choices by family concerns about 'ijut' (a girl keeping her, and her family's, 'honour', 'good name', 'respect' in the community are probably the closest one can get to translating what 'ijut' means). The links between parents and school did not operate to the pupils' best advantage (Anderton, 1992: 251). Whilst teachers held a 'deficit' model of Bangladeshi parents, the parents themselves held schools and teachers in great trust and regard. Parents did not understand homework and coursework and could not support their children with these and would keep their children at home if they needed them to act as an interpreter for the family. Only 22% of the Bangladeshi parents attended parents' evening compared to 51% of all parents (Anderton, 1992: 230). Anderton hypothesised that these factors may have caused tension for pupils between home and school (Anderton, 1992: 251).

Anderton concluded her study by claiming that it was the 'institutional bias'³ in school that lead to 'racist outcomes' for Bangladeshi pupils (Anderton, 1992: 254). Teachers were influenced by the institutional talk they heard in the staff room about Bangladeshi pupils and

³Anderton uses Pollard's definition of 'institutional bias' - 'a type of generally shared knowledge, a diffuse and often tacit set of social understandings or cultural assumptions about a school and about practices in it. The conventions are developed over time and frequently reflect the perspectives of those with most power and influence in the school' (Pollard, 1985: 116 cited in Anderton, 1992: 254)

were supported in their judgements about Bangladeshi pupils by 'common-sense ideas' which were themselves racist (Anderton, 1992: 255). However, she finished by making clear that she did not locate the explanation for Bangladeshi underachievement solely in teachers and their attitudes and judgements.

I have attempted to demonstrate that the racism that affects pupils is not just the racism of individual teachers' attitudes or of school procedures but is racism operating and interacting from many levels within and without the school, namely individual attitudes, senior management, school practices and procedures, institutional bias of the school, LEA, attitudes in wider society, ideas disseminated by some researchers and the operation of government policies.

(Anderton, 1992: 260).

Murshid (1990) reported on the findings of a DES funded 'Bangladeshi Education Project' conducted in Hertfordshire between 1988 and 1990, of which she was Director. Murshid found, through gathering the views of Bangladeshi parents and pupils, that a lack of fluency in English was the biggest barrier to pupils' educational progress, together with low teacher expectations, economic pressures and pupils' low self esteem. These factors constituted a 'vicious circle' from which even the most able pupils could not escape (Murshid, 1990: 12). The pupils reported that they felt that they had had fun in primary school but were not prepared well enough for secondary school (Murshid, 1990: 13). Murshid claimed that the pupils were treated with 'benign neglect' by their schools and that despite appearing to cope well with the work in their classrooms they were in need of a great deal of support which they did not receive. Murshid concluded that there was a wide gap between the children's needs and the provision that was made for them and this constituted a key reason for their underachievement in school.

However, no data were offered by Murshid in support of her claims. The research project relied only on the views of parents and pupils and so teachers and schools' perspectives were missing from her account. We are also not told how many parents and children were interviewed, by whom or what the age ranges of the children were.

A study conducted by the Centre for Bangladeshi Studies which looked at educationally successful young Bangladeshis found that parents had played an important part in the young people's educational success, not necessarily through helping with school work but through allowing their children to get on with their school work at home and not expecting them to help out with household chores (the girls) or take a part time job to support the family financially (the boys) (Centre for Bangladeshi Studies, 2001: 12). The interviews with the young people also revealed that the support of school friends was also important, being part of a supportive group of friends with similar ambitions to do well in school made a great deal of difference to the young people and their work. Some of the young people found their teachers helpful, whilst others did not and they complained of a lack of encouragement, poor expectations and poor careers and further study advice (Centre for Bangladeshi Studies, 2001: 17). One clear finding of the study was that all the young people had experienced racism, in the form of name calling and sometimes in the form of physical assault, during their school career (Centre for Bangladeshi Studies, 2001: 37).

Haque's study (1999) combined qualitative and quantitative research methods to consider the perceived underachievement of Bangladeshi pupils. Her research aims were to attempt to understand the effects of different factors on academic performance, the relationships between these factors and to examine the views and experiences of Bangladeshi pupils in British schools. Haques's study was based on a sample of twenty-one schools in eleven different LEAs as she was keen to get away from the London/inner-city bias in other research studies into ethnic minority achievement.

The data gathered for the qualitative part of the study indicated that Bangladeshi families tended to live in public sector housing, were poor and were employed in manual, unskilled work. Parents educational levels were very low - none of the parents interviewed had any formal educational qualifications.

In terms of parents' knowledge about their children's experiences of school, none of the parents thought that their children suffered from racism at school (Haque, 1999: 122).

(Tomlinson and Hutchinson also found this when they interviewed Bangladeshi parents in Tower Hamlets, despite the fact that their children all reported having to deal with racism at school. Tomlinson & Hutchinson, 1991). The pupils reported in their interviews that they got very little parental help at home with homework and that they relied on their older siblings instead as they knew and understood the British system (Haque, 1999: 101). The pupils claimed that they were expected to help at home with housework (girls) or with looking after their younger brothers and sisters (both boys and girls). They also all reported that they attended Arabic and Bengali classes for about two hours every evening (Haque, 1999: 101). Although all the pupils interviewed hoped for a career outside the home after their education they felt they had few role models and there was pressure on them if they were boys to find work quickly. The girls reported that they felt that their gender made a difference to the options they had after school (Haque, 1999: 111).

The teachers felt that Bangladeshi pupils' problems were caused by their English as a Second Language status and their 'cultural disadvantage' (by this they meant a lack of educational resources at home, not speaking English at home, no trips to museums, theatres or libraries and little awareness of life outside their local area) thus reflecting the views of the teachers in Anderton's study. The problems, the teachers claimed, were exacerbated by a background of economic deprivation and uneducated parents (Haque, 1999: 105). Some teachers went further and claimed that Bangladeshi pupils had limited intelligence, low self-esteem, a lack

of motivation and domineering parents who were apathetic towards children's education (Haque, 1999: 105).

Interestingly, Haque concludes her analysis of her qualitative data by stating that it was difficult to identify variables directly linked to achievement,

Certainly there were some similarities in students' experiences but none were identical each of the factors appeared to influence individuals differently.

(Haque, 1999: 128)

We cannot easily separate factors influencing the achievement of Bangladeshi students into 'home' or 'school' as the reality reflected complex interactions between factors in both school and home for each student.

(Haque, 1999: 135)

In the quantitative part of her study, Haque found that Bangladeshi families did occupy a different socio-economic position to all the other ethnic groups. Bangladeshi pupils came from families with low socio-economic backgrounds when compared with Indian, African, UK Whites and Other Asians. They were also more likely to have unskilled manual parents with little education and poor English fluency and to live in large households. These factors were also true of Pakistani pupils but Bangladeshi pupils came from families with more unemployment and more likely to live in public sector housing than Pakistani families.

Although Haque began her study querying the 'apparent' underachievement of Bangladeshi pupils in Britain, she did find that the Bangladeshis in her sample achieved low GCSE results and had the lowest mean scores of all the ethnic groups. They also made the least progress between Key Stage 3 and GCSE. Those Bangladeshis born in the UK achieved

higher GCSE results than those who had been born in Bangladesh. The more recently arrived students had problems with English.

Haque claimed that recency of arrival, parental occupation and fluency were the most important factors related to school success for Bangladeshi pupils (Haque, 1999: 217). However, her quantitative analysis showed that Bangladeshis couldn't be regarded as a uniform group even in terms of GCSE attainment (Haque, 1999: 242). There was considerable variation in scores between pupils and little variation between schools. As with her qualitative data conclusions, Haque stated that her analysis of the quantitative data revealed that, whilst circumstances of Bangladeshi families appeared to be very similar,

it was the subtle differences in these families, and in the lives of Bangladeshi boys and girls that influenced educational attainments greatly.

(Haque, 1999: 249)

It seems clear from this that what is required in research terms are studies that can focus on individuals and the 'complex interactions between factors', to use Haque's term, that influence and affect those individual children's achievement. This is one of the objects of my study.

3.4 Conclusions – and the Present Study

The research reviewed in this chapter is research which looked specifically at Bangladeshi pupils in school. The research either looked at Bangladeshi pupils and reading in the early years of school in the context of the relationship between home and school or at Bangladeshi pupils' experiences and achievement in Secondary school.

Gregory and her colleagues made the case for understanding Bangladeshi pupils' struggles in school in terms of the differences between home and school practices in learning to read and

teachers' failure to recognise and incorporate some of these practices into their teaching of reading in school. Blackledge came to very different conclusions when he looked at the home reading practices of Bangladeshi pupils and their siblings. He concluded that older siblings, contrary to Gregory et al.'s claim that they provided a gradual scaffolded process which encouraged and supported their younger brothers and sisters, held back their younger siblings when hearing them read at home.

Blackledge's claim may be rather pessimistic but there is an awareness in his work of the need to 'read for meaning' and the importance of becoming an independent reader in English school classrooms which seems missing from Gregory et al.'s account. Although Gregory et al. describe a range of strategies that older siblings employ at home when hearing reading there is little further analysis which shows how young Bangladeshi pupils make the transition from 'reading reciting' (the home practice) to reading independently and for meaning (the school practice).

Neither Gregory et al. nor Blackledge's work considers the Bangladeshi pupils in their studies as members of their class or as learners in a wider sense (for example as learners of other subjects in the school day) or in terms of their actual achievement in school. Neither report on how successful or otherwise the pupils in their samples were in becoming independent readers, or how teachers responded to them and provided for them.

Of the research that looked at Bangladeshi pupils and their experiences and achievement in school, Murshid's report on Bangladeshi pupils in Hertfordshire schools relies on pupils' and parents' views alone as well as her own views of pupil experiences. Although of interest, the lack of empirical work and evidence mean that the report cannot offer in any detail what may lie behind her claims that lack of fluency in English, low teacher expectations, economic pressure and pupils' low self-esteem were the cause of underachievement.

The study conducted by the Centre for Bangladeshi Studies usefully highlighted two important factors for success in school: parental support (provided by allowing their children to work at home without interruption) and peer support (provided by school friends who shared similar ambitions). This study highlighted how Bangladeshi pupils do have different experiences in school, for example some found teachers helpful and some did not.

Both the study by the Centre for Bangladeshi Studies and Anderton's MEd study found that parental support (through allowing their children to focus on their school work when at home) was an important factor in Bangladeshi achievement. They both also found that Bangladeshi pupils experienced racism at school thus supporting claims made by Wright, Gillborn and Connolly with regard to Asian pupils in school (see Chapter Two). Anderton made the claim that racism itself is one of the underlying reasons for Bangladeshi pupils underachievement in that the 'institutional biases' within school lead to common-sense, racist ideas that the teachers hold about pupils. However, Anderton herself conceded that she could not demonstrate a link between teacher attitudes and academic outcomes, nor that Bangladeshi pupils were treated differently by their teachers in the classroom.

Haque's study confirmed the underachievement of Bangladeshi pupils nationally in English schools and claimed that the factors that affect achievement for Bangladeshi pupils were recency of arrival, parental occupation and fluency. However, her analysis revealed that there was considerable within-group variation and that it was the subtle differences in the lives of Bangladeshi pupils that most influenced educational achievement.

From this small amount of research into Bangladeshi pupils, and the context provided by the three areas of research reviewed in Chapter Two, it seems that in order to answer the original question 'What is going on in the lives, background and schooling experiences of Bangladeshi pupils that helps and hinders them in learning and achieving in the English school system?' there is a need to conduct a study which can explore:

- the complex processes of classroom life, of teaching and learning in relation to Bangladeshi children and their achievement - this would include the unfolding processes of life in the classroom over a period of time rather than at one moment, would look at more than just one aspect of classroom life (i.e. learning to read by reading with the teacher) and would be able to consider the subtle differences in the lives of Bangladeshi pupils that influence educational achievement.

- teachers' experiences of Bangladeshi pupils and how teachers come to understand, assess and plan for the Bangladeshi pupils in their class and what kinds of support and resources they provide Bangladeshi pupils with.

- the place of reading in the daily life of the classroom and what counts as reading for children and for teachers (i.e. reading may be more than just reading in a group or 1:1 with the teacher) and what the effects of these understanding (and one's ability to read) are on achievement.

- what early years Bangladeshi pupils themselves have to say about their experiences of being pupils and of learning in early years classrooms.

This is what this study sets out to do.

Chapter 4

Research Methodology

4.1 Methodology and Methodological Issues

4.1.1 The research aim

The aim of the research is to consider Bangladeshi pupils' experiences in school and in relation to this the issue of the underachievement of Bangladeshi pupils. The aim is to describe what is going on in the day-to-day lives of a group of Bangladeshi pupils and to illuminate what helps and hinders such pupils in school and how such pupils go about learning in school and their teachers go about teaching them. The aim is also to explore whether 'being Bangladeshi' has anything to do with it.

As a result of the issues identified in the Literature Review there needs to be a focus in the research on the processes of daily life in the classroom and on the processes of learning, especially learning to read for meaning.

The aim of the research is to be achieved by considering Bangladeshi pupils

- as learners in the classroom (not just as readers or pupils)
- as individuals rather than as members of a homogenous group

and by

- making careful descriptions of 'what takes place inside schools' (Meehan 1979)

- understanding daily life as an unfolding process and not as static
- including Bangladeshi children's thoughts and accounts.

4.1.2 The research question

The research question is:-

What is going on in the lives, backgrounds and schooling experiences of Bangladeshi pupils that helps and hinders them in learning and achieving in the English school system?

The Literature Review and the pilot study guided me to focus on the following as I entered the research classrooms:

What was happening in the classrooms? Specifically:

- What interactions were taking place and how were the Bangladeshi pupils taking part?
- Were Bangladeshi pupils denied access to language learning through the practices and organisation of classrooms?
- To what extent were Bangladeshi pupils' language needs recognised by teachers and how did teachers make judgements about their language needs?
- How were the teachers responding to and planning for their Bangladeshi pupils and how did this impact on the pupils?
- What kind of support was offered to pupils?
- Is learning and then joining in with the reading interaction patterns initiated by the teacher enough to be a successful reader, to learn to read for meaning and to become an independent reader?

- What kind of relationships existed between home and school and between home literacy and school literacy?

4.1.3 The research design

It is clear from the discussion so far, and the research question that I adopted, that a survey strategy for this study would not have been appropriate. Such a strategy would have been unable to capture the processes of daily life in the classroom in the richness and detail that was required.

A qualitative design was required for the study for the following reasons.

Qualitative research is able to focus on the particular social processes and practices that are lost in survey research. Keith reminds us that each child brings with them into a classroom a biography and an experiential history which then mediates the way that particular incidents and events are interpreted. Only qualitative approaches to classroom research can focus on the different relationships that children from the same ethnic background develop with their teachers and their peers and show what is shared and not shared. Through qualitative work, understandings of ethnicity in classrooms can be developed which do not rely on or reproduce, 'insidious stereotypes' (Keith, 1993).

Another reason for choosing a qualitative approach was that qualitative strategies and methods do not always require the researcher to decide in advance of the study what categories, attitudes, practices and events should be used and explored in the research. Qualitative strategies allow researchers to explore their research sites and to consider the concepts, language, actions and events, and the meanings given to these by participants (and the meanings given to the participants by these), in the course of defining the terms of the study. This was much more appropriate to a study of the experiences of Bangladeshi pupils

than entering the research sites with a preconceived idea of what was happening in classrooms and with predetermined categories to describe the children's experiences as a basis for data collection. As Merriam points out, in qualitative research the researcher is able to be responsive to the situation, is able to adopt techniques to circumstances and is able to explore anomalous responses as well as consider the total context (Merriam, 1988: 19).

There were also philosophical reasons why a qualitative research strategy was more appropriate for this study than a quantitative strategy. Survey research is located within a traditional scientific paradigm, which assumes that there is a single, constant, objective reality that can be observed and measured. The researcher's role is to look for what is there and report on it. Some, though not necessarily all, qualitative research strategies recognise that the world is a 'function of interaction' and that phenomena are interpreted and not measured and are ever changing and not fixed. A qualitative research strategy, such as ethnography or case study, allows for a focus on process and on meaning; how people make sense of their lives, what they experience, how they interpret these experiences and how they structure their social worlds (Merriam, 1988). At the same time qualitative research also allows for a consideration of how people's social worlds make meaning of them (the participants in that world).

A final reason for choosing a qualitative approach was that such a strategy was appropriate for a study of the experiences of Bangladeshi pupils within the context of underachievement because it gave an opportunity for capturing something of the 'messiness' and complexity of classroom and individual life, for allowing the inclusion of things that didn't neatly tie up or fit into a 'box'. Qualitative research is able to give expression to the multiple, changing, fluid 'realities' of participants' lives as well as to the contradictory ways people understand

their world and their actions within it. Qualitative research also allows for multiple viewpoints to be captured and included in analysis.

4.1.4 The research strategy

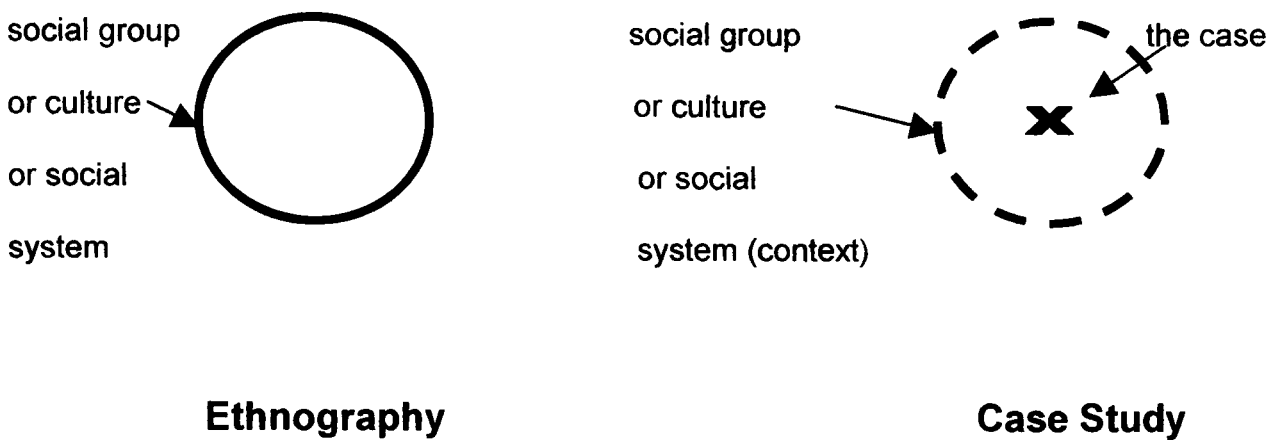
The preferred research strategy for this study was ethnographic case study.

Ethnography and case study are often used interchangeably in much research literature and there is often a lack of clarity about what differentiates them as research strategies (Burns, 2000: 459; Hammersely, 1992: 183). This confusion arises partly because the terms ethnography and case study can be used to describe a research focus (the choice of phenomena to be studied), the research methods (or procedures) used and/or the results of the research.

For the sake of clarity I follow Stake who claims that case study is not a methodological choice but a choice of object to be studied (Stake, 1998: 86). Ethnography (traditionally) takes as the focus of its study a culture or social group or system (Creswell, 1998).

Ethnography aims to investigate and understand the way a group or social system works, the meanings it gives to actions, artefacts and so on. Ethnography investigates people in interaction in ordinary settings, it looks for patterns of daily living (culture), what people do, say and use to find out what a stranger would have to know in order to be able to take part in the group or society in a meaningful way. This results in the holistic cultural portrait of the social group (Creswell, 1998). Case study on the other hand takes as the focus of its study a bounded system of some kind. This can be an individual, an event, an organisation or a cultural group (or a number of these). Case study does not ignore context but it focuses on the case situated within a context. The emphasis of the investigation is on the case. Thus one provides a holistic view of a social group or culture the other an in-depth study of a bounded system or case or set of cases. Case study is able to explore a range of topics whilst

(traditionally) ethnography focused on cultural behaviour and artefacts. In this way case study differs from ethnography in that it is not seeking to understand a social group or system (unless a group is taken as a case) it is seeking to understand a case within an acknowledged social system. The difference between the two could be represented like this:



Either choice of study would have been appropriate for a study of the experiences of Bangladeshi pupils in school in the context of underachievement. However, a choice of study that focused specifically on a child, or a number of children, rather than on the social group or the social system of a classroom seemed a more appropriate focus for understanding what the experiences of being a pupil in a classroom and of learning and taking part in the classroom were like. I was not intending to get a holistic view of a classroom, or a number of classrooms or school cultures but I did want to get at the experiences of specific children in the context of the classroom. Previous qualitative research, which has considered ethnic minority children in the classroom (see Chapter Two), has started with the social system, the culture of the classroom and through that has shown how identities are produced and resources subsequently allocated to pupils. I wanted to look 'right up close' at specific children's experiences of being in the classroom by starting with a specific child or number of identified children and seeing what was happening to them in specific groups and locations. The starting point for the study would be a specific child or a

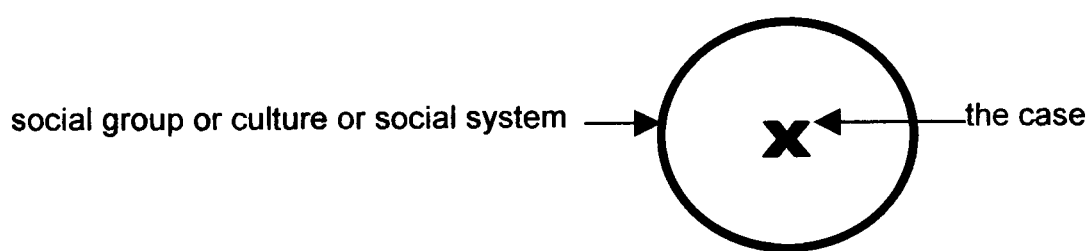
group of children not classrooms. In this respect I refer to the object of my study as 'cases' and to my research strategy as case study.

Case study as a research strategy allows the researcher to undertake a single case study or a number of case studies. I decided to undertake a number of case studies rather than a single case study so that I would have a range of 'portraits' to illustrate the experiences of Bangladeshi pupils. An important aspect of the research was to consider the different experiences Bangladeshi pupils might have to each other and to get away from the notion that children, once ascribed to an ethnic group, must have the same experience and needs in the classroom. A number of case studies of individual children would allow me to carry out 'within-case analysis' (a detailed description of each case and themes within the case) followed by a cross-case analysis (a thematic analysis across the cases) (Creswell, 1998: 63) and a discussion of 'lessons learnt' (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). By being able to do 'within-case analysis' I would be able to avoid a danger of only considering Bangladeshi pupils in relation to each other and be able to consider them as individual pupils in a classroom. Combining 'within case analysis' with 'cross-case analysis' would allow for a level of depth as there would be the opportunity, later in the research, to explore any emerging themes or patterns or dissimilarities.

However, in moving on to discuss choices about research methodologies it is necessary to say why I have chosen to describe my research strategy as ethnographic case study.

At the heart of most definitions of case study (even those that also claim to be ethnographic or qualitative) is an emphasis on the notion of 'boundedness' with which I am uncomfortable. Stake (1995) for example, speaks of the aim of case study being 'to thoroughly understand the bounded case' (Stake, 1995: 9) and that a child can constitute a case because s/he is 'a working combination of physiological, psychological, cultural, aesthetic and other forces'

(Stake, 1995: 436). Although indeed a child could be considered to be a bounded unit, I am in favour of seeing children in context and in interaction, as created in and by the social processes in which they take part and not as separated, bounded identities. Case study would seem to have an unspoken affinity with modernist conceptions of subjectivity which do not sit easily with my theoretical approaches to understanding identity and subjectivity. In the light of this I chose to think of my research strategy as case study because the phenomena that the research was investigating was the child or the children rather than the classroom or the school and as ethnographic because I did not consider the child or children to be bracketed off from the culture, the interactions and the context around them. Case study, as traditionally presented, does recognise the importance of context, but for this study I want to be clear that context was not some kind of background scenery or 'noise' but was an integral part in constituting who and what the child, or children, were. In this respect using the term 'ethnographic' with case study signals that the social system or cultural group that the child or children studied is part of is an important part of constituting who and what that child is and can be. My understanding of ethnographic case study could be represented in the following way (where I have taken the previous elements of ethnography and case study and combined them):



Ethnographic Case Study

I have also termed my research strategy ethnographic case study because my research focus would seem to require that I use many of the same research methods as an ethnographer¹

¹ Case study does not have to be qualitative or ethnographic (Burns, 2000: 460), although in some research textbooks it is defined this way e.g. Feagin, Orum & Sjoberg (Feagin et al., 1991: 2).

and because the final descriptions and findings of the study will share a lot with the outcomes of an ethnographic study.

Using ethnographic procedures² involves the researcher 'entering into a close and relatively prolonged interaction with people in their every day lives, to better understand (their) beliefs, motivations and behaviours' (Tedlock, 2000). This 'ethnographic participation' means the researcher has to get close to the activities and everyday experiences of the research participants and see from the inside how people lead their lives, how they carry out their daily rounds of activities, what they find meaningful and how they do so. There is a requirement that the researcher actively participates and thereby learns what is required to become a member of this world (Emerson et al., 1995).

Close, continuing participation in the lives of others encourages appreciation of social life as constituted by ongoing fluid processes. Through participation, the field researcher sees first-hand and up close how people grapple with uncertainty and confusion, how meanings emerge through talk and collective action, how understandings and interpretations change over time. In all these ways, the

fieldworker's closeness to others' daily lives and activities heightens sensitivity to social life as process.

(Emerson et al., 1995: 4)

Rather than considering outcomes, ethnographic procedures place an emphasis on understanding and identifying particular social processes and practices (Connolly, 1998c;

² I am using the term ethnographic procedures here to refer to research methods that are often referred to in research methodology textbooks as qualitative, ethnographic, case study, qualitative case study or ethnographic case study. Writers use these terms in different ways to mean different things. 'Ethnographic procedures' is an attempt at clarity and simplicity.

Emerson et al., 1995). They suspend premature judgement about what should be selected as data. Rather than start with predetermined categories to be investigated or rely on a preconceived framework for analysing data, analytical frameworks can be created from interactions with informants and hypothesis, theories can be modified and developed and new questions and avenues can be explored (Walford & Massey, 1998: 5-9; Stake, 1995: 33, 9, 22; Parlett & Hamilton, 1976; Merriam, 1988). One of ethnography's peculiarities is that the questions it seeks to answer emerge after data collection has begun rather than before (Stake, 1995: 33). Spradely emphasises this non-linearity of ethnographic research methods by representing the conduct of an ethnographic study as a cyclical movement, what he terms 'the ethnographic research cycle' (Spradley, 1980: 29).

Ethnographic procedures can allow a researcher to look at a situation from many perspectives by gathering data from a range of sources, in a variety of forms (Walford & Massey, 1998: 5-9; Merriam, 1988) and thus to capture multiple realities (Stake, 1995; Adelman et al., 1980).

The outcome of a study which uses the ethnographic procedures discussed above is an account of processes and experiences and what happens over a period of time. As a result phenomena and processes can be understood within their particular social, historical and spatial contexts. A richness of detail is allowed for rather than the 'forgetting' that is involved in statistical research (Keith, 1993). This results in an account of 'the values, practices, relationships and identifications of people' and answers to the questions 'What is going on here? How does this work? How do people do this? (Massey & Walford, 1998).

Thus to use ethnographic procedures seemed particularly appropriate for my study. As Massey and Walford claim, such procedures are 'especially well-suited to the study of children learning'.

If how children learn is to be understood within a social context and the meanings given to these learning contexts explored in detail, then ethnography.....provides an ideal strategy. Further, ethnography can capture the proactive nature of learning, where children are no longer seen as passive absorbers of knowledge but are recognised as active constructors of their own meanings and understandings.
(Massey & Walford, 1998: 14)

Such research also has the ability to pay attention to subtlety, complexity and embeddedness (Adelman et al., 1980), it proliferates (what can be seen and understood) rather than narrows (Stake, 1980) and it is able to focus on what is not typical or the norm and thereby enhance understanding. By looking at the particular one is left with more to pay attention to rather than less (Stake, 1995).

It is worth noting that there are criticisms of ethnography and qualitative case study as research strategies. One of the most frequent criticisms is that findings cannot be generalised and because of this they are of little use. In some of the discussion above we can see how some researchers have defended ethnography and case study against this criticism by speaking of the importance and necessity of having things depicted in their particularity (Stake, 1995; Keith, 1993). Bassey defends qualitative case study against the criticism that one cannot generalise from it by claiming that case study can make 'fuzzy generalisations', by this he means 'the kind of statement which makes no claim to knowledge, but hedges its claim with uncertainties...in some cases it may be found that....' (Bassey, 1999: 12).

Connolly (1998c) claims that it is a mistake to expect to be able to generalise from ethnographic research and, like Stake and Keith, he defends the remit of such ethnographic research strategies as being concerned with identifying and understanding particular social processes and practices. (Sharrock and Anderson, 1982: 172-173 defend their research on these grounds too)³. I defend ethnography and case study on the grounds that both strategies can provide findings which illuminate key processes and open up issues and questions that may remain hidden when other research strategies are used.

In my own research I was interested in capturing what was particular about the individual learning experiences of the case study children as I was interested in saying something about what appears to be happening in these cases. I was not interested in generalising to other children but in raising questions about what might be going on and thus offering starting points for the consideration of what might be happening in other situations, in widening the range of questions or variables that other researchers might choose to use and critically considering the attitude or assumption that all children labelled 'Bangladeshi' are the same.

As a result of the above, it was decided that this study would comprise of a small number of individual case studies of Bangladeshi pupils in the early years of school. The case studies would explore the processes of life in the classroom for each child and would include the thoughts and experiences of the children, their families and their teachers gathered over the course of one year.

³ Another identified weaknesses of ethnography and case study is the role of researcher as research instrument which is seen to endanger the research results through researcher bias, subjectivity and contamination (Massey & Walford, 1998). Some aspects of this criticism are discussed below in the section 'Research and 'race''.

4.1.5 Theoretical assumptions

There is always some kind of theory, explicit or implicit, underlying and informing all social research. It is clear from the discussion of qualitative methodologies and ethnographic case study above that an interpretative approach to understanding the social world underlies this study. By interpretative approach I mean an approach which strives for an in-depth understanding of the cultural meanings, subjective perspectives and dynamics of social behaviour.

Many ethnographic studies and case studies are located within the tradition of symbolic interactionism. This allows researchers to see humans as interpretative beings, able to attach meaning to the world around them and choosing how to act in the light of these interpretations (see for example the work of Pollard 1994, Pollard & Filer 1999; Woods 1980). Many of the theoretical assumptions that underlie this study can be located within this tradition. However, I also have theoretical understandings, deriving from a more post-structuralist account of the social world, which cannot accept that humans can simply choose how to act socially in the light of interpretations they have made of the world around them. A more post-structural account would see humans as shaped and positioned by the discourses that surround them. Thus, such discourses must come to shape how the world is understood and interpreted by persons as well as the actions a person can take. The meanings that can be attached to each other's actions are limited by the discursive frameworks we have at our disposal and these discursive frameworks are produced in particular social, political, historical contexts. Such understandings take us away from the human as actor who always has motives and exercises will to a position where it is possible to see meaning as always escaping intention and multiply interpreted. Such a position foregrounds the process of interpretation which is central to this study in terms of the ways in which teachers came to understand and talk about the research children.

Within phenomenological and ethnomethodologist traditions there is more emphasis, than in symbolic interactionism, on the tacit skills and knowledges that humans (without fully realising it) bring to and use in social situations to get the ‘work’ of a particular situation done - e.g. telephone conversations, classrooms (Meehan, 1978; 1979), reading (Heap, 1991). Meehan, for example, in what he terms ‘constitutive ethnography’ examines classrooms to show how order comes about and how particular roles are offered to pupils in classrooms. This kind of understanding of the social world underlines the work of Gregory et al. discussed in Chapters Two and Three in which they demonstrate the importance for children of learning the interaction patterns expected in their classroom in order to be able to join in and learn to read with the teacher. Heap demonstrates that ‘what counts as reading’ is different in different locations and that humans involved in reading bring (and learn) their tacit knowledge of what reading is in this particular situation to the act of reading. This ethnomethodological work has also influenced my theoretical understandings and assumptions and underlies the manner in which I describe the organisation of classrooms and discuss the data on reading.

What all of the above foreground is the importance of interaction between humans, context and environment in understanding social life and social action. This is also foregrounded in the theoretical understandings of learning that underlie this work. Learning has been understood as a purely cognitive process. However, I understand learning as an activity which takes place in social environments and through social encounter/interaction and in this respect I am influenced by discussions and descriptions of learning by Lave and Wenger (1991) and Wenger (1998), and also by critiques of the invisibility of power and reproduction in Lave and Wenger’s accounts of ‘communities of practice’ (Linehan & McCarthy 2001). I did not enter the research classrooms with a view of children as limited in what they could achieve by an innate ability nor with a view that children were simply receivers of information provided by their teachers.

Some of the other theoretical assumptions that underlie this study are:

- humans do not have *a priori*, bounded identities. Identity is not already present, rather it is a production, it is situational and it emerges out of process. Humans have different identities in different contexts and at different times (Yon 2000).
- culture is not static, unitary and all encompassing but fluid, changing and dynamic.
- there are no universal explanations - things must be understood in their specificity and context. This can be seen in the work of Heath (1983), for example when she shows how language and literacy practices change according to location. There is not just one way of reading, one way of conceptualising the self, nor one kind of pupil. Other researchers and disciplines show how there is not just one kind of ‘woman’ or ‘worker’ and how gender, ‘race’ and class fragment a notion of universal sensibility and identity.

4.1.6 The research methods and the pilot study

The research methods or procedures that seemed the most appropriate for addressing the research focus were participant observation, unstructured interviewing and the examination of school documents. The appropriateness of these methods was explored through a pilot study conducted in the last week of June 2000 in a First School⁴ in the county and city that

⁴ The county in which I conducted my research uses a First, Middle and High school system. Children attend their First school between the ages of four and eight (Reception Year to Year 3) then transfer to Middle School at age eight where they stay until they are twelve (Year 4 to Year 7). At the age of twelve, children transfer to a High school for the rest of their schooling (Year 8 to Year 11 or 13). All of my research schools were mixed County First schools, with eight classes (two per year) and all were long-established schools in their community. A county advisor remarked that all three of the schools were considered to be ‘good schools’ by the LEA.

were to be the locations for the doctoral study⁵. The reasons why I chose this county and city are described later in this chapter. The reasons why I chose a First School are as follows:

Firstly, I wanted to focus the research on Bangladeshi pupils at the beginning of their school career. I chose to focus on Year Three pupils because I wanted to see what was happening as they became independent readers in the classroom, to see what was happening as they moved from reading with the teacher in the manner described by Gregory and her colleagues to using text and print independently in the classroom as well as reading with the teacher. Were the expectations of what reading was the same in a Year Three classroom as those described by Gregory in a Year One classroom (Gregory, 1992b)?

Secondly, my professional experience also suggested that it was in Year Three that children appeared to start struggling in school and teachers began to talk of children not doing very well. It seemed to me that it was around Year Three and Year Four that children started to have real problems that could clearly be seen and were seen by teachers. Therefore Year Three seemed a good year to focus on and see what was going on. This choice was confirmed when I consulted a Literacy Advisor in another LEA about which Year to chose. She also felt

that it was in Year Three that you could begin to see problems and underachievement and that

in Years One and Two it was possible to teach children to 'achieve' but what they were taught and what they learnt did not necessarily carry them through Year Three and Year Four.

⁵ See Walters (2001) for a full account of the pilot study.

Thirdly, if I had chosen Year One I would also have had translation issues to deal with. By choosing Year Three all the children were likely to be socially fluent enough in English to be able to talk to me.

The pilot study explored whether it would be more appropriate to adopt a participant observer or a complete observer role in the classroom, whether to use any form of systematic observation instrument, whether my presence as an observer and using a tape recorder when talking or hearing children read would cause changes in behaviour and whether it was more appropriate to use unstructured or semi-structured interviewing techniques. These research methods were explored in a Year One classroom⁶ with two Bangladeshi pupils.

The pilot study showed that adopting the role of a participant observer was the most appropriate observer role. As a participant observer I took up a role in the classroom which was almost the same as the role I had occupied whilst working as a peripatetic language support teacher. This was an ideal role as it allowed me to have time when I was simply observing in the class, time for taking part in the class activities and time for working one-to-one with the case study children. The role of a peripatetic support worker who came and went during the school week allowed me the advantage of being able to step freely in and out of my 'participant role' into 'observer role' and into 'interviewer role'. Schools in the county were

very familiar with peripatetic support provided by the LEA as children with support needs are spread thinly across the county (Walters, 2001: 31). The pilot study also showed that using a systematic observation instrument was not appropriate and the decision was made to

⁶ a Year One classroom had to be used for the pilot as no Year 3 Bangladeshi children could be identified in the county at this time and any Year 2 children chosen may have ended up being in the main study.

observe in the classroom without any instrument and to record observations as narrative style fieldnotes.

In terms of interviewing, the pilot revealed that the case study children talked naturally and freely during one-to-one reading sessions and that they often directed the topic of conversation or introduced things they wanted to talk about. Therefore it was decided to include regular one-to-one reading sessions with the case study children and with other children in the class during the fieldwork and to continue with unstructured ways of 'interviewing' the case study children (Walters, 2001: 60). With teachers however, the pilot study revealed that because of pressures of time it was necessary to use semi-structured interviewing so that there was some focus to what needed to be discussed. The interviewing however, was to encourage teachers to give accounts of their experiences and their perceptions of their pupils in their own words and in their own ways rather than imposing a language or a structure on their accounts.

It was decided that as well as interviewing the case study children and their teachers I would also interview the parents of the case study children, the case study children's siblings, their head teachers, support teachers and previous teachers. It was also decided that six other White, monolingual pupils in each research classroom would also be included in the study and interviewed as a way of protecting against making assumptions that experiences revealed by the research were specific to Bangladeshi pupils only.

As a result of the pilot study I was clear about the research methods to be used and that the most appropriate Year to focus on in the research was Year Three. Due to the highly intensive nature of the research strategy and research methods I had chosen the case study children would have to be located either within the same school or within the same locality.

Before moving on to consider the research site and access issues there are three outstanding research methodology issues to be considered.

4.1.7 Research and 'race': being a White researcher

Race does not simply exist as an object of study or a variable in analysis, it enters into the research process itself- into the selection of a problem, into the methodology, the conduct of the research, the assumptions behind it, who is included in the study, whose perspective is highlighted – and importantly influences the relationship with those we are researching.

(Edwards, 1990: 482)

An important methodological issue that needs consideration and discussion is that of being a White researcher studying the experiences of Bangladeshi children and their families.

It is claimed that White social science researchers have been involved in portraying minority ethnic people and groups as caricatures (Troyna & Carrington, 1993) and as agents in their own racial inequality (Ladner, 1975 cited in Troyna, 1998). They have also been responsible for reproducing, for a White audience, a sense of minority ethnic people's 'oddness, differentness (and) exceptionality' whilst leaving Whiteness as an unexamined norm 'the natural, inevitable, ordinary way of being' (Dyer, 1988: 44). In addition, criticisms of White researchers have been made in terms of their ability to understand and interpret correctly what they are being told by the minority ethnic subjects of their research and in terms of what use the information that minority ethnic subjects of research provide is put to by the state or other institutions (Troyna & Carrington, 1993). White researchers have also been

challenged on the quality of the interview data they can elicit from interviewees who are not White (Troyna & Carrington, 1993).

Some White researchers have responded to these challenges by paying attention to their practice and by explicitly locating themselves and their ethnicity (and gender) within their research (Edwards, 1990; Haw, 1996; Fine, 1994). Haw claims that she endeavours to open up spaces for unheard Muslim women's 'voices' in her work (Haw, 1996). Others have represented their research as 'emancipatory', undertaken on behalf of those that cannot adequately represent themselves (or working with participants in the research to bring about emancipation).

There are two issues at play here. One is how being a White researcher impacts on the actual process of gathering data and whether a White researcher should research minority ethnic subjects. The second is the manner in which White researchers write up their research, present minority ethnic people and the ways in which such research becomes used.

In terms of the first issue, a criticism is made that White researchers forget that there is a power imbalance between themselves and the minority ethnic subjects that they seek to study or include in their research. In this study there is a power imbalance between myself as a White, middle-class, female, who is perceived as part of the adult world of the school by the children in the classroom and the Bangladeshi pupils who are included in the study. I have sought to be clear and transparent about this imbalance in the presentation of this research and in the setting up and conducting of the research (see below). I was also aware that there was unlikely to be what researchers have referred to as a natural 'rapport' or 'symmetry' (Oakley, 1981; Edwards, 1990; Troyna, 1998) between my experiences of the world and those of the children or their parents. It was certainly the case that a researcher

who was Bangladeshi would have been in a far better position to gather certain kinds of data than I was. However, as other researchers have pointed out, although a researcher and their research subject may share the same ethnic identity there are other characteristics that separate a researcher from their research subjects (Edwards, 1990). In the case of the Bangladeshi pupils and their parents in this research a Bangladeshi researcher may well have been from a different class and geographical background and had different cultural experiences, language affiliations and expertise to the children and their parents. Gender and age and location would have still played their part, in some cases encouraging and in some cases inhibiting 'rapport'. This is not to claim that as a White researcher I have just as much access to 'rapport' as a Bangladeshi researcher. As a White English researcher there are many limitations in what I could bring to the research process.

As a consequence of these considerations, I undertook the research with the intention of not denying my 'classed, gendered (and) raced location' (Fine, 1994: 76) but of keeping it very much to the fore and of making a 'historical critique' of my position as an investigating person (Spivak, 1990). I undertook the research from a particular position which was that of a White, English ex-teacher who was part of a group of White professionals who 'wanted to know' about Bangladeshi pupils, their experiences and their (perceived) underachievement. In this way I locate myself as part of the establishment but as someone questioning within the establishment about what the impact of work focused on ethnic minority groups of children is. Any piece of research is as much about those undertaking it as it is about the participants (Haw, 1996: 320). In this sense this research reveals a great deal about me at the same time it presents a picture of Bangladeshi children and their families. By not pursuing a strategy of proclaiming objectivity it is hoped that there is opportunity for the consumers of this research to judge for themselves how my location and positioning, through the research process and in the analysis and writing of the study, contributes to what is presented.

In terms of the actual impact of my ethnicity, gender and class on the research children, their families and their teachers, and the data I was able to collect, I am able to make the following comments.

As far as I could be aware, the research children viewed me as a White, English female adult who was similar to one of the visiting EAL teachers that they were all familiar with from their English school classrooms. That is, they perceived me as a White teacher but as someone who was not completely aligned with their school or classroom and the structures that existed there. All of the case study children chose to call me 'Sue' (as did the other children in the classroom) rather than Ms Walters. (They referred to their class teachers and support teachers formally by their surnames). They recognised that I came and went from the school and that I did not have the same kind of power within the school as other teachers (ie disciplining children). I was seen as someone who 'helped' in the classroom and who talked to children more informally and, most importantly, had time to talk to children and to listen to what they had to say. (This was true for all the children in the classroom). The research children also responded to me as someone who was interested in their home life and what being a Muslim meant for them. Two of the children frequently told me about life in the Qur'an school and recited things they were learning to me. Three of the research children knew me well from outside school, before the research began. They knew me as a White teacher, who visited their home and talked to their older siblings and mother about school things, who 'helped' their older siblings at school and someone who talked to and played with them. I had been a frequent visitor in these three homes for approximately four years before the research began. I was also known as a friend and ex-colleague of a respected Bangladeshi woman known to the families. In terms of the impact of this on the data I was able to collect, the children were able to talk to me more informally than they could to their class teacher and they were able to tell me things that they did not tell their

class teachers because I was not a normal teacher. However, there were occasions when the children told me about things to do with Bangladesh or with being a Muslim when I was slow to understand or did not understand at all. This must have prevented the children from telling me certain things. There were clearly things that the children did not tell me because I was a White, female teacher and an adult.

As far as I am aware, the research children's families saw me as a White, English female teacher who was interested in helping their children do well in school. I was probably accepted by the families that did not already know me because I was introduced to them by my friend (the respected Bangladeshi woman mentioned above). As noted above, three of the families knew me well from visits (both professional and social) to their homes. All of the families would have seen me as someone who belonged to the world of school but the three families that had known me for a number of years would also have seen me as someone who did not belong to a particular school and who was often concerned about things that happened to their children in school. Over the years these three families had asked me to help with non-school issues⁷. In terms of the impact of this on the data I was able to collect, the families answered the questions that I asked them about their children and their schools as if I was a respected teacher. This was especially true of two of the families who did not know me. My questions were answered with short answers and nothing was added. With the other four families answers were more developed and many of the family members joined in answering. I found that the older children present were less likely to treat me as the 'respected teacher' and to talk to me as someone who, whilst belonging to the world of English school, was interested in what they thought. I am sure

⁷ In five of the families my contact was with mothers and children as the fathers were always at work when I visited. In the sixth family, my contact was always with the father and older sibling. This was the choice of the families. I always left it open to the families to say when they would like me to visit. When I had worked as a EAL support teacher in most families it was the mother who was the person who took care of things connected with education and schools although, as is the case here, in some families (about a sixth) it was the father.

that certain things were not said that I might construe as criticisms but a few critical things were said during these interviews.

I do not make the claim that this research is making spaces for the voices of Bangladeshi children and their families to be heard. I think that such claims ignore the power of the writer/researcher in the sense that the writer/researcher is the one who makes the choices about what to include and how to frame the voices to be heard. In this study I have tried to quote the children and let them speak about what they know but I alone have chosen what to include and made decisions about how to frame what they say.

I also do not make the claim that this research is emancipatory. I feel, along with Stansfield (1994, cited in Troyna 1998), that such a claim is often a way for White researchers to placate their anxieties about what they are doing. I do not presume, in this study, to know more than the children and their families, I only share what I have come to know (as a White researcher).

The second issue referred to above is the manner in which White researchers present ethnic minority people in their research and the ways in which such research becomes used. I have already alluded in my Introduction to my concerns about using the term 'Bangladeshi' and to my unease about Bangladeshi pupils being presented as a homogenous group. As an extension to this I bring to the research concerns about 'othering' Bangladeshi pupils and their families. It is easy to turn those groups that researchers (White or otherwise) feel they are representing, describing (or 'liberating') into 'Others', people who are different to 'us' and through whom 'we' define (usually positively) who 'we' are. Fine (1994) writes that by decontextualising 'Others' lives, and presenting 'them' as 'socially bereft, isolated and deficient', research texts 'present portraits of Them who can't seem to get better' (Fine, 1994: 79). It is easy for researchers to represent these 'Others' not only as strange or exotic

(Dyer, 1988, James & Harris, 1993, in Troyna 1998) but also as ‘unworthy, pitiable, victimised and damaged’ (Fine, 1994: 79). Research can be colonial, surveilling and exotic (Fine, 1994: 74). I have tried to work with this in mind and to work against this but there will inevitably be aspects of ‘Othering’ in this study. In the presentation of the data I have endeavoured to show the children, and their families, as active agents in going about their worlds, as agents who are knowing and who challenge and resist and whose experiences and opinions overlap with other groups. I have endeavoured to listen to the children and their families and to speak, both during the fieldwork and in the presentation of people in this study, in a way that will be taken seriously by the children and their families (Spivak 1990: 42). However, despite such intentions this study will bear traces of such ‘Othering’.

Rather than present the research as an opportunity to make a space for ‘voices that are not heard’ in dominant discourse or as emancipatory, I present this research as an account that has the potential for initiating a dialogue, as something that can be worked against. As Fine writes, there is the possibility of someone responding with ‘I’m tired of hearing you speak for me. Only I can speak for myself’ (Fine, 1994: 80).

4.1.8 Research with children

There are two issues that need consideration in relation to doing research with children. Firstly, there is the issue of whether children can be reliable informants and secondly, the ethical issues that arise because children are frequently not in a position where they can give or withhold consent or exercise overt control over situations that are created by adult researchers.

King is an example of a researcher who believe that the role that children can play in research is a limited one. During his research in primary school classrooms he claimed that the five and six year old children in the classroom with him ‘seemed to lack the

competencies for being interviewed...it could be said that they have not become sufficiently reflexive about their experiences' (King, 1984)⁸. I had not experienced young children in this way as a professional and I share Connolly's view that five and six year olds are socially competent and have sophisticated and active understandings of their social worlds (Connolly, 1998b: 187–188). In light of this I began the research with a belief that not only could children, even young children, be reliable informants about their experiences and their social worlds but that it was only through including and talking to children (and treating them as expert informants) that any real understanding of their experiences could emerge.

As with all research participants there are important ethical issues that must be considered and included in a research design to protect the well-being and dignity of the research participants. There has been a tendency in much research with children to explain the research to, and to seek consent to being a research participant from, parents and/or from schools and not from the children themselves⁹. I considered it important to include children as I sought access for my research and an account of what I did is included in the section on access. Throughout the research, and especially in preparing to do the research, I worked with the following guidelines which I have taken (and reworded, rearranged and added to) from Boyden and Ennew (1997) and Alderson (1995):

- Children should be informed about the research and able to give consent/dissent to being involved in the research. A child should be able to withdraw from the research at any time or refuse to take part in a particular activity or answer particular questions. The researcher should think carefully before the research takes place about how they will handle refusal so that the possibility of the child refusing remains an option to the child

⁸ King joins a long history of understanding, perceiving and constructing 'the child' as incompetent. See Alderson for legal cases and philosophies that do just this (Alderson, 1995). Also Graue & Walsh (1998) and Cannella (1997) for particular constructions of 'the child'.

⁹ In fact the BERA guidelines suggest that this is all that is required when researching with children in schools. (BERA, 1992: 2)

at any time. Consent should be seen as something that is fluid. The researcher should be sensitive to all signs of discomfort or refusal, not just verbal ones. Power imbalances should not be exploited.

As well as striving as far as possible to seek permission from the case study children during the time I was getting consent from parents and teachers I was aware that the children were usually in situations where they were surrounded by adults at these times and may have found it difficult to say no to being included in the research study. I also asked each child away from adults during the first visit to school if they were happy for me to be there and to include them in the research. Although all the children said 'yes' this was not a hundred percent guarantee that they were fully consenting. I endeavoured during the fieldwork to always ask children if it was OK to do something and paid attention to body language, change of subject and so on and respected these signals. During the year the children appeared pleased to see me when I arrived in the classroom, invited me to their homes, asked to go outside and read and in one case at the end of the school year when I might have expected the six case study children to be thoroughly sick of my 'interest' in their lives took my 'interview question sheet' I had been using to interview her mother and asked me to interview her using them. Other children in the three classrooms frequently asked to be included in the 'interviewing' and activities I brought into school (and I did include other children so that jealousies did not develop).

- Children should come to no harm as a result of the research. Care must be taken with the dissemination of the research so that a child is not exposed in anyway (for example, names should be changed). There should be a consideration of whose interests are to be served by the research and what benefits, if any, there are, in or from the research, for the children involved.

All the children have had their names changed in the writing up and in any presentation of the research. Not exposing the children has proved to be more difficult in terms of reporting back to schools and to people in the county who work with Bangladeshi children and families as the children are recognisable through details of their experiences and home life which are important to the case study presented of them. It has meant that reporting back to schools cannot be as detailed or nuanced as would be desirable, general statements about the children have to be made so that individuals cannot be recognised. In terms of whose interests are served by the research, an honest answer would be that it is my own interests that are predominantly served in that I wanted to be able to answer a question for myself. However, there were some benefits for the children during the research in the sense that they had a lot of extra reading time with an adult, help with their work in the classroom, someone to talk to in the classroom and in one case someone to play computer games with.

There is a further consideration about ‘harm’ that was an issue in this research. This is the issue of the effects of referring to children as ‘Bangladeshi’ pupils and introducing myself and my research as concerned with ‘Bangladeshi underachievement’. I was conscious throughout the research of perpetuating a particular view of Bangladeshis (as underachieving, as a problem that needed solving – by a White person, as poor and marginalised and so on) or a particular view of ethnic minority pupils (i.e. that they must be understood via their ethnicity first and only latterly as just pupils). As I have indicated already in the Introduction, this seemed an insoluble dilemma and I was not able to work beyond it but only to work within it and be aware of what I was part of doing.

- Children should have their confidentiality respected. Children’s secrets should be kept.

At the same time the researcher has a responsibility to be clear with all children that there are some things that they might tell the researcher that cannot be kept confidential

and must be reported to prevent harm/more harm coming to the child. Researchers should be aware that talking can become counselling and they need to be prepared for this and sensitive to the needs of the child.

All the children I taped reading and talking to me were told that no-one else would hear the tape and that their name would be changed if I showed anyone what they said. If a child told me anything that was personal or a secret I checked about who else knew what they had told me and whether it was to stay a secret. I respected the child's wishes if they said that they did want something to remain a secret. At no time did any of the children tell me anything that had to be reported because of statutory rules within the LEA etc. However, there were a few occasions when children told me things in confidence that, had I been able to tell someone e.g. the teacher, a situation in school might have been improved for the child (for example, see Chapter Six and the issues of Tumi and her 'cheating at reading'. In this case I respected Tumi's decision that nothing should be said to her teachers). These were hard situations to keep quiet in but I did respect the wishes of the children concerned and, after discussing it with them again, did not say anything to their teachers.

4.1.9 Research ethics

Adults were also research participants in this study. The guidelines that I developed from Boyden and Ennew (1997) and Alderson (1995) for research with children also applied to the adults who took part in the research. I also used the Guidelines published by BERA (1992) and those of the British Sociological Association Statement of Ethical Practice, specifically the section on 'Relations with and responsibilities towards research participants' (British Sociological Association, 2002). All of the adult identities have been anonymised and I have endeavoured to leave out any specific details about an adult or family that could reveal their identity. In a county that has so few minority ethnic people, bilingual language assistants and visiting EAL teachers it was impossible to keep people's identities

anonymous by just changing their names. For this reason neither the county nor the city are named in this thesis and the children's parents are referred to as 'X's dad', 'Y's mother' and so on. I have also left out personal details about people unless I felt that such information was important to the argument being made and that the person could not be identified. I have been careful throughout not to betray family confidences.

4.2 The Research Site

4.2.1 The County

The county chosen for the research was one in which Bangladeshi pupils, ethnic minority pupils and English as an Additional Language pupils made up only a small proportion of the pupils attending the county's schools. The decision to look at Bangladeshi children in this context was made because nearly all the previous research on these three (overlapping) groups of children had been conducted in inner-city, urban areas where ethnic minority, EAL (and in some cases Bangladeshi e.g. Gregory's later work) children made up the majority of pupils in some schools. I was interested in understanding the issues, and what was going on, in a context where EAL and ethnic minority children were a 'minority' presence in a school (and in an LEA) as this was a more common experience for both pupils and teachers. In England 80% of schools have less than 5% EAL pupils and 66% of all schools have less than 5% ethnic minority pupils. Only 4% of schools have more than 50% of EAL pupils and only 6% of schools have a majority of ethnic minority pupils (DfEE Statistical Bulletin no3/99 from website 1999). On the other hand 33% of all primary schools, and 50% of all secondary schools, have at least one EAL pupil and 75% of all primary schools and 95% of all secondary schools have ethnic minority pupils (DfEE, 1999). The experiences of these pupils and teachers remains under-researched.

The county was a sparsely populated¹⁰ rural county of approximately 798,000 people (mid-2001)¹¹ with many small village schools and people travelling to the larger towns and city¹² to access many services and resources. I was aware, from professional experience, that implementing policy initiatives and statutory requirements from the government and the DfEE (now the DfES) could not always be achieved in the same ways as in large urban areas and that many educational policy directives were designed for implementation in an urban area. This was especially true of initiatives and policy concerned with ethnic minority pupils and EAL pupils (e.g. Section 11 funding and, its replacement, the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant).

The county chosen was also one that was predominantly 'white' in terms of the ethnicity of its population. Moving around the county and speaking with people it felt like a county in which this population tended not to have much contact with people from other parts of the world and subsequently not very much (accurate) information about how lives are lived in other parts of the world. In terms of racism and 'race' issues, a research report, by the local Race Equality Council, demonstrated that while the dominant view of the White population in the county was that 'there is no problem here' there were widespread racist attitudes and behaviour across the county.

Table One: Percentage of people in different ethnic groups in the county 2001

<i>White:</i>	British	97.02%
<i>White:</i>	Other White	1.46%
<i>White:</i>	Irish	0.45%

¹⁰ 1.5 people per hectare compared to London's 46.1 people per hectare
¹¹ all figures and information about the economy from the county council website
¹² 38% of the population lived in three major built up areas, 18% live in market towns, 20% lived in parishes of under 1,000 people, 4% live in parishes of under 300 people.

<i>Mixed:</i>	White and Asian	0.15%
<i>Mixed:</i>	Other	0.14%
<i>Asian, Asian British:</i>	Indian	0.12%
<i>Mixed:</i>	White and Black Caribbean	0.10%
<i>Asian, Asian British:</i>	Other Asian	0.07%
<i>Mixed:</i>	White and Black African	0.06%
<i>Asian, Asian British:</i>	Pakistani	0.05%
<i>Asian, Asian British:</i>	Bangladeshi	0.02%

Adapted from Census 2001 (figures rounded up so do not equal 100%)

The census figures show how small the percentage of people defined as belonging to the various ethnic minority groups was in 2001 when the research was undertaken. They also show that Bangladeshis made up the smallest group. The ethnic minority population of the county was highly disparate and from a wide range of backgrounds. There were historical connections in the county with refugees and travellers. The Asian population became established during the 1960s and 1970s when men moved into the county to open Chinese and Indian takeaways and restaurants. Indian takeaways and restaurants, as in most of England, are run by Bangladeshis. People had also moved to area because of other work opportunities, for example at the university and the hospital (Race Equality Council Report).

A final reason for choosing this county to conduct my research in was that I had lived in it for four years before the research began and had been visiting it since 1983. I had also worked for the LEA of this county (as a peripatetic language support teacher) and had many contacts with LEA advisors, school heads, the Language Support Service, teachers, classroom assistants and Bangladeshi families. I felt that this not only offered me ease of access in the sense that I was already known (and trusted in my previous role) in the county but that I could also bring my knowledge of it, and how things worked, to bear on my research design and methods in the sense that I would not have to spend a lot of time

gathering basic information and finding my way around before focusing in on what I was interested in gathering data on.

4.2.3.1 Ethnic minority and EAL pupils in the county

The numbers of ethnic minority pupils attending school in the county could not be accurately gauged at the time of the research (or before) because there was not a statutory requirement for schools to give information about pupil's ethnicity to LEAs or central government until September 2001. In the summer of 1999, schools were asked to give such information and on a return of 64% it was calculated that 2.2% of the school population was made up of ethnic minority pupils (Head of Service, EAL).

A research report conducted in the mid-eighties found that the LEA at that time had no written policy about supporting ethnic minority pupils in school as it was considered that the small numbers of ethnic minority pupils present in the county precluded such provision. The report also found that there was little communication between the LEA and schools regarding multi-racial issues and that LEA and school officials were working with the assumption that the only problem that ethnic minority pupils faced in county schools was acquiring English. The research report found that this was not the case and that all the ethnic minority pupils interviewed experienced name calling and racism in their daily lives in school, a fact not recognised by their teachers. This finding was also confirmed by the Race Equality Report referred to earlier.

According to an LEA official interviewed before I began the fieldwork, events in the late 1990s had done much to change the situation with regard to policy and provision for ethnic minority pupils in the county. The Lawrence Inquiry, the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant, the shift of funding into schools and away from LEAs, the LEA Development Plans and the Literacy and Numeracy Hours had all raised the profile of underachievement, ethnic

minority pupils and racism in schools and led to ‘a fluid rapidly changing situation’. The LEA was attempting to monitor ethnic minority achievement in schools and had introduced policies concerning multi-cultural and anti-racist curricula as well as anti-racist policies.

Again, because there was no requirement for schools to report the numbers of EAL pupils they had on roll, it was not possible to find an accurate figure for how many EAL pupils there were at school in the county at the time of the research. The only figures available were for those EAL pupils who were being supported by the EAL service at that time. In September 2000, 483 were supported by the EAL service in 130 schools. Many of these pupils (n=121) were asylum seekers who arrived in the county during the period April 1999 to September 2000. The 483 EAL pupils who were supported by the EAL service came from seventy-five different countries of origin and spoke fifty languages between them.. 52% of the EAL pupils supported in the county were complete beginners.

Of the EAL pupils in the county schools supported by the EAL Service, the Head of Service considered Bangladeshi pupils, Punjabi Pakistani pupils and Hong Kong Chinese pupils to be ‘at risk’ of not doing well in school based on local patterns of achievement (using SATs). The Service supported approximately 75% of Bangladeshi pupils in the county whilst only supporting approximately 30% of the other ‘at risk’ group of Hong Kong Chinese pupils.

4.2.2 Access

After deciding on the county in which to conduct my research, my approach was next to identify the pupils to be included in the study. As there were only a small number of Bangladeshi pupils within the county and, except for a core of Bangladeshi families living in the county's one city, these pupils were widely dispersed.

I began identifying the pupils that I could include in my research as the case study children in March 2000 during a visit to the city to set up the pilot study for the research. I consulted with a Bangladeshi bilingual assistant working in the county, who had previously been a work colleague, about Bangladeshi pupils in Primary schools in the county. I needed to find out at this point if there were enough Y3 pupils in the county and where they were for my research design to be viable. During April, May and July I consulted with Language Support teachers, with heads of schools and with Bangladeshi families to get more information about where there were Bangladeshi pupils attending primary schools in the county. This information had to be gathered in this way as, as noted above, the LEA did not hold this kind of information centrally.

By the end of July I felt that I had as accurate picture as was possible. My investigations revealed that there were approximately fifty-seven Bangladeshi pupils in total at school in the county. Of these thirty-nine were in First/Middle school and eighteen were in Secondary school. There were exactly six Bangladeshi children in Y3 in the county and they were attending three schools in the county's city. It was decided to approach these three schools and the six families to see if I could get permission to do my research with them.

4.2.3 The city

The city, in which the six Y3 children were attending school, had a population of approximately 121,550 (Census 2001). It had a higher percentage employment in the service sector, in media printing and publishing than the UK average. However, earnings were on average below that of the county and of the UK and the unemployment rate slightly higher. Other key employers were financial services (twice as many people were employed in this sector than in other parts of the UK), electronics, engineering, food-related industries and tourism. Tourism was the fastest growing industry in the city (from www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk).

The city was described, on a city website, as one of historic beauty in an area of recognised natural beauty. As well as museums, historic monuments, arts centres, a market, a theatre and a few cobbled streets it also had a cathedral, a university, a BBC presence, two local radio stations, two daily papers, café bars, a shopping mall and a large vibrant shopping centre. This cathedral city had a visible middle class and employment by major occupation figures showed that over a third of the workforce were employed as managers, administrators or in professional occupations (Labour Force Survey March 2000 to Feb 2001 ([www.statistics.gov.uk /themes/labour_market](http://www.statistics.gov.uk/themes/labour_market))).

However, the city also had pockets of urban deprivation and there were higher rates per 1,000 of the population for crime against the person, sexual offences, burglary from dwelling and theft from motor vehicles (www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk).

As with the county, the city was a very ‘White’ city. Compared with figures for England the city had a smaller percentage of ethnic minority people living within it than was present in the English population.

Table Two: Percentage of resident population in ethnic groups

	The City	England
White*	96.8	90.9
Mixed*	1.1	1.3
Asian or Asian British*	0.9	4.6
Black or Black British*	0.4	2.3
Chinese or Other*	0.9	0.9

Source: 2001 Census

*figures not given for breakdown of these categories as in county profile

Bangladeshi people had been present in the city since the 1960s when men began to arrive to establish 'Indian' takeaways and restaurants. The men often came from other parts of Britain whilst their wives came from Bangladesh and joined their husbands in the city after marriage. Some of their children were born in Bangladesh although many of the younger children were born in the city. Widowed mothers, and sometimes fathers, in Bangladesh often moved to the city to join their family and be supported by them. The men nearly all worked in the restaurant trade in the city and the women raised the family and took care of running the home. Bangladeshi families who lived in the city did not all live close to each other, there was not a part of the city that was perceived as where Bangladeshi families live. The families were scattered around the city and there was no Bangladeshi Community Association. A room over one of the restaurants was used as a Mosque for many years until a Mosque was opened during the research year. Families were linked by marriages and the current 'parents' of school-aged children are often brothers and sisters and thus their children were cousins. People also had connections because of ties with particular villages and towns in the Sylhet region of Bangladesh¹³.

4.2.3.1 Ethnic minority and EAL pupils in the city

The information concerning ethnic minority and EAL pupils in the county applies here as the LEA did not make a distinction in its data collection between the county and the city. The city did have more ethnic minority pupils and EAL pupils attending its schools than the other towns and villages in the county (with the exception of one town which received many asylum seekers from 1999). However, it was not the case that the schools in the city were all used to receiving EAL and ethnic minority pupils and felt experienced in doing this.

Only a few schools located close to the hospital, the city centre and the university were in this position.

4.2.4 Access to schools

All three schools were approached in July 2000. A letter was sent to the head of the school¹⁴ and this was followed by a visit to the school and an interview with the head or deputy head. I knew one of the schools (Parkway) very well as I had worked for half a morning a week in this school as a Language support teacher in 1995-1996. One school (Sandhill) I knew a little as I had assessed one child in the school in 1995 and liaised with the school concerning his learning plan for the rest of that academic year. The other school (Bailey) was unknown to me, I had never worked there nor conducted any assessments there and I did not know any of the teaching staff in the school.

All three schools agreed immediately to be involved in the research and time was spent in the initial interview confirming who the Bangladeshi pupils in Year Three were. Time was also spent discussing key issues regarding confidentiality, access to the classrooms and teachers and the role I would play in the school. All three schools were happy with my participant observer role. In August I sent the schools a letter which explicitly laid out what I wanted to do and what role I would play and went through this document with both the heads and the teachers, whose classes I was going to be in, at the beginning of the school year¹⁵. I made sure that there was an opportunity for all of the teachers involved to speak to

¹³ Information about Bangladeshi migration to the UK and the settlement of Bangladeshis in England is presented in Appendix 3

¹⁴ see Appendix 4

¹⁵ see Appendix 5

me in private and in confidence about any uncertainty they had and to say that they also agreed to be involved in the research (and not just directed by their head to take part and to allow me access).

4.2.5 Access to the children and their families

Having received permission to conduct the research in the three schools by the end of the academic year I then needed to contact the parents of the six children and explain the research project and ask their permission for me to include their children in the research as well as to ask the permission of the six children themselves. I had not approached the families to tell them what I wished to do or to ask their permission before I received permission from the schools in case I raised expectations amongst the families and then found that the school said no. This would have been difficult to explain to the families and could have led to bad feeling between the families and the school if the parents had been very keen to have their children included and the school had refused permission.

Of the six families that I wished to approach concerning the research, I knew three very well as I had worked with the families and their older children when I had been employed as a peripatetic language support co-ordinator by the LEA. I had visited these families on many occasions both for work and also socially (for meals or to watch videos). The other three families I did not know at all. I had never worked with any of the children and I did not know any of these families socially.

In terms of seeking permission, I was only confident that one parent was fluent enough in the kind of English I needed to use to explain the project and how their child would be involved for me to speak to without an interpreter. For this reason, and because I wanted to

be absolutely sure that the other parents understood exactly what I was doing and could therefore give (or withhold) their permission as fully informed persons, I asked a Bangladeshi ex-work colleague who knew me and the families very well, to act as an interpreter. I chose this person carefully as I didn't want to use a stranger as this would have been too formal but at the same time I wanted to use somebody that the families could be honest with and state their concerns or questions through. My ex-work colleague was known, respected and trusted by the families and had acted as an interpreter for them (and me) before. I knew from working together with her that the families were able to say no to things or ask for more information and so on. We were also used to having formal and informal discussions with families together and had developed over the years quite a good flow between languages and leaving spaces for others to speak in.

I had to wait until the beginning of September 2000 for my ex-work colleague to be free so that we could visit the families to ask their permission. Before we did this I spent an evening with my colleague and went through the project with her and explained what I needed to say in the visits to the families and answered her questions¹⁶. We made the visits to the families, in their homes, in the first two weeks of September as the school year was beginning. All the families agreed to be involved and were happy for their children to be a focus of my observations and enquiry especially since my interest was in reading and learning and the children's success in school; they were all concerned that their child should do well in school. I conducted one of these permission visits on my own (to the one parent with whom I could communicate in English). On this visit the daughter of my ex-work colleague came along to see her friend (the child I wanted to include in the research) as well as one of the other children I had already sought permission for and from. They enthusiastically joined in my explanation of the project which reassured me that we had been explaining things clearly during the other permission visits and that these children felt

positive about and unthreatened by the project. I asked all the families to sign a permission slip so that I could show the schools that I had parental permission and what exactly I had parental permission to do¹⁷.

During my visit to the homes I also spoke to the children and asked them what they thought. I followed this up by talking to the children when they were away from their parents and on their own with me during my first few days in school to find out if they did feel comfortable with my presence in the classroom and with my use of the tape recorder when they were reading. The children all said that they were although one child, Attar, was concerned about the tape recorder and this was not used in the beginning. The other children loved being taped and listening to themselves afterwards and Attar also changed his mind after the first few sessions of reading together when he realised he could listen to herself reading with me. A discussion about doing research with children and the ethical issues involved appears above.

4.2.6 The case study children

The six case study children were:

Tumi, a girl, who was attending Parkway School (dob 31/7/93)

Rahul, a boy, who was attending Parkway School (dob 16/2/93)

Reena, a girl, who was attending Bailey School (dob 22/11/92)

Attar, a boy, who was attending Bailey School (dob 24/9/92)

Afia, a girl, who was attending Sandhill School (dob 8/1/93)

Faiza, a girl, who was attending Sandhill School (dob 7/1/93)

¹⁶ see appendix 6 for the checklist of things to cover that I used for parental permission.

¹⁷ see appendix 7 for a copy of the parental permission letter that was signed by all the families.

All of the case study children were seven years old at the beginning of the research year and were eight years old by the end of the research year.

Although I was researching the total population of Year Three Bangladeshi pupils and had not sampled to get my six case study children, I did have a good balance between children I knew in advance of the research (n=3) and children I did not (n=3) and between older children in the year and younger children in the year. The balance between children living in the north of the city (n=4) and the south of the city (n=2) was also good as this seemed to reflect the ratio of families with young children living in both parts of the city.

Unfortunately, the 'total population' gave me more girls than boys (4 compared to 2) but as the research design had never intended to work with numbers large enough for me to present any confirmable evidence of gender difference this did not seem a big weakness. I felt that it was still possible with the four girls and two boys I had in my study to be aware of how gender and assumptions about gender may affect the children's experiences as they went about school and school went about them.

4.3 The Conduct of the Research and Data Analysis

4.3.1 The fieldwork year

The fieldwork year can be summarised as follows:

Table Three: Outline of the Fieldwork Year

11/09/00 - 29/09/00	week 1 - 3	initial fieldwork in three schools, transcribing, parental permission, child permission 3 weeks
30/09/00 - 08/10/00	week 4 half term	in Oxford refining research design 1 week
09/10/00 - 24/11/00	week 5 - 11	fieldwork in schools, transcribing, reading data, first teacher interviews, interviews with heads, begin interviews with case study children's previous teachers. 7 weeks
25/11/00 - 14/01/01	week 12 - 18 Christmas	in Oxford, initial data analysis, refining research focus, reading 7 weeks

15/01/01 - 16/02/01	week 19 - 23	fieldwork in schools, transcribing, reading data, continue interviews with heads and previous teachers 5 weeks
17/02/01 - 25/02/01	week 24 half term	transcribing, reading data 1 week
26/02/01 - 01/04/01	week 25 - 29	fieldwork in schools, transcribing, reading data, continue interviews with heads and previous teachers, introduce different reading activities to children to find out what they know about reading, introduce Friendship cards to find out about friendship groups in each class, start to gather information from case study children's files, interview EAL staff, start visiting case study children at home, start interviewing siblings of case study children and where possible observing them in class. 5 weeks
02/04/01 - 11/05/01	week 30 - 35 Easter	in Oxford, transcribing, further data analysis, finding gaps in data 6 weeks
12/05/01 - 25/05/01	week 36 - 37	fieldwork in schools, reading data, filling gaps in data 2 weeks
26/05/01 - 03/06/01	week 38 half term	transcribing, reading data 1 week
04/06/01 - 20/07/01	week 39 - 45	fieldwork in schools, reading data, filling gaps in data, parental interviews, second teacher interviews 7 weeks

In total 29 weeks were spent in the schools conducting the fieldwork during the course of the school year (which is 37 weeks in total; schools are ‘open’ for 38 weeks but 5 days are training days when pupils do not attend).

During the first term in school (weeks 1 - 11) I collected data according to the focus questions referred to earlier. I transcribed as much as possible so that I could see the data as they were unfolding and could go back and clarify things people had said and find gaps and contradictory things. I was also able to hand people copies of their transcripts so that they could amend or add to things that they had said. Interestingly, many of the adults I interviewed did not want to see their transcript and those that did take a copy of it had nothing they wanted to change or add.

At first I, like many researchers entering the field, felt that there was either nothing remarkable or worthy of report appearing in my data. This began to change after week 7 when the data started to show some of the more complex things that were happening in the classrooms, how pupils were being understood by their teachers and the kinds of things that the case study children were having difficulty with in class. These are discussed in the next chapter.

During the Christmas break I took the opportunity to catch up with all the transcribing, to read through all the data that I had gathered and to then reread it and start coding it using headings. I also organised the data so that I knew where to find things and wrote indexes. Before I returned to the schools, I made myself checklists for the coming term so that I was confident about what I was observing and asking about and could address any gaps in the data I had already gathered (for example after going through all of my data I realised that I did not have very much data on Faiza and needed to focus on her).

During both the Easter and the Whitsun half term holiday, I went through the same process.

After the Whitsun holiday I went into schools at different times to see whether being present in the classroom at a different time in the school week and for a different subjects revealed any differences in what was going on. I found that by attending at a different time confirmed patterns and processes that I had observed during the rest of the year.

Parent interviews were also conducted at this time. For these interviews I used my ex-work colleague as an interpreter for three of the parent interviews (Rahul's mother, Reena's mother and Attar's mother) for the reasons outlined above. Two interviews (Faiza's mother and Tumi's father) I conducted myself as both parents could speak and understand the kind of English required for an interview. The sixth interview (Afia's mother) was conducted

with the three older sisters acting as interpreters (and commentators). I used an interview check list for these interviews to help me remember what I wanted to find out about¹⁸.

However, there was space left for the conversation to unfold in other ways. Afia's mother was happy to have the interview taped because of the presence of her daughters, however, all the other parents were not comfortable with the use of a tape recorder and I made notes as people were speaking and added to these as soon as the interview was over.

4.3.2 The interview schedules

Interview schedules were also created for teacher interviews, previous teacher interviews, headteacher interviews, children interviews and EAL teacher interviews. These consisted of a battery of potential questions that could be explored during an interview and over the course of the fieldwork year. The questions were generated by my research question and from other pieces of research that I was aware of that had some similarities to my own. As I came to conduct interviews I consulted these schedules and made myself an interview checklist from the questions or ideas that seemed most appropriate considering the stage of the research and what was emerging from observations (or from what had emerged in previous interviews)¹⁹.

4.3.3 Record keeping and organisation

Fieldnotes were read through each day after returning from school, annotated where required

and filed. Tapes of children reading and talking were transcribed as soon as possible afterwards so that I did not lose track of what children had told me and so that I could keep focusing on and refining what I was observing and asking about. These transcripts were also filed and indexed. Tapes of adults were transcribed as soon as was possible and

¹⁸ See appendix 8 for parent interview checklist.

¹⁹ See appendix 9 for these interview checklists.

transcripts were passed back to the adults for their comments. These transcriptions were also filed and indexed. A filing system was created. Each case study child had a file, each group of six additional readers had a file, each class had a file and each school had a file. Records were kept of coding categories as these developed. A research journal was kept during the fieldwork year and afterwards, recording what had been done in each week, any problems that needed sorting out and any emerging ideas or patterns.

Number of interviews:

58 interviews with the case study children (n=6)

48 interviews with other pupils in the three classrooms (n=16)

17 interviews with teachers (n=15)

3 interviews with headteachers (n=3)

3 interviews with older siblings (n=3)

6 interviews with parents (n=6)

Number of class observations:

67 classroom observations (n=3)

4.3.4 Data analysis

Data were analysed during the fieldwork period and after the field work had been completed as is the norm in qualitative research studies (Bishop 1999; Wiseman 1974). My intention as I undertook the analysis was to deal with the data systematically. Creswell describes data analysis in qualitative research as a process which passes through five stages. First there is a stage of data management where the researcher organises the data, then there is a stage of getting a sense of the data through reading. This is followed by a stage of describing, classifying and interpreting the data. The next stage is that of representing and

visualising the data. The final stage is producing an account. He does not represent the process as a linear process, however, but as that of a spiral.

to analyse qualitative data, the researcher engages in the process of moving in analytic circles rather than using a fixed linear approach. One enters with data of text or images...and exits with an account or a narrative. In between, the researcher touches on several facets of analysis and circles around and around.

(Creswell, 1998: 142 –143)

As outlined in the section above, the first two stages of Creswell's process were undertaken from the first weeks in the classrooms through the creation of filing and indexing systems, through the practice of reading through the data each evening and through listening to and transcribing any interview tapes as they were recorded. (At this point, and for all of the interviews conducted, tapes were transcribed in their entirety). In addition, the notes and annotations I added to the data as I read or transcribed during these early days took the process on towards the third stage of describing and classifying the data. During November and December, especially during the Christmas holidays, the data were reread and the first set of headings or categories were created and used to annotate the transcripts and fieldnotes.

From December onwards each transcription of a tape and each set of observation notes had an 'of interest' sheet attached to it indicating what data were of interest and why. This was in addition to any annotations within the texts. Between December and July, when the fieldwork finished, I also undertook to write mini-case studies for each of the case study children based on the data I had gathered to that point to see what kind of details and themes were emerging and to see what kinds of gaps, inconsistencies or puzzling details were contained in the data. These mini-case studies were written in December, March and June.

4.3.4.1 Category Headings

By the time all the transcribing of interview and reading tapes was completed in February 2002 I had simplified the categories that I was going to use to organise and continue to analyse the data for each of the case study children. These headings, which are outlined below, arose out of a reading of the data and also out of the Literature Review that I had undertaken. As a result of the focus on learning to read in most of the literature on Bangladeshi pupils (Blackledge, 1999; Gregory et al., 1996) I had questions which focused on reading and so one of my headings for organising and analysing data was ‘Reading’. I was also interested in looking at the children in other aspects of their school life and learning and so the headings ‘Learner’, ‘Social’ and ‘Experiences’ emerged. The Literature Review had also directed me to considering teachers’ responses to pupils and so the heading ‘Interactions’ and ‘Teacher Accounts’ emerged for this data. A key explanation for the poor performance of EAL pupils in schools was linked to language need and teachers’ understandings of pupils’ language needs. Thus the heading ‘Language’ emerged. Some of this data was also included in the category ‘Teacher Accounts’. Thus the headings arose out of the Literature Review and the questions generated there. The headings were organisational ones which allowed me to explore a more inclusive picture of each child than the research which had only focused on reading or set allocation and so on.

Table Four: Headings Used to Organise and Analyse the Data

Headings:	Type of information included:
Interactions	Child putting hand up on carpet, child contact with teacher and peers and vica versa – in classroom setting; taking part in class activities.
Playground	Playtime friends and behaviour, feelings about playtime, experiences at playtime.
Experiences	How child feels about school; activities in school e.g. trips out of school; things that happen in school e.g. misbehaviour, punishments, racism; taking medicine; friends – feelings about friends, feeling included or left out, friends cards; things children do in school and how they feel about it e.g. cookery club.
Language	Examples of children explaining something; children asking for the meaning of vocabulary; children not understanding vocabulary; examples of teachers’ language in the classroom; children asking for help with writing.

Learner/Strategies	What the child perceives themselves to be good at; what child perceives other people to be good at etc; how children go about learning or about completing a task; groups children are placed in; targets set for children by teacher; child interacting with environment (e.g. looking out of the window on the bus); support offered within the classroom; how long child has spent in school.
Reading	What child does when they read; what kinds of reading take place in the classroom; what the child reads and who with and when; reading performance; strategies used when reading; what child knows about reading; reading practices and experiences outside school.
Pre-Year 3	Any information gathered from school documents, from interviews with children, teachers and previous teachers and with parents. This category was abandoned in July 2002 and the information placed in the appropriate category available e.g. information about pre-Year 3 reading was placed in the category 'Reading'.
Home	Any information about the child's home life and life outside school; information about parents and siblings; parents and siblings views, experiences and perspectives.
Teacher Accounts	All teacher interviews were placed in this category (this included current teachers, previous teachers, headteachers, support teachers and specialist EAL teachers). This was so that the ways accounts of each child were constructed could be analysed. Information from teacher accounts was also placed in other categories where appropriate e.g. a teacher's comments on a child's reading ability were also included in the Reading category.
General	Attendance; test results.

From February to May I cut and pasted the data from transcripts and fieldnotes so that they appeared under one or more than one of the above categories. I kept the data in date-order within each category. When this was completed I read through the data for each child again, this time ordered under the category headings, and underlined important or intriguing data, data which seemed to have parallels with data elsewhere, data which was puzzling. I also annotated the data and wrote memos and summaries to myself. When this had been completed for all six children I read through the data in the same order again but this time using my underlinings and annotations to write full length notes for each category using the heading 'What can I say about X child and x category?' For example, 'What can I say about Rahul and reading?', 'What can I say about Afia and language?'

The teacher accounts were analysed a little differently. As I was interested in considering how the teachers constructed their accounts of pupils²⁰, and made sense of their pupils, I used the following headings or questions to work through and analyse the transcripts of teacher comments about pupils and teacher interviews.

‘How does --- represent ---?’

(e.g. ‘How does Miss Birch -the teacher represent Attar -the pupil?’)

‘How does --- come to assess ---’s achievement?’

‘How does --- see --- as a learner?’

‘What does --- offer --- in the classroom?’

I went through every teacher account for all six case study pupils in this way answering the same questions. In each case I was careful to pay attention to the language and the construction of the account provided by the teacher and to conserve these aspects of the account in the answering of the questions.

During this process of working through the data using headings and questions I also started to represent the data to myself by producing schematic diagrams for each of the case study children based on the patterns and themes that were emerging. These were worked on and added to during the next months and provided the foundation for the written case studies.

Data analysis took place during the fieldwork, after the fieldwork and continued to take place during the writing of the thesis. During all of this time I was immersed in the data; reading it, listening to it, thinking it; talking it and writing it (Hudson, 1999: 124).

²⁰ I was influenced in this by the work of D E Smith.

4.3.5 Research integrity

In an effort to conduct and present a research study that has integrity²¹ the following strategies were used during the data collection and analysis:

Triangulation:

I have striven to use multiple sources of data by combining interview, observation and the collection and analysis of documents to explore and confirm emerging findings. I have been sensitive to when triangulation has produced data that are consistent and data that are contradictory and used this as a means of reflection and questioning of my ideas as well as a means of constructing 'plausible explanations about the phenomena being studied' (Mathison 1988: 17 cited in Merriam, 1988).

Long-term observation in the three research sites:

A year was spent following the children through their lives in school. Not only was intensive time spent in the classrooms in the role of participant observer but I accompanied the children to assemblies, into the playground, to classes in other classrooms with other teachers and on school trips. I also spent time in school outside of lessons in the staffroom, in staff meetings, in the school office and generally wandering about. I took the time to visit other classrooms in the school and spend time there with other children and teachers. I visited the research children in their homes and in one case accompanied the family on more than one shopping

²¹ I am not comfortable with using the words 'validity' or 'reliability' here as these have terms already have clear meanings imputed to them within the positivist paradigm which are not appropriate for this context. Alternative terms to replace positivist 'truth' terms e.g. Lincoln and Guba's 'credibility', 'transferability', 'dependability' and 'confirmability' (Lincoln and Guba 1985) and Kvale's ideas about 'validity' (Kvale 1996) are more useful and I chose the word 'integrity' from this work to use here. In the section that follows in which I outline the things I did during the course of the research to further the integrity of the study, I use many of the ideas outlined by Lincoln & Guba 1985; Merriam 1988 ; Kvale 1996; Goertz and Le Compte 1984; Eisenhart & Howe 1992 as alternatives to positivist 'truth' terms.

trip. I lived in the city in which the research took place for the year of the fieldwork and have lived there on other occasions.

Peer examination:

I have presented up-dates to fellow students and professional researchers into what I was doing and finding in my research on a regular basis since the inception of the research design through to the writing up. Some of these have been within my department whilst others have been at professional conferences. Papers for comment have been presented at these conferences. In this way I have opened up the research and the analysis to peer examination and comment as the research has progressed. I also gave all the adults I interviewed the opportunity to see and comment upon transcripts. The children were able to listen to the tapes that I recorded and watch themselves on the videos that were made. In two cases the children requested copies of audio tapes of their 'interviews and reading sessions' to keep and these were provided.

Researcher's biases and reflexivity:

My theoretical assumptions are clearly articulated in the theory section of this thesis and attention is drawn, throughout the thesis, to the assumptions and expectations that I entered the field with, and held and modified during the course of the fieldwork and analysis, . Throughout the fieldwork and analysis I was obliged by the nature of my research strategy to go back to my data and to ask and explore what I was finding and to be aware of my own assumptions and expectations as I did this. This was particularly so at the beginning of the fieldwork when I discovered that none of the children I had 'drawn' in my 'total population sample' were considered to be underachieving in school. This is discussed in the next chapter.

Providing a rich, thick description:

This thesis attempts to provide the reader with enough detail and description so that such a reader can make judgements for themselves about the transferability and the integrity of the findings.

Conducting cross-site and cross-case analysis:

I included six children in the study, in three different classrooms in three different schools in different parts of the city. I also included in my observations and regular interviews sixteen other White, monolingual children from the same classrooms as my research children. I did this to prevent myself making sweeping generalisations and coming to too-quick conclusions about the experiences of Bangladeshi children in school. As a result I was required to explore my data carefully before making a case for any description or explanation.

Using and following participant's language for interview questions and discussions:

I endeavoured during all of the interviewing to use the language that the interviewee used and to follow through their accounts of something rather than impose a language and a framework on the information we were exploring. This was especially pertinent when interviewing the children but I considered it important when interviewing adults too. This meant that I avoided imposing definitions of 'achievement' on interviewees or accept as shared the meanings of words like 'bright' or 'doing well' but asked people to share with me how they understood the terms if they used them.

4.4 Conclusions

In this chapter I have endeavoured to state clearly the research aims and the research question, to set out the research design, strategy, methods and theoretical assumptions and to discuss issues connected to the undertaking of social research, namely the effects of 'race' on the research process and the ethical dimensions of research.

I have also explained the reasons for the research site, and given some background to the county and city in which the research took place. I have described the process of gaining access to the research sites and to parents, schools and children. I have then gone on to discuss the ways in which the research was conducted and the data analysed. The chapter finishes with a short discussion about research integrity.

The following chapter will give a brief introduction to the schools and teachers and will describe the early days of data gathering and analysis.

Chapter Five

Setting the Scene

5.1 Introduction

This short chapter introduces the schools and teachers and gives some contextual information about how the three research classrooms were organised. The chapter also gives the case study children's SAT results for the end of Key Stage One (tests the children had taken during the term previous to the research) and shows how none of the case study children were considered to be underachieving at the beginning of the research year.

5.2 The Schools and the Teachers

The research was conducted in three classrooms in three schools. In this section the three schools are briefly introduced together with the class teachers of the case study pupils. All three schools had been built approximately one hundred years before but had either had substantial internal restructuring or had been built on to in the last thirty years. They were clean, pleasant environments with children's work on the walls, books on display and artefacts to be looked at in the corridors.

All three schools were considered to be 'good schools' by the LEA according to an LEA officer (22/9/00) and all had good Ofsted reports.

5.2.1 Bailey School

The school was situated within a local authority housing estate approximately 0.8 miles north-east of the city centre. The majority of the children at the school come from this estate and another estate close by. The school intake also included children from families living in

the mostly small, privately owned turn-of-the-century terraced housing within the school catchment area. Some children come from outside the catchment area. Within the catchment area there was also a permanent winter site for Showman Guild families and there was a long tradition of fairground, traveller families attending the school. In 2000/01 there were five traveller children attending the school. The school had a number of Bangladeshi families living in its catchment area and as these were young families there had been an increase in the number of Bangladeshi pupils coming into the school. During 2000/01 there were twelve Bangladeshi pupils attending the school. The only other EAL children attending the school were European asylum children. The percentage of EAL children in the school, including the nursery, was 5.5%, the percentage of children defined as ethnic minority children in the school was 3.7% (School PANDA).

Statistics for the ward show that 4% of the resident population were unemployed (compared with 4.1% for the city and 3.4% for England and Wales: National Statistics, 2001 Census). The headteacher of the school reported that the school 'probably had one of the broadest cross sections you could possibly get...we have parents who are professionals as well as families from really disadvantaged homes where they are really struggling to make ends meet financially, where life is tough' (25/6/01). The head teacher also reported that she felt that the parent community was 'wonderfully supportive' of the school (25/6/01). In terms of pupil mobility, the headteacher reported that the more middle class parents tended to move to other parts of the city as they had more children or earned more money so 'we do tend to lose our more professional groups' (25/6/01).

In September 2000 the school had 252 children on its roll. In the year 2000/01 39% of the children in the school received free school meals (compared with a county figure of 16% and a national figure of 20%). The attendance rate in the school year 1999/01 was 93% which was in line with county and national figures.

The school SAT results for Key Stage 1 in summer 2000 showed that the percentage of Year 2 children that gained Level 2s was higher than the county and national average in all subjects (Reading, Writing and Maths) and higher than the national average for Maths at Level 3. The percentage of children only gaining a Working Towards Level or a Level 1 was below that of the national average in all subjects (no figures for the county). The school won a Dfee School Achievement Award for a substantial improvement in results in 2000.

During the school year I spent Monday mornings and Thursday afternoons in the school. At the end of the school year I changed the times I went into school to on Thursday afternoons.

5.2.2 Parkway School

The school was situated on the north edge of the city centre, with shops and restaurants on one side and a residential area of traditional terraced houses on all the others. The catchment for this school was very established. Many of the families had lived in the locality for several generations in the rented or owner-occupied terraces. A small population in this area lived in local authority accommodation. In the ward 6.7% of the population were unemployed (compared with 4.1% in the city and 3.4% in England and Wales: National Statistics, 2001 Census). In the school year 1999/00 there were fifteen ethnic minority pupils and seven EAL pupils on the school roll.

In September 1999 the school had 225 children on roll. 28.8% of the pupils received free school dinners (compared with a figure of 16% for the county and 20% nationally). The attendance rate in the school year 1999/01 was 93% which was in line with the county and national rate.

The school SAT results for Key Stage 1 in summer 2000 showed that the percentage of Year 2 children that gained Level 2s was slightly lower than the national average for reading (81%

compared with 83%) but much higher than the national figure for writing and maths (90% versus 85% and 91% versus 80% respectively). The percentage of Year 2 pupils that gained a Level 3 in writing was also higher than the national average but the percentage that gained a Level 3 in maths and and reading was a little lower than the national average.

During the year I spent all day Tuesday in the school. At the end of the school year I changed the time I went into school to Thursday morning.

5.2.3 Sandhill School

The school was situated approximately 1.5 miles south-west of the city centre. It was close to both the city hospital and the university and parents who work on short term contracts at either institution sent their children to the school. Approximately 10.6% of the school's pupils were EAL pupils (predominantly European and Chinese pupils) and 11% were defined as ethnic minority pupils. Most of the the school's ethnic minority pupils came and went because of their parents' contracts. The exception to this were the Bangladeshi families who lived in the catchment area.

The catchment area of the school was made up of the small local authority housing estate behind the school and the large, often detached, middle class houses on the tree-lined roads typical of this side of the city. According to the headteacher, the children in the school came from a wide range of social backgrounds and included children who come to the school from outside the catchment area as it had a reputation as a good school. Ward statistics showed that 2.3% of the population were unemployed (compared with 4.1% for the city and 3.4% for England and Wales: National Statistics, 2001 Census)

In the school year 1999/00 there were 194 children on the school roll. 21% of pupils were entitled to free school meals (compared with 16% for the county and 20% nationally). The attendance rate for the school in 1999 was 93.7%.

The school SAT results for Key Stage 1 in summer 2000 showed that the percentage of Year 2 children that gained Level 2s was higher than the county and national averages for reading comprehension and writing but slightly lower for the reading task and maths. The percentage of children only gaining a Working Towards Level or a Level 1 was below that of the national average for Reading and for Writing but the percentage was higher for maths.

During the year I spent Wednesday and Thursday mornings in the school. At the end of the school year I changed the time I went into school to Friday morning.

By chance, when the new academic year began and I entered the schools to begin my research, I found that in all three schools both Bangladeshi pupils had been placed in the same class. All three schools claimed that this had happened by chance and they had not deliberately done this because of my research.

5.3 The teachers

5.3.1 Bailey School: Miss Birch and Mr Field

During the fieldwork year at Bailey the class was taught by a newly qualified teacher, Miss Birch, for the first term and then by the Deputy Head, Mr Field, for the rest of the year. Mr Field was an experienced primary school teacher. The class was supported by two Learning Assistants who were shared with other classes in the school.

5.3.2 Parkway School: Mrs Heatherly and Miss Gardner and Jill

The class was taught by Mrs Heatherly, with the support of a Learning Assistant, Jill, during the first two terms of the school year. The Learning Assistant was shared with other classes in the school. In the final term of the year a PGCE student, Miss Gardner, took the class,

supported and assisted by the class teacher and the same Learning Assistant. On Tuesday mornings one of the school's governors came to support in the class.

5.3.3 Sandhill School: Mrs Winter, Mrs Joseph and Mr Dickens

The class was taught by the Deputy Head, Mrs Winter, from Monday to Thursday and by another part-time teacher, Mrs Joseph, who came in just to take this class, on Friday. The part-time teacher worked as a supply teacher in the county for the rest of the week. This arrangement was to allow the Deputy Head to have one 'office day' a week to do her administrative work associated with being Deputy Head. There was also a Learning Assistant, Mrs Arger, attached to class who was also shared with other classes, a student from the local FE college, Jane, who was undertaking a placement in the school and a special needs support teacher, Mrs Hazel, who worked exclusively with Ben, one of the pupils in the class who had profound learning needs.

5.4 Organisation of the Research Classrooms

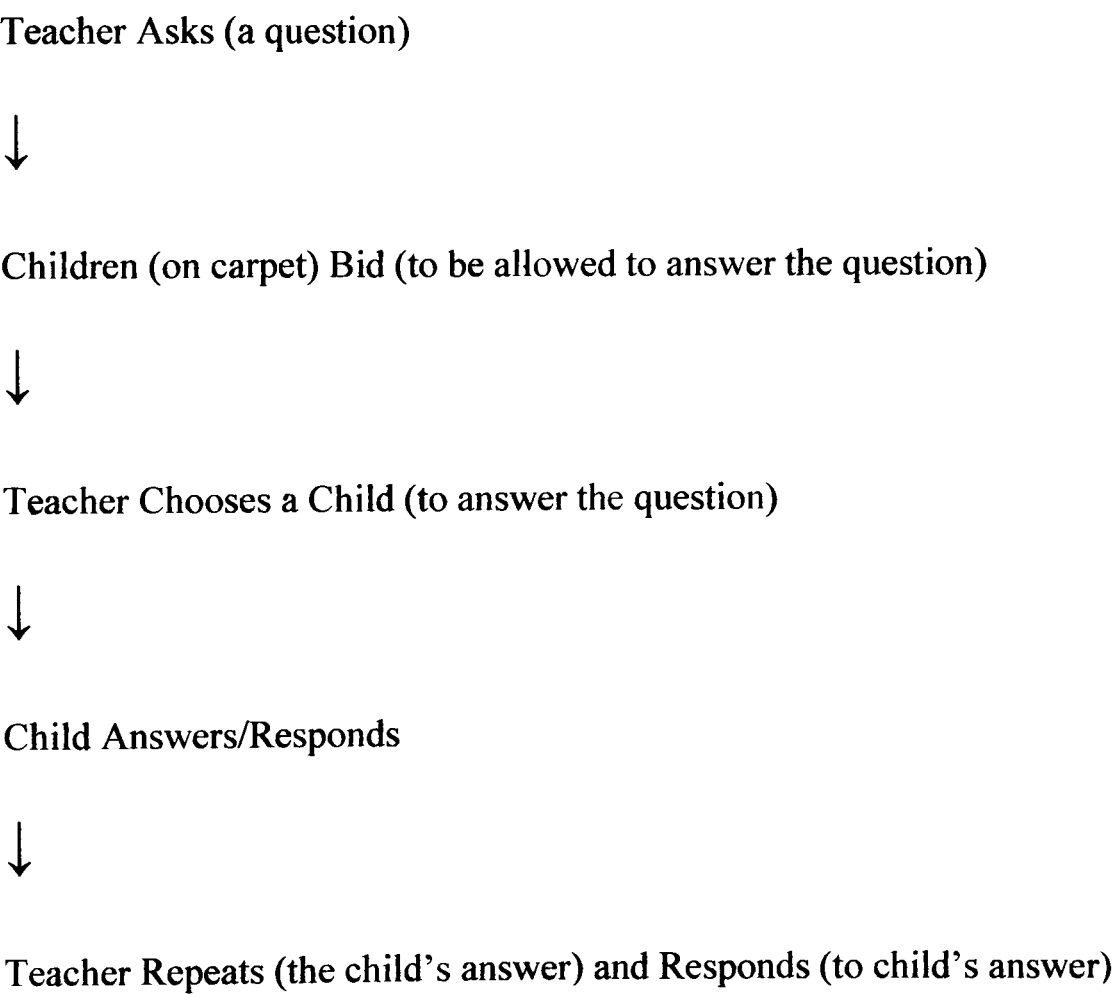
The three research classrooms were all organised around 'carpet time', where the children sat on the carpet and were talked to and taught by the class teacher, and working in groups at desks (which would be arranged in such a way in the classroom to provide for five or six groups) when specific tasks were given for the children to complete either independently or in their groups.

When children entered the three classrooms in the morning (with or without their parents) they usually played read or talked at their desks but then gathered on the carpet for the register and the first lesson of the day. All lessons and sessions (ie morning, after break, afternoon etc) began on the carpet with the teacher sitting at the front near a white board. In each lesson the children would receive 'whole class teaching' on the carpet until they were directed to go and sit in their groups at their desks to complete a task. The class usually

reconvened on the carpet at the end of the lesson to discuss what had been done or what was going to be done next. In all the classrooms, children were assigned to their groups by their teachers.

In all of the research classrooms the interactions between teachers and pupils, when working together in a whole class situation, followed the interaction patterns described by Meehan (1979). I had also observed these patterns during my pilot study.

The basic interaction pattern between teacher and pupils, whilst interacting during carpet time can be summarised as:



(adapted from Meehan 1979)

In this interaction pattern the term ‘bid’ is used to mean that the children raise their hands because they wish to be chosen to answer the teacher’s question. The teacher nominates a child to answer by either looking at a child and saying ‘Yes’ or by saying the name of a

child. The teacher responds to the child’s answer by saying something like ‘Good’ or ‘Yes’ (Meehan, 1979).

5.5 The Case Study Children’s SAT Results and Teacher Observations

The SAT results from the case study children’s Key Stage One tests, which the children had undertaken at the end of Year Two, showed that the case study children were not underachieving and appeared to be doing well in school (or would soon be doing very well in school). The children generally were average, or where they should be, in terms of their attainment when compared with their peers and with national results for Key Stage One results in Reading, Writing and Maths.

The following table shows the case study children’s SAT results.

The levels that pupils can gain in Key Stage One are (from lowest to highest):

Working Towards Level 1 (the child has not gained the skills/knowledge to attain Level 1)

Level 1

Level 2C

Level 2B

Level 2A

Level 3

At the end of Key Stage One pupils are expected to be at Level 2 (either 2C, 2B or 2A).

Rahul did not take any of the SAT tests as he was in Bangladesh at the time.

Table Five: SAT results for the case study pupils (Key Stage One), June 2000

	Reading Task	Reading Comprehension	Writing	Spelling	Maths
Tumi	2A	2B	2B	2	2C
Rahul	did not take test	did not take test	did not take test	did not take test	did not take test
Parkway School average*	2B	3	2B	2	2B
Reena	2B	below level 2	2C	Not available	2C
Attar	2B	2B	2B	3	2A
Bailey School average*	2B	2B	2B	2	2A
Afia	2B	2B	2B	2	1
Faiza	2A	2B	2C	2	2A
Sandhill School average*	2A	3	2B	2	2B
England average*	2B	3	2B	2	2C

* modal average

This table shows that the case study children had attained the levels that were expected at the end of Key Stage One and were attaining in line with other children in their classes and nationally (if not better in some cases). Although in reading comprehension the case study children were gaining 2Bs (except for Reena) and so were not doing quite so well as other children nationally or in their schools (except in Bailey where Attar was doing as well as his peers) and in writing, Reena and Faiza gained a 2C rather than the average of 2B, the children were, across the board, attaining the same levels as the children in their classes and nationally. Afia was the only case study pupil to gain a Level 1 in any of the SAT subjects. In some cases the case study children were attaining higher levels than their school or national average. Tumi gained a Level 2A for reading, Attar gained a Level 3 for spelling

and Attar and Faiza a Level 2A for Maths. There was no evidence that the children were underachieving in school in these results.

The children's achievement was also supported by comments that were made to me by teachers and headteachers during my access visits and during the first few weeks that I spent in the classrooms.

During my visit to Bailey School in September both the head and the deputy head commented on Attar's excellent achievement in school especially in maths and spelling (13/9/00). On my first visit to his classroom, the classteacher, Miss Birch, reiterated what an excellent speller he was (14/9/00).

At Sandhill School, Faiza's classroom teacher told me that Faiza was very 'capable' and not very far behind the other children in the class (14/9/00) and that both Faiza and Afia were 'relaxed, attentive and confident' pupils during carpet time (21/9/00). This was reiterated by the headteacher when she commented that both Faiza and Afia 'are getting on well aren't they?' (1/11/00).

At Parkway School, Tumi was described by her teachers as 'OK in terms of her ability' (11/9/00), 'a very fluent reader' (12/9/00) and 'well integrated' (12/9/00). Rahul's headteacher and his teachers claimed that 'his reading was better than Tumi's and that, if he hadn't missed most of Year Two because of a prolonged trip to Bangladesh, he would have got a 2B' in the SATs for reading (Mrs Heatherly 17/10/00) and the same or higher for maths (Head 26/9/00). The implication was that once he had settled back into school again and found his feet he would regain his former ability and do well.

The final case study pupil, Reena, was also described as able but in need of support because she missed 'quite a bit of school' and 'won't have coped with the stress of a new teacher' (the

visiting EAL teacher 14/9/00). Reena was the only case study pupil during these early days of the research who did not appear to be a confidently achieving pupil.

The SAT results coupled with the teachers' comments revealed that my total sample of six pupils was made up of pupils who were perceived to be doing well in school.

Chapter 6

The Case Studies

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter the six case studies are presented. Each case study describes the experiences of a Year Three Bangladeshi pupil during a year of school and their teachers' responses to them as pupils.

The case studies are careful descriptions of what took place inside the three classrooms (Meehan, 1979). They present the complex processes of classroom life and show how the case study children were differently situated to each other and how their experiences were not uniform.

Each case study describes the pupil as a learner, taking part in the daily life of the school and classroom, in order to address the research question,

What is going on in the lives, backgrounds and schooling experiences of Bangladeshi pupils that helps and hinders them in learning and achieving in the English school system?

Each case study describes how the pupil went about learning in the classroom and how their teachers went about teaching them. Each child's relationship with their teachers and with their peers is explored as well as the ways in which their teachers came to assess and provide for them in the classroom. What the pupil and the teacher had to say are also included. Each child's experiences are linked to their achievement as a learner. Each case study also describes the pupil as a reader.

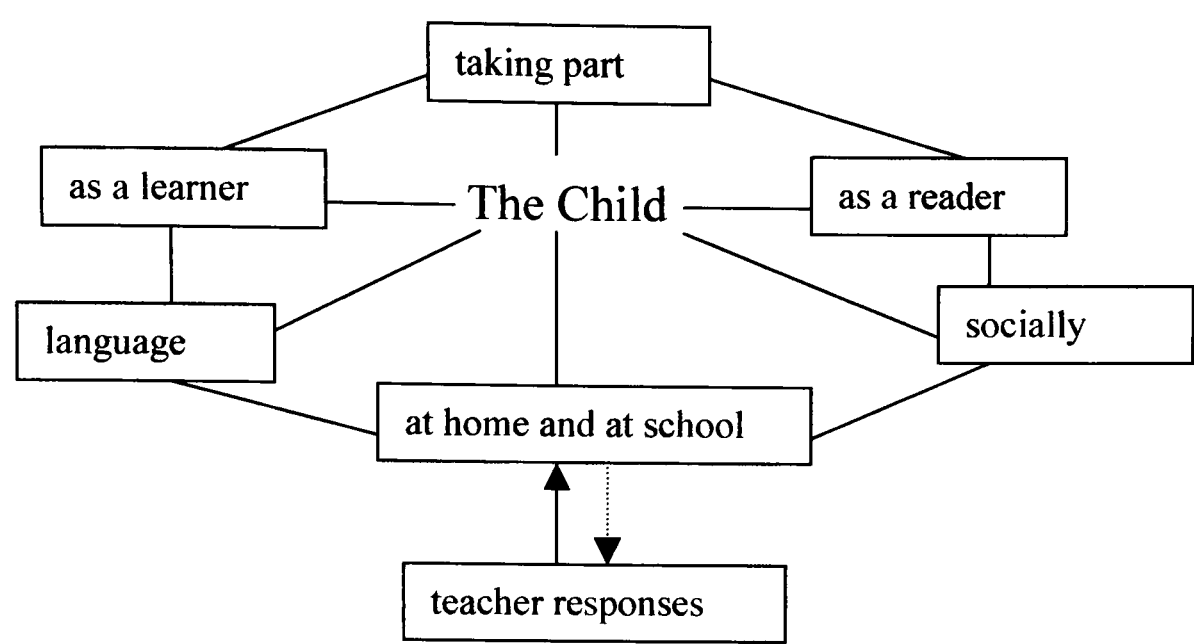
In each case study some details of the child's home life are given and of the relationships that existed between home and school. The help that the children could call on at home is described. Two of the case studies (Attar and Rahul) show pupils who did not have an older sibling to help them at home and two case studies (Afia and Faiza) show pupils who did not use their older sibling for help with school work or reading. These cases provide a contrast to other studies of Bangladeshi pupils and their homes (Gregory et al., 1996; Blackledge, 1999) where older siblings were always present and supported their younger brothers and sisters.

To order my analysis and presentation in each case study the child is first presented in terms of how they took part in interactions with the teacher in the classroom. This description comes first because one of the key findings in the research was that the manner in which the children took part in interactions with their teachers had implications for how the children were seen and understood by their teachers and for the resources that the children had access to in their classrooms. These understandings, and the child's subsequent access to resources, had implications for the achievement of the case study children.

The description and analysis then go on to explore how each child appeared as a reader, as learner (and the role that language played in this) and in terms of their social experiences in and outside the classroom. The relationship between the child's home and their school is also described.

In each case study the final section considers how the child's teachers understood and responded to the child although key elements of these understandings and responses are included, as appropriate, in the sections regarding taking part, reading, learning and language.

The structure can be represented thus:



The Structure for Analysing and Presenting the Data in Each Case Study

This structure is used to present the data clearly and simply, to separate out the complex strands that constituted the processes of classroom life. (The headings for each section originally arose through the initial analysis of the data as described in Chapter Four). In the daily life of the case study pupils these aspects of experience were not separated off from each other but a way of analysing and presenting the data clearly and systematically needed to be found. An attempt is made throughout all the case studies to suggest how different aspects of classroom life fed into each other and created a complex whole.

As well as addressing the research question, the six case studies provide insights and answers to the questions that arose in the literature reviews in Chapters Two and Three. The questions that are particularly focused on in this chapter, in addition to the Research Question, are:

- How are Bangladeshi pupils perceived by their teachers? What identities do Bangladeshi pupils acquire and is there a link between this and their achievement?

- What are teacher expectations of Bangladeshi pupils and are these linked with Bangladeshi pupils' achievement?

These questions, to do with identity and teacher expectations, are chiefly answered through the description and analysis in the sections on 'Taking Part' and 'Teacher Responses' in each case study.

- To what extent are Bangladeshi pupils denied access to language through the practices and organisation of their classrooms?
- Are the language needs of Bangladeshi pupils recognised by their teachers?
- How do teachers make judgements about the language needs of their pupils and to what extent do these judgements impact on Bangladeshi children and in what ways?
- When is support used and not used?
- If children's language needs are not met how are children coping?

These questions, to do with language needs, are chiefly answered through the description and analysis in the sections on 'Language', 'Taking Part', 'As a Reader' and 'As a Learner' in each case study.

- To what extent are the children who are considered to be successful at reading able to be successful readers?
- Is joining in with the interaction patterns enough?

- How successful are the children in becoming independent readers?

These questions, to do with reading, are chiefly answered through the description and analysis in the section on ‘As a reader’ in each case study.

6.1.1 Outline of arguments to be developed through the case study evidence

What will be argued through the case studies, in response to these questions, is that the way that the case study children’s teachers came to know the case study children, and to assess their needs and abilities, was through the manner in which the children took part in classroom interactions. In addition, the manner in which teachers came to assess the needs and abilities of the case study children and came to understand and perceive them as pupils had implications for the case study children’s access to school resources, such as support from classroom adults, and opportunities to succeed in the classroom.

It will also be argued that the children’s teachers rarely recognised the EAL language needs of their Bangladeshi pupils and that they based their assessment of English language fluency on the child’s social, conversational English. (The case studies also demonstrate how unsupported the case study pupils were in acquiring the subject and genre-specific conventions of written English and the implications of this for some of the children.) It is argued through the case studies that because many of the children’s language needs were not recognised, the case study children’s struggles with classroom work were frequently interpreted as ‘laziness’, ‘defiance’ or ‘obstinacy’ by their teachers and that this had the affect of creating and confirming particular pupil identities.

In relation to the questions about reading it will be argued through the case studies that the children could all take part in the expected reading interaction patterns when they were

reading with a classroom adult. However, despite being able to read out loud to the teacher, and being considered by the teacher to be an excellent reader as a result of this performance, some of the case study children could not read for meaning and were very vulnerable as readers and as learners as they moved on through school. The case studies also show how the manner in which a child read out loud to the teacher affected the teachers understandings of the child as a pupil and of their proficiency in English.

These issues, briefly outlined here, will be explored in more depth in Chapter Seven following the presentation of the case study evidence which describes, in close detail, how the six case study children were able to inhabit certain identities as a result of how they took part in classroom interactions and how these identities had positive and negative consequences for them and had implications for them being and becoming, or not being or becoming, successful, achieving pupils.

The case studies are presented in the following order:

Tumi – girl, Parkway School

Rahul – boy, Parkway School

Reena – girl, Bailey School

Attar – boy, Bailey School

Afia – girl, Sandhill School

Faiza – girl, Sandhill School

The first case study is presented as a full case study. The remaining five are edited versions. In three of these edited versions (Rahul, Reena and Attar) the description of each of the case study children is left intact but the supporting evidence for each point made is reduced. In

two of the case studies, those of Afia and Faiza, an outline of the case study is presented. The full case studies, for all five children, can be found as appendices¹.

6.2 Case Study One: Tumi

6.2.1 Introduction

At the beginning of the study, in September 2000, Tumi was seven years old and the second youngest child in her class. The children in the class had been together as a class in Year 2 and so knew each other well. Tumi had no special friends in the class at the beginning of the year and told me, later in October, that she didn't have any friends in the class at all (31/10/00). Tumi's teacher, Mrs Heatherly, had taken Year 3 classes for three years and had been a teacher in the school for more than six years. Mrs Heatherly was supported each day in the classroom by Jill, a classroom assistant, and every Tuesday morning by one of the governors.

Tumi was the youngest child of four children. Her brothers were aged twenty-five and twenty. The twenty-five year old brother lived with the family from February of the research year after he returned from Bangladesh, the other brother lived with the family between Thursdays and Sundays, the rest of the week he was away studying in Cambridge. Only her sixteen year old sister, Salima was living at home all of the time. Tumi's father owned a successful Indian take-away in the city and the family were all educated to some extent. Her father had completed Year 5 in Bangladesh, the two brothers had attended college in the UK and Tumi's sister was taking her GCSEs. Tumi's mother had received the least education, only getting as far as Year 2 of school in Bangladesh before failing her exams that would have given her access to Year 3. Tumi's father and mother were both born in the Sylhet

¹ Appendix 10 Rahul; Appendix 11 Reena; Appendix 12 Attar;
Appendix 13 Afia; Appendix 14 Faiza
These appendices are presented on a CD.

region of Bangladesh. Her father had come to England twenty five years earlier, her mother had come four years later.

Tumi's father bought books for Tumi as well as videos of children's films (mainly Disney). The family also had a computer and lots of computer games including chess. Tumi reported that neither she nor her parents belonged to a public library. Her brothers read instruction manuals and information books (in English) about cars and mobile phones but not any other kind of book (21/5/01). It appeared that Tumi and her sister were the only readers of fiction in the house.

Tumi's father described her as a very 'noisy', always active toddler. He reported that she always liked hearing stories and he used to tell her stories. She had a favourite which was a story from Bangladesh about two birds (21/6/01).

Tumi spoke English and Bangla² at home. She reported that 'most times I speak Bangla' but that she sometimes spoke to her sister in English and occasionally used English when speaking with her brothers. With her mother she spoke Bangla as her mother did not speak English but with her dad she used both used Bangla and English. Both parents could read and write in Bengali and Tumi's father spoke excellent English. Tumi reported that she thought she was best at English but that Bangla was her favourite language 'cos..its different and nobody knows it and I can trick them' (12/6/01). Tumi couldn't read Bengali but her mum was teaching her how to read and write in Bengali at home. Tumi reported that her

² Bangladeshi people in the county speak either Bengali or Sylheti (or a mixture) as their mother tongue. Sylheti is the regional dialect (or language) of the Sylhet region that nearly all British Bangladeshis come from. Sylheti no longer has a written form. When children go to school in the Sylhet they learn to read and write in Bengali although their 'mother tongue' is Sylheti. People describe the language they speak as Bengali, Bangladeshi, Bangla or Sylheti and these are sometimes used interchangeably. The most common description from the children is Bangla, Bangladeshi or Muslim. As far as possible I use the terms that each child uses to describe their language .

parents didn't read books or newspapers at home but that she saw her mother and father writing letters at home and her father writing in Bengali for his work. Tumi didn't know any Hindi because the family did not receive Zee TV, a Hindi satellite station, or watch Hindi movies at home. However, she did know some Hindi songs because she heard them on the radio in her dad's car and learnt them by copying her dad's singing of them.

Tumi had attended a playgroup when she was four and then Parkway School from Reception Year. Tumi had thus already had just over four years of education by the time she began Year Three. Tumi and her mother had also been included in a Bangladeshi Family Literacy project before Tumi started school. Tumi's attendance in the Reception Year and in Year One had not been good. In Year One Tumi only attended school for thirty-four days in the whole school year (part of the reason was that the family went to Bangladesh) and in Year Two she was absent for twenty-nine days (i.e. she missed just under six weeks, or half a term, of school). The school's Headteacher had referred Tumi and her family to the Education Welfare Service during Year Two (an LEA service who deal with poor, unauthorised attendance and truancy). Tumi's attendance had improved towards the end of Year Two but was still of some concern at the beginning of Year Three.

Tumi was a cousin of Rahul, the other Bangladeshi pupil in the class. However, Tumi reported that Rahul and his family only visited her home once during the research year and she and her family did not visit Rahul's home (3/7/01). Outside school Tumi mainly played with her brothers and sister (she played computer games with her brothers). The only visitors to the house that she mentions during the research year were Jamila and her family (13/3/01 & 3/7/01) and the only home she reports visiting was the home of one of the new girls in her class who she was friends with for some of the school year (3/7/01). Tumi attended the mosque school in the city on Saturdays and Sundays but Tumi reported that there were not very many opportunities for the children to talk or mix in class or informally

(21/5/01). Thus contact with other children of her own age outside school was limited, her main interlocutors outside school were adults or near-adults.

There were twenty-six pupils in Tumi's class at the beginning of the year. She and Rahul were the only ethnic minority pupils and EAL pupils in the class.

6.2.2 Taking Part

During my first few days in the classroom it became clear that Tumi, on nearly all occasions, was an active participator in teacher – pupil interactions in the classroom. Whenever, the children were gathered on the carpet (and this was a regular feature of classroom life - the children began and ended the school day and each discrete subject area of the Year 3 curriculum, including Literacy and Numeracy Hour, sitting in front of the teacher and her whiteboard, on the carpet), and the teacher was asking the children questions, Tumi would be raising her hand 'bidding' to answer the questions.

For example, on my first morning in the classroom, after the register was called, the teacher began Numeracy Hour with a warm-up activity and asked the class who could count down from one hundred in tens. Tumi immediately put her hand up and was selected by the teacher. She counted down with some help from the teacher. Tumi also put her hand up to answer another question a few moments later. During the day Tumi continued to raise her hand to answer questions. During Literacy Hour she raised her hand to answer a teacher question about settings and later to answer a question about putting words into alphabetical order. After lunch she raised her hand during a discussion about playing chess to answer a question about how chess pieces moved and during the Science lesson she raised her hand to answer the teacher question 'Light. What is it?' which led to the following interaction and observation comment in my fieldnotes:

Tumi: the sun
Teacher: why do plants need it?
Tumi: so they can grow
Teacher: Yes, so they can grow

Tumi puts her hand up again. She even bids when the teacher hasn't asked for bids.

A few moments later..

Teacher: where does light come from?

Tumi bids but is not nominated to reply

(Fieldnotes 12/9/00)

Tumi was not the only child to actively participate in teacher – pupil interactions in this way but she did stand out as one of a small group of pupils who took an active part in carpet time interactions with the teacher and was on two occasions (in Numeracy and in science) the only, or the first child, to raise her hand. Tumi's participation was such that at the end of the day the teacher said to me 'I haven't talked (to you) much about Tumi as she is so....so well integrated' the implication being that the teacher perceived Tumi as an able pupil and able to take an active part in classroom life and learning (12/9/00).

This active participation continued during the research year. Some examples from the fieldnotes are:

When the children assemble on the carpet, Tumi is sitting down the front near the teacher....The children are doing phonemes and graphemes. Tumi bids for all the teacher questions in this session about the number of phonemes in a word.

(Fieldnotes 7/11/00)

Tumi is sitting towards the back of the class.She bids for the teacher's question about the Train Song poem and what is going on in it. She says 'People might be singing the song.' The teacher asks who has been on a train and Tumi puts her hand up. She bids for the other questions too.

(Fieldnotes 13/2/01)

The children sit on the carpet for a story. Tumi sits near to the teacher. She bids for all the teacher's questions about the Alice in Wonderland story. She does know it. For example, she knows 'eats biscuits' for what makes Alice small again. This is not part of the story the teacher has read the class.

(Fieldnotes 11/7/01)

There were some occasions early in the research year that Tumi did not raise her hand and bid to answer a question. These appeared to be occasions when she did not know the answer to the questions posed. For example, in Literacy Hour, during the first day, in introducing the idea of 'settings' to the class the teacher asked 'Little Red Riding Hood, where does that take place? You all know where.' Tumi did not bid to answer this question, nor the following one 'Who has got another famous story? The rest of the class took an active role in these discussion and most of them were bidding to give answers or suggestions (12/9/00).

From these observations it appeared that Tumi was not raising her hand when she did not know the answers to the teacher's questions or was not sure of what the answer might be. As a bilingual pupil from a Bangladeshi home it was quite likely that she was either unfamiliar with the stories of Little Red Riding Hood and Jack and the Beanstalk or that the terms 'setting' or 'where does that take place?' were unfamiliar to her and that she was not sure

how to understand what the teacher wanted when she asked for a 'famous story'. Tumi observed and listened to the other pupils at these times and she did raise her hand to answer the second time the teacher asked the class for another 'famous story' which would suggest that she had worked out, through listening, what kind of answer was required.

Generally, Tumi appeared as a pupil that took an active part except when she didn't know the answer and at these times she listened and used cues from other children so that she could join in and participate later.

However, this 'considered participation', bidding to answer the questions she knew answers to listening and taking her cue from other pupils in the class when she didn't know or wasn't sure, changed in October, after six weeks in the class. Tumi began at this point in the year to raise her hand and bid for questions when she didn't know the answers, as well as when she did, and this continued throughout the rest of the school year as the following observation notes indicate:

Tumi bids all the time during the morning. When she is nominated after putting her hand up for an adjective to describe Mr Twit she hasn't got a word or a response.

(Fieldnotes 17/10/00)

After lunch, on the carpet, the class are going to be learning about the parts of a computer. The children are asked to nominate names for parts of a computer. After about seven suggestions (from other children) Tumi enthusiastically shoots her hand up, the teacher nominates her. Tumi is silent, waving her hand around in front of her, 'um...um...oh I forgot'

(Fieldnotes 31/10/00)

(In Literacy Hour)...Tumi bids again later, to go out to the front and read the poem. The teacher chooses her. When she has been chosen Tumi shakes her head, she doesn't want to go.

(Fieldnotes 27/2/01)

After break the teacher is modelling how to write a letter in reply to the letters from the children in the Middle School. Tumi bids and is chosen third. Her suggestion for letter writing is 'think'. Later the teacher asks, 'What do we need to have at the beginning of the name?' Tumi bids but, when called on first, she hasn't an answer.

(Fieldnotes 21/5/01)

During this time Tumi did continue to bid and answer questions correctly as she had done in September but it was striking that from October for the rest of the year she began to bid whenever the teacher asked for such participation on the carpet. Her teachers reported that they too noticed that Tumi always joined in. Her class teacher noted that Tumi not only raised her hand all the time but also started to give long rambling answers to questions, which the teacher claimed she found rather sweet (27/3/01). The classroom assistant reported that Tumi always had a go and was not put off if she was wrong (21/5/01) and the student teacher, who took the class during the third term, commented that Tumi was 'always very keen to join in to go along with whatever you're doing' (26/6/01)

In terms of taking part, Tumi presented herself as an enthusiastic pupil, willing and eager to participate and to join in with the interactions of the teacher. This 'taking part' was noticed, as indicated above, by all of the adults in the classroom (how this contributed to their perceptions and understandings of Tumi will be discussed later) and this became an important dimension to Tumi's identity in the classroom during the year. However, her participation obscured much of what Tumi struggled with and couldn't yet do in the

classroom. Her teacher was aware of her weakness in Numeracy, though probably not the extent of it, but what Tumi couldn't do, and didn't yet know how to do in the classroom, remained hidden from the adults during reading and in other literacy events. These will now be considered.

6.2.3 Tumi as a reader

Tumi's teachers all commented during the year on the fact that Tumi was a good reader. 'She's a very fluent reader', (Jill 12/9/00). 'She reads beautifully and her English is excellent', (Jill 21/5/00). 'Her literacy skills are very good, especially considering that English is a Second Language for her' 'Tumi is now reading long chapter books with ease', (Mrs Heatherly, School Report July 2001). 'Her reading is very good now' (Mrs Heatherly 19/6/00). 'She's a good reader isn't she and she enjoys reading' (EAL teacher 13/3/01).

However, all the adults in the classroom reported that Tumi read very fast and missed out words when she read. I also experienced this when I heard Tumi read during the course of the year. Various explanations were put forward for this unusual way of reading, however, none of the adults doubted that Tumi was an able reader. For example, Jill, the classroom assistant, who heard the children in the class read on a one-to-one basis reported that 'Tumi is used to reading on her own (at home) which is why she reads so fast' (12/9/00). Her sometimes poor 'performance' in discussing what she had read was put down to the fact that she rushed the reading and hadn't taken in the meaning, or had read too fast so that she could not take in the meaning or could not remember what she had read (Mrs Heatherly 27/3/01 and Report).

These extracts give something of the flavour of Tumi's reading 'performance' and reading interaction:

Reading with me 1:1. This is the first time we have read together.

She hasn't read the text before.

It is called 'Holiday for Three Bears'

She reads very quietly, I can't hear her very well.

She rushes. Then I hear,

Tumi: ...quite glump (a mistake but she doesn't self-correct)

A few moments later she stops this unusual rushed, quiet way of 'reading'

Tumi: What is a burglary?

I explain.

She starts the rushed, quiet reading again. I still cannot hear well and I lose most words.

She does voices for the dialogue.

She continues to read very fast, a blur of words.

I read the text to myself over her shoulder.

.....

At the end of the page I ask her 'What's gone wrong for them?' as a way of trying to get at her understanding of what is happening in the story.

Tumi: I don't know

Sue: Where could we find the answer?

Tumi: Just ignore the trouble

Sue: What trouble? Where? (puzzled)

Tumi: Forgetting something is that the trouble? (said as if she is trying to check out what the correct answer to my question is).

....

We read the next page.

I ask her a question in advance of reading the page

Sue: Let's find out who opens the door of the castle. I'll ask you who opened the door of the castle when you have finished reading the page.

Tumi looks at the picture on the page before she reads.

She reads the page in the same rushed, quiet way so that I cannot hear most of the words.

At the end of the page I ask,

Sue: So who opened the door of the castle?

Tumi: Barking.

....

Later, I ask her

Sue: What didn't the mother like?

Tumi: Scary tombs (the text says 'the décor')

Sue: Do you know what a scary tomb is?

Tumi: No. Look at this picture (she proceeds to talk about the pictures).

(Tumi 27/9/00)

I too was puzzled by Tumi's reading style. I was aware that just because she did not conform to the normal reading performance of a child reading with a teacher (where each word is clearly read out loud turning written text into an oral performance) this didn't indicate that she wasn't reading, or wasn't able to read well. However, her answers to questions I asked about what we were reading didn't reassure me that she was actually reading the words on the page or that she was taking in any kind of meaning of what she was reading. This could have been because of my questioning (as indicated by Gregory and her colleagues, see Chapter Two) but other activities that I tried with Tumi, inking out words on photocopies of texts she was reading, getting her to sequence passages from cut up photocopies of the more straightforward books she was reading, didn't reassure me either. On the other hand, Tumi had gained a Level 2A for her Reading and a 2B for Reading Comprehension at Key Stage One.

I stayed puzzled until one day, after taking part in a reading activity with me and as we were preparing to read a book together, ('The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe' a particularly

difficult book, with many chapters in, for a Year 3 child) chosen by Tumi, Tumi started talking about how she 'read'.

Sue: Are you going to read?

Tumi: (pause) No.

Sue: Why not?

Tumi: Cos I'm nervous.

Sue: Why do you feel nervous?

Tumi: Well sometimes I cheat.

Sue: Sometimes you cheat. What do you mean sometimes you cheat? What do you do?

Tumi: First I read this bit (opening the book at the last page).

Sue: What the end?

Tumi: Yeah and then I read this bit and I read it all at one page. All one page by one page I just look at the pictures (she turns the pages quickly starting at the back of the book moving forward, stopping or slowing when she reaches a page with a picture).

Sue: Yeah.

Tumi: But I don't read it.

Sue: You don't.

Tumi: Yeah, but when there's some words like this I don't even read it I just..../

Sue: So how do you know what is happening?

Tumi: Well I look at the pictures and it looks like something is happening but sometimes I read the words too, easy words. Like 'the Queen of' and 'impress of loan island', 'the eye safe conduct to come and speak with you'.

Sue: That's very interesting.

(The classroom assistant comes into the room).

Sue: So have you been doing that for a long time?

Tumi: Yeah.

(I laugh).

Sue: How many people know that you do that?

Tumi: Well nobody.

(Tumi 27/3/01)

From this account it became clear that Tumi had found a way of appearing to read and of being able to consume high status books. As she so clearly explains here, her strategy with a chapter book was to read the last page first, flick through from the back of the book looking at the pictures and picking out the easy words (and even with the 'easy words' she made mistakes in her 'reading'). She then used her excellent knowledge of how story books worked and her story knowledge to make a 'reading'. Tumi knew a lot about how story books worked. During the sequencing activity that I gave to all the children to do, Tumi showed that she knew 'this one was the beginning because of the title..and then this one comes, because there's a little bit of writing here, cos most times there aren't any pictures at the beginning' (27/3/01), rightly identifying the fact that there is rarely a picture on the page that follows the beginning of the story in a story book. Later in the same session she refers to this again and describes how she uses this knowledge.

Tumi: I just look over to see the pictures because I told you that they start with no pictures. There's no pictures. (She is showing me using her copy of the book).

Sue: Yes, you were right, I had never noticed that about books before, they often have a picture where the title is/

Tumi: /and then a page and then a picture comes along.

Sue: So you look at the pictures and then you look at some of the words that are kind of easy words to work out, little bits?

Tumi: Yes. Like 'look' and 'saying' and 'Edmund'

(Tumi 27/3/01)

During another sequencing activity, she displayed a similar knowledge about how story books were put together (12/6/01). Tumi had gained a lot of knowledge about stories from home. Her sister read to her nearly everyday and Tumi had a large collection of Walt Disney and other children's films based on popular fairy or fantasy stories on video at home together with mini-books which accompanied the videos (12/9/00; 3/7/01). She also reported to have a lot of books at home that her father had bought her (21/5/01). During the first time she read with me Tumi could identify all of the well-known nursery/fairy story characters that appeared in the story of 'Holiday for Three Bears' (27/9/00).

Like the majority of the children I heard read during the course of the year, Tumi used the pictures that accompanied the stories she was reading to give her clues about what she was reading and what was happening or was going to happen (13/3/00). However, Tumi used the pictures to give her ideas about the story she was reading and then 'invented' the plot or created her own versions of the stories, by using her knowledge of stories to fill in the gaps between the bits and pieces she could read in the text or identify from the pictures that accompanied the story.

Tumi: ...and then they came here (pointing at the picture) and they got started shrinking some more.

Sue: ...How did you know they were shrinking and getting smaller?

Tumi: Because when I looked at this picture I saw this big face of the wolf.

Sue: OK, when you looked at that picture you saw the big face of the wolf.

Tumi: And they find a way to get out of the tunnel.

Sue: So how do you know that they found a way to get out...What told you that?

Tumi: Well they found a wishing stone..(can't hear)..cos it says 'the wishing stone'. (She points at this point to the words in the text).

(Tumi 27/3/01)

Here Tumi uses the pictures, one (word level) piece of text and what she knows about stories (she is familiar with Alice in Wonderland as we have seen above) to create a story out of the pages that I had given her (the first six pages of Journey Into the Earth, see Appendix 15). This is not the story she has supposedly been reading and sequencing (the children do not shrink, they do not find a way out of the tunnel in the extract and the wishing stone is used to get into the tunnel). In fact, the sequence for the story that Tumi came up with was wrong (in the sense that the text did not work as a story in the form she presented it) except for the title page being placed first. Tumi did not notice, when she read the story to me, that the story did not work in the order that she has sequenced it in. However, when talking about the story with me she managed to make a story that did work for her.

A little later during this session, when we had been through the story together, I asked Tumi what she looked at first when she was asked to sequence the pages of the story,

Sue: What did you look at?

Tumi: The pictures

Sue: The pictures

Tumi: But the first time that I knew that, because the Journey into the Earth..but first I thought they were born underground and they had to find their way up but instead what happened was that they wished to go under the molehill and I started to molehill, but I think, well I want it to rhyme.

(Tumi 27/3/01)

Tumi used story knowledge to take what she could from the text and then invented a story that worked (and that she enjoyed?). Her use of story world language and ideas also appeared in her talk. This is indicated in the following exchange between Tumi and her sister whilst I was visiting the family at home. Tumi wanted to tell me something about herself when she was younger,

Tumi: Once I went into our attic.

Salima: We don't have an attic Tumi

(Tumi Home Visit 29/3/01)

Her fast reading and leaving out words when taking part in a reading-aloud interaction with another adult was a clever way of covering that she was not reading in the conventional sense, nor able to. Whilst visiting the family at home Tumi spoke to me while everyone was out of the room,

'Do you know why I read fast?' (Salima had just been telling me that Tumi read too fast at home and missed bits out and mumbles words. I replied that Tumi does that at school too. Salima left the room to go and make some tea for us). 'It's because if you read fast, zoom, you can miss out bits zoom, zoom and you can miss out the bits you can't read, you don't know – and then no-one knows'.

(Tumi 29/3/01)

Tumi used certain other strategies which helped her successfully take part in reading-out-loud interactions with the teacher. She read with a lot of expression for the voices of characters in the books she was 'reading'. Even when the words spoken by the character were rushed out and the ends of the sentences left out, the way Tumi began the 'speaking' and the range of voices she could call on (old and crabby for an old woman, booming for a King) convincingly suggested that she was reading with understanding of what was

happening (31/10/00). She used an adult, teacher-like vocabulary to talk about books, 'it was very interesting' (12/9/00) and she was good at distracting the adult by talking about something she liked in the story when she was stuck with an answer for a 'what is happening?' question (27/9/00) and by giving a personal response to the story without being asked for one (27/3/01). She also used her knowledge of the story as a whole to answer questions about part of the story (27/2/01). Tumi was also able to call on her memory of a story that had been read to the class to demonstrate that she could engage with the text in front of her (12/6/01). When confronted with reading tasks where she couldn't use these strategies 'to cheat' she was quick enough to devise other ways of avoiding her lack of reading being discovered. On one occasion I made a photocopy of the text of Hansel and Gretel that Tumi was reading and inked out some of the words. Tumi had read the text twice before. Her immediate response was a gleeful 'I will cheat by looking at the back' and she promptly turned the paper over to see the words that were inked out. She managed to 'read' the first section of the text which had four words inked out in it, the fifth inked-out word she couldn't read through the back of the paper so she promptly reached for the book and looked the word up in the original text rather than try and remember the word or work out what the word was from the context. When a classroom assistant entered the room we were reading in Tumi proudly announced that 'I have been cheating so I could do the reading' (31/10/00).

Tumi's way of reading meant that she was not able to 'read for meaning' in the way that pupils are conventionally meant to be able to 'take meaning' from what they read. Tumi found it difficult to talk about text or demonstrate an understanding of specific bits of text and to use non-fiction (12/6/01, 3/7/01). Listening to her read over the course of the year it was clear that Tumi also lacked an understanding of many of the words that she was actually reading (12/6/01). This aspect of Tumi's life in the classroom is developed later when we consider Tumi in terms of Language.

Reading harder books which had chapters in them (rather than the easy readers that beginner readers read that had no chapters in them) and by reading fast gave the children in the class a high status amongst the other children in the classroom. Dean told me, when I asked him how he could tell who was a good reader in the class ‘ I hear them reading a book and they read it really fast’ (12/5/01). Kylie spoke proudly of having a whole shelf of ‘chapter books’ at home (16/1/01) and Amy of reading ‘pretty long’ books (7/11/00) and reading ‘really long books. I can read about three chapter books in one day if its Goosebumps’ (13/3/01). Tumi nearly always had a chapter book in her tray from November onwards during the research year and she claimed to have read all the books in the classroom book box (27/3/01).

Tumi’s fast reading and the status it could bring is most clearly demonstrated in the following observation of Tumi in the classroom towards the end of the year when the teacher had given her and three other boys an old SAT Reading Comprehension Paper to complete to find out how they were progressing in their reading. The paper required the children to read a booklet containing a story and an information text and then answer questions about both passages in a separate answer booklet. The children were sitting together at one of the tables in the classroom.

They are all reading.

Tumi looks across at what Dean is doing.

James is reading aloud to himself.

Tumi: Finished!

Ellis: How can she have finished?

The other boys suggest:

She’s cheating.

She’s not really reading the words.

She’s just following the lines.

Tumi leaves the table and goes to the teacher to get answer booklet.

She comes back to the table with the booklet.....

Ellis: What page are you on?

James: Page six.

Ellis: I'm on page eight.

Tumi starts marking her answer booklet.....

Tumi: Look this is the last bit.

James: Did you read all of it? Up to there? The last page?

Tumi: Yeah

James: How did you do it?

(Tumi 5/6/01)

What is interesting about this interaction between Tumi and the three boys, in addition to what it shows about attitudes to reading fast and the boys attitude to Tumi and her reading, is that it was the only time, in a year of observing in the classroom, that I saw Tumi taking part in an extended exchange with other pupils and observed other pupils interacting at some length with Tumi. The interactions between Tumi and the other pupils in the class are discussed later in the case study. At this point it is worth noting that reading fast gave Tumi one way of achieving some engagement with the other pupils.

Her teachers did not realise at any point during the year that Tumi was 'cheating at reading' to the extent that she was. They were puzzled by her reading-out-loud style and her class teacher felt that because she read so fast she could only remember what had happened on the page she had read but not in the previous chapter (27/3/01). The guidance she was offered throughout the year (in terms of reading instruction) was to 'slow down' (15/5/01) and the class teacher reported that this was one of Tumi's targets in literacy for the year (27/3/01 although this did not appear in Tumi's Literacy book or in her school report as one of her targets). According to Tumi's reading record book and my observations and conversations

with her teachers, no other kind of reading activity, other than reading-out-loud to an adult, was used during the year (except when I heard Tumi read³). Also according to Tumi’s reading record book, Tumi only read to an adult in school three times in January, on no occasion in February and once in March. The rest of her reading with an adult was with her sister at home and this seemed infrequent. (Tumi did read to me during my visits to the school during this period so this may have affected how many times the school staff heard her read. I heard Tumi read nine times during the year.

Tumi’s Reading Record Book (from January 2001 to March 2001)

11/1	The Toymaker. Lovely reading but still a little fast. (Mrs Heatherly)
16/1	Very fluent but needs to slow down and notice punctuation. (Mrs Heatherly)
17/1	Learned about chapter headings, sub-headings, bold type and italics.(Mrs Heatherly)
5/2	Lovely expression also much clear reading. (Salima* signs it S. Begum).
24/3	Tumi enjoyed reading this book, read confidently. (Salima)
29/3	Tumi read very fluently but rather too quickly and not clearly enough. Well done. (Miss Gardner)

* Salima was Tumi’s sixteen year old sister.

I recorded in my fieldnotes that Tumi had the same book for reading from May to July in the research year.

6.2.4 Tumi and language

Tumi often used adult-like language and intonation when she was speaking to adults and pupils in the classroom and had a ‘charming’ way of interacting with the adults. When reading with the classroom assistant during my first day in the classroom she initiated a conversation about how she felt about the book she was reading and said that she liked the

³ When I presented Tumi with a text that needed to be sequenced she did start to read each word at a ‘normal’ pace rather than rush at the reading and leave large chunks of the text out (27/3/01).

book and found it 'very interesting' (12/9/00). By October she was answering questions on the carpet in a Numeracy session in such a charming way that the class teacher was calling her 'darling' and 'sweetheart' as she responded to Tumi's answers (31/10/00). Tumi also spoke to other pupils in this adult voice. In January, in Literacy, she tried to initiate a conversation with the girl seated next to her by saying 'My handwriting changes every year. I don't know why' (16/1/01) and with a boy in the class, in March, by saying 'You see, I'm thinking now....' (27/3/01). On neither occasion did the children respond.

Tumi also used 'fantasy-story language' to explain things. For example, when talking to me about what she had done during one of the school holidays she reverted to using such language as a way of explaining a game she had been playing.

Sue: What kind of games did you play?

Tumi: 'Squeak'.

Sue: Tell me about 'Squeak'. What's Squeak?

Tumi: Well one day, yeah, they went long, long ago Squeaks Land, yeah?

Sue: Say that again. A long, long time ago -

Tumi: In Squeakies Land.

Sue: Um.

Tumi: They used to live in peace and harmony.

Sue: Um.

Tumi: But until this big monster thingie

Sue: Uh-hu.

Tumi: I forgot half the story but I remember most of, Squeak was chosen to finish the whole game.

Sue: What whole game?

Tumi: The ninety-nine level. If you've finished all of the ninety-nine level all the Squeak people, yeah, all the mouses, will go back, will be released.

Sue: Released where? By whom?

Tumi: Well they'll be released by the king, the evil king.

Sue Uh-hu.

Tumi: From Sque, Sque, from the horrible nasty king but to get them released you have to make everything pink. Everything.

Sue: Right. So how do you play this game? And where do you play this game?

Tumi: Well you need a joy stick, yeah?

Sue: So it's a computer game?

Tumi: Yeah.

(Tumi 27/2/01)

It took me until the twentieth turn, when Tumi mentioned the joy stick, to orientate myself to a conversation and explanation about a computer game.

Tumi's preference, or comfort, with using what I have termed 'fantasy-story language' also emerged during writing activities in the classroom. Whatever type of writing Tumi was asked to do in Literacy Hour, especially at the beginning of the year, she reverted to using the conventions of this genre. In March, in a Literacy Hour carpet session the teacher introduced the idea of monsters. The task the children were set was to write a description of a monster after looking and talking about a range of pictures the teacher had brought in of traditional and mythical monsters. At her desk Tumi wrote her title 'The Very Deadly Puppy' and then announced to me and the other children at her desk that she was going to start by writing 'Once upon a time'.

I pointed out to her that she was asked to write a description and descriptions don't start with 'once upon a time'. ... I asked her 'What about how to start, how will you start writing a description? She replied 'Once upon a time' again. I worked with her

during the rest of the session on the kinds of words and phrases and textual conventions used to start when writing a description.

(Fieldnotes 27/3/01)

Generally, during the course of the year I observed that Tumi had a good knowledge of language at word level, at decoding level, but that she was quite weak at text level.

Even more significantly, in relation to Tumi and Language, were observations which showed that she did get stuck with work because she did not know what some words used in the classroom meant. During my second visit to the classroom I observed Tumi during the Literacy Hour. Although she had taken an active part in the work on the carpet at the beginning of the session, things were very different when she went to her desk to complete the task set (which was to answer some questions on a worksheet about a passage of text). After observing her for some time from across the classroom I approached her to find out why she was not doing the work.

She is working in her group. She is not interacting with anyone. She has only underlined one adjective and has done one question. She is stuck with the second question. She could find the place in the text that gave the answer to the question but she didn't know what to do with it. It was a question about lorries. It turned out that she didn't know what 'lanes' or 'leftovers' were or what 'narrow' meant. This meant that she didn't understand the sentence that she needed to understand in the text to be able to answer the question.

(Fieldnotes 19/9/00)

The above discussion has considered Tumi and English. In terms of Tumi and her other languages, it was observed during the year that Tumi did not use Bengali/Bangla in the classroom on any occasion even when there were opportunities to do so (i.e. when answering

the register in another language Tumi always chose Spanish or Japanese and never Bengali (12/9/00, 26/9/00). This was confirmed by her teachers (19/6/01, 26/6/01) and by Tumi herself. Tumi said she felt too shy to speak Bangla at school (12/6/01)

6.2.4.1 Language teaching in the classroom

Throughout the year in this classroom the children were directed by the teacher to consider specific features of language and how language was used in writing. For example, in a Literacy session on using capital letters, the teacher elicited information from the children about what they knew about capital letters. The teacher used these questions during the discussion on the carpet:

When else do you need to use a capital letter?

Think about what day it is today. So what else has a capital letter?

Think about your address.

Think about your street names.

What else has a capital that's to do with where you live?

Think about place names.

Countries, they all have capitals.

Things like Weetabix will have a capital.

(Mrs Heatherly 7/11/00)

However, none of these uses of a capital letter was demonstrated on the white board or by using text that the children could see. On another occasion the teacher was concerned that the class did not understand the need to answer comprehension questions with a complete sentence rather than a word or a phrase. The teacher was surprised that she needed to teach this stylistic point ('it's ridiculous that it's something we have to teach them' 15/5/01) but devoted a long session that afternoon to tackling the issue. She did this by explaining that a

complete sentence was required and then gave the children practice with this by orally asking them questions which the children gave (oral) answers to in sentences.

Questions are things like: What kind of clothes do Eskimos wear? How tall is that tree? Can you tell me the name of a country in Europe? (She encourages the children to use the words in the question to formulate their answers.

(Mrs Heatherly 15/5/01)

Yet again the teacher's teaching of important stylistic points that the children needed to know about writing was conducted orally and in this case the difference between the manner in which questions are answered orally and in writing was obscured rather than made explicit.

As a result, the children did not often see the different conventions of language modelled and visually displayed. This meant that there was firstly, a greater reliance on the children's understanding of oral language and oral explanation in order to understand the teaching points being made and secondly, there was a lack of explicit information about how English as a language worked in its different forms and in its different genres and conventions especially when written.

This point is clearly demonstrated in an observation of a Literacy Session in the classroom. The teacher was preparing the children to write a weather forecast for a newspaper. This observation was recorded during the beginning of the Literacy Hour when the children were sitting on the carpet. The teacher has already collected words to describe the weather from the children and these are written in two lists on a white board. A full transcript appears as Appendix Sixteen.

Mrs Heatherly, 'OK. Your weather forecast. The title will be weather forecast' (this is not written on board). 'You're going to have to write it in two bits. There will be a sub-heading for the first bit. It will be today ...and the second bit will be a title tomorrow' (this is not written on the board). '....So, be quiet please Jack. OK. I expect you to describe the weather for today, made up. Remember one you can choose one bad day and one good day, and don't forget that the weather can change during one day. For instance you see it was quite gloomy and wet and not very nice as I came to school but looks like it might get better later on, it's beginning to be sunny out. Shhs shh..I'm trying to explain'. (Charlie and some others are shouting out 'brightening up').

'Um ...shh shh...No I didn't write that did I Jack? Brighten up...yeah because I couldn't get up in the space so I wrote it below Jack. Um so you might like to say today in the morning it will be blah, blah, blah, blah. Shh shh shh sh. And and then you might like to write later on in the afternoon it will become and you will describe how it will change. OK? Then you need to write tomorrow it will be like this. Now there's a bit more to it, Joe.

(Fieldnotes and Transcription, Mrs Heatherly 13/3/01)

These observation notes provide a good example of how a great reliance is placed upon the children's ability to follow oral explanations and oral examples of how to write something. They also show how the teacher orally provides the children with a lot of information about how to write a weather report for a newspaper but does not visually demonstrate (and practice) the conventions of a written weather report (nor discuss how language is used in a different way when writing a weather report than when writing a story). The children are offered a list of words and only have this to work with when they go to their desks. The teacher's 'example beginnings' to sentences that they might use and the titles that she expects are not put on the board.

6.2.5 Tumi as a learner in the classroom

During the course of the research year Tumi used two strategies whilst completing work in the classroom that were also used by the other children – on certain occasions she looked to see what other children were doing and she looked at and copied other children's work (31/10/00, 13/2/01, 27/3/01, 5/6/01). Tumi was not more reliant on these strategies than the other children, however, unlike the other children Tumi did not take part in the talk that surrounded checking each other's work, or sorting out what the task was, that the other children took part in. This was not because Tumi did not try to initiate such talk or to join in with it but because she was nearly always ignored when she did so. This will be described and discussed later. The effect of her lack of oral interaction with the other children in the class and those sitting at her desk during work time was that Tumi appeared as a child who 'got her head down' and 'got on with her work' whilst other children were interacting and were 'off task'.

(Tumi joins her Numeracy group). Sitting down in this group she tries to initiate a conversation with two boys at her table but they ignore her. There are five children in the group including Tumi. Tumi gets on with the task. She starts copying down the task before the others start.

(Fieldnotes 12/9/00)

The children go into their (Literacy) groups. Tumi speaks to James but does not get a response. James and Ellis come over to ask me about whether they should write below the words or rub out. James and Ellis talk to each other during the session. Lisa does not join in. Luke looks at Fred's work and talks to Fred. Tumi has her head down and is working.

(Fieldnotes 13/2/01)

I look at the work the group did at the end of the lesson when the children have gone to lunch. Tumi reached question 18 and has most of her answers 'right' although they are not always well-expressed. Ellis hasn't answered any of the questions. Dean hasn't answered any of the questions and didn't get as far as collecting an answer book from the teacher. James has only answered the two practice questions and nothing else.

(Fieldnotes 5/6/01)

This view of Tumi was confirmed by her teachers and led to their positive appreciation of Tumi as a hard working pupil.

..she's quite industrious really. When she comes to a task she's listened to the brief and she's away. You know she's got her pencil straight on the paper and she's off.

(Jill 21/5/01)

I mean she does actually get on with the work well. She's not one who's constantly talking or anything.

(Mrs Heatherly 19/6/01)

As a learner, Tumi demonstrated in the classroom that she could call on quite a range of what could be termed 'world knowledge', that is facts and information about the world and how things worked that she brought into the classroom from her life outside school or from previous years in school. In science she was able to take part in discussions about 'light' and the sun and plants (27/9/00), she knew about moles and their habits (27/3/01), knew that there were different kinds of soil (27/3/01) and knew about European myths and legends (27/3/01). In the case of the European myths and legends, her knowledge came from watching television at home, particularly programmes like 'Zena Warrior Princess'. Her teachers commented on the fact that she was quite knowledgeable.

As a learner, Tumi also experienced some difficulties in the classroom during the year. This was especially so in Numeracy. Tumi was much weaker than most of the children in the class in Numeracy and struggled with tasks that much younger children would have been able to cope with. At the beginning of the year she was unable to count on once she had reached numbers over sixty.

Tumi: sixty-seven, sixty-eight, sixty-nine, ninety-two....

(Fieldnotes: 19/9/00)

As a result she was unable to complete the task set by the teacher. I noted in my fieldnotes that ‘ She can’t do the task. She performs worse than the other children in her group, a low group, who eventually get what they have to do and do it. ..she cannot count on’ (19/9/00)

Tumi also could not cope with number bonds up to twenty (31/10/00). In February it became clear that, unlike nearly all the children in the class, she could not count on in fives and this meant she could not complete the work set which was about using the clock and telling the time (13/2/01). Her class teacher was aware that Tumi was weak in Numeracy but not the extent of Tumi’s lack of knowledge about how to count on or about Tumi’s lack of knowledge about different strategies that she could use. (I had noted in my Fieldnotes that Tumi did not attempt to use her fingers or any other strategy to count on and that she didn’t appear to have any strategies in place for tackling a maths task that involved counting 31/10/00).

6.2.6 Tumi socially

One of the most striking things about Tumi in her classroom during the research year was the lack of contact she had with the other pupils in her class and in other classes in the school.

Tumi's attempts at making contact with other children whilst they were sitting in their Numeracy and Literacy groups were nearly always rebuffed. We have already seen above how her opening attempt to speak to James during Literacy on 27/2/01 was ignored by James. Later in the morning, in Numeracy, when the children were working in their groups, Tumi was again ignored.

None of the girls are interacting. Then Tumi speaks to Jo in her adult voice. Jo ignores her and gets up and walks over to the teacher. Tumi says something to the group but is ignored. She then speaks to Amy but is ignored. Tumi speaks to the table again but is ignored. Amy looks at Joy and her book. Joy speaks to Tumi. Tumi doesn't respond.

(Fieldnotes 27/2/01)

Similar observations to this were made throughout the year (and recorded in detail for 12/9/00, 13/2/01, 27/3/01).

Tumi was rarely observed speaking to other children whilst moving around the classroom or at the beginning or end of class time (e.g. in the mornings or after lunch before the register at the end of the school day) when the other children shared games or books or chatted together.

At the beginning of the school year, during the first two observations made in the classroom, she did speak to James at such times (12/9/00 and 19/9/00) but this did not happen during the rest of the year. Typical of Tumi's lack of contact with other children in the class is the following fieldwork observation:

7/11/00 (Classroom at the beginning of the day)

Tumi arrives and wanders over to the group on the carpet who are standing around the teacher. The teacher has got Bluey the parrot out. He is a large glove puppet. The children had been looking at an atlas but now there are two groups in the classroom – those looking at the atlas and those around the teacher and Bluey. Tumi stands on the edge of this group watching. No-one speaks to her. After a minute or two she comes over to the trays to get her reading book out...She wanders off and goes to the desk where the atlas group are and stands and leans on the desk. She is on the periphery of the group. She isn't invited to join and she doesn't force herself on them. She sits at the same table and starts to read her book. No-one speaks to her.

As reported before, Tumi did not have a particular friend in the class at the beginning of the school year. This was something she reported about herself.

Tumi: I don't have any friends in class

Sue: No

Tumi: I have a friend in Class Six called Jenny.

(Tumi 31/10/00)

However, I did not observe Tumi ever playing with Jenny at playtime (nor with any other child except, on one or two occasions, Amti, Rahul's sister who was in a Year 2 class) and Tumi did not mention Jenny again during the rest of the year.

The EAL teacher observed in January that Tumi seemed to have no friends and appeared to be an isolated pupil (16/1/01). The student teacher commented in July, 'I don't see her with many children....in the classroom, she doesn't....there isn't really anyone she's particularly with' (26/6/01).

Tumi's lack of a particular friend or friends in the class (and at playtime) continued until the second term when a new girl, Lisa, joined the class. The class teacher reported 'she's teamed up with Lisa, the new girl quite a bit, but I don't know if its developing' (16/1/01). There was a brief friendship between Lisa and Tumi but in February Tumi was telling me 'I'm not friends with Lisa anymore' (27/2/01) Katie was another new girl who also arrived in the class during the term and although Tumi became friends with her there was little classroom contact between them and I only observed Tumi playing with Katie at playtime once (on 27/2/01). By July,

Tumi comes out of the hall and walks slowly down the playground towards the tree. She doesn't speak to anyone and no-one speaks to her. She ambles around under the tree then walks balancing herself along the trunk. She repeats this walking along where the grass joins the playground. She spends all playtime doing this. She doesn't speak to anyone, no-one speaks to her. She plays alone. Katie is on the playground but she is running around with a group of boys from the class. She doesn't look for Tumi or seek her out. Tumi doesn't approach her.

(Fieldnotes 3/7/01)

The classroom assistant explained Tumi's lack of contact with other children in the class in terms of the increasing 'sexualised' behaviour of the other girls.

The girls in the class, there's a sort of broad band of them that are almost approaching puberty, you know, they're worried about what they're wearing and how they look and which boy spoke to them and they're sort of hitching their skirt down so nobody sees their knickers you know, this sort of thing, and Tumi really isn't in that group at all.

(Jill 21/5/01)

Despite her attempts to make friends and have a particular friend in the class, by the end of the research year, Tumi was about to be without a friend again. When the class teacher put the children into pairs for going up to their new Middle School, 'Tumi was on her own' (Mrs Heatherly 5/6/01) as Katie was going to a different Middle School.

During the research year, Tumi appeared as a pupil who was isolated and who had lost any friends she had made. To make friends during the year, she attached herself to new children in the class but this did not appear to be successful for her. Tumi did experience her lack of friends, and her loss of friends, as painful and distressing and went to her sister when she was upset (21/5/01).

Tumi did have some contact with Rahul, her cousin, in the classroom (12/9/00, 26/9/00, 13/2/01, 27/2/01, 27/3/01, 5/6/01) but they rarely spoke or worked together and Tumi understood this relationship as one based on the fact that the children were cousins and did not see her contact with Rahul as one of friendship (13/3/01). Tumi saw herself as having social ties with Rahul based on expectations to do with 'looking after' and being cousins rather than friendship. Tumi had clear ideas about what was expected of the two of them, Rahul and herself, they were 'to take care of Amti cos she is younger'. (Amti was Rahul's sister in the Year 2 class). She was aware of the roles they should play in relation to each other and complained that Rahul did not fulfil his role 'He's just acting silly (in school)' (13/3/01). Tumi compared herself with Rahul by claiming that he acted 'silly and babyish' whilst she acted 'so grown-upish' (13/3/01).

6.2.7 Tumi at home and at school

A key person in Tumi's home life was her older sister Salima. It was Salima who helped her with her school work by hearing her read and filling in her Reading Record book. Tumi reported that it was her sister who helped her learn to read before she went to school, 'at

home my sister read me stories, that's how I learnt (to read)..before playschool, in English' (27/9/00). Tumi did not read in English with either of her parents (21/5/01).

Salima also helped Tumi with her maths. We saw earlier how Tumi struggled in maths and how at the beginning of the research year she was unable to count on accurately. Tumi reported that it was her sister who helped her during the research year with Maths and taught her how to count on and to do her times tables (21/5/01). She also reported that her brothers helped her use the computer they had at home but did not help her with Maths and English (21/5/01). Salima was also the person Tumi went to if she was upset (21/5/01) and who gave her guidance. Salima was also the member of the family who was consulted when Tumi's school work was being discussed and it was Salima who looked at Tumi's school report (21/6/01). Tumi's father confirmed that it was Salima that helped Tumi at home with her school work because he was unable to because of the hours he needed to work for his job and Tumi reported that it was Salima that she passed any school letters to, not her mother 'because she doesn't know English'. Salima, together with her brothers if they were at home, were also Tumi's main playmates (27/2/01, 21/5/01) Tumi reported that she played schools at home with her sister (21/5/01).

Tumi, although born in the city, had visited Bangladesh once when she was five. She did not attend school in Bangladesh (12/6/01).

Having a British birthplace made Tumi feel very different to her family. Her parents and her brothers and sisters were all born in Bangladesh, Tumi was the only member of the family to be born in England. She reported that 'I feel like I'm not really the same' (21/5/01). Later when talking about which words she used to describe herself she referred back to this being different.

Sue: I always describe you as a Bangladeshi girl but is that how you describe yourself?

Tumi: I describe myself as I was born here and..all my family goes to Bangladesh except for me. But I do go.

Sue: So what should I say then?

Tumi: Both really

Sue: Both what? Both?

Tumi: Sometimes I speak Bangla and I learnt Bangla first but I don't know Bangla that much cos I can't speak it. I can't. I don't know what 'exercise' means in Bengali.

Sue: OK. So there are quite a few words you're not sure about?

Tumi: yeah

Sue: So what should I say? How should I describe you?

Tumi: I don't know really

Sue: It's hard to think of a good way?

Tumi: Half-English and half-Bengali....cos I do come from England. I do come from England, England. I was born here. And I stayed more time and everything. And I got to know it more. (Pause). Grandpa, and I never got to see my grandpa cos he died.

(Tumi 3/7/01)

Tumi spent her time either at school, at her Qur'an school or at home. Tumi reported that she didn't go on any trips away from home during the research year and that she spent her school holidays at home playing on the computer. When asked specifically about the Easter holiday,

Sue: ..and did you have a nice holiday?...Did you do anything? Go anywhere?

Tumi: Just stayed at home.

Sue: Just stayed at home. What did you do?

Tumi: Played computer games

Sue: Played computer games. Do you ever go out?

Tumi: (laughing) No

Sue: Do you ever go to the city with your mum, or sister or brother?

Tumi: No

Sue: No?

Tumi: I go with my mum, no, I go with my dad sometimes...but nowadays..he used to.

(Tumi 21/5/01)

Tumi also watched a lot of British television and often mentioned television programmes she liked and watched regularly (Mr Bean, Pokemon, Zena Warrior Princess).

Tumi did take part in some of the school clubs that existed in her English school. She had been a member of the Chess Club, run by her classroom teacher, but had stopped going because, she claimed, she had decided she would rather go home and watch television than do Chess. Tumi also went to Recorder Club, which met at breaktime on Tuesdays, during the third term of school.

Tumi's attendance at school had been poor in previous years as outlined earlier. During the research year Tumi missed twenty-two days of school, that is four weeks and two days out of a possible thirty-eight weeks of school.

Tumi's father reported that he did not attend parent evenings and could not help Tumi at home a lot because of the timings of the school day and the fact that his job took him out of the house at the times Tumi was at home, especially in the late afternoons and evenings. His

wife was also unable to attend the school's parents evenings 'because she doesn't understand English' (21/6/01).

Tumi's father reported that he and his wife chose Parkway School for Tumi because her brothers and sisters had been there and they knew that it was OK. They had decided to send their eldest son there because it was the nearest school. Tumi's father went on to say that he thought the school had changed for the better since their eldest son went there. When his eldest son had finished at the school 'he couldn't even do his alphabet..and he had to learn it at middle school but Tumi is reading and writing so that is good' (21/6/01). This is an interesting insight into how the school is judged by Tumi's father. Tumi's father also recognised the different starting points his children had had in relation to their English schools.

Tumi was born here. She knew English before she went to playgroup. When she went to playgroup she was just in there. She was very happy. She went off to play with the other children. Tumi had (Family Literacy Support at home) but once the teacher had spent time with her she stopped coming because Tumi didn't need any support. She already knew those kind of things. When Salima started school, she didn't know anything and didn't know any English.

(Tumi's father 21/6/01)

Tumi's father and Tumi's sister Salima, also revealed that they had noticed that before Tumi went to Bangladesh 'she was very curious about school. She liked going. Always wanted to go. But since we went on our visit she doesn't want to go and we have to do a lot of persuading every morning' (Tumi's father 21/6/01). Salima added, 'Tumi says it is because she is bored at school. And, she doesn't want to go because she can't do the maths' (Salima 21/6/01).

Tumi's father reported that he and his wife did not worry about their children losing their religion, culture and language because they taught them at home. He personally did not have any worries about his children spending so much time in an English secular context. He did say that if there had been a single sex school for girls in the city he would have sent his two daughters to such a school (26/5/01)

6.2.8 Teacher responses

Over the course of the research year Tumi had contact with three different adults in the classroom. Her classroom teacher, the classroom assistant and the student teacher who took the class for most of the third term. Each of these adults responded to Tumi, and understood Tumi as a pupil and as a child, in different ways. These responses and understandings had implications for Tumi as a pupil in her class and as a pupil moving on into a Year Four class in a new school.

6.2.8.1 Mrs Heatherly, the classroom teacher

The classroom teacher's understandings of and responses to Tumi developed through the research year. Tumi was certainly a pupil that the classroom teacher was aware of in the classroom. At the beginning of the research year the classroom teacher reported that she felt that Tumi was 'OK in terms of her ability but lazy' (11/9/00) and 'well integrated' into the class (12/9/00). By November, the classroom teacher had changed her mind about this and saw Tumi as 'very keen on school, she's very well motivated' (and cited how Tumi had told her that she wanted to be a teacher when she grew up) and saw her as **not** well integrated into 'the work of the class' (7/11/00). In terms of ability, Tumi's teacher reported that she gave very good explanations on the carpet, especially in subjects like Science but that she was weak in Numeracy and had 'a mind of her own, does her own thing. She is not so good at following the instructions of the lesson. In the work the children had to do on adjectives, Tumi didn't really understand the task. She just wrote a story. She's not listening' (26/9/00). Later, Tumi's teacher made the following comment,

She can be quite stubborn in some ways and you know she likes to do her own thing and I know at the start of term I feel almost she was testing me to see whether I'd let her do her own thing, especially in terms of writing. If she wanted to write about fairy in a green dress even though I had asked them to write about an elephant, she would write about the fairy....in fact I have given her one of her targets...follow the teacher's instructions more closely.

(Mrs Heatherly 7/11/00)

However, despite this, the classroom teacher saw Tumi as 'really quite bright' (7/11/00).

When asked, she gave the following explanation of what it was about Tumi that gave her the impression that Tumi was 'quite bright'.

Um, she's very good at... funnily enough if you speak to her orally she can, I mean her grasp of vocabulary is very good I think and I think the way she constructs sentence, she's got quite complicated sentence construction...which I don't think is easy. I think..she must be exposed at home to some quite good English speaking really and...she can be perceptive, she can be very perceptive from time to time about people, about stories. She often comes up with her own. If you read a story with her she often comes up with 'Well I wonder why ...that happened in the story?' She is very thoughtful about things. So I think its that that makes me think that there's quite a lot of potential there. Yeah.

(Mrs Heatherly 7/11/00)

The classroom teacher's interactions and responses towards Tumi in the classroom during this time were very positive ones. She called Tumi 'darling' and 'sweetheart' (31/10/00) and reported to me that she liked Tumi and thought she was a 'funny little thing' (7/11/00)

By March of the research year, the classroom teacher was talking to me about how Tumi rambled on when answering questions on the carpet. 'Its so sweet when she puts her hand up on the carpet and you call on her and she starts rambling on and you think 'Oh no! Here goes one of her rambles. Where are we going with this? What is this about? How is this connected to what we are doing?' And often it isn't' (27/3/01). The teacher described this way of responding on the carpet as Tumi 'thinking aloud'.

At the end of the research year, Tumi had retained her positive image in the classroom teacher's eyes. In her Year 3 report, Mrs Heatherly wrote under the heading 'General Progress':

Tumi is a delightful girl who is always smiling and is very well behaved in school.

Tumi enjoys learning and works hard. She has told me more than once that she would like to be a teacher when she grows up!

(Year 3 Report: General Progress)

When interviewed at the end of the year, the class teacher reported that, although Tumi did sometimes have a problem getting her ideas down on paper and that she still had a very florid and long-winded way of expressing her ideas on the carpet, she felt that Tumi had definitely moved on through the course of the year from being at a Level 2 to working at a Level 3 in Literacy and to being nearly Level 3 in Numeracy. She reported that 'Mrs Hill, who taught her before said 'Oh Tumi's Maths, you know you need to watch that, but in fact I've found more and more that (Tumi's) picking that up and I don't feel concerned about her Maths at all' (19/6/01). She also reported that although she had wondered whether Tumi was comprehending what she was reading during the year she was sure that Tumi's level of understanding when she read was at a Level 3 and wrote in Tumi's end of year report, 'Tumi is now reading long chapter books with ease' and 'She can read independently, using a range

of strategies in an appropriate way to read and understand difficult words or passages of text' (Year 3 Report: English). As to Tumi's writing, she reported that,

Her writing is very good now. I mean I looked at her book the other day and I thought well you know, cos she was very unkeen, very unkeen to write at the start of the year and wanted to just do her own thing all the time and she did settle down and she does now make an attempt to do a piece of work in the way you've asked on the carpet. I mean if it's a letter, she writes a letter, whereas at the start of the year you'd ask them to write a letter and Tumi would write a story.....and she'd very often sit there and not, and write very, very little and get sort of a bit, you know, and when you approached her and said 'Well you haven't done much Tumi', she'd say 'Oh well, I'm still thinking' or 'Well I'm not sure'..and she'd have some sort of excuse rather than, I mean she does actually get on with the work, she's not one who's constantly talking or anything and her maths has come on really well.

(Mrs Heatherly 19/6/01)

In terms of Tumi's language ability, which she had praised earlier in the year, Mrs Heatherly reported in our final interview that,

It's very good, its just rather idiosyncratic....she has the ability to waffle. That's the only way I can describe it. Instead of just giving a direct answer she feels she's got to..come at it in a sort of a spiral shape so you're sort of feeling 'Oh we will get there. I know we'll get there'. In some ways its very charming and shows a good grasp of language. You know its just occasionally you just think 'Why can't you just say 'Yes I do' instead of 'Well sometimes on Wednesday blah, blah, blah'. You know sometimes it goes on.

(Mrs Heatherly 19/6/01)

Her classroom teacher thought that Tumi would do very well in Year Four.

From the above account it can be seen that Tumi's classroom teacher came to see and understand Tumi, and to understand Tumi's achievement and potential as a learner, in terms of Tumi's **behaviour** in the classroom.

The classroom teacher refers to Tumi's oral performance as an indicator of Tumi being 'bright'. What tells Mrs Heatherly that Tumi is 'bright' and 'has potential' is her 'good explanations' in lessons like Science, her 'grasp of vocabulary', her 'quite complicated sentence construction' and the way in which Tumi can be 'perceptive' about people and about stories and the way in which she talks about stories (7/11/00). Thus, Tumi's taking part on the carpet, her deep knowledge of stories and the manner in which she discusses stories with the teacher leads to a positive identity for Tumi as a 'bright' child with potential.

The classroom teacher's interpretations of Tumi's behaviour off the carpet when completing tasks set in Literacy also has implications for Tumi. She refers to Tumi's 'doing her own thing' and 'not following instructions' (and to some extent her 'long-winded', 'florid' way of speaking), during the research year, as aspects of Tumi's personality and behaviour which interferes with her ability and potential. Even when Mrs Heatherly acknowledges that Tumi 'didn't really understand' the task, when she is talking about the work the children had to do on adjectives, she still understands Tumi's subsequent behaviour (which was to present the teacher with a story, something Tumi could do and did know how to do) as Tumi being wilful 'doing her own thing' and 'not listening' (26/9/00). Later Mrs Heatherly refers to this as Tumi 'testing' her to see what she could get away with. As a result of this behaviour Tumi was given as one of her Literacy targets 'to follow the teacher's instructions'. Her Literacy target was in fact about conforming to appropriate behaviour in the classroom rather than acquiring a particular skill in literacy (although in this context the successful skill was to behave in a certain way). Mrs Heatherly interprets Tumi's behaviour whilst completing tasks set in Literacy as indicative of aspects of Tumi's personality rather than of her abilities or needs as a learner. The continued use of the story form and story language by Tumi for most of the research year, not only in written work but in her conversations with adults,

would suggest that Tumi may have only felt comfortable with this form of English and her slow progress in a writing task an indication of not knowing how to proceed rather than avoiding work⁴. In both cases, what remains hidden by the classroom teacher's interpretations of Tumi's behaviour, is what Tumi struggles with and cannot do. In the first case, Tumi's interactions in the classroom, her ability to use English orally in certain ways, leads her teacher to see her as a bright pupil with good English and no problems as an EAL pupil. This leads the teacher to see Tumi's completion of written tasks using the story form, when this hasn't been asked for, as indicative of Tumi's wilfulness rather than of a learning and teaching need. Tumi's florid and long-winded language on the carpet is not interpreted as indicative of a need for support in using oral English in a range of ways according to content, context and audience but of Tumi's idiosyncrasies. Tumi's 'cheating at reading' is also hidden from her classroom teacher by Tumi's performance as a 'bright' little thing and by her access to story language and her knowledge of how to 'behave' in interactions with adults around stories. Tumi's reading performance leads her class teacher to see her as a child with a great deal of potential (7/11/00) and not as a child who needs support with acquiring English literacy.

The teacher's report at the end of the year gives some indication of how Tumi's personality, and how she behaves, come to predominate in an account of her 'progress' and achievement during the year. The report begins with:

General Progress:

Tumi is a delightful girl who is always smiling and is very well behaved in school.

Tumi enjoys learning and works hard.

(Report July 2001)

⁴ I have discussed briefly above how very little visual modelling of different forms of written English took place in Tumi's classroom during the year.

6.2.8.2 Jill, the classroom assistant

The classroom assistant saw Tumi as a very enthusiastic, bubbly little girl. Jill had a very positive view of Tumi as a pupil and this was based on Tumi's behaviour in the classroom and on her performance as a reader. Jill described Tumi as a good participator, 'often with her hand up, coming up with ideas' (21/5/01). She also commented that sometimes Tumi was 'way off beam' with her ideas but that did not put her off taking part. She saw Tumi as an industrious pupil, who listened, got her head down and got on with her work. When asked about Tumi as a learner, Jill replied,

She's an able little girl. She reads beautifully and her English is excellent. She doesn't have any pronunciation problems or anything of that nature.

(Jill: 21/5/01)

This again demonstrates how Tumi was judged as a learner by her reading performance and how her language needs were judged.

6.2.8.3 Miss Gardner, the student teacher

The student teacher in contrast saw Tumi as a pupil who, although always keen to join in, was perhaps not actually listening and taking things in.

She's always very keen to join in to go along with whatever you're doing but, well an awful lot of the time I do wonder about how much she's actually listening and taking in. Because when she does join in its often quite off the wall.

(Miss Gardner 26/6/01)

This teacher also noticed that when writing Tumi often produced something that was not quite what was asked for. Miss Gardner described Tumi as an able pupil whose thinking was 'a little bit askew sometimes' (26/6/01)

None of the adults in Tumi's classroom realised what Tumi hid and what language and learning needs she had.

6.2.9 Tumi: Conclusions

In relation to the questions generated by the review of literature, Tumi's case study provides answers to the questions regarding teacher responses to pupils, to questions regarding pupils' language and language needs and to questions regarding reading.

Tumi's manner of 'taking part' in classroom life, her particular interactions with the adults in the classroom and her manner of 'being a reader' meant that the adults understood Tumi as a bright pupil with potential. Tumi presented herself as a pupil who had ability, who, according to her teachers, just needed to turn that ability into the appropriate forms of expression.

However, none of the adults in the classroom during the research year actually taught her about the appropriate forms of expression and Tumi continued to call on what was available to her, that is her resources from home (her sister Salima, her access to story language through the books and videos her father bought her, her access to knowledge through the television, her interactions with adults which helped her develop her language, her access to teaching from her sister in Numeracy). Tumi's home life was key to her ability to take part at school. Whereas her classroom teacher saw Tumi as 'picking up' Numeracy through the year, Tumi reported that her sister was actually teaching her at home. Tumi also reported that it was her sister who taught her to read and, from her comments and Tumi's reading record, it appeared that Tumi read more regularly at home than at school. Tumi showed through the research year that she had developed her own ways of producing the performance of reading (especially the reading of high status books) and pleasing the teacher

and getting a reaction from the other children in her class. For Tumi being able to read meant being clever and she intended to show that she was clever.

How successful was Tumi as a learner and as a reader? Her teachers were puzzled but were convinced that she was bright, had potential, was able and that she was a good reader. She was not placed in the bottom sets in the class and she retained her high status as a reader amongst her peers. However, what she hid in the classroom and in her reading-aloud-interactions with her teachers, in an effort to take part successfully and have a high status, were the things that she got stuck with when she engaged with text (and when she tried to explain things orally in class). In terms of Tumi as a reader what is hidden from her teachers and her peers was the fact that she struggled with a lot of vocabulary in the story books she read. This impeded her understanding to a far greater degree than any of the teaching staff recognised because she hid it so well when she read to them and the kind of reading activity she was asked to engage in allowed her to continue to hide what she didn't know and couldn't do.

Tumi thought that she would be able to carry on 'cheating at reading' as she moved through school and that her manner of 'reading' wouldn't cause her problems in the future.

Sue: So do you think its going to cause you a bit of a problem ever or will you be able to carry on doing that ('cheating at reading')

Tumi: I'll be able to carry on

(Tumi 27/3/01)

However, it seemed unlikely that she would be able to carry on reading in the way that she had developed as she moved on through the curriculum and through school.

In terms of Tumi as a learner what was hidden from her teachers, this time by a combination of her way of participating on the carpet and her teachers' lack of awareness that Tumi's 'social language' was not indicative of a child who was fully fluent in English, was her struggles with developing her English language into appropriate forms of expression. Her isolation from other pupils also limited her opportunities for developing her English in and for different contexts.

In terms of answering the research question, 'What helped and hindered this pupil in learning and achieving in school during the research year?' it can be seen that what helped Tumi were her resources from home and the opportunities she got from interacting with the adults in the classroom and the ways in which the adults subsequently perceived Tumi and understood her as a pupil. What hindered her during this particular year in school was her teachers' acceptance of her performance as a reader and as a 'bright' pupil and their lack of training in understanding and assessing the needs of EAL pupils and the subsequent lack of support or teaching to develop Tumi's English and her lack of contact with other children. Tumi's hiding, her willingness and eagerness to please, meant that she was vulnerable as she moved on into Year 4. Her strategies for reading especially were unlikely to keep working for her and she had the potential to become a pupil who 'plateaued' as she moved through Middle School and the demands of the curriculum required more and more independent reading. Her isolation from other pupils also made her vulnerable as she did not have a peer support system in place. Tumi's reliance on her home looked likely to continue as she moved from Year Three to Year Four.

6.3 Case Study Two: Rahul

Rahul's case study describes a pupil in the same class as Tumi but very differently situated to Tumi. This case study reveals how a Bangladeshi pupil, with little English, can find themselves in a position in which they cannot take part in classroom interactions because of the orally-intense nature of classroom life. This case study shows us a Bangladeshi pupil who is not able to present himself as an enthusiastic pupil, eager to participate in classroom activities and what the implications of this are for pupil identity. The case study also shows us how a Bangladeshi pupil can be offered support which impedes their progress as a learner and how a pupil can get caught in a situation in which they are unlikely to be able to move on to become a successful, achieving learner.

6.3.1 Introduction

Rahul was seven years old at the beginning of the research year. As his birthday was in February he was neither one of the eldest nor one of the youngest in the year. Rahul was in the same class as Tumi and, as noted above, the children in this class had been together in Year 2 and therefore knew each other well. Rahul did not have a particular friend that he spent a lot of time with at the beginning of the year but he did have some contact with a boy called Jaz in his class and this friendship developed somewhat during the research year.

Rahul's mother was the second wife of Rahul's father and Rahul and his younger sister Mahi had five step-brothers and sisters from the first marriage. The step-brothers and sisters were all older than Rahul and lived together with their mother in another part of the city. Rahul and his sister had moved with their father and mother to a house in the north of the city when Rahul was just turning five. For a while Rahul, his sister and mother lived with another family in the city, then in bed and breakfast accommodation before settling in their new home. This meant that Rahul started his Reception Year in one school in the south of the city, missed a few months of that year of school while the family were moving about and

started attending Parkway school, in the north of the city, in May 1998. Although he spent Year 1 in the same school, his current school, his Year 1 teacher reported that Rahul had also missed a lot of school during Year 1 (23/1/01). Rahul's schooling was also interrupted during Year 2 when the family went to Bangladesh from December 1999 to July 2000. This meant that Rahul had only spent the first term of Year 2 in school. Rahul had not attended a play school or a nursery before starting school so taken together Rahul had had two terms of schooling in Reception Year, three terms of Year 1 with a lot of absences and one term of schooling in Year 2, a total of less than one year and two terms of schooling when he started Year 3. At the beginning of the research year Rahul was returning to school having not attended since December of the year before and having spent seven months living and going to school in Bangladesh.

Rahul's mother had been to school in Bangladesh but did not pass her matric, an exam which pupils take at the end of primary school. (A pass allows pupils to continue on into secondary education). She had been born in the same village as her husband in the Sylhet part of Bangladesh and had moved to England after her marriage in 1991. She was a housewife. Rahul's father worked as a waiter in an 'Indian' restaurant in the city. Rahul's mother commented that her education was completely different to her children's (18/6/01). During the course of the year Rahul did not mention having books bought for him or reading non-school books at home. He did have a computer at home and Rahul mentioned playing computer games on the computer (27/2/01).

Rahul's mother described Rahul as 'very active' and 'very naughty' as a child. He liked playing with cars and used to make car races on the floor. He had a set of toy cars when he was small (18/6/01).

Rahul used both Bangla and English at home and with his friends outside school. He reported that he spoke Bangla with his mother as she did not speak English 'not a bit'

(5/6/01). This was confirmed by his mother (18/6/01). Rahul also used Bangla with his father. With his sister he used English and 'sometimes Bangla' (5/6/01). Rahul's mother confirmed that he usually spoke English to his sister (18/6/01). With one friend and with his older step-brothers and sisters Rahul reported that he used English, whilst with two other friends he used a mixture of English and Bangla (5/6/01). When asked about how he decided which language to use, Rahul reported that he used Bangla when the other person did not speak English but otherwise used English, or a mixture of English and Bangla, as he preferred to speak English 'cos its good' and 'it is more easier to say' (5/6/01). Rahul also reported that he knew a little bit of Hindi (5/6/01) although the family did not have Zee TV or any of the other South Asian satellite channels at home.

Rahul's mother could read and write in Bengali but not in English. She was teaching him to read and write in Bengali at home. Rahul reported that he could read a little bit in Bengali but it was 'boring, its too hard' (23/1/01). He could write his name and some words in Bengali. Rahul's father could speak quite a lot of English. Rahul reported that his mother and father did not write letters to friends and family in Bangladeshi. They did use the telephone to talk to friends and family in Bangladesh but Rahul said that he did not take part in these phone conversations (17/10/00).

Rahul reported that he played with his sister outside school and that he sometimes visited his step-brothers in their house (27/2/01). He also reported that he went to the park during one of the school holidays and saw his cousins Nadir, Aceef, Ateef and Bella and that the children came back to his house to continue playing (5/6/01). This only happened once during the research year though. In June Rahul said that some of his relatives were no longer allowed to come to his house, this seemed to include his cousins and his step-brothers and sisters (5/6/01) and to be the result of continuing tensions within the immediate family. Tumi, Rahul's cousin, and her family had also been visitors to his house in previous years,

Rahul: (Tumi) often comes sometimes, now she doesn't come anymore. Maybe she will come if we go round theirs then they will come.

Sue: OK. But you have to go to their house first?

Rahul: Yeah but we're not allowed.

(Rahul 5/6/01)

He did continue to see Aceef and Ateef outside school on an irregular basis and he also played with Jaz, his friend from school, who came to Rahul's house to play. Rahul was not allowed to go to Jaz's house to play because, according to Rahul, he was not allowed to cross a busy main road on his own (5/6/01).

As noted above, Rahul was in the same class as his cousin Tumi at school and together they were the only Bangladeshi, ethnic minority, EAL children in the class.

6.3.2 Taking Part

It was clear from the first two days that I observed in the classroom that Rahul was a pupil who did not take part in teacher-pupil interactions during carpet time. This behaviour continued throughout the research year. The following observation, made on my first day in the classroom, gives an idea of how Rahul behaved on the carpet and how his class teacher responded.

During Numeracy time on the carpet he doesn't bid once. Towards the end of the session the teacher directs a question at Rahul, 'What on your body can you use to add or subtract?' and nominates him to answer even though Rahul has not raised his hand to answer the question. Rahul sits silent for about eight seconds. The class don't interrupt or shout out. The teacher prompts him by showing her fingers.

Rahul says 'Fingers'. A little bit later he is called on by the teacher to listen and to

look. He is one of two boys called on to listen and look in this session. At the end of the session, when the children move off the carpet to go to their group desks, Rahul remains behind. He stands next to the teacher. When the teacher speaks to Rahul he shakes his head for 'No' rather than speak the word. He doesn't appear to be at ease from his body language, very hesitant. He doesn't have any books to use for the work as he was absent on the first day of school when the books were given out.....

After break, at the beginning of Literacy Hour when the children are on the carpet, three children are called on and chastised. One of these is Rahul who is told to pay attention.

The teacher is introducing the idea of setting and place to the class 'Little Red Riding Hood. Where does that take place? You all know where'. Rahul does not bid although most of the class bid. The teacher talks about whether it is a forest or a wood. Rahul is looking away.....'

(Fieldnotes 12/9/00)

The Literacy session on the carpet continued in this vein. Rahul continued to look away, around the classroom. After five minutes had passed he started to rock backwards and forwards and then began to flick his face and tap his teeth with his fingers. After this he chattered his teeth together whilst staring around. As I recorded in my field notes 'As the children give answers and suggestions to the teacher, Rahul is totally disengaged. Rahul doesn't bid once during this class time even though most of the class do' (12/9/00). At this point in the lesson, the teacher called on Rahul to pay attention.

During the rest of this session on the carpet, which lasted for twenty-five minutes, Rahul slowly moved back through the seated children so that he was sitting right at the back of the

group. Whilst the teacher was explaining the task the children had to complete in their groups, Rahul was looking away and blowing into his hands (12/9/00). There was only one occasion when Rahul looked at the teacher and what she was doing during this session. This was when the teacher read a piece of text from a story book to the class and pointed at the words with her finger as she read. When the teacher did this, Rahul sat up and looked at the teacher and followed her finger as she pointed (12/9/00).

A week later, in Numeracy, the following observation was made.

The teacher is covering number lines with the class. Rahul is focused and looking at the number line the teacher has put on the board. He tries to work out the answers to the number questions the teacher is asking (he says numbers quietly to himself and counts on using the line). The teacher introduces a number line without numbers on it and Rahul starts to look away. The teacher nominates Rahul to answer a question using the un-numbered number line although he hasn't raised his hand. Rahul thinks briefly and then quietly gives the correct answer. The teacher says 'Good boy'. The teacher continues marking numbers on the line, asking 'Which is the biggest, smallest?' etc. Rahul moves nearer the board. He bids at the next question and gets nominated by the teacher. He gets the question right. The teacher asks him another question 'What number is in between twenty-six and fifty?'. Rahul can't answer the question. He looks puzzled and uncertain. He remains silent. The next question is 'Which number is in between seventy-eight and ninety-eight?' Rahul does not bid for this question and starts looking away around the classroom. At the end of the lesson the support teacher tells the class teacher that Rahul didn't know what 'in-between' meant and that she had to explain it to him. 'He did know what 'biggest' and 'smallest' meant and could do them OK but not 'in between''

(Fieldnotes 19/9/00)

These two observations and the comment of the classroom assistant would suggest that Rahul was struggling with the amount and nature of English language around him, especially during sessions on the carpet which were very language-rich (the teacher would be talking for up to twenty-five minutes in these sessions). The observations suggest that when a visual prop or focus was used by the teacher Rahul did look at the teacher and take part in the activity in some way. This was also observed on 26/9/00. When the lesson was all oral language, Rahul switched out. The second observation also shows how, early on in the school year, the teacher responds to Rahul's behaviour on the carpet. She successfully calls on him to answer a question as he is beginning to 'switch out' of the lesson and thus manages to engage him in the work. However, a language difficulty, which the teacher did not recognise, prevented Rahul from staying engaged with the work. He did not understand and could not take part.

Between October and February Rahul generally stayed out of interactions on the carpet. There were some occasions when he did join in, when there was some kind of visual support but even on these occasions Rahul was not always successful in taking part (19/9/00; 27/2/01). When the activity on the carpet was orally/aurally based and involved discussion (which it usually was and did) Rahul 'switched out'. His teachers began to comment that Rahul 'doesn't listen in class' (Jill 16/1/01).

For the rest of the research year, Rahul continued to stay out of interactions on the carpet. During this time he appeared to be a pupil resigning himself to, or comfortably inhabiting, a non-participatory role. He continued to pay great attention to a visual resource in the classroom but did not participate in predominantly oral/aural sessions on the carpet. His teachers continued to refer to his 'not listening' in class (Mrs Heatherly 13/3/01).

In terms of taking part Rahul was not able to present himself as an enthusiastic pupil, eager to participate in classroom activities. His not taking part was understood in specific ways by

his teachers and became an important dimension of Rahul's identity as a pupil during the year.

Rahul's non-participation signalled to his teachers some aspects of his language needs as a learner but other interpretations of his behaviour also came into play and although support was provided some language and learning needs remained invisible. Rahul's inattention and non-participation began to be interpreted as 'not listening' by his teachers as the year progressed. This understanding of Rahul is picked up and developed below and later in the case study.

6.3.3 Rahul and language

Rahul's teachers did notice and comment upon Rahul's language and his lack of taking part in the classroom (Mrs Heatherly 12/9/00). They recognised Rahul's quietness and non-participation as linked to the fact that he had been away from England and using English for a long period of time and that he had gaps in his English (Mrs Heatherly 26/9/00, 23/1/01; EAL teacher 26/9/00).

Rahul's classroom teacher was very aware of the role that language and understanding played in Rahul's experience of learning on the carpet in the classroom. She recognised that he rarely spoke in class and that he found 'understanding quite complex English sentences difficult' (7/11/00). These difficulties made it hard for Rahul to work independently, 'he needs help with actual specific vocabulary items sometimes in order to be able to do a task or to read a page, it becomes obvious that he just doesn't know what that thing is that's referred to' (7/11/00). She was certain though that Rahul did not lack ability but only the language with which to demonstrate his ability (7/11/00).

However, in tension with these understandings of Rahul were teacher comments about Rahul not listening on the carpet.

As we have seen above, the teacher frequently called on Rahul to ‘pay attention’ and ‘to listen’ whilst the children were on the carpet, even when the session was oral/aural and very language-intense. In October, the class teacher reported that ‘Rahul is still not listening on the carpet’ (17/10/00) suggesting that somehow Rahul’s ability to listen and to understand were somehow distinct from (and not affected by) his acknowledged difficulties with English as a language. At the end of the research year she reported that Rahul ‘simply needs to listen, in the introductory sessions to literacy and Numeracy’ and that the advice she would pass up to Rahul’s new Middle School would include ‘he needs to be reminded to listen on the carpet’ (19/6/01). In these accounts not having enough language slips into ‘not listening’ . The way that this teacher and the other classroom adults responded to Rahul’s non-participation and the manner in which explanations around lack of English developed into explanations about ‘not listening’ are discussed later in the case study.

What was not appreciated by the adults in the classroom was the great amount of English that there was to be listened to and understood especially during the sessions on the carpet during the day. These sessions normally lasted between twenty and thirty minutes and were composed of teacher talk with spaces within that talk provided for the answers and comments of the children. The language that filled these sessions was not bite-sized language. During these long stretches of teacher and teacher controlled talk, the teacher’s language ranged (without stop) from introductory explanations of topics, definitions of words and phrases, questions that expected answers and questions that did not expect answers, repetitions of things the children had said, corrections or things the children had said, asides to me and Jill, directions to the children, instructions, explanations, anecdotes and language to control behaviour⁵.

⁵ Some sense of the complexity of language in use in these sessions is given in the Weather Report Lesson presented in Tumi’s case study -see pages 174-175 and Appendix Sixteen.

There appeared to be little appreciation by Rahul's teachers of the amount of English flowing around Rahul and coming at him during these sessions nor that Rahul was unlikely to be in a position where he could distinguish which were the necessary 'bits' of teacher talk for him to listen to and which were not (or to distinguish which bits were important for now and which bits for later and so on).

This could be seen, for example, in the moments when the teacher was explaining what the children must do in their groups in Literacy Hour after the session on the carpet. For example, in one session the teacher had spent the carpet session focusing on settings and adjectives. When it was time for the class to go and work in groups some of the children were directed to go and look in their own reading book for settings (Rahul was in one of these groups) whilst some children were to do work on alphabetical order which was not connected with the work just covered. Rahul needed to be able to distinguish which set of instructions to listen to as they were not explicitly stated or flagged up for him. Thus Rahul spent much of the carpet sessions awash in English with little, if any guidance, about which bits he needed to listen to.

The support that Rahul was offered (injunctions to 'Look and listen' and 'Pay attention') was intended to orientate him to the correct ways of taking part. It was not provided to help him cope with the great amount of listening that was required during the daily sessions on the carpet.

It has been commented on, in Tumi's case study, that the classroom teacher also relied heavily on giving oral explanations of teaching points (such as particular stylistic features used in writing) and rarely visually demonstrated such points on the board so that children could see them. In this way Rahul had little access to these teaching points because of his beginner-level English.

In terms of his other languages, Rahul did not use Bengali in the classroom during teacher-led activities. For example, when the children were encouraged to use another language to answer the register Rahul chose to use Spanish, German or Welsh (12/9/00, 26/9/00, 23/1/01). However, Rahul did write things for the other children in Bengali. This started as something between himself and his friend Jaz. Rahul wrote Jaz's name for him in Bengali and as the year progressed other children in the class approached Rahul and asked him to write their names and he did this for them. This activity went on outside the official boundaries of lessons and without teacher direction.

6.3.4 Rahul as a reader

Rahul was a beginning reader in the sense that when he read out loud to an adult he focused on and decoded each word as a bounded unit before moving on to the next word. For Rahul, the words that he was reading did not join up in any meaningful way to make a story or have meaning. Rahul needed to use the pictures and/or to call on the help of the adult he was reading to access a story.

At the beginning of the research year Rahul needed to point at each word as he read and then sound it out using initial sounds to guess at words, in this manner he was able to decode small, simple words in a text but generally failed to accurately decode the other words on the page (12/9/00, 17/10/00). He had very little idea of how to find his way around a page of text (12/9/00) or what to do with written text (15/5/01).

When Rahul was reading with me it was clear that there were many words he did not know the meaning of in the texts that he was reading. Most of the words were words that monolingual Year Three children would have had little difficulty in knowing the meaning of. These are the words that needed to be explained while we were reading together in February of the research year :

angry, world, because, become, cruel, many, completed, loading up, rusty

(Fieldnotes 13/2/01, 27/2/01)

In his Reading Record Book for the year, the following words were noted down by his teachers as words that Rahul did not know the meaning of when he was reading with them:

fit, sulky, cheeky, scruffy, selfish, annoyed, mischief, blame, bored, lap, yawn,
curl, pounce

(Reading Record Book July 2001)

Of course, these were just vocabulary items that could be easily identified in the text by Rahul, and his teachers, as words that he did not know the meaning of. There would have been phrases, and nuances in the meaning that words take according to their placement in relation to other words, that would have been beyond Rahul's understanding as well.

Rahul's reading did develop during the research year. By January Rahul was able to self-correct, make predictions and was learning new words quickly. By February he was reading more fluently and was able to decode words more accurately. He started to take over the reading and to ask questions about the story (27/2/01) although, as noted above, he still relied on the pictures to guess at meaning or engage with meaning. By July he was decoding simple texts very accurately although the story still needed to be explained. At the end of the research year he was still struggling with turning words on the page into a meaningful text. He was able to decode words but still relied on me to explain a story we were reading (3/7/01).

However, as Rahul developed as a reader during the year it was not possible for him to move up a Literacy group and have a place in the next group up who received Additional Literacy Support (ALS) even though his teacher recognised that Rahul was the best reader in his

group by May of the research year. This was because of how Additional Literacy support was organised. The ALS group was made up of the children who had got a 2C at Key Stage 1. The idea was to bring these children ‘up’ with extra support so they made it to a level 4 by the end of Key Stage 2⁶. Those children who got below a 2C were not placed in the ALS group but in the group below, the lowest group in the class. Rahul was in this group for the reasons given above.

I mean he’s doing very well in (his) group and he’s ahead of the children in that group but I can’t move him because he cannot go up to the next group because they are the ALS group and to move him two groups up I think would be too hard.....(With regard to the ALS group) we are funded to support that specific group of children, to introduce others is always a little bit frowned upon.

(Mrs Heatherly 19/6/01)

Rahul was also not able to receive support for his reading from another classroom assistant who heard certain children in the class read in the afternoons because she was only funded to support children who were statemented as Special Needs pupils.

A visiting EAL teacher did occasionally take Rahul out of the classroom to hear him read but this did not happen very often and did not happen at the beginning of the school year.

Thus the support that Rahul received as a reader were opportunities to read in his Literacy Group (often interrupted by other children), some opportunities to go and read with the EAL teacher and opportunities to read one-to-one with the adults in the classroom like the other children.

⁶ This was a government plan/policy

Rahul's reading record shows that he read eighteen times with the class teacher or the classroom assistant during the year. In light of the fact that Rahul reported that he did not read with anyone at home and did not have anyone at home who read to him (23/1/01) these eighteen occasions were the only one-to-one reading that Rahul was offered during the year. Interestingly this is the equivalent of less than three weeks worth of reading for any child who had the opportunity to read at home with a parent every night, as a number of the children in Rahul's class did⁷

Rahul's need to develop his English affected his ability to develop as a reader as he needed to know what words meant in order to develop as a reader. He was also held back by becoming stuck in the lowest Literacy group because of the way that support was organised in the school. The support he was offered became a double bind in reading (i.e. he couldn't move out of his reading group) and, as will not be discussed, in terms of learning generally.

6.3.5 Rahul as a learner

Rahul's experience of being in a very oral/aural English-dominated environment has been discussed above. We have seen how he was surrounded by a lot of complex oral English during the carpet sessions and how he appeared to 'switch out' during carpet time sessions unless there was some kind of visual or physical prop for him to focus on or use. What also emerged over the year was how the information and learning provided on the carpet at the beginning of Literacy and Numeracy very often did not relate to the task that Rahul and his group were given to complete in the next part of the hour at their desk. In addition Rahul was often taken out of the classroom by the classroom assistant or by the EAL teacher for support work during the time the rest of the class were learning on the carpet. Both of these factors created a 'fragmented day' for Rahul in terms of his experiences as a learner.

⁷ Three out of the six White English language background (WELB) children in the class that I interviewed reported that they read at home every night with their mother or father.

For example, in a Literacy lesson in May on the correct way to lay-out a letter, Rahul was taken out of the classroom by the visiting EAL teacher to go and read whilst the student teacher was modelling how to write a letter on the white board. When Rahul was returned to the classroom the children had moved into their Literacy groups and were writing their letters. Rahul was expected to join his group and write a letter even though he had missed the explanation and demonstration (21/5/01). In another Literacy session, the class were being introduced to the way the textual features in a reference book differed to the textual features in a fiction book. Rahul was taken out of the classroom by the EAL teacher to read and missed most of the session and was not in a position to be able to join in a discussion about 'What kind of text is it? Fiction or non-fiction?' when he returned to the classroom (3/7/01).

This fragmentation of the day would have also been experienced by the other children in the class in terms of the lack of continuation between the beginning of the Literacy hour and what the children were asked to do in their groups. However, Rahul's level of English, his inability to handle the amount and complexity of oral English in the classroom, must have made it more difficult for him to understand the bracketing off of discrete areas of learning and knowing, of recognising when talk and activities were connected and when they were not, of recognising the key points in carpet time when the teacher switched from introducing and discussing and teaching a topic to giving instructions about what tasks should be done (and by which group) and giving instructions about how a task should be done. These switches in talk were never explicitly signalled. By being taken out of sessions and then being brought back in during the session the amount of understanding of the what was being taught (and the task that needed accomplishing) **increased** .

Rahul was not only faced with coping with oral English beyond his range but with missing large chunks of the introduction and discussion of a topic and then having to fit back in to complete a task. Ironically, a fully fluent monolingual child received twenty minutes of

introduction, teaching and demonstration of a topic before being asked to go and complete a task whilst Rahul often received less than half of that and often ended up with less time than the other children to complete a task.

The following observation gives some sense of how Rahul was moved in and out of the classroom and the learning day, how 'not knowing things' gets in his way and some of Rahul's disappointment and frustration about not finishing work.

The teacher has started Numeracy Hour by finding out what the children know about adding money. Just as she starts to review with the children and explain how to do it, the EAL teacher arrives and takes Rahul out to go and read. When the EAL teacher brings Rahul back to the classroom he is sent off to join his Literacy group who are reading with the classroom assistant. The children are reading a Maori myth about the origins of the Earth, the language is quite archaic. The group have already read the story through once and are now talking about the story. After fifteen minutes the classroom assistant returns the group to the class five minutes before the end of the carpet session. The children on the carpet are talking about mythical monsters and looking at pictures with the class teacher. Rahul and his group have missed most of this introduction. The children are sent off into their groups to invent a monster and a story about the monster. They are to write the title for their story, decided on their ideas for the story and draw a picture of their monster. Rahul wanders around the class and comes to sit at the same desk as Tumi and myself. He spends the time choosing colouring pencils to draw with. He tells us he is going to do a monster which is half-eagle and half-lion. Then he says to me he can't do it, not because he doesn't understand but because 'I can't think'. I ask him about this and it turns out that he doesn't know what an eagle looks like. Tumi helps him. By the time the teacher says to stop and pack up, all of the children in the class that I can see (about eight) have done their pictures and title and have their

ideas scribbled down. Rahul has just started writing his title. He has a picture but does not have any ideas written down. He is very disappointed he has to stop.

(Fieldnotes 27/3/01)

This observation gives some flavour of the changes in topic and language (and groupings of pupils) that Rahul moved through in the course of an hour in his classroom during the research year. Here he starts off adding money, then moves to reading his reading book with the visiting EAL teacher, then joins his Literacy group half way through talking about a story (a Maori myth) he has not read, then rejoins the class towards the end of a discussion about descriptions of mythical monsters (European myths) and then moves into his Literacy group to draw and write a description of a made-up monster. All of these activities become disconnected from each other. Each requires a different awareness and knowledge of language and how it is used.

In addition to the support provided by placing Rahul in the lower Literacy and Numeracy groups and by the visiting EAL teacher, the classroom teacher also always asked Rahul what he had to do at the end of each carpet session. Towards the end of the research year she felt that this was all the support that Rahul needed (19/6/01). In the light of the above it can be seen why Rahul may have needed his teacher to ask him at the end of every carpet session ‘Do you know what you have got to do?’ and why Rahul may have not always known. It is also clear how this support could only provide Rahul with an orientation towards ‘how to get on with a task’ in the classroom and not with the information and teaching that he required in order to become a successful learner.

6.3.6 Rahul socially

Rahul occupied the social position of an ‘onlooker’ in the classroom and on the playground during the research year. He did have contact with other children and this increased with Jaz, another boy in the class, during the year. However, Rahul was not tightly woven into

the social fabric of the class and was kept in his 'onlooker' position by the other children when he attempted to join in as demonstrated by this observation of arriving in the classroom in the morning.

Rahul comes in first. He ambles into the classroom. He immediately heads, with a smile, to where Ellis and Colin are playing with Knex (a plastic construction kit). Stuart and James are sitting at another desk. They say his name as he passes by and when he turns they salute him. Rahul is wearing a white shirt with badges embroidered on it, a military-style shirt. The salute is affectionate. Rahul stands by Ellis and Colin's desk looking at the Knex. He is ignored by the other two boys. Rahul then touches a piece and Ellis says quickly 'Don't!'. Rahul withdraws his hand, stands there a second or two and then moves away.

(Fieldnotes 3/7/01)

This being kept on the outside also happened on the playground.

Rahul is standing on the edge of a large group of boys from different classes who are all looking at something on the ground. No-one pays any attention to him. He is standing at the back of the crowd. After about seven minutes of playtime, Rahul is running, playing a kind of Tag game with Jaz and Tom. The game comes to a halt back at the tree. Colin joins Tom, Jaz and Rahul but it immediately becomes a threesome of Colin, Tom and Jaz and Rahul is once again at the back of the crowd, not included. He spends the rest of playtime on his own.

(Fieldnotes 3/7/01)

Rahul did have something of a friendship with Jaz. Jaz would often speak to Rahul in class and often sat next to him on the carpet. Jaz also visited Rahul in his home and chose Rahul

as his partner to go to the new Middle School with in Year 4⁸. However, Jaz also had other friends and wasn't always with Rahul. Rahul reported that Jaz was 'sometimes' his friend (13/2/01). Although not always ignored, Rahul never moved beyond his location at the periphery of the class.

Rahul occasionally had some contact with Tumi. At the beginning of the research year they would follow each other in from break or lunch and sit next to each other on the carpet but they did not speak (12/9/00). On occasions Tumi would take charge of Rahul and give him directions or 'help' him with his work but this rarely occurred. Rahul did not play with Tumi, or have any contact with her, at playtimes (even though Tumi also had no-one to play with).

6.3.7 Rahul at home and at school

As noted earlier, Rahul reported that he read on his own at home, he did not read to anyone else and no-one read to him. He realised that this was not necessarily the case for other children in the class; 'My mum and dad don't read to me, it makes me sad' (23/1/01). None of the comments in Rahul's Reading Record Book are by any of the members of his family, they are all by adults in school. Although he said that he read on his own at home, Rahul never mentioned a specific occasion when he read or a particular book that he had read at home. Whenever I enquired about what he had done at home over the weekend or during the holidays he did not mention reading as an activity and when asked specifically he would reply that he hadn't read because reading was boring at home (5/6/01).

He also reported that when he had lived with his older step-brothers and sisters they had not helped him with school things although one of his step-sisters, who attended a High School in the southern part of the city, did sometimes help him read when she stayed at Rahul's house. However, it seemed that these visits did not happen very often and that tensions in

⁸ Unfortunately, Jaz went to another Middle School.

the family meant that at times the step-brothers and sisters could not come to the house (5/6/01).

During the course of the research year Rahul did not appear to go on any visits or trips outside of the home except when he went each weekend to the Mosque with his father. Rahul and his sister both attended the Mosque school on Saturdays and Sundays. Rahul was always keen to talk about what he was learning at Mosque school and would often recite the 'prayers' that he was learning in preparation for learning the Qur'an (5/6/01, 3/7/01).

When asked what he had done in the various school holidays Rahul always said that he had stayed at home and played on the computer with his sister (23/1/01, 27/2/01). On one occasion the computer was broken and he reported that he had a very boring holiday because he did not go anywhere and he could not play on his computer (5/6/01).

Rahul occasionally went to the park and saw some of his friends but he generally felt frustrated and bored by the opportunities he had to play at home (5/6/01).

As well as not taking part in many activities or trips outside school, Rahul did not take part in any of the school clubs that were on offer. The problem for Rahul was that he could not explain to his parents what the clubs were and so his parents could not give permission for him to attend.

Rahul: I'm not allowed to

Sue: You're not allowed to. Ahhh. Who says you're not allowed to?

Rahul: Do chess like that. Yeah. They don't speak to me. They don't speak to me.

Sue: Who doesn't ?

Rahul: My mum and dad.

Sue: Oh. So if you ask them, they don't say 'Yes' or 'No', they just ignore it. They don't say anything?

Rahul: They say 'What the chess?' They don't know what is chess.

Sue: Oohh and you can't explain it very well?

Rahul: Yeah

(Rahul 5/6/01)

Although he did not report going on visits or trips during the research year, Rahul did tell me that he had been to Bangladesh and to London in the past. When asked what he did in London, Rahul reported that he had visited relations and played with the children. He had visited Bangladesh once (23/1/01).

Rahul missed four weeks of school during the research year. He was absent a lot on Mondays.

Rahul's parents got all of their information about Rahul and school through letters and reports. During the research year I did not see either of Rahul's parents enter the classroom when they dropped Rahul off or picked him up at the end of the school day. Other parents did come into the classroom with their children. The teacher only reported seeing Rahul's parents once, right at the beginning of the year (12/9/00).

Rahul would give school letters and reports to his father when he was picked up from school (18/6/01). Rahul's mother reported that she felt that this information was enough. She reported that she had not attended any of the parent's evenings in the school because she did not know that there had been any (18/6/01). This would suggest that Rahul's father did not always pass on information to his wife about school events.

Rahul's mother said that she didn't know how she would know whether Rahul was doing well at school and that she could not help him at home with school things because she did not know English. She reported that she thought the school was a good school and she had chosen to send Rahul there when they moved to the north of the city because other people, like Tumi's mother, told her that it was a good school.

Rahul's mother said that she and her husband did not worry about either of their children losing their language or culture by attending an English school and living in England. They were both speaking Bengali at home with their children and they were both teaching them about Islam and about Bengali things (18/6/01).

6.3.8 Teacher responses

Over the course of the research year Rahul had contact with three different adults in the classroom. Each of these adults responded to Rahul and understood Rahul as a pupil and learner in ways that have been touched on above. These will now be discussed in more depth.

6.3.8.1 Mrs Heatherly, the classroom teacher

As we have seen Rahul's class teacher saw Rahul as a pupil who had certain strengths and skills in the classroom but who was impeded in what he could understand and do by his limited knowledge of English. During the course of the year Mrs Heatherly shared many of her thoughts and insights about Rahul and his language needs. She was aware of how difficult it was to make an assessment of Rahul's ability because of his inability to express himself.

I think he's probably..at least average you know. I mean it is hard to say really if he might be above average. He might be. That would be too difficult I think for me to assess at the moment because of the fact that he does hardly ever speak. He's got a

lot of skills but also has a lot of skills that need developing in terms of his reading and his writing and his maths. He's very quick mentally with maths which I think is quite interesting. He finds interpreting symbols a little bit more difficult but he finds understanding quite complex English sentences, I think, difficult. So I think he needs a lot more exposure to those and he needs help with actual specific vocabulary items sometimes in order to be able to do a task or to read a page. It becomes obvious that he just doesn't know what that thing is that's referred to.

(Mrs Heatherly 7/11/00)

She also saw him as a reader who could decode well but who missed the meaning of what he was reading.

He decodes quite well but I don't think he always gets the meaning - that is, sometimes he doesn't get the vocabulary. I think he is picking up some vocabulary, sometimes you are talking to him and you can suddenly see him think, 'Oh yes. That word. That's how I use that word'.

(Mrs Heatherly 23/1/01) .

Mrs Heatherly understood Rahul to be a child with skills and abilities who was unable to always articulate and demonstrate those abilities. As noted above she was very aware of the language demands of the classroom and how these presented Rahul with difficulties.

However, what is of interest is the manner in which Rahul's teachers' insights and understandings get played out and put into practice in the classroom and the consequences of these practices.

As we have seen, Rahul's classroom teacher decided to place Rahul in the lowest groups so that he would receive more support during the year. However, support in these groups was

often interrupted and limited. Mrs Heatherly also decided to provide Rahul with some one-to-one support but this resulted in Rahul being removed from the classroom and whilst out of the classroom with the EAL teacher he undertook different activities to those of the rest of the class and on returning to the classroom was expected to know how to go about and complete the tasks the other children were doing despite missing chunks of the lesson. Rahul's day as a result became fragmented and the language demands more demanding.

In Mrs Heatherly's comments about Rahul as a pupil there is tension between the understandings she had of his language needs and her understanding of when those language needs prevented Rahul from understanding and being able to complete classroom work. Despite her recognition of his language needs a frequent complaint about Rahul during the research year was that he didn't listen on the carpet, that he switched off during carpet sessions and that he was not motivated as a pupil (Mrs Heatherly 17/10/00; 7/11/00; 13/3/01; 19/6/01).

(At the beginning of the year) he did have this difficulty with listening on the carpet and with following instructions and knowing what to do independently.....gradually as time has gone on he's certainly become more and more able to work independently and I've finally got him to do some writing independently, whereas before he just sat there and did nothing...he doesn't actually give of himself very much.

(Mrs Heatherly 7/11/00)

I try to say to him always 'Do you know what have got to do Rahul because, I mean, you know, that is all he needs'. I'm trying to get him to the point of knowing what to do.

(Mrs Heatherly 7/11/00)

Mrs Heatherly held, at the same time, the understanding that English was difficult for Rahul and the complaint that Rahul 'just doesn't listen' and just needed 'reminding what he has to do'. A key behaviour that the teacher wanted to see Rahul acquire was to be able to work independently from her which meant that what he needed to do was to understand the instructions she gave whilst the children were on the carpet. Once his English was good enough for him to understand her instructions for doing and completing tasks he would be able to work independently. This understanding of Rahul ignored the fact that he needed the language to be able to complete tasks as well as to understand what the task was and what was required and that without a significant development in his English both written and oral he would not be able to work independently whether he understood the task or not.

Whilst Rahul's classroom teacher recognised that Rahul had difficulty understanding and using English, it was only particular parts of classroom life that were recognised as constituting times when language was getting in the way

Mrs Heatherly did see Rahul as a pupil who fell through the gaps during his Year 3 in school (19/6/01). She also felt that he was a pupil who had been held back by being in a large class with a curriculum to get through and that he would have benefited from more one-to-one support (19/6/01). In addition to these barriers, located within the system of the school, she also identified Rahul's home background as unsupportive and a barrier to Rahul being a successful pupil. According to his classroom teacher Rahul was being held back by his frequent absences from school and a lack of exposure to English at home. She felt that Rahul did not have many friends in school because he was not allowed to take friends home to play (7/11/00, 19/6/01).

6.3.8.2 Jill, the classroom assistant

Whilst Mrs Heatherly recognised that Rahul had some language needs, the classroom assistant felt, by the mid-point of the research year, that Rahul was a very able boy who hid behind his 'lack of English'

I think he's perfectly aware of everything that's going on but he has a sort of preconceived idea really of that...really looks like hard work, 'I don't think I understand that' when I think he does perfectly well because when you actually talk to him, to try to encourage him to sort of move along with the activity he knows what's going on quite well.

(Jill 21/5/01)

Jill came to the conclusion that Rahul's English was well developed enough to cope with the language demands of the classroom because she judged his spoken English to be adequate ('because when you actually talk to him...'). This was a frequent way in which EAL pupil's language proficiency in English was judged by some staff in the school.

Jill saw Rahul as a pupil who just needed a push to get going and did not consider that the language demands of the task may have been different to the demands of social, oral English.

For this teacher Rahul did not need EAL support and had no language needs.

6.3.8.3 Miss Gardner, the student teacher

Jill's opinion of Rahul was echoed by the student teacher who took the class during the summer term. Miss Gardner felt that Rahul often used 'the language barrier as something to hide behind' (26/6/01).

He'll say 'I didn't understand' when he obviously hasn't been listening at all. He's been looking the other way'

(Miss Gardner 26/6/01)

Like Mrs Heatherly, she also perceived Rahul as unmotivated (26/6/01).

For Miss Gardner, Rahul's lack of participation was due to a lack of motivation and not because of his language needs. Miss Gardner felt that if Rahul could motivate himself he would do well in school. In terms of the support she offered him during this term in the classroom, Miss Gardner continued with Mrs Heatherly's support strategy of asking Rahul if he knew what he had to do whenever the children were dismissed from the carpet and getting him to repeat the task back to her. She reported that 'most of the time he won't know' (26/6/01).

6.3.9 Rahul Conclusions

In relation to the questions posed at the beginning of this chapter the following can be said.

It can be seen how Rahul's lack of participation in classroom activities contributed to his teachers' perceptions and understandings of Rahul as a learner and as a pupil. How he took part and how this was understood became an important dimension to Rahul's identity. Although his classroom teacher was aware of Rahul's language needs in many ways, the complex language demands of the classroom were not recognised and the fact that Rahul only had one year and two terms of English school under his belt seemed to be forgotten. He became identified as a pupil who did not 'listen'. The other two adults in the classroom did not perceive Rahul as a child with language needs and therefore Rahul's non-participation in classroom interactions was open to understandings which called on explanations based on

personal traits within the child. For these teachers Rahul was lacking in motivation and looking for ways to avoid hard work.

Rahul made some progress during his Year Three in school. His reading improved and his spoken English developed. He was able to complete tasks in the classroom at a basic level if he had someone to 'start him off' and he demonstrated a grasp of basic Numeracy.

However, Rahul did not get many of his language needs met during the year and finished the year in a vulnerable position regarding the future. It is unlikely, with the level of English language and school knowledge that he had 'under his belt' at the end of Year Three, that Rahul would be able to access the Year Four curriculum in such a way as to become a successful learner and pupil in the following academic year. Rahul appeared as a pupil caught in a position where the only opportunities he had as a pupil were to develop his social networks amongst his peers and acquire social English. He appeared to be so far behind in terms of 'academic' English and knowledge by the end of Year Three that it was hard to envisage, without an intensive and appropriate support programme, that Rahul would be able to acquire enough 'academic language', catch up with his peers and become an achieving pupil. Rahul was in the position where he seemed set to underachieve as he moved on up into middle school.

In terms of the research question regarding what helped and hindered the case study children in the year of school studied, it can be seen that Rahul was impeded as a learner by the fact that his English language needs were not fully recognised by his teachers and by being placed in an English language-rich environment that he had to navigate by himself with no guidance. He was also impeded by becoming stuck in the lower Literacy group when he was ready to move up and by the way that his school day became a 'fragmented day' with little cohesion between the various tasks and teaching situations he was involved in. Rahul's 'onlooker' status in the class also meant that he had limited opportunities for developing his English in and for different contexts.

Rahul was also vulnerable as a learner because he was not able to call on sources of help for school work at home. He did not have anyone to read with or to ask for help with school work and he didn't have anyone to read to him at home. His absences from school in previous years, the fact that he had not attended any pre-school playgroup or nursery and not been involved in the Family Literacy project meant that he had much less exposure to school activities and to school English than other children in his class.

Rahul was helped to some extent during the research year by his class teacher's recognition of his English language needs and her attempts to respond to these. Some of his needs were recognised as a learner and a reader because Rahul did not attempt to hide what he could not do and did not strive to take part in classroom interactions to please the teacher. He did not constantly raise his hand to fit in with the class and he did not strive to produce a performance of reading to gain some kind of status in the classroom. However, what hindered Rahul as a learner and a pupil during the research year outweighed what helped him.

6.4 Case Study Three: Reena

Reena's case study clearly shows, like Rahul's, how her classroom teachers came to make decisions about support. In this case, the support provided for Reena was appropriate for Reena's needs. Reena's case study, like the others, demonstrates how her way of 'taking part' in classroom activities had implications for how she was seen and understood by her teachers and for the support she subsequently received.

6.4.1 Introduction

In September 2000, at the beginning of the research year, Reena was seven years old. Her November birthday placed her amongst the older children in her class at Bailey School. The

children in Reena's class came from half of one Year Two class joined with half of another Year Two class. Reena did not have a particular friend in the class at the beginning of the year. Towards the end of the year she had some contact with Annie and Kate but neither of these girls was a best or particularly close friend.

Reena had two classroom teachers during the research year. During the first term she was taught by Miss Birch who was a newly qualified teacher and during the second and third term she was taught by the deputy head, Mr Field, who was an experienced primary teacher. These two teachers were supported in the classroom by two classroom assistants who were shared with other classes.

At home Reena lived with her mother and father and her sister, Amti, who was one year older than Reena. Reena's father worked as a chef in an 'Indian' restaurant in the city and her mother was a housewife. Her father had been born in the UK and had gone to school in the UK although I was not aware that he had gained any qualifications from school. Reena's mother had been born in the Sylhet region of Bangladesh and came to England after her marriage. She had attended primary school in Bangladesh but had finished school before taking her matric. Reena's mother could read and write in Bengali and borrowed Bengali books from the public library. Reena reported that her father bought and read a Bengali newspaper and could also read English. Her mother could not read in English. Reena also told me, on more than one occasion, that she had 'hundreds of books at home' (28/9/00, 2/11/00). The family also had a computer.

Reena's mother described Reena as 'very quiet and shy' when she was a toddler, and reported that she liked to play with dolls.

Reena spoke Bengali and English at home. She reported that she spoke Bengali with her mother all the time because her mother could only understand a few words of English. She

spoke English with her father and her father always spoke to her in English. With her sister she spoke both Bengali and English and with her friends she spoke English. This was unless she was talking to her cousin Tamila and her friends Jamil and Jessi, on these occasions she would speak Bengali 'cos they're little' (25/6/01). Reena said that she knew some Hindi, from the songs in the Hindi movies she watched at home on television. When asked Reena said that she liked speaking both Bengali and English (25/6/01). Reena's mother was teaching Reena how to write in Bengali at home but Reena claimed that she couldn't write very much 'because it's too hard' (14/5/01).

Reena and her mother had been included in a Bangladeshi Family Literacy project before Reena started school and Reena had gone into her current school's Nursery class when she was nearly four years old. Thus Reena was beginning her fifth year of schooling at the beginning of the research year and had benefited before school from English and literacy activities in her own home through the Literacy project. However, Reena's attendance at school had been very poor prior to Year Three. In her Reception Year she had missed the equivalent of eleven weeks of school, in Year One she had missed the equivalent of six and a half weeks of school and Year Two she had missed the equivalent of five weeks of school. During Year Three Reena was frequently absent in the second half of the year on the days I was in school. For this reason the fieldnotes for Reena contain fewer observations than for the other case study children.

Reena was a step-cousin of Attar the other Bangladeshi pupil in her class. However, Reena did not see Attar and his family outside of school and did not appear to have any contact with him in the classroom. Reena played with three Bangladeshi girlfriends and her sister outside of school. She reported that her family was visited by her four aunts and uncles and their children at home and that she went to the park with her mother, her aunts and her cousins to play. Thus Reena appeared to have a lot of contact with cousins and other family members, and some Bangladeshi friends, outside of school and to have a range of playmates.

There were twenty-four children in Reena's class at the beginning of the research year. She and Attar were the only ethnic minority pupils in their class. There was one other child who was an EAL pupil in the class.

6.4.2 Taking Part

It was clear from my first few days in the classroom that Reena did not take an active part in teacher-pupil interactions when the class were on the carpet or in pupil-pupil interactions when the children were working at their desks. Fieldnotes taken during the first time I observed Reena in the classroom give some indication of how Reena 'took part' in classroom life at the beginning of the school year and where she was positioned in relation to the class. This observation was made in mid-September as Reena was absent from school during the first two mornings I spent in the classroom.

Reena arrives with her mum holding her hand. In the classroom, once her mum has left, she stands awkwardly on her own. Then she sits on the carpet but does not talk to or sit near any other children. She sits alone. She sits away from the teacher next to the big, comfy chair at the back. She bites her fingers. She answers the register at the right place but she speaks very quietly. She has put her book bag in the wrong place along with five other children in the class. After the register, when the maths cards are given out, she does not get given a card until a girl sitting in front of her gets up and gets one for her. Reena can do the maths task, only about one third of the children in the class can do it. She has a very runny nose. The teacher hands her a tissue. Reena doesn't put her hand up to answer a question once during this session...

During the beginning of the group work part of the Numeracy Hour Reena finds her place at her group's table quickly but then she just sits down and waits. She looks to the others to see what is to be done. Her group have to measure things

in the classroom. She trails around after Poppy and Charlotte, the two other girls in her group, for about two-thirds of the session. She just follows them. She doesn't speak to them and they do not speak to her. They ignore her but do not tell her to go away.

(Fieldnotes 18/9/00)

During all of my early observations Reena 'took part' only in the sense of following the physical directions of where to go and where to sit issued by the teacher. She replied to her name in the register (but did so very quietly), went to sit in her group, copied down the date in her book, looked at what other children were doing and copied what they were writing in their books or on their worksheets. During sessions on the carpet she usually sat at the back by the comfy chair and slid down next to it so she was almost out of sight. She didn't raise her hand to bid for questions and she was often ignored or left out by the other children. In addition to how she 'took part' in the classroom, Reena often came to school with greasy hair, she spent a lot of time slouching and she nearly always had a bad cold which meant that she had a permanently runny nose which she had to be encouraged to blow as we saw above.

Reena made no effort to play the role of an enthusiastic, eager to participate pupil in this classroom during the first half of the research year (18/9/00; 28/9/00; 13/10/00; 16/10/00; 30/10/00; 6/11/00; 14/11/00). This was noted by her classroom teacher and the visiting EAL teacher.

I think she thinks that she can daydream and get away with it...We (myself and the visiting EAL teacher) both noticed that she just sort of sat back, just not with us at all.

Miss Birch (6/11/00)

The adults in the classroom understood Reena's lack of participation not as a lack of motivation, ability or a particular difficulty with the language of the classroom but as shyness and a lack of confidence.

Reena doesn't mix with the other children. She's very shy. Excruciatingly shy.

(Miss Birch 28/9/00)

It was also understood as a lack of experience in being able to focus and concentrate on the carpet.

She's with me for English (*i.e. in the Literacy Group that the teacher supported*) but that's more because she needs support. She's got beautiful handwriting, really really good spelling and capital letters at the start of sentences full stops at the end. You know very, very able but just needs refocusing and help.

(Miss Birch 6/11/00)

As the year progressed, Reena's participation on the carpet changed and she began to focus on the teacher and to bid for questions (Fieldnotes 14/5/01).

She's doing well (now) actually...she listens very, very well on the carpet and she goes off and responds....

....I find that when she actually goes to do a task now she normally gets down to it, goes right for what she needs to do, and gets on with it.

(Mr Field 14/6/01)

What is of interest in these observations of how Reena took part in classroom life during the research year is the manner in which she came to be seen as a shy pupil who lacked confidence and experience in being able to focus and concentrate on the carpet because of

how she behaved on the carpet and took part in interactions with her teachers. This identity as shy, and as lacking in confidence, had positive repercussions for Reena in terms of the support she received in the classroom during the research year. This will be discussed below in the section on Reena as a Learner.

The following sections consider Reena as a reader and as a learner and show that, despite her behaviour (as a weak pupil), Reena was a competent pupil in many respects, developing in many ways like many of the monolingual pupils in the class. Reena did have some language needs as an EAL pupil and these are discussed in the section on Language.

6.4.3 Reena as a reader

At the beginning of the year Reena read very slowly and carefully but she had good decoding skills. When she came to a word she didn't recognise she could usually work out the word through sounding it out (18/9/00; 28/9/00). Reena did not read with a readerly voice or add lots of expression to her reading (Miss Birch included this as something Reena should work on in her October report) and Reena did not avoid words when she did not know their meaning. When reading she would stop at a word she did not know and ask what it meant (18/9/00). Reena also had the ability to infer the meanings of some words from their context in the text (13/10/00). Reena was able to read-for-meaning when she chose texts that were at her level. Early in the year Reena chose books that were too difficult for her but after October all the reading books that she chose to bring to reading session were ones that were challenging but were within her capabilities to read and understand (30/10/00; 13/11/00; 14/5/01; 25/6/01). Reena was also able to relate to things in the stories that she read in school (13/10/00).

What was most striking about Reena as a reader was the fact that out of the thirteen children that I gave a reading activity to that required the child to put the pages of a story in the

correct order (see Appendix Fifteen) Reena was one of only two pupils who used the text, and what she knew about how narrative text worked, to complete the task.

She found the first page of the story by flicking her eyes over the text and pictures (mainly the text) very quickly. 'Here's the title'. She put the page down and began going through the rest of the pages....She read the text on each page and didn't attempt to match the paper edges like most of the other children had. She got a rough order, about two thirds right, but she sorted out where things were wrong as she read it through out loud....She knew that to check it she needed to read it through. She said that the first two pages went together because the story 'made sense' and later she responded to my question about another two pages 'How do you know they go together?', 'By the writing...because if you read it you know'. When I asked her how she knew that a particular page was the first page she replied 'Because, because it says "One day"'

(Fieldnotes and video 13/11/00)

In this activity Reena demonstrated that she knew a lot about narrative texts and how they worked and that she could read for meaning. She was not reliant on the pictures to put the story together and did not look at the pictures first. She used them only as a support to her reading of the text. Reena showed, through reading activities like this one, that she had capabilities as a reader that were beyond those of many of the other readers in the three research classrooms.

6.4.4 Reena as a learner in the classroom

Reena frequently demonstrated that she could competently complete tasks that were set for the children in the class and that she was often more able than the majority of the children in the classroom. In an early Numeracy Hour, despite her body language, her appearance and

her non-participation, when required to complete a task cards on the carpet she could do the task successfully and got the correct answer whereas about two thirds of the class could not do it and got the wrong answer (18/9/00). Her spelling was at the same level as the average children in the class and when the class were given a handwriting task to complete Reena was more able than the other children in her group although my comment in my fieldnotes records that 'her behaviour suggested she didn't know how to do it' (18/9/00). Also, on looking through the children's Literacy books it was clear that Reena's work was stronger than Jessica's and Poppy's, the two dominant girls in Reena's Literacy group (13/10/00). As noted above Reena was also a competent reader and compared well with other average readers in the class.

However, as a result of her identity as a shy child who lacked confidence and experience, (gained through the way she took part in classroom interactions as outlined above), Reena was provided with EAL support in school and with placements in groups where she would be supported by the classroom teacher. This support was provided despite the competence she demonstrated as a learner and as a reader. This is how the visiting EAL teacher explained the reasons why Reena received EAL support throughout the whole of Year Three.

Because she's in a way only just got going, I felt it was sort of a help just to keep coming. And she was having two teachers this year because she was having Miss Birch, who was new and who she didn't know, for a term and then she was having Mr Field and because she hadn't had anything to do with him and because he was a man I thought well perhaps, as she's really starting to write independently and become much more confident perhaps it was better to keep coming in case she sort of had a wobble because of the change. But I think academically now she's fine really. I mean she's coping well. It was more just to give her a bit of a boost.

(Visiting EAL teacher 14/9/00)

Reena was not perceived as a pupil who lacked ability or motivation, or as a pupil who had language needs that needed attention, she was perceived and understood as a pupil who needed support to increase her confidence and prevent her from having 'a wobble' (14/9/00).

Knowledge of how Reena had been in earlier years in the school and the contrast with her sister were also called on in coming to these understandings of Reena. The visiting EAL teacher had supported her since the Reception Year of school and had vivid memories of Reena in her previous three years of schooling and how different she was from her sister who she had also supported.

When she came into school she was very lacking in confidence, very sort of withdrawn, wouldn't look at anybody, say anything, very shy. I'd say it was about Year 2 really before she began to kind of come out of her shell, you know, spontaneously come up and speak to adults and that sort of thing or even socialise with the other children.....

(Amti, her older sister) was a very different kettle of fish. I had Amti until Year 2 but after that she was fine. She was so much more confident.....

(EAL teacher 26/1/01)

She's ever so different to Amti who's open and brash and loud and in your face. You have to respect that she's (Reena) shy and she's quiet. I can't push myself on to her. If you do she clams up.

(Mr Field 14/6/01)

This comment that Reena was completely different to her confident, out-going sister who had preceded her by a year in school was also made by the headteacher (14/9/00) and by Reena's mother (20/6/01).

As noted in the section on Taking Part, as the year progressed Reena's participation on the carpet changed and she began to focus on the teacher and to bid for questions and to take part in classroom interactions. This was also noted by her teachers. Yet because Reena's support was provided because she was seen as shy and because she might have 'a wobble', her support was not withdrawn. Reena received support for the whole of Year Three despite the fact that, when directly asked, her teachers described her as an academically average pupil in relation to the class and as a competent pupil. Mr Field, her classroom teacher for the second two terms of the year made reference to this.

I think her language ability is probably not much poorer than Attar's (*the other Bangladeshi pupil in the class who was considered to have excellent English*). I think that she presents in a different way. She's probably getting a longer crack at additional help because of how she presents herself.

(Mr Field 14/6/01)

6.4.5 Reena and language

As observed above, Reena did have some language needs as an EAL pupil in terms of needing help with what some words meant when she was reading (2/11/00; 22/1/01). It can be assumed from this that there were also words and phrases and words in different contexts that she would not have understood in the oral and written practices of the classroom.

Reena's teachers varied in their responses to Reena in terms of her language needs. For instance, at the beginning of the year Miss Birch reported that Reena was held back in maths because of language problems. She also felt that Reena had some problems with comprehension and understanding in Literacy. For these reasons she placed Reena in middle ability groups that received support in Numeracy and Literacy (6/11/00). However, both the

visiting EAL teacher and Mr Field felt that Reena did not have any EAL needs (26/1/01; 14/6/01).

What was of interest in the teacher responses to Reena and her language was the manner in which Miss Birch, whilst recognising that language may have been impeding Reena's ability to learn and to complete work in Numeracy and Literacy, divorced this understanding from the advice she gave to (and therefore the expectations she had of) Reena and her parents in her school report. In this report written in October she advises Reena and her parents that Reena would do better in school if she sat near the front, concentrated and listened more carefully, asked questions and played a more active part in the carpet sessions. She commented to me that 'once she listens she can do it' and that once Reena felt comfortable in the classroom she could do things. In an interview Miss Birch referred to Reena's non-participation as 'daydreaming' rather than relating it to the language difficulties that she felt that Reena faced in Literacy and Numeracy (6/11/00).

Because Reena did not rush to join in and take part, because she held back, there were not misunderstandings about what she could not do. Teachers did not recognise all of Reena's language needs but because of the way Reena presented herself in the classroom she received support which, although provided to build up her 'confidence' and help her 'concentrate' and 'focus', may have helped her develop her English language.

Reena reported that she never used Bengali in the classroom because she thought the other children would laugh (25/6/01).

6.4.6 Reena socially

Despite Reena's identity as a shy, withdrawn pupil in the classroom she had a very different identity on the playground. An early observation demonstrates this clearly.

When Reena comes out on to the playground after her lunch..she watches the children skipping until they stop. She teams up with another Bangladeshi girl and they go arm in arm around the playground. A Bangladeshi boy joins them walking around the playground. Reena is the leader in this game. They walk around the painted maze. Reena still leading the direction of the walk. She is confident, the dominant one. She plays at 'strangling' her friend. She covers the whole playground in her play. She then plays skipping-in-a-ring games with the same girl and a White boy. She is very happy and laughing.

(Fieldnotes 11/10/00)

This was followed by similar observations (13/10/00; 19/3/01).

Reena played with a range of children, not just Bangladeshi pupils in the school and on each occasion observed she was definitely a leader. On the playground Reena did not wear her slouching, non-participatory, too-shy demeanour. Her manner here was very different to how she presented herself in the classroom.

If she had behaved in the classroom with the confidence and authority that she demonstrated on the playground, it is unlikely that Reena would have received the support that she received through the whole of Year Three.

The children that Reena played with on the playground were not children from her class. Contact with other children in her classroom was very different for Reena. At the beginning of the research year Miss Birch noted that Reena didn't have a friend in the class (11/10/00). By November she felt that Reena was 'coming out of herself a little bit' and 'doing well in the friendship stakes' (6/11/00) and during the second term Mr Field made a similar observation when he said that she was 'mixing more' (14/5/01). These friendships were with one or two of the quieter girls and at no time in the research year did Reena appear as a

central figure in classroom friendships and interaction. Both the visiting EAL teacher and Mr Field had explanations for why Reena did not have many friends in the class. Mr Field believed that it was because Reena's frequent absences meant that Reena was not in class enough for the other children to form close friendships with her (14/6/01). The visiting EAL teacher claimed that it was because Reena's mother had told her not to mix with White children at school (26/1/01).

6.4.7 Reena at home and at school

As noted above, Reena read at home with her father and older sister (28/9/00; 25/6/01).

Reena also reported that her father and sister were good at listening to reading and that they both helped her if she got stuck (25/6/01). Reena's mother confirmed this and said that Reena's sister also helped her with 'homework things'. Reena's mother reported that she was unable to help Reena 'because of English' and because the English education system was so different (20/6/01). She did take Reena and her sister to the public library, however, and they all borrowed books (25/6/01). On more than one occasion Reena told me that they had lots of books at home (28/9/00). Thus for Reena reading and using books was something that happened at home as well as at school and she did have her sister and father to consult if she wanted help with her reading or with 'homework things'.

It was also clear that Reena had access to paper, pens, colouring pens, glue, string and scissors at home as well as in the classroom. She enjoyed art at school and at home as demonstrated in an account of making a jack-in-the-box which Reena recounted to me with great enthusiasm (25/6/01).

Thus for Reena in many respects there was a link between what she did in school and what she did at home. She also reported that she coloured in pictures (28/9/00) and played schools at home and wrote in a diary (25/6/01).

Reena had been born in England in the city. She had visited Bangladeshi once (13/11/00) but she had not attended school in Bangladeshi. Reena described herself as Bengali (25/6/01).

Reena had a lot of contact with other (Bangladeshi) children outside school and often played with her friends and cousins. Her home was visited by other families. She reported that Rahul and his family had once been visitors to her house but that they did not come anymore confirming Rahul's report that they didn't go to other people's houses like they used to (14/5/01).

Reena spent her holidays at home playing in the garden, in the park or indoors with her sister and her friends. However, in June she reported that her half term holiday had been boring because they were no longer able to play in their garden at home because the neighbour had a 'rude dog (which) bites everybody', and who was able to jump over the garden fence (25/6/01). Reena also reported that she liked to play on her cousins' Playstation (25/6/01).

Reena did not go on any trips or holidays away from home during the research year and reported that the only times she had been away were to go to Bangladesh and to London once. The only time Reena had been to the seaside or visited anywhere in the county (her family lived about forty minutes from the coast) was with the school in her Nursery year (25/6/01).

Reena did not belong to any school clubs. She did attend the mosque school in the city at weekends.

During the research year Reena missed seven weeks of school in total. The most frequent day missed was Monday. Her regular absences meant that Mr Field decided not to move

Reena up a group in Numeracy despite her ability as she was missing the introductions to topics so often (14/6/01).

Reena's parents did not attend the school's parent evenings during the research year.

Reena's mother said that she did not know that there were any parents' evenings as she had not received any letters about them (20/6/01). Reena told me on a separate occasion that she gave letters home to different family members so it may have been that the information about parent evenings was not passed on to Reena's mother (25/6/01). Reena's mother did report that she got information from the school via letters and reports and not via parent evenings. Reena's father reported that he was pleased with his daughter's school. Despite her parents not attending the school's parent evenings, Mr Field felt that he knew mum quite well (14/5/01) and Miss Birch reported that she had a 'basic pleasantries' level of contact with mum (6/11/00).

Reena's parents reported that they were not worried about their daughters losing their language or culture because of going to an English school. They reported that they taught their children religious things at home and sent daughters to Qur'an school (20/6/01).

6.4.8 Teacher responses

Much of how Reena's teachers responded to Reena during the research year has been discussed already. As we have seen, the way Reena behaved in the classroom, the way teachers called on what they knew about her from previous years in school and the way in which she was contrasted with her sister meant that Reena, despite being a competent 'academically average' pupil, received support throughout the research year. She was not perceived as a pupil without motivation or ability. Her ability was assessed through her accurate and neat work (Miss Birch referred to her 'beautiful handwriting'), her ability to spell and punctuate accurately and her increasing ability to answer questions on the carpet

(Miss Birch 18/10/00). As we have seen above, she was not seen as having any language needs by two of her teachers during the year but the consistent support she was offered during the year meant that she did receive help with language through working one-to-one on class tasks with the visiting EAL teacher. Little was hidden from Reena's teachers. (Even her lack of shyness on the playground was known about but, interestingly this was not interpret as a sign of wilful lack of participation in the classroom on the part of Reena) .

In discussing Reena as a pupil in her class Miss Birch commented that she thought that 'Attar brings an attitude to school but Reena doesn't' (Miss Birch 6/11/00).

In terms of how Reena would fare in Year Four, Mr Field commented

She'll be pretty average.... She's got too much to build on to fall back

(Mr Field 14/6/01).

6.4.9 Reena Conclusions

In terms of the questions posed at the beginning of this chapter regarding teacher responses and identity it can be seen in this case study that the way in which Reena took part in classroom interactions had implications for how she was seen by the adults in the classroom. Despite her behaviour (as a weak pupil) we have seen that Reena was quite a competent pupil. However, because of her behaviour as a weak pupil she was seen as needing support (for her confidence) and so received it.

Reena was quite successful as a learner and a reader during Year Three. Through presenting herself as a pupil who made no effort to play the role of an enthusiastic, eager-to-participate pupil in her classroom, she was able to gain access to important resources in the classroom during the year, most importantly the support of the visiting EAL teacher. If Reena had

presented herself as the girl she was on the playground then it is unlikely that she would have received this support. It is also likely that Reena's gender, and the fact that she was a **Muslim** girl, also played a part in the understandings her teachers had of her non-participation. Rahul's non-participation, for example, was never understood in the way that Reena's was.

It can also be seen that because Reena did not 'take part' all the time, and strive to please her teacher in this manner or fit in, there were no misunderstandings about what she could and could not do as a learner. As a result of this, and of the support she received in Year Three, Reena was progressing slowly but surely through the curriculum. She did indeed appear as a pupil who was in a position to continue to be a successful learner as she moved through primary school.

In terms of the research question regarding what helped and hindered the case study children, the things that helped Reena during her Year Three in school were the support she received in her classroom and the support she received from her family at home.

One thing that impeded Reena as a learner during her Year Three in school was her lack of contact with other children in the classroom.

6. 5 Case Study Four: Attar

Attar's case study shows us a pupil rather like Tumi in that Attar strives to please his teachers through his reading performance and subsequently hides what he cannot do as a reader. Attar's case study clearly demonstrates how misunderstandings about EAL pupil's language needs can lead to negative identities and consequences for a Bangladeshi pupil.

Attar's case study also shows something of the racism a Bangladeshi pupil can experience in school and the impact of this on a pupil.

6.5.1 Introduction

Attar was seven at the beginning of the research year and, having a September birthday, was the third eldest pupil in the class. Attar was in the same class as his step-cousin Reena and so the details about the class and the number of children and the teachers are the same.

Attar did not have a real friend in his class and this situation did not change during the research year. His classroom teacher commented at the beginning of the research year,

Attar doesn't have a particular friend in class. He was very friendly with Hari but Hari was held back a year to repeat Year 2. I think he's probably missing Hari.

(Miss Birch 28/9/00).

Attar lived with his mother and father, an elder sister and a younger sister. However, his elder sister, Rupa, who was sixteen years old, had not always lived with the family. She had been born in Bangladesh and when Attar's parents had left Bangladesh to come and live in the UK she had stayed behind and had been brought up by her uncle. She only came to England to join the family when Attar was four years old. In February of the research year, Rupa and her father left England and returned to Bangladesh for a long visit. For the rest of the research year Attar lived at home with just his mother and younger sister.

Attar's mother was educated to the extent that she had passed her matric in Bangladesh. She could read and write in English as English was a subject she had studied after she had passed her matric. However, she spoke very little English and she and I always spoke to each other through the children or through an interpreter. Rupa reported that her father had also passed his matric exam.

Attar's mother was a housewife and his father worked as a chef in an Indian restaurant in the city.

Attar owned some books and reported that Father Christmas brought him books and that he had three at home (21/9/00, 15/1/00). Attar's mother also bought him computer games and, during the research year, a new Ninetendo computer (13/10/00, 4/6/01). During the research year Attar invited me to his house on many occasions to play computer games - invitations I was happy to accept.

Attar's mother reported that as a toddler Attar was 'noisy' and that 'he always liked reading and studying and learning things' (26/6/01). Attar responded to the same question by reporting that he was 'noisy and naughty' when he was small (11/7/01).

Attar said that he spoke 'Bengali, English and Caveman' at home (11/6/01), the 'Caveman' being a reference to the spoof language in cartoons like 'The Flintstones' that he enjoyed watching on television.

Attar spoke to his mother, and his mother spoke to him, in Bengali but his mother claimed that Attar's Bengali was not as good as his younger sister's and Attar reported that he was better at speaking English than any other language. He spoke English with his younger sister because he claimed he didn't know Bengali well enough to use it when speaking with her all the time. He reported that he used English when he was in London and playing with his three cousins (26/2/01) and when speaking with Reena, his step-cousin, and her sister. He claimed that he could understand what the two girls were saying when they spoke in Bengali (11/6/01) but that he used English to talk to them.

Even though the family received satellite television Attar reported that he did not know any Hindi. He did not watch Hindi movies because they were on television in the afternoons when he was at school or on late at night when he was sleeping (11/6/01).

On starting Year Three Attar was starting his fifth year of schooling as he had been attending Bailey School since Nursery. In addition to this he had also received support from a Family Literacy project for at least two years before he started attending the Nursery.

Attar had missed quite a few days of school in his Reception Year and Year One (five weeks in both years) but his attendance in Year Two had been very good. He had only missed six and half days of school in the whole year.

Outside of school Attar played with his small sister at home (11/6/01). His family was sometimes visited at home by another family where there were four children, two of whom, a boy and a girl, were close in age to Attar. Otherwise the family did not receive many visitors. Attar reported that his step-cousin Reena and her sister had been to his house but this only happened once in the research year. Attar did not have many relations in the city and the family did not have close connections with other families. People did not regularly visit the house.

Attar reported that he had visited London twice in his life and when he was there he played with three of his cousins. He had never been to Bangladeshi and was born in the city where he now lived.

6.5.2 Taking Part

Throughout the research year Attar both took part and did not take part in the daily interactions of classroom life. He took part in the routines of the classroom and joined in on

the carpet by bidding for questions and giving answers when the teacher chose him to answer. At the same time he rarely interacted with the other children in the class or with other adults when he was off the carpet. He never joined in with any class chat on the carpet when children shared their news or the teacher talked about events in the school or things that had happened in the holidays. Some sense of his presence in the classroom is given in the following observations made during the year:

The beginning of the day. The children are sitting on the carpet reading their books. The teacher begins the day by doing the register and talking with the children as she does so. Attar does not take part in the class chat and the interactions with the teacher. He does not join in with how things were on Friday when Mr Field took the class. He stays focused on his book. He does not chat to the other children although there is a lot of talk in the room.

In the Numeracy warm-up Attar is bidding to answer the teacher's question. He is nominated and he gives the correct answer. Eight children in the class had the correct answer and four did not (of those who raised their hands). Attar gets called on a lot in maths - about six times so far in this lesson, most of the other children only two or three times. Attar is very focused on the board. He does not look at the other children when they are working on their white boards. He works on his own. He looks at his board and at the teacher.

After playtime, the children come back into the classroom and sit on the carpet. They talk to the teacher about playtime. Attar does not join in. During the handwriting demonstration Attar watches the board. He asks a question.

(Fieldnotes 16/10/00)

This and other observations (16/10/00; 12/3/01; 4/6/01) give some sense of the manner in which Attar took part in the routines of the class and joined in with the interactions on the carpet, often with enthusiasm. He was usually focused on what the teacher was doing and saying whilst sitting on the carpet and he was able to give correct answers. He was frequently chosen to answer especially in Numeracy, a subject in which his teachers thought he was particularly able. At the same time these observations also gave some indication of how Attar was in some sense apart from the other children in the class and how he appeared to be holding himself apart from them or they from him.

Despite Attar's focused behaviour and his enthusiasm for taking part during the carpet sessions his classroom teacher at the beginning of the year also saw Attar as a pupil who needed to be kept 'on a tight reign'. She reported to me on a number of occasions that Attar was badly behaved in class and pretended not to understand her (21/9/00, 28/9/00). This resulted in his teacher feeling that she needed to establish that she was in control (28/9/00). As a result Attar was frequently 'in trouble' and 'called on' in the classroom (14/9/00; 18/9/00; 28/9/00; 2/11/00).

Key to this teacher's understanding of Attar was her belief that he pretended not to understand her and played on his status as an EAL child (28/9/00). This came to a head in October when the teacher reported to me,

I caught him out the other day. He was chatting with other children in the class. He didn't know I was there. I moved closer, to the next desk, and put my finger 'Shh' so that Darren wouldn't let on I was there. He was chatting away. Then I leant over and said 'Attar, don't ever pretend you don't understand me again'. He said, 'OK' very quickly and since then he's a transformation.

(Miss Birch 11/10/00)

The teacher presented the situation to Attar's parents in the following way when she wrote a report for them in October.

Attar has spent a large part of this half term pretending not to understand very simple instructions. Having sat discreetly behind him one science lesson and having listened to his conversations with other children, I am satisfied that this was the result of his choosing, not due to any genuine lack of understanding.

(Report 18/10/00)

Whatever the rights or the wrongs of the situation (I was never present when Attar pretended to not understand and I did not ever observe him misbehaving in class - but I was only present in the classroom for a morning and an afternoon a week) this class teacher's responses to Attar's manner of taking part in the classroom and her perceptions of how he chose to interact with her had repercussions for Attar as a learner in this classroom especially with regard to reading and as a learner in Numeracy.

6.5.3 Attar as a reader

Attar had a high status as a reader in his class. His teacher told me during my first visit to the classroom that he was 'an excellent reader' (14/9/00). This was a status that had come through school with Attar from his reception year. His Reception Year teacher and the visiting EAL teacher both reported that Attar could read quite well by the time he finished his Reception Year in school (Mrs Jones 18/1/01; EAL teacher 26/1/01). Towards the end of his first term in Year Three his classroom teacher reported that 'his reading is phenomenal. Its absolutely um..he can read Harry Potter brilliantly' (6/11/00).

Attar often chose to read high status books. For example, at the beginning of the research year he was reading 'Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone' (3/10/00; 2/11/00) and later

in the year I recorded that he was reading 'George's Marvellous Medicine' (5/5/01; 11/6/01). The class teacher had started reading 'Harry Potter' to the class at the beginning of the year (but had not been able to find the time to continue) and 'George's Marvellous Medicine' had been read to the class by the teacher when Attar was in Year Two. Both 'Harry Potter' and 'George's Marvellous Medicine' were 'chapter books', paperback books with proper chapters in them unlike early beginning reading books which do not have chapters. All the children in the Year Three classroom aspired to reading 'chapter books' as a sign of their high status and ability as readers.

At the beginning of the research year when Attar read Harry Potter with me he used great expression and gave each of the characters a different voice (13/10/00). On more than one occasion in the classroom, the teacher had spoken to the class about how important it was to read with expression.

What we are going to start tomorrow is Perseus the Dragon Slayer. Why it's a good book to read is it's got a fantastic story, you'll like it a lot and it's a book we can read with more expression. I'm find that when I'm hearing lots of you read we are getting the same sort of voice all the while and when something exciting is happening in the book or we have characters that are speaking we are not getting different voices...So when we start reading Perseus tomorrow we are going to liven up our voices, we are going to have different voices for different characters.

(Mr Field 15/1/01).

And Attar was very good at providing this kind of reading for the teacher. When reading Attar sounded like a competent reader who was taking in the story as he read along. He gave emphasis to key words, varied the pace of the reading as well as using a readerly voice for the narration and a range of voices for the characters (19/3/01; 21/5/01).

However, over the course of the first term, as I heard Attar read and asked him to take part in some other kinds of reading activities with me, it became clear that Attar was finding it extremely difficult to 'take meaning' from what he was reading in a way expected by school and to the extent that his reading performance suggested. These are my notes about a reading session I had with Attar at the start of the second term (after his teacher had described his reading as 'phenomenal') with the dialogue transcribed from a tape of the session. The book he was reading was not a particularly difficult book, especially when compared with Harry Potter, and one that would have been read by the top third of the readers in the class with reasonable understanding:

I ask what book he is reading.

Attar: The Guard Dog

Sue: Why did you chose this book?

Attar: Cos the dog is a guard dog

Sue Do you know what a guard dog is?

Attar Um

Sue What it means?

Attar Yeah. Uhh...it...I forgot.

I explain to him what a guard dog is.

He has read some of the story all ready. I ask him what has been happening in the story and who is in the story (as I don't know the book at all).

Attar Um the fat girl. First it starts with the dogs. There were six puppies in the window and then the pet shop..

He is turning the pages and then he alights on a piece of text and he just reads the piece of text to me. He asks me to explain 'inhabitant' to him (a word in the bit of text he has just read out loud) which I do. He then picks out words in the section he has already read and asks me what they mean: e.g. 'racket', 'loathing', 'dislike', 'vulgar'. After we have sorted out what lots of the words mean he asks me if he can

read now. He reads with great expression, he starts reading with a real 'reader' style i.e. a projected voice. He loses some fluency when he has to work out how to say words like 'hullabaloo'. I stop him after a page or two to see if he understands what is happening. He can say who is talking to who (the kennel maid to the manager). I have to explain to him what a manager and a dogs' home are (the setting for the story). What is happening in the story is lost on him really as there are some many words he needs to know the meaning of and he is not familiar with the idea of a dogs' home etc

(Fieldnotes and transcription 15/1/01)

During the research year whenever I heard Attar read we spent a good section of the time going through the words that he didn't know in the text. This became such a regular feature of our reading together sessions that Attar would initiate the conversation about 'new words' and the meaning of words himself and ask me the meaning of words he had heard being used in other parts of the school day or at home (11/10/00; 20/11/00; 19/3/01; 11/6/01).

When reading Harry Potter another difficulty that Attar faced emerged.

I ask him what the giant looks like (in the passage he has been reading). He finds the bit of text and rereads it to me out loud. I ask the question again. Attar replies, 'He got a beard and got black beetles in his hair'. I ask him to show me where it says this. It is a simile. 'The giant's eyes were glinting like black beetles'.

(Fieldnotes and transcription 13/10/00)

This and other observations (e.g. 2/11/00) suggested that Attar also struggled with similes and metaphors in text as well as the meaning of words and phrases. The kinds of books he was choosing to read in Year Three were books that increasingly contained similes and metaphors and yet Attar seemed to have little familiarity with this kind of figurative

language. This increased his misunderstandings and confusions about what he was reading. Attar could only talk about a story and make simple comments about what was happening or who characters were if the texts were books he had heard a teacher reading to a class.

Some of the problems that Attar had with reading were recognised by his teachers. His Year One teacher, when interviewed, alluded to the manner in which, right from the beginning of his time in school, Attar could provide a performance of reading without understanding what he read.

(His reading was) very good. It was way beyond his understanding of English I think, He really was very good at decoding and reading and he could read a text, fair, pretty accurately that was beyond a) beyond his understanding of English and b)

beyond his understanding just as a child anyway, his understanding of the concepts.

(Mrs Arthur 21/1/01)

His Year Two teacher reported that,

He could read anything. He could work things out but he didn't always take in what he was reading and the comprehension wasn't always there. He got a 2B. His expression got better, worked really hard at it. But he wasn't always taking in what a story was about. He improved and started to use expression but it was still mechanical.

(Miss Davies 16/10/00)

In her written report on Attar at the end of Year Two this teacher wrote, 'He tends to read words rather than the meaning of the text' (July 2000)

His Year Three teacher also recognised some of his problems.

He, the words he struggles on are the unfamiliar English words, for example, 'craning', when - I can't remember what Dudley's mum's called, Mrs Dursely or Petunia, she was craning and he said 'cranning' (*like tanning*) cos that is exactly how you would say it but with the English language being the way it is it's actually not like that...his writing is sort of quite specific that's why we're doing the work, he knows all of his List One and List Two he can spell all of them. Fantastic speller. So we're working him on using a thesaurus to expand his vocabulary.

(Miss Birch 6/11/00)

What is interesting here is that although Attar's Year Two and Year Three teachers recognised some of the difficulties Attar had when reading, namely a difficulty with 'taking in what a story was about' or struggling with words, both teachers focused on Attar's reading-out-loud performance as a way of either understanding his difficulty with reading or of assessing his difficulty with reading. The Year Three teacher saw Attar's problems with unfamiliar English words as problems with pronunciation not of meaning and understanding. For the Year Two teacher Attar's performance of reading-out-loud acted as an indication of how much Attar was understanding. In this situation Attar's improved performance, his use of expression and giving each character a different voice, was understood by his Year Two teacher as a sign that he was 'taking in' what he was reading. As his Year One teacher recognised, and as the reading sessions I had with Attar showed, this was not necessarily the case. Attar was able to provide a performance of reading whilst not understanding many of the words (or worlds) he was reading so expressively out loud. However, the messages that Attar may have received in his early career as a reader may have orientated him, or confirmed for him, that what being a reader required, and what counted as reading, was the act of turning a text into an expressive oral performance.

Attar's second teacher in Year Three also recognised that Attar did not always take in what he read. In his end of year report on Attar, Mr Field wrote,

Reading is very fluent, with lovely expression. However, Attar needs constant questioning to help him with his comprehension.

(Report July 2001)

Again reading is represented as an oral performance and here Attar's lack of 'taking in the story' is seen as a lack that can be remedied through 'constant questioning' which forces Attar to go back to the text and focus on it. Attar's lack of comprehension, it is implied, is a result of his lack of focus rather than his lack of knowledge about what English words and phrases mean.

During the research year, the various reading activities that I gave Attar, which required him to sequence pages from a range of stories that had been photocopied and cut up, revealed Attar to be a tenacious pupil who did not give up and who tried hard to complete the tasks. However, his difficulties with the meaning of words and his lack of knowledge about how narrative texts worked prevented him from being able to sequence the stories correctly whatever their level of complexity. At the same time Attar was not able to call on a knowledge of stories and how they worked to aid him in the sequencing or to provide him with his own version of stories (20/11/00; 19/3/01; 23/3/01).

My impression, after doing these reading activities with Attar and after hearing him read over the course of the year, was that Attar was less able to read and find his way around a text and 'take' some of the meaning of the story than Reena.

Although he had a commitment to being 'a good reader', and had had a great deal of early success at reading in school, Attar had little support at home with reading. Attar reported

that his mum had taught him to read, by teaching him his ABCs in English and Bengali, before he started school (21/9/00), and he would have received some support for early reading and gained some familiarity with books from his Family Literacy support before school. However, now he was attending school he did not receive any of this support at home. Attar reported that he read on his own at home and didn't have anyone to help him if he got stuck (21/9/00).

Sue: Who do you read with at home?

Attar: I read it by myself.

Sue: What do you do if you get stuck?

Attar: I say 'Oh, whatever'

(Attar 13/10/00)

6.5.4 Attar and language

Attar also had a very high status and identity as 'good at maths'. Again this was something he had brought with him from his Year One and Year Two classrooms. His interactions with the teacher in Year Three maths and the enthusiasm he displayed by putting his hand up for many of the questions during 'carpet time' at the beginning and end of Numeracy Hour confirmed this identity for the teacher.

As a pupil on a good day he is brilliant, gives you the answers you need, he's always thinking at a higher level than the majority of the rest of the class. He's very inquisitive you know, he'll ask questions that help the others understand and sometimes make you think about what you teach as well which I really like and you know on a good day he works rally hard, gets the work done very, very quickly, very neat, top standard...

(Miss Birch 6/11/00)

However, the problems with vocabulary that appeared when reading also affected Attar's ability to complete work in Numeracy and because of the classroom teacher's reaction to Attar's behaviour, and what she saw as his pretending not to understand, these problems were not perceived or picked up on in the classroom. The incident in which the teacher had 'caught' Attar chatting to the other children in his science group lead to a situation in which for the rest of the term the teacher was adamant that Attar did understand everything and that his poor work on 'bad days' was due to how he related to her as a teacher and to his laziness.

...but on a bad day, with the good days and the bad days related to how he has been with me, he'll just do nothing and be completely lazy and not make any effort and just write nonsense cos he thinks he can get away with it so that's what he is like.

(Miss Birch 6/11/00)

Attar's difficulties with language and vocabulary were thus hidden which had consequences for Attar. Here are some more fieldnotes from a reading session.

Before we start reading together we discuss maths (he has just spent the playtime preceding this reading session kept in the classroom because he had not finished his maths work). Attar says he didn't understand the word 'investigate'. I ask him what he had to do. He replied 'I had to say which coin made £1.25, £1.06 and £2.20'. He then read me Question Three and said 'this is what Lauren help me with'. 'Question Three: Mark was offered two silver coins to pay for a 17p toy. Investigate how much change he got'. Attar could read the question out but he couldn't do it. He didn't understand 'offered' and 'investigate'. Once he understood 'offered' (I explained it) he could tell me that Mark had two silver coins to pay. I then explained 'investigate'. He like my explanation that investigate must meant to find out and he substituted this in Question Four and read out 'Find out ways of using silver coins to pay 50p'. He hadn't been able to do this question either because he didn't understand

what the question was asking. He had done Questions One and Two but got stuck with Questions Three and Four because he didn't understand the language. I asked him if he asked the other children for help. 'No'. Did he ask the teacher? 'Yes'. Then he changed his answer to 'No'. I asked him about staying in at break. 'The teacher thought I wasn't working but I was thinking. I wasn't messing about'. In the reading that we do next it becomes clear that there are many words that Attar doesn't know the meaning of.

(Fieldnotes and transcription 30/10/00)

On another occasion Attar had not completed his maths work and was told to stay behind in the classroom to complete the work whilst the class went to the Hall for their PE lesson. I stayed behind with him to supervise and to work with him to make sure the work was completed. The work the children had been covering in Numeracy that day was about fractions. I asked Attar what he had to do.

Attar: I have to colour in a third of the squares (on the worksheet).

Sue: OK. Do you know what that is – a third?

Attar: Yes.....actually no. Is it a third when you run a race?

Sue: Yes. When you come third. That's when its an order – first, second, third. So we use the word like that. We say 'She came first in the race, he came second...'. This is a different kind of third.

Attar: What is it mean to to that ? (meaning in the task)

I explain by using some maths cubes.....and conclude:

Sue: A third means dividing the number into three equal groups. How many are there in each group ?

He can tell me and we practice learning what a third and a quarter are in this way.

(Attar 20/11/00)

I also recorded an example from a History lesson where Attar used the meaning he knew of a word in one context to make meaning in another context, just as he had tried to do with the word 'third'. In History the class were studying the Victorians and whilst discussing a piece of writing with Attar it became clear that he understood the term 'workhouse' to mean a place where men and boys went to work (11/7/01).

As noted above when discussing Attar as a reader, Attar frequently asked me the meaning of words he had heard at other times when we were together. Over the course of the year I recorded instances of him asking me the meaning of 'blue tack', 'confused', 'conference' (19/3/01), 'verruca', 'overnight', 'lost property day', 'call minder', 'temperamental', 'qualifications' (11/6/01). These were words that he heard being used in the classroom or by people around him. In the case of 'overnight' and 'call minder' he needed to know the meaning of the words as he was responsible for translating for his mother at home whilst his father and older sister were away and these were words that he could not translate for her (11/6/01). During the time Attar was responsible for translating he was involved in responsible and complicated transactions on behalf of his mother with companies like SkyDigital and getting refunds and so on in the local shops.

6.5.5 Attar as a learner

A lot has already been said about Attar as a learner and how he presented himself in his classroom during the year. Many of these points will be picked up later in a consideration of Attar's social presence in the classroom and in school, the manner in which he took home many of the things he experienced in school (such as his diary) and in a consideration of his teacher's reactions to his behaviour and the manner in which he presented himself in the

classroom. What is of interest here is to note that, despite the observations made by his teachers over the course of Attar's time in school regarding his lack of understanding of what he was reading and his needs as an EAL pupil, Attar did not receive any support as a learner in his Year Three classroom and had not received any support for EAL since he was a pupil in Year One.

Also of interest is the manner in which Attar became quickly aware of how he was perceived as a pupil by Miss Birch at the beginning of the research year.

I ask Attar if he is enjoying Year Three. He replies 'It's hard because I can't remember what she said (*meaning his teacher*). I can remember what she said in Nursery.....I have to stay in at playtimes and lunchtimes, just me and Charlotte. We both do naughty things. We shout and we both have to sit in the corner.....When I started this school I was good. Now I am not good. It started the 2nd September.

(This was the day that term started).

(Attar 2/11/00)

Attar obviously took school seriously and was concerned that he was getting things wrong in Year Three. He was also quick to internalise his teachers view of himself ('When I started this school I was good. Now I am not good.') and was concerned that he was no longer pleasing his teacher.

6.5.6 Attar socially

We have seen above that Attar took part in the routines of the classroom and joined in on the carpet by bidding for questions and giving answers when the teacher chose him to answer.

At the same time he rarely interacted with the other children in the class or with other adults when he was off the carpet. He never joined in with any class-chat on the carpet when children shared their news or the teacher talked about events in the school or things that had

happened in the holidays⁹. Despite observing in the classroom for a whole year, spending time with many of the children and talking extensively to Attar about friends and the other children in the class, a clear picture of how and why this situation came about never emerged.

Attar's teachers from his early years in school reported that he held himself apart and did not mix with them or with the other pupils in the class (18/1/01; 21/1/01; 16/10/00).

However, an incident in Year Two which Attar talked to me about and which his teachers and his mother also referred to would suggest that classmates also had a part to play in his isolation. The incident was described in this way by a bilingual language assistant who sometimes worked in the school.

(Last year), Attar was getting angry with his mum. Mum told me he was getting angry and was crying and saying he didn't want to go to school. He was angry with her because she wasn't washing his clothes properly and bathing him and so the other children were saying he was stinky, that his clothes smelt.

(Lufna Begum 2/11/00)

Attar described the incident in the following manner.

They said, 'Come here stinky', when we were playing Stuck-in-the-Mud and they wouldn't release me...

(Attar 2/11/00)

⁹ It is extremely difficult to describe or state this phenomenon without some kind of causation being implied through the writing i.e. Attar did not mix with the other children and held himself apart and so they did not mix with him or the other children did not mix with Attar and kept him away from them. I have settled on the wording used but am aware there is a suggestion that Attar was responsible for the state-of-affairs which I do not mean to imply.

This incident shows that some of the children in his Year Two were, at least on one occasion, capable of using racial taunts to hurt and exclude Attar. The headteacher, as soon as she was alerted to what had happened in the playground, dealt with the perpetrators of the name-calling, spoke to the whole class and spoke privately with Attar to reassure him that such behaviour would not be allowed and that he was to tell her or his teacher if it ever happened again. However, Attar often referred to what had happened as a reason why he didn't want to be friends with the children in his current Year Three class. When I asked Attar about what he did at lunchtimes in school he replied,

Nothing, I just play with the Year One children sometimes....I don't play with big children, Year Three children...They won't play with me. They say I am stinky.

(Attar 30/10/00)

Attar: These children don't want to sit next to me.

Sue: Why?

Attar: Because these children say I'm stinking.

(He asks me for reassurance that he doesn't smell).

No-one wants to be my friend

(Attar 2/11/00)

In class the children in Attar's Numeracy and Literacy group often ignored him when he did attempt to join in group talk (which wasn't often) and his mother reported that he came home upset from school sometimes and said it was because he didn't have any friends at school (26/2/01; 26/6/01). Racist taunts and being ignored may well have been the reasons why Attar held himself apart from other children in school (neither Attar nor any of the other adults that I interviewed recalled any incidents of name-calling or taunts before the Year

Two incident but this is not to say that they did not happen out of the earshot of the adults). Attar certainly often ignored the children in his class on the occasions I observed him being addressed by them. Whether this was an attempt to protect himself, it is not possible to say. However, Attar's isolated, 'loner' status meant that because he did not have a close friend in the class or belong to a supportive friendship group, he did not have other children in the class to call on as a resource to help him with work, to interact and develop his English with and Attar felt his isolation and lack of friends and obviously found the situation distressing¹⁰.

In addition, Attar spent most of the year playing on his own in the playground (13/10/00; 5/10/00). If he played with other children then he played with his younger sister and her friends who were all in Year One (21/9/00; 30/10/00) or with Hari his old friend who had been kept back in Year Two (11/10/00; 13/11/00; 18/6/01; 21/5/01). In previous years Attar had played with a group boys at playtime who had frequently been in trouble for their poor playground behaviour. Attar reported that in Year Three he sometimes played with two boys from another class. I asked him how he made friends with them and he replied 'They do silly things. They fight. I fight' (2/11/00) thus suggesting that one of the few strategies that Attar did have of being able to find playmates was to join in with the 'naughty boys' and behave badly himself on the playground (2/11/00)

6.5.7 Attar at home and at school

Attar took many of the practices of school home with him. He kept an extensive diary of each days activities at home, filling a page of this diary every night. He also arranged his bedroom to look like a study and laid out his school books in a prominent place. During one half term holiday he improvised an elaborate 'game' of school in his elder sister's empty bedroom which lasted for the whole week and which he spoke about enthusiastically to me afterwards and invited me to go and see. Conversations with Attar and adults who knew him

¹⁰ A situation not ignored by me.

at home revealed that he took school things very seriously and acted upon the things he was told in school.

In all of this activity though, Attar was very self-directed and did not have an elder sibling to turn to for input or for help if he was stuck with school work or making sense of school things. Although he did have an elder sister she spent most of the research year away, had not been present in the home until Attar was four years old and even when present had very little contact with her younger brother and sister. On occasions when I visited the family the elder sister remained in her room, did not speak with her younger brother and sister, and reported to me that she hardly had any contact with them. She confirmed that she did not help Attar with his school work or hear him read at home. Attar's main playmate in school and at home was his younger sister.

In terms of literacy and language outside school, Attar did not belong to a public library. Attar reported that no-one else read at home except his mum who read the Qur'an although books had been bought for him as Christmas presents. No-one else read any other kind of book including his younger sister who thought reading was boring. Attar reported that his mum and dad wrote postcards and letters at home.

Attar's mother had attempted to teach Attar to write in Bengali at home by encouraging him to watch a special television programme on Bangla TV which taught writing. Attar had started learning in this way but reported that he had not been very successful and had stopped using the television programmes to learn. Attar also reported that his mother had tried to teach him to read and write simple words in Bengali but added that he couldn't really do it. Attar did write in English at home, he wrote extensively in his diary, wrote notes for himself about school and made a register for his pretend school.

Attar had been born in the city and had never visited Bangladesh. When asked how he described himself, Attar said that he was Bengali. He wasn't Bangladeshi like his mum and dad because he had not been born in Bangladesh. 'If I'm Bangladeshi I have to come from Bangladesh and I don't. Only my mum and dad do' (11/7/01)

Attar had once attended the Mosque school in the city but no longer went. He was not happy about this situation and reported that he had asked his mum if he could go back to the Mosque school but that his mum said it was easier for her to teach him at home. Attar reported that his mother did teach him to read the Koran at home and that he spent one hour each evening learning it with her.

As well as not attending the Mosque school at the weekends, Attar did not have a lot of contact with other children or other families outside school. During the research year Attar only mentioned a family of four children coming to play at his house on one occasion. Most of Attar's out of school life including the school holidays was spent at home playing with his younger sister, playing games on his computer and watching television. The only trip Attar ever referred to was to London to visit his cousins one summer. His only trip to the seaside had been with the school.

Attar did not talk to relatives on the telephone (including his father and older sister while they were in Bangladesh).

Attar did not belong to any school clubs although the school had placed him in two groups:- a nurture group that met at playtimes and in a cookery group. These are discussed below.

Attar's attendance at school had been very good in previous years and was excellent during the research year. He only missed three weeks of school in the whole year.

During the research year Attar's mother did not attend the school parent evenings. She reported to me that she had done so in the past when a Bilingual Language Assistant who worked one day a week in the school had been available to come with her and translate for her.

Attar's mother reported that she and her husband had chosen Bailey School for Attar because it had been recommended by one of the Family Literacy project teachers. She reported that she was happy with the school although earlier in the research year she had been worried that Attar would become known as a 'naughty boy' and get placed in a Special School. She was also concerned about Attar coming home unhappy because he said he didn't have any friends and the fact that Attar told her that the other Bengali children in school also picked on him at playtimes.

The family, including Attar's mother, saw Attar as a clever boy and his mother wanted him, and his sister, to do well at school and go into Further Education.

Attar's mother reported that she was not worried about her children losing their religion, culture and language as she was teaching them Bengali at home and raising them as Muslims.

6.5.8 Teacher responses

Over the course of the research year Attar had contact with two different adults in the classroom; Miss Birch who took the class for the first term and Mr Field who took the class for the rest of the school year. These teachers had some similar and some different responses to Attar as a pupil and as a learner. These responses and understandings had implications for Attar as a pupil during Year Three and as a pupil moving into a Year Four class in a new school.

6.5.8.1 Miss Birch, the classroom teacher in the first term

Miss Birch saw Attar as a pupil with a great deal of ability. She reported early on in the research year that he was an excellent reader (13/9/00) and wrote in a report to his parents that he was a ‘very able and intelligent boy’ had excellent spelling and that he read very well (18/10/00). She described him later in the term in the following manner ‘he’s bright, he’s inquisitive, he thinks really hard’ (6/11/00) when talking about how Attar took part on the carpet during Numeracy and Literacy session.

From her comments it was clear that Miss Birch had a positive view of Attar’s abilities and that she had arrived at her judgement of him as a bright and able boy because of his excellent reading and because of his interactions and answers on the carpet especially in Numeracy. Attar was placed in the top groups in the class for Literacy and Numeracy because he was seen as a very able pupil.

In parallel with these judgements about his ability, Miss Birch experienced Attar as a pupil who behaved badly in the classroom and pretended not to understand her and did so ‘to test her out’. This was clear from very early on in the research year (21/9/00; 18/10/00).

Talking to Miss Birch after school. She feels that Attar is really misbehaving. She feels that she needs to establish that she is in control. She feels that it is a gender thing, that Attar doesn’t accept her control because she is a woman. ‘I know it’s a cultural thing but I don’t have any isms and so I don’t want to be on the receiving end of any.

(Fieldnotes 28/9/00)

The reference to ‘it’s a cultural thing’ in September, and the explanation for Attar’s behaviour in relation to his ethnicity and attitudes to women, was the first explanation that Miss Birch ‘tried out’ in talking through how she experienced Attar as a pupil and what she

felt was going on. Later in the term she 'tried out' a range of explanations for how she experienced him in the classroom.

...we did have this clash and I don't know, I still don't know why. I think it was because he felt that I couldn't speak to his parents cos as a new teacher I wouldn't have any way of (contacting them because they don't speak English) ...he's been very different since I sent the report home and I think that's it. It just seems to me that, you know, if he's so bright and so able, then why mess about unless its cos he thinks he can get away with it and now he's found out he can't.....

.....he was underachieving unbelievably cos he couldn't be bothered to do the work. He was being defiant with the work.....the fact that he was underachieving , it was to do with the personality clash between me and him. Now it might have been a personality clash. It could be that he's got to respect you as a teacher or whatever it was that was affecting his work.....I'd love to know why, I really would love to know why
..... I was partly wondering about the whole Attar thing. Whether it was because I was female. I don't think it was now but I did consider it for quite some time that it might be. It's meant to be this whole um background culture of you know, like females are meant to really enjoy school because they are just treated as equals in school. Now I've no experience of that so I wouldn't be able to say butI think Attar brings an attitude to school but Reena doesn't.

(Miss Birch 6/11/00)

Here Miss Birch tries out a range of explanations for Attar's behaviour, there was a clash of personalities, he thought that because she didn't speak Bengali and his parents didn't speak English she wouldn't be able to tell them about his bad behaviour and he would be able to get away with it (when in fact she used the bilingual language assistant to go through the

written report she had prepared with Attar's mother), he couldn't be bothered to work, he was being defiant, he was a pupil who needed to respect the teacher to work and behave for them, whether it was because she was a female teacher and Attar was a Muslim boy.

Although she rejects this last explanation (it was something she had considered to be the explanation for quite some time) she is left with the response to Attar that he 'brings an attitude to school' whereas the other Bangladeshi, Muslim, child does not. It is hard to unpack how much of 'the attitude' that Attar brings is just 'an attitude' and how much it is linked in the teacher's mind with his ethnicity and gender. The placing of the last comment after comments about being a female teacher and about the 'background culture' of the two Bangladeshi pupils would suggest that Attar's attitude is somehow linked for the teacher with his 'background culture' and assumed attitudes to women and girls.

What is key to his first teacher's responses to his presence as a pupil in the classroom is that because the teacher felt that Attar spent the early part of the term pretending not to understand English and was confirmed in her belief that he was pretending by the incident in which she 'caught him out' chatting to the other children in his Science group, she did not include in her explanations for Attar's laziness and poor work any explanation based on the fact that Attar's struggles with vocabulary, as we have seen in Numeracy work, may have prevented him from completing work. What the teacher understood as Attar's 'sloppy work', as 'choosing not to work' and 'defiance', could have been explained by his not understanding what particular words and phrases meant or how to use English to write in science. The teacher had given a strict injunction to Attar when she had 'caught him' talking to the other pupils, 'Attar, don't ever pretend you don't understand me again', an injunction which closed down the possibility of Attar ever saying that he didn't understand and asking for support from his teacher.

Miss Birch understood that being able to speak and use English socially, whilst 'chatting' to other children, meant that Attar was fluent in English. This, combined with his excellent

performance as a reader, lead to a situation in which Attar was understood as a bright and able boy with no language needs whose poor work was to be explained by reference to his 'attitude' or his 'cultural background' or a mixture of these.

6.5.8.2 Mr Field, the classroom teacher in the second and third term

Mr Field was aware of how Attar was perceived and experienced by Miss Birch in the first term of the research year as he was Miss Birch's mentor during her first year of teaching and she reported to me that she had consulted him about Attar's behaviour and how best to deal with him. He was also aware of how Attar had been perceived and understood as a pupil in his Year Two class and earlier in school as he was the Deputy Headteacher. When interviewed at the end of the research year and asked how he thought the year had been for Attar and what he felt he could say about Attar as a pupil in his class Mr Field made reference to this.

He's done well. I think the most significant news is about his behaviour as opposed to what he was like in Year Two. He was stubborn but I think that might also be a reflection of having a teacher who was a female. I'm not saying that's necessarily good, because I don't think it is. It's a worry about what sort of roles he's got of the male at home or outside of school. He's made good progress, he's an able child. I don't think he shows his best in his work. He's not always showing me his best work all the time. I've only seen glimpses of his best work and that seems to be running throughout his time in this school. Nobody actually feels he's working at his optimum level or showing us what he can do as his best.

(Mr Field 14/6/01)

What is of interest here is that this teacher picks up on Attar's behaviour as the 'significant' and first thing to discuss and, as with Miss Birch, his comments about Attar's behaviour, and his explanations for it, are embedded within comments and assumptions about Attar's

ethnicity, 'cultural background' and the resultant 'attitudes' that Attar may hold. Again a picture emerges of Attar as a child who has ability but who doesn't show 'what he can do as his best'. Mr Field goes on to describe Attar as 'very, very able. He's a level higher than the majority of children, well quite a bit....He's a level or (more than a level) aboveBut its all glimpses' (14/6/01). Throughout this account there is a sense in which Attar is perceived as a pupil who makes a choices about whether to show his best work or not and as a pupil who usually makes a choice not to.

Mr Field did see some of the language needs that Attar had.

I think he does have problems with understanding. I think he listens and takes something from the carpet and he works hard but he hasn't got hold of what it was that was wanted. He doesn't ask about what he doesn't understand, like Jan does.

(Mr Field 5/2/01)

However, in this account of these needs, and Attar's problems with getting hold of what is wanted', Mr Field shifts into a comment about how Attar was not willing to ask about what he didn't understand and compares him with the other EAL pupil in the classroom who did behave in this way. Later in the year, Mr Field commented on Attar's English language ability again in much the same way.

I think actually the further you tap into looking at his understanding of English in written form you realise there are still gaps. His understanding of certain problems of punctuation and the way that he writes, he keeps getting his tenses muddled up, that's characteristic of a child of his age, but for a child of his age with his ability I would say that that's more of his background, his English as an Additional Language.....

.....He's very different to Jan, who's got English as an Additional Language, who's very, very 'What's that mean?'. I think Attar tends to probably think 'Well I think it means this and I will go with this', until he's picked up on it and then we'll go about it and have a refocus.

(Mr Field 14/6/01)

Again, in this account of Attar, although there is a recognition (missing from other teacher accounts of Attar) that he is an EAL pupil and that he does not always follow or understand accurately enough what is required or what has been taught, Attar is presented as a child who waits for the teacher to 'pick up' on a misunderstanding or a misconception he has and who waits for his teacher to 'refocus' him, a child who chooses to coast along rather than take responsibility for asking what he doesn't understand. In other comments about Attar this emphasis remains. In each case the responsibility for overcoming his EAL difficulties lies with Attar and not within the curriculum nor the support or teaching available in school.

'writing can be good as long as Attar remains tightly focussed on what has been asked of him'

'Attar needs to focus his attention on comprehending what he is reading rather than on how he reads. On many occasions, his understanding of what he reads is limited. Attar needs to be encouraged to say when he does not understand what a word means'

'Content of writing is good as long as Attar listens to what has been said and he then remains focussed on what the expectations of a piece of work are.'

(Report Mr Field July 2001)

And the manner in which Attar is perceived only as an active agent, choosing how to be a pupil in the school is underlined in a comment made about Attar at playtime.

‘He will choose to play by himself or with a very little group of children’

(Mr Field 14/6/01)

A situation that we have heard from Attar was not one he chose and one which caused him a great deal of distress.

Attar was offered some support in school but this was for his behaviour rather than for his learning needs as a pupil. During the research year Attar was placed in a Nurture Group that met at playtime a couple of times a week and after Christmas in a special Cooking Group that met every fortnight. Mr Field explained that Attar was selected for the Nurture Group because the group was set up as a means of trying to teach certain children how to play appropriately at playtime and was appropriate for Attar (14/6/01).

Mr Field explained Attar’s placement in the Cooking Group in the following way.

Its more like an idea of a nurture group. It’s a sort of nurture activity really, trying to encourage children who ...are needy in the sense of having something to bring them out a little bit more, give them that little bit more confidence, getting them to work alongside others in a more..acceptable way....Attar was sort of selected because often he’s very quiet and reserved and shy and we just thought it was an opportunity just to put him in a group with other children.

(Mr Field 14/6/01)

These comments are interesting in that they reveal something of the many ways Attar was understood and perceived as a pupil in the course of one year in his schooling. The

comments are also of interest in that they suggest the manner in which the school was able to provide, and thought it useful to provide, specific support for Attar's behaviour but not for his language needs as these either remained hidden or were perceived as the responsibility of Attar to address.

6.5.9 Attar Conclusions

In terms of the questions posed at the beginning of the chapter regarding teacher perceptions and identity, language and language needs and reading, Attar's case study provides many insights and answers.

Attar's teachers' responses to his manner of taking part in the classroom and their perceptions of how he chose to interact with them had repercussions for Attar as a learner during Year Three. His teachers came to understand Attar as a very bright, able pupil who was either defiant or who chose not to do his best work. He was also seen by one of his teachers to come to school with 'an attitude' which made him a pupil that needed to be controlled.

Abu's ability to take an active part on the carpet in Numeracy session and to answer questions correctly coupled with his ability to produce an excellent performance of reading and his ability to speak English fluently at a 'conversational' level, convinced his first teacher that Attar did not have any language needs. The implications of this were that when Attar did struggle with work because he needed support with the vocabulary his teacher did not see this and assumed that Attar was deliberately not working as a challenge to her authority as a female teacher.

Attar's second teacher did recognise that Attar did have some English language needs (but not the extent of those needs). However, this teacher understood Attar, because of how Attar behaved on the carpet, as a pupil who was happy to coast through lessons and not take

responsibility for his own learning. Although support was provided by this teacher, the support was for Attar's behaviour and not for his English language learning.

Attar was a successful learner and reader in school but a vulnerable one. As he moved on into Year Four it seemed possible that his vocabulary needs would affect him more and more especially in reading and especially as pupils were increasingly required to work from worksheets, textbooks and instructions on the blackboard.

In terms of the research question, Attar was helped as a learner in Year Three by his engagement with school things, the fact that he had over four years experience of school when he began Year Three and the positive view of his abilities that was held by his family and by his teachers.

Attar was hindered as a learner in Year Three by a lack of recognition of his English language needs and subsequent misunderstandings about his attitude to work and to school. Attar appeared to his teachers to be an excellent reader, yet his performance of reading hid what Attar could not do. Because he tried to please his teachers and read in the manner he believed was required, Attar produced a performance of reading which, like Tumi, hid what he could not do and did not understand. Attar was not able to read for meaning in the way that his teachers assumed. As his large gaps in vocabulary were not seen, his teachers did not realise that Attar was sometimes unable to complete work in the classroom (or show his best work) because of his English language needs. Because they were not aware of this, his teachers called on other explanations for Attar's work. These explanations usually involved notions of Attar's personal traits – he was defiant and lazy. The explanations also called on notions, that were assumed, about Attar's ethnicity and gender (i.e. he was testing out his female teachers because he was a Muslim boy).

Attar was also hindered as a learner by his isolation in the classroom, the hurt (and exclusion?) caused to Attar by the racist name-calling he had experienced in Year Two and the lack of help with school work and school activities that Attar could call on at home.

6.6 Case Study Five: Afia

Afia's case study shows us a Bangladeshi pupil who strives to take part, to engage with the teacher and to get support when she needs it but who fails in these endeavours and who becomes disengaged during the course of the research year. Her teachers' understandings of Afia and her language and learner needs prevent Afia getting the support she needs.

6.6.1 Introduction

Afia was in a class of twenty-seven at Sandhill School with her cousin Faiza. There were three other EAL pupils in the class, these pupils were also minority ethnic pupils.

Afia had been born in the city and had visited Bangladesh once.

Afia already had four years of schooling behind her when she started Year Three. Her attendance at school had always been good.

Afia had many relatives who lived in the city and these families frequently visited each other.

6.6.2 Taking Part

Afia took an active part in classroom interactions with the teacher at the beginning of the research year. However, although she took part actively on the carpet she was not always successful. She often gave the wrong answers when chosen to answer a teacher question. She also often shouted out in class and was subsequently ignored by the teacher or chastised.

Being ignored meant that things that it was clear Afia was confused about, or did not understand, were not picked up or rectified by her teacher. Her engagement with what the teacher was teaching was not encouraged because Afia's engagement and way of taking part did not fit with the organisational rules of classroom life. The implications of this for Afia were that she did not have the opportunity to develop her language, understanding, thinking or engagement.

In addition, Afia's teacher did not often acknowledge or praise Afia's correct answers or choose Afia to answer questions in class.

After March of the research year, Afia participation on the carpet fell away and she ceased to take an active part in classroom interactions.

6.6.3 Afia as a reader

Afia understood the gist of the simple story books that she chose to read but did not grasp the nuances of the stories. She could use context clues in these books and what she knew about the world to work out the meaning of new words. She also used a lot of expression when she read out loud.

Afia's teacher half-way through the year told Afia to choose 'harder books' to read from the book box. When reading these 'harder books', Afia was not able to read for any meaning although she continued to read with great expression. In these situations Afia invented her own versions of stories which had little to do with what she was reading. Her teacher believed her to be a good reader because Afia was able to read with great expression. She understood Afia's choice of 'easy books' as a way of Afia avoiding reading because she did not want to stretch herself. As a result of this understanding, Afia did not receive any support with reading during the year.

Afia's teacher did not see Afia's needs as a reader because of how Afia read out loud. Afia herself indicated that she was aware that her teachers liked it when she read with 'good expressions' but that she was confused about what else she should be doing when reading to be a good reader.

Afia read to an adult twenty-six times in the year.

6.6.4 Afia as a learner

Afia struggled with Numeracy (she only gained a Level 1 in her Key Stage 1 SAT) and she found some of the basics difficult. There were time when Afia could be observed engaging with new ideas in Numeracy but she was not able to take part in Numeracy lessons in such a way that she could develop her ideas and language (see 'Taking Part' above). Afia often stayed with everyday understandings of words (like 'face' for example) and did not receive any support with understanding such words in their subject-specific context.

Afia was able to bring her experiences of using money at home and in the local shops to a particular Numeracy task in school during the year. She was able to give change very quickly and accurately in a small role play the teacher set up in one Numeracy lesson early in the year. Afia's teacher understood Afia's ability to play the role of the shopkeeper so well in this scenario as indicative of Afia's ability generally in Numeracy and believed that the occasions when Afia claimed that she was finding Numeracy difficult or asked for help were to do with Afia's self image and a desire to 'opt out' of work. As a result of this Afia did not receive any support in Numeracy during the year and was understood to be a capable pupil.

Afia also struggled in Literacy in situations where she was asked to write. This was particularly so in situations where she was expected to call on cultural knowledge that she was assumed to have (but which she did not have). For example, on one occasion the class

were asked to write the beginning of a known fairy tale. Afia chose Cinderella as her fairy tale but she did not know this fairy tale nor any other. Nor did she have much grasp of how stories are told and the textual features used in a written narrative. As a result Afia could not complete the task. However, Afia was not understood as a pupil who need this kind of support by her teacher. Afia admitted that she often copied other children when asked to complete a written task in the classroom.

6.6.5 Afia and language

Incidents in the classroom during the research year demonstrated that Afia's home language(s) and her skills as a bilingual speaker were not recognised nor valued in her classroom. She was also placed in a position by her teacher where she publicly appeared not to know her own mother tongue.

6.6.6 Afia socially

Afia had friends in the classroom and played happily with a range of children at playtime.

6.6.7 Afia at home and at school

Afia was a member of a large family who had experiences of English schools. However, Afia rarely called on her older siblings for help. She did not read very often at home.

Afia had a lot of contact with other children, both Bangladeshi and White, outside school. She also had contact with a lot of Bangladeshi adults. She went on trips into the city to go shopping with her mother and the family had once hired a boat on the river. Other than this, the family did not appear to have visited other places in the locality except to visit relatives. Afia's only trip to the beach had been with me or with her school. Afia did not attend any school clubs. She did go to the Mosque school in the city at weekends.

Afia's attendance was excellent during the research year. She only missed nine days of school in the whole year. Most of her absences were on a Monday when her father had his day off work.

Afia's parents did not attend parent evenings because of 'language and baby'. Afia's mother did feel she received enough information from the school. However, she was reliant on her daughters and husband to tell her what was in school letters and sometimes they failed to do this.

Afia's mother did worry about her children losing their language and their religion.

6.6.8 Teacher responses

Afia's teachers all understood Afia in much the same way. Her classroom teachers saw Afia as 'less focused and not as able as Faiza' and 'more easily distracted and ... less willing to accept challenge than Faiza'.

The key theme in Mrs Winter's account of Afia was the Afia withdrew and avoided work in the classroom. Her final comment about Afia was that Afia was 'probably quite bright but bone lazy'.

Mrs Joseph, the other classroom teacher, also saw Afia as a pupil who did not try hard and whose personality interfered with her ability to benefit from what was on offer in the classroom. 'She thinks she knows better and won't try as hard'.

What was interesting in both teacher accounts was the manner in which they both (only) compared Afia with Faiza, and sometimes Nazma (a Pakistani pupil in the class), and not with any of the other White children in the classroom.

Neither of Afia's teachers perceived Afia as a pupil who had EAL needs.

6.6.9. Afia Conclusions

In terms of the questions posed at the beginning of the chapter it can be seen that Afia gained a particular identity as a pupil because of the ways in which she participated in classroom interactions. Afia's attempts to join in classroom interactions during the research year were not successful and Afia became disengaged in the classroom through the research year. Her teachers came to perceive her as bright but lazy and as a pupil who did not listen or focus enough to benefit from what was on offer in the classroom. Afia's requests for help and support were ignored as her teachers felt that she was avoiding work rather than in need of support. Her language needs and her difficulties with reading harder, age-appropriate texts for meaning, were also ignored because of Afia's identity as 'lazy' and lacking in concentration and because her teacher understood her reading-out-loud performance as indicative of Afia's ability to read for meaning.

In terms of the research question, Afia's failure to initiate access to support and guidance (or oral scaffolding) in the classroom, especially during carpet sessions, hindered Afia's development of language and her understanding of more formal abstract concepts that she needed to be a successful learner. She was also hindered by her lack of cultural knowledge, that was assumed in the classroom (e.g. a knowledge of a fairy story such as Cinderella) and her lack of knowledge about how narrative texts work.

6.7 Case Study Six: Faiza

Faiza's case study shows us a Bangladeshi pupil who is able to take an active part in classroom interactions with the teacher and who is able to demonstrate the right knowledge in the right form within these interactions. As a result, Faiza's case study shows us how such a pupil is able to access and use the resources of the classroom and achieve as a learner.

6.7.1 Introduction

Faiza was in the same class as Afia, her cousin, at Sandhill School.

Faiza had been born in the city and had visited Bangladesh twice.

Faiza already had four years of schooling behind her when she started Year Three. Her attendance in school had been good in her Reception Year but she had missed fourteen and a half weeks of school in Year One and five weeks in Year Two.

Faiza had many relatives who lived close by in the city or near the city and Faiza often played with her cousins although she did not see much of Afia outside school.

6.7.2 Taking Part

Faiza took an active part in the interactions that took place on the carpet between the pupils and the teacher. She raised her hand to answer questions, was frequently chosen by the teacher and on most occasions and gave clear, correct answers.

This continued throughout the research year. She also nearly always sat close to the teacher and focused on what the teacher was doing.

Not only was Faiza chosen to answer questions by the teacher when she raised her hand but she also received very positive, public feedback from the teacher about her answers and the teacher often took time to guide and develop Faiza's answers. Faiza also received positive feedback from other pupils in the class.

As the year progressed Fazia took the opportunities that presented themselves to take part and to use language and to have her language developed by the teacher.

6.7.3 Faiza as a reader

Faiza could read and talk about the books she chose to read at school and she did not get stuck with the meaning of the words on the page. She was able to read for meaning.

Faiza did not strive after a high reading status in the classroom and was self-aware about where she was in a hierarchy of readers. She perceived herself as a pupil who was a good reader who was about to move on to be a very capable reader.

Faiza was supported in her reading by her home. Her mother had helped her learn to read (her mother spoke and could read English) and she encouraged Faiza to read at home every night. Faiza did read regularly at home on her own. Faiza also used her English at home to help her father with reading English.

Faiza read to an adult in school approximately three times per month.

6.7.4 Faiza as a learner in the classroom

Faiza had clear ideas about her abilities and identity as a learner. She saw herself as good at her school subjects. She used the teacher's language and comments to describe herself, demonstrating the powerful role her teacher had in Faiza's life and in determining her identity. Faiza's comments also showed the importance to Faiza of the public praise she received from the teacher in the classroom.

As a learner Faiza revealed herself to be a pupil who had embraced school life and its norms and expectations. She often spoke about school things using the 'voice' and the kinds of

words and ideas that she had heard the teacher using, especially when talking about learning in school and following rules.

Faiza did not receive any EAL support during the research year.

6.7.5 Faiza and language

Faiza did not have many struggles with the language she encountered in her reading or in classroom activities. She did sometimes struggle to explain things that happened outside school because she did not have access to the English vocabulary she needed. This also signalled how important having opportunities to use English in school to explain and describe were to her.

Faiza did face some problems with homework because she was an EAL pupil.

Like Afia, Faiza's home language(s) were not valued or accepted in the classroom.

6.7.6 Faiza socially

Faiza had a range of friends, both Bangladeshi, Pakistani and White that she played with at playtime. She also had friends in the classroom. It is of interest that the three South Asian girls in the class, Faiza, Afia and Nazma, stuck together in the playground, and to some extent in the classroom, and that the other children they played with were younger White children rather than children in their own class.

6.7.7 Faiza at home and at school

Faiza did not use her older brother to help her with school work or reading at home. Faiza was seen by everyone, including her teachers, as being more able and often ahead of her older brother. In conversation Faiza also frequently compared herself favourably with her brother. Thus Faiza did not call on the resources of her older brother to help in school.

Rather her older brother seemed to play an important role in creating and perpetuating Faiza's identity as a bright and able pupil. He provided a convenient 'Other' for Faiza, her mother and her teachers to compare Faiza against and find her able and clever.

Faiza did read at home.

Faiza also occupied herself at home by creating school-like tasks to complete and she often made up homework tasks.

Faiza had a lot of contact with her extended family of aunts, uncles and cousins outside school. She also travelled with her family to places like Alton Towers, London and the seaside in the family car. Faiza had only visited places in the county on school trips. Faiza did not belong to any school clubs but she did go the Mosque school every weekend.

Faiza missed ten and a half weeks of school during the research year. Five and a half weeks were spent in Bangladesh because of the death of a close relative. Faiza did not appear to be very disadvantaged by this absence and her teachers did not report that her absences had held her back during the year in any way.

Faiza's parents did not attend parents' evenings. Faiza's mum said that she found out about how Faiza was doing at school through her school reports.

6.7.8 Teacher responses

There was a great deal of similarity in the way Faiza's classroom teachers perceived and understood Faiza.

When speaking about Faiza and her identity as a learner and her abilities as a pupil in the classroom, Mrs Winter compared Faiza with her older brother or with her cousin Afia and

always found Faiza to be the abler pupil. Mrs Winter responded very favourably towards Faiza because of these comparisons and because how Faiza took part and interacted on the carpet.

As a result of her ability to take part so appropriately on the carpet, Faiza was placed in the top group in the class for Numeracy and Literacy. As we have already seen Faiza was also in receipt of a lot of positive feedback and public praise in the classroom, which was not offered to all the children in the class, and she was placed in a position in the classroom in which she could take the floor without chastisement and make good use of opportunities to use and develop her language.

Mrs Joseph felt that she could not comment very much on Faiza as a pupil as she hadn't seen a lot of her because of Faiza's absences. However, Mrs Joseph, like Mrs Winter discussed Faiza in relation to Afia and reported that she found Faiza to be 'Quieter, totally different to Afia..and more serious in a way, both in her looks funnily enough and the way she conducts herself and in her attitude. She'll try a lot harder you know than Afia'.

Thus, as with Afia, both teachers (only) compared Fazia with the other Bangladeshi pupil in the class and not with any of the White children in the classroom. In this case, Fazia is seen more favourably than Afia.

Faiza's commitment to school work, that is the way she behaves in the classroom and presents herself, is also key to this teacher's understanding of her as a pupil. The comment 'totally different....in her looks funnily enough' would suggest that the teacher assumed Bangladeshi girls to look alike (she did not know that the two girls were cousins and so she was not expecting a family resemblance).

6.7.9 Faiza Conclusions

Faiza's manner of taking part in the classroom, her enthusiasm, her correct, concise answers to teacher questions, her commitment to the values of the classroom and the fact that she was perceived to be very different to her older brother (and to Afia) meant that she gained a very positive identity in her classroom. Her teachers perceived her as an able, hard working pupil. As a result of this, Faiza received many opportunities in the classroom to use, practice and develop her English¹¹ and Faiza made good use of these opportunities. She also received public praise and encouragement from her teachers.

Fazia was successful as a learner and a reader. She was able to play an active part in classroom activities and to have access to the language and learning that were appropriated for her as a pupil. She chose books that were appropriate to her development as a reader and did not feel the need to strive for a high status as a reader with her teachers or in relation to her peers.

In terms of the research question, Fazia was supported as a learner and a reader by the classroom context, her teachers and her positive identity as a pupil at school. She had also been supported in the past by her access to pre-school education experiences and help from her mother at home.

In comparison with the other case study children, there was little that impeded Fazia in school during the research year. Unlike many of the case study children, Fazia had found a way of taking part that accorded her the resources and opportunities she needed in the classroom to be, and to continue to be, a successful learner.

¹¹ But not her mother tongue.

6.8 Conclusions

Each of the cases presented in this chapter has shown what has helped and hindered the six case study children as Year Three learners during one year of school. The cases have also given a sense of what kinds of resources, in the children's lives and backgrounds, contributed to their achievement as pupils.

The children have been variously helped by their families and older siblings, their extensive experience of schooling before Year Three (stretching back for most to a pre-school Family Literacy project and playgroup), by the opportunities for participation and learning provided in their classrooms, the support provided by their schools and the pupils' own commitment to and engagement with learning and school.

Of course, not all the children, as we have seen, have been in a position to benefit from all or many of these things. For example, some did not have families and older siblings to help them at home (Attar, Rahul) and some did not have opportunities for participating fully in their classrooms (Rahul, Afia).

The children were variously hindered in their learning and achievement as pupils by the lack of recognition in their schools of their language needs as EAL learners, their lack of contact with and support from other pupils (and adults) in the classroom, the complex and intensive language demands of the classroom which were unrecognised, their teachers' misunderstandings about why they did not complete their work, their absences from school, the absence of anyone at home who could help them with school work and hear them read and their lack of classroom-assumed cultural knowledge.

Again, not all the children were hindered by these things. For example, some did have families who could help them with school work and reading (e.g. Reena, Tumi), other

children did have contact with children and adults in the classroom (e.g. Faiza) and others had good attendance (Afia, Attar).

Most significantly, the case studies have shown how these six Bangladeshi pupils were perceived by their teachers, the kinds of identities the pupils acquired as a result of this and how this had implications, in each case, for the access that the pupils had to resources in the classroom. The implications of these identities and understandings are discussed in each case study. For all the children these identities had profound implications for the amount of help they received and for their achievement and success as pupils.

The case studies have also shown how the language needs of the Bangladeshi pupils in this study were rarely recognised by their teachers and how support was rarely provided. When support was provided it was often not appropriate or it resulted in a pupil becoming stuck in a low set and in a 'fragmented' learning day.

The case studies have also shown some of the ways the children coped in their classrooms, either by copying or by producing a performance as a reader and using their knowledge of how texts worked and so on. The children who strove to take part and join in were very active and resourceful in their endeavours.

The case studies have also shown how these Bangladeshi pupils were frequently denied access to language practice and development through the practices and organisation of their classroom. This point and those above are discussed in the following chapter. There is also a full discussion of the questions relating to reading in the following chapter.

Chapter Seven

Discussion

7.1 Introduction

The focus of this chapter will be to consider the issues and themes that I have come to understand through an intense study of the data and my understanding of its implications. In doing so the discussion returns to the original research question which was ‘What is going on in the lives, background and schooling experiences of Bangladeshi pupils that helps and hinders them in learning and achieving in the English school system?’

The individual case studies in Chapter Six have revealed a wealth of detail about the experiences of six Bangladeshi pupils and what helped and hindered them as learners and pupils during the research year. Through the case studies it is possible to see how elements of their experiences in and out of school **combined** to create situations in which they were offered certain resources and opportunities in school and how they were able to take what was on offer in school and find their way to being successful pupils or not.

This chapter is organised into four sections each addressing a specific aspect of the research question and each addressing some aspect of the data. The sections are entitled ‘Taking Part’, ‘Accessing and Supporting EAL’, ‘Reading at Home and at School’ and ‘Lives In and Out of the Classroom’.

What will be argued in the section ‘Taking Part’ is that the manner in which teachers came to assess the needs and abilities of the case study children and came to understand and perceive them had implications for the case study children’s access to school resources and opportunities to succeed in the classroom. It will also be argued that the particular practices

of the classroom were important in that they created particular kinds of spaces within which the children were to show what they knew and who they were.

In the section ‘Assessing and Supporting EAL’ it will be argued that the teachers nearly all relied on the child’s social or ‘conversational’ fluency to assess their pupils’ EAL language needs and that the support that was offered was not appropriate.

In the section ‘Reading at Home and at School’ it is argued that not all the children who could take part successfully in reading interactions with their teachers were successful readers in that they may well have been able to decode text but could not all read for meaning. It is also argued that as well as different literacy practices, the children were familiar with different learning practices in their homes and that, in their English schools, explicit teaching that called attention to the differences between the ways of learning at home and at school would be beneficial.

The section ‘Lives In and Out of the Classroom’ argues that the case study children were different to each other in terms of the access they had to resources inside and outside the classroom. There were also differences between the case study children and the White (English language background) children in their classrooms. Access to pre-school education, help at home with reading and contacts and visits outside the home are all considered.

The chapter then concludes with a discussion of ‘race’/ethnicity, class and gender in relation to the six case studies.

7.2 Taking Part

One of the striking things to emerge out of the case study data was that the way the case study children took part in classroom life brought them identities and things that helped them achieve and learn and things that hindered their ‘learning’. Their teachers made important

assessments of the case study children based on the ways in which the children took part in classroom life and these assessments affected the children's access to resources such as support.

Through the case studies it could be seen how some of the children put a lot of effort into taking part and appearing as achieving or successful learners and how, to some extent, this paid off. These children worked hard at achieving achievement. However, at the same time this meant hiding things from their teachers and in these cases the children's needs were therefore not seen by their teachers. This experience of 'achieving achievement' can be seen clearly in the case studies of Tumi and Attar.

Tumi put a lot of effort into taking part in classroom life by always bidding to answer questions on the carpet and through the ways in which she interacted with the adults. She also made a big effort to appear a successful, high achieving reader and had developed an elaborate, and highly successful way of 'cheating at reading' (her words). As a result of her performance on the carpet and her way of reading with the teacher, her teachers all understood Tumi to be a bright pupil. Thus, Tumi's way of presenting herself in the classroom brought her an identity as a bright, enthusiastic pupil who got her head down and who got on with her work. This identity worked for Tumi in many ways. However, what was hidden from her teachers, by Tumi's way of behaving in the classroom and through her way of interacting with the teacher when reading, was what Tumi could not do. Because these things were hidden, Tumi did not have any access to help with developing her reading strategies, her vocabulary or a familiarity with other 'genres' of writing. In addition to this the data showed that when Tumi was unable to complete work, this was not understood by her teachers in terms of her weaknesses as a reader or a writer, or the language needs that she had as an EAL pupil, but in terms of her wilfulness, stubbornness or her lack of listening. She was also seen at one point as 'testing the teacher'. Tumi's language needs were hidden because her teachers had made assessments of her abilities and needs based on the ways

Tumi took part in the classroom and when reading. Thus Tumi did not receive any support for her EAL needs and because her teachers did not perceive her as an EAL pupil, her teachers were left with 'within child' explanations for Tumi's poor work, that is explanations that were based on an assumption of traits within Tumi's personality. She was considered to be wilful, stubborn or lazy rather than needing help with her language.

Attar took part on the carpet with enthusiasm and he was often nominated in Numeracy to answer questions, his teacher making space for him to show what he could do. Attar's answers were nearly always correct. Attar, like Tumi, performed well at reading and gave the class teacher what was asked for. Attar, like Tumi, made a big effort to be a successful reader and chose high status books to read in school. The data showed that his first teacher in the research year saw Attar as a bright, inquisitive and very able pupil because of how he took part on the carpet, because of his excellent reading and because he was able to work fast and complete work in Numeracy. However, just like Tumi, a lot of things that Attar struggled with in the classroom were hidden from his teachers, especially the first teacher he had in the research year. Due to his excellent reading performance and his interactions on the carpet, it was not seen that Attar did not know the meaning of many words that he came across daily in the classroom. It was also not seen that he, like Tumi, could not read average, age-appropriate texts or worksheets in the classroom for meaning and that he lacked general knowledge about the worlds he was reading about in his story books and so was limited in what he could infer from what he was able to read. It was also not seen that he struggled with figurative language. When Attar did not complete work or produced poor work, his teachers did not see, because of how Attar presented himself, that the work was often poor or not completed because of Attar's language needs. They understood his work to be poor, or not completed, because Attar was lazy, or defiant, or lacking in respect for his female teacher, or stubborn or was choosing not to do his best. These were all explanations put forward and tried out by his teachers. Again, teachers were left with 'within child'

explanations for poor work. As a result Attar did not receive any support for his specific language needs.

Thus one of the things we can see through Tumi and Attar's case studies is that what these children struggled with in school was often hidden and so not provided for. Neither Tumi nor Attar received support for their language because their behaviours conformed to the expected behaviours and performances of the classroom, their needs were hidden by their performance as particular kinds of pupils in the classroom. It is of interest to note that the only support Attar was offered (being placed in the nurture group and the special cookery group) was not for his learning but for his behaviour, namely, his lack of contact with other children and adults.

What is of interest in these two case studies is how these particular pupils attempted to 'do school' and cope with the situation that they found themselves in. Their responses to the practices and expectations that they came across in their classrooms were to attempt to fit in, to join in and take part and to prevent exposure and a 'degradation' in their status. They were each very successful in this but their success was also responsible for keeping their teachers away from them. The teachers of these case study pupils did not know how to connect or access these pupils in their classes because they did not know that they needed to; the children having done such a good job of hiding what they could not do and presenting themselves as good pupils, performing the role with success. It is also of interest that the teachers called on 'within child' explanations when pupils did not conform to the expected behaviours of the classroom. This has implications for how needs were assessed for all pupils and this is discussed later.

The other four case study children did not take part in classroom interactions in the same way as Tumi and Attar. They did not hide what they could not do. However, it was still the case that how they behaved on the carpet in interactions with the teacher had profound

effects on how they were understood by their teachers and on the access they had to resources such as support.

Rahul did not take part in interactions with the teacher on the carpet at all. He was a non-participatory pupil during carpet sessions and was frequently disengaged from what the teacher and the class were doing. His class teacher at the beginning of the research year understood his non-participation as a consequence of his lack of English due to his long absence in Bangladesh (and called on what she had heard about Rahul when he was a Year Two pupil). As a result of his non-participation and the manner in which his teacher understood this, Rahul was provided with access to resources. He was placed in Numeracy and Literacy groups that had teacher support, he had infrequent access to the visiting EAL teacher and his classroom teacher began the year by holding spaces for him on the carpet so that he could contribute some responses during Numeracy sessions. What is of interest in Rahul's case is that as the year progressed the data showed that the focus of the support and the focus of what the teacher wanted from Rahul, shifted from developing his oral English to getting him to a point where he understood her instructions. The class teacher wanted Rahul to have enough English so that he **behaved** like the other pupils in the class. The focus of the support provided by his teacher was on getting Rahul to understand what he had to do so that he could leave the carpet with the other children at the end of the carpet sessions and go away and complete the task set, it was not on the language skills that he needed to be able to complete the task. Thus the focus of the support offered to Rahul in the second half of the research year was to enable him to conform to the behaviours and practices of the classroom. What then becomes striking is the manner in which his teachers, during this second half of the research year, focused more and more, in their comments and descriptions of Rahul, on his behaviour on the carpet rather than on his acquisition of English or the difficulties Rahul faced following what was being said. They turned to 'within child' explanations for Rahul as a learner. Rahul became a pupil who didn't listen, who lacked motivation, who avoided

hard work, who was lazy, who didn't concentrate and who chose to play about with his friend Jaz.

Reena was another of the case study pupils who did not take an active part in classroom life and who presented herself in the classroom as a quiet, shy, disengaged pupil. Reena made no effort to play the role of an enthusiastic, eager-to-participate pupil during the first part of the research year. Her classroom teacher interpreted this behaviour as a consequence of Reena's shyness, lack of confidence and lack of experience in being able to focus and concentrate on the carpet. She was seen as a pupil who was able and academically competent but who needed focusing and support to give her a boost. Her teachers also called on what they knew about Reena from previous years in her schooling, her extreme shyness then, the contrast in behaviour between Reena and her older sister and the fact that Reena would have two teachers during the course of the research year, one of them a man, to support their perceptions of Reena as a quiet, shy, disengaged, female (Muslim) pupil. As a result of this identity, Reena was provided with EAL support and class support. Thus Reena's presentation of herself as a particular kind of pupil meant that she received EAL support for all of the research year. Reena was offered support to help her conform to expected classroom behaviours, to be more confident and to join in. Interestingly, if Reena had presented herself in the classroom in the manner in which she presented herself on the playground each day it is unlikely that she would have received support during the research year. The way that Reena took part in classroom life, the manner in which she appeared as withdrawn, disengaged and non-participatory (and her history as a pupil in the school) resulted in her being perceived as a shy, quiet pupil who lacked confidence and who, because of being a Muslim girl may have had a problem having a man as a teacher. This identity meant that Reena received support for EAL during the research year which was of benefit to her as a learner.

In the third research classroom the data showed that Afia was understood as being a capable pupil by her teacher because of how she was able to read very expressively and because of how she sometimes successfully took part in interactions on the carpet in Numeracy (e.g. the day when the teacher asked Afia to play the role of shop keeper and give change). Afia's requests for help with her work and her choice of reading books were thus subsequently understood by her classroom teacher as laziness, a wanting to opt-out and as an avoidance of challenge. The data also showed that Afia's decreasing participation on the carpet during the year was understood by Afia's classroom teacher as withdrawal and avoidance rather than Afia giving up trying to participate successfully. As a result of these understandings Afia was not provided with any support during the research year, even when she asked for it, and was not provided with opportunities in the classroom to engage with the teacher and develop her ideas or clarify confusions around language.

In the same classroom the data showed that Faiza was perceived by her teacher to be a very capable pupil because of the manner in which she was always 'very responsive' and 'focused' on the carpet and because she always responded 'appropriately'. Her teacher claimed that her accurate answers demonstrated that Faiza was a good listener. Because she was perceived as a pupil who responded appropriately on the carpet, Faiza, like Attar, was placed in the top sets for Numeracy and Literacy and was encouraged to take the floor and use opportunities to show what she knew and to develop her learning. In this way, because of how she behaved in interactions with the teacher, Faiza was understood as being a very capable pupil and as a result received access to certain types of resources (being placed in the top groups, a positive image in the classroom, opportunities to develop her language and ideas) that aided her as a learner during the research year.

The way that the case study children's teachers came to know the case study children and to assess their needs and abilities was through the manner in which the children took part in classroom interactions. The data revealed that how the children took part led to particular

understandings or identities being ascribed to the children and this in turn led to particular resources being made available to the children in the classroom in the form of access to opportunities to develop language and to extra support from adults. The data also revealed how teachers focused through the support provided, not on language, but on encouraging the children to display appropriate behaviour and fit in with other members of the class (by becoming for example, more confident, or being able to follow instructions). It can be seen in the data that some of the teachers also called on what they knew about a child from previous years in the school and some compared the case study children with their sibling or with other EAL pupils as a means of coming to some understanding about the case study pupil and their abilities and needs (this point will be returned to later), however, the key factor in how the children came to be understood, described and assessed was their behaviour and participation in interactions with the teacher in the classroom.

What then emerges from this insight is the importance that the particular practices of the research classrooms come to have in creating particular spaces and opportunities for particular kinds of learning and behaviour to be displayed in the interactions between the teachers and their pupils. The data show how the practices of the research classrooms created opportunities for particular kinds of participation and that the case study children took up or did not take up, or tried to take up these opportunities and failed, or could not take up these opportunities. Attar, Tumi and Faiza took up opportunities, Reena did not take them up, Afia tried and failed, Rahul could not take up the opportunities and spaces offered in his classroom.

The data also show how the children were subsequently assessed as a result of this. The way that the classroom and persons within it were spatially organised (sitting on the carpet and then into groups) and the way that talk (and teaching and learning) between teacher and pupils were organised (sitting on the carpet and taking part in a particular kind of dialogue with the teacher, through reading a story book out loud to the teacher) had the effect of

producing particular spaces for children to show **what they knew**, (in other words, whether they were ‘bright’, or ‘able’, or not), and at the same time, through their behaviour on the carpet and when sitting down to get on with tasks, to show **who they were** .

The case study data show how personality and ability traits, like ‘lazy’, ‘defiant’, ‘motivated’, were ‘read off’ from carpet behaviour and how, if children were not able to use the spaces appropriately to show what they knew and/or if they did not behave in the expected way, then ‘within child’ explanations were used to explain the child. In this way the particular nature of the spaces and opportunities in the classroom and their role in creating identities was neutralised and made invisible. ‘Within child’ explanations located the source of difficulties in the classroom within the child and not within the practices of the classroom, school or education system. The child was at fault, not the opportunities or spaces provided. In this way the data show that the opportunities and spaces provided in the three research classrooms can be seen to create who the child is.

I have come to the understanding outlined above through my data. Having made this kind of sense of the data it was interesting to find that what is described above is supported in recent work by Filer and Pollard (2000), Benjamin et al. (2002) and Day (2002). These understandings also relate to aspects of Toohey’s work as outlined in the Literature Review.

Filer and Pollard (2000) have recently questioned the issue of assessment in primary classrooms through careful analysis of ethnographic data collected over a number of years in two primary schools. Their analysis of classroom practices and how pupils come to be assessed and identified share many similarities with what has been outlined above. One of Filer and Pollard’s assertions is that, irrespective of intention,

Classroom contexts which teachers create, and the subsequent interrelation of teacher- pupil strategies within those contexts, have consequences for the

performances of individuals and groups of pupils and for the assessments of them made by teachers. (Filer & Pollard, 2000: 4)

Through their case studies Filer and Pollard demonstrate that

Teachers' experiences of pupils and the different interpretation they put on their behaviour, relationships, attitude to work and intelligences are, in part, features of the classroom contexts that teachers themselves create (Filer & Pollard, 2000: 34)

In this manner Filer and Pollard demonstrate that individual pupil performances cannot be separated from the contexts and social relations within which they are embedded and that teachers' assessments of pupils always reflect the socio-cultural circumstances of their production. While Filer and Pollard claim that the organisational aspects of classroom life affect pupil engagement with learning, classroom relationships and assessment, I would want to add, based on the data from my study, that the organisational aspects of classroom life also have an affect on the resources that pupils gain or do not gain access to and therefore on pupils' opportunities for successful learning and for becoming successful, achieving pupils.

Filer and Pollard also refer to what I have called 'within child' explanations and problematise, as I have attempted to do, the assumption that 'knowledge of individual pupil's attitudes, motivation and emotions can be 'read off' in some straightforward way by teachers from classroom responses and interactions' (Filer & Pollard, 2000: 35)

Toohy's work, outlined in the Literature Review, also found that children became attached to identities and that these identities affected the children's access to classroom resources. She also concluded that classroom practices produced particular kinds of pupils. The data in this study and my understandings of it show how these processes are also at play in relation to the six Bangladeshi case study pupils in three English classrooms.

In this discussion I hope to have demonstrated the importance for the six case study pupils of how they took part in classroom interactions in terms of how they became understood and ‘identified’ by their teacher and in terms of the subsequent access to resources that arose from these understandings and identities. I also hope to have shown how the particular nature of classroom spaces allowed certain identities to be formed and seen and how they produced particular kinds of pupils. In the next section I will look more closely at what teachers called on to decide if a pupil had EAL needs and if any of the support provided helped or hindered the case study pupils in being successful learners and pupils.

7.3 Assessing and Supporting English as an Additional Language

We have looked at what emerged concerning how teachers assessed the case study children as learners and pupils and how the children came to have particular identities in their classrooms through the spaces and opportunities that were available to them and the manner in which they were able to use those spaces and take part. It is also of interest when considering the case studies to look specifically at how the adults in the three research classrooms made judgements about whether the case study children had EAL needs or not and whether they should be considered as EAL pupils. In the review of Literature the following questions were posed ‘Are the pupils’ language needs recognised by their teachers? How do teachers make judgements about the language needs of their pupils and to what extent does this impact on the pupils and in what ways? When is support used and what kind of support is offered?’

The data in the case studies show that the adults in the three research classrooms nearly always referred to the child’s ability to use what Cummins refers to as the ‘surface of conversational aspects of language’ in the classroom to determine whether a child had

English language needs and was to be considered an EAL pupil or not. In this respect the case study data support the findings of Cummins as outlined in the Literature Review.

For example, Tumi's classroom teacher judged that Tumi did not have any EAL needs because of the way Tumi was able to talk socially to her and how she could talk during interactions on the carpet. Tumi's 'florid' way of speaking on the carpet was interpreted as part of Tumi's idiosyncratic personality, and as charming, rather than an indication that this was all Tumi could currently do with her language. In the same manner Rahul was judged by the same teacher to have EAL needs and to be an EAL pupil early in the year because he was unable to chat to her (he was restricted early on to a 'Yes' or a 'No') and did not speak or participate on the carpet.

At the same time, teachers also referred to good pronunciation as a way of judging whether a child had EAL needs or not. If a child had good pronunciation and did not have an accent then they were considered to have no EAL needs.

Two of the teachers in the research classrooms did sometimes refer to something more than the case study pupil's 'conversational' English when judging EAL needs.

Mrs Heatherly recognised that Rahul needed help with vocabulary when he was reading or completing a task. However, as we have seen, as the research year progressed the recognition of these needs drifted to the background and Rahul became understood as a pupil who did not listen and was not motivated rather than as an EAL pupil with specific language needs. Mr Field recognised that Attar had some EAL needs because Attar did not always 'get hold of what (was) wanted' and there were problems with his writing. Mr Field saw these problems as being the result of Attar being an EAL pupil. However, the remedy for these needs was for Attar to ask when he didn't understand.

In answer to the questions 'Are the pupils' language needs recognised by their teachers?' And 'How do teachers make judgements about the language needs of their pupils?' the case studies show that classroom adults nearly always judged the language needs of their pupils by the 'surface or conversational' language that they heard their pupils using. Only in two cases were needs recognised through a recognition of a child's difficulty in completing a task and only one teacher consistently brought this understanding and way of judging to bear. Because classroom adults used judgements based on the 'surface and conversational' language use of the case study children, the case study children's language needs as EAL pupils were rarely recognised and the data support Cummin's claim that,

Children's good control over the surface features of English (i.e. their ability to converse adequately in English) is taken as an indication that all aspects of their 'English proficiency' have been mastered to the same extent as native speakers of the language. In other words, conversational skills are interpreted as a valid index of overall proficiency in the language....a close relationship is assumed between the two faces of language proficiency, the conversational and the academic'

(Cummins, 1989: 21-22)

The teachers also judged that the language that the children were using to talk on the carpet, to talk conversationally with the adults in the classroom (or to their peers) was the same language that children were required to use when writing a weather report, writing a story, talking mathematically or explaining a process in science. The case studies showed that this was not so.

The consequences of the adult's judgements about the language needs of their pupils and the manner in which they made those judgements were such that Tumi, Attar (early in the year) and Afia were not perceived as having any EAL needs, when other data indicated that they were impeded in their learning by such unaddressed needs. Rahul, although originally

thought to be an EAL pupil and require support, ended the research in much the same position. Attar was seen in the latter part of the research year to have some EAL needs but his classteacher was not able to put in place a specific support strategy to address them.

This takes us to the third question posed about the case study children's language needs. When is support used and what kind of support is offered?

Attar's second teacher in the research year did recognise that Attar did have certain EAL needs in terms of his writing. However, in the teacher's account of this no specific support strategy to help Attar with this was activated. To overcome the difficulties he faced Attar was required to tell the teacher when he did not understand. In Mr Field's account there is a sense that the responsibility for overcoming any EAL difficulties lay with Attar and not within the curriculum, or the support offered, or the way things are taught in the classroom. In the teacher's account Attar needed to stay focused, to listen carefully and to say when he did not understand. The remedy thus being placed upon Attar himself so that he alone became responsible for his learning and success as a pupil. In addition, to help with his lack of comprehension when reading, Attar was offered constant questioning on what he had just read. This strategy was intended to refocus him back on the text but it did not offer Attar any teaching (or experience) of how texts work and implied that the problems that Attar faced with making meaning from reading were due to his lack of focus on the text and could be remedied by more focus. The specific support that Attar was offered by his first teacher during the research year was how to pronounce unfamiliar words and access to a thesaurus to expand his vocabulary. Considering what the data reveals about Attar's needs in terms of language, none of the support strategies offered to him seem particularly appropriate.

Tumi was not considered to be an EAL pupil or to have any specific language needs as a pupil. However, when confronted with her strange reading style, guidance was given by her classroom teacher for Tumi to slow down and this became one of Tumi's Literacy targets.

Again from Tumi's case study it can be seen that this was not a target that was very meaningful for Tumi and would certainly not address what was going on when Tumi was (not) reading. Tumi's classroom teacher did go to great lengths to teach specific features of language in the classroom but this teaching was only conducted orally and the different conventions of language, especially when written, were not modelled and made visual in a way that Tumi, and pupils with the same needs, could have found useful.

Rahul was offered a good deal of support for his language needs but as we have seen in his case study, this support was interrupted, infrequent and led to a 'fragmented day' as Rahul moved in and out of different classroom activities. As a result Rahul had to cope with increased language demands rather than decreased ones. Rahul also got stuck in an inappropriate Literacy group because of the way Literacy support was organised. The only consistent support that Rahul received during the year was his teacher checking with him that he knew what he had to do each time the children left the carpet to go and complete a task in their groups. The appropriateness of this has been discussed above.

Reena was understood at the beginning of the research year to have some problems understanding in Numeracy and Literacy sessions. The advice Reena and her parents were given to address these problems was for Reena to 'sit near the front', 'concentrate', 'listen more carefully', 'ask questions' and 'play a more active part on the carpet'. As noted above, Reena's behaviour was seen as in need of adjustment and there is an implication in this advice that if Reena should change her behaviour on the carpet then she would be able to understand what was being said on the carpet. The other support that Reena was offered, ironically EAL support in Literacy although Reena was not understood to be an EAL pupil, was based on in-class work and Reena, unlike Rahul, benefited from this support because she was not removed from the classroom to go and do something different to the other pupils and did not, as a result, suffer from a 'fragmented day'. Reena was placed in specific Literacy and Numeracy sets so that she could receive more teacher support.

In the research year the only support that Afia received was the monitoring of her choice of reading book to make sure she did not choose easy books. No support was actually offered with reading.

Faiza did not receive specific EAL help during the research year but she was offered spaces and opportunities to use language on the carpet and her teacher also helped her develop her language through the interactions she had with Faiza.

As noted above none of the children's teachers had received any specific training in EAL and were required to rely on what they knew from their personal experience and from their 'craft knowledge' of teaching and learning. They did their best for the children in their classes but equating conversational fluency with the type of language fluency the children needed meant that many language needs were not seen or appreciated and when teachers were aware of difficulties they had little expert opinion to call on to find appropriate strategies for supporting the case study children.

7.4 Reading at Home and at School

Gregory and others (Gregory 1992a, 1992b 1993a as discussed in Chapter Two) have found that one of the key things that prevents pupils, like Bangladeshi pupils, becoming successful readers is that they cannot always easily take part in the interaction patterns with their teachers when reading. They argue that because of their poor performance in these interactions such pupils experience great difficulty in learning to read. However, in this study I have found that even when a child can take part successfully in reading interactions with the teacher, as Tumi and Attar can, it does not necessarily mean that they are on a path to becoming, or actually are, successful readers. What is clear from the data is that **they are**

only successful at taking part in the interaction. They are not successful at reading for meaning as is expected by National Curriculum¹ in English classrooms and by their teachers.

In the research about learning to read, considered in the Literature Review, the focus is on reading with the teacher (or with parents and siblings at home). This is always ‘reading-out-loud’ reading, that is turning text into an oral performance. What counts as reading, and what counts as successful reading, in research on non-mainstream, or bilingual children learning to read, is always ‘reading as a performance’.

The data in my study show that taking part successfully in an interaction with a classroom adult should not be confused with being able to read for meaning. Pupils like Attar and Tumi can **perform** reading, they can take part in the interactions with their teachers very successfully and Attar and Tumi are seen as successful readers. However, their current abilities as readers may not be enough as reading in the classroom (and in life) begins to shift to an activity that takes place between a text and a reader and not between a pupil and an adult. As children move on through school they will have to use texts **independently** in their classrooms as instructions and information will be provided in text form by their teachers.

In the Literature Review the questions were posed ‘Are children who can take part successfully in reading interactions with their teachers successful readers? Do their early successes continue?’. The data in this study would indicate that not all children who can take part successfully in reading interactions with their teacher are successful readers in the sense that although they can decode text very accurately they cannot take enough meaning from it to be successful readers for the purposes of reading worksheets in the classroom,

¹ The Ofsted Inspection Notebook for Nurseries even includes the concept of reading for meaning as the first goal that should be considered when evaluating children’s learning in the Nursery setting: (Ofsted, 2000: 10, 17).

completing classroom task or for following a narrative. Whether these children's early 'successes' will continue is dependent on a range of things, on whether they will be able to change the strategies they currently use to read, whether they spend the next years of their schooling in classrooms where they receive explicit teaching about school literacy, or specific support for reading for meaning, or opportunities to engage with reading in different ways, or whether they have access to support outside the classroom through an older sibling or another adult. As things stand both Tumi and Attar are very vulnerable and there is no guarantee that they will continue to be 'successful' readers.

Gregory's and other researchers' work, (Gregory 1993b; Gregory et al., 1996; Rashid & Gregory 1997; Kenner 2000; Drury 1997) reviewed earlier, also raised the issue of the importance of home literacy practices in learning to read for minority ethnic and Bangladeshi pupils. This work successfully challenged notions of minority ethnic children caught between the clash of home and school and notions of the 'deficit home' as a reason for poor achievement in reading. My findings in this study echo this work in that the six case study children did not come from homes without any literacy at all and the children did bring, to their learning-to-read, practices that they were familiar with from their home and 'community' life. The case study children saw their parents or their siblings reading in Bengali or Arabic at home.

In addition the children's parents also attempted to teach their children. Afia and Faiza's fathers tried to teach them 'Muslim numbers'. Faiza's dad tried to teach her to read and write in Bengali and her mother was going to start teaching her. Afia's parents had in the past paid for a tutor to teach her Bengali. Attar's mother was keen to teach Attar to write using a television programme and was teaching him the Qur'an every night. She had also taught him his English alphabet before he started school. Rahul's mother was also making a good job of teaching Rahul to read and write in Bengali and Tumi's mother had tried to teach Tumi to write in Bengali.

Thus the case study children would have all shared, to some extent, in the ways of learning, dominant in their families.

The descriptions that the case study children gave during the research year gave some indication of what these ways of learning were. The parents taught their children by providing the information and getting their children to repeat it or to copy it. Afia reported that her father taught her 'Muslim numbers' by 'he says it and we copy' (2/11/00), Tumi mother tried to teach her to write by writing out words and getting Tumi to copy them 'She used to give me things that was writing in Bengali and I used to copy it' (21/5/01). Attar's mother taught him the Qur'an by saying parts of the verse and he repeated it.

Their parents also had ways of conceptualising learning and knowing what successful learning was. For example, Faiza's mother, through an account of her eldest son, revealed that she understood successful learners to be those that learnt fast and had good memories (16/5/01). Tumi's father revealed that he felt his eldest son had been let down by his First school because 'he couldn't even do his alphabet when he finished there'. He judged Tumi to be doing very well in the same school 'because she is reading and writing and so that is good' (21/5/01).

The case study children also all had experience of attending the mosque school in the city. (although Attar did not attend during the research year he had attended previously) and Rahul had experience of going to school in Bangladesh. In the mosque school it was clear from what the children reported that they learnt in the ways described by Gregory and her colleagues (1996; 1998). Using one's memory, listening and then producing a performance or recitation using a copied rhythm and intonation, using cues/text to produce an oral performance, gaining status and the identity of 'clever' through progressing through work more quickly than others were practices the children were familiar with from the mosque

classroom and were ways of learning that were familiar to their family members. The case study children when talking about their experiences at the mosque school in the city often spoke about their learning in terms of comparing themselves with other children and who could learn fastest. They also often spoke about the status that was attached to starting to read the Qur'an at a very young age (certain other 'texts' have to be learnt before children can progress to learning the Qur'an). It was also clear that, as Gregory and her colleagues described (in Chapter Three and Appendix One), the children listened to their teacher, repeated what the teacher had said and moved through what they had to learn in this manner. 'Reading' the (pre-Qur'an) texts that they were learning to read involved learning to recite them and to commit them to memory. The role of the children as readers in this practice of reading was a mixture of decoding text, memorising text/speech and producing a performance of text.

When discussing the case study children's reading practices in their English school earlier I referred to 'reading as performance'. It would appear that from the reports of the children and the descriptions of community classes provided by Gregory and her colleagues that 'reading as performance' was a practice to be found in the children's community classes and in the literacy practices of the home. In both places reading was decoding and turning text into a spoken performance. As the children could only know what reading was by observing how reading was done and what counted as reading in the particular settings in which they were required to be readers (Heap 1991) and as it would seem that the case study children saw 'reading as performance' in both their English school settings, at home and in the Mosque school, it is not surprising that some of the case study children did not notice that what counted as reading was actually something else in their English school classroom and within dominant English culture. That something else was reading for meaning.

Thus, it would seem that some of the case study children needed specific and explicit teaching, and opportunities for engaging in reading in the classroom, which fostered the practice required for reading for meaning and not only for decoding and ‘performing’. Observations during the research year found that the reading practices in the three Year Three classrooms (and the YR, Y1 and Y2 classrooms I also observed in) allowed pupils limited opportunities to recognise that the favoured reading practice in English schools was (at least by Year Three) decoding **and** reading for meaning. This was because reading in the classroom with an adult was only decoding and reading out loud to the teacher, i.e. ‘reading as performance’.

Recent research by Rosowsky (2001) supports these insights. Rosowsky found that Muslim pupils in an English Secondary school, were very influenced as readers by their reading practices outside of school right the way through to secondary level. S/he found that the pupils were used to reading text outside of school (in their Qur’an schools) by decoding and that they made no use of semantic knowledge when reading. In their English secondary school they relied heavily on graphophonic cues and word recognition information and did not read for meaning. Rosowsky found that

by relying almost exclusively on graphophonic cues at the expense of semantic and syntactic cues, the reading process (for these pupils) becomes detached from meaning as soon as the comprehension level of the text rises above the very simple.

(Rosowsky, 2001: 67)

and went on to say, much as I have claimed above, that,

What is not so often recognised is the possibility that an experience of literacy outside of the classroom many also partially determine for a reader **what exactly**

literacy is and that the engagement with other forms of literacy, including that of the school and the classroom, is shaped by that experience.

(Rosowsky, 2001: 68 my emphasis).

Research by Cline (1998) with Mirpuri-Punjabi pupils (who also attended Qur'an schools) also found that pupils made great use of graphophonic strategies to decode text and that extracting meaning became of secondary importance. Cline claimed that such pupils 'become habitual users of the surface and syntactic cues in print and, in effect, learn not to read for meaning' (Cline 1998: 13).

To return to the literature reviewed earlier, Gregory and her colleagues made a strong case for schools and teachers to become aware of and learn about the home literacy practices of the pupils in their classes and to build upon these practices. The data reported in this study (and the findings of Rosowsky and Cline) would suggest that although this is so, schools and teachers can also benefit from knowing about pupils' home literacy practices so that decisions can be made regarding what needs to be made explicit in their teaching and in classroom practices. My data show that for some children, with home literacy practices based on recitation and the use of memory, the transition to reading for meaning (the transition to reading independently) may be impeded if children do not receive explicit teaching that demonstrate that there is a difference between reading as decoding/performance and reading for meaning . Both these practices (reading as decoding/performance and reading for meaning) have their uses and strengths in different contexts and for different purposes. They are different reading practices with different purposes that arise in different socio-cultural circumstances to do different things. Children need to know which one is being called on, and when, and how to make judgements about which one is appropriate if

they are to be successful learners and successfully literate².

7.5 Lives In and Out of the Classroom

The data reported in this study show how the case study children had differential access to resources inside and outside school compared with each other. The interviews with the other White children in the three classrooms also revealed that there were differences between the White children's access to resources and those of the case study children. There were also some overlaps between the two groups. Some of the key differences and similarities within the case study group and between the case study group and their White peers will be discussed in this section. These are: access to pre-school educational experiences, help at home from adults and siblings and contacts and visits with adults and children inside and outside school.

The data and discussion presented in this section are not meant to imply that the case study children's homes were deficit homes in any way. Visits to the children's homes and families showed them to be warm, friendly, supportive environments with a great deal of parental care and regard for children and their well-being as well as for their education and future prospects. This is stated not because it was for me to judge families and their home life but because it is difficult to present data about resources without a deficit theme emerging. I am choosing to report on what appeared to be differential resources in children's homes in the light of arguments by social theorists and researchers, such as Bernstein (1990; 1996) and Bourdieu (1997, 1986) who argue that 'subordinate groups within society lack access, relatively, to the cultural resources which schools demand of children and which ... reflect the ways of life of dominant social groups' (cited in Cooper & Dunne 1999: 307). The data

² Rosowsky (2001) and Heap (1991) give good examples of how we all call on different reading practices at different times. Rosowsky gives the example of opera singers and choirs singing in a language they do not know or speak when only decoding is employed (p60). Heap of how we decode and read for meaning very carefully when reading certain documents like legal contracts but will skim read something we are very familiar with or do not consider to be of much importance (p116)

in this study suggest that this is the case for the case study children and for some of the White pupils in the three research classrooms.

7.5.1 Pre-school education

The case study children had all had access to pre-school educational experiences except Rahul. This meant that, with the exception of Rahul, they all started school with some familiarity with the kinds of activities they would encounter in school and with some familiarity with English. The children were thus in a position to acquire English more quickly when they started their Reception Year and thus were not so vulnerable to falling behind the other White children in terms of accessing what was happening in their classrooms and what their peers were learning. Rahul, who did not experience any pre-school education, started school with little familiarity with the activities he would find in the classroom and without any English. These two aspects, combined together with his frequent and long absences during his Reception Year and Years One and Two, meant that, according to his EAL teacher at the time, he was unable to access what was on offer in the classroom and started to fall behind other pupils at a very early stage in his school career.

Of the fourteen White children in the three research classrooms that I have data for, nine had had some pre-school experience in a playgroup or nursery and four had attended playgroup followed by a nursery class. In this respect many of the case study children's White peers had received the benefits of some pre-school education. Thus the case study children's access to pre-school educational experiences gave them access to the same beginnings as most of the White children. Put another way, if the case study children had not attended playgroups and nurseries they would have started school in their Reception Year doubly disadvantaged in that they would have been beginning school without any experience of the activities of English classrooms, without any knowledge of classroom English and without the educational experiences of many of their White peers. In the same way, some White

pupils in the three classrooms (n= 5 in my sample of fourteen) also started their Reception Year without these educational experiences.

7.5.2 Help at home with school work

The data showed how the case study children had differential access to resources at home that they could call on to help them with their school work.

Attar and Faiza both had access to help with learning to read from their mothers before they started to school. However, once school had started this kind of help stopped. In Faiza's case this was because her mother had a new baby to take care of in addition to her other responsibilities in the home and she was unable to spend the time required with Faiza. (The material conditions of other mothers' lives also prevented them from helping their children at home and this was reported by three of the mothers). Although Attar and Faiza's mothers no longer sat with their children to read with them, both homes provided books for their children and Faiza's mother insisted on Faiza spending some time reading each night.

Reena continued to receive some help from her mother and from her older sister and had access to books and materials to make things at home.

Afia had access to older sisters but rarely seemed to use them. There were not many books in her home or any other readers.

Tumi had a great deal of help from her older sister who was familiar, like Reena's sister with the English school system, and had a father and two brothers who played with her. Tumi's sister read with her each evening and helped Tumi with other school work as well as listened to Tumi's stories and problems in school. Tumi's sister was very orientated to education and learning in school.

In contrast Rahul had no help at home at all. He did not read to anyone at home and he had not had help with learning to read before he started school. He also had no-one at home he could talk to about school things.

Access to help at home with school work was also curtailed for the case study children by the material circumstances of their fathers' lives. All the case study children's fathers worked in the restaurant trade, either as owners, chefs or waiters. This meant that they all worked days that began at lunchtime and finished late at night. Thus fathers were not at home to help their children in the evenings and were not able to attend after-school parents' evenings. This was unfortunate in that all had fathers, with the exception of Attar's, could speak some English and had experience of the English education system. The fact that the case study children's fathers had Monday as their day off (rather than Saturday or Sunday) also had consequences as this was a day that many of the children were frequently absent from school.

Ball (2003) has recently commented on 'the effort that goes into the assembly and maintenance of an able middle-class child' by middle class children's mothers and explores how such mothers buy in tutors and activities, make sure that their children move in the right circles and use their knowledge of the education system. In such a way their children gain 'skills, capabilities and a certain orientation to schooling' which work to constitute the child as clever (Ball, 2003). This reflects much of the work of Heath (1982; 1983). In contrast with the middle class, school-orientated families described here, the case study children in this study were very differently resourced in their homes in terms of orientation and resources that would support them in being successful and achieving pupils.

In contrast to the case study children the White children who were included in the study nearly all had access to a far higher level of resources in their homes. In terms of reading

support at home and help with school work it is interesting to compare Attar with the six other White members of his class that I also interviewed. Attar did not have an older sibling or parent to read with him at home and no-one to help him when he got stuck with school work or with reading and so he only took his reading book home at weekends. In contrast, James reported that he read to either his mother and grandfather, not every night but regularly, and that his mother helped him if he got stuck. James took his school reading book home every night. Jo, another boy in the class, told me that he did not read every night at home with his mother but did read with her regularly. Will reported that he took his school reading book home every night and read to his mother. Michael reported that he read at home to both his mother and father and that his mother helped him when he got stuck with his reading and with school work. Charlotte reported that she read to either her mother or father every night at home and that she also read with her grandmother and grandfather who lived close by. Ruth told me that she either read to her mother every night at home or in the mornings in the car on the way to school. Both her mother and her father helped her when she got stuck with school work and with reading.

James, Jo, Will, Michael, Charlotte and Ruth did not all come from literacy-rich, middle class homes yet they all reported that they had access to regular reading with at least one adult at home. In some cases, it seemed, they were also able to benefit from living close to grandparents who also read with them, something that was not possible for any of the case study children as their grandparents were all living in Bangladesh.

The White children were also able to consult an adult, and they reported that they did do this, if they were stuck whilst reading on their own or with school work that they were trying to do at home. In contrast with his classmates Attar's opportunities to read with another adult were restricted to school times when he had the same reading contact with the teacher as the children listed here. As we saw in his case study, there was a large discrepancy between the

amount of reading with an adult or sibling that Rahul had access to compared with a White pupil in his class.

7.5.3 Contacts and visits outside school

The case study children differed from the White pupils in their research classrooms in terms of the amount of visits and activities that they took part in outside the research classrooms and, in some cases, the amount of people they saw. This was especially noticeable in the school holidays. Again, an interesting contrast can be seen between Attar and his classmates.

	Life Outside School: Bailey School
Attar	‘my mum went to the shops but I didn’t go with her’ Attar (15/1/01). Attar doesn’t go out unless it is to the supermarket with his mum. Sometimes he goes shopping with his mum in the city (but not very often). He plays at home with his younger sister. He has never been to Bangladesh but has been to London twice. His out of school world is television, computer games and playing with his younger sister in the house. Has little contact with other extended family members and there are few visitors to the house. Attar does not go to the Mosque School on Saturdays and Sundays.
James	Sees friends outside school. Goes to the Monday Club at the local chapel. Belongs to the school football club. He sees classmates Lauren and Emily at the Monday Club.
Joe	Spends Thursday around his grandmother’s house where he sees other members of his family, goes to swimming lessons on Mondays, goes bowling with his extended family, sees his aunts, cousins and uncles regularly when the family go out and do things together.
Will	Doesn’t do anything. He says that ‘home is boring’.
Michael	Goes swimming every Monday, goes to his grandmother’s every Wednesday and goes to Cubs every Thursday. Went on holiday in Yorkshire, went walking and shopping. Went to the beach and to a nearby zoo and attended a BBQ party during one half term holiday. He sees his classmate Jack at Cubs and at swimming.
Ruth	Two school friends come and play at her house. Went to a local aquarium and the beach during one half term holiday, goes shopping in the city, goes to swimming lessons every Thursday, plays the recorder at home. She sees her classmate Kate at swimming
Charlotte	Goes swimming every week. Goes to parties, a local ‘Fun Factory’, the local park and goes walking. Does ‘hundreds of things in the holidays’. Was a bridesmaid at a wedding.

The White children all reported, except Jamie, that they spent time with other adults and children outside school and went out during the week to take part in activities like Cubs or swimming where they often met other classmates. They also went away in the holidays to other places and took part in a range of activities. This was not an experience that the case study children had (except for when they went to Bangladesh). For example, for all the case study children the only visits that they had made to the seaside (about forty minutes away), or to other places in the county, had been through school. This did have implications for the opportunities that the case study children had to use and develop language (both English and Bangla) in different contexts and with different audiences and it did set them apart from the other children if only in terms of what they are able to contribute to 'news' time on the carpet, especially after holidays. Trips to Bangladesh were rarely during the school holidays and so did not fit into the 'What I did in my holidays' talk of the first few days of term.

7.5.4 Access to resources inside school

In the above discussion I have looked at the resources available to the case study children outside school but have not yet discussed the contacts that the case study children had with their peers, and the subsequent opportunities that they had for developing their language and their experiences, inside the classroom.

In the Literature Review the research of Toohey was considered. This research demonstrated that social relations in the classroom provided opportunities for the EAL pupils to practice using English and to become members of the community of practice of the classroom. To do this the EAL pupils needed access to the activities and the experienced members of the community and to opportunities for participation in order to learn and to become full members of the community. Toohey also demonstrated how learners could also be excluded by their peers and thus excluded from opportunities for language learning and developing English.

In the data presented in this study it can be seen that the case study children had different opportunities to access the experienced members of their classrooms (i.e. the White children who were varying experienced users of English), to participate in dialogue with their White peers in order to learn and to become full members of their classroom 'community'.

Attar, Tumi, Reena and Rahul were all isolated children in their classrooms in that they had very little verbal or physical contact with other children in their class. Attar and Tumi were the most isolated. Tumi's attempts at friendship with new children in the class worked for a while but she ended up on her own each time. Her attempts to join in conversations and group discussions during Literacy Hour were ignored as were Attar's in Numeracy and Literacy. Reena had a little contact with another girl in the class but had such little presence in the classroom her contributions were often ignored by other children during group work. Rahul, like Reena, had some contact with another pupil in the class but was otherwise always left to play the role of 'onlooker' in any activity or discussion.

Of the case study children only Afia and Faiza had contact with their White peers in the classroom and interacted with a number of children during a school day.

Attar, Tumi, Rahul and Reena were not full members of their classroom 'community' and subsequently had limited opportunities to develop and extend their oral English unless they used the opportunities that might be provided to talk with adults in the classroom. Tumi and Rahul did have these opportunities and did use them, Tumi more than Rahul.

In addition to his isolation, Attar had also had the experience of being called (racist) names in Year Two and this may have well contributed to his 'holding himself apart' that classroom adults commented on. For Attar, as for any child, the name calling was a deeply distressing incident and seemed an act of exclusion, from full class membership, enacted by his peers.

Tumi also appeared to be excluded by her class peers from full class membership as did Rahul, especially at playtime.

In this discussion above I have shown how the case study children were differently situated to each other in terms of the resources inside and outside school that they had access to. Where there were similarities these have been indicated. I have also shown something of the difference between the case study children and their White peers (and where there were some overlaps). I hope to have shown in this discussion firstly that Bangladeshi children are not all the same as each other and have different access to resources outside (and inside) school. One consistent thing that united the Bangladeshi pupils was their lack of visits and trips to other places outside their homes in England and this was an important 'extra' that the children's schools provided. The three research schools did provide opportunities for the case study children to visit the seaside, museums and other institutions which the children did not do with their own families. This gave the children access to some of the experiences and knowledge that teachers tend to assume all children have. School visits, unfortunately are an activity that become rarer in schools, and more constrained by legislation and financial considerations, and thus it is worth noting how important, and enjoyable, these 'trips' were to the case study pupils.

Filer and Pollard (2000) claim that while it is possible to analyse a child's performance in school as a clinically distinct entity, it might be more useful and informative to recognise the circumstances of children's lives. In this way, they claim, it is possible to reveal the material, cultural and social capital that is available to children's families, the extent to which children embody such advantages or disadvantages 'and are thus more, or less, able to cope with the school curriculum' (Pollard & Filer 2001: 7). This is what I have attempted to do in this discussion.

7.6 What role did ethnicity, class and gender play?

It seems important to ask the question ‘What role did ethnicity, class and gender play?’ at the end of this discussion of the data. Did the ‘race’ and ethnicity of the case study children have any part to play in how their teachers responded to them and understood them? Did the gender of the child make a difference? To some extent the issue of the class background of the child and the impact this had on their experiences in school has been discussed above, in terms of resources at home, but some further points need to be made.

7.6.1 Ethnicity/‘race’

What role did ‘race’ and ethnicity play in the experiences of the six Bangladeshi pupils and in terms of their achievement? Classrooms are not neutral spaces as has been discussed above. They are ‘saturated’ with race in the sense that children and adults bring racialised discourses and knowledges with them into any classroom.

One of the key ways that ethnicity and ‘race’ came to play a part was in the manner in which, whenever the teachers (in all three schools) spoke about the case study children, and their progress, ability or success as learners, the teachers **always** compared the Bangladeshi pupil with the other Bangladeshi pupil in the class, with another minority ethnic pupil in the class or with an older sibling (who had been in the class before) and on one occasion with another EAL pupil in the class. None of the case study children were ever compared with the White English Language Background children in the classroom. In this way the case study children are very much located within an ethnic identity and ‘othered’ from the White children in the three classrooms. The Bangladeshi pupils’ academic performance was not considered alongside that of the White pupils, as if the teachers were operating with two different scales in their heads, one for White pupils and one for Bangladeshi pupils (or South Asian pupils - Afia and Faiza were compared with Nazma, a Pakistani girl in their class but other conversations with the teacher revealed that she thought Nazma was the cousin of Afia

and that all three girls were Bangladeshi). This indicated that the teachers always saw their Bangladeshi learners as different to and separate from the other learners in the same class and that, in their thinking about the learning and achievement, their Bangladeshi pupils were not to be considered in the same cohort of learners moving through the National Curriculum. Considering the evidence that was presented in Chapter Two concerning the underachievement of Bangladeshi pupils this way of thinking could lead to low expectations of the Bangladeshi pupils.

Another way that 'race'/ethnicity came to play a part was in the way that teachers relied on assumptions about the home life of the children and their Muslim faith. These assumptions were often wrong (e.g. that the children were forced to fast during Ramadan, that girls' education was not valued by parents) and fed into teachers explanations for the children's struggles or poor work in school. Many of these assumptions were about gender with the result that ethnicity and gender became intertwined in the teachers assumptions about the children. This will be discussed below.

'Race'/ethnicity also came to play a part in the way that the children's languages were not valued in school. In this way an aspect of the children's identity was placed in a subordinate, lesser role unlike the speakers of French or Italian. The children's other languages, and their bilingualism, were seen as a problem rather than an 'achievement'.

The impact of 'race'/ethnicity was seen most visibly in Attar's case study, in the racist name-calling that had occurred in Year Two which had profound effects on Attar as a pupil in the classroom and his relationships with the other children. Not only did this name calling affect Attar emotionally but, he claimed, it also prevented him from establishing any relationships with other pupils during Year Three.

The case studies showed that in addition to Attar, three of the other case study children were isolated in their classrooms and thus did not have access to peer support structures or to opportunities to develop their language and knowledge. This was an aspect of the children's experience that this study was unable to explore in any depth. How the children came to be isolated, the exclusionary and inclusionary aspects of pupil cultures within the classroom were all happening at a much subtler level than could be investigated in this study.

Other researchers (as discussed in Chapter Two) have argued that 'race' impacts on minority ethnic pupils' achievement through teachers' lower expectations, through teachers placing minority ethnic pupils in lower sets and not entering them for exams and through minority ethnic pupils being more controlled, chastised and excluded from school than majority ethnic pupils. The data in this study shows how teachers may come to have lower expectations of pupils through how they interpret the children's behaviour (she's lazy, he doesn't listen, he pretends not to understand, she thinks in a spiral). This, of course, is true of all children, however, Bangladeshi pupils are more vulnerable because their teachers do not recognise that the reasons for such behaviour are often connected to the child's unmet language needs. The data, as noted above, also suggest that teachers are in danger of having lower expectations because they only compare Bangladeshi pupils with each other in terms of achievement and not with other children.

This study, through the case of Rahul, also shows how children can be placed in lower sets so that they can receive support and then find themselves stuck there even though they are working at a more advanced level than the other children in the set.

In terms of minority ethnic pupils being chastised more than White pupils, this study is able to show something of how some of the case study children (Afia, Attar and Rahul) came to be chastised. The argument put forward here has been that these children were chastised because their teachers misunderstood their English language ability and thought that the

children were being naughty when in fact the children were trying to take part (Afia) or were not able to understand (Attar and Rahul). However, the data also suggest that the case study children may have also been enacting some 'resistance' to teacher structures through the way they behaved. (For instance, through holding themselves apart in the classroom in Reena and Attar's case, not asking for help in Reena's case. Mirza refers to this as a form of resistance in her study of Black female secondary school students, 1992). At the same time, Attar's case study shows how his behaviour is explained for a while by his teacher as a way of 'testing' her and she considers his behaviour as related to his Muslim culture. This does not happen in a straightforward way across the cases though, Tumi is also seen as 'testing' her teacher but this is not seen as part of her Muslim identity. It may be the case that the gender of the children comes to play a part here but with only six case studies it was not possible to explore this.

7.6.2 Gender

As just noted, the limited number of case studies do not allow for an exploration of how gender came to play a role in teachers' understandings of their pupils to any great extent. Even though Attar's and Tumi's 'testing' of the teacher were understood differently these two case studies come from different classrooms and different teachers and so no claims can be made. This limits what else can be said about the part that gender came to play in how teachers came to understand their Bangladeshi pupils. However, Reena's case study clearly shows that her gender **and** ethnicity were important in her teachers understandings of her and in their decisions to provide her with support. Her non-participation in the classroom was interpreted as shyness and a lack of confidence and it was felt that she might find it difficult having a man as a teacher. Reena was understood through the lens of White English assumptions about South Asian females. In the same classroom, if Attar had behaved in the same way, it is unlikely that any of the adults would have assumed that he was shy and lacking in confidence (or found it difficult to be taught by a man) and provided him with

support. In another classroom, Tumi's ways of taking part and charming her teachers were also successful because they were appropriate female behaviours.

7.6.3. Class

In this study I have used the concept of 'resources' instead of class. It is difficult to locate the Bangladeshi families, like many minority ethnic families, within traditional descriptions of class as they could not be considered, in economic terms, as single households. Instead the families were part of a complex network of households both within the county, England and Bangladeshi. For these reasons it was considered more appropriate to consider the resources of the family. The resources that the child had access to within their family and the impact of these on the child as a learners have been discussed above. The material consequences of their parents' work have also been discussed above. The manner in which the families understood their own class location and the impact of this was not explored in this study.

7.7 Conclusion

In this chapter the key issues and themes that emerge from the case studies have been discussed.

These key issues and themes were:

- that the manner in which the teachers came to assess the needs and abilities of the case study children and came to understand and perceive them had implications for the children's access to school resources and to opportunities to succeed in the classroom.
- that the practices and organisation of the classrooms created particular spaces for the children to demonstrate what they knew and who they were and that these spaces led to particular assessments being made of the children.

- that these assessments often relied on within-child explanations which located the source of any difficulties a child may have had in the classroom within the child rather than the practices of the classroom.
- that the case study children's language needs were rarely understood or recognised and where such needs were recognised the support provided was usually inappropriate or added to the child's difficulties in the classroom.
- that learning to take part successfully in reading interactions with the teacher did not necessarily mean that a child was a successful reader and could read for meaning.
- that the case study children were familiar with 'reading as performance' or recitation, in their home literacy and learning practices whilst their English classrooms expected 'reading for meaning' and that the organisation and teaching of reading in the English classrooms did not make this difference explicit.
- that the case study children had differential access to resources outside school and that access to pre-school education and help at home with school work and reading were important in terms of achievement.

Chapter Eight

Conclusions

8.1 Introduction

This chapter will begin by returning to the research question and discussing how it has been answered. Attention will also be paid to the main explanations that were put forward by other researchers who considered the experiences of ethnic minority pupils in schools and the poor achievement of EAL and non-mainstream pupils, all of which were considered in the Literature Review. The implications of the study will then be discussed.

8.2 The Research Question

The research question posed at the beginning of this study was ‘What is it in the lives, backgrounds and schooling experiences of Bangladeshi pupils that helps and hinders them in learning and achieving in the English school system?’ This study has attempted to answer this question through the portrayal and analysis of six Bangladeshi pupils experiences of one year of schooling in three different classrooms. Each case study revealed the complexity of things that helped and hindered a particular Bangladeshi child as a learner during the year. Taken together the case studies showed how taking part in particular ways in the classroom, and teachers responses to those ways of taking part, had implications for the resources that the Bangladeshi children had access to in the classroom and how classroom practices allowed them to be particular types of pupil. The case studies also showed how access to other resources such as pre-school educational experiences, support from older siblings and/or parents at home, absences from school, home literacies and relationships with school adults all had a part to play.

What helped or hindered the six Bangladeshi children in learning and achieving in the English school system was not reducible to a simple list of factors. It was not the case that the presence or absence of a factor, or a particular combination of factors, could be singled out as the reason for success or underachievement. However, what emerged strongly from the case studies were the processes whereby Bangladeshi pupils could become achievers or underachievers in the school system and how these processes had a lot to do with what a pupil had to call on in terms of previous educational experience, in terms of support at school and at home and how they come to be identified and known in their classrooms. Through the case studies it is possible to see the process of becoming and remaining a successful achieving pupil or an unsuccessful and underachieving one.

Interestingly, of the six Bangladeshi pupils in this study, only one of the children, Rahul, could be considered to be currently underachieving. The data presented in this study allowed for some observations to be made about how the other children came to be 'doing well' in school and how Rahul came to be 'not doing well'. However, it is necessary to ask how well the successful children's strategies may serve them in the future, especially as literacy demands of their classrooms change. The resources that have carried Tumi and Attar so far as successful pupils may not serve them so well in the future. Will their strategies for reading carry them through? What will happen to Tumi if her older sister should marry and leave home? Some of the case study children may well become underachieving, dissatisfied Bangladeshi pupils, Rahul certainly seems in danger of this. Some of them may plateau as they move into Key Stage Two and struggle to cope with the demands of the curriculum because of their unmet language needs. This may well happen to Tumi, Attar and Afia unless they find ways of having their needs met or strategies that allow them to cope. Some may continue to be successful, this seems a possibility for Faiza and Reena. All six Bangladeshi pupils are vulnerable, however, because their schools and teachers have not been trained to recognise or provide for their language needs and in many cases have poor information about the children's home lives. The children are also vulnerable because of

their different access to resources in and out of school (for example, support at home) and because teachers call on ‘within-child’ explanations to explain their poor performance rather than question school and classroom practices and the children’s familiarity with ‘academic’ English.

What is clear from this study is that things are already very much in place concerning whether one is positioned to be a successful or unsuccessful pupil in the educational system by Year Three. The processes of achievement and underachievement start early. Because of his lack of pre-school and pre-Year Three educational experiences and pre-Year Three, the little support for school he has at home, his long absences from school in his Reception Year and Year Two, the fragmented support he received in Year Three and his ‘outsider status’ in the classroom, it is highly unlikely that Rahul will be able to catch up with his White (English Language Background) peers as they moved on through the curriculum in Key Stage Two.

Although it was claimed above that what helped or hindered the six Bangladeshi children in learning and achieving in the English school system was not reducible to a simple list of factors it may be possible to answer the research question by summarising this study’s findings in the following manner:

What can hinder pupils in their English schools is –

- their lack of identity as EAL pupils.
- the differences that exist between the literacy and learning practices of home and school which are not made explicit.
- their lack of social, cultural and economic resources, including help at home (with school work) and access to the cultural experiences that are central to classroom life.

- their lack of school experience (through not attending pre-school or being regularly absent from school).

What can help pupils in their English schools is –

- their orientation towards school and determination to do well.
- the home support that they receive and their pre-school and pre-Year Three educational experiences.
- the good schools that they find themselves in.
- receiving support for their language needs.

The social isolation of many of the children in this study needs to be explored further to understand how such exclusion comes about and to gain a deeper understanding of the effects it has upon pupils as learners.

8.3 Other Researcher's Explanations

In the Literature Review we saw how, in the research about the experiences of ethnic minority pupils in schools, teacher judgements about pupils were key. This study has provided more information about this and shown what teachers base their judgements on, how they think about the Bangladeshi pupils in their classes, how they respond to them and the implications of this for the children. Like the work on Afro-Caribbean children, I have found that the Bangladeshi children in this study acquired an identity through their behaviour in the classroom but have been able to provide a more subtle picture of how this comes about and show how Bangladeshi pupils (who were always described in the ethnic minority research as 'well behaved') came to acquire identities that had implications for access to resources through their taking part on the carpet. This is a more subtle picture than the notion of being 'well behaved' or 'badly behaved'. In this study, like the research referred to above, teachers did give different amounts of and different kinds of attention to children but this was not simply a division between 'Black' and 'White' pupils. Pupils in the classrooms

I observed in received differing amounts of and different kinds of attention depending on how they took part and how their teachers came to understand them and their needs. This study also found that isolation and racism did exist in the lives of the case study children and has attempted to show the relationship that existed between the isolation some of the children experienced and their learning and becoming a successful pupil.

In the Literature Review we also saw how researchers, who had considered the underachievement of EAL pupils, found that language was key and that poor English ability was interpreted by teachers as poor cognitive ability. In this study I also found that language was key. However, unlike the researchers referred to above, this study showed that EAL children can come to be seen as having a great deal of cognitive ability because of their social fluency (and their way of taking part in the classroom) and how poor work and behaviour then become interpreted by teachers as a wilful non-compliance on the part of pupils. In this study I have attempted to show how some Bangladeshi pupils are constrained by a lack of English fluency and how some have other resources to call on which work for them in the classroom whilst others do not. I have also shown how teachers go about making judgements about children's facility with English and what the implications of these judgements are.

The final section of the Literature Review considered research which examined the mismatch between home and school practices as the source of difficulty and underachievement for non-mainstream pupils. I have followed through one of the key findings of this research, the importance of non-mainstream children learning the interaction patterns of the classroom so that they can join in and become successful learners, and have shown that indeed children do need to learn this (and do learn it). However, this study has also shown that learning the interaction patterns and joining in successfully can hide what children do not know. In Year Three (and possibly earlier) reading is **more than** joining in with the teacher (although classroom practices around reading do not make this explicit) and the lack of recognition of

this, and of the home learning and literacy practices, obscures what does count as reading in dominant culture classrooms. I have also attempted to problematise the notion, put forward by the researchers referred to above, that home literacy practices and school literacy practices can be easily merged and melded with one another, that literacy is the same thing in other practices and other places and that 'reading' is always 'reading'. Finally, I have attempted to show what it is about homes that aids non-mainstream children in school as learners and move away from the notion that there is a simple, straightforward mismatch. This has led me to prefer to talk about 'resources' that exist, or do not exist, in homes (and classrooms), and how they help and hinder non-mainstream pupils.

In what follows the implications of the research for practice and for policy are considered.

8.4 Implications for Practice

This study is presented from an observer's point of view and seeks to explore six children's experiences of being learners in their classrooms over a year. As such the study attempts to engage with each child's perspective – and not their teachers' perspective. Although all the adults in each classroom were interviewed and their thoughts and feelings that they shared during the research year were recorded, this study does not examine life in the classroom, or teaching and learning, from the teachers' perspective. It is recognised and respected that teachers need to make sense of and simplify to get by in the classroom, to do the job of teaching successfully and with purpose. This study deliberately makes complex what teachers need to simplify. The purpose of this is not to criticise individual teachers or to make any of the classroom adults responsible for what has been described from each Bangladeshi pupil's perspective. The purpose is to try and understand the process that each child is part of and how these affect the opportunities for successful learning for each child. Another research project could usefully explore teacher's perspectives of working with

Bangladeshi pupils especially when there are large differences between what children bring with them into the classroom in terms of home resources, language and literacy.

MacIntyre (2002) has usefully written about how teachers are required to deal with too much information given what running a classroom involves and asks what can be done about this. He answers his question by stating that teachers need to be given the information that they need to do the job of teaching as well as they can be expected to do it. This study shows not only what six Bangladeshi children experience in classrooms but something of the range of differences that exist in classrooms that teachers confront each day. In the light of MacIntyre's recommendation that teachers need to be given the information that they need to do the job of teaching as well as they can be expected to do it, this study could be said to reveal the following information:

- That Bangladeshi pupils may have language needs and these needs cannot be assessed simply from children's oral language, especially their conversational language¹.

Academic language ability in English cannot be assessed through conversational language. This may also apply to other White pupils in a classroom who come from non-mainstream homes.

- Different ways of 'doing' reading need to be found that encourage pupils to engage with text other than as a means for making a performance. Reading activities and teaching need to make explicit the fact that text carries meaning in dominant culture settings.

This may also benefit other White pupils in a classroom who come from non-mainstream homes.

¹ Needs reveal themselves in the disjuncture between oral fluency and poor academic language (e.g. difficulty explaining processes, difficulties with writing, using the same genre for writing all the time and so on) and that rather than understand poor work as a lack of motivation or wilful resistance what a child knows and can do with language should be explored.

- The conventions of language, especially writing conventions, need to be explicitly taught and visually modelled across the curriculum. Models of language-in-use from real sources also need to be present in classrooms. There needs to be a focus on sentence and text level work and not just on word level work. This will also benefit other White pupils in a classroom as all pupils need to learn these conventions and those who come from non-mainstream homes may well lack access to these conventions.
- That many opportunities need to be provided for pupils to reformulate ideas for themselves through reporting back and using language.
- Vocabulary needs to be taught at all time especially where vocabulary has a subject specific meaning. It also needs to be demonstrated that individual words only take their meaning from the context in which they appear.
- Support should be coherent and help pupils take part in the school day rather than take them out of the classroom and away from tasks and information that they are later expected to engage with.
- Consideration should be paid to the strong pull of trying to 'fit in' that many children, especially minority pupils, will experience.
- Consideration should be paid to the differing resources that pupils have at home. This also applies to other White pupils in a classroom who come from non-mainstream homes.
- Information about pupil's home literacy and learning practices should, where the information is available, inform teacher's planning. This also applies to the practices of White pupils who come from non-mainstream homes.

- That racism needs to be dealt with immediately and a deeper familiarity with the local cultural and spiritual practices of Bangladeshi (and minority ethnic) pupils needs to be developed.

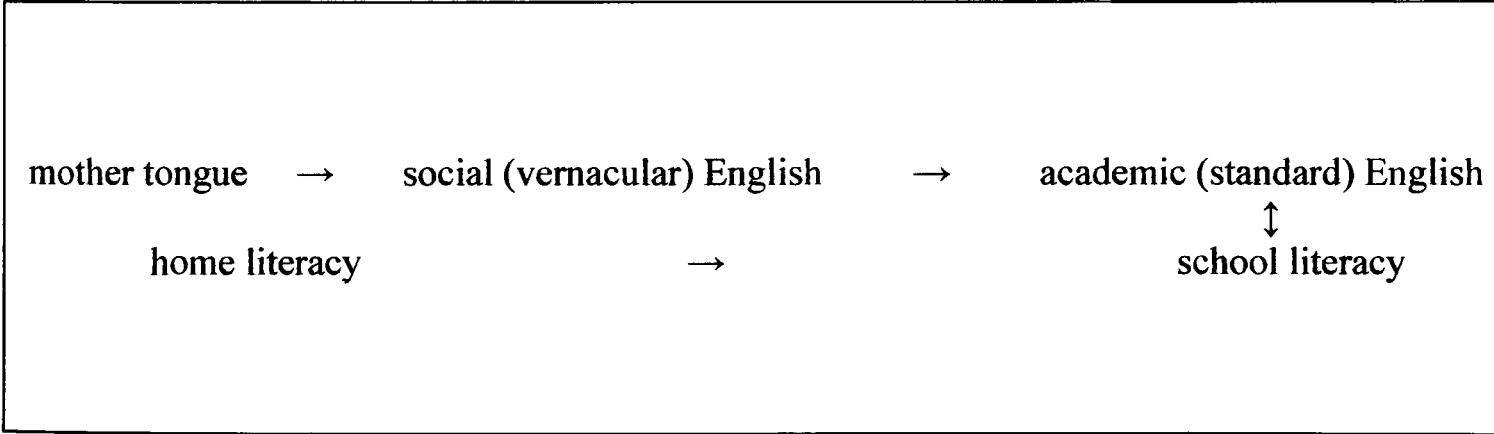
8.5 Implications for Policy

This study has shown that for these six Bangladeshi pupils one of the key impediments to their success and achievement in school is their unmet language needs and the resources that they have about and around them to support them in the process of schooling. The data show what many of these unmet needs and missing resources are. The study also shows how these pupils' language needs are not seen by their teachers and their schools. That the children are always seen as **Bangladeshi pupils** is evidenced by the way teachers, with one exception, always talked about the case study pupils in relation to other Bangladeshi pupils and not in relation to other White children in their classrooms. Language thus disappears from the picture while ethnicity remains. This is reinforced by current government policy which focuses on **ethnicity** and achievement² rather than **language** and achievement. Harris refers to this as the 'ethnicisation of achievement' (Harris, 2001).

One of the implications of my study is that a focus on ethnicity in policy terms conceals the language needs of pupils and the role that these play in achievement. Harris (2001) critiques the manner in which an English national fiction has been created in which there is only one English which (only) people from outside (minority ethnic people) do not have. As Harris demonstrates, this English, which he refers to as Standard English, is not held by all English people and English speakers, there are also local, vernacular Englishes which are used by English people and English speakers. People from inside do not necessarily have Standard

English but a lack of English continues to be equated with ethnic minorities and seen as a problem. In this light Harris argues that policy makers and practitioners need to rethink the labels that are used to describe groups of pupils and rather than use ethnic categories to describe pupils (and provide support and monitor achievements) other labels need to be developed, ones that are based on language and language need. The case studies presented here support this view. If schools and teachers were encouraged to consider all of their pupils in terms of their language needs and their language practices in and out of school then teaching and support could be provided that met what are currently unmet needs. Harris’s argument that many White pupils come from backgrounds in which they are only familiar with local, vernacular Englishes and not with the dominant Standard English of the classroom implies that many White pupils share many of the needs of the case study pupils when it comes to learning about the conventions, especially in writing, of academic (Standard) English. A trajectory of what needs to be acquired in terms of language and literacy to be a successful pupil in English schools could be represented in this way:

Trajectory of what needs to be acquired in terms of language and literacy in English schools



Ethnic minority children with a different mother tongue to English would enter the trajectory at an earlier place than White children who acquire a social, vernacular English as their mother tongue in their early years. Children with a different mother tongue would have to

² For example, funding to support EAL pupils is now supplied through the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant (EMTAG) and is to be used to focus on raising the achievement of ethnic minority groups.

acquire social, vernacular English before or on arrival in school and have specific educational needs in doing this that need supporting if they are in an English mainstream classrooms. Once social, vernacular English is acquired all the children in the classroom need to acquire the academic (standard) English of school practices and the dominant culture. Some, both EAL and White, will find this easier than others, depending on whether they have experience of this form of English outside school and are able to easily reproduce it in the classroom. To support those, both EAL and White, who do not have access to such experiences and do find it difficult to reproduce, classrooms can provide explicit teaching in the dominant, standard forms. At the same time children, both White and EAL, will come into school with differing experiences of home literacy practices and need to acquire, to be successful pupils, the literacy practices of the school. A way of describing pupils and where they are in this trajectory, rather than in terms of their ethnicity, would seem, from the data presented in this study, to be more useful to teachers and to policy initiatives.

However, having made a claim for considering children in terms of their language needs rather than their ethnicity it is important to continue to be aware of the material consequences of being perceived as a different culture or colour in school and society for Bangladeshi pupils. The data show how teachers sometimes call on their own (inaccurate) ideas about Islam to explain behaviour and to make judgements about children and how the case study children are compared with other Bangladeshi pupils children and not with White children. Attar's case study reminds us that racism exists in schools amongst young children and the exclusion and distress that occurs.

8.6 What Has Being Bangladeshi Got To Do With It?

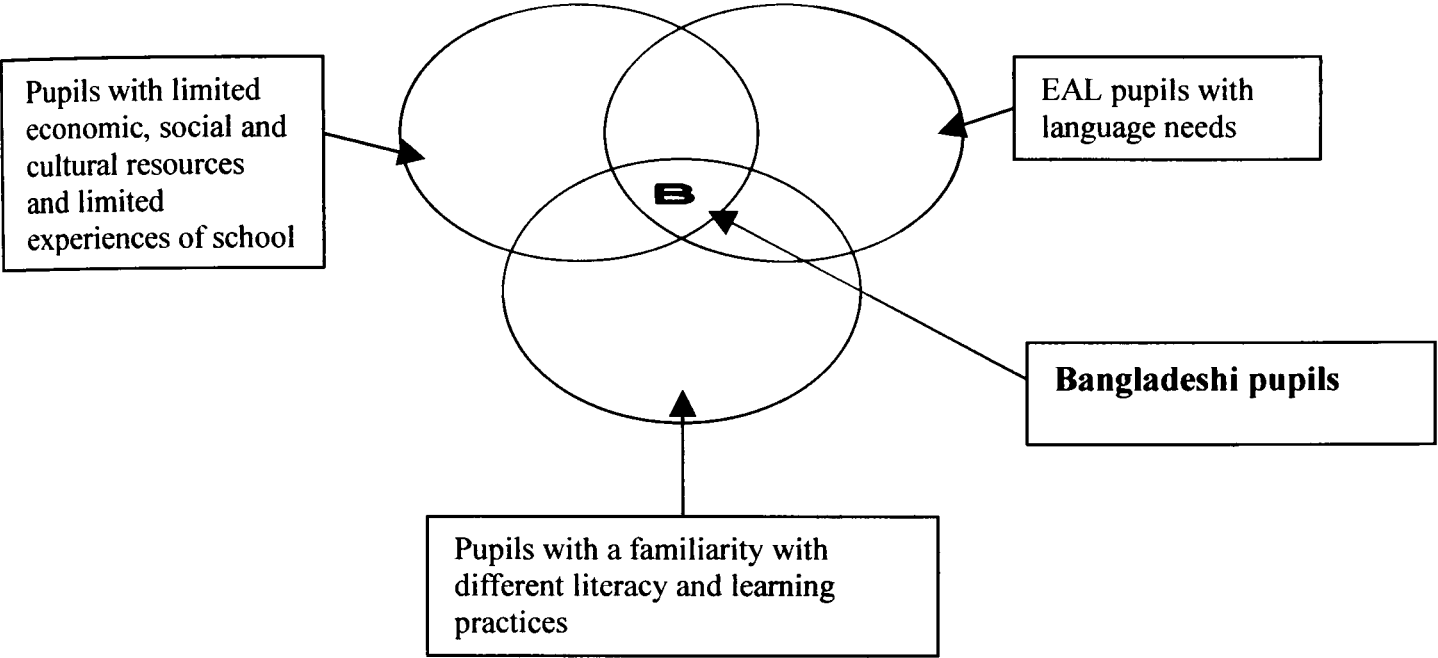
The issue of whether 'being Bangladeshi' had anything to do with what helped and hindered Bangladeshi pupils in English schools was raised in Chapter One. Why Bangladeshi pupils needed more support and over longer periods of time in the county than other EAL pupils

and why Bangladeshi pupils should gain fewer qualifications at the end of schooling compared to other minority ethnic groups of pupils (such as Indian pupils) were questions that were also asked.

The discussion above has begun to answer the first question. It has established that being Bangladeshi had little to do with what helped and hindered the case study children in their classrooms; it was, in the main, the children's language needs and the invisibility of their EAL identity that hindered them in their learning. However, other EAL pupils also have these needs in their classrooms so it is necessary to consider the other two questions that were posed.

In the summary of the study's findings three other hindrances to Bangladeshi pupils success as learners were put forward, namely, the differences that exist between the literacy and learning practices of home and school which are not made explicit, the children's lack of social, cultural and economic resources and a lack of (English) school experience. Other EAL pupils may also find themselves in classrooms in which their language needs are not met, however, many EAL pupils will come from homes which will be rich in economic, social and cultural resources and that have literacy and learning practices that compliment English schools. They may also have attended school without any regular absences from a young age.

What is being suggested is that Bangladeshi pupils appear in the statistics as one of the poorest achieving groups in England not because they are Bangladeshi but because they are a group of pupils who have few economic, social and cultural resources, because they are EAL pupils and because their home literacy and learning practices do not prepare them for the literacy and learning practices of their English schools. Other groups of minority ethnic pupils and EAL pupils do not find themselves necessarily 'disadvantaged' by all of these circumstances. This can perhaps be represented clearly in the following way:



In this way it is possible to understand how underachievement comes about for many Bangladeshi pupils and why such pupils require support for longer periods of time than other minority ethnic and EAL pupils.

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Appendix One: Learning to Read in Bengali and Qur'an Classes

Reading in the Bengali class

Teacher: K, KO, GO
Child: Repeats
Teacher: Go, read it
Child: mutters quietly
Teacher: Read it loudly
Child: quietly says the alphabet
Teacher: Say it again
Child: repeats the letters
Teacher: Not like that, like this (stresses the different inflections of the letters)
What, what did you say?
Child: quietly repeats
Teacher: Good. What next?
Child: continues
Teacher: Which one is 'Dho'?
Child: This one.
Teacher: Then carry on. No, say it like this 'Pho'
Child: repeats

Reading in the Qur'an school

Teacher: Read this, Shuma.
Shuma: Alif, bah, tah, sayh, hae...
Teacher: What was that? Say it again.
Shuma: Alif, bah, tah, sayh, jim
Teacher: Um, that's it, now carry on.
Shuma: Jim - jim, hae, kae, d- (hesitates)
Teacher: Dal - dal, remember it and repeat.
Shuma: Dal, zal, rae, zae, sin, shin, swad, dwad,
Teacher: (nods), What's next? Thoy, zoy
Shuma: Zoy, thoy,
Teacher: No, no. listen carefully. Thoy, zoy,
Shuma: (repeats)
Teacher: OK. Say it again from the beginning...

Adapted from (Gregory, 1996)

Appendix 2: Examples From Taped Home Reading Sessions Showing How Older Siblings Use Community Class Reading Strategies When Hearing Their Younger Siblings Read (from Gregory et al. 1996)

Child = younger sibling learning to read
Sibling = older sibling hearing child read at home

Reading at Home with Older Siblings adapted from Gregory et al. (1996) Appendix Eight		
Strategy 1	Listen and Repeat Type A: Child repeats word by word after the older sibling. This may build up to repeating chunks of words. Occasionally the child predicts the next one or two words of the text. Type B: Child tries to repeat longer chunks of the sibling's reading but often manages only telegraphic speech. Fast flowing rhythm and little insistence on accuracy.	Examples Type A: Sibling: gave Child: gave Sibling: her Child: her Sibling: fishy Child: fishy Sibling: gifts Child: gifts Type B: Sibling: Peace at last Child: Peace in last Sibling: The hour Child: The hour Sibling: was late Child: was late Sibling: Mr. Bear was tired Child: was tired
Strategy 2	Tandem Reading Child echoes the sibling's reading, sometimes managing only telegraphic speech.	Sibling: The postman Child: The postman Sibling: It was Tum's birthday Child: was...birthday Sibling: Ram made Child: Ram made Sibling: Him a birthday card Child: Him a birthday card
Strategy 3	Chained Reading The sibling begins reading and the child continues reading the next 1,2 or 3 words until she needs help again. Then the sibling reads the next word and the pattern recurs. Chained reading is typified by the way the child repeats the sibling's correction before continuing to read alone.	Sibling: It's Child: It's a whobber. Meg.... Sibling: Mog Child: Mog caught a fish Sibling: caught Child: caught a fish
Strategy 4	Almost Alone Here the child initiates and reads until a word is unknown; the sibling corrects the error or supplies the word. The child repeats the word correctly and continues until the next error is made.	Child: Don't eat the postman. It was Tom's Sibling: Tum's Child: Tum's birthday. Ram made him a birthday card. 'Don't eat the birthday card' said Ram. "But it is my birthday" shouted Tum. "I want some, I.... Sibling: something Child: something to eat
Strategy 5	The Recital Reciting a complete piece (in a similar way to prayer recital in Arabic).	Child: six pink piglet walkin' on the wall, six pink piglet walkin' on the wall, six pink piglet walkin' on the wall and one pink piglet should fall, there be five pink piglet walkin' on the wall, there be five pink piglet walkin' on the wall, there be five pink piglet walkin' on the wall, and one pink piglet should accilently fall, there be six Sibling: five Child: four pink piglet..... (continues to end)

Strategy 6	Talk about Text The sibling asks the child comprehension questions on the text in Sylheti*. This is typified by being very directed to the text itself. It also follows the reading of the text in English and takes place only if the child is a competent reader. If the child is wrong, the correct answer is given and the child repeats it immediately. *Sylheti is a regional dialect of Bengali	Sibling: What's his name? (using illustration) Child: Tum. And Ram made him a card Sibling: And what did he say? Child: Don't eat that Sibling: What shouldn't he eat? Child: Birthday cake Sibling: Card Child: Card. Not to eat birthday card.
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Appendix Three: Bangladeshis in the UK (History and Settlement)

The country now known as Bangladesh was part of British India until 1947. On independence in 1947 the landmass which is now known as Bangladesh became East Pakistan. It was only after a civil war with West Pakistan that Bangladesh became an independent country in 1971.

Men from what is now known as Bangladesh first arrived in London as sailors, or lascars, working for the East India Company. Some settled in East London near the docks. Poor working conditions, discrimination and poor pay on ships meant that some men began to earn their incomes in other ways. Coffee shops and Indian restaurants were opened, in what is now the Tower Hamlets part of London, as an alternative to ship work. (Many of the men were experienced cooks because dietary requirements had meant that they prepared their own food and had their own eating arrangements on ships). (Tower Hamlets 1995).

Qureshi (1998) claims that many men continued to arrive and settle in port areas such as London and Liverpool before and during the Second World War when many Bangladeshi men served in the British merchant fleet (Qureshi, 1998: 3).

The majority (but not all) of Bangladeshis in the UK come from the Sylhet region of Bangladesh. This is a region in the north-east of Bangladesh and its capital city is Sylhet. The region is mainly rural and is famous for tea growing. Qureshi claims that the depressed economic situation in the Sylhet region was the cause of young men from the region seeking work with the British merchant fleet. At the same time, labour shortages in Britain prompted the encouragement by the British government of workers from former colonies. (Qureshi, 1998: 4).

Later in the 1960s and 1970s men who arrived found work in the north of England and Birmingham in heavy industry and manufacturing as well as in East London.

Qureshi also describes how,

workers settled in East London and found employment on the docks and in the local garment trade. As the community took a foothold, individuals began to set up service industries to cater for the needs of the Bangladeshi community. Retail outlets, food shops, travel agencies and book stores in east London sprang up to supply the consumer needs of the community. ... The popularity of Indian cuisine resulted in the growing number of Indian restaurants. The restaurants (70% Bangladeshi owned) are a major source of employment for Bangladeshi (men). The shift from manufacturing to service sector took place in the 70s because of the decline of manufacturing industries in the north, there was a movement south to London and the south east. (Qureshi, 1998: 5)

Today approximately 90% of Indian restaurants in the UK are owned and run by Bangladeshis.

Qureshi claims that the 'vast majority of people who emigrated to Britain are from rural farming backgrounds' (Qureshi, 1998: 4). Men send money home and,

over the years, migrants who have settled in Britain have invested substantial proportions of their resources in planning and making periodic visits to Bangladesh. For many, it has been typical for them to visit Bangladesh at least once every three years and spend anything up to three months there. One of the main reasons for visiting is to see children and grandchildren left behind in Bangladesh. Generally,

great importance is placed on the upkeep and maintaining of family lands and home (Qureshi, 1998: 5)

Due to changes in immigration laws, it is now only the dependants of those families who are already here who are able to emigrate to the UK.

According to recent national statistics (Clancy et al., 2001), Pakistani and Bangladeshi people have the highest risk of being the victim of a racially motivated incident (4.2% for Bangladeshi and Pakistani people, 3.6% for Indian people, 2.2% for Black people and 0.3% for White people).

Appendix Four: Example of the letter sent to the headteachers of the three schools.

Sue Walters
Oxford University Department of Educational Studies
15 Norham Gardens
Oxford
OX 2 6PY

8th June, 2000

Dear Mrs Moston,
I am currently a research student at the University of Oxford working towards my PhD in Education. I used to be a teacher and the project co-ordinator of the Bangladeshi Achievement Pilot Project between 1995 and 1998. I worked with Mrs Lufna Begum.

My research has arisen out of the work of the B- A- P- Project. I have been given some funding to look more closely at the achievement of Bangladeshi-origin children in school and to consider the experiences of the children, their teachers and their families in a more rural, monolingual setting than the metropolitan centres where research is usually conducted. I am particularly interested in early years and the experience of starting school and learning to read. The emphasis of the research will depend on the age of the children involved. Ideally, I would like to look at Bangladeshi-origin children in Year Three.

I am looking for approximately four First schools that would be interested in taking part and allowing me to do some of my fieldwork in their classrooms. My fieldwork would involve classroom observation of the children (including some tape recording and possibly videoing), some interviews with the class teachers involved and perhaps some one-to-one work with the Bangladeshi-origin children I am focusing on.

Lufna speaks very highly of your school and so I am writing to you first to see if you would be interested in being involved. I would be very, very happy to come and talk to you and explain in more detail what I would like to do and what it would involve for the school, and discuss important issues like confidentiality for the school and so on. If you were interested in being involved I would, of course, ask the parents for their permission too.

Please let me know if you would like me to come and see you. You can write to me at the above address or email me at sue.walters@educational-studies.oxford.ac.uk

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Sue Walters
Research Student

Appendix Five: Letter for schools explaining what I wanted to do

Background

The research is looking at the experiences of six Bangladeshi children, their teachers and their families in three monolingual settings over one year. I am specifically interested in looking at how the six children go about school and what strategies they use especially in learning to read and write and how these compare with their peers. I want to consider what it means to learn to read and write independently in English for these six children. What do they have to learn in order to become independent readers and learners? What strategies do they use? Are they the same strategies as the other (monolingual) children in the class? As well as my own perceptions and understandings as I observe and collect data I will be interested in the perceptions and views of the children's teachers and families.

If you have any queries or questions, or you want to discuss something that concerns you about this research, then please call me (in confidence) at any time. I will be happy to talk to you.

Contact details:

Sue Walters, Research Student, Oxford University Department of Educational Studies, 15 Norham Gardens, Oxford OX2 6PY Tel: 01865 247 549 sue.walters@edstud.ox.ac.uk

From Sept 2nd ----- Tel: email as above

Practicalities

I would like to visit the school approximately seven times each term

A visit will probably be two consecutive mornings or afternoons, each morning or afternoon spent focusing on one of the children. There will be less visits in the Spring Term.

These are the things I would like to be able to do during each morning or afternoon I am in school:

- spend approximately one hour in the classroom observing the child/children (during a language or literacy based 'lesson' ie doing English or Science or Geography rather than PE).
- spend approximately half an hour working 1:1 with the child.
- The rest of the time I am in school I am happy to be an extra pair of hands in the classroom as long as I can keep the child I am focusing on 'in sight'.

In addition I would like to ask staff for the following:

- when the child reads with an adult that this be taped.

At the beginning of the year, for the first couple of weeks, this would be each time the child reads with an adult. Thereafter, only once a week or perhaps once a fortnight. I will provide the tape recorder and the tapes. The only thing required is that the tape recorder be turned on at the beginning of whatever is a normal reading session with the child (this might be 1:1 or in a group). The tapes will come to me and I will be the only person who will listen to them and I will not speak to anyone else in the school or in (the city) about anything that is on the tapes. I am happy to share the tape or the transcript of the tape with the adult involved if that person would like to have this for professional development reasons. I originally intended to just have the children read with me (and tape this) but my supervisor and I agree that if I do this I will just get how the children go about reading with me, a visitor to the school. The intention of the research is to consider their reading in the normal context of their daily, ordinary life in school and so I need to ask if whoever normally hears the child read would tape record the sessions on a regular basis.

- at the beginning of the year, and on three subsequent occasions during the year, six other children in the class are taped in the above manner. Again I will provide the tape recorder and the tapes. This is so I can compare, as far as possible, some of the monolingual children with the bilingual children. It will also be very useful to me as a reminder of the range of reading skills and behaviours. This is something I need after focusing on bilingual learners for so long. I will seek parental permission for this in whatever way the school feels is best.
- to be able to informally interview the teacher(s).
Approximately four times during the course of the year.
- to be able to informally interview any other adult involved in reading with the children. Approximately 2 –3 times during the year.
- to be able to photocopy some examples of the children's writing.

Sue Walters 12th July, 2000

Appendix Six: Checklist for asking for parental permission

- I am looking at the experiences of Bangladeshi children and their families (and their teachers). How it really is.
- I am focusing on learning to read and becoming an independent reader and at what helps children do well in school and what stops them doing well.
- This work is like some of the work that I was doing when I was working with the Bangladeshi Achievement Pilot Project. I am trying to find out how teachers can best help children, especially with learning to read and write. I want to find out what is needed, what helps children do well and what stops them doing well. I also want to find out what families think.
- If you are happy to be part of the research, and to have your child included, I need to ask you to give your permission for me to do the following things (and sign a letter so that I can show the schools that you have given me permission to do these things):
 - ☐ tape record your child reading with the teacher
 - ☐ work 1:1 with your child in the classroom (in addition to any EAL support they might be receiving).
 - ☐ observe your child in the classroom.
 - ☐ talk to your child and tape record any conversations.
 - ☐ write about your child (having changed their name and the name of the school so they will be anonymous).
 - ☐ see your child's school record.
 - ☐ have access to your child's school marks and test results
 - ☐ see your child's EAL record.
 - ☐ have access to any LEA records about your child.
 - ☐ talk to your other children if they agree about their experiences of going to school.
 - ☐ give a lift to your child in my car.

Appendix Seven: Permission letter signed by case study parents

August 2000

To Whom It May Concern,

I have met with Ms Sue Walters today and she has explained to me that she is a student at Oxford University and that she is trying to find out about the following things:

- the experiences of Bangladeshi children and their families and their teachers when the children go to school in (name of the city)
- what it is like learning to read and write at school and how children can be helped to read and write well.

I give permission for Ms Sue Walters to:

- work with my child in school (in the classroom and 1:1)
- observe my child in school to see how they are doing and what might help them
- talk to my child about school
- write about my child in her report (I know that my child's name will be changed as well as the name of the school)
- talk to me about my child and how I think they are doing in school
- talk to my other children about going to school in (name of the city) and what it is like
- sometimes tape record my child reading in school (if this is OK with my child)
- see my child's school records
- to know my child's grades and marks for tests and assessments including the SATs
- see my child's records kept by the LEA Language Service
- see any information kept by the Local Education Authority about my child
- use a video camera in the classroom to record what is happening in the classroom
- give a lift to my child in her car

Yours sincerely,

.....

Date.....

This letter was translated and discussed in Bengali/Sylheti.

Appendix Eight: Checklist for parent interviews

These were headings that I had written on the back of a postcard. They were intended as beginnings to conversations. The first two were intended as a 'warm up'. I did not always ask them if I felt in a particular family that they were intrusive.

Checklist

What was X like as a baby/toddler?

Were there particular rhymes or stories or games that they liked when they were small?

How did you choose a school for X?

What kind of contact do you have with the school?

Are you pleased with the school? What are the good things about it and the bad things?

Are you satisfied with the amount of information that you get from school?

How do you find out how X is doing at school?

How do you think they are doing?

How will you know when they are doing well at school?

What more could the school do to help X?

Do you go to parents evenings?

How much help can you give X?

What do you do if X is having a problem at school?

Is there a difference between your experience of school and your children's?

Where did you go to school?

When did you finish school?

Would you prefer a single sex school for X?

What would you like X to do, to be, when they finish school?

Is it difficult to bring your children up as Muslims in this city?

How would you prefer to be described? As Bangladeshi, Bengali, British-Bengali etc?

Is there anything else?

Appendix Nine: Interview schedules and checklists for teachers, headteachers, EAL teachers, children's previous teachers and children

Teacher Interview Schedule: November 2000

This schedule was intended as an aid to make sure that key areas that I was interested in were covered. Not all the questions were asked if the information had been covered in another way or if the question became irrelevant. Each teacher was given a brief written overview of the interview and what it would cover and a reminder that whatever was said was confidential before the interview began.

Could you begin by describing your class for me, the kinds of children you have in your class this year...how you see them/think about them?

Are they a typical year 3 class?

Establish how teacher sees class, how 'sorts' children. Is underachieving used?

Where do Bangladeshi children fit into this map of the class?

Could you describe how you organise your classroom and how you organise tasks in your classroom?

What are your beliefs about your role as a teacher? Have they changed?

How supportive are the parents? What are their attitudes to school?

Are they typical?

What is teacher's view of the parent community?

When would you refer a child to the EAL services?

Why would you refer a child to EAL? *(language problems or achievement problems?)*

Teacher's knowledge of the whole child (overlap with accounts)

How would you describe X and how they are as a pupil in your class?

How do they react in relation to the way things are done in the classroom?

You described X as xxxxxxxxxx what has led you to that conclusion, what was the first things that made you think that about x?

What else have they done that has made you think that?

Anyone else involved?

How would you describe X's academic ability?

What has led you to that conclusion? What was the first thing that made you think that?

What else have they done that has made you think that? Anyone else involved?

How is X doing?

Where have you got information about the child from?

Information about child

Do you think you need to plan differently?

How do you use KS1 data to prepare child for KS2?

What individual targets have you set the child?

What are the needs of the child?

How might they be addressed?

What are your perceptions of the child's language ability?

Do you think X is interested in school?

Does X experience school differently to other children? In what ways?

Home

Do you have some contact with the B child's parents?
How easy/good is communication with parents ?
What do you think are the attitudes of the parents towards education?
Do you think X experiences pressures from home?
What could X and parents do to help themselves?
What are the parents of children in the class like in general?
What is the local community like? Do most parents live locally?

Resourced

How well resourced do you feel for having EAL/bilingual children in your class? Have you ever had an EAL/bilingual/Bangladeshi child in your class before?
How do you work out what to do? From others, from training or from own common sense?
Do you feel you need any additional info?
Have you ever had or been offered any training in working with bilingual children or children who are learning English? How useful was it? What did you learn? What training would you like?

EAL

How are EAL teachers used? Successfully? For who?
Does partnership exist in any form?
Do you get copies of EAL records for child? Are they useful?

Headteachers – Interview checklist

Parent and Local Community

- ☐ How do they see the parent community?
- ☐ How easy is communication with parents (mono and e/m)?
- ☐ Role of parents, parents attitude to school, parental involvement

- ☐ How do they see the local community?
- ☐ Type of housing
- ☐ Socio-economics
- ☐ Racial ethnic mix
- ☐ Images of the area
- ☐ Are people short term or long term residents?
- ☐ How far do children travel to school?

School data

- ☐ How many children receive free school meals?
- ☐ What is the level of absenteeism?
- ☐ Baseline level of children?
- ☐ How many Bangladeshi children in school?
- ☐ How many EAL children?
- ☐ How many ethnic minority children?
- ☐ Number on roll
- ☐ Staffing and staff changes, staff turnover?
- ☐ Governors
- ☐ Things coming up for the school this year
- ☐ Key events from last year
- ☐ Ethos
- ☐ Ofsted
- ☐ The funding the school receives

Bangladeshis in school

- ☐ Why do you think the children are doing/not doing well?
- ☐ What do you think might be some of the constraints on his or her schooling?
- ☐ Or how was this child making a success of school?
- ☐ What does this school do that leads to achievement for Bangladeshi children?

EAL/EMTAG

- ☐ What do they know about EAL?
- ☐ Curriculum/policy changes coming from government/LEA etc
- ☐ What info about EAL, ethnic minority children, bilingualism is on offer? Training?
- ☐ Is there anyone in the LEA or advisory service that passes on info, policy, research regarding EAL, ethnic minority achievement, bilingualism?
- ☐ What policy has the school established for making provision for EAL pupil (as per EMAG) and for raising the achievement of e/m children who are at risk of underachieving? How is policy incorporated within the school development plan?
- ☐ What kind of support does the school receive from the LEA?
- ☐ Does the school receive regular reports about how ethnic minority children are achieving in relation to LEA targets?
- ☐ What monitoring do you have in place to monitor the achievement of e/m groups and what target and outcome measures (EMAG)?
- ☐ Is it easy to provide the LEA with info required to monitor the grant (EMAG)?
- ☐ Does the school buy back? Why?
- ☐ How is EAL service used by the school? (Partnership?)
- ☐ How are EAL staff perceived?

- ❑ How do you decide when to refer a child to EAL service? When do you decide that a child no longer needs supporting by EAL service?
- ❑ Do they feel resourced and supported?

School policy and practices

- ❑ What kind of testing/assessment does the school use?
- ❑ School policies especially m/culturalsim/racism and bullying

Case Study Children's Previous Teachers

What is your teaching background?
How long have you been teaching at this school?
What classes and age groups?
Where did you teach before?
Where did you do your training?

Information about child

How would you describe X and how they were in your class?
What can you tell me about X academic ability?
Did you need to plan or teach differently for X in any way? Did X have particular needs?
Did you find it easy to know what their needs were?
Did any support staff work with X? What was their role?
What was your class like last year. Was it a typical year 2 class? How did X fit into the class?
What was causing problems/underachievement for X? Or how was X making a success of school?
Were there other people who could give help, give information, provide support?
Did you have some good resources that you felt really worked or helped?
How successful did you feel? How successful were you?
What were the things that really worked well?
What were the things that you would have liked more resources or help with?
How did you go about assessing X in your class? The same way as other children?
What did you think of X's language ability,
Did you think X was interested in school and liked school last year?
How was X doing by the end of the year?
Do you think X experienced school differently to other children? In what ways?
What might be some of the constraints on X's schooling?

Home

What kind of contact did you have with home? Parents? Older siblings?
What was the contact like?
How easy/good was communication with parents/
The same as for other parents?
Were the parents supportive?
The same as for other parents?
Did you build up any impressions of home life?
Does home life have any effect on school?
What do you think were the attitudes of the parents towards education?
What do you know about the local community that the school draws its population from?

EAL Service

Were EAL used? Successfully? For who?
How did EAL respond, plan for needs of teacher/child? How resourced? Info exchange?
Did partnership exist in any form?
Do you get copies of EAL records for child? Were they useful?

Resourced

Did you feel resourced and supported?
Would you have liked more help with anything?
Have you ever had or been offered any training in working with bilingual children or children who are learning English? How useful was it? What did you learn? What training would you like?

EAL Teacher Interview Guide

Teacher's knowledge of the whole child (overlap with accounts)

How long have you known and worked with X?

How did you come to work with X, when did you stop working with X? Why is X receiving/not receiving support?

How much support does/did X receive?

How would you describe X? Before, during YN, YR, Y1, Y2?

You described X as xxxxxxxxxx what has led you to that conclusion, what was the first things that made you think that about x? What else have they done that has made you think that? Anyone else involved?

How would you describe X's academic ability?

What has led you to that conclusion? What was the first thing that made you think that? What else have they done that has made you think that? Anyone else involved?

How is X doing? What helps or impedes them?

What are your perceptions of the child's language ability?

Home

Do you have some contact with the B child's parents?

How easy/good is communication with parents ?

What do you think are the attitudes of the parents towards education?

How supportive are the parents? What are their attitudes to school?

Are they typical?

Your role

How do you respond, plan for needs of teacher/child? How resourced? Info exchange?

Does partnership exist in any form?

Children Interviews/Talk

Put dates and tape location, if any, after tick

Child:

General

- ☐ Schools before/mobility:
- ☐ Classes in school before:
- ☐ Age/birthday/position in family:
- ☐ Visits to Bangladesh:
- ☐ Where born
- ☐ Nos. of siblings and their ed.:
- ☐ Mosque school/Bengali tutor:

Reading

- ☐ Who they read with at home:
- ☐ Their definition of reading:
- ☐ What do you need to do to become a good reader?:
- ☐ Why do we read?:
- ☐ What do you do if you get stuck reading at home?
- ☐ Who do they see reading and writing at home?
- ☐ Readex:
- ☐ How they take from books, what do they know, how familiar with books, stories, literacy?
- ☐ What do they know about reading patterns and strategies?
- ☐ What strategies do they use to read?

Friendships and social contact

- ☐ Who do they see, visit outside school? How often?:
- ☐ Who are the significant others in their life?
- ☐ Who are their friends? Who do you like to work with? Play with?
- ☐ Who are the clever ones in the class?
- ☐ Map of friendships in class:
- ☐ How do they make friends? Maintain friends?
- ☐ Have they had people call them names? Bullying?

Learning

- ☐ What do you like learning/doing in class?
- ☐ What do you find hard?
- ☐ What do you do when you are stuck?
- ☐ What is it like in Year 3 (compared to Year 2)? In class, friends, teachers?

Appendix Ten: Rahul's Case Study

Rahul

Introduction

Rahul was seven years old at the beginning of the research year. As his birthday was in February he was neither one of the eldest nor one of the youngest in the year. Rahul was in the same class as Tumi and, as noted above, the children in this class had been together in Year 2 and therefore knew each other well. Rahul did not have a particular friend, or friends, that he spent a lot of time with at the beginning of the year but he did have some contact with a boy called Jaz in his class and this friendship developed somewhat during the research year.

Rahul's mother was the second wife of Rahul's father and Rahul and his younger sister Mahi had five step-brothers and sisters from the first marriage. The step-brothers and sisters were all older than Rahul and lived together with their mother in another part of the city. Rahul and his sister had moved with their father and mother to a house in the north of the city when Rahul was just turning five. For a while Rahul, his sister and mother lived with another family in the city, then in bed and breakfast accommodation before settling in their new home. This meant that Rahul started his Reception Year in one school in the south of the city, missed a few months of that year of school while the family were moving about and started attending Parkway school, in the north of the city, in May 1998. Although he spent Year One in the same school, his current school, his Year One teacher reported that Rahul had also missed a lot of school during Year One (23/1/01). Rahul's schooling was also interrupted during Year 2 when the family went to Bangladesh from December 1999 to July 2000. This meant that Rahul had only spent the first term of Year 2 in school. Rahul had not attended a play school or a nursery before starting school so taken together Rahul had had two terms of schooling in Reception Year, three terms of Year One with a lot of absences and one term of schooling in Year 2, a total of less than one year and two terms of schooling when he started Year 3. At the beginning of the research year Rahul was returning to school having not attended since December of the year before and having spent seven months living and going to school in Bangladesh.

Rahul's mother had been to school in Bangladesh but did not pass her matric, an exam which pupils take at the end of primary school. (A pass allows pupils to continue on into secondary education). She had been born in the same village as her husband in the Sylhet part of Bangladesh and had moved to England after her marriage in 1991. She was a housewife.

Rahul's father worked as a waiter in an 'Indian' restaurant in the city. Rahul's mother commented that her education was completely different to her children's (18/6/01). During the course of the year Rahul did not mention having books bought for him or reading non-school books at home. He did have a computer at home, a system which relied on using the family television as a screen. Rahul mentioned playing computer games on the computer (27/2/01).

Rahul's mother described Rahul as 'very active' and 'very naughty' as a child. He liked playing with cars and used to make car races on the floor. He had a set of toy cars when he was small (18/6/01).

Rahul used both Bangla and English at home and with his friends outside school. He reported that he spoke Bangla with his mother as she did not speak English 'not a bit' (5/6/01). This was confirmed by his mother (18/6/01). Rahul also used Bangla with his father. With his sister he used English and 'sometimes Bangla' (5/6/01). Rahul's mother confirmed that he usually spoke English to his sister (18/6/01). With one friend and with his older step-brothers and sisters Rahul reported that he used English, whilst with two other friends he used a mixture of English and Bangla (5/6/01). When asked about how he decided which language to use, Rahul reported that he used Bangla when the other person did not speak English but otherwise used English, or a mixture of English and Bangla, as he preferred to speak English 'cos its good' and 'it is more easier to say' (5/6/01). Rahul also knew a little bit of Hindi (5/6/01) although the family did not have Zee TV or any of the other South Asian satellite channels at home. Rahul's mother could read and write in Bengali but not in English. She was teaching him to read and write in Bengali at home. Rahul reported that he could read a little bit in Bengali but it was 'boring, its too hard' (23/1/01). He could write his name and some words in Bengali. Rahul's father could speak quite a lot of English. Rahul reported that his mother and father did not write letters to friends and family in Bangladeshi. They did use the telephone to talk to friends and family in Bangladesh but Rahul said that he did not take part in these phone conversations (17/10/00).

Rahul reported that he played with his sister outside school and that he sometimes visited his step-brothers in their house (27/2/01). He also reported that he went to the park during one of the school holidays and saw his cousins Nadir, Ateef and Bella and that the children came back to his house to continue playing (5/6/01). This only happened once during the research year though. In June Rahul said that some of his relatives were no longer allowed to come to

his house, this seemed to include his cousins and his step-brothers and sisters (5/6/01).
Tumi, Rahul's cousin, and her family had also been visitors to his house in previous years,

Rahul: (Tumi) often comes sometimes, now she doesn't come anymore.
Maybe she will come if we go round theirs then they will come.

Sue: OK. But you have to go to their house first?

Rahul: Yeah but we're not allowed.

(Rahul 5/6/01)

He did continue to see Aceef and Ateef outside school on an irregular basis and he also played with Jaz, his friend from school, who came to Rahul's house to play. Rahul was not allowed to go to Jaz's house to play because, according to Rahul, he was not allowed to cross a busy main road on his own (5/6/01).

As noted above, Rahul was in the same class as his cousin Tumi at school and together they were the only Bangladeshi, ethnic minority, EAL children in the class.

Taking Part

It was clear from the first two days that I observed in the classroom that Rahul was a pupil who did not take part in teacher-pupil interactions during carpet time. This behaviour continued throughout the research year. The following observation, made on my first day in the classroom, gives an idea of how Rahul behaved on the carpet and how his class teacher responded.

During Numeracy time on the carpet he doesn't bid once. Towards the end of the session the teacher directs a question at Rahul, 'What on your body can you use to add or subtract?' and nominates him to answer even though Rahul has not raised his hand to answer the question. Rahul sits silent for about eight seconds. The class don't interrupt or shout out. The teacher prompts him by showing her fingers. Rahul says 'Fingers'. A little bit later he is called on by the teacher to listen and to look. He is one of two boys called on to listen and look in this session. At the end of the session, when the children move off the carpet to go to their group desks, Rahul remains behind. He stands next to the teacher. When the teacher speaks to Rahul he shakes his head for 'No' rather than speak the word. He doesn't appear to be at ease from his body language, very hesitant. He doesn't have any books to use

for the work as he was absent on the first day of school when the books were given out.....

After break, at the beginning of Literacy Hour when the children are on the carpet, three children are called on and chastised. One of these is Rahul who is told to pay attention.

The teacher is introducing the idea of setting and place to the class 'Little Red Riding Hood. Where does that take place? You all know where'. Rahul does not bid although most of the class bid. The teacher talks about whether it is a forest or a wood. Rahul is looking away.....'

(Fieldnotes 12/9/00)

The Literacy session on the carpet continued in this vein. Rahul continued to look away, around the classroom. After five minutes had passed he started to rock backwards and forwards and then began to flick his face and tap his teeth with his fingers. After this he chattered his teeth together whilst staring around. As I recorded in my field notes 'As the children give answers and suggestions to the teacher, Rahul is totally disengaged. Rahul doesn't bid once during this class time even though most of the class do' (12/9/00). At this point in the lesson, the teacher called on Rahul to pay attention.

During the rest of this session on the carpet, which lasted for twenty-five minutes, Rahul slowly moved back through the seated children so that he was sitting right at the back of the group. Whilst the teacher was explaining the task the children had to complete in their groups, Rahul was looking away and blowing into his hands (12/9/00). There was only one occasion when Rahul looked at the teacher and what she was doing during this session. This was when the teacher read a piece of text from a story book to the class and pointed at the words with her finger as she read. When the teacher did this, Rahul sat up and looked at the teacher and followed her finger as she pointed (12/9/00).

A week later, at the beginning of the Literacy session on the carpet, Rahul was directed by the class teacher to sit next to the classroom assistant so that he could tell her his answers to the class teacher's questions. The topic of the lesson was 'What are characters in books?' At the end of the week the children were to write a description of a traditional story character. The children were asked to suggest traditional story characters and the teacher wrote the suggestions on the board. Rahul said nothing to Jill, the classroom assistant, then,

Jill asks Rahul about wizards. Rahul just stares ahead and appears to ignore Jill. He then puts his hand up. Jill has encouraged him to bid. He gets nominated by the classroom teacher but he is hesitant. He says 'poem'. Jill gives him another answer 'Witch'.

(Fieldnotes 19/9/00)

And after break, in Numeracy,

The teacher is covering number lines with the class. Rahul is focused and looking at the number line the teacher has put on the board. He tries to work out the answers to the number questions the teacher is asking (he says numbers quietly to himself and counts-on using the line). The teacher introduces a number line without numbers on it and Rahul starts to look away. The teacher nominates Rahul to answer a question using the un-numbered number line although he hasn't raised his hand. Rahul thinks briefly and then quietly gives the correct answer. The teacher says 'Good boy'. The teacher continues marking numbers on the line, asking 'Which is the biggest, smallest?' etc. Rahul moves nearer the board. He bids at the next question and gets nominated by the teacher. He gets the question right. The teacher asks him another question 'What number is in between twenty-six and fifty?'. Rahul can't answer the question. He looks puzzled and uncertain. He remains silent. The next question is 'Which number is in between seventy-eight and ninety-eight?' Rahul does not bid for this question and starts looking away around the classroom. At the end of the lesson the support teacher tells the class teacher that Rahul didn't know what 'in-between' meant and that she had to explain it to him. 'He did know what 'biggest' and 'smallest' meant and could do them OK but not 'in between''

(Fieldnotes 19/9/00)

These two observations and the comment of the classroom assistant would suggest that Rahul was struggling with the amount and nature of English language around him, especially during sessions on the carpet which were very language-rich (the teacher would be talking for up to twenty-five minutes in these sessions). The observations suggest that when a visual prop or focus was used by the teacher Rahul did look at the teacher and take part in the activity in some way. This was also observed on 26/9/00. When the lesson was all oral language, Rahul switched out. The second observation also shows how, early on in the school year, the teacher responds to Rahul's behaviour on the carpet. She successfully called on him to answer a question as he is beginning to 'switch out' of the lesson and thus managed to engage him in the work. However, a language difficulty, which the teacher did

not recognise, prevented Rahul from staying engaged with the work. He did not understand and could not take part.

Between October and February Rahul generally stayed out of interactions on the carpet. There were some occasions when he did join in, when there was some kind of visual support (looking at the text or a number line held up by the teacher, telling the time with a clock that the teacher held up and manipulated) or physical activity (reading out loud with the class, making noises as sound effects for a poem), but even on these occasions Rahul was not always successful in taking part (19/9/00; 27/2/01). When the activity on the carpet was orally/aurally based and involved discussion (which it usually was and did) Rahul 'switched out'. His teachers began to comment that Rahul 'doesn't listen in class' (Jill 16/1/01).

For the rest of the research year, Rahul continued to stay out of interactions on the carpet. On some occasions he joined in and then stopped after a question or two of the discussion. During this time he appeared to be a pupil resigning himself to, or comfortably inhabiting, a non-participatory role. He continued to pay great attention to a visual resource in the classroom but did not participate in predominantly oral/aural sessions on the carpet. His teachers continued to refer to his 'not listening' in class (Mrs Heatherly 13/3/01). Rahul was also to be observed watching and acknowledging the antics of another boy, Charlie, in the classroom during carpet times. This was a boy who was often in trouble for misbehaving on the carpet and who provided the other children with a great deal of entertainment during such sessions (27/2/01).

By the end of the research year, Rahul had teamed up with another boy in the class, Jaz, and both were to be observed during carpet session, watching each other and focusing on things like their trainers (12/6/01). The classroom assistant reported that,

..he enjoys the funny things that are going on the carpet, you know the things they're not supposed to be doing. He enjoys that side of it very much. You know the nudging and things like that.....

..he likes to have a bit of a laugh with Jaz, they like a bit of a giggle

(Jill 21/5/01)

In terms of taking part Rahul was not able to present himself as an enthusiastic pupil, eager to participate in classroom activities. His not taking part was understood in specific ways by his teachers and became an important dimension of Rahul's identity as a pupil during the year. Rahul's non-participation signalled to his teachers some aspects of his language needs

as a learner but other interpretations of his behaviour also came into play and although support was provided some language and learning needs remained invisible. Rahul's inattention and non-participation began to be interpreted as 'not listening' by his teachers as the year progressed. This understanding of Rahul is picked up and developed below and later in the case study.

Rahul and language

Rahul's teachers did notice and comment upon Rahul's language and his lack of taking part in the classroom. Rahul's classroom teacher commented to the classroom assistant during the lunch hour on the first day I spent observing in the school, 'I'm worried about his oral language' and suggested to the classroom assistant that she 'get him to read and talk about what he is reading, lots of oral talk and description, when he is reading with you' (12/9/00). She also reported to me that Rahul, 'was very quiet last week, now he says 'Yes' and 'No'' (12/9/00). Rahul's classroom teacher and the English Language Support teacher recognised Rahul's quietness and non-participation as linked to the fact that he had been away from England and using English for a long period of time, that he had gaps in his English and that he was still learning a great deal of the English that was being used in the classroom.

Rahul probably has the intellect but the language will cause him problems.

(Mrs Heatherly 26/9/00)

Rahul will need time to settle now he's back from Bangladesh.

(Visiting EAL Teacher 26/9/00)

I think he is picking up some vocabulary, sometimes you are talking to him and you can see him suddenly think, 'Oh yes, that word. That's how I use that word'.

(Mrs Heatherly 23/1/01)

And the Head teacher of the school made reference to the fact that,

Many of the (Bangladeshi) kids do well in school but then they go off on long absences to Bangladesh and they lose so much. They make up again...but they lose their English while they are away.

(Mrs Smith 26/9/00)

This was echoed in the class teacher's comments in November when she said,

Rahul returned to the Year 3 class after I think about ten months, a ten month stay in Bangladesh and I knew from colleagues that they felt that he'd been making very good progress before he went to Bangladesh and that it, if you like, it was a shame because this stay abroad really interfered with that progress and I think,there was a feeling that he had sort of gone backwards when he first came to Year Three. He was certainly quite withdrawn, quite quiet and very rarely spoke to me and not very much to the other children either. He was very polite, and a manageable boy and clearly, was quite well motivated, he wanted to work, but he did have this difficulty with listening on the carpet and with following instructions and knowing what to do independently

(Mrs Heatherly 7/11/00)

Rahul's classroom teacher was very aware of the role that language and understanding played in Rahul's experience of learning on the carpet in the classroom. She recognised that he rarely spoke in class and that he found 'understanding quite complex English sentences difficult' (7/11/00). These difficulties made it hard for Rahul to work independently, 'he needs help with actual specific vocabulary items sometimes in order to be able to do a task or to read a page, it becomes obvious that he just doesn't know what that thing is that's referred to' (7/11/00). She also felt that Rahul did not lack ability but only the language to demonstrate his ability.

..in terms of assessing for the National Curriculum, I think he would actually be Level 1 on some things. I'm sure. Particularly if you wanted to look at Science. Only because of the language problem, not because of lack of understanding or lack of logic or lack of reasoning.

(Mrs Heatherly 7/11/00)

However, in tension with these understandings of Rahul were teacher comments about Rahul not listening on the carpet. As we have seen above, the teacher frequently called on Rahul to 'pay attention' and 'to listen' whilst the children were on the carpet, even when the session was oral/aural and very language-dense. In October, the class teacher reported that 'Rahul is still not listening on the carpet' (17/10/00) suggesting that somehow Rahul's ability to listen and to understand were somehow distinct from (and not affected by) his acknowledged difficulties with English as a language. At the end of the research year she reported that Rahul 'simply needs to listen, in the introductory sessions to literacy and numeracy' and that the advice she would pass up to Rahul's new Middle School would include 'he needs to be reminded to listen on the carpet' (19/6/01). Not having enough language slips into 'not

listening' in these accounts. The way that this teacher and the other classroom adults responded to Rahul's non-participation and the manner in which explanations around lack of English developed into explanations about 'not listening' are discussed later in the case study.

What was not appreciated by the adults in the classroom was the great amount of English that there was to be listened to and understood especially during the three sessions on the carpet during the day. These sessions normally lasted between twenty and thirty minutes and were composed of teacher talk with spaces within that talk provided for the answers and comments of the children. The language that filled these sessions was not bite-sized language. During these long stretches of teacher and teacher controlled talk, the teacher's language ranged (without stop) from introductory explanations of topics, definitions of words and phrases, questions that expected answers and questions that did not expect answers, repetitions of things the children had said, corrections or things the children had said, asides to me and Jill, directions to the children, instructions, explanations, anecdotes and language to control behaviour¹.

There appeared to be little appreciation by Rahul's teachers of the amount of English flowing around Rahul and coming at him during these sessions nor that Rahul was unlikely to be in a position where he could distinguish which were the necessary 'bits' of teacher talk for him to listen to and which were not (or to distinguish which bits were important for now and which bits for later and so on).

This could be seen, for example, in the moments when the teacher was explaining what the children must do in their groups in Literacy Hour after the session on the carpet. In one session the teacher had spent the carpet session focusing on settings and adjectives (through calling on the children's knowledge of fairy stories/famous stories, nouns, haunted house stories, the meanings of words). When it was time for the class to go and work in groups some of the children were directed to go and look in their own reading book for settings (Rahul was in one of these groups) whilst some children were to do work on alphabetical order which was not connected with the work just covered (settings and adjectives). Rahul needed to be able to distinguish which set of instructions to listen to something that was not explicitly stated or flagged up for him. Thus Rahul spent much of the carpet sessions awash in English with little, if any guidance, about which bits he needed to listen to.

¹ Some sense of the complexity of language in use in these sessions is given in the Weather Forecast Lesson presented in Tumi's case study -see Appendix Sixteen.

The support that Rahul was offered (injunctions to ‘Look and listen’ and ‘Pay attention’) was intended to orientate him to the correct ways of taking part, it was not provided to help him cope with the great amount of listening that was required during the daily sessions on the carpet.

It has been commented on, in Tumi’s case study, that the classroom teacher in this classroom also heavily relied on giving oral explanations of teaching points (such as particular stylistic features used in writing) and rarely visually demonstrated such points on the board so that children could see them. In this way Rahul had little access to these teaching points because of his beginner level English.

In terms of his other languages, Rahul did not use Bengali in the classroom during teacher-led activities. For example, when the children were encouraged to use another language to answer the register Rahul chose to use Spanish, German or Welsh (12/9/00, 26/9/00, 23/1/01). However, Rahul did write things for the other children in Bengali. This started as something between himself and his friend Jaz. Rahul wrote Jaz’s name for him in Bengali and as the year progressed other children in the class approached Rahul and asked him to write their names and he did this for them. This activity went on outside the official boundaries of lessons and without teacher direction.

Rahul as a reader

Rahul was a beginning reader in the sense that when he read out loud to an adult he focused on and decoded each word as a bounded unit before moving on to the next word. For Rahul, the words that he was reading did not join up in any meaningful way to make a text, to make a story or have meaning, Rahul needed to use the pictures and/or to call on the help of the adult he was reading to access a story.

At the beginning of the research year Rahul needed to point at each word as he read and then sound it out using initial sounds to guess at words, in this manner he was able to decode small, simple words in a text but generally failed to accurately decode the other words on the page (12/9/00, 17/10/00). He had very little idea of how to find his way around a page of text (12/9/00) or what to do with written text (15/5/01).

When Rahul was reading with me it was clear that there were many words he did not know the meaning of in the texts that he was reading. Most of the words were words that monolingual Year Three children would have had little difficulty in knowing the meaning of.

These are the words that needed to be explained while we were reading together in February of the research year :

angry, world, because, become, cruel, many, completed, loading up, rusty
(Fieldnotes 13/2/01, 27/2/01)

In his Reading Record Book for the year, the following words were noted down by his teachers as words that Rahul did not know the meaning of when he was reading with them:

fit, sulky, cheeky, scruffy, selfish, annoyed, mischief, blame, bored, lap, yawn,
curl, pounce

(Reading Record Book July 2001)

Of course, these were just vocabulary items that could be easily identified in the text by Rahul, and his teachers, as words that he did not know the meaning of. There would have been phrases, and nuances in the meaning that words take according to their placement in relation to other words, that would have been beyond Rahul's understanding as well.

Rahul's teacher recognised what he struggled with when he was reading. His classroom teacher commented that '(he) has a lot of skills that need developing in terms of his reading and his writinghe needs help with actual specific vocabulary items sometimes in order to be able to do a task or to read a page...it becomes obvious that he just doesn't know what that thing is that's referred to'. Mrs Heatherly (7/11/00).

At the same time Rahul had a particular style of reading when reading out loud with an adult. At the beginning of a reading interaction Rahul would begin reading straightaway as soon as the book was open in front of him. He would read fast with no pauses, intent on pushing on through the text. Early in the year he would often start swaying as he read in this manner (27/9/00).

In my observations and in the reading activities that I did with Rahul he appeared to get at the meaning of what he was reading by using the pictures on the page (12/9/00, 15/5/01). When we read together Rahul would like to have words and the story explained to him but at the same time he wanted to get on with 'reading' the book and finishing the book. He became skilled during the year at getting some explanation of the story by asking good questions but at also at keeping the reading going and getting through the story to the end of the text (27/2/01).

Rahul's reading did develop during the research year. By January Rahul was able to self-correct, make predictions about what might happen in the story and was learning new words quickly. By February he was reading more fluently and was able to decode words more accurately. He started to take over the reading and to ask questions about the story (27/2/01) although, as noted above, he still relied on the pictures to guess at meaning or engage with meaning. By July he was decoding simple texts very accurately although the story still needed to be explained. At the end of the research year he was still struggling with turning words on the page into a meaningful text. He was able to decode words but still relied on me to explain a story we were reading (3/7/01).

However, as Rahul developed as a reader during the year it was not possible for him to move up a Literacy group and have a place in the next group up who received Additional Literacy Support (ALS) even though his teacher recognised that Rahul was the best reader in his Literacy group by May of the research year. This was because of how Additional Literacy support was organised. The ALS group was made up of the children who had got a 2C at Key Stage 1. The idea was to bring these children 'up' with extra support so they made it to a level 4 by the end of Key Stage 2². Those children who got below a 2C were not placed in the ALS group but in the group below, the lowest group in the class. Rahul was in this group for the reasons given above.

Rahul is the best reader in his group, the one below the ALS group, but I can't really move him up to the ALS group because it is so late in the year and he's not supposed to be in there so he is in the same group at the moment.

(Mrs Heatherly 15/5/01)

I mean he's doing very well in (his) group and he's ahead of the children in that group but I can't move him because he cannot go up to the next group because they are the ALS group and to move him two groups up I think would be too hard.....(With regard to the ALS group) we are funded to support that specific group of children, to introduce others is always a little bit frowned upon.

(Mrs Heatherly 19/6/01)

² This was a government plan/policy

Rahul was also not able to receive support for his reading from another classroom assistant who heard certain children in the class read in the afternoons.

Rahul doesn't get supported by the class assistant who come in the afternoons because she is funded to work with children who are on a SNARE Stage 2 or above³.

(Mrs Heatherly 15/5/01)

A visiting EAL teacher did occasionally take Rahul out of the classroom to hear him read but this did not happen very often and did not happen at the beginning of the school year.

Thus the support that Rahul received as a reader were opportunities to read in his Literacy Group (interrupted as we have noted above), some opportunities to go and read with the EAL teacher and opportunities to read one to one with the adults in the classroom like the other children. In terms of actually reading in the classroom the opportunities available and whether Rahul took part in them were outlined by the class teacher in a conversation towards the end of the school year.

Sue: So he will get as much one-to-one reading with an adult as most children?

Mrs Heatherly: Yeah, I mean hopefully, probably once a week, and again not for that long really. But there's lots, what I'm trying to get at is that there is quite a lot of reading within the school day you know but not necessarily supported one to one with an adult..the whole class sessions when we're using big books and we're doing games on the board and that sort of thing.

Sue: Do you ever do things where the whole class reads together?

Mrs Heatherly: Yes sometimes.

Sue: Do you notice if he joins in then?

Mrs Heatherly: No he doesn't, that I know of.

(Mrs Heatherly 19/6/01)

Rahul's reading record shows that he read eighteen times with the class teacher or the classroom assistant during the year. In light of the fact that Rahul reported that he did not

³ A SNARE being a Special Needs Awareness Record designed to be used for children who presented as having Special Needs. Rahul was not considered to be a 'Special Needs' child (the LEA, and DfES) have a clear policy that EAL pupils are not Special Needs pupils.

read with anyone at home and did not have anyone at home who read to him (23/1/01) these eighteen occasions were the only one to one reading that Rahul was offered during the year. Interestingly this is the equivalent of less than three weeks worth of reading for any child who had the opportunity to read at home with a parent every night, as a number of the children in Rahul's class did⁴

Rahul's need to develop his English affected his ability to develop as a reader as he needed to know what words meant in order to develop as a reader. He was also held back by becoming stuck in the lowest Literacy group because of the way that support was organised in the school. The support he was offered became a double bind in reading, he couldn't move out of his reading group, and in terms of learning generally.

Rahul as a learner

Rahul's experience of being in a very oral/aural English-dominated environment has been discussed above. We have seen how he was surrounded by a lot of complex oral English during the carpet sessions and how he appeared to 'switch out' during carpet time sessions unless there was some kind of visual or physical prop for him to focus on or use. What also emerged over the year was how the information and learning provided on the carpet at the beginning of Literacy and Numeracy very often did not relate to the task that Rahul and his group were given to complete in the next part of the hour in at their desk. In addition Rahul was often taken out of the classroom by the classroom assistant or by the EAL teacher for support work during the time the rest of the class were learning on the carpet. Both of these factors created a 'fragmented day' for Rahul in terms of his experiences as a learner.

For example, in a Literacy lesson in May on the correct way to lay out a letter, Rahul was taken out of the classroom by the visiting EAL teacher to go and read whilst the student teacher was modelling how to write a letter on the white board. When Rahul was returned to the classroom the children had moved into their Literacy groups and were writing their letters. Rahul was expected to join his group and write a letter even though he had missed the explanation and demonstration (21/5/01). In another Literacy session, the class were being introduced to the way the textual features in a reference book differed to the textual features in a fiction book. Rahul was taken out of the classroom by the EAL teacher to read and missed most of the session and was not in a position to be able to join in a discussion

⁴ Three out of the six White English language background (WELB) children in the class that I interviewed reported that they read at home every night with their mother or father.

about ‘What kind of text is it? Fiction or non-fiction?’ when he returned to the classroom (3/7/01).

This fragmentation of the day would have also been experienced by the other children in the class in terms of the lack of continuation between the beginning of the Literacy hour and what the children were asked to do in their groups. However, Rahul’s level of English, his ability to handle the amount and complexity of oral English in the classroom, must have made it more difficult for him to understand the bracketing off of discrete areas of learning and knowing, of recognising when talk and activities were connected and when they were not, of recognising the key points in carpet time when the teacher switched from introducing and discussing and teaching a topic to giving instructions about what tasks should be done (and by which group) and giving instructions about how a task should be done. These switches in talk were never explicitly signalled. By being taken out of sessions and then being brought back in during the session the amount of understanding of the what was being taught (and the task that needed accomplishing) **increased** .

Rahul was not only faced with coping with oral English beyond his range but with missing large chunks of the introduction and discussion of a topic and then having to fit back in to complete a task. Ironically, a fully fluent monolingual child received twenty minutes of introduction, teaching and demonstration of a topic before being asked to go and complete a task whilst Rahul often received less than half of that and often ended up with less time than the other children to complete a task.

The following observation gives some sense of how Rahul was moved in and out of the classroom and the learning day, how ‘not knowing things’ gets in his way and some of Rahul’s disappointment and frustration about not finishing work.

The teacher has started Numeracy Hour by finding out what the children know about adding money. Just as she starts to review with the children and explain how to do it, the EAL teacher arrives and takes Rahul out to go and read. When the EAL teacher brings Rahul back to the classroom he is sent off to join his Literacy group who are reading with the classroom assistant. The children are reading a Maori myth about the origins of the Earth, the language is quite archaic. The group have already read the story through once and are now talking about the story. After fifteen minutes the classroom assistant returns the group to the class five minutes before the end of the carpet session. The children on the carpet are talking about mythical monsters and looking at pictures with the class teacher. Rahul and his

group have missed most of this introduction. The children are sent off into their groups to invent a monster and a story about the monster. They are to write the title for their story, decided on their ideas for the story and draw a picture of their monster. Rahul wanders around the class and comes to sit at the same desk as Tumi and myself. He spends the time choosing colouring pencils to draw with. He tells us he is going to do a monster which is half-eagle and half-lion. Then he says to me he can't do it, not because he doesn't understand but because 'I can't think'. I ask him about this and it turns out that he doesn't know what an eagle looks like. Tumi helps him. By the time the teacher says to stop and pack up, all of the children in the class that I can see (about eight) have done their pictures and title and have their ideas scribbled down. Rahul has just started writing his title. He has a picture but does not have any ideas written down. He is very disappointed he has to stop.

(Fieldnotes 27/3/01)

This observation gives some flavour of the changes in topic and language (and groupings of pupils) that Rahul moved through in the course of an hour in his classroom during the research year. Here he starts off adding money, then moves to reading his reading book with the visiting EAL teacher, then joins his Literacy group half way through talking about a story (a Maori myth) he has not read, then rejoins the class towards the end of a discussion about descriptions of mythical monsters (European myths) and then moves into his Literacy group to draw and write a description of a made-up monster. All of these activities become disconnected from each other. Each requires a different awareness and knowledge of language and how it is used.

In addition to the support provided by placing Rahul in the lower Literacy and Numeracy groups and by the visiting EAL teacher, the classroom teacher also always asked Rahul what he had to do at the end of each carpet session. Towards the end of the research year she felt that this was all the support that Rahul needed (19/6/01). In the light of the above it can be seen why Rahul may have needed his teacher to ask him at the end of every carpet session 'Do you know what you have got to do?' and why Rahul may have not always known. It is also clear how this support could only provide Rahul with an orientation towards 'how to get on with a task' in the classroom and not with the information and teaching that he required in order to become a successful learner.

Rahul socially

Rahul occupied the social position of an 'onlooker' in the classroom and on the playground during the research year. He did have contact with other children and this increased with Jaz, another boy in the class, during the year. However, Rahul was not tightly woven into the social fabric of the class and was kept in his 'onlooker' position by the other children when he attempted to join in as demonstrated by this observation of arriving in the classroom in the morning.

Rahul comes in first. He ambles into the classroom. He immediately heads, with a smile, to where Ellis and Colin are playing with Knex (*a plastic construction kit*). Stuart and James are sitting at another desk. They say his name as he passes by and when he turns they salute him. Rahul is wearing a white shirt with badges embroidered on it, a military style shirt. The salute is affectionate. Rahul stands by Ellis and Colin's desk looking at the Knex. He is ignored by the other two boys. Rahul then touches a piece and Ellis says quickly 'Don't!'. Rahul withdraws his hand, stands there a second or two and then moves away.

(Fieldnotes 3/7/01)

This being kept on the outside also happened on the playground.

Rahul leaves assembly with no contact with other children. Out on the playground he walks around on his own. He covers the whole area of the playground. He is the only one who is isolated like this (Tumi is absent today). The other children are all playing chase games. At one point Rahul attaches himself to a group of four boys from his class but they ignore him and he stops following them. The two new girls in his class are both actively involved in a game of Submarines with other children from Rahul's class.

(Fieldnotes 23/1/01)

Rahul is standing on the edge of a large group of boys from different classes who are all looking at something on the ground. No-one pays any attention to him. He is standing at the back of the crowd. After about seven minutes of playtime, Rahul is running, playing a kind of Tag game with Jaz and Tom. The game comes to a halt back at the tree. Colin joins Tom, Jaz and Rahul but it immediately becomes a threesome of Colin, Tom and Jaz and Rahul is once again at the back of the crowd, not included. He spends the rest of playtime on his own.

(Fieldnotes 3/7/01)

Rahul did have something of a friendship with Jaz. Jaz would often speak to Rahul in class and often sat next to him on the carpet. As noted above, as the year progressed Jaz and Rahul often both opted out of taking part in the carpet session and entertained each other during this time by comparing trainers and so on. Jaz also visited Rahul in his home and chose Rahul as his partner to go to the new Middle School with in Year 4⁵. However, Jaz also had other friends and wasn't always with Rahul. Rahul reported that Jaz was 'sometimes' his friend (13/2/01).

Rahul was not ignored by the other children in the class. Many of them acknowledged his presence through comments and jokes like the salute and they asked him to write their names in Bengali. He was elected by the class to be the Class Representative for the boys on the School Council. However, all the other boys had already been the representative and Rahul was the last to be chosen. Although not always ignored, Rahul never moved beyond his location at the periphery of the class.

Rahul occasionally had some contact with Tumi. At the beginning of the research year they would follow each other in from break or lunch and sit next to each other on the carpet but they did not speak (12/9/00). On occasions Tumi would take charge of Rahul and give him directions or 'help' him with his work but this rarely occurred. Rahul did not play with Tumi, or have any contact with her, at playtimes (even though Tumi also had no-one to play with).

Rahul at home and at school

As noted earlier, Rahul reported that he read on his own at home, he did not read to anyone else and no-one read to him. He realised that this was not necessarily the case for other children in the class; 'My mum and dad don't read to me, it makes me sad' (23/1/01). None of the comments in Rahul's Reading Record Book are by any of the members of his family, they are all by adults in school. Although he said that he read on his own at home, Rahul never mentioned a specific occasion when he read or a particular book that he had read at home. Whenever I enquired about what he had done at home over the weekend or during the holidays he did not mention reading as an activity and when asked specifically he would reply that he hadn't read because reading was boring at home (5/6/01).

⁵ Unfortunately, Jaz went to another Middle School.

He also reported that when he had lived with his older step-brothers and sisters they had not helped him with school things although one of his step-sisters, who attended a High School in the southern part of the city, did sometimes help him read when she stayed at Rahul's house. However, it seemed that these visits did not happen very often and that the step-brothers and sisters could not always come to the house (5/6/01).

During the course of the research year Rahul did not appear to go on any visits or trips outside of the home except when he went each weekend to the Mosque with his father. Rahul and his sister both attended the Mosque school on Saturdays and Sundays. Rahul was always keen to talk about what he was learning at Mosque school and would often recite the 'prayers' that he was learning in preparation for learning the Koran (5/6/01, 3/7/01).

When asked what he had done in the various school holidays Rahul always said that he had stayed at home and played on the computer with his sister (23/1/01, 27/2/01). On one occasion the computer was broken and he reported that he had a very boring holiday because he did not go anywhere and he could not play on his computer (5/6/01).

Rahul occasionally went to the park and saw some of his friends but he generally felt frustrated and bored by the opportunities he had to play at home.

- Sue: Do you ever play schools at home?
- Rahul: Bella always do that. Her game is that always.
- Sue: What about Mahi does she like to do it?
- Rahul: Yeah and I hate it!
- I laugh
- Rahul: I want to play what Nadir plays.
- Sue: What does Nadir play?
- Rahul: She plays football and bikes and you can pretend that's a motorbike and go very fast.
- Sue: Ahh, that's what you like doing. Where can you do that? Do you do that in the garden or in the house?
- Rahul: No. We haven't got room.
- Sue: You haven't got room in your garden?
- Rahul: Yeah.
- Sue: So where do you have to go if you want to pretend to be a motorbike?
- Rahul: I used to go to the park.

Sue: Do you go to the park on your own?
 Rahul: Yeah I want to but I'm not allowed.
 Sue: You're not allowed.
 Rahul: Jaz is.
 Sue: Its hard isn't it/
 Rahul: When I'm bored I want to go to the park on my own.

(Rahul 5/6/01)

As well as not taking part in many activities or trips outside school, Rahul did not take part in any of the school clubs that were on offer. The problem for Rahul was that he could not explain to his parents what the clubs were and so his parents could not give permission for him to attend.

Rahul: I'm not allowed to
 Sue: You're not allowed to. Ahhh. Who says you're not allowed to?
 Rahul: Do chess like that. Yeah. They don't speak to me. They don't speak to me.
 Sue: Who doesn't ?
 Rahul: My mum and dad.
 Sue: Oh. So if you ask them, they don't say 'Yes' or 'No', they just ignore it. They don't say anything?
 Rahul: They say 'What the chess?' They don't know what is chess.
 Sue: Oohh and you can't explain it very well?
 Rahul: Yeah

(Rahul 5/6/01)

Although he did not report going on visits or trips during the research year, Rahul did tell me that he had been to Bangladesh and to London in the past. When asked what he did in London, Rahul reported that he had visited relations and played with the children. He had visited Bangladesh once. This was the long visit that the family made when Rahul was six years old when the family had stayed in Bangladesh from December 1999 to July 2000. Whilst there the family stayed in the family house in the Sylhet region of Bangladesh and Rahul went to school and played with his friends who lived next door. Rahul reported that he 'sometimes went to school...and read Bengali books. When I write ABCD all the boys and girls copy me. I did some maths too' (23/1/01).

When I asked Rahul about how I should describe him (i.e. was he Bangladeshi, Bengali, British, British Bengali and so on) he said he didn't know.

Rahul missed twenty and a half days of school during the research year. This meant that he missed the equivalent of four weeks and half a day of school. Rahul missed lots of Mondays during the year.

Rahul's parents got all of their information about Rahul and school through letters and reports. During the research year I did not see either of Rahul's parents enter the classroom when they dropped Rahul off or picked him up at the end of the school day. Other parents did come into the classroom with their children. The teacher only reported seeing Rahul's parents once, right at the beginning of the year when they came into the classroom to tell her that Rahul was not allowed to go swimming (12/9/00). Rahul would give school letters and reports to his father when he was picked up from school (18/6/01). Rahul's mother reported that she felt that this information was enough. She reported that she had not attended any of the parent's evenings in the school because she did not know that there had been any (18/6/01). This would suggest that Rahul's father did not always pass on information to his wife about school events. Rahul's mother said that she didn't know how she would know whether Rahul was doing well at school and that she could not help him at home with school things because she did not know English. She reported that she thought the school was a good school and she had chosen to send Rahul there when they moved to the north of the city because other people, like Tumi's mother, told her that it was a good school. She felt that one thing the school could do to help Rahul do well in school was to provide more one-to-one teaching for him. Rahul's mother said that she and her husband did not worry about either of their children losing their language or culture by attending an English school and living in England. They were both speaking Bengali at home with their children and they were both teaching them about Islam and about Bengali things (18/6/01).

Teacher responses

Over the course of the research year Rahul had contact with three different adults in the classroom - his classroom teacher, the classroom assistant and the student teacher who took the class for most of the third term. Each of these adults responded to Rahul and understood Rahul as a pupil and learner in ways that have been touched on above. These will now be discussed in more depth.

Mrs Heatherly, the classroom teacher

As we have seen Rahul's class teacher saw Rahul as a pupil who had certain strengths and skills in the classroom but who was impeded in what he could understand and do by his limited knowledge of English. During the course of the year Mrs Heatherly shared many of her thoughts and insights about Rahul and his language needs. She was aware of how difficult it was to make an assessment of Rahul's ability because of his inability to express himself.

I think he's probably..at least average you know. I mean it is hard to say really if he might be above average. He might be. That would be too difficult I think for me to assess at the moment because of the fact that he does hardly ever speak. He's got a lot of skills but also has a lot of skills that need developing in terms of his reading and his writing and his maths. He's very quick mentally with maths which I think is quite interesting. He finds interpreting symbols a little bit more difficult but he finds understanding quite complex English sentences, I think, difficult. So I think he needs a lot more exposure to those and he needs help with actual specific vocabulary items sometimes in order to be able to do a task or to read a page. It becomes obvious that he just doesn't know what that thing is that's referred to.

(Mrs Heatherly 7/11/00)

She also saw him as a reader who could decode well but who missed the meaning of what he was reading.

He decodes quite well but I don't think he always gets the meaning - that is, sometimes he doesn't get the vocabulary. I think he is picking up some vocabulary, sometimes you are talking to him and you can suddenly see him think, 'Oh yes. That word. That's how I use that word'.

(Mrs Heatherly 23/1/01) .

Mrs Heatherly did not consider Rahul to be a Special Educational Needs (SEN) child (7/11/00; 19/6/00). She understood Rahul to be a child with skills and abilities who was unable to always articulate and demonstrate those abilities. As noted above she was very aware of the language demands of the classroom and how these presented Rahul with difficulties.

I think a lot of the stuff, for instance that video that we watched on Ancient Egypt, which is very good. I would think that he would find that quite difficult, to actually

absorb a lot of that, simply because the language is very fast moving. I mean he gets a lot from the just the images but in terms of language I would think he would find that quite hard.

(Mrs Heatherly 7/11/00)

In addition to his language needs she felt that Rahul's absences contributed to his difficulties in the classroom because he lacked important knowledge to build on.

Science to some extent - I think he finds it difficult...I think there's quite a lot of background knowledge actually he doesn't have in science. I think that means it's quite difficult for him. I think he's quite curious about how things work and he does enjoy that aspect but the technical thing of developing a fair test and I'm not sure if he really gets a very good overview of everything that's going on within a topic. I think he loses bits and then it becomes a bit confusing. That's how I think it is for him.

(Mrs Heatherly 19/6/01)

She also recognised that Rahul needed support.

Rahul is in the lowest ability group although that is because of his problem in comprehending oral instructions. I think intellectually he's quite capable of being in a higher group but I feel he needs the extra support that he will tend to get from being in the low ability group.

(Mrs Heatherly 7/11/00)

However, what is of interest is the manner in which Rahul's teachers' insights and understandings get played out and put into practice in the classroom and the consequences of these practices.

As we have seen, Rahul's classroom teacher decided to place Rahul in the lowest groups so that he would receive more support during the year. However, support in these groups was often interrupted and limited. Mrs Heatherly also decided to provide Rahul with some one-to-one support but this resulted in Rahul being removed from the classroom and whilst out of the classroom with the EAL teacher he undertook different activities to those of the rest of the class and on returning to the classroom was expected to know how to go about and complete the tasks the other children were doing despite missing chunks of the lesson. Rahul's day as a result became fragmented and the language demands more demanding.

In Mrs Heatherly's comments about Rahul as a pupil there is tension between the understandings she had of his language needs and her understanding of when those language needs prevented Rahul from understanding and being able to complete classroom work. Despite her recognition of his language needs a frequent complaint about Rahul during the research year was that he didn't listen on the carpet, that he switched off during carpet sessions and that he was not motivated as a pupil.

At playtime Alison tells me 'Rahul is still not listening on the carpet'

(Fieldnotes 17/10/00)

(At the beginning of the year) he did have this difficulty with listening on the carpet and with following instructions and knowing what to do independently.....gradually as time has gone on he's certainly become more and more able to work independently and I've finally got him to do some writing independently, whereas before he just sat there and did nothing...he doesn't actually give of himself very much.

(Mrs Heatherly 7/11/00)

I try to say to him always 'Do you know what have got to do Rahul because, I mean, you know, that is all he needs'. I'm trying to get him to the point of knowing what to do.

(Mrs Heatherly 7/11/00)

I tell Alison how Rahul wanted to know how the television presenter knows about the weather. He had asked me while I was helping him write his weather report. Alison says that she had explained about meteorologists and what they did and they didn't know for sure what the weather would be. She sees Rahul's asking me as an example of Rahul not listening on the carpet.

(Fieldnotes 13/3/01)

I will probably say that he needs a little extra adult support in independent group work, that it's a good idea to always ask him 'Do you know what you've got to do' and that he needs to be reminded to listen on the carpet

(Mrs Heatherly 19/6/01)

Mrs Heatherly held, at the same time, the understanding that English was difficult for Rahul and the complaint that Rahul 'just doesn't listen' and just needed 'reminding what he has to do'. A key behaviour that the teacher wanted to see Rahul acquire was to be able to work independently which meant that what he needed to do was to understand the instructions she gave whilst the children were on the carpet. Once his English was good enough for him to understand her instructions for doing and completing tasks he would be able to work independently. This understanding of Rahul ignored the fact that he needed the language to be able to complete tasks as well as to understand what the task was and what was required and that without a significant development in his English both written and oral he would not be able to work independently whether he understood the task or not.

Whilst Rahul's classroom teacher recognised that Rahul had difficulty understanding and using English, it was only particular parts of classroom life that were recognised as constituting times when language was getting in the way

Mrs Heatherly did see Rahul as a pupil who fell through the gaps during his Year 3 in school (19/6/01). She also felt that he was a pupil who had been held back by being in a large class with a curriculum to get through and that he would have benefited from more one-to-one support (19/6/01). In addition to these barriers, located within the system of the school, she also identified Rahul's home background as unsupportive and a barrier to Rahul being a successful pupil. According to his classroom teacher Rahul was being held back by his frequent absences from school and a lack of exposure to English at home. She felt that Rahul did not have many friends in school because he was not allowed to take friends home to play (7/11/00, 19/6/01).

Jill, the classroom assistant

Whilst Mrs Heatherly recognised that Rahul had some language needs, the classroom assistant felt, by the mid-point of the research year, that Rahul was a very able boy who hid behind his 'lack of English'

I think he's perfectly aware of everything that's going on but he has a sort of preconceived idea really of that...really looks like hard work, 'I don't think I understand that' when I think he does perfectly well because when you actually talk to him, to try to encourage him to sort of move along with the activity he knows what's going on quite well

(Jill 21/5/01)

Jill came to the conclusion that Rahul's English was well developed enough to cope with the language demands of the classroom because she judged his spoken English to be adequate ('because when you actually talk to him...'). This was a frequent way in which EAL pupil's language proficiency in English was judged by some staff in the school.

Jill saw Rahul as a pupil who just needed a push to get going and did not consider that the language demands of the task may have been different to the demands of social, oral English.

For this teacher Rahul did not need EAL support and had no language needs.

Miss Gardner, the student teacher

Jill's opinion of Rahul was echoed by the student teacher who took the class during the summer term. Miss Gardner felt that Rahul often used 'the language barrier as something to hide behind' (26/6/01).

He'll say 'I didn't understand' when he obviously hasn't been listening at all. He's been looking the other way'

(Miss Gardner 26/6/01)

Like Mrs Heatherly, she also perceived Rahul as unmotivated.

...it's quite hard to get him motivated. He seems to choose to be with people like Jack who are disruptive . When I first came I didn't feel that he was like that. I don't know if it is a recent thing or whether it is a reaction to someone else (i.e. me) being in the classroom....It is much more of a case of not concentrating rather than actually doing the wrong thing, you know talking or being unkind or whatever.

(Miss Gardner 26/6/01)

For Miss Gardner, Rahul's lack of participation was due to a lack of motivation and not because of his language needs. Miss Gardner felt that if Rahul could motivate himself he would do well in school. In terms of the support she offered him during this term in the classroom, Miss Gardner continued with Mrs Heatherly's support strategy of asking Rahul if he knew what he had to do whenever the children were dismissed from the carpet and getting him to repeat the task back to her. She reported that 'most of the time he won't know' (26/6/01).

Conclusions

It can be seen how Rahul's lack of participation in classroom activities contributed to his teachers' perceptions and understandings of Rahul as a learner and as a pupil. How he took part and how this was understood became an important dimension to Rahul's identity.

Although his classroom teacher was aware of Rahul's language needs in many ways, the complex language demands of the classroom were not recognised and the fact that Rahul only had one year and two terms of English school under his belt seemed to be forgotten. He became identified as a pupil who did not 'listen'. The other two adults in the classroom did not perceive Rahul as a child with language needs and therefore Rahul's non-participation in classroom interactions was open to understandings which called on explanations based on personal traits within the child. For these teachers Rahul was lacking in motivation and looking for ways to avoid hard work.

Rahul made some progress during his Year Three in school. His reading improved and his spoken English developed. He was able to complete tasks in the classroom at a basic level if he had someone to 'start him off' and he demonstrated a grasp of basic numeracy. However, Rahul did not get many of his language needs met during the year and finished the year in a vulnerable position regarding the future. It is unlikely, with the level of English language and school knowledge that he had 'under his belt' at the end of Year Three, that Rahul would be able to access the Year Four curriculum in such a way as to become a successful learner and pupil in the following academic year. Rahul appeared as a pupil caught in a position where the only opportunities he had as a pupil were to develop his social networks amongst his peers and acquire social English. He appeared to be so far behind in terms of 'academic' English and knowledge by the end of Year Three that it was hard to envisage, without an intensive and appropriate support programme, that Rahul would be able to acquire enough 'academic language', catch up with his peers and become an achieving pupil. Rahul was in the position where he seemed set to underachieve as he moved on up into middle school.

Rahul was impeded as a learner in this year of school by the fact that his English language needs were not fully recognised by his teachers and by being placed in an English language-rich environment that he had to navigate by himself with no guidance. He was also impeded by becoming stuck in the lower Literacy group when he was ready to move up and by the way that his school day became a 'fragmented day' with little cohesion between the various tasks and teaching situations he was involved in. Rahul's 'onlooker' status in the class also meant that he had limited opportunities for developing his English in and for different contexts.

Rahul was also vulnerable as a learner because he was not able to call on sources of help for school work at home. He did not have anyone to read with or to ask for help with school work and he didn't have anyone to read to him at home. His absences from school in previous years, the fact that he had not attended any pre-school playgroup or nursery and not been involved in the Family Literacy project meant that he had much less exposure to school activities and to school English than other children in his class.

Rahul was helped to some extent during the research year by his class teacher's recognition of his English language needs and her attempts to respond to these. Some of his needs were recognised as a learner and a reader because Rahul did not attempt to hide what he could not do and did not strive to take part in classroom interactions to please the teacher. He did not constantly raise his hand to fit in with the class and he did not strive to produce a performance of reading to gain some kind of status in the classroom. However, what hindered Rahul as a learner and a pupil during the research year outweighed what helped him.

Appendix Eleven: Reena's Case Study

Reena

Introduction

In September 2000, at the beginning of the research year, Reena was seven years old. Her November birthday placed her amongst the older children in her class at Bailey School. The children in Reena's class came from half of one Year Two class joined with half of another Year Two class. Reena did not have a particular friend in the class at the beginning of the year. Towards the end of the year she had some contact with Annie and Kate but neither of these girls was a best or particularly close friend.

Reena had two classroom teachers during the research year. During the first term she was taught by Miss Birch who was a newly qualified teacher and during the second and third term she was taught by the deputy head, Mr Field, who was an experienced primary teacher. These two teachers were supported in the classroom by two classroom assistants who were shared with other classes.

At home Reena lived with her mother and father and her sister, Amti, who was one year older than Reena. Reena's father worked as a chef in an 'Indian' restaurant in the city and her mother was a housewife. Her father had been born in the UK and had gone to school in the UK although I was not aware that he had gained any qualifications from school. Reena's mother had been born in the Sylhet region of Bangladesh and came to England after her marriage. She had attended primary school in Bangladesh but had finished school before taking her matric. Reena's mother could read and write in Bengali and borrowed Bengali books from the public library. Reena reported that her father bought and read a Bengali newspaper and could also read English. Her mother could not read in English. Reena also told me, on more than one occasion, that she had 'hundreds of books at home' (28/9/00, 2/11/00). The family also had a computer.

Reena's mother described Reena as 'very quiet and shy' when she was a toddler, and reported that she liked to play with dolls.

Reena spoke Bengali and English at home. She reported that she spoke Bengali with her mother all the time because her mother could only understand a few words of English. She spoke English with her father and her father always spoke to her in English. With her sister

she spoke both Bengali and English and with her friends she spoke English. This was unless she was talking to her cousin Tamila and her friends Jamil and Jessi, on these occasions she would speak Bengali 'cos they're little' (25/6/01). Reena said that she knew some Hindi, from the songs in the Hindi movies she watched at home on television. When asked Reena said that she liked speaking both Bengali and English and didn't have a favourite language (25/6/01). Reena's mother was teaching Reena how to write in Bengali at home but Reena claimed that she couldn't write very much 'because it's too hard' (14/5/01).

Reena and her mother had been included in a Bangladeshi Family Literacy project before Reena started school and Reena had gone into her current school's Nursery class when she was nearly four years old. Thus Reena was beginning her fifth year of schooling at the beginning of the research year and had benefited before school from English and literacy activities in her own home through the Literacy project. However, Reena's attendance at school had been very poor prior to Year Three. In her Reception Year she had missed the equivalent of eleven weeks of school, in Year One she had missed the equivalent of six and a half weeks of school and Year Two she had missed the equivalent of five weeks of school. During Year Three Reena was frequently absent in the second half of the year on the days I was in school. For this reason the fieldnotes for Reena contain fewer observations than for the other case study children.

Reena was a step-cousin of Attar the other Bangladeshi pupil in her class. However, Reena did not see Attar and his family outside of school and did not appear to have any contact with him in the classroom. Reena played with three Bangladeshi girlfriends and her sister outside of school. She reported that her family was visited by her four aunts and uncles and their children at home and that she went to the park with her mother, her aunts and her cousins to play. Thus Reena appeared to have a lot of contact with cousins and other family members, and some Bangladeshi friends, outside of school and to have a range of playmates.

There were twenty-four children in Reena's class at the beginning of the research year. She and Attar were the only ethnic minority pupils in their class. There was one other child who was an EAL pupil in the class. This was Jan, a Yugoslavian boy, who had come to the UK with his family as a refugee a year previously.

Taking Part

It was clear from my first few days in the classroom that Reena did not take an active part in teacher-pupil interactions when the class were on the carpet or in pupil-pupil interactions

when the children were working at their desks. Fieldnotes taken during the first time I observed Reena in the classroom give some indication of how Reena 'took part' in classroom life at the beginning of the school year and where she was positioned in relation to the class. This observation was made in mid-September as Reena was absent from school during the first two mornings I spent in the classroom.

Reena arrives with her mum holding her hand. In the classroom, once her mum has left, she stands awkwardly on her own. Then she sits on the carpet but does not talk to or sit near any other children. She sits alone. She sits away from the teacher next to the big, comfy chair at the back. She bites her fingers. She answers the register at the right place but she speaks very quietly. She has put her book bag in the wrong place along with five other children in the class. After the register, when the maths cards are given out, she does not get given a card until a girl sitting in front of her gets up and gets one for her. Reena can do the maths task, only about one third of the children in the class can do it. She has a very runny nose. The teacher hands her a tissue. Reena doesn't put her hand up to answer a question once during this session. At the end of the carpet session she puts her hand up to be able to give out the rulers. She is not chosen. During the beginning of the group work part of the Numeracy Hour Reena finds her place at her group's table quickly but then she just sits down and waits. She looks to the others to see what is to be done. Her group have to measure things in the classroom. She trails around after Poppy and Charlotte, the two other girls in her group, for about two-thirds of the session. She just follows them. She doesn't speak to them and they do not speak to her. They ignore her but do not tell her to go away. She is tolerated? During the last part of the lesson the two girls come over to me to ask for some help. Reena stays out of the asking for help. It is only when the other two girls have gone that she uses me for help but I initiate the help not Reena.

(Fieldnotes 18/9/00)

Another observation, the following month, found the same lack of participation.

I watch Reena's interaction with her group. She gets to her desk and sits down but her body language is so different to the other children. She slouches over the desk, she does not make eye-contact with anyone, she looks away from the group and looks totally uninterested. Poppy and Jessica, by contrast, are leaning towards each other. Poppy has her sparkly, eyes and eager, enthusiastic body language. Reena stays in her sad/ill/depressed/uninvolved body language. When Mr Field comes

over and talks to the group Reena turns away slightly so her shoulder is nearest him and she is facing away. She does not join in the group discussion.

During the reporting back in Numeracy Hour, the class are back on the carpet. Reena is slumped in the corner by the big, comfy chair, not looking at the teacher. She looks at the other children as they count down with the teacher but she does not join in the counting down. The class do take-aways together. Reena looks at her fingers but is not trying to do the sums. She is called on by the teacher to join in. She does so reluctantly. She echoes the other children around her but does not appear to understand what the class are doing. By the time the class reach doing number pairs to fifty Reena has switched out again.

(Fieldnotes 13/10/00)

During all of these early observations Reena 'took part' only in the sense of following the physical directions of where to go and where to be issued by the teacher. She replied to her name in the register (but did so very quietly), went to sit in her group, copied down the date in her book, looked at what other children were doing and copied what they were writing in their books or on their worksheets. During sessions on the carpet she usually sat at the back by the comfy chair and slid down next to it so she was almost out of sight. She did not raise her hand to bid for questions and she was often ignored or left out by the other children. In addition to how she 'took part' in the classroom, Reena often came to school with greasy hair, she spent a lot of time slouching and she nearly always had a bad cold which meant that she had a permanently runny nose which she had to be encouraged to blow as we saw above.

Reena made no effort to play the role of an enthusiastic, eager to participate pupil in this classroom during the first half of the research year (18/9/00; 28/9/00; 13/10/00; 16/10/00; 30/10/00; 6/11/00; 14/11/00). This was noted by her classroom teacher and the visiting EAL teacher.

I think she thinks that she can daydream and get away with it...We (myself and the visiting EAL teacher) both noticed that she just sort of sat back, just not with us at all.

Miss Birch (6/11/00)

In an early report sent home to Reena's parents (because they had not attended the October parent conference) Miss Birch referred to the need for Reena to 'sit nearer the front to help her concentrate' and for her to 'listen carefully during whole class sessions on the carpet'.

She also commented that Reena 'would benefit from asking questions to aid her understanding' during the carpet sessions (18/10/00).

The adults in the classroom understood Reena's lack of participation not as a lack of motivation, ability or a particular difficulty with the language of the classroom but as shyness and a lack of confidence.

Reena doesn't mix with the other children. She's very shy. Excruciatingly shy.
(Miss Birch 28/9/00)

Reena started off not really talking to people. Being very quiet and shy.
(Miss Birch 6/11/00)

It was also understood as a lack of experience in being able to focus and concentrate on the carpet.

She's with me for English (*i.e. in the Literacy Group that the teacher supported*) but that's more because she needs support. She's got beautiful handwriting, really, really good spelling and capital letters at the start of sentences full stops at the end. You know very, very able but just needs refocusing and help.
(Miss Birch 6/11/00)

I think she (the EAL teacher) needs to keep coming in and doing the support work with her. I think that it is just time and experience and focusing on the carpet.
(Miss Birch 6/11/00)

As the year progressed, Reena's participation on the carpet changed and she began to focus on the teacher and to bid for questions.

During the numeracy session on the carpet Reena does not bid but shakes her head to the teacher's question, 'If I said double fifteen was thirty two would I be right?'. She is watching and listening to the teacher today, following the lesson. She then raises her hand for a question and a few moments later raises her hand to answer another question. This is the first time I have observed her doing this. Five minutes later and Reena is still bidding. As the children read things off the board Reena is saying them too.

(Fieldnotes 14/5/01)

This was noted by her teachers as well.

She's doing well (now) actually...she listens very, very well on the carpet and she goes off and responds....

....I find that when she actually goes to do a task now she normally gets down to it, goes right for what she needs to do, and gets on with it.

(Mr Field 14/6/01)

What is of interest in these observations of how Reena took part in classroom life during the research year is the manner in which she came to be seen as a shy pupil who lacked confidence and experience in being able to focus and concentrate on the carpet because of how she behaved on the carpet and took part in interactions with her teachers. This identity as shy, and as lacking in confidence, had positive repercussions for Reena in terms of the support she received in the classroom during the research year. This will be discussed below in the section on Reena as a Learner.

The following sections consider Reena as a reader and as a learner and show that, despite her behaviour (as a weak pupil), Reena was a competent pupil in many respects, developing in many ways like many of the monolingual pupils in the class. Reena did have some language needs as an EAL pupil and these are discussed in the section on Language.

Reena as a reader

At the beginning of the year Reena read very slowly and carefully but she had good decoding skills. When she came to a word she didn't recognise she could usually work out the word through sounding it out (18/9/00; 28/9/00). Reena did not read with a readerly voice or add lots of expression to her reading (Miss Birch included this as something Reena should work on in her October report) and Reena did not avoid words when she did not know their meaning. When reading she would stop at a word she did not know and ask what it meant. For example whilst reading with me for the first time in September of the research year she stopped reading to ask me the meaning of the words 'homecoming', 'collecting' and 'prepared' (18/9/00). Reena had the ability to infer the meanings of some words from their context in the text (13/10/00). Reena was able to read-for-meaning when she chose texts that were at her level. Early in the year Reena chose books that were too difficult for her but after October all the reading books that she chose to bring to reading session were ones that were challenging but were within her capabilities to read and understand (30/10/00;

13/11/00; 14/5/01; 25/6/01). Reena was also able to relate to things in the stories that she read in school (13/10/00).

What was most striking about Reena as a reader was the fact that out of the thirteen children that I gave a reading activity to that required the child to put the pages of a story in the correct order (see Appendix Fifteen) Reena was one of only two pupils who used the text, and what she knew about how narrative text worked, to complete the task.

She found the first page of the story by flicking her eyes over the text and pictures (mainly the text) very quickly. 'Here's the title'. She put the page down and began going through the rest of the pages....She read the text on each page and didn't attempt to match the paper edges like most of the other children had. She got a rough order, about two thirds right, but she sorted out where things were wrong as she read it through out loud....She knew that to check it she needed to read it through. She said that the first two pages went together because the story 'made sense' and later she responded to my question about another two pages 'How do you know they go together?', 'By the writing...because if you read it you know'. When I asked her how she knew that a particular page was the first page she replied 'Because, because it says "One day"

(Fieldnotes and video 13/11/00)

In this activity Reena demonstrated that she knew a lot about narrative texts and how they worked and that she could read for meaning. She was not reliant on the pictures to put the story together and did not look at the pictures first. She used them only as a support to her reading of the text. Reena showed, through reading activities like this one, that she had capabilities as a reader that were beyond those of many of the other readers in the three research classrooms.

When asked about who had taught her to read Reena replied that it had been the visiting EAL teacher and the Bilingual Language assistant who used to come and work with her in her Reception Year (25/6/01).

Reena reported that she read at home with her older sister and her father on a regular basis (25/6/01). She also went to the public library to borrow books with her mother and sister.

Reena as a learner in the classroom

Reena frequently demonstrated that she could competently complete tasks that were set for the children in the class and that she was often more able than the majority of the children in the classroom. We have seen above that in an early Numeracy Hour, despite her body language, her appearance and her non-participation, when required to complete a task using the maths cards on the carpet she could do the task successfully and got the correct answer whereas about two thirds of the class could not do it and got the wrong answer (18/9/00). Her spelling was at the same level as the average children in the class and when the class were given a handwriting task to complete Reena was more able than the other children in her group although my comment in my fieldnotes records that 'her behaviour suggested she didn't know how to do it' (18/9/00). Also, on looking through the children's Literacy books it was clear that Reena's work was stronger than Jessica's and Poppy's, the two dominant girls in Reena's Literacy group (13/10/00). As noted above Reena was also a competent reader and compared well with other average readers in the class.

However, as a result of her identity as a shy child who lacked confidence and experience, (gained through the way she took part in classroom interactions as outlined above), Reena was provided with EAL support in school and with placements in groups where she would be supported by the classroom teacher. This support was provided despite the competence she demonstrated as a learner and as a reader. This is how the visiting EAL teacher explained the reasons why Reena received EAL support throughout the whole of Year Three.

Because she's in a way only just got going, I felt it was sort of a help just to keep coming. And she was having two teachers this year because she was having Miss Birch, who was new and who she didn't know, for a term and then she was having Mr Field and because she hadn't had anything to do with him and because he was a man I thought well perhaps, as she's really starting to write independently and become much more confident perhaps it was better to keep coming in case she sort of had a wobble because of the change. But I think academically now she's fine really. I mean she's coping well. It was more just to give her a bit of a boost.

(Visiting EAL teacher 14/9/00)

Reena also received support, according to the visiting EAL teacher, because she had missed 'quite a bit of school' (14/9/00). Reena was not perceived as a pupil who lacked ability or motivation, or as a pupil who had language needs that needed attention, she was perceived

and understood as a pupil who needed support to increase her confidence and prevent her from having 'a wobble'.

Knowledge of how Reena had been in earlier years in the school and the contrast with her sister were also called on in coming to these understandings of Reena. The visiting EAL teacher had supported her since the Reception Year of school and had vivid memories of Reena in her previous three years of schooling and how different she was from her sister who she had also supported.

When she came into school she was very lacking in confidence, very sort of withdrawn, wouldn't look at anybody, say anything, very shy. I'd say it was about Year 2 really before she began to kind of come out of her shell, you know, spontaneously come up and speak to adults and that sort of thing or even socialise with the other children.....

(Amti, her older sister) was a very different kettle of fish. I had Amti until Year 2 but after that she was fine. She was so much more confident.....

She (Reena) didn't progress very fast. I mean she didn't make a very early start with reading as I recall and certainly not writing but again that was a sort of confidence thing, she wasn't prepared to do it with everybody else. She needed a lot of encouragement to start with her writing. I don't think it was the ability. I don't think she had any less ability than Amti but she wasn't really using it.....

(The support that I provided) was more working around what (the class) were doing to give her a bit more vocabulary or a bit more confidence perhaps to take part.

(EAL teacher 26/1/01)

She's ever so different to Amti who's open and brash and loud and in your face. You have to respect that she's (Reena) shy and she's quiet. I can't push myself on to her. If you do she clams up.

(Mr Field 14/6/01)

This comment that Reena was completely different to her confident, out-going sister who had preceded her by a year in school was also made by the headteacher (14/9/00) and by Reena's mother (20/6/01).

As noted in the section on Taking Part, as the year progressed Reena's participation on the carpet changed and she began to focus on the teacher and to bid for questions and to take part in classroom interactions. This was also noted by her teachers. Yet because Reena's

support was provided because she was seen as shy and because she might have 'a wobble', her support was not withdrawn. Reena received support for the whole of Year Three despite the fact that, when directly asked, her teachers described her as an academically average pupil in relation to the class and as a competent pupil. Mr Field, her classroom teacher for the second two terms of the year made reference to this.

I think her language ability is probably not much poorer than Attar's (*the other Bangladeshi pupil in the class who was considered to have excellent English*). I think that she presents in a different way. She's probably getting a longer crack at additional help because of how she presents herself.

(Mr Field 14/6/01)

Reena and language

As observed above, Reena did have some language needs as an EAL pupil in terms of needing help with what some words meant when she was reading (2/11/00; 22/1/01). It can be assumed from this that there were also words and phrases and words in different contexts that she would not have understood in the oral and written practices of the classroom.

Reena's teachers varied in their responses to Reena in terms of her language needs. For instance, at the beginning of the year Miss Birch reported that Reena was held back in maths because of language problems. She also felt that Reena had some problems with comprehension and understanding in Literacy. For these reasons she placed Reena in middle ability groups that received support in Numeracy and Literacy (6/11/00). However, the visiting EAL teacher reported that Reena didn't really have any language needs but that support was needed for her socially. This teacher claimed that Reena only had vocabulary needs like any other (monolingual) English child in her class, that is she needed help with understanding new, subject specific-words as they came up in curriculum subjects like science (26/1/01). Mr Field, like the EAL teacher, also saw Reena as not having any language needs that were specific to her being an EAL pupil and commented that her understanding was very good (14/6/01).

What was of interest in the teacher responses to Reena and her language was the manner in which Miss Birch, whilst recognising that language may have been impeding Reena's ability to learn and to complete work in Numeracy and Literacy, divorced this understanding from the advice she gave to (and therefore the expectations she had of) Reena and her parents in her school report. In this report written in October she advises Reena and her parents that Reena would do better in school if she sat near the front, concentrated and listened more

carefully, asked questions and played a more active part in the carpet sessions. She commented to me that 'once she listens she can do it' and that once Reena felt comfortable in the classroom she could do things. In an interview Miss Birch referred to Reena's non-participation as 'daydreaming' rather than relating it to the language difficulties that she felt that Reena faced in Literacy and Numeracy (6/11/00).

Because Reena did not rush to join in and take part, because she held back, there were not misunderstandings about what she could not do. Teachers did not recognise all of Reena's language needs but because of the way Reena presented herself in the classroom she received support which, although provided to build up her 'confidence' and help her 'concentrate' and 'focus', may have helped her develop her English language.

Reena reported that she never used Bengali in the classroom because she thought the other children would laugh (25/6/01).

6.3.6 Reena socially

Despite Reena's identity as a shy, withdrawn pupil in the classroom she had a very different identity on the playground. An early observation demonstrates this clearly.

When Reena comes out on to the playground after her lunch..she watches the children skipping until they stop. She teams up with another Bangladeshi girl and they go arm in arm around the playground. A Bangladeshi boy joins them walking around the playground. Reena is the leader in this game. They walk around the painted maze. Reena still leading the direction of the walk. She is confident, the dominant one. She plays at 'strangling' her friend. She covers the whole playground in her play. She then plays skipping-in-a-ring games with the same girl and a White boy. She is very happy and laughing.

(Fieldnotes 11/10/00)

This was followed by a similar observation two days later. This time Reena played with another Bangladeshi girl and two White boys at lunchtime then switched to a game of chase with the same children, then initiated a running game and was joined by more children. Once again she was the leader of the group. When a child fell over, it was Reena who took charge and lead the boy over to a dinner lady so that his knee could be washed (13/10/00). Even after a considerable absence from school in the second term Reena returned and took up her position as leader on the playground,

Despite being out of school for ages, Reena is her usual self at playtime. She is wandering around the playground with Umi and Umi's friend. She is the leader of this little group. Where she goes they follow. A lot of the time they are walking and running around hand-in-hand. If Reena walks away, which she does, the other two follow her.

(Fieldnotes 19/3/01)

Reena played with a range of children, not just Bangladeshi pupils in the school and on each occasion observed she was definitely a leader. On the playground Reena did not wear her slouching, non-participatory, too-shy demeanour. Her manner here was very different to how she presented herself in the classroom.

If she had behaved in the classroom with the confidence and authority that she demonstrated on the playground, it is unlikely that Reena would have received the support that she received through the whole of Year Three.

The children that Reena played with on the playground were not children from her class. Contact with other children in her classroom was very different for Reena. At the beginning of the research year Miss Birch noted that Reena didn't have a friend in the class (11/10/00). By November she felt that Reena was 'coming out of herself a little bit' and 'doing well in the friendship stakes' (6/11/00) and during the second term Mr Field made a similar observation when he said that she was 'mixing more' (14/5/01). These friendships were with one or two of the quieter girls and at no time in the research year did Reena appear as a central figure in classroom friendships and interaction. Both the visiting EAL teacher and Mr Field had explanations for why Reena did not have many friends in the class. Mr Field believed that it was because Reena's frequent absences meant that Reena was not in class enough for the other children to form close friendships with her (14/6/01). The visiting EAL teacher claimed that it was because Reena's mother had told her not to mix with White children at school (26/1/01).

Reena at home and at school

As noted above, Reena read at home with her father and older sister (28/9/00; 25/6/01). Reena also reported that her father and sister were good at listening to reading and that they both helped her if she got stuck (25/6/01). Reena's mother confirmed this and said that Reena's sister also helped her with 'homework things'. Reena's mother reported that she was unable to help Reena 'because of English' and because the English education system was so different (20/6/01). She did take Reena and her sister to the public library, however, and

they all borrowed books (25/6/01). On more than one occasion Reena told me that they had lots of books at home (28/9/00). Thus for Reena reading and using books was something that happened at home as well as at school and she did have her sister and father to consult if she wanted help with her reading or with 'homework things'. Mr Field recognised something of the support that Reena's older sister might be providing at home when he commented,

Actually her understanding's very good. Her grammar, spelling, tenses are much better than the other children in her group. I think she just picks things up and locks them in. She's very similar to (her sister), (her sister) will pick things up quite quickly and lock them in, wouldn't lose them. Reena might have learnt that this was the way to do it.

(Mr Field 14/6/01)

Miss Birch also recognised that there might also be some support for Reena's learning from the home and that this benefited Reena's progress (6/11/00).

Another instant which showed how Reena could make connections between reading at school and her family life was when she chose to read a school book 'Jesus's Christmas Party' which was a version of a (jokey) nativity play that her sister had a part in school the year before. Reena read this book with enthusiasm and talked about the story and the role her sister played (despite the book being based on a Christian story) (14/5/01).

It was also clear that Reena had access to paper, pens, colouring pens, glue, string and scissors at home as well as in the classroom. She enjoyed art at school and at home as demonstrated in this account of making a jack-in-the-box which Reena recounted to me with great enthusiasm.

Reena: ..Yesterday I was..a jack-in-the-box!

Sue: Did you make one?

Reena: Yeah I made a lid for it and when I open the lid it just pops out.

Sue: Did you make that on your own at home?

Reena: Yeah

Sue: So how did you know how to do that? I don't know how to make a Jack-in-a-Box .

Reena: First I got a tape and I folded it in, yeah, tight. It stuck to the box. I got two strings of paper. I put one of them, there, and then it was cos, you know...I don't know what's they called. It was, put kind of zigzags/

Sue: Oh, like a concertina thing, like a spring?

Reena: Yeah. I made loads and I stuck them all together and then I made a lid.

Well if I, then I made a little things, a..a..clown face too and I stucked it in then

when it, when I, when I shut the lid it just went squeeze and when I open it just pops up.

Sue: How clever. You did that all on your own?

Reena: Yeah

(Reena 25/6/01)

Thus for Reena in many respects there was a link between what she did in school and what she did at home. She also reported that she coloured in pictures (28/9/00) and played schools at home and wrote in a diary (25/6/01).

Reena had been born in England in the city. She had visited Bangladeshi once (13/11/00) but she had not attended school in Bangladeshi. Reena described herself as Bengali (25/6/01)

Reena had a lot of contact with other (Bangladeshi) children outside school and often played with her friends and cousins. Her home was visited by other families. She reported that Rafique and his family had once been visitors to her house but that they did not come anymore confirming Rafique's report that they did not go to other people's houses like they used to (14/5/01).

Reena spent her holidays at home playing in the garden, in the park or indoors with her sister and her friends. However, in June she reported that her half term holiday had been boring because they were no longer able to play in their garden at home because the neighbour had a 'rude dog (which) bites everybody', and who was able to jump over the garden fence (25/6/01). Reena also reported that she liked to play on her cousins' Playstation (25/6/01)

Reena did not go on any trips or holidays away from home during the research year and reported that the only times she had been away were to go to Bangladesh and to London once. On the trip to London Reena had travelled on the train and she remembered looking out of the window and seeing 'horses, cows, sheep and chickens' (28/9/00). The only time Reena had been to the seaside or visited anywhere in the county (her family lived about forty minutes from the coast) was with the school in her Nursery year (25/6/01).

Reena did not belong to any school clubs. She did attend the mosque school in the city at weekends.

During the research year Reena missed thirty-five days of school, the equivalent of seven weeks of school in total. The most frequent day missed was Monday. Her regular absences meant that Mr Field decided not to move Reena up a group in Numeracy despite her ability as she was missing the introductions to topics so often (14/6/01).

Reena's parents did not attend the school's parent evenings during the research year. Reena's mother said that she did not know that there were any parents' evenings as she had not received any letters about them (20/6/01). Reena told me on a separate occasion that she gave letters home to different family members so it may have been that the information about parent evenings was not passed on to Reena's mother (25/6/01). Reena's mother did report that she got information from the school via letters and reports and not via parent evenings. Reena's father reported that he was pleased with his daughter's school. Despite her parents not attending the school's parent evenings, Mr Field felt that he knew mum quite well (14/5/01) and Miss Birch reported that she had a 'basic pleasantries' level of contact with mum (6/11/00).

Reena's parents reported that they were not worried about their daughters losing their language or culture because of going to an English school. They reported that they taught their children religious things at home and sent daughters to Qur'an school (20/6/01).

6.3.8 Teacher responses

Much of how Reena's teachers responded to Reena during the research year has been discussed already. As we have seen, the way Reena behaved in the classroom, the way teachers called on what they knew about her from previous years in school and the way in which she was contrasted with her sister meant that Reena, despite being a competent 'academically average' pupil, received support throughout the research year. She was not perceived as a pupil without motivation or ability. Her ability was assessed through her accurate and neat work (Miss Birch referred to her 'beautiful handwriting'), her ability to spell and punctuate accurately and her increasing ability to answer questions on the carpet (Miss Birch 18/10/00). As we have seen above, she was not seen as having any language needs by two of her teachers during the year but the consistent support she was offered during the year meant that she did receive help with language through working one-to-one on class tasks with the visiting EAL teacher. Little was hidden from Reena's teachers.

(Even her lack of shyness on the playground was known about but, interestingly this was not interpret as a sign of wilful lack of participation in the classroom on the part of Reena) .

In discussing Reena as a pupil in her class Miss Birch commented that she thought that ‘Attar brings an attitude to school but Reena doesn’t’ (Miss Birch 6/11/00).

In terms of how Reena would fare in Year Four, Mr Field commented ‘She’ll be pretty average.... She’s got too much to build on to fall back’ (14/6/01).

Conclusions

The way that Reena took part in classroom interactions had implications for how she was seen by the adults in the classroom. Despite her behaviour (as a weak pupil) we have seen that Reena was quite a competent pupil. However, because of her behaviour as a weak pupil she was seen as needing support (for her confidence) and so received it.

Reena was quite successful as a learner and a reader during Year Three. Through presenting herself as a pupil who made no effort to play the role of an enthusiastic, eager-to-participate pupil in her classroom, she was able to gain access to important resources in the classroom during the year, most importantly the support of the visiting EAL teacher. If Reena had presented herself as the girl she was on the playground then it is unlikely that she would have received this support. It is also likely that Reena’s gender, and the fact that she was a **Muslim** girl, also played a part in the understandings her teachers had of her non-participation. Rahul’s non-participation, for example, was never understood in the way that Reena’s was.

It can also be seen that because Reena did not ‘take part’ all the time, and strive to please her teacher in this manner or fit in, there were no misunderstandings about what she could and could not do as a learner. As a result of this, and of the support she received in Year Three, Reena was progressing slowly but surely through the curriculum. She did indeed appear as a pupil who was in a position to continue to be a successful learner as she moved through primary school.

The things that helped Reena during her Year Three in school were the support she received in her classroom and the support she received from her family at home.

One thing that impeded Reena as a learner during her Year Three in school was her lack of contact with other children in the classroom.

Appendix Twelve: Attar's Case Study

Attar

Introduction

Attar was seven at the beginning of the research year and, having a September birthday, was the third eldest pupil in the class. Attar was in the same class as his step-cousin Reena and so the details about the class and the number of children and the teachers are the same.

Attar did not have a real friend in his class and this situation did not change during the research year. His classroom teacher commented at the beginning of the research year,

Attar doesn't have a particular friend in class. He was very friendly with Hari but Hari was held back a year to repeat Year 2. I think he's probably missing Hari.

(Miss Birch 28/9/00).

Attar and Hari, an English boy, had been in the same class in Year Two but Hari had been kept back for a year because he was considered to be a pupil with 'special learning needs' and was thought to need the extra time retaking Year Two would give him.

Attar lived with his mother and father, an elder sister and a younger sister. However, his elder sister, Rupa, who was sixteen years old, had not always lived with the family. She had been born in Bangladesh and when Attar's parents had left Bangladesh to come and live in the UK she had stayed behind and had been brought up by her uncle. She only came to England to join the family when Attar was four years old. In February of the research year, Rupa and her father left England and returned to Bangladesh for a long visit. For the rest of the research year Attar lived at home with just his mother and younger sister.

Attar's mother was educated to the extent that she had passed her matric in Bangladesh. She could read and write in English as English was a subject she had studied after she had passed her matric. However, she spoke very little English and she and I always spoke to each other through the children or through an interpreter. Rupa reported that her father had also passed his matric exam.

Attar's mother was a housewife and his father worked as a chef in an Indian restaurant in the city. His father had once jointly owned a restaurant with his brother-in-law but this was no longer the case.

Attar owned some books and reported that Father Christmas brought him books and that he had three at home (21/9/00, 15/1/00). Attar's mother also bought him computer games and, during the research year, a new Nintendo computer (13/10/00, 4/6/01). During the research year Attar invited me to his house on many occasions to play computer games - invitations I was happy to accept.

Attar's mother reported that as a toddler Attar was 'noisy' and that 'he always liked reading and studying and learning things' (26/6/01). Attar responded to the same question by reporting that he was 'noisy and naughty' when he was small (11/7/01).

Attar said that he spoke 'Bengali, English and Caveman' at home (11/6/01), the 'Caveman' being a reference to the spoof language in cartoons like 'The Flintstones' that he enjoyed watching on television.

Attar spoke to his mother, and his mother spoke to him, in Bengali but his mother claimed that Attar's Bengali was not as good as his younger sister's and Attar reported that he was better at speaking English than any other language. He spoke English with his younger sister because he claimed he didn't know Bengali well enough to use it when speaking with her all the time. He reported that he used English when he was in London and playing with his three cousins (26/2/01) and when speaking with Reena, his step-cousin, and her sister. He claimed that he could understand what the two girls were saying when they spoke in Bengali (11/6/01) but that he used English to talk to them.

Even though the family received satellite television Attar reported that he did not know any Hindi. He did not watch Hindi movies because they were on television in the afternoons when he was at school or on late at night when he was sleeping (11/6/01).

On starting Year Three Attar was starting his fifth year of schooling as he had been attending Bailey School since Nursery. In addition to this he had also received support from a Family Literacy project for at least two years before he started attending the Nursery.

Attar had missed quite a few days of school in his Reception Year and Year One (five weeks in both years) but his attendance in Year Two had been very good. He had only missed six and half days of school in the whole year.

Outside school Attar played with his small sister at home (11/6/01). His family was sometimes visited at home by another family where there were four children, two of whom, a boy and a girl, were close in age to Attar. Otherwise the family did not receive many visitors. Attar reported that his step-cousin Reena and her sister had been to his house but this only happened once in the research year. Attar did not have many relations in the city and the family did not have close connections with other families. People did not regularly visit the house.

Attar reported that he had visited London twice in his life and when he was there he played with three of his cousins. He had never been to Bangladeshi and was born in the city where he now lived.

Taking Part

Throughout the research year Attar both took part and did not take part in the daily interactions of classroom life. He took part in the routines of the classroom and joined in on the carpet by bidding for questions and giving answers when the teacher chose him to answer. At the same time he rarely interacted with the other children in the class or with other adults when he was off the carpet. He never joined in with any class chat on the carpet when children shared their news or the teacher talked about events in the school or things that had happened in the holidays. Some sense of his presence in the classroom is given in the following observations made during the year:

The beginning of the day. The children are sitting on the carpet reading their books. The teacher begins the day by doing the register and talking with the children as he does so. Attar does not take part in the class chat and the interactions with the teacher. He does not join in with how things were on Friday when Mr Field took the class. He stays focused on his book. He does not chat to the other children although there is a lot of talk in the room.

In the Numeracy warm-up Attar is bidding to answer the teacher's question. He is nominated and he gives the correct answer. Eight children in the class had the

correct answer and four did not (of those who raised their hands). Attar gets called on a lot in maths - about six times so far in this lesson, most of the other children only two or three times. Attar is very focused on the board. He does not look at the other children when they are working on their white boards. He works on his own. He looks at his board and at the teacher.

After playtime, the children come back into the classroom and sit on the carpet. They talk to the teacher about playtime. Attar does not join in. During the handwriting demonstration Attar watches the board. He asks a question.

(Fieldnotes 16/10/00)

Attar enthusiastically joins his Numeracy group. They are writing down the Numeracy target for the day. There is no talk in Attar's group, they are all working. Attar gives out some rulers to his group. Sam says something briefly to him. Samantha just takes her ruler. At 9am when the children move on to the carpet the other children in the class start chatting. Attar stands looking at the books on the shelf next to the carpet. Two minutes later he is still looking at the books, the other children are all sitting on the carpet, quietly chatting waiting for the teacher to start. Attar finally sits down at 9.05 am just before the teacher begins. He sits at the back. During the Numeracy hour warm-up Attar doesn't bid at the beginning - only three children are bidding at this point. He is looking at the number square on the board that is the focus of the questions the teacher is asking. He then joins in the bidding. The second time he bids he gets called on. He gives a correct answer. A little later he bids and gets chosen again. From now on he joins in the bidding and is one of the first to raise his hand, his hand goes up almost immediately after each question. About half the class are bidding now.

(Fieldnotes 12/3/01)

Beginning of the day. Attar arrives after the other children but in time for the register. The children are all on the carpet. Attar goes to his table and copies down the day's target for Numeracy then he joins the children on the carpet. The children are talking about trips and the school fair. Attar is sitting now, not making any eye contact with the other children, just sitting staring off, a bit sleepy, yawning. The teacher tells the class about his holiday. Attar is still not particularly engaged but he is looking at the teacher and he looks at Kate talking about mosquitoes. Later the teacher asks the class who would like to do country dancing for the school fair.

About half the class put their hands up. Attar does not put his hand up. Those that do the country dancing have to be able to practice at lunchtime and come to the summer fair. Attar takes no part in the sharing of news in this session. He doesn't have any contact with the other children.

(Fieldnotes 4/6/01)

These observations give some sense of the manner in which Attar took part in the routines of the class and joined in with the interactions on the carpet, often with enthusiasm. He was usually focused on what the teacher was doing and saying whilst sitting on the carpet and a sense is given of how he was able to give correct answers and how he was frequently chosen to answer especially in Numeracy, a subject in which his teachers thought he was particularly able. At the same time these observations also give some indication of how Attar was in some sense apart from the other children in the class and how he appeared to be holding himself apart from them or they from him.

Despite Attar's focused behaviour and his enthusiasm for taking part during the carpet sessions his classroom teacher at the beginning of the year also saw Attar as a pupil who needed to be kept 'on a tight reign'. She reported to me on a number of occasions that Attar was badly behaved in class and pretended not to understand her. (21/9/00, 28/9/00). This resulted in his teacher feeling that she needed to establish that she was in control (28/9/00). As a result Attar was frequently 'in trouble' and 'called on' in the classroom as the following observations indicate:

The afternoon session starts off with the children on the carpet. After the register is done the teacher introduces the science topic and then the task the children are going to do in their science groups. Attar sits on the carpet and looks at the teacher. At the same time as looking at the teacher he shakes his leg up and down (restless, bored, energetic, frustrated, none of these?). At the end of the carpet session Attar is in trouble for making a snorting noise (I don't hear this) and the teacher keeps him back when the other children go off to start work. She asks him what he has done wrong. Attar looks around the classroom.

(Fieldnotes 14/9/00)

Numeracy hour. Attar finishes his work in his group and goes to get his book. He sits with his book, reading, in the comfy chair which is his for the day. The teacher ends the lesson and gets the class to clear up. Attar is still sitting in the comfy chair.

The teacher gets the class to sit at their tables waiting for break to begin. Attar is still reading. The teacher is cross with him for not being at his desk and tells him he must stay in at break.

When the children go out to break the teacher forgets that she has said that Attar must stay in. He goes out with the other children.

After break ,during Literacy, the teacher remembers that Attar didn't stay in at break. She tells him that he must stay in all of lunchtime. He is very quiet. During the demonstration of handwriting he gets called on by the teacher. He is told to sit 'nice and quiet and nice and still and listen'. He complies. (I wasn't aware that he wasn't doing any of these things).

(Fieldnotes 18/9/00)

Attar is sitting on the carpet with the class. It is a Science lesson. The teacher calls on Attar and he knows the answer. Later on the carpet he is chastised for playing with his glasses. The teacher says she wants a word with him. No one else has to have a word with the teacher after the lesson.

(Fieldnotes 28/9/00)

Attar and I are out of the classroom reading together during Art. When we return to the classroom after reading together Attar is in trouble for making a plastic shape dirty. The teacher tells him that he has to stay behind after school to explain why he made a shape dirty. He also had to clean it.

(Fieldnotes 2/11/00)

Key to this teacher's understanding of Attar was her belief that he pretended not to understand her and played on his status as an EAL child (28/9/00). This came to a head in October when the teacher reported to me,

I caught him out the other day. He was chatting with other children in the class. He didn't know I was there. I moved closer, to the next desk, and put my finger 'Shh' so that Darren wouldn't let on I was there. He was chatting away. Then I leant over and said 'Attar, don't ever pretend you don't understand me again'. He said, 'OK' very quickly and since then he's a transformation. He asks to go to the toilet and all

that. None of this 'Can...I...go...to...

(Miss Birch 11/10/00)

The teacher presented the situation to Attar's parents in the following way when she wrote a report for them in October.

Attar has spent a large part of this half term pretending not to understand very simple instructions. Having sat discreetly behind him one science lesson and having listened to his conversations with other children, I am satisfied that this was the result of his choosing, not due to any genuine lack of understanding.

(Report 18/10/00)

Whatever the rights or the wrongs of the situation (I was never present when Attar pretended to not understand and I did not ever observe him misbehaving in class - but I was only present in the classroom for a morning and an afternoon a week) this class teacher's responses to Attar's manner of taking part in the classroom and her perceptions of how he chose to interact with her had repercussions for Attar as a learner in this classroom especially with regard to reading and as a learner in Numeracy.

Attar as a reader

Attar had a high status as a reader in his class. His teacher told me during my first visit to the classroom that he was 'an excellent reader' (14/9/00). This was a status that had come through school with Attar from his reception year. His Reception Year teacher and the visiting EAL teacher both reported that Attar could read quite well by the time he finished his Reception Year in school (Mrs Jones 18/1/01; EAL teacher 26/1/01). Towards the end of his first term in Year Three his classroom teacher reported that 'his reading is phenomenal. Its absolutely um..he can read Harry Potter brilliantly' (6/11/00) and the visiting EAL teacher, who knew Attar but did not support him, said that she was confident that he had reached Key Stage Level 3 in reading at the beginning of Year Three (26/1/01).

Attar often chose to read high status books. For example, at the beginning of the research year he was reading 'Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone' (3/10/00; 2/11/00) and later in the year I recorded that he was reading 'George's Marvellous Medicine' (5/5/01; 11/6/01). The class teacher had started reading 'Harry Potter' to the class at the beginning of the year (but had not been able to find the time to continue) and 'George's Marvellous

Medicine' had been read to the class by the teacher when Attar was in Year Two. Both 'Harry Potter' and 'George's Marvellous Medicine' were 'chapter books', paperback books with proper chapters in them unlike early beginning reading books which do not have chapters. All the children in the Year Three classroom aspired to reading 'chapter books' as a sign of their high status and ability as readers.

At the beginning of the research year when Attar read Harry Potter with me he used great expression and gave each of the characters a different voice (13/10/00). On more than one occasion in the classroom, the teacher had spoken to the class about how important it was to read with expression.

What we are going to start tomorrow is Perseus the Dragon Slayer. Why it's a good book to read is it's got a fantastic story, you'll like it a lot and it's a book we can read with more expression. I'm find that when I'm hearing lots of you read we are getting the same sort of voice all the while and when something exciting is happening in the book or we have characters that are speaking we are not getting different voices...So when we start reading Perseus tomorrow we are going to liven up our voices, we are going to have different voices for different characters.

(Mr Field 15/1/01).

And Attar was very good at providing this kind of reading for the teacher. When reading Attar sounded like a competent reader who was taking in the story as he read along. He gave emphasis to key words, varied the pace of the reading as well as using a readerly voice for the narration and a range of voices for the characters (19/3/01).

Sue: Off we go then.

Attar: George fetched her a saucer. And what happened about the teaspoon?

He reads very clearly. He enunciates clearly and carefully and puts expression in. He self corrects a mistake he has made in the reading-out-loud. He sounds all the endings of words clearly and correctly, like the endings of words that end with -ed and the 't' in fetched. I laugh at the story.

(Fieldnotes and transcription 21/5/01)

However, over the course of the first term, as I heard Attar read and asked him to take part in some other kinds of reading activities with me, it became clear that Attar was finding it extremely difficult to 'take meaning' from what he was reading in a way expected by school and to the extent that his reading performance suggested. These are my notes about a reading session I had with Attar at the start of the second term (after his teacher had described his reading as 'phenomenal') with the dialogue transcribed from a tape of the session. The book he was reading was not a particularly difficult book, especially when compared with Harry Potter, and one that would have been read by the top third of the readers in the class with reasonable understanding:

I ask what book he is reading.

Attar: The Guard Dog

Sue: Why did you chose this book?

Attar: Cos the dog is a guard dog

Sue Do you know what a guard dog is?

Attar Um

Sue What it means?

Attar Yeah. Uhh...it...I forgot.

I explain to him what a guard dog is.

He has read some of the story all ready. I ask him what has been happening in the story and who is in the story (as I don't know the book at all).

Attar Um the fat girl. First it starts with the dogs. There were six puppies in the window and then the pet shop..

He is turning the pages and then he alights on a piece of text and he just reads the piece of text to me. He asks me to explain 'inhabitant' to him (a word in the bit of text he has just read out loud) which I do. He then picks out words in the section he has already read and asks me what they mean: e.g. 'racket', 'loathing', 'dislike', vulgar. After we have sorted out what lots of the words mean he asks me if he can read now. He reads with great expression, he starts reading with a real 'reader' style i.e. a projected voice. He loses some fluency when he has to work out how to say words like 'hullabaloo'. I stop him after a page or two to see if he understands what is happening. He can say who is talking to who (the kennel maid to the manager). I have to explain to him what a manager and a dog's home are (the setting for the story). What is happening in the story is lost on him really as there are some many words he needs to know the meaning of and he is not familiar with the idea of a dog's home etc

(Fieldnotes and transcription 15/1/01)

On another occasion whilst reading Harry Potter Attar did not know the meaning of the following words – ‘plump’, ‘barrier’, ‘platform’, ‘jostle’, ‘scarlet’ (20/11/00). During the research year whenever I heard Attar read we spent a good section of the time going through the words that he didn’t know in the text. This became such a regular feature of our reading together sessions that Attar would initiate the conversation about ‘new words’ and the meaning of words himself and ask me the meaning of words he had heard being used in other parts of the school day or at home (11/10/00; 20/11/00; 19/3/01; 11/6/01).

When reading Harry Potter another difficulty that Attar faced emerged.

I ask him what the giant looks like (in the passage he has been reading). He finds the bit of text and rereads it to me out loud. I ask the question again. Attar replies, ‘He got a beard and got black beetles in his hair’. I ask him to show me where it says this. It is a simile. ‘The giant’s eyes were glinting like black beetles’.

(Fieldnotes and transcription 13/10/00)

This and other observations (eg 2/11/00) suggested that Attar also struggled with similes and metaphors in text as well as the meaning of words and phrases. The kinds of books he was choosing to read in Year Three were books that increasingly contained similes and metaphors and yet Attar seemed to have little familiarity with this kind of figurative language. This increased his misunderstandings and confusions about what he was reading. Attar could only talk about a story and make simple comments about what was happening or who characters were if the texts were books he had heard a teacher reading to a class.

Some of the problems that Attar had with reading were recognised by his teachers. His Year One teacher, when interviewed, alluded to the manner in which, right from the beginning of his time in school, Attar could provide a performance of reading without understanding what he read.

(His reading was) very good. It was way beyond his understanding of English I think, He really was very good at decoding and reading and he could read a text, fair, pretty accurately that was beyond a) beyond his understanding of English and b) beyond his understanding just as a child anyway, his understanding of the concepts.

(Mrs Arthur 21/1/01)

His Year 2 teacher reported that,

He could read anything. He could work things out but he didn't always take in what he was reading and the comprehension wasn't always there. He got a 2B. His expression got better, worked really hard at it. But he wasn't always taking in what a story was about. He improved and started to use expression but it was still mechanical.

(Miss Davies 16/10/00)

In her written report on Attar at the end of Year Two this teacher wrote, 'He tends to read words rather than the meaning of the text' (July 2000)

His Year Three teacher also recognised some of his problems.

He, the words he struggles on are the unfamiliar English words, for example, 'craning', when - I can't remember what Dudley's mum's called, Mrs Dursely or Petunia, she was craning and he said 'cranning' (*like tanning*) cos that is exactly how you would say it but with the English language being the way it is it's actually not like that...his writing is sort of quite specific that's why we're doing the work, he knows all of his List One and List Two he can spell all of them. Fantastic speller. So we're working him on using a thesaurus to expand his vocabulary.

(Miss Birch 6/11/00)

What is interesting here is that although Attar's Year Two and Year Three teachers recognised some of the difficulties Attar had when reading, namely a difficulty with 'taking in what a story was about' or struggling with words, both teachers focused on Attar's reading-out-loud performance as a way of either understanding his difficulty with reading or of assessing his difficulty with reading. The Year Three teacher saw Attar's problems with unfamiliar English words as problems with pronunciation not of meaning and understanding. For the Year Two teacher Attar's performance of reading-out-loud acted as an indication of how much Attar was understanding. In this situation Attar's improved performance, his use of expression and giving each character a different voice, was understood by his Year Two teacher as a sign that he was 'taking in' what he was reading. As his Year One teacher recognised, and as the reading sessions I had with Attar showed,

this was not necessarily the case. Attar was able to provide a performance of reading whilst not understanding many of the words (or worlds) he was reading so expressively out loud. However, the messages that Attar may have received in his early career as a reader may have orientated him, or confirmed for him, that what being a reader required, and what counted as reading, was the act of turning a text into an expressive oral performance.

Attar's second teacher in Year Three also recognised that Attar did not always take in what he read. In his end of year report on Attar, Mr Field wrote,

Reading is very fluent, with lovely expression. However, Attar needs constant questioning to help him with his comprehension.

(Report July 2001)

Again reading is represented as an oral performance and here Attar's lack of 'taking in the story' is seen as a lack that can be remedied through 'constant questioning' which forces Attar to go back to the text and focus on it. Attar's lack of comprehension, it is implied, is a result of his lack of focus rather than his lack of knowledge about what English words and phrases mean.

During the research year, the various reading activities that I gave Attar, which required him to sequence pages from a range of stories that had been photocopied and cut up, revealed Attar to be a tenacious pupil who did not give up and who tried hard to complete the tasks. However, his difficulties with the meaning of words and his lack of knowledge about how narrative texts worked prevented him from being able to sequence the stories correctly whatever their level of complexity. At the same time Attar was not able to call on a knowledge of stories and how they worked to aid him in the sequencing or to provide him with his own version of stories (20/11/00; 19/3/01; 23/3/01). My impression, after doing these reading activities with Attar and after hearing him read over the course of the year, was that Attar was less able to read and find his way around a text and 'take' some of the meaning of the story than Reena.

Although he had a commitment to being 'a good reader', and had had a great deal of early success at reading in school, Attar had little support at home with reading. Attar reported that his mum had taught him to read, by teaching him his ABCs in English and Bengali, before he started school (21/9/00), and he would have received some support for early reading and gained some familiarity with books from his Family Literacy support before

school. However, now he was attending school he did not receive any of this support at home. Attar reported that he read on his own at home and didn't have anyone to help him if he got stuck (21/9/00).

Sue: Who do you read with at home?

Attar: I read it by myself.

Sue: What do you do if you get stuck?

Attar: I say 'Oh, whatever'

(Attar 13/10/00)

Attar and language

Attar also had a very high status and identity as 'good at maths'. Again this was something he had brought with him from his Year One and Year Two classrooms. His interactions with the teacher in Year Three maths and the enthusiasm he displayed by putting his hand up for many of the questions during 'carpet time' at the beginning and end of Numeracy Hour confirmed this identity for the teacher.

As a pupil on a good day he is brilliant, gives you the answers you need, he's always thinking at a higher level than the majority of the rest of the class. He's very inquisitive you know, he'll ask questions that help the others understand and sometimes make you think about what you teach as well which I really like and you know on a good day he works rally hard, gets the work done very, very quickly, very neat, top standard...

(Miss Birch 6/11/00)

However, the problems with vocabulary that appeared when reading also affected Attar's ability to complete work in Numeracy and because of the classroom teacher's reaction to Attar's behaviour, and what she saw as his pretending not to understand, these problems were not perceived or picked up on in the classroom. The incident in which the teacher had 'caught' Attar chatting to the other children in his science group lead to a situation in which for the rest of the term the teacher was adamant that Attar did understand everything and that his poor work on 'bad days' was due to how he related to her as a teacher and to his laziness.

...but on a bad day, with the good days and the bad days related to how he has been with me, he'll just do nothing and be completely lazy and not make any effort and just write nonsense cos he thinks he can get away with it so that's what he is like.

(Miss Birch 6/11/00)

Attar's difficulties with language and vocabulary were thus hidden which had consequences for Attar. Here are some more fieldnotes from a reading session.

Before we start reading together we discuss maths (he has just spent the playtime preceding this reading session kept in the classroom because he had not finished his maths work). Attar says he didn't understand the word 'investigate'. I ask him what he had to do. He replied 'I had to say which coin made £1.25, £1.06 and £2.20'. He then read me Question Three and said 'this is what Lauren help me with'. 'Question 3: Mark was offered two silver coins to pay for a 17p toy. Investigate how much change he got'. Attar could read the question out but he couldn't do it. He didn't understand 'offered' and 'investigate'. Once he understood 'offered' (I explained it) he could tell me that Mark had two silver coins to pay. I then explained 'investigate'. He liked my explanation that investigate must meant to find out and he substituted this in Question Four and read out 'Find out ways of using silver coins to pay 50p'. He hadn't been able to do this question either because he didn't understand what the question was asking. He had done Questions One and Two but got stuck with Questions Three and Four because he didn't understand the language. I asked him if he asked the other children for help. 'No'. Did he ask the teacher? 'Yes'. Then he changed his answer to 'No'. I asked him about staying in at break. 'The teacher thought I wasn't working but I was thinking. I wasn't messing about'. In the reading that we do next it becomes clear that there are many words that Attar doesn't know the meaning of.

(Fieldnotes and transcription 30/10/00)

On another occasion Attar had not completed his maths work and was told to stay behind in the classroom to complete the work whilst the class went to the Hall for their PE lesson. I stayed behind with him to supervise and to work with him to make sure the work was completed. The work the children had been covering in Numeracy that day was about fractions. I asked Attar what he had to do.

Attar: I have to colour in a third of the squares (on the worksheet).

Sue: OK. Do you know what that is – a third?

Attar: Yes.....actually no. Is it a third when you run a race?

Sue: Yes. When you come third. That's when its an order – first, second, third. So we use the word like that. We say 'She came first in the race, he came second...'. This is a different kind of third.

Attar: What is it mean to to that ? (meaning in the task)

I explain by using some maths cubes.....and conclude:

Sue: A third means dividing the number into three equal groups. How many are there in each group ?

He can tell me and we practice learning what a third and a quarter are in this way.

(Attar 20/11/00)

I also recorded an example from a History lesson where Attar used the meaning he knew of a word in one context to make meaning in another context, just as he had tried to do with the word 'third'. In History the class were studying the Victorians and whilst discussing a piece of writing with Attar it became clear that he understood the term 'workhouse' to mean a place where men and boys went to work (11/7/01).

As noted above when discussing Attar as a reader, Attar frequently asked me the meaning of words he had heard at other times when we were together. Over the course of the year I recorded instances of him asking me the meaning of 'blue tack', 'confused', 'conference' (19/3/01), 'verruca', 'overnight', 'lost property day', 'call minder', 'temperamental', 'qualifications' (11/6/01). These were words that he heard being used in the classroom or by people around him. In the case of 'overnight' and 'call minder' he needed to know the meaning of the words as he was responsible for translating for his mother at home whilst his father and older sister were away and these were words that he could not translate for her (11/6/01). During the time Attar was responsible for translating he was involved in responsible and complicated transactions on behalf of his mother with companies like SkyDigital and getting refunds and so on in the local shops.

Attar as a learner

A lot has already been said about Attar as a learner and how he presented himself in his classroom during the year. Many of these points will be picked up later in a consideration of Attar's social presence in the classroom and in school, the manner in which he took home many of the things he experienced in school (such as his diary) and in a consideration of his teacher's reactions to his behaviour and the manner in which he presented himself in the classroom. What is of interest here is to note that, despite the observations made by his teachers over the course of Attar's time in school regarding his lack of understanding of what he was reading and his needs as an EAL pupil, Attar did not receive any support as a learner in his Year Three classroom and had not received any support for EAL since he was a pupil in Year One.

Also of interest is the manner in which Attar became quickly aware of how he was perceived as a pupil by Miss Birch at the beginning of the research year.

I ask Attar if he is enjoying Year Three. He replies 'It's hard because I can't remember what she said (*meaning his teacher*). I can remember what she said in Nursery.....I have to stay in at playtimes and lunchtimes, just me and Charlotte. We both do naughty things. We shout and we both have to sit in the corner.....When I started this school I was good. Now I am not good. It started the 2nd September. (*This was the day that term started*).

(Attar 2/11/00)

Attar obviously took school seriously and was concerned that he was getting things wrong in Year Three. He was also quick to internalise his teachers view of himself ('When I started this school I was good. Now I am not good.') and was concerned that he was no longer pleasing his teacher.

In his interactions with me during the research year, Attar showed himself to be a keen and inquisitive learner. As well as asking about the meaning of new words he had come across he also asked for information. For example, during the school trip to a local beach that I accompanied the class on Attar spent the journey time looking out of the coach window exclaiming 'Look a lake. Look pigs. Look cows' and was very enthusiastic. On the beach he came up to me and asked me 'Can you give me some information about this please?' referring to a stream running down the beach. During the whole trip he wanted to know the names and things and information about them (19/7/01). On one occasion when I took Attar

and his mother to the supermarket Attar spent the whole time in the shop asking me 'What's this? What's this?' (4/11/00)

Attar socially

We have seen above that Attar took part in the routines of the classroom and joined in on the carpet by bidding for questions and giving answers when the teacher chose him to answer. At the same time he rarely interacted with the other children in the class or with other adults when he was off the carpet. He never joined in with any class-chat on the carpet when children shared their news or the teacher talked about events in the school or things that had happened in the holidays¹. Despite observing in the classroom for a whole year and talking extensively to Attar about friends and the other children in the class a clear picture of how and why this situation came about never emerged.

Attar's teachers from his early years in school reported that he held himself apart and did not mix with them or with the other pupils in the class.

....he wasn't easy because it was difficult to make a relationship with him...

....he played with children....he talked to the other children and interacted with them while he was playing, quite a strong leader really, lots of ideas, that was one of the ways I could find out what he knew cos he was very keen to, but he was in many ways a loner in as much as when he wasn't playing with a group he would be sort of lurking around and I don't remember him having a special friend.

(Mrs Jones Reception Year teacher 18/1/01)

Mrs Arthur:(he was) not forthcoming either, not somebody who would talk much to me, if at all. I don't think I ever remember a conversation with Attar....

Sue: did he have friendships with other children in the class?

Mrs Arthur: No. He was quite um..he held himself, quite separate yeah. I don't think it was the children rejecting him. I think it was him you know just withdrawing so..he would sit on his own in the class group and watch..

¹ It is extremely difficult to describe or state this phenomenon without some kind of causation being implied through the writing i.e. Attar did not mix with the other children and held himself apart and so they did not mix with him or the other children did not mix with Attar and kept him away from them. I have settled on the wording used but am aware there is a suggestion that Attar was responsible for the state-of-affairs which I do not mean to imply.

(Mrs Arthur Year One teacher 21/1/01)

He wasn't interested in being with the other children...He started to make relationships but not appropriate ones, he was involved in fighting outside on the playground....He wasn't interested in making relationships with adults. I never felt we had a relationship. He didn't warm to me...He was different to the other children. There wasn't any physical contact. There was a barrier. He would rarely say 'Thank you'....He would go and do things on his own, not talking to the other children. This got a little better but not much...

(Miss Davies Year Two teacher 16/10/00)

From their accounts it appeared that Attar increasingly chose to hold himself apart from other pupils and adults in school². However, an incident in Year Two which Attar talked to me about and which his teachers and his mother also referred to would suggest that classmates also had a part to play in his isolation. The incident was described in this way by a bilingual language assistant who sometimes worked in the school.

(Last year), Attar was getting angry with his mum. Mum told me he was getting angry and was crying and saying he didn't want to go to school. He was angry with her because she wasn't washing his clothes properly and bathing him and so the other children were saying he was stinky, that his clothes smelt.

(Lufna Begum 2/11/00)

Attar described the incident in the following manner.

They said 'Come here stinky' when we were playing Stuck-in-the-Mud and they wouldn't release me...

(Attar 2/11/00)

² This perception of Attar as a pupil who did not make relationships with adults was challenged by Cooking Group teacher who reported that Attar talked to her a lot during cooking activities (25/6/01). Attar also initiated and developed a very strong relationship with me during the year (although as I wasn't a teacher perhaps that made it different for him). The idea that he did not put himself out or ask about things was not true for all circumstances. He asked me constantly during the year about what things meant (see above).

This incident shows that some of the children in his Year Two were, at least on one occasion, capable of using racial taunts to hurt and exclude Attar. The headteacher, as soon as she was alerted to what had happened in the playground, dealt with the perpetrators of the name-calling, spoke to the whole class and spoke privately with Attar to reassure him that such behaviour would not be allowed and that he was to tell her or his teacher if it ever happened again. However, Attar often referred to what had happened as a reason why he didn't want to be friends with the children in his current Year Three class. When I asked Attar about what he did at lunchtimes in school he replied,

Nothing, I just play with the Year One children sometimes....I don't play with big children, Year Three children...They won't play with me. They say I am stinky.
(Attar 30/10/00)

Attar: These children don't want to sit next to me.
Sue: Why?
Attar: Because these children say I'm stinking.
(He asks me for reassurance that he doesn't smell).
No-one wants to be my friend

(Attar 2/11/00)

In class the children in Attar's Numeracy and Literacy group often ignored him when he did attempt to join in group talk (which wasn't often) and his mother reported that he came home upset from school sometimes and said it was because he didn't have any friends at school (26/2/01; 26/6/01). Racist taunts and being ignored may well have been the reasons why Attar held himself apart from other children in school (neither Attar nor any of the other adults that I interviewed recalled any incidents of name-calling or taunts before the Year Two incident but this is not to say that they did not happen out of the earshot of the adults). Attar certainly often ignored the children in his class on the occasions I observed him being addressed by them. Whether this was an attempt to protect himself, it is not possible to say. However, Attar's isolated, 'loner' status meant that because he did not have a close friend in the class or belong to a supportive friendship group, he did not have other children in the class to call on as a resource to help him with work, to interact and develop his English with and Attar felt his isolation and lack of friends and obviously found the situation distressing³.

³ A situation not ignored by me.

In addition, Attar spent most of the year playing on his own in the playground (13/10/00; 5/10/00). If he played with other children then he played with his younger sister and her friends who were all in Year One (21/9/00; 30/10/00) or with Hari his old friend who had been kept back in Year Two (11/10/00; 13/11/00; 18/6/01; 21/5/01). In previous years Attar had played with a group of boys at playtime who had frequently been in trouble for their poor playground behaviour. Attar reported that in Year Three he sometimes played with two boys from another class. I asked him how he made friends with them and he replied 'They do silly things. They fight. I fight' (2/11/00) thus suggesting that one of the few strategies that Attar did have of being able to find playmates was to join in with the 'naughty boys' and behave badly himself on the playground (2/11/00)

Attar at home and at school

Attar took many of the practices of school home with him. He kept an extensive diary of each day's activities at home, filling a page of this diary every night. He also arranged his bedroom to look like a study and laid out his school books in a prominent place. During one half term holiday he improvised an elaborate 'game' of school in his elder sister's empty bedroom which lasted for the whole week and which he spoke about enthusiastically to me afterwards and invited me to go and see. Conversations with Attar and adults who knew him at home revealed that he took school things very seriously and acted upon the things he was told in school.

In all of this activity though, Attar was very self-directed and did not have an elder sibling to turn to for input or for help if he was stuck with school work or making sense of school things. Although he did have an elder sister she spent most of the research year away, had not been present in the home until Attar was four years old and even when present had very little contact with her younger brother and sister. On occasions when I visited the family the elder sister remained in her room, did not speak with her younger brother and sister, and reported to me that she hardly had any contact with them. She confirmed that she did not help Attar with his school work or hear him read at home. Attar's main playmate in school and at home was his younger sister.

In terms of literacy and language outside school, Attar did not belong to a public library. Attar reported that no-one else read at home except his mum who read the Qur'an although books had been bought for him as Christmas presents. No-one else read any other kind of book including his younger sister who thought reading was boring. Attar had read to his

younger sister on a few occasions but this had not been successful. Attar reported that his mum and dad wrote postcards and letters at home.

Attar's mother had attempted to teach Attar to write in Bengali at home by encouraging him to watch a special television programme on Bangla TV which taught writing and had a series of books that parents could buy for their children to use in conjunction with the television programme. Attar had started learning in this way but reported that he had not been very successful and had stopped using the television programmes to learn. Attar also reported that his mother had tried to teach him to read and write simple words in Bengali but added that he couldn't really do it. Attar did write in English at home, he wrote extensively in his diary, wrote notes for himself about school and made a register for his pretend school.

Attar had been born in the city and had never visited Bangladesh. When asked how he described himself, Attar said that he was Bengali. He wasn't Bangladeshi like his mum and dad because he had not been born in Bangladesh. 'If I'm Bangladeshi I have to come from Bangladesh and I don't. Only my mum and dad do' (11/7/01)

Attar had once attended the Mosque school in the city but no longer went. He was not happy about this situation and reported that he had asked his mum if he could go back to the Mosque school but that his mum said it was easier for her to teach him at home. Attar reported that his mother did teach him to read the Qur'an at home and that he spent one hour each evening learning it with her.

As well as not attending the Mosque school at the weekends, Attar did not have a lot of contact with other children or other families outside school. During the research year Attar only mentioned a family of four children coming to play at his house on one occasion. Most of Attar's out of school life including the school holidays was spent at home playing with his younger sister, playing games on his computer and watching television. The only trip Attar ever referred to was to London to visit his cousins one summer. His only trip to the seaside had been with the school.

Attar did not talk to relatives on the telephone (including his father and older sister while they were in Bangladesh).

Attar did not belong to any school clubs although the school had placed him in two groups:- a nurture group that met at playtimes and in a cookery group. These are discussed below.

Attar's attendance at school had been very good in previous years and was excellent during the research year. He only missed three weeks of school in the whole year.

During the research year Attar's mother did not attend the school parent evenings. She reported to me that she had done so in the past when a Bilingual Language Assistant who worked one day a week in the school had been available to come with her and translate for her. She felt that this facility was no longer available to her.

Attar's mother reported that she and her husband had chosen Mousehold School for Attar because it had been recommended by one of the Family Literacy project teachers and that teacher had come with her into the school to meet the headteacher. She reported that she was happy with the school although earlier in the research year she had been worried that Attar would become known as a 'naughty boy' and get placed in a Special School. She was also concerned about Attar coming home unhappy because he said he didn't have any friends and the fact that Attar told her that the other Bengali children in school also picked on him at playtimes.

The family, including Attar's mother, saw Attar as a clever boy and his mother wanted him, and his sister, to do well at school and go into Further Education.

Attar's mother reported that she was not worried about her children losing their religion, culture and language as she was teaching them Bengali at home and raising them as Muslims.

Teacher responses

Over the course of the research year Attar had contact with two different adults in the classroom; Miss Birch who took the class for the first term and Mr Field who took the class for the rest of the school year. These teachers had some similar and some different responses to Attar as a pupil and as a learner. These responses and understandings had implications for Attar as a pupil during Year Three and as a pupil moving into a Year Four class in a new school.

Miss Birch, the classroom teacher in the first term

Miss Birch saw Attar as a pupil with a great deal of ability. She reported early on in the research year that he was an excellent reader (13/9/00) and wrote in a report to his parents that he was a 'very able and intelligent boy' had excellent spelling and that he read very well (18/10/00). She described him later in the term in the following manner 'he's bright, he's inquisitive, he thinks really hard' (6/11/00) when talking about how Attar took part on the carpet during Numeracy and Literacy session. Miss Birch also had a positive view of Attar's home life and the support that he must receive at home in completing school work (21/9/00; 6/11/00).

From her comments it was clear that Miss Birch had a positive view of Attar's abilities and that she had arrived at her judgement of him as a bright and able boy because of his excellent reading, the fact that he was reading Harry Potter so well, and because of his interactions and answers on the carpet especially in Numeracy. She also saw his ability to pretend that he didn't understand her for the first six weeks or so of school as another indication of his cleverness. Attar was placed in the top groups in the class for Literacy and Numeracy because he was seen as a very able pupil.

In parallel with these judgements about his ability, Miss Birch experienced Attar as a pupil who behaved badly in the classroom and pretended not to understand her and did so 'to test her out'. This was clear from very early on in the research year.

The teacher at the end of the school day asks me how I find Attar and asks if he plays me up when we are working together one-to-one. She says she feels that he is testing her out and pretends that he doesn't understand her.

(Fieldnotes 21/9/00)

Talking to Miss Birch after school. She feels that Attar is really misbehaving. She feels that she needs to establish that she is in control. She feels that it is a gender thing, that Attar doesn't accept her control because she is a woman. 'I know it's a cultural thing but I don't have any isms and so I don't want to be on the receiving end of any'.

(Fieldnotes 28/9/00)

In the report she wrote to his parents Miss Birch said that the school remained 'very disappointed with Attar's behaviour and attitude in class'.....'Attar does not try to do his best work during lesson time and has been kept in at several playtimes and lunchtimes so

that he can catch up. Attar is a very able and intelligent boy who chooses not to work for reasons of his own (18/10/00).

The reference to ‘it’s a cultural thing’ in September, and the explanation for Attar’s behaviour in relation to his ethnicity and attitudes to women, was the first explanation that Miss Birch ‘tried out’ in talking through how she experienced Attar as a pupil and what she felt was going on. Later in the term she ‘tried out’ a range of explanations for how she experienced him in the classroom.

...we did have this clash and I don’t know, I still don’t know why. I think it was because he felt that I couldn’t speak to his parents cos as a new teacher I wouldn’t have any way of (contacting them because they don’t speak English) ...he’s been very different since I sent the report home and I think that’s it. It just seems to me that, you know, if he’s so bright and so able, then why mess about unless its cos he thinks he can get away with it and now he’s found out he can’t.....he was underachieving unbelievably cos he couldn’t be bothered to do the work. He was being defiant with the work.....the fact that he was underachieving , it was to do with the personality clash between me and him. Now it might have been a personality clash. It could be that he’s got to respect you as a teacher or whatever it was that was affecting his work.....I’d love to know why, I really would love to know why.....

I was partly wondering about the whole Attar thing. Whether it was because I was female. I don’t think it was now but I did consider it for quite some time that it might be. It’s meant to be this whole um background culture of you know, like females are meant to really enjoy school because they are just treated as equals in school. Now I’ve no experience of that so I wouldn’t be able to say butI think Attar brings an attitude to school but Reena doesn’t.

(Miss Birch 6/11/00)

Here Miss Birch tries out a range of explanations for Attar’s behaviour, there was a clash of personalities, he thought that because she didn’t speak Bengali and his parents didn’t speak English she wouldn’t be able to tell them about his bad behaviour and he would be able to get away with it (when in fact she used the bilingual language assistant to go through the written report she had prepared with Attar’s mother), he couldn’t be bothered to work, he was being defiant, he was a pupil who needed to respect the teacher to work and behave for

them, whether it was because she was a female teacher and Attar was a Muslim boy. Although she rejects this last explanation (although it was something she had considered to be the explanation for quite some time) she is left with the response to Attar that he ‘brings an attitude to school’ whereas the other Bangladeshi, Muslim, child does not. It is hard to unpack how much of ‘the attitude’ that Attar brings is just ‘an attitude’ and how much it is linked in the teacher’s mind with his ethnicity and gender. The placing of the last comment after comments about being a female teacher and about the ‘background culture’ of the two Bangladeshi pupils would suggest that Attar’s attitude is somehow linked for the teacher with his ‘background culture’ and assumed attitudes to women and girls.

What is key to his first teacher’s responses to his presence as a pupil in the classroom is that because the teacher felt that Attar spent the early part of the term pretending not to understand English and was confirmed in her belief that he was pretending by the incident in which she ‘caught him out’ chatting to the other children in his Science group, she did not include in her explanations for Attar’s laziness and poor work any explanation based on the fact that Attar’s struggles with vocabulary, as we have seen in Numeracy work, may have prevented him from completing work. What the teacher understood as Attar’s ‘sloppy work’, as ‘choosing not to work’ and ‘defiance’, could have been explained by his not understanding what particular words and phrases meant or how to use English to write in science. The teacher had given a strict injunction to Attar when she had ‘caught him’ talking to the other pupils, ‘Attar, don’t ever pretend you don’t understand me again’, an injunction which closed down the possibility of Attar ever saying that he didn’t understand and asking for support from his teacher.

Miss Birch understood that being able to speak and use English socially, whilst ‘chatting’ to other children, meant that Attar was fluent in English and did not have any language needs. This, combined with his excellent performance as a reader, lead to a situation in which Attar was understood as a bright and able boy with no language needs whose poor work was to be explained by reference to his ‘attitude’ or his ‘cultural background’ or a mixture of these.

Mr Field, the classroom teacher in the second and third term

Mr Field was aware of how Attar was perceived and experienced by Miss Birch in the first term of the research year as he was Miss Birch’s mentor during her first year of teaching and she reported to me that she had consulted him about Attar’s behaviour and how best to deal with him. He was also aware of how Attar had been perceived and understood as a pupil in his Year Two class and earlier in school as he was the Deputy Headteacher. When

interviewed at the end of the research year and asked how he thought the year had been for Attar and what he felt he could say about Attar as a pupil in his class Mr Field made reference to this.

He's done well. I think the most significant news is about his behaviour as opposed to what he was like in Year Two. He was stubborn but I think that might also be a reflection of having a teacher who was a female. I'm not saying that's necessarily good, because I don't think it is. It's a worry about what sort of roles he's got of the male at home or outside of school. He's made good progress, he's an able child. I don't think he shows his best in his work. He's not always showing me his best work all the time. I've only seen glimpses of his best work and that seems to be running throughout his time in this school. Nobody actually feels he's working at his optimum level or showing us what he can do as his best.

(Mr Field 14/6/01)

What is of interest here is that this teacher picks up on Attar's behaviour as the 'significant' and first thing to discuss and, as with Miss Birch, his comments about Attar's behaviour, and his explanations for it, are embedded within comments and assumptions about Attar's ethnicity, 'cultural background' and the resultant 'attitudes' that Attar may hold. Again a picture emerges, in this account, of Attar as a child who has ability but who doesn't 'show his best', or show 'what he can do as his best'. Mr Field goes on to describe Attar as 'very, very able. He's a level higher than the majority of children, well quite a bit....He's a level or (more than a level) aboveBut its all glimpses' (14/6/01). Throughout this account there is a sense in which Attar is perceived as a pupil who makes a choices about whether to show his best work or not and as a pupil who usually makes a choice not to.

Mr Field did see some of the language needs that Attar had.

I think he does have problems with understanding. I think he listens and takes something from the carpet and he works hard but he hasn't got hold of what it was that was wanted. He doesn't ask about what he doesn't understand, like Jan does.

(Mr Field 5/2/01)

However, in this account of these needs, and Attar's problems with getting hold of what is wanted', Mr Field shifts into a comment about how Attar was not willing to ask about what he didn't understand and compares him with the other EAL pupil in the classroom who did

behave in this way. Later in the year, Mr Field commented on Attar's English language ability again in much the same way.

Mr Field: I think actually the further you tap into looking at his understanding of English in written form you realise there are still gaps. His understanding of certain problems of punctuation and the way that he writes, he keeps getting his tenses muddled up, that's characteristic of a child of his age, but for a child of his age with his ability I would say that that's more of his background, his English as an Additional Language.

Sue: Does he ever ask you the meaning of words?

Mr Field: Not often.

Sue: Because he often asks me when we're reading one-to-one and I wondered if he carried that into the classroom?

Mr Field: He occasionally will on the carpet..but not often on an individual basis. He's very different to Jan, who's got English as an Additional Language, who's very, very 'What's that mean?'. I think Attar tends to probably think 'Well I think it means this and I will go with this', until he's picked up on it and then we'll go about it and have a refocus.

(Mr Field 14/6/01)

Again, in this account of Attar, although there is a recognition (missing from other teacher accounts of Attar) that he is an EAL pupil and that he does not always follow or understand accurately enough what is required or what has been taught, Attar is presented as a child who waits for the teacher to 'pick up' on a misunderstanding or a misconception he has and who waits for his teacher to 'refocus' him, a child who chooses to coast along rather than take responsibility for asking what he doesn't understand. In other comments about Attar this emphasis remains. In each case the responsibility for overcoming his EAL difficulties lies with Attar and not within the curriculum nor the support or teaching available in school.

'writing can be good as long as Attar remains tightly focussed on what has been asked of him'

‘Attar needs to focus his attention on comprehending what he is reading rather than on how he reads. On many occasions, his understanding of what he reads is limited. Attar needs to be encouraged to say when he does not understand what a word means’

‘Content of writing is good as long as Attar listens to what has been said and he then remains focussed on what the expectations of a piece of work are. If he does not remain focussed, what results is a piece of writing that pays no resemblance to what was expected. Similarly tenses when writing present Attar with difficulties. Reading is very fluent, with lovely expression. However, Attar needs constant questioning to help him with his comprehension.

(Report Mr Field July 2001)

And the manner in which Attar is perceived only as an active agent, choosing how to be a pupil in the school is underlined in a comment made about Attar at playtime.

‘He will choose to play by himself or with a very little group of children’

(Mr Field 14/6/01)

A situation that we have heard from Attar was not one he chose and one which caused him a great deal of distress.

Attar was offered some support in school but this was for his behaviour rather than for his learning needs as a pupil. During the research year Attar was placed in a Nurture Group that met at playtime a couple of times a week and after Christmas in a special Cooking Group that met every fortnight. Mr Field explained that Attar was selected for the Nurture Group because the group was set up as a means of trying to teach certain children how to play appropriately at playtime.

Some (children) are in it as role models in order to encourage some of the children in how to play and some of the children have been selected cos we just feel they need just a little more prompting and encouragement about how to play with others. And Attar would fall into that group in my eyes.

(Mr Field 14/6/01)

Mr Field explained Attar’s placement in the Cooking Group in the following way.

Its more like an idea of a nurture group. It's a sort of nurture activity really, trying to encourage children who ...are needy in the sense of having something to bring them out a little bit more, give them that little bit more confidence, getting them to work alongside others in a more..acceptable way....Attar was sort of selected because often he's very quiet and reserved and shy and we just thought it was an opportunity just to put him in a group with other children.

(Mr Field 14/6/01)

These comments are interesting in that they reveal something of the many ways Attar was understood and perceived as a pupil in the course of one year in his schooling. The comments are also of interest in that they suggest the manner in which the school was able to provide, and thought it useful to provide, specific support for Attar's behaviour but not for his language needs as these either remained hidden or were perceived as the responsibility of Attar to address.

Conclusions

Attar's teachers' responses to his manner of taking part in the classroom and their perceptions of how he chose to interact with them had repercussions for Attar as a learner during Year Three. His teachers came to understand Attar as a very bright, able pupil who was either defiant or who chose not to do his best work. He was also seen by one of his teachers to come to school with 'an attitude' which made him a pupil that needed to be controlled.

Abu's ability to take an active part on the carpet in Numeracy session and to answer questions correctly coupled with his ability to produce an excellent performance of reading and his ability to speak English fluently at a 'conversational' level, convinced his first teacher that Attar did not have any language needs. The implications of this were that when Attar did struggle with work because he needed support with the vocabulary his teacher did not see this and assumed that Attar was deliberately not working as a challenge to her authority as a female teacher.

Attar's second teacher did recognise that Attar did have some English language needs (but not the extent of those needs). However, this teacher understood Attar, because of how Attar behaved on the carpet, as a pupil who was happy to coast through lessons and not take

responsibility for his own learning. Although support was provided by this teacher, the support was for Attar's behaviour and not for his English language learning.

Attar was a successful learner and reader in school but a vulnerable one. As he moved on into Year Four it seemed possible that his vocabulary needs would affect him more and more especially in reading and especially as pupils were increasingly required to work from worksheets, textbooks, computer programmes and instructions on the blackboard.

Attar was helped as a learner in Year Three by his engagement with school things, the fact that he had over four years experience of school when he began Year Three and the positive view of his abilities that was held by his family and by his teachers.

Attar was hindered as a learner in Year Three by a lack of recognition of his English language needs and subsequent misunderstandings about his attitude to work and to school. Attar appeared to his teachers to be an excellent reader, yet his performance of reading hid what Attar could not do. Because he tried to please his teachers and read in the manner he believed was required, Attar produced a performance of reading which, like Tumi, hid what he could not do and did not understand. Attar was not able to read for meaning in the way that his teachers assumed. As his large gaps in vocabulary were not seen, his teachers did not realise that Attar was sometimes unable to complete work in the classroom (or show his best work) because of his English language needs. Because they were not aware of this, his teachers called on other explanations for Attar's work. These explanations usually involved notions of Attar's personal traits – he was defiant and lazy. The explanations also called on notions, that were assumed, about Attar's ethnicity and gender (i.e. he was testing out his female teachers because he was a Muslim boy).

Attar was also hindered as a learner by his isolation in the classroom, the hurt (and exclusion?) caused to Attar by the racist name-calling he had experienced in Year Two and the lack of help with school work and school activities that Attar could call on at home.

Appendix Thirteen: Afia's Case Study

Afia

Introduction

Afia was seven years old at the beginning of the research year. She turned eight just before the beginning of the second term in the Christmas holidays. There were twenty-seven children in her Year Three class at school. Afia was in the same class as her cousin Faiza at Sandhill First School. In their class there were three other EAL pupils who were also ethnic minority pupils; a boy from Hong Kong who left the school early in the first term, an Indian boy and a Pakistani girl.

Afia did have friends in her class and spent a lot of time in the classroom and at playtime with Faiza. The children in her Year Three class had been together as a class in Year Two.

Afia lived with her mother and father, three older sisters and baby brother. She also had an older brother who had left home and was working in an Indian restaurant elsewhere in the county. Afia was a member of a large and very close family. During the research year Afia's father spent approximately two months in Bangladesh due to the death of his father.

Afia's mother had been born in the Sylhet region of Bangladesh and went to school there until the end of primary school (Year 5). She had moved to England when she got married. Her daughters reported that she read and wrote Bengali very well. In conversation Afia's mother could speak a little English but to talk properly we both relied on her daughters or on the interpreter to translate for us. She could not read and write in English. Afia's mother said that her experience of going to school was completely different to her children's (21/6/01).

Afia's mother was a housewife and her father worked in an Indian restaurant. Her father had been born in the Sylhet region of Bangladesh but had come to England when he was fifteen. He had attended a school in Manchester for a while but had not taken any English exams. Afia's father could speak, read and write some English. Afia reported that 'my mum doesn't know proper English but my dad does' (21/3/01).

Afia had been born in the city and had visited Bangladesh once when she was three or four years old and attending Nursery (7/6/01).

Her mother described her as 'very lively and inquisitive' as a toddler (26/6/01).

Afia reported that she spoke 'Muslim' and English at home and that she knew a little bit of Hindi and of French. She reported that she spoke to her mother and father in 'Muslim' (most of the time she referred to her language as 'Muslim' and sometimes as Bengali) although she sometimes spoke to her dad in English. She reported that she spoke to her sisters and her friend Nazmin in English. Her favourite language was 'Muslim' and reported that she felt equally good at speaking English and 'Muslim'. She had learnt Hindi from watching movies and said that she knew a lot of Hindi songs which she sung at home with her sisters. She reported 'I even sing them when I come to school (7/6/01). Afia reported that she could not read very much in 'Muslim' and that she could read much better in English (7/6/01).

On starting Year Three Afia was starting her fifth year of schooling having attended school from the Nursery Year. In addition to this when she was three she had also attended a playgroup (the same playgroup as her cousin Faiza) and had been included in the Family Literacy Project before starting Nursery. Afia had started attending Grinton School in the city but had transferred to Sandhills in her Reception Year.

Afia's attendance had been good in her previous years in school. She had only missed just over three weeks of school in Years One and Two and only one week of school in her Reception Year.

Afia had many cousins in the city and close-by as her father had two brothers and a sister who were all settled south of the city with their families. The families were close and visited each other. Afia often visited the home of one of her cousins and was visited by them in turn. The families met together for celebrations. Two of the brothers worked together and all of the families were involved in the restaurant trade. Two of the brothers were successful; one of them was a city councillor for some time. Outside of school Afia reported that she played with her cousins, with her baby brother and with friends from school (8/11/00).

Taking Part

During the second morning that I spent in Afia's classroom I recorded in my fieldnotes that 'Afia comes across as a very social child, she joins in everything' (14/9/00) and this observation was confirmed through other observations made between September and March of the research year. Afia regularly sat close to the teacher on the carpet (13/9/00; 14/9/00; 1/11/00; 24/1/01), joined in enthusiastically with all of the carpet activities, such as reading

aloud (14/9/00; 20/9/00; 24/1/01; 14/3/01; 29/3/01) and tried to join in with by raising her hand to answer teacher questions on most occasions.

However, Afia was not always successful in her attempts to join in. When nominated by the teacher to answer a question on the carpet, Afia nearly always got the answer wrong as the following examples demonstrate:

Beginning of the day. The children are on the carpet. The register is done and then Literacy Hour starts. Afia is sitting near the front to the right of the teacher...Afia bids twice at the beginning of this session. Both times she gives an incorrect answer. The activity is making words out of the word 'ANOTHER'. Afia suggests 'their' and 'noth'. The first word is a misspelling, Afia leaves the 'i' out of 'their' and the second word does not exist as a word.

(Fieldnotes 13/9/00)

In Numeracy Hour warm-up, the children have to work out how many counters are needed to make a number using a Hundred, Tens and Units Grid. The teacher asks 'How many counters would we need for five-hundred-and-six?'. At first (Afia does not bid) then Afia bids and is called on. She says 'Five' which is not the correct answer (eleven is the correct answer, five in the hundreds column and six in the units column).

(Fieldnotes 13/9/00)

The teacher is reading out David's story and is using it to talk about speech marks. She reads the text and then asks the class 'What are the words that mum said?'. Afia bids and is nominated. She replies 'My mum says 'No you don't'' rather than 'no you don't' which is the correct answer.....Later whilst practising the rhyme for the Harvest Assembly, Afia bids twice to answer questions and is wrong both times.

(Fieldnotes 14/9/00)

Beginning of Literacy Hour, the children are on the carpet. The teacher asks the class some checking questions to recap the plot of the story they are reading together from yesterday.... Afia bids (about two thirds of the class are bidding) and is nominated by the teacher. The teacher has asked the question 'Why was he making a cake for his grandmother? Afia answers 'Because he had a terrible sneeze coming' (which is the wrong answer).

(Fieldnotes 21/9/00)

In Numeracy after break, the children are practising using the Hundred Square with the teacher...Afia starts bidding for all the questions after about two minutes of the session have passed. She is nominated and gets the answer wrong.

(Fieldnotes 1/3/01)

As well as raising her hand to answer questions Afia also called out, and sometimes shouted out, answers to the teacher's questions.

Back on the carpet after doing the Literacy activity. Afia is sitting down the front close to the teacher. During this plenary time the teacher is taking bids from the children. Afia says out loud, without a bid, 'There's eight letters in there'. She is ignored. (She calls words letters).

(Fieldnotes 13/9/00)

During Numeracy the class are practising number bonds to ten. The teacher is using cubes and hiding six cubes behind her back. The teacher says 'I've got four. How many have I hidden?' Afia tries to take the floor by shouting out. The teacher says to her 'Don't shout out'. She shouts out again a few moments later. The teacher ignores her this time.

(Fieldnotes 14/9/00)

Afia is sitting next to the teacher. During the Literacy Hour Afia contributes but she confuses adjectives and verbs. During the Numeracy Hour Afia is speaking a lot. She shouts out at one point, when the teacher draws a shape on the board, 'She's done a square' then tries to show what she means by drawing the shape on her white board. She is ignored. Later when she is working, the teacher tells her 'Afia, make the corners straight'. Afia comments to me that the angles that the teacher has drawn on the rectangle 'are like wheels' (which is correct in the sense that the outer angles drawn in on the rectangle could be seen as wheels and the rectangle a square vehicle). While the teacher is drawing and explaining an angle on the board, Afia calls out 'It makes a A!' (which is correct in the sense that when the teacher draws in the angles they do make the shape of an A). Later when the teacher is using number cards, Afia calls out 'That's an angle!' pointing at one of the number cards. The teacher replies 'You'll be spotting angles everywhere' to the class, not to Afia. Later in the lesson Afia is catching dust and is not focused on the teacher or the lesson anymore. She looks up at the board and shouts out 'There's a number

missing'. This is ignored by the teacher. Afia starts to speak again but the teacher cuts across her.

(Fieldnotes 1/11/00)

(The class are recapping what they know about verbs)..the teacher asks for an example. Afia puts her hand up. Another child is nominated and says 'Swimming'. Afia calls out 'It's got 'ing' in it'. This is ignored. Afia doesn't bid for the next question.

(Fieldnotes 2/11/00)

Afia's shouting out on the carpet broke the unspoken classroom rules of interaction¹ so Afia was alternatively chastised for doing it (the teacher tells her 'Don't shout out') or ignored. On one occasion the teacher even talked across Afia to indicate that she shouldn't be speaking (1/11/00). Being ignored meant that things such as Afia's confusion between 'words' and 'letters' were not picked up on or rectified (13/9/00). Afia's taking part, her engagement with what the teacher was doing, for example when the teacher drew a rectangle on the board (1/11/00), was not encouraged or developed because Afia's engagement and taking part did not fit in with the organisational rules of classroom life (the rules required for lessons to move smoothly forward and for the interactions between one adult and twenty-seven children to be successfully managed). Unfortunately for Afia the implications of this were that she did not have the opportunity to develop her language and understanding (the shape the teacher drew was a rectangle not a square) or her thinking and engagement. This happened elsewhere in the same session, for example, when Afia called out that the angles looked like wheels and then like letter 'A's. During the year there were other occasions when Afia likened something or understood something in terms of her everyday world, just as she did on this occasion – turning a rectangle with its outer angles marked into a car with wheels. As on this occasion there was little that directed Afia towards understanding the more abstract, formal subject specific concepts that were being introduced and taught.

What was also noticeable was that when Afia did make an observation which was correct and which the teacher choose to accept (Afia's comment 'That's an angle!') the teacher's positive response was to the whole class and not to Afia (1/11/00). It is also noticeable that Faiza gets praised for her correct answer but Afia does not.

¹ see discussion of interaction patterns (Meehan) Chapter Five, p140

On other occasions Afia would bid for most of the questions the teacher asked but was not chosen very often to answer the questions. The following observation was made when I decided to keep a record during a Numeracy session of the number of times the teacher asked a question and the number of times Afia raised her hand to answer and was chosen to answer.

In the first sequence of nine questions Afia bids for six of them. She is only nominated for one question and she is chosen second after a child has given an incorrect answer. In the second sequence of nine questions Afia bids three times and is not nominated. In the next sequence of eight questions Afia bids twice and is not nominated. In the next sequence of questions Afia has stopped bidding altogether.

(Fieldnotes 20/9/00)

In the observations above Afia often stopped joining in after she either gave the wrong answer, didn't get chosen or was ignored because she had shouted out. After March of the research year I did not observe Afia bidding very much on the carpet or joining in as enthusiastically as she had in the first part of the year. In March I recorded in my field notes 'Afia listening but not bidding' (22/3/01) and later in the year 'Afia does not bid at any time in this session' (17/5/01), 'Afia not bidding to answer questions from the teacher.....Afia does not join in this speculative discussion' (29/3/01) and 'The teacher is asking what 'camouflage' means. Afia does not bid. The teacher says 'Afia are you listening or fiddling with your hair?'' (13/6/01).

Afia as a reader

When she read Afia used both pictures and text to find her way through a story. When reading with me early on in the year she laughed at an incident in the story as she read it rather than when she turned the page and saw the picture of the incident which suggested that she was taking meaning from the text as she read out loud (21/9/00). However, when reading with me a week later she used the pictures to make sense of the story and missed key things that were only recounted in the text (28/9/00). This was a pattern I observed during the whole year. Afia seemed poised between using the pictures to take meaning from a story she was reading and moving on to using the text and getting at the meaning and information that was only present in the text. Although she understood the 'gist' of a story through using the pictures and the text she often missed the nuances of the story, and sometimes key pieces of information for understanding the story, that were only present in the text.

Afia had certain resources to call on as a reader. She was often able to call on what she knew about the world to make sense of what she was reading. For example, when reading a story about a shark (who lost his teeth) she knew that sharks lived in the sea, that they had lots of teeth and that 'people don't like sharks because sharks eat people' (24/1/01). She was also often able to use such knowledge and the context that new, unfamiliar words appeared in, when she was reading, to work out the meaning of a word or what was being implied in the text.

She reads her book very fluently. She doesn't know the word 'referee' but she works it out from the context. She knows what wrestling is because she watches it on television and knows what the difference is between boxing and wrestling. She doesn't know what 'hinge' means but works out, without any help from me, by looking at where the word appears (in the phrase 'pulling the door of its hinges') that the character is very strong.

(Afia 1/3/01)

She was also able to apply things that the teacher had been talking about in class to what she was reading. In September she referred to the writing on the back cover of the book as the 'blurb' after the teacher had introduced the word in Literacy Hour earlier in the day (28/9/00) and later in the month she used the term 'root word' and talked about finding verbs by looking for 'root words' that had had 'ing' added to them, a topic that the teacher had covered in class that morning (14/9/00). In addition, Afia was able to self-correct herself when reading (21/9/00; 8/11/00; 24/1/01). She read out loud with a lot of expression and with a readerly voice (21/9/00; 24/1/01; 1/3/01).

However, despite these strengths and resources as a reader, the reading system used in the school meant that Afia chose books for herself from a book box and Afia always chose books that she found easy and comfortable to read. She always looked through a book when she was choosing from the book box, looked at the pictures and the words and rejected any book that didn't 'make sense' or had pictures she didn't like (1/3/01). The books she chose were always fairly easy readers with lots of pictures, at least one on every page. Afia could read these books, although as noted above, she did not always follow the nuances of the story and sometimes misunderstood, because of a reliance on the pictures, what had happened.

Afia's classroom teacher noticed that she was choosing a particular type of book which she considered to be 'too easy' for Afia and in the second half of the research year Afia was told to choose books from a different book box which were not quite so 'easy'. When reading a

text that she found more challenging Afia was not able to use the resources as a reader that were outlined above.

Afia has got to page eight of her book. I ask her what is happening (as I don't know the story or the book). She replies 'This man called Mr Podney and he was a baker and he had his , he had a son called Rodney and they had this party I think. Yeah. And um, and they took it to this house and they gave it; they made these cakes and they gave it to these children and they wondered if they liked it or not and the son, Rodney, says that...'I know they will like it . They will like it and then, um his dad was really calling and he (Rodney) won't come downstairs. His dad was calling him. That's all I know.

Afia then reads to me from page eight onwards. She reads fluently and with great expression.

I read the book later and the story that Afia has given me doesn't fit the story in the book. The story in the book is about the Charles brothers and Rodney. They need to invent a machine that will keep the tables in their restaurant clean.

(Afia 21/3/01)

This difficulty that Afia faced when reading harder texts than those she had been choosing was also confirmed when she was presented with a text that did not have pictures on every page and which I asked her to sequence. In this situation Afia was unable to use what she knew about reading and about texts to put the cut-up pages in the correct order.

First she tries to match the cut edges of the pages. She does identify the title page and page one. She does what she can by matching the edges of the pages and this strategy gives her page two but then she can't really decide and switches all of the pages around. She then uses the pictures, which don't help her much, and odd words like 'wish' and 'dig'. She doesn't read complete sentences.

(Afia 9/11/00)

When presented with a harder text to read, texts that her classroom teacher felt that she should be reading, Afia was unable to find her way around the text, was not able to 'take' any meaning from the text and invented her own version of a story that had very little to do with the story in the text (the only link between Afia's story and the one in the text was the

name Rodney and the context of preparing food). She also stopped being able to work out the meaning of words from their context and what she knew.

She doesn't know the meaning of the words 'swish', 'jolted' and 'grubby' in the text we have been reading

(Afia 21/3/01)

I explain what 'pulling my hair out', 'canal' and 'pong' mean. She can't use the context to guess at the meanings.

(Afia 29/6/01)

However, Afia continued to read with great expression and fluency although she was not able to follow what she was reading.

When asked about Afia's ability as a reader, her Year Three teacher replied,

She reads with just the most fantastic expression, I mean you know, she's definitely one of the most expressive readers of the class

(Mrs Winter 24/1/01)

and went on to describe Afia as a pupil who avoided reading and who chose not to stretch herself.

Afia's been choosing very, very easy books, so she's been avoiding...reading. So now we are monitoring her because she's not stretching herself, well I'm not saying she needs to stretch herself but she's just, you know, they are books she can read in two minutes and she's not into her reading and she's good at reading but the books are not suitable and she's done that, she's taken it, she can do that, make up her own mind and just go with it and hope we don't notice'

(Mrs Winter 24/1/01)

As Afia was perceived as an adequate reader ('she's good at reading') who chose not to stretch herself ('just make up her own mind and just go with it and hope we don't notice') no support or additional reading time was provided for Afia in Year Three.

It would seem from these accounts that Afia did have some problems taking meaning from text. In the case of her reading in Year Three this became more acute as Afia tackled harder

books without any additional support or guidance. Afia was able by the time she was in Year Three to read, with some basic understanding, books that her Year Three teacher referred to as ‘easy books’ and was able to read out loud fluently and with good expression. For this reason her Year Three teacher understood Afia to be an able reader. Mrs Winter understood Afia’s choice of ‘easy books’ as an attempt by Afia to take things easy, hoping that no-one would notice and that what Afia needed as a reader was someone to monitor what she was reading and make sure that she chose books that challenged her.

From these accounts and observations it seemed that Afia might continue to develop as a reader and find her own way to make meaning when confronted with more challenging texts but that there was a danger that she could ‘plateau’ and fail, because she had been left, through her Year Three experience of reading, to work out on her own how the texts she was reading made meaning.

When I asked her if she thought she was a good reader or one of the average readers in the class she replied,

I’m not really sure because I always give...normally teachers write I have good expressions, different voices all the time
(Afia 8/11/00)

Her comment would imply that she was aware that her teachers liked it when she read with good expression and different voices but that she had a sense that something more might be required to be a good reader. Afia did compare herself with her cousin Faiza who was also in her class and Faiza was ahead of Afia in terms of the book box/reading scheme that she chose reading books from (21/9/00; 28/9/00).

It would seem that Afia did not receive clear and consistent messages about what it was that she should be doing when reading. She knew that she was praised for reading with ‘good expression’ and ‘different voices’ but seemed unsure of what else was required to be a good reader like her cousin.

During the research year Afia read one-to-one with an adult (other than myself) in school on twenty-six occasions (In contrast with Year 2 when she read with an adult forty one times during the school year). This meant that on average she read one-to-one with an adult approximately once every one and a half weeks of school. Afia didn’t borrow books from the school library (14/9/00).

Afia as a learner in the classroom

Afia found aspects of Numeracy difficult. I observed at the beginning of the research year that she was very slow in counting up and down in tens compared with most of the other children in the class and that she did not really understand the concept of ‘units, tens and hundreds’ (21/9/00).

Later (in the Numeracy session) the teacher asks ‘Who is still feeling wobbly?’ Afia puts her hand up with about six other children. They are given the same worksheet as the other children but theirs has already had some answers completed. When I go over about twelve minutes later Afia is still unsure about the first question on the worksheet so we go through it together. She understands what the task is but she isn’t confident about placing the counters on the Hundred-Tens-and-Units Grid. She is fine with hundreds but doesn’t really grasp tens. If you say nine hundred and eleven she writes 9011. She couldn’t work out on her own how many counters to put in the tens column and couldn’t really say what number she had when she had put the counters in the columns.

(Fieldnotes 21/9/00)

Afia herself reported that she found Numeracy hard and that the work in Numeracy in Year Three was harder than it had been in Year Two (7/6/01). There were occasions when Afia asked for help in Numeracy or said that she felt ‘wobbly’ which was the teacher’s word for those children who had not quite grasped something that they were being taught or had to do (13/9/00). Sometimes this was accepted by the teacher – as we saw above Afia said she felt wobbly and was given a partially completed worksheet to fill in (13/9/00). Sometimes when Afia asked for help or said that she was ‘wobbly’ this was not accepted by the teacher.

(At the end of the introduction and explanation in Numeracy) the teacher says the names of some of the children who may be feeling a bit wobbly and asks if anyone else is feeling wobbly. Afia puts her hand up. The teacher with a wave of her hand says, ‘You aren’t’. Afia does not receive any extra help or support.

(Fieldnotes 1/11/00)

There were occasions in the classroom when it was possible to observe Afia engaging with new ideas in Numeracy and reaching a point where she had almost grasped what was being taught. However, a lack of opportunity to develop her ideas, language and engagement meant that she did not quite succeed in this. This observation is from the same lesson,

discussed above in the section on Taking Part, where Afia had shouted out about the angles on the rectangle looking like wheels on and letter 'A's.

Later, towards the end of the lesson, the children are back on the carpet and the teacher is showing them a 3D shape and talking about what a 3D shape is. She is asking the class, 'What is a 3D shape?' She follows this with the comment, 'It fills space' and Afia says without bidding, 'It's a thin face'. Faiza speaks next, 'Its round and flat'. The teacher repeats Faiza's offering (i.e. accepting it), 'Its round and flat'. (Afia is ignored even though she hit on the word 'face'). The teacher next says, 'If I said it had two faces would anyone know what we mean? (doesn't acknowledge that Afia had introduce the word face) Afia now stops joining in for about five minutes. Then the teacher asks the class 'Do I have a triangular face' (referring to the faces on the shape she is holding) and Afia calls out, 'When you grow up like an old lady you'll have one'.

Later Afia knows that a shape is a cuboid. The teacher asks Afia how many edges the cuboid has. She says eight which is the number of faces.

(Fieldwork notes 1/11/00)

As in the earlier observation, Afia is excluded and ignored by the teacher even though she proffers the very useful word 'face' to talk about the shape because she has not followed the interaction patterns expected (and necessary in the classroom). The teacher goes on to positively accept Faiza's contribution and to use Afia's word, without acknowledgement to Afia, in her next question to the class ('If I said it had two faces would anyone know what we mean?'). Afia stops joining in at this moment and only rejoins the discussion to respond to the teacher's question 'Do I have a triangular face?' with her, unauthorised response 'When you grow up like an old lady you'll have one'. This response from Afia could be considered as either a moment of cheeky revenge on the teacher for ignoring her earlier, as just a bit of 'cheek' or as an indication that Afia is, throughout this discussion on the carpet, staying with an understanding of the word 'face' as referring to a face with eyes, nose and mouth. There are many moments during the whole of this Numeracy session, and as we have seen when Afia is reading, when Afia engages with ideas and concepts by linking them with things she knows from her environment (cars, wheels on cars, capital 'A', faces' put in literacy ones). Perhaps at the beginning of the discussion about the 3-D shape Afia really did look up at the shape and think it looked like the shape of a face. If so by the end of the session she does appear to have sorted out for herself that the word 'face' has another meaning in maths but has not had the space in which to move on to understanding the term 'edges'. With regard to making the 'transition' from understanding the word 'face' as a

thing with eyes, ears and a nose to a concept in maths, Afia has to work this out for herself without any help from the teacher.

Afia's expertise with things she knew from her world and environment was most striking when she was called on during a Numeracy session to play the role of a shop keeper who had to give change to pupils who had bought things in her/his shop. Despite Afia's track record of wrong answers in Numeracy, when she was called on to play this role she was accurate, confident and very fast at working out the change that needed to be given.

Afia is chosen to be the shopkeeper. She works out the change very quickly, in about three to four seconds. The teacher says to the class 'Well I have to say she's the best shopkeeper so far because she got it right and she didn't give me a handful of coins. She thought about that very carefully. I'm going to give her an harder one'. So the teacher gives her another one. She is very good at this too and the teacher gives her a third one.

(Fieldnotes 24/1/01)

Afia frequently went to the shops on her own and was used to handling money, she was also used to borrowing and lending money to her sisters, so in this Numeracy lesson she was able to work within a framework of what she already knew in the 'everyday world'.

Afia's classroom teacher understood Afia's ability to play the role of the shopkeeper as an indication of her ability in Numeracy and thought that the times when Afia claimed that she found maths hard were to do with Afia's self-image and wanting to opt out.

Afia's (approach) is 'I'm not sure if this task is within my capabilities when quite often it is actually. I think particularly in Maths, I think she, her self-image is more positive in English than it is in Maths. But in fact her maths skills...are pretty good and as, did you see on the shop? I mean she was great. She was really good. But she would have sat on the carpet and said she found it hard.

(Mrs Winter 24/1/01)

As a result of her perceptions of Afia, Afia did not receive any support in Numeracy and was understood to be a capable pupil.

In terms two and three of the research year the children in both Year Three classes were able to chose which of the two Year Three teachers' Numeracy class they wished to attend. Mr Dickens, the other Year Three teacher, took the faster moving group that was intended for the more able pupils and Mrs Winter took those children who wanted to move at a slower pace and get more practice. Afia chose to attend Mr Dickens's class with her cousin Faiza. My observations of her in this classroom during the second half of the research year showed that she worked much slower than the other children (14/3/01) that she coped with the work by copying the other children (Afia also told me that this was what she did 14/3/01; 21/3/01; 7/6/01). She also spent a lot of the time in this class writing her numbers very neatly and making elaborate patterns on her white board and looking out of the window rather than taking part in the numerical work the class were engaged with (14/3/01; 21/3/01; 6/6/01).

Afia also found work in other parts of the curriculum difficult to complete. The following observation is from a Literacy Hour session at the beginning of the second term. The children had already chosen a fairy story in an earlier lesson (when I was not present) and had each prepared a story board of four pictures which told the beginning of their story. Their task in this lesson was to write the beginning of their story as a narrative. I went to sit with Afia to see what she had done and what she was doing in this lesson.

- S: So this is your story board. So tell me what's happening in your story.
- N: That's Cinderella.
- S: Yeah. And what's happening?
- N: She's sitting on the floor.
- S: Uh-hu and what's she saying here?
- N: She's saying 'It's not fair because I can't meet the queen'.
- S: OK and then which way do I go (*meaning reading the pictures*)?
- N: There.
- S: OK and what is happening here?
- N: Three ugly sisters. No two ugly sister and there's the mother..The mother's there..and I think that's Cinderella going up the stairs and that's Cinderella and the um king
- S: OK so where are these stairs? Whereabouts are the stairs?
- N: Uh uh
- S: Is this the house where she lives?
- N: Yeah
- S: So why is she going up the stairs in your story?

N: I don't know

S: You don't know. OK

Right do you want to know how to spell this the right way or did you deliberately spell it a different way? (she has spelt Cindereller)

N: Uhh....I don't know

S: Do you want to spell it the right way or do you want to spell it your new way?

N: I want to spell it the right way

We sort out the spelling

S: So how are you going to start your story?

N: *silence.....*

S: What way do people start fairy stories? Do you know any ways?

N: *silence.....*

S: How many fairy stories have you heard?

N: -----

S: OK. A way people usually start fairy stores, not always but usually, is 'Once upon a time.....

She decides to use 'Once upon a time'. She writes it in her book.

She wants to begin her story with 'Once upon a time there lived a Cinderella'. When I question what a Cinderella is she says a Cinderella is a fairy. I go on to explain that at the beginning of the story Cinderella is a girl, just a girl at the beginning. She uses this and ends up with Once upon a time there lived a girl called Cinderella.

S: What now?

N: and um nothing. She..I don't know..she talked long, worked hard.

S: She? (I didn't hear)

N: *silence.....*

S: OK I think we need to know a little more about her like where she lived, who she lives with, why she's with them.

N: She lives with the Prince

S: Does she live with the Prince at the beginning of the story?

Another child in Afia's group joins in the discussion and says 'She lives with her father at the beginning of the story and then her mother dies and then and then her father married someone else and then her father died and then she got and then her mother died yeah and she lived with her father.

N: Oh right
We decide on the next sentence.

Afia writes

S: What else do we need, what else do we need to say about her? What happens? Do you know this story very well?

N: No

S: No. OK. Why did you choose Cinderella?

N: I don't know (and laughs)

S: Is there another story you know better?

N: No

I say OK maybe I need to tell you the beginning of the story and start to do so.

(Fieldnotes and transcription combined 24/1/01)

In this conversation we can see how Afia has a Literacy task to complete which requires a certain, assumed, knowledge in this case knowledge of the story of Cinderella, or another 'fairy story'. Afia does not have this knowledge; she says she doesn't really know the story and this is clear from the answers she gives earlier in the conversation. She thinks that Cinderella is unhappy because she can't meet the queen (rather than go to the ball), that Cinderella lives with the Prince and the King at the beginning of the story and that Cinderella is a fairy. This could be interpreted as Afia wishing to rewrite or re-order the story and create an alternative version but it is clear that she also lacks a knowledge of how characters need to be introduced in a story, how character have to have a location (in a specific place) in the beginning and through a story. She also lacks knowledge about how stories begin (the particular words that can be used to signal the opening of a story) and she lacks familiarity with how narratives are driven, how they move forward and unfold. The other child who cuts in to tell us the beginning of the story of Cinderella may present a confusing array of fathers marrying and mothers dying but this child demonstrates her

familiarity with how stories work, how they unfold and move forward through the use of textual strategies like ‘and then’, ‘and she..’. Afia does not have this familiarity and does not make the shift from describing what is in her pictures to telling a story (‘she’s sitting on the floor’; ‘no two ugly sisters and there’s the mother’; ‘...and I think that’s Cinderella going up the stairs’).

With support (from me) Afia was able to begin her Literacy task as she was able to call on someone who could tell her the traditional version of the story of Cinderella and explicitly introduce some of the ways stories are written and the textual conventions involved. However, Afia was not perceived by other adults in the classroom as a pupil who needed support.

Afia did ask for help in Literacy as well as in Numeracy. (24/1/01) but tended to ask me for help rather than approach anyone else in the classroom (14/9/00; 21/9/00; 17/1/01; 7/6/01). She said that she found writing hard,

Afia: Like when she tells us what to do in the carpet I just don’t understand it and I can’t think of anything to write.

Sue: Oh I see. When you say you don’t understand you don’t understand how to do it?

Afia: Yeah.

Sue: So what do you do then if you don’t understand?

Afia: Copy.

Sue: OK that’s a good strategy. So you kind of look at what they’re doing?

Afia: Yeah.

Sue: And then and then what?

Afia: And then I just think of my own stuff and then I start to like, then I just copy a little bit and then I start to think and and then I know what they’re talking about.

Sue: So when you say you copy the other people do you ask the other people in your group or do you just look at what they’re doing?

Afia: Just look at what they’re doing

Sue: Ah OK. Can you always work it out? (571)

Afia: No

Sue: It must be quite hard sometimes.

No answer

Sue: Have you got a friend in the class that you can ask or not really?

Afia: Not really

Sue: So do you just do that in Literacy or do you do it for other things?

Afia: I do it for other things. But not for art.

(Afia 7/6/01)

At the end of the research year Afia revealed that she had quite a poor image of herself as a learner. Whilst completing her assessment of her year for her school report Afia said to me 'I'm not good at anything' (6/6/01) and chose Art and PE as the only subjects she felt she was adequate in. The next day she told me that she wasn't good at Maths. She also compared herself unfavourably with Faiza (7/6/01).

Afia and language

Afia did use her mother tongue sometimes in the classroom when she was speaking to Faiza. The classroom teacher also encouraged the children in the class to use languages that they knew when answering the register. However, on the occasions when I observed Afia using her mother tongue in class, the adult responses were not positive.

On one occasion while the children were sitting on the carpet in a Literacy session the teacher overheard Afia say something to Faiza in Sylheti.

The teacher hears Afia and says to her, in an interested voice, 'What did you say?' Afia translates the phrase for her, 'Take this'. The teacher then says, 'Isn't there a please? Say it with please'. Afia is silent, she cannot say it with please. The teacher says to her 'You've got memory holes like me'.

(Fieldnotes 8/11/00)

In Sylheti, I am told, there is no requirement to express the concept of 'please' in this way. In this incident we have an example of the teacher trying to impose the 'politeness codes' of one language and culture on to another and, in the process of doing so, denying the skills, abilities and expertise Afia has as a fluent speaker of another language. Afia herself confirmed later in the year that there is not such a way of saying please in Sylheti.

When you say please in our language, well its just like saying please but we're saying, we're still saying please but its like a different way.

(Afia 7/6/01)

Her teacher's demand for a please silences Afia in her own language and her comment, 'You've got memory holes like me' suggests that Afia is not a very competent speaker of her own heritage language.

On another occasion, during the taking of the class register, Afia was the only pupil to remember that the teacher had told the class to answer the register using another language.

When the teacher calls out Afia's name she replies 'Acha'. The teacher looks up from the register and says 'It sounds like sneezing!' The class laugh..... Later Nazma replies to her name with 'Owey Mrs Winter'. The teacher asks her to repeat it. 'It sounds like 'I've got a bucket!'' the teacher comments..... One child then replies to their name with 'Oui'. The teacher says, 'Well done, excellent. James' the first one to reply in French'. Vinnie replies to his name by quietly trying to say 'Bongiorno' helped by the teacher. She says 'It's a beautiful language isn't it?'

(Fieldnotes 14/9/00)

The messages here, stated for all the class to hear, are quite explicit. Some languages (the European languages of French and Italian) are more highly valued than others (the Asian languages of Sylheti, Hindi, Punjabi) and some languages sound beautiful (Italian) while others sound like 'sneezing' or just sound silly (Sylheti, Hindi and Punjabi). There is also a kind of permission-giving here for the class to find Afia, Faiza and Nazma's languages funny and amusing, and there is very little encouragement from the teacher for the three girls to share their languages or make use of them in the classroom. This lack of encouragement and regard for the girls' linguistic skills was also demonstrated a little later in the year when the NVQ student working in the classroom told me that she had told Afia and Faiza to stop speaking 'their language' to each other because she could not understand them (8/11/00).

These incidents demonstrate the manner in which Afia's linguistic expertise, her bilingualism and Bangladeshi identity were marginalised and undervalued by the adults in the classroom.

Afia socially

Afia was part of her class and was not an isolated pupil nor an outsider. She had friends in her classroom who she played with at playtime and outside school although she did not have a best friend (14/9/00; 9/11/00). At playtime Afia mixed with a range of children and played happily. She tended to play with Faiza and Nazma, the Pakistani girl in the class and

children, both White and Bangladeshi from Years One and Two. She moved around the playground and played a variety of games. This observation is of a typical playtime.

Afia gets outside the door first. She stands with her drink waiting. Faiza comes out and she and Afia walk together to the playground. They stand near the middle of the playground talking. Afia tries to give Faiza her drink, playing around. Then Nazma comes out and joins them. A small girl from Year One or Year Two comes out and Afia walks over to speak to her. Faiza and Warda head over to where a box has been put down for another class and talk to two children from a Year One class. A boy hugs Faiza and she speaks to a girl. Then they are all together again, talking and laughing.. Five minutes later they are playing with the two small White girls they spoke to earlier. They (Nazma, Afia, Faiza and the two girls) are playing 'Ring-a-ring-a-roses' together.

(Fieldnotes 15/3/01)

Afia at home and at school

Afia had a large family at home and a number of sisters that had passed through or were passing through the English school system. However, despite the potential for support Afia reported that she did not have any school work to do at home and that she did not read very often at home with her sisters. She only took her book bag home at weekends (21/9/00). She did report, and her mother confirmed this, that if she got stuck with something she would ask her sister Jamila to help her but implied that this did not happen very often. Her mother reported that she was not able to offer much support because of her lack of English (21/6/01).

In terms of literacy and language outside school, Afia reported that she sometimes went to the public library with her sisters (but she never spoke about any books that she had borrowed and read when we were talking about reading and books). Afia did not see people reading or writing at home unless it was her sisters doing their homework and using their school textbooks. Afia was not learning to read and write in Bengali at home although she reported that her father sometimes tried to teach the children 'Muslim numbers' at home by saying them out loud and the children copying them (2/11/00).

Afia was not expected or asked to do any translating for her family because she had a father who spoke enough English to translate and help her mother. When Afia's father was away

in Bangladesh during the research year, Afia had three older sisters and an older brother who could translate for her mother.

Afia had been born in the city and had visited Bangladesh once. She did not attend school in Bangladesh.

Afia did have a lot of contact with other children and adults outside school. She had a large family to interact with and she often saw her cousins and aunt and uncle who lived quite close by. This family visited them in their home and they often went there. This often happened on Mondays because it was the fathers' day off work. Afia also played with some of her school friends outside school (Katie, Amy and Rebecca, Kelly) and played with two other children in her class, Becky and James, on a small green by their house (8/11/00). In the holidays Afia played with her friends and went into the city to go clothes shopping with her mother and sisters and when it was Eidd she and her family were visited by another Bangladeshi family who lived across the road (24/1/01). Afia reported that she and her family had once visited a small town close to the city and hired a boat to go on the river but other than this Afia did not appear to have visited other places in the locality. She reported that the only visits to the seaside she had made had been when I took her and some of the other families to the beach and when she went with the school in Year Two (24/1/01). Afia had also attended an Indian Dancing club at school run by one of the parents but she reported that she had stopped going because it was boring. She didn't attend any other school clubs.

Afia did attend the Mosque school in the city at the weekends.

Afia's attendance at school was excellent during the research year. She only missed nine days of school in the whole year. Most of her absences were on a Monday, the day her father had a day off work.

During the research year Afia's parents did not attend parent evenings. Her mother reported that she could not go because 'of language and baby, he takes a lot of work and attention' (21/6/01). Afia's mother had attended parent evenings for her other children when the Bilingual Language assistant had come with her.

Afia's eldest sister explained how a school had been chosen for Afia.

When (my parents) moved into the house on ---- Road they didn't know anything about what schools there were so they asked their next door neighbour. Then

because Bella (the third sister) was experiencing racism at Forest Road School they moved her to Norham School and there was no one really to walk to school with Afia because mum was pregnant so Afia moved to Sandhill First (*which is close to Norham School*).

(Shami 21/6/01)

Afia's mother reported that she felt that she got enough information from the school. Even though the school sent letters she was reliant on her daughters to tell her what they said and sometimes they threw these letters away without telling her things. Afia's father read Afia's report and told his wife what was in it (21/6/01).

Afia's mother reported that she did worry about her children forgetting their Bangla, even though she felt that they all spoke and understood it well at the moment. She also felt that it was hard to bring her children up as good Muslims in the city. She reported that she had that very evening been rowing with her eldest daughter because she didn't know the Qur'an . She said that she was not concerned about sending her children to a single sex school (21/6/01).

Teacher responses

Afia was taught by three teachers during the course of the research year. There was a uniformity in how the three teachers understood Afia.

Mrs Winter, the classroom teacher

Early in the research year Mrs Winter reported that she perceived Afia as 'relaxed, attentive and confident in carpet time' and, like her cousin Faiza, as a pupil who liked attention. She added that she felt that Afia was less able to benefit, compared with Faiza, with what was on offer in the classroom (21/9/00). By the beginning of the second term Mrs Winter's view of Afia had become more negative.

Afia is less focused and she's not as able as Faiza and she does underachieve. She's more easily distracted and....she's less willing to accept challenge than Faiza....Afia (thinks) 'I'm not sure if this task is within my capabilities when quite often it is actually.

(Mrs Winter 24/1/01)

After briefly mentioning Afia's abilities as a learner in Numeracy, Mrs Winter returned to discussing Afia as a pupil in the classroom.

...she went through a bad patch just before Christmas, when her father was away. Now either she wasn't feeling very well or it was because her father was away and I don't know what, which it was, but she went through a big change and she withdrew and she did quite a lot of fasting and I think that probably affected her

(Mrs Winter 24/1/01)

Afia's identity as a pupil who withdrew and/or avoided things became a key theme in Mrs Winter's account of Afia. She saw Afia as a pupil who avoided challenge, who avoided taking part in Numeracy, who had avoided learning her lines for the school play, who avoided reading by choosing 'easy books' and who withdrew in the classroom.

She's always friendly and polite to me but she withdraws and her eye contact goes. I think avoidance is the best (way of describing it).

(Mrs Winter 24/1/01)

What is of interest in Mrs Winter's account of Afia is the manner in which she only (and always) compares Afia with Faiza (an observation which will be returned to in the next chapter) and how the focus is on Afia's perceived personality and behaviour with little mention made of Afia's actual academic achievement except for the comment about her maths being 'pretty good' and a comment about Afia being 'one of the most expressive readers of the class'. Afia's 'avoidance' is located very much in her personality ('more easily distracted', 'less willing to accept challenge') or within her home life ('not feeling very well', father being away or fasting) and no consideration is given as to whether there might be an explanation, or part of an explanation located within the classroom. Mrs Winter did not think that Afia had any needs as an English as an Additional Language pupil.

At the end of the research year Mrs Winter described Afia in the following way:

Afia is probably quite bright, she's just bone lazy.

(Mrs Winter 7/6/01)

suggesting that any problems or difficulties that Afia might have experienced as a learner in the classroom were, for this teacher, due to Afia's laziness and lack of effort.

Mrs Joseph, the other classroom teacher

Mrs Joseph also saw Afia as a pupil who did not try hard and whose personality interfered with her ability to benefit from what was on offer in the classroom.

Afia rushes a bit like a bull at a gate. She thinks that she knows what is required of her but nine times out of ten she's the one that will make a mistake. And she's careless and a bit bumptious at times. A bit uppity. She thinks she knows better and won't try as hard.

(Mrs Joseph 26/1/01)

...she does get a little bit above herself sometimes you know. She's a nice little thing. It's not a problem but then I can guarantee if she doesn't listen and then she'll go away and get it wrong but think she's done it right.

(Mrs Joseph 26/1/01)

Mrs Joseph did consider whether Afia's behaviour was due to a personality clash with her or whether this was how Afia was. Like Mrs Winter, Mrs Joseph did not consider whether some of Afia's behaviour as a pupil and learner was due to difficulties she might face as a learner in the classroom. Mrs Joseph did not perceive Afia as a pupil who had English as an Additional Language needs.

Mr Dickens, the Numeracy teacher

Mr Dickens, who took Afia for Numeracy during the second two terms, shared the same perceptions as the other two teachers regarding Afia as a pupil. Late in the research year he commented that;

Afia's got the ability. She just needs to sort herself out and concentrate. She is able to do it. She just needs to focus.

(Mr Dickens 20/7/01)

Conclusions

Nazia's attempts to join in classroom interactions during the research year were not successful and Afia became disengaged in the classroom through the research year. Her teachers came to perceive her as bright but lazy and as a pupil who did not listen or focus enough to benefit from what was on offer in the classroom. Afia's requests for help and

support were ignored as her teachers felt that she was avoiding work rather than in need of support. Her language needs and her difficulties with reading harder, age-appropriate texts for meaning, were also ignored because of Afia's identity as 'lazy' and lacking in concentration and because her teacher understood her reading out loud performance as indicative of Afia's ability to read for meaning. Her failure to initiate access to support and guidance (or oral scaffolding) in the classroom, especially during carpet sessions hindered Afia's development of language and her understanding of more formal abstract concepts that she needed to be a successful learner. She was also hindered by her lack of cultural knowledge, that was assumed in the classroom (eg a knowledge of a fairy story such as Cinderella) and her lack of knowledge about how narrative texts work.

What appeared to help Afia as a pupil was the amount of schooling she had had pre-Year Three, the help that she could call on if she wished and her friendships in the classroom and in school.

Appendix Fourteen: Faiza's Case Study

Faiza

Introduction

Faiza was seven at the beginning of the research year. As she had a January birthday, she was one of the oldest in her Year Three class because the class was made up of the younger half of the children in Year Three. Faiza was in the same class as her cousin Afia at Sandhill School and so the details about the class, about the numbers of children and her teachers are the same. Faiza also attended Mrs Dickens's Numeracy class during the second and third term.

Faiza had many friends in her class and spent a lot of time in the classroom and at playtime with Afia.

Faiza lived with her mother and father, older brother and baby brother in a local authority house close to the school. Faiza's older brother had passed through Sandhill School and during the research year he was a pupil in the nearby Middle school where Faiza would be going in Year Four.

Faiza's mother had been born in the UK, in Bradford, and had then gone to live in Bangladesh until she was about ten years old. She had then returned to the UK, to Bristol this time, had attended a language centre followed by a school and had returned to Bangladesh when she was fifteen to get married. She had moved to the research city in 1989 (16/5/01). Her education had been in both Bangladesh and in England but she did not have any GCSEs from her English secondary school because she had gone to Bangladesh to get married the year she would have sat them. Faiza's mother was a housewife. She had completed a short course run in the city so that she could work as a Bilingual Language Assistant in local schools but she had had another baby and hadn't taken up such a position while he was small. Faiza's mother could speak some English and we were able to talk without using an interpreter. Faiza reported that her mother could read and write in English and Bengali (7/6/01).

Faiza's father was not as educated as his wife and worked as a chef in one of the local 'Indian' restaurants. He did not speak any English but Faiza reported that he could read and write a few words in English (18/1/01).

Faiza reported that she saw her mum reading the Koran at home and the timetable for when to pray and that both her mother and father wrote postcards to Bangladesh (18/1/01). She also reported that she couldn't read the postcards and didn't know how to write in Bengali (18/1/01). Her father had tried to teach Faiza to write in Bengali.

He always does (try to teach me) but I never get it right cos its..its harder than English. Its harder because, cos ..its not like ours cos you don't do 'a's and everything. You need to make lines like that and curves and you know. But the only things I know is how to spell my brothers', both brothers', names and my name but now but sometimes I forget.

(Faiza 18/1/01)

Faiza was born in the city and had visited Bangladesh twice. She also visited Bangladesh during the research year and was absent from school for five and a half weeks in November and December 2000. The death of her grandfather was the reason for the visit. Faiza had many positive memories of her visits to Bangladesh when she was small. She did not go to school in Bangladesh.

Faiza's mother described Faiza as 'busy, not shy, into everything and excited about going to school' when she was a toddler. She added that Faiza was quiet as a baby but that 'she was very fast as a toddler and learnt things very fast, she wanted to do things' (13/6/01). During a visit to Faiza's home I watched a family video of Faiza and her brother when they were very small. In the video it is clear that Faiza was a gregarious toddler. Her mother reported that Faiza was 'really excited about going to school. I took her to school and left her there and she was fine. I came home. Asab (Faiza's older brother) cried when he went to school. His is shy. He was very shy. Faiza isn't shy' (13/6/01).

Faiza reported that she spoke 'Muslim', English, 'Indian' and some harder words from English .. that grown ups talk' (7/6/01). By 'Indian' Faiza meant Hindi which she had learnt from watching Hindi movies. She reported that she spoke 'Muslim' at home with her mum and dad although since her mother did the training to be a Bilingual Language Assistant she had been speaking English with her mother (18/1/01). She spoke English and 'Muslim' with her older brother and 'baby talk' in any language with her baby brother (7/6/01). She reported that she spoke to Afia in 'Muslim and English when we come to school' (7/6/01) and English with another cousin, who she saw frequently, because she was very good at English (7/6/01).

Faiza reported that she did translate sometimes at home for her father and gave the examples of translating at election time and translating written instructions for assembling a piece of furniture for her father (21/3/01).

On starting Year Three Faiza was starting her fourth year of schooling having attended Sandhill since the Reception Year. Before this she had attended a local playgroup with her cousin Nazi and she and her mother had been included in the Family Literacy project.

Faiza's family had a reputation at Sandhill School for poor attendance (Mrs Winter 14/9/00; Headteacher 8/11/00; Mrs Hazel 8/11/00). In her Reception Year Afia only missed just over three weeks of school but in Year One she was absent for fourteen and a half weeks of school. In Year Two she missed five weeks of school.

Faiza frequently visited and played with her cousins outside of school. She often visited two homes to see her cousins, one in the city and one about eight miles outside the city. One of these families had also visited Bangladesh with Faiza's family on the two occasions Faiza had been to Bangladesh (20/9/00). She did not see much of Afia outside school except at big family gatherings. She also played with her baby brother at home (7/6/01).

Taking Part

Faiza took an active part in the interactions that took place on the carpet and between the pupils and the teacher. She raised her hand to answer questions on most occasions and gave good, clear, correct answers.

Faiza is sitting (on the carpet) at the front of the class close to the teacher. She bids for everything. She bids for the word 'Whatever' before the other children and she gets nominated by the teacher. She can do it as she has done it in her book.

(Fieldnotes 13/9/00)

In Literacy, the class are recapping together the plot of 'The True Story of the Three Little Pigs'. Faiza is bidding. She is focused during the session. Faiza answers a question then bids for the next question. Later Faiza takes the floor and it is accepted. In a recap of what a description is, Faiza takes the floor again. The teacher says to the class 'Faiza is a good listener. What makes it easier for a child to

learn than others – listening’.

(Fieldnotes 21/9/00)

This joining in (and giving correct answers) continued through the research year (1/11/00; 2/11/00; 17/1/01; 24/1/01; 14/2/01; 21/3/01; 22/3/01; 17/5/01; 6/6/01). There were occasions when Faiza did not raise her hand but these appeared to be times when she did not know the answer. She started bidding again soon after and there were never any occasions when I observed Faiza not raising her hand during any of a session or for more than three or four minutes during a session. As well as raising her hand and giving answers, if nominated by the teacher or by taking the floor herself (as in the observation quoted above from 21/9/00), Faiza frequently sat near the teacher at the front of the class (13/9/00; 20/9/00; 1/11/00; 17/1/01; 14/2/01) and always looked at the teacher and what the teacher was doing during a session on the carpet (13/9/00; 14/9/00; 21/9/00; 2/11/00; 17/1/01; 24/1/01; 14/3/01; 21/3/01; 29/3/01; 6/6/01). Faiza always joined in the reading out loud on the carpet (which was a frequent practice in this classroom in the Literacy Hour) with great enthusiasm (20/9/00; 24/1/01; 14/3/01; 29/3/01).

Not only was Faiza chosen to answer questions by the teacher when she raised her hand but she also received very positive, public feedback from the teacher about her answers. We saw this in the observation quoted above (21/9/00) when the teacher responded to Faiza’s answer (which Faiza had shouted out - she had not waited for the teacher to nominate her) by praising her for being a ‘good listener’ a social practice highly valued in the classroom (she did not chastising her for calling out). Other observations of Faiza’s taking part, of the teacher’s positive, public feedback and of the teacher taking the time to guide and develop Faiza’s answers are as follows:

Faiza is sitting on the carpet about two rows back from the teacher. Faiza bids for the first question for the teacher. The teacher is talking about verbs. In Numeracy after break, Faiza bids for every question. She gets nominated and gives an answer which the teacher helps her with by repeating her answer and changing it slightly so that the language is used more appropriately, ‘It has got four straight lines that are the same length’. The teacher smiles at Faiza after this interchange.....The teacher says to the class, ‘Faiza jolly nearly got there, she was a lot further ahead than anyone else’.

(Fieldnotes 1/11/00)

After break, during Numeracy which is about fractions, Faiza is sitting right at the front and is bidding for every question. About one third to one half of the class are bidding.....Faiza is nominated twice and give corrects answers and gets a verbal positive evaluation from the teacher on both occasions.

(Fieldnotes 14/2/01)

In Literacy Hour, Faiza bids in response to the teacher's question 'Why were the people desperately worried?' Faiza is chosen and gives a very full answer. The teacher says to Faiza and the class 'That was a very full answer'.

(Fieldnotes 29/3/01)

Faiza also receives positive feedback from the other pupils in the classroom:

Literacy Hour. Faiza looks tired. She bids for a question though and gives an answer. The teacher accepts and reinforces her answer and explains that it is a prediction about what will happen that she has given. Later, as the class read on together, another child in the class calls out 'Faiza was right'.

(Fieldnotes 6/6/01)

As the year progressed Faiza took the opportunities that presented themselves to take part and use language.

On the carpet at the beginning of day. Faiza is sitting a third of the way back. When her name is called in the register she tells the teacher and the class some news about doing her homework the night before and taking part in Red Nose Day. It is a clear two sentence explanation.

(Fieldnotes 14/3/01)

In Literacy Hours the teacher has a discussion with the children about the portrayal of Germans as evil in the video they are watching about evacuees (Good Night Mr Tom). This is a chance for children to use language, to ask questions and tell things. Faiza joins in and says, 'War always means that there is an enemy'

(Fieldnotes 16/5/01)

The class have a supply teacher. She asks the class to tell her what is happening in the video 'Goodnight Mr Tom'. Faiza bids and is called on twice. She is making

use of opportunities to speak, to use language. She gives a competent explanation of why the child in the story has to leave London.

(Fieldnotes 17/5/01)

The children are telling their news at beginning of the morning....The children say their news after their name has been called if they wish to. Faiza tells about her Ludo game and her baby brother.

(Fieldnotes 7/6/01)

Faiza took a successful part in classroom interactions and used the opportunities presented in the classroom. She was supported by the teacher who publicly praised her, who accepted her answers even when she called them out and Faiza even appeared to have a positive image amongst the other pupils. She was provided with, and took, opportunities during the year to use language and to have her language developed by the teacher.

Faiza as a reader

Faiza could read and talk about the books she chose to read at school. When she read she did not get stuck with the meaning of the words on the page and she could talk about what she had read if she used the text and the pictures as a support. Faiza did not need to ask me for the meaning of unfamiliar words during the year. When asked to sequence the cut-up pages that told the beginning of a story she was able to use what she knew about books and her ability to read for meaning to complete the task although she did start the task by using the pictures.

Faiza sets off very confidently. She moves quickly through the pages. She identifies the title page and first page very quickly and then uses the pictures exclusively to arrange the order (she uses the themes or concepts of above ground, below ground to order the pictures). She then hands the pages to me. I ask her if it is the right order (it isn't). She starts to tell me her version of the story but when I ask her 'How did the children get into the mole hole? she cannot answer. I ask her how we could find out and she says, 'Read'. It is when she is reading the text that she realises the 'story' she had given me doesn't work. Now when she does read the text she can do it. She puts the pages in an order that works as a beginning of a story.

(Fieldnotes 17/5/01)

Here Faiza shows here that she could follow the meaning of a text (she is the one to spot where the story does not make sense in the version she has put together for me). She knows enough to know that to check whether the story is put together in a way that makes sense that it has to be read and she is able to use structuring ideas like above ground and below ground to give some order to the story. She uses what she knows about titles,

I ask her how she knew the first page was the first. 'Because that is always there (pointing at the title) and that always says the title'. 'How did you know that that page came next?'. 'Cos it tells you, like some stories, it tells you the next bit is about 'Into the Centre of the Earth' or something like that. The one is 'Into the Ground'...she also recognises the need to put together and order 'because they shut their eyes' and 'opened their eyes'

(Fieldnotes 17/5/01)

Faiza did not strive after a high reading status in the classroom and was self-aware about where she was in a hierarchy of readers.

Sue: Who are the best readers in your class?

Faiza: Louis, Becky and Stuart and James

Sue: OK. You don't think you are?

Faiza: Well I ain't on the highest book and James passed Badger Box 5

Sue: Ahh, I see. So that's how you can tell. It's where the children are in the boxes?

Faiza: Yeah and James reads really fast.....

Sue: So what are you on now then?

Faiza: Badger Box 1.

Sue: So is the next thing for you Badger Box 2

Faiza: Yeah. Then Badger Box 3, then Badger Box 4 and then Badger Box 5 is choosing any book you want.

Sue: So where's Afia?

Faiza: She's on Badger Box 1 as well.

Sue: Oh. Is she?

Faiza: Yes because we both read well to the teacher but we're not that high. If you're on Badger Box 1 then you are a good reader and if you pass that then you're really the thing.

(Faiza 24/5/01)

Faiza here also reveals how aware she is of other readers in the class and how she is able to judge their reading ability by where they are in the school's system of boxes for reading. She also reveals how 'reading fast' gives another child a high status. She appeared as a pupil who perceived herself as a good reader who was about to move on to be a very capable reader ('then you're really the thing').

Over the course of the research year, Faiza revealed quite a lot about how her home experiences helped her in school especially in terms of reading. She reported that her mother had helped her learn to read before she started school when she had been receiving support at home through the Family Literacy Project. She reported that her mum had been able to do this because her mum knew English (21/5/01). She also reported that her mum tried to get both her and her brother to read each evening when they came in from school (20/9/00). This was confirmed by Faiza's mother. Faiza said that she didn't always comply with this but that she did read later in the evening between 8pm and 9pm. Faiza also reported that her mum was limited these days in how much help she could give her because of the baby (21/3/01). Faiza used her reading skills and English at home to help her father. During a Literacy session where the children had to write a sequence of instructions with very little pre-teaching of what instructions look like and the textual conventions that are employed to write them, Faiza reported that she had found the task quite easy.

I have done instructions before. I actually read them out cos my dad doesn't know how to speak English yet and my mum does but she needs to take care of my little baby brother so I need to read them. I read these hard ones but the words that are hard, I actually sound them out and see if I'm right or wrong.

(Faiza 21/3/01)

In contrast to her experiences of reading (in English) at home, Faiza mentioned that she didn't get to read in school very often in Year Three. This was in response to a question I asked her in March about why she still had the same reading book that she had brought to read with me in February. 'Its because I don't get to read often cos on every Tuesday (the day the class read one to one with the classroom assistant during swimming) I don't get to read to Miss Winter' (21/3/01). According to her reading record, Faiza read to an adult approximately three times each month.

Faiza as a learner in the classroom

Faiza had clear ideas about her abilities and identity as a learner. We can see something of this above in terms of reading. She also had a clear idea about who was good at maths, her own ability in this subject and what else she was good at in the classroom.

Faiza and I are talking about a task she has done in Numeracy. It was a practice test. She says that although she may have made one or two mistakes she thinks she did alright 'Because I'm very good at maths'...

Sue: So you're good at maths are you?

Faiza: Yes

Sue: And who else is good at maths in your class?

Faiza: Um Stuart and James and probably Nazma (05)

Sue: So what else are you good at Faiza?

Faiza: Um I'm also good at art.....

Um when I grow up I want to become an artist and it's like it's like the right thing for me to do and my mum thinks I have talent to be an artist so she might put me in, in art school.

Sue OK. What kind of art would you like to do? Do you know?

Faiza: Like um painting

Sue: Painting. Painting pictures?

Faiza: Yeah

Sue: Not sort of painting to make adverts but painting pictures of/

Faiza: /No like because art means like um I've got peace and like I can draw whatever I want, what's in my mind and ..and like be a real artist.

(Faiza, Fieldnotes and Transcription 7/6/01)

Sue: Is there anything in school you're not good at?

Faiza: I'm good at everything.

Sue: I think you're good at everything too.

(Faiza 7/6/01)

Faiza demonstrates here her identity as good at art and 'everything'. She also had a clear future idea of herself, an ambition. She wanted to be an artist and go to art school and she

can connect this ambition with who she is and what she is good at in the classroom at this time in her life. None of the other children I interviewed during the research year, either amongst the case study children or the other White monolingual children, expressed an ambition for the future and none formulated such a clear sense of what they wanted to be in relation to what they felt they were good at in their Year Three classroom.

Faiza demonstrated a sophisticated understanding of why she wanted to be an artist and how to become an artist. What is of interest in the second observation is not just Faiza's confidence about her abilities as a learner but how I reinforce her identity as 'good at everything' in collusion with her.

When asked to explain how she knew she was good at maths, Faiza called on the teacher's behaviour and comments as the way in which she was able to judge who was and who was not good at maths.

Sue: So who in your class are the people who are good at Numeracy then, maths?

Faiza: Me, Louis, and James, Stuart and Becky and um I guess Paul.

Sue: OK. So how do you tell in maths who's good at maths and who's not?

Faiza: Because Miss Winter she always shows their work if its good yeah and Paul got this question right and it was really hard and she said 'You're a super brain' or superstar or something and everyone was laughing because he was good and he was like shy.

(Faiza 24/5/01)

The teacher had a powerful role in Faiza's life. The importance of the teacher's evaluation and public praise of pupils in determining their identity at being good at something, at least in Faiza's eyes, is also revealed in the following.

The classroom at the beginning of the afternoon. The children are replying to their names in the register. Some children reply to their name and give their news and say whether they have had a good playtime etc. Faiza says, 'Good afternoon Mrs Winter. I am really looking forward to art'. The teacher says, 'Yes you really like art don't you'. When Nazma answers her name she says 'Faiza wants to be an artist when she grows up'. The teacher replies 'Yes I know and I think she might well be an artist when she grows up. She's good at art and enjoys it. Its good to do

something that you enjoy'

(Fieldnotes 13/6/01)

Here the teacher reinforced Faiza's sense of being good at art and both the teacher and another pupil in the class further Faiza's identity as a pupil with an ambition to be an artist. We have seen above when considering Faiza as a reader that her peers in the classroom often reinforced her positive identity as being an able pupil (6/6/01) and during group work the pupil's in her group took instructions from Faiza in how to complete a task (1/11/00).

As a learner, Faiza revealed herself to be a pupil who had embraced school life and its norms and expectations. She often spoke about school things using the 'voice' and the kinds of words and ideas that she had heard the teacher using, especially when talking about learning in school and following rules.

Sue: So why do you think we learn to read and write in school? Why do we have to learn to read?

Faiza: Because if you didn't go to school (very emphatic), and Ben don't come that often, yeah, he just comes seven times, you wouldn't learn that much.

Sue: You wouldn't learn that much. Do you think it's important to learn things?

Faiza: Yeah, cos if someone said, 'Thank You' you wouldn't know what to say back, so you wouldn't have learned anything. And if someone was talking about the World War Two and you said 'What is the World War Two?' and you hadn't been listening or learning or anything.

Sue: So you think it is important to learn?

Faiza: Yeah because I don't have target and I think school is important too. I don't even have a target.

Sue: Well you do very well in school don't you?

Faiza: Yeah

Faiza used the teacher's and the school's language a lot. She used words like 'wobbly' and 'non-wobbly' and repeated the teacher's language about what kind of child she was 'cos I love numbers' (18/1/01). She accepted the identities or descriptions that were made of her.

During the Numeracy Session when I am asking Faiza and Afia if they would work together so I could hear them read Faiza says, 'No cos um cos she's wobbly' (meaning Afia). I say 'and your non-wobbly?' and she replies 'No cos I love

numbers’.

(Fieldnotes 18/1/01)

Faiza did not receive any EAL support during the research year.

Faiza and language

Faiza did not have many struggles with the language she encountered in her reading or in classroom activities. Like many of the children in her class, her oral language demonstrated her acquisition of school words. Her oral language did show how she was able to use English to explain herself, especially when she was talking about activities in the classroom, and how she found this more difficult when talking about things that occurred outside the classroom. For example, this attempt by Faiza to tell me about an incident on a school trip shows how she didn’t always have access to the vocabulary that she needed and signals how important having opportunities to use English with her peers and adults to explain and describe were to her. Faiza’s explanation also demonstrates how she incorporated classroom language into her speech (the sophisticated use of ‘hexagon’ and ‘pentagon’).

We went to ----- when we were in Miss Pinter’s class and we went on another trip that was..um..somewhere, can’t remember that name, but we went under these, you know those things like, um, those corner things, and they have, they are made out of wood, right, but colour like a tree house but not on a tree, and not made out of house, just like made out of wood and kind of like a hexagon or pentagon and they have wood fences yeah. Well we went in one of those, right, and we went under it and we had our lunch there yeah and Luke, yeah, he was right at the side and it was raining and Luke was at the side and he got soaked.

(Faiza 24/5/01)

One problem that Faiza did face as an EAL pupil in her classroom was with regard to homework. Early in the year she reported that she found it hard to do a homework set by the teacher because she had no-one at home to ask (nor a dictionary). The task was to find out what the word ‘granary’ meant. Even though her mother spoke some English, as Faiza put it, ‘She didn’t learn all the words in the whole wide world’. Faiza felt strongly that she could not go to the teacher and ask for help with this homework because ‘it is homework’ (20/9/00).

As with Afia, as we have already seen, Faiza’s mother tongue was not valued or accepted in the classroom.

Faiza socially

Faiza had a group of friends she played with at playtimes through the research year – Afia, Nazma and two younger girls. Other White monolingual children moved in and out of this group on the days I observed in the playground. Faiza played ‘Mums and Dads’ and ‘racing-around games’ with her friends and she reported having lots of fun at playtime. It was clear that Faiza was not an isolated pupil. She also interacted with other children in the classroom although often chose Afia or Nazma to do pair work with. Faiza reported herself that her main friendship group in the classroom and in school was herself, Nazma and Afia (24/5/01). It is of interest that the three South Asian girls in the class stuck together in the playground, and to some extent in the classroom, and that the other children they played with were younger White children rather than children in their own class.

Faiza at home and at school

Although Faiza had an older brother at home who had passed through the English school system since his Reception Year, Faiza did not use this older sibling to help her with her school work. In fact, Faiza helped her older brother with his school work (7/6/01). Faiza was seen by everyone, including herself, as being more able and often ahead of her older brother. Faiza's mother reported that Faiza was doing better at Qur'an School than her brother. She also said that her eldest son had problems with spelling and writing in English school, 'he doesn't know which letters make which sound....he doesn't have a good memory' (16/5/01). She also identified her son's shyness as a reason for his poor achievement in school (16/5/01). Faiza's teachers, whenever asked about Faiza, always mentioned her brother and compared Faiza favourably against her brother and Faiza herself reported that she was not shy like her brother (13/6/01). In conversation Faiza frequently compared herself with her brother,

Was that (at home) where you started to learn to read or was that when you came to school?

Well I learnt to read with, well my brother didn't learn to read until he was in , you know, Neera, which class she's in

OK about Year 2

No Year 1...because he got all his letters wrong, in a different order, you know 'l', 'r', 'e', 't', and that and that didn't make a word

(Faiza 24/5/01)

Thus Faiza did not call on the resources of her older brother to help in school. Rather her older brother seemed to play an important role in creating and perpetuating Faiza's identity as a bright and able pupil. He provided a convenient 'Other' for Faiza, her mother and her teachers to compare Faiza against and find her able and clever.

In terms of literacy and language outside school Faiza reported that her mother did try and insist that she read at home every evening for an hour and that she did do this before she went to bed. Faiza's mother reported that when Faiza had been younger she had been able to hear her read, teach her a bit and help her with her school work but since the baby had come along she had been unable to do that because she had to look after the baby and her husband did not help her (13/6/01). Faiza did not belong to the public library. She had been taken there but she reported that she found it too boring and too quiet (20/9/00).

Faiza did occupy herself at home by creating school-like tasks to complete. She reported that when she had been younger she had used the tins in the kitchen cupboard for counting. She also reported that she did things like her two-times-table at home and got her brother to grade it claiming that 'I only got one wrong'. She said that she often made homework tasks up to do at home (21/3/01) and that she also pretended to be a teacher to pretend pupils (6/6/01). 'I read to them and tell them about north, south and stuff' (6/6/01). She said that she also wrote at home when she was pretending to be a teacher. She wrote about maths 'and I write about myself and how I want to be an artist' in a special book (7/6/01). These home activities support the view of Faiza as a pupil who has embraced school life and culture.

Faiza also reported that her father taught her sometimes at home. He taught her 'Muslim numbers' by saying them out loud and Faiza and her brother copied them by reciting them after him (2/11/00). Faiza's mum said that she was going to teach Faiza and her older brother to write in Bengali when the children were older (16/5/01). She had a Beginners' Level book ready to use with them. Faiza's mother reported that she could write in Bengali but that she didn't get much opportunity to use it. She wrote letters to Bangladesh and she used it when she was in Bangladesh (16/5/01).

Faiza did go to the Qur'an school in the city on Saturdays and Sundays with her older brother (16/5/01). Otherwise Faiza spent her time outside school playing at home, writing and making up homework activities as we have seen above and visiting her cousins. Faiza mixed with a good number of adults and children outside school. These adults and children were members of her extended family. She also travelled with her family to places like Alton Towers, London and the seaside (24/5/01) in the family car. A school trip to London

during the research year would have been the first time Faiza had been on a train and the London Underground. Unfortunately, Faiza missed the school trip because her father left it too late to drive her to the railway station where her class were meeting and the train and her class had already left when they arrived at the station. Faiza was very upset about this. Faiza had only visited places in the county on school trips.

Faiza did not belong to any school clubs although she had gone to the Indian dancing club but had stopped 'because it was getting boring and my dad kept on coming late. Cos he always came at half past and it finished at four and I had to wait' (24/5/01).

Faiza missed ten and a half weeks of school during the research year. Five and a half weeks were spent in Bangladesh because the family needed to go to attend the death of her grandfather. These ten and a half weeks accounted for almost a quarter of the school year. Faiza did not appear to be very disadvantaged by this absence. Early in the year when she missed odd days it was noticeable that Faiza could not take part in certain interactions on the carpet because she had been away (13/9/00) however, in these situations Faiza quickly picked up what the class were doing and before the end of the session was contributing to what was being discussed. This was observed in Literacy (13/9/00) and Numeracy (13/9/00). Her teachers did not report that Faiza's absences during the research year had held her back in anyway.

Neither of Faiza's parents attended parent's evenings during the research year. Faiza's mum reported that she found out how Faiza was doing at school through reading her school reports. She felt that the reports were good and gave her enough information (13/6/01). Faiza claimed that her mum knew how she was doing at school 'cos I tell her'. Faiza's mum did not think that she could help her children more at home because she could speak and read and write in English although she did feel could translate for them and help them that way (13/6/01).

Faiza's mum reported that she chose Faiza's school 'because it was the nearest one. I asked people and they said it was a good school' (13/6/01). She said she was happy with the school and thought it was a good school. Faiza gave all her school letters to her mum and her mum signed them for her (7/6/01).

Teacher responses

There was a great deal of similarity in the way Faiza's classroom teachers perceived and understood Faiza.

Mrs Winter, the classroom teacher

When speaking about Faiza and her identity as a learner and her abilities as a pupil in the classroom, Mrs Winter compared Faiza with her older brother Asab or with her cousin Afia and always found Faiza to be the abler pupil.

She is very capable unlike Asab.

(Mrs Winter 14/9/00)

Faiza is more able to benefit from what's on offer than Afia.

(Mrs Winter 21/9/00)

..they are so different (Asab and Faiza) you can't believe they're from the same family.

(Mrs Winter 24/1/01)

Faiza is a very bright girl. She is so different in her behaviour to Afia

(Mrs Winter 7/6/01)

Mrs Winter responded very favourably towards Faiza because of these comparisons and because how Faiza took part and interacted on the carpet.

She's very responsive, she's good on the carpet...she's quite focused.....she's quite flexible really. I think, I think when I first got her she underestimated her own abilities..and I think that she will find her work comes easier and easier and easier as she goes along. She has got good solid basic understanding knowledge, that's how I see her within this group. At times she holds back. She's not somebody who just prattles on but she will respond appropriately and she, her answers are nearly always, you know, accurate and right so she has good listening skills. No problems at all I think.

(Mrs Winter 24/1/01)

As a result of her ability to take part so appropriately on the carpet, Faiza was placed in the top group in the class for Numeracy and Literacy (24/1/01). As we have already seen Faiza was also in receipt of a lot of positive feedback and public praise in the classroom, which was not offered to all the children in the class, and she was placed in a position in the classroom in which she could take the floor without chastisement and make good use of opportunities to use and develop her language.

Mrs Joseph

Mrs Joseph felt that she could not comment very much on Faiza as a pupil as she hadn't seen a lot of her because of Faiza's absences. However, Mrs Joseph, like Mrs Winter discussed Faiza in relation to Afia and reported that she found Faiza to be,

Quieter, totally different to Afia..and more serious in a way, both in her looks
funnily enough and the way she conducts herself and in her attitude. She'll try a lot
harder you know than Afia. She's more committed to her school work
I think she's a good average and I suspect that she could probably be better. She tries
really hard.

(Mrs Joseph 26/1/01)

Again Faiza is compared with Afia and is viewed more favourably than Afia. Faiza's commitment to school work, that is the way she behaves in the classroom and presents herself, is also key to this teacher's understanding of her as a pupil. The comment 'totally different....in her looks funnily enough' would suggest that the teacher assumed Bangladeshi girls to look alike (she did not know that the two girls were cousins and so she was not expecting a family resemblance).

Conclusions

Faiza's manner of taking part in the classroom, her enthusiasm, her correct, concise answers to teacher questions, her commitment to the values of the classroom and the fact that she was perceived to be very different to her older brother (and to Afia) meant that she gained a very positive identity in her classroom. Her teachers perceived her as an able, hard working pupil. As a result of this, Faiza received many opportunities in the classroom to use, practice and develop her English¹ and Faiza made good use of these opportunities. She also received public praise and encouragement from her teachers.

Fazia was successful as a learner and a reader. She was able to play an active part in classroom activities and to have access to the language and learning that were appropriate for her as a pupil. She chose books that were appropriate to her development as a reader and did not feel the need to strive for a high status as a reader with her teachers or in relation to her peers.

¹ But not her mother tongue.

Fazia was supported as a learner and a reader by the classroom context, her teachers and her positive identity as a pupil at school. She had also been supported in the past by her access to pre-school education experiences and help from her mother at home.

In comparison with the other case study children, there was little that impeded Fazia in school during the research year. Unlike many of the case study children, Fazia had found a way of taking part that accorded her the resources and opportunities she needed in the classroom to be, and to continue to be, a successful learner.

Appendix Fifteen: The Sequencing (Reading) Activities Used With Children in the Three Classrooms

These three reading activities were created by photocopying the beginning of three story books present in the research classrooms. The pages for each story were cut up and the page numbers removed.

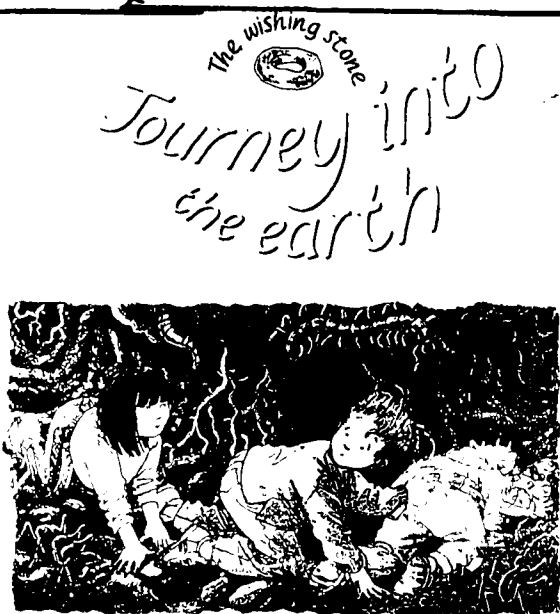
When used in the classroom the (shuffled up) pages from the beginning of a story were given to a child and the child was asked to put the pages in the/a right order to make the beginning of the story. The children were told what the story was about and who the main characters in the story were. There was no time limit. After the child had completed the task the child was asked to explain how they had gone about doing the task and to read the beginning of their story. The activity was taped. Each of the case study children was also videoed on at least one occasion.

The activity made it possible to observe and discuss what kinds of things the child did when 'reading' and what they knew about how story texts work. The activity also made it possible to observe to what extent making meaning was important to the child as a reader.

The three stories chosen were of different reading levels. 'Journey into the Earth' was the more complex text, 'Mog and Bunny' the least complex text.

Story Beginning One: Journey into the Earth

Eleven pages in total. Six pages were given to start with, the remaining five were passed to the child when they felt that they had sequenced the first six correctly. This was done so as to not overwhelm the child at the beginning of the activity.



Written by William Edmonds
Illustrated by
Shelagh McNicholas and Robert McPhillips

Heinemann

A

Into the ground

It was a warm day.
Yasmin, Jack and Lee were playing
in the park when they saw a molehill
by a tree.
'I wish we could see what it's like down
under the molehill,' said Lee.



B



'Let's make a wish on the magic stone,'
said Yasmin, and she took out of her
pocket a little stone. It was pink and
grey and blue, and in the middle was
a hole. Lee put his finger in the hole.
Then they all shut their eyes and
whispered, 'One ... two ... three ...
wish-sh-sh-sh.'

C



When Yasmin, Jack and Lee opened their
eyes they were in a long dark tunnel.
'It's very dark in here,' said Jack.
'I don't like it,' said Lee.
'I wonder where we are,' said Yasmin.

D



'You are in my home,' they heard someone say.
The children turned round and saw a big black animal with a long pink nose. It was a mole.

E

'Welcome to my home,' said the mole.
'Would you like to eat some worms and beetles?'
'No, thank you,' said Yasmin. 'But we would like to have a look around your home.'
'Then follow me,' said the mole. 'I can't see very well but I'm very good at hearing.'



F



Yasmin, Jack and Lee followed the mole down the long dark tunnel.
'Who made this tunnel?' asked Lee.
'I did,' said the mole. 'I'm very good at digging.'

G

'They had not gone far when the mole stopped.
'Ssh,' he said, 'I can hear something.'
'We can't hear a sound,' said the children.
'I can,' said the mole, 'and what's more I can smell a fox.'



Just then a big red nose came pushing down the tunnel.

H



I

'Dig!' shouted the mole. 'Help me make a wall to keep out the fox. Quick!' So they all began to dig as hard as they could.



J



Soon there was a big wall right across the tunnel.

'Good,' said the mole. 'We are safe from the fox, but not for long.'

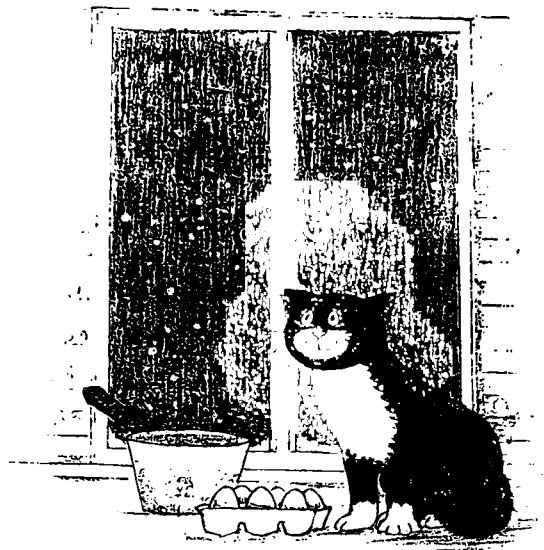
The mole began to dig a new tunnel as fast as he could.

K

Story Beginning Two: Mog on Fox Night

Eleven pages in total. Seven pages were given to start with, the remaining four were passed to the child when they felt that they had sequenced the first seven correctly. This was done so as to not overwhelm the child at the beginning of the activity.

Mog on Fox Night



Judith Kerr


PictureLions
An Imprint of HarperCollins Publishers

For Daniel, Rebecca,
Katie and Rachelle

Mog on Fox Night is ideal for children beginning to read as it uses a limited vocabulary of about 200 words.

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A

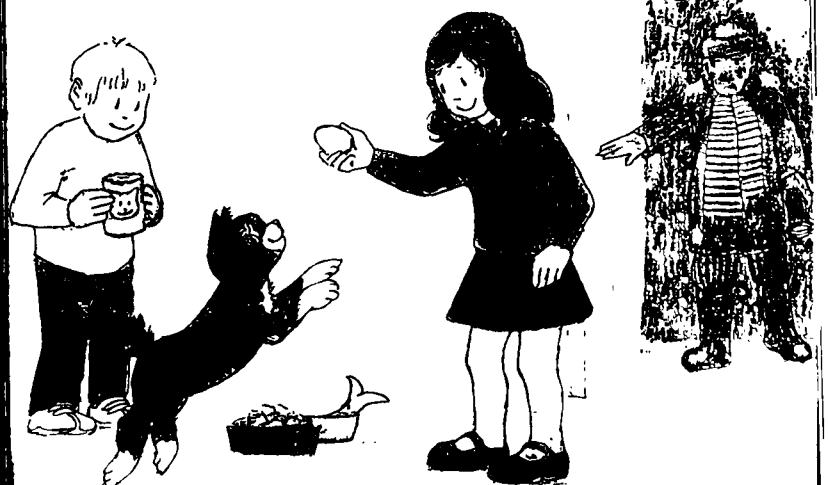


One day Mog did not want to eat her supper. It was fish. But Mog always had an egg for breakfast. She thought, "Why shouldn't I have an egg for supper as well?" She looked at the fish. Then she looked at Mrs Thomas. She made a sad face. "Oh dear," said Mrs Thomas. "Perhaps that fish isn't very nice."

B



"I'll give her some kitty food," said Nicky. Mog looked at the kitty food. Then she looked at Nicky. She made an even sadder face.



"I know," said Debbie. "She wants an egg." Just then Mr Thomas came in from the garden.

D

Mr Thomas had been putting the binbags out for the binmen to take away in the morning. Mr Thomas did not like doing the binbags. He liked it even less when it was snowing, and he was cross.



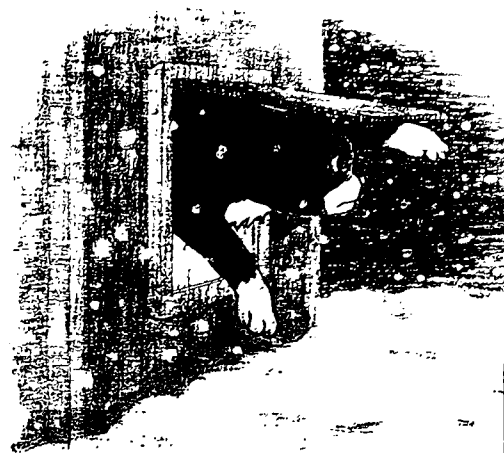
He said, "You spoil that cat. That cat has been given two suppers and has left them both. She is not to be given an egg as well. In fact, if that cat does not eat every bit of those two suppers, she will not get an egg for her breakfast either." And he put the egg back in the fridge.

E



Mog was very sad when the egg went back in the fridge. She was also very cross. She hissed at Mr Thomas. Then she hissed at the fridge.

And then she ran through her cat flap and out into the garden.



F

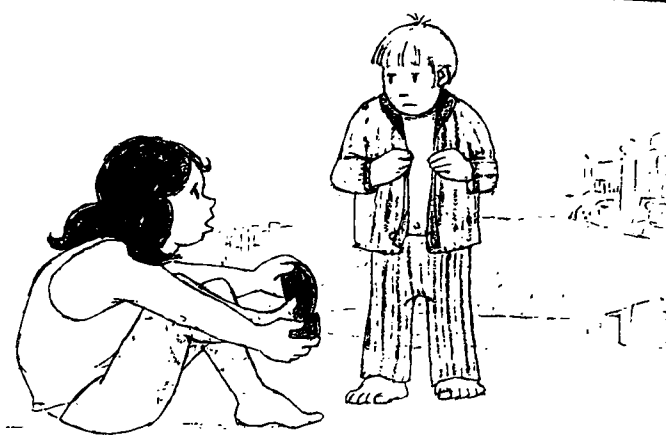


The garden was very cold. There was snow everywhere.



But there was no snow under the binbags. Mog crept under a binbag and went to sleep.

G



Debbie and Nicky were sad too when they went to bed. "Mog never eats anything she doesn't like," said Debbie. "She'll never eat that fish and the kitty food." "And then she won't get an egg for her breakfast," said Nicky. "She'll be so cross."



Mog was cross even in her sleep.

H



She had a cross dream.
It was a dream about Mr Thomas.
Mr Thomas had put all the eggs
in the world into a binbag.
He wanted to take the binbag away.
Mog tried to stop him...

I

Suddenly she woke up.
There was snow all over her.
The binbag had gone.
Had Mr Thomas taken it away?



J

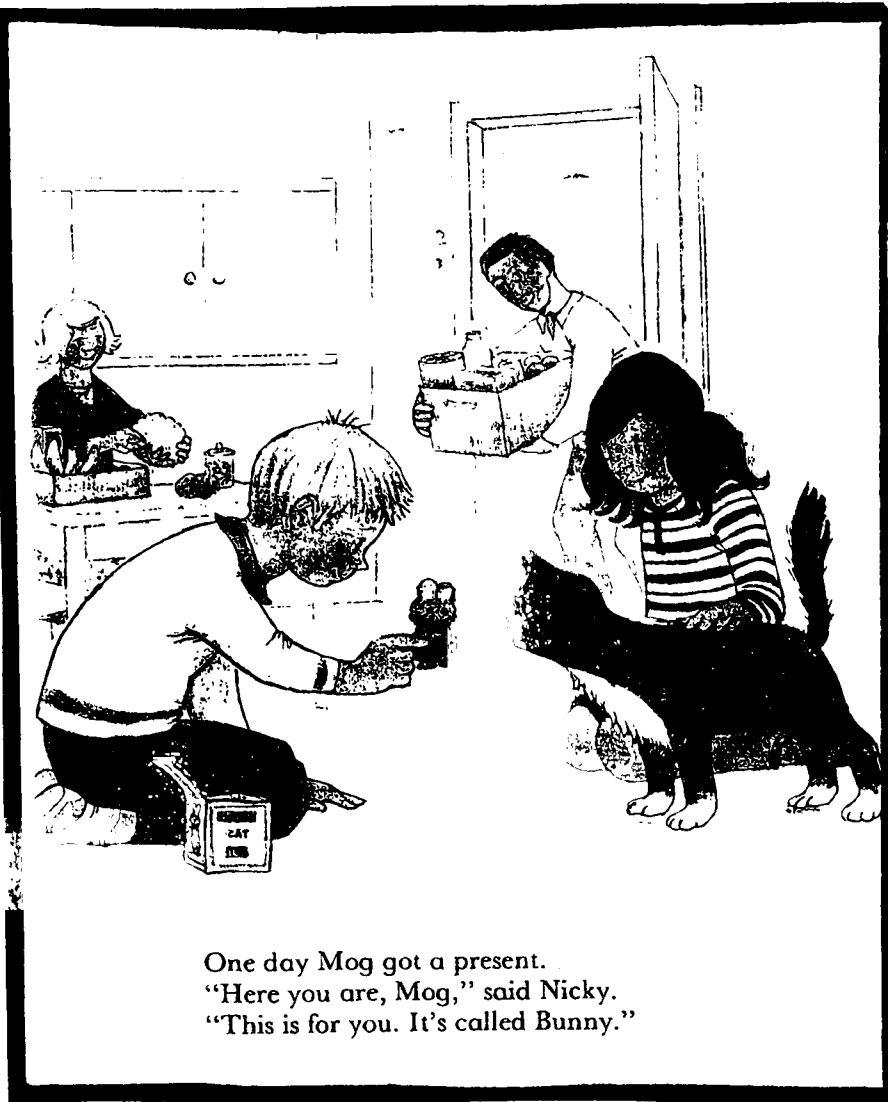


She looked.
Then she thought, this is too much.
First they give me a horrible supper,
and now there's a fox in my garden.
The fox had made a hole in the binbag
and was pulling things out of it.
What is he doing? thought Mog.

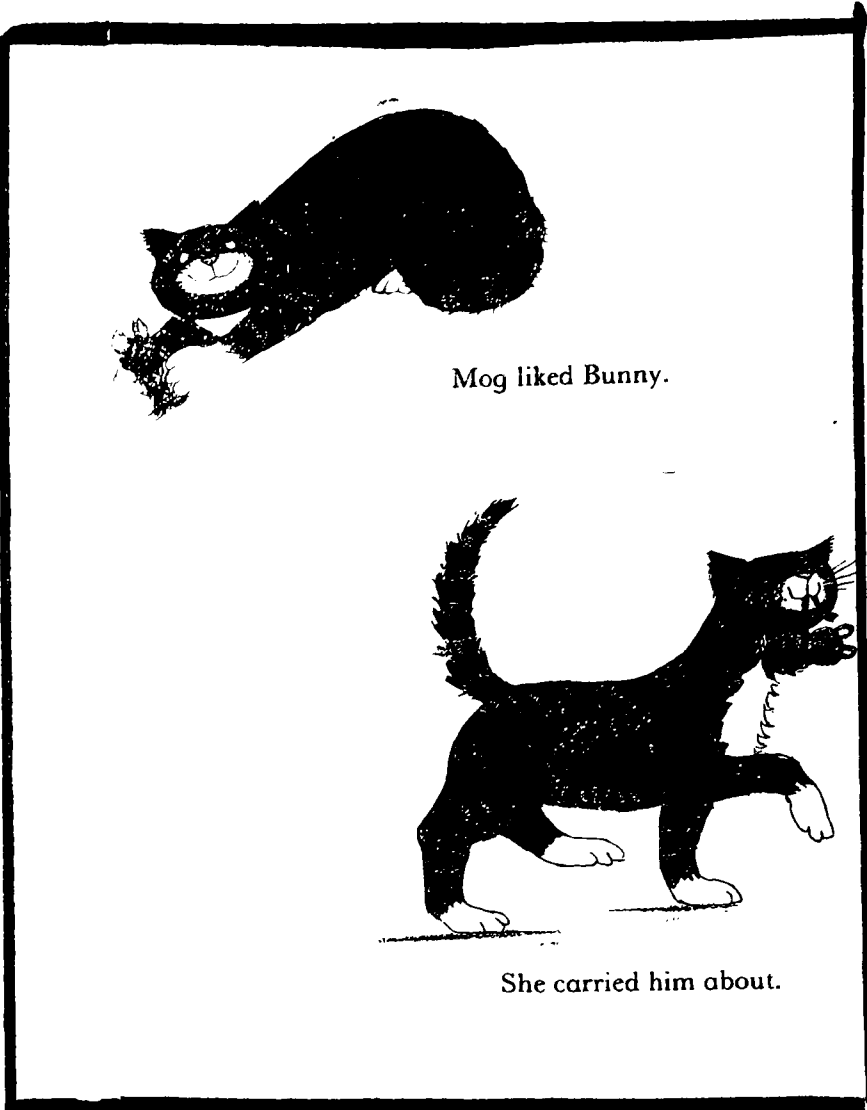
K

Story Beginning Three: Mog and Bunny

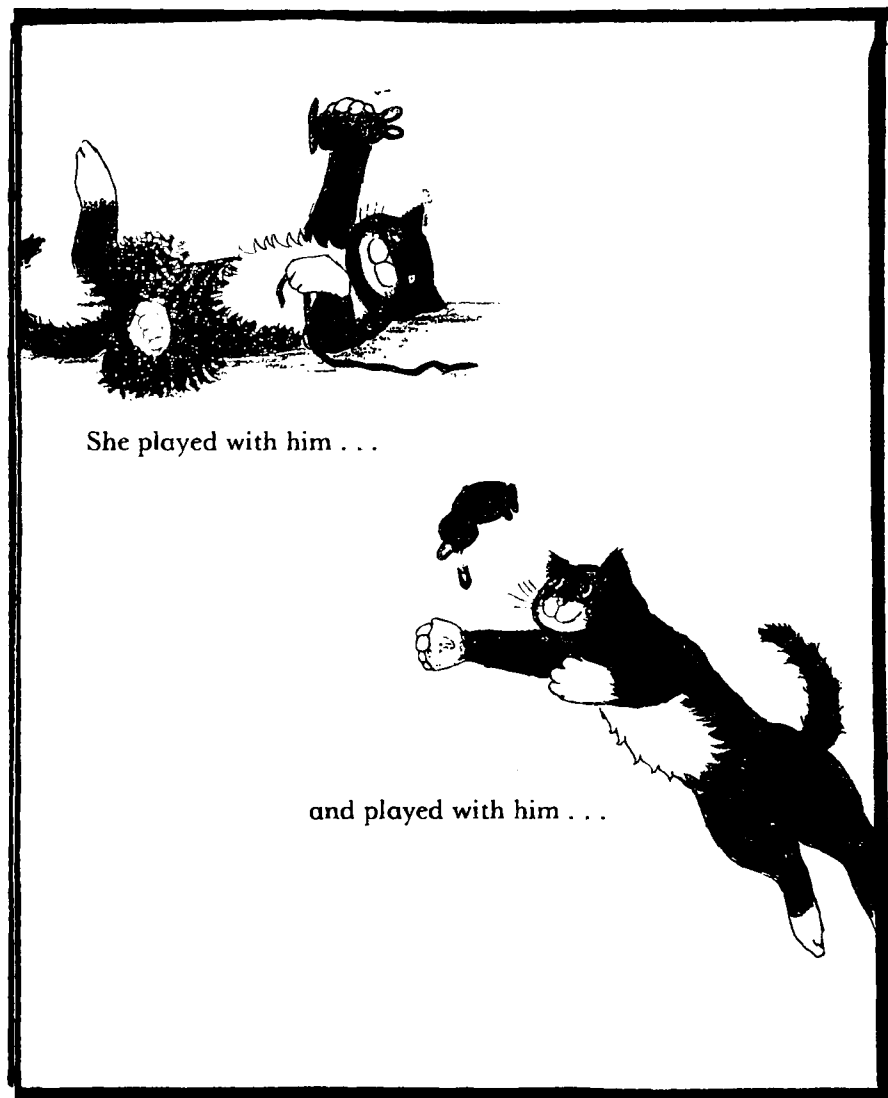
Fourteen pages in total. Nine pages were given to start with, the remaining five were passed to the child when they felt that they had sequenced the first nine correctly. This was done so as to not overwhelm the child at the beginning of the activity.



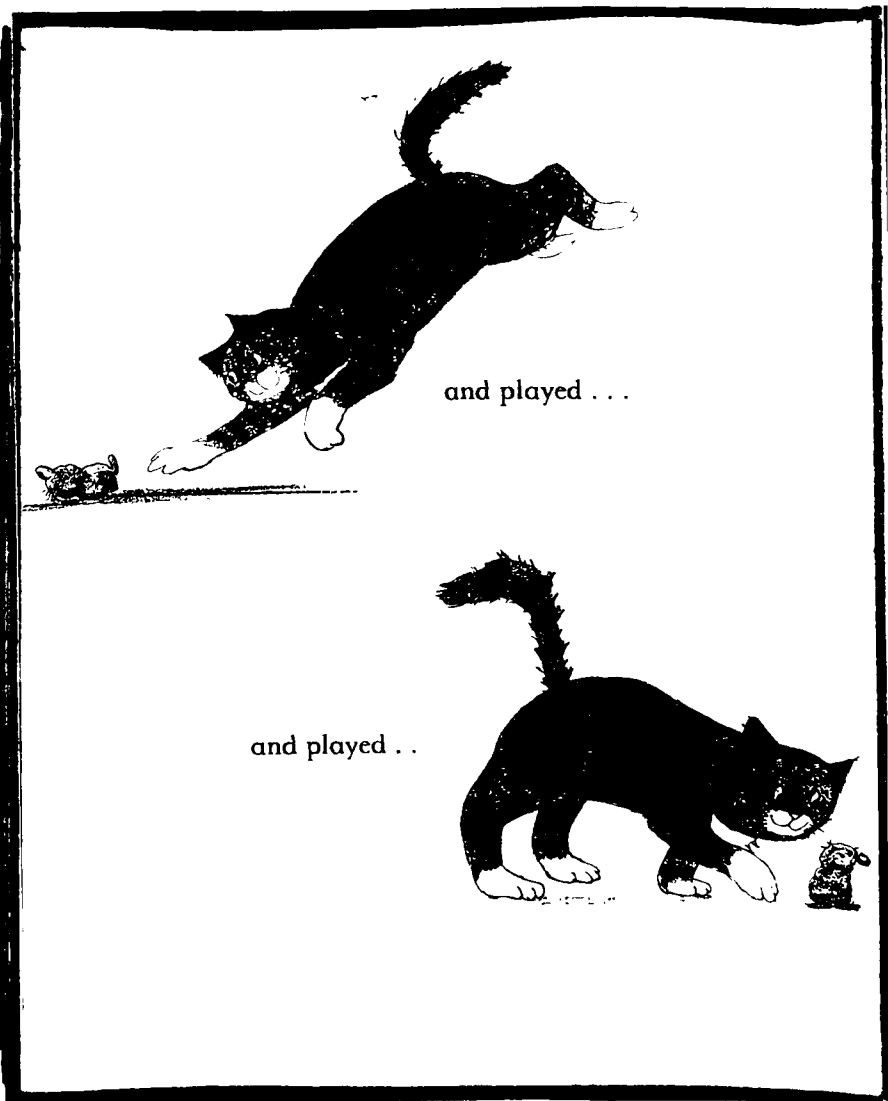
A



B



C



D

and played with him.



He was her best thing.

E



When Mog came to have her supper, Bunny came too.

F

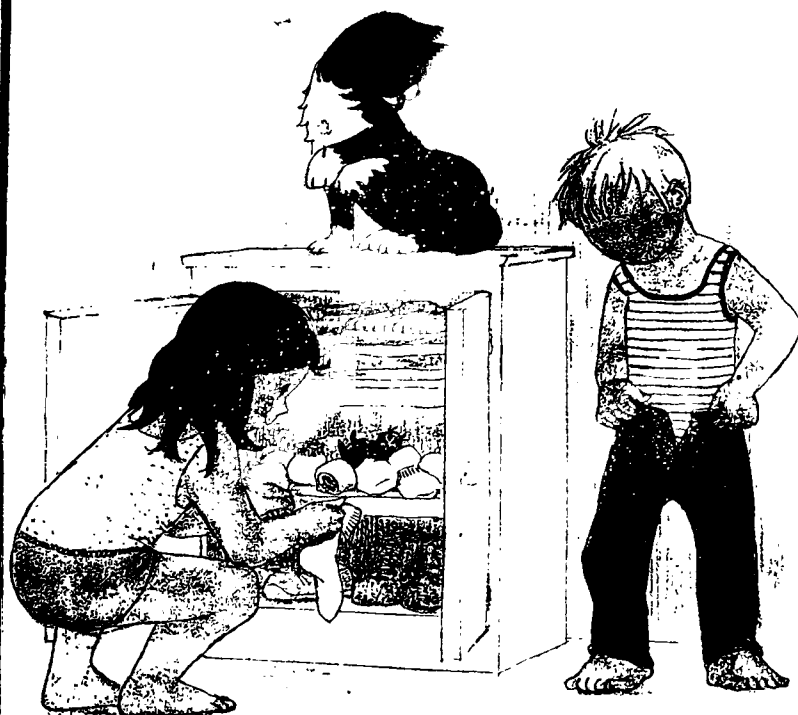


At night Bunny slept with Mog in her basket.

During the day,
when Mog was busy,
she always put Bunny
somewhere nice.
You never knew where
Bunny would get to.

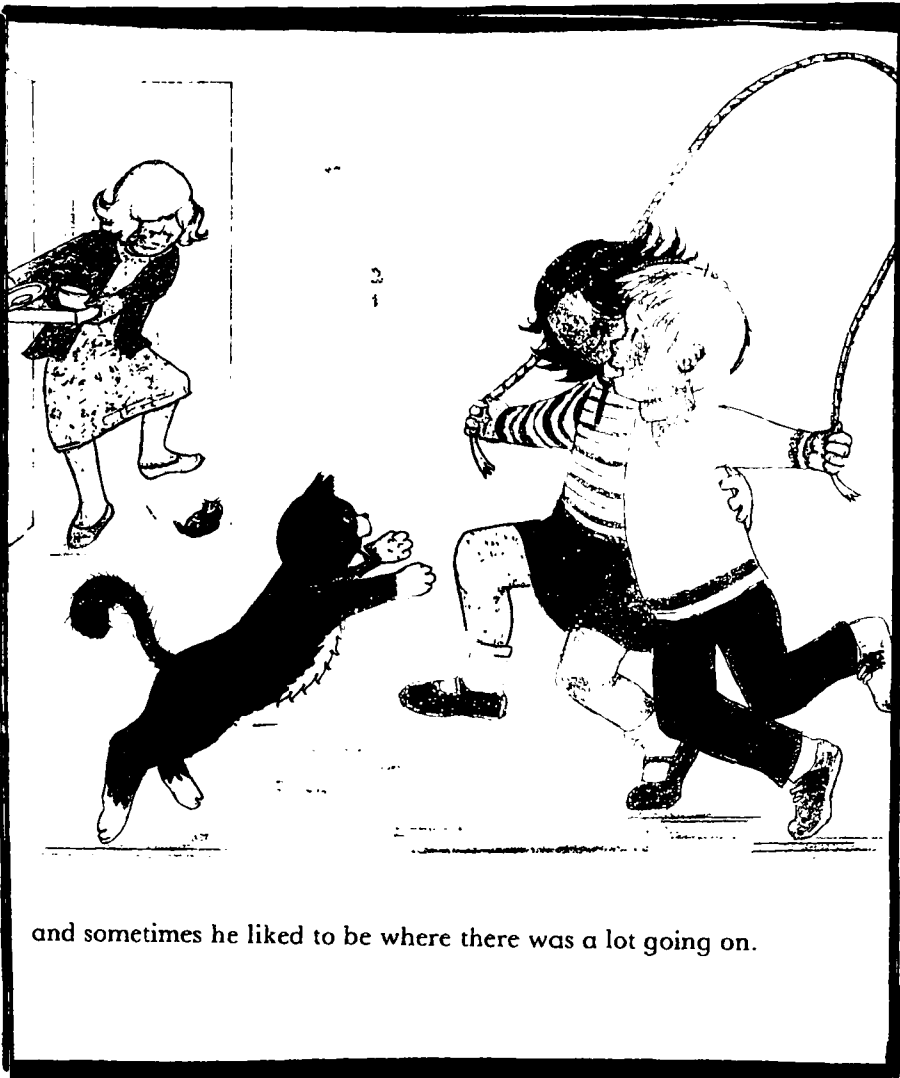


G

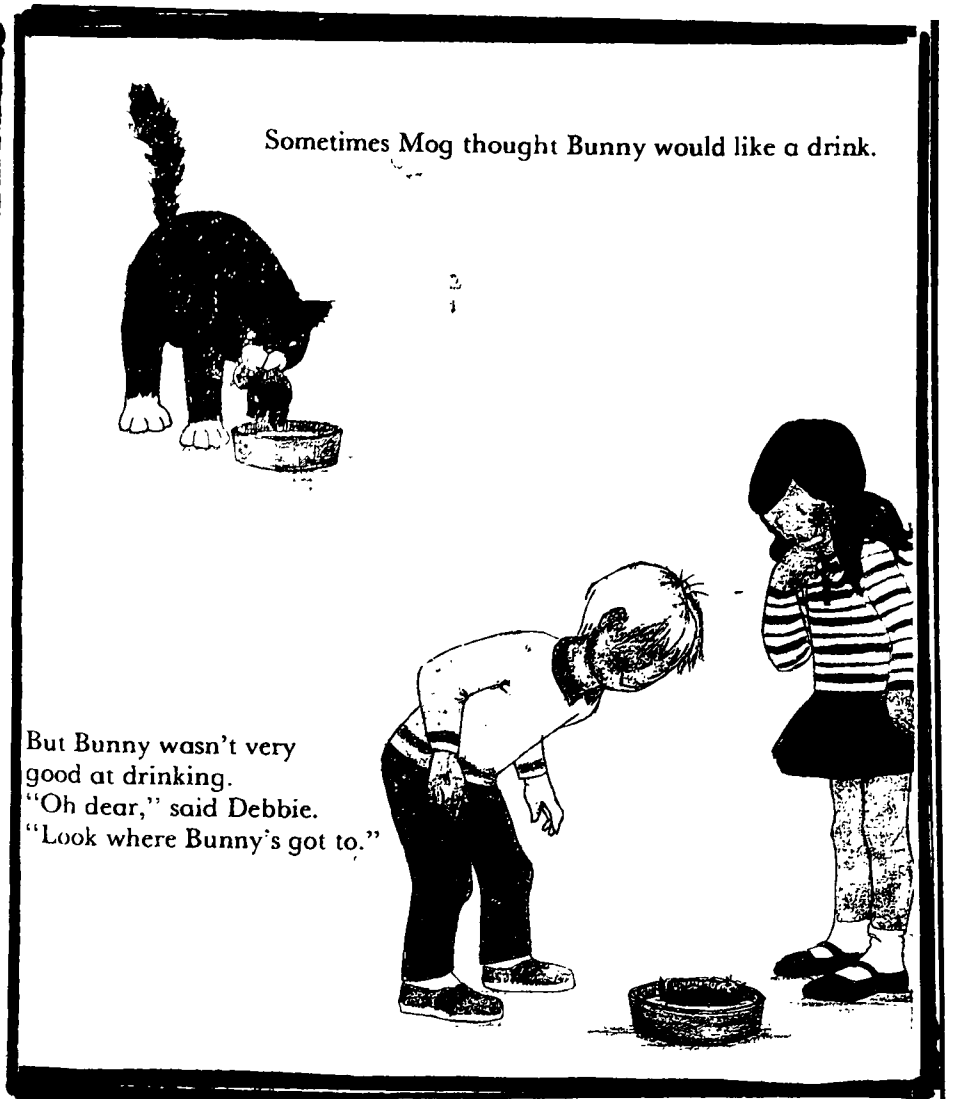


Sometimes Bunny liked to be quiet and cosy,

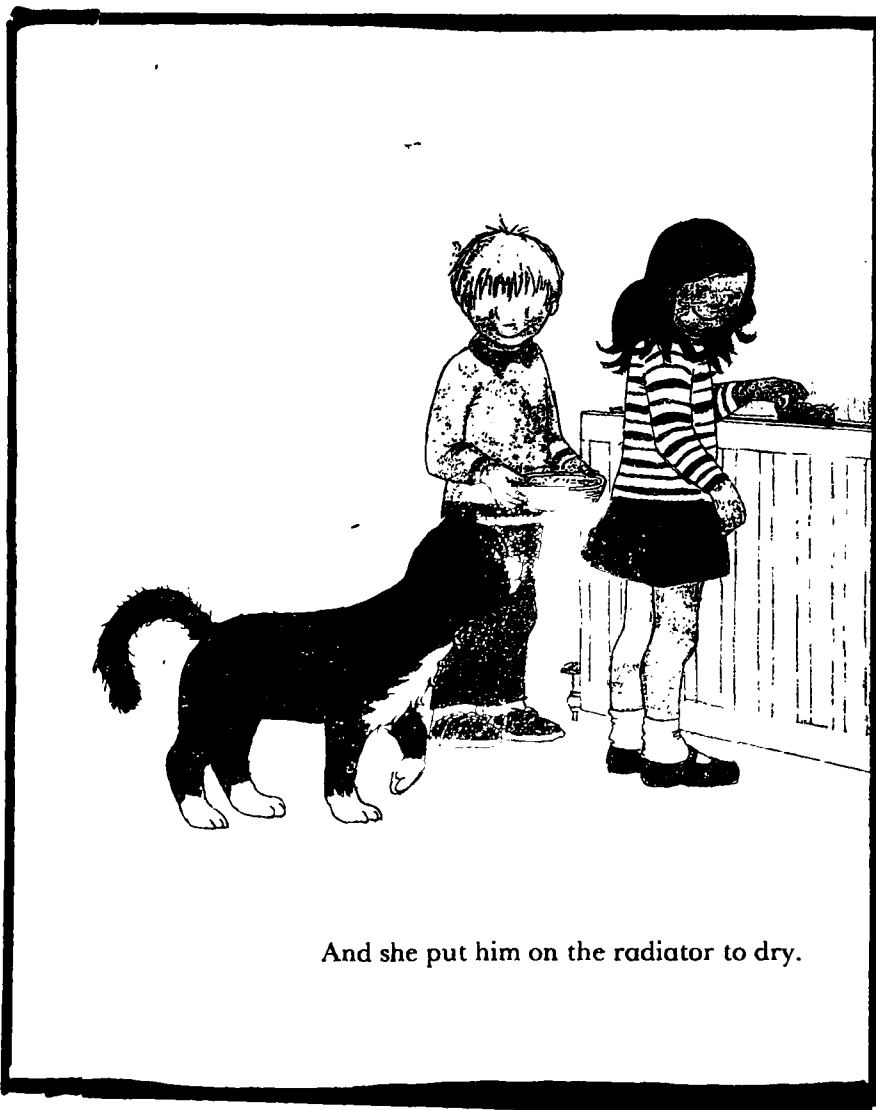
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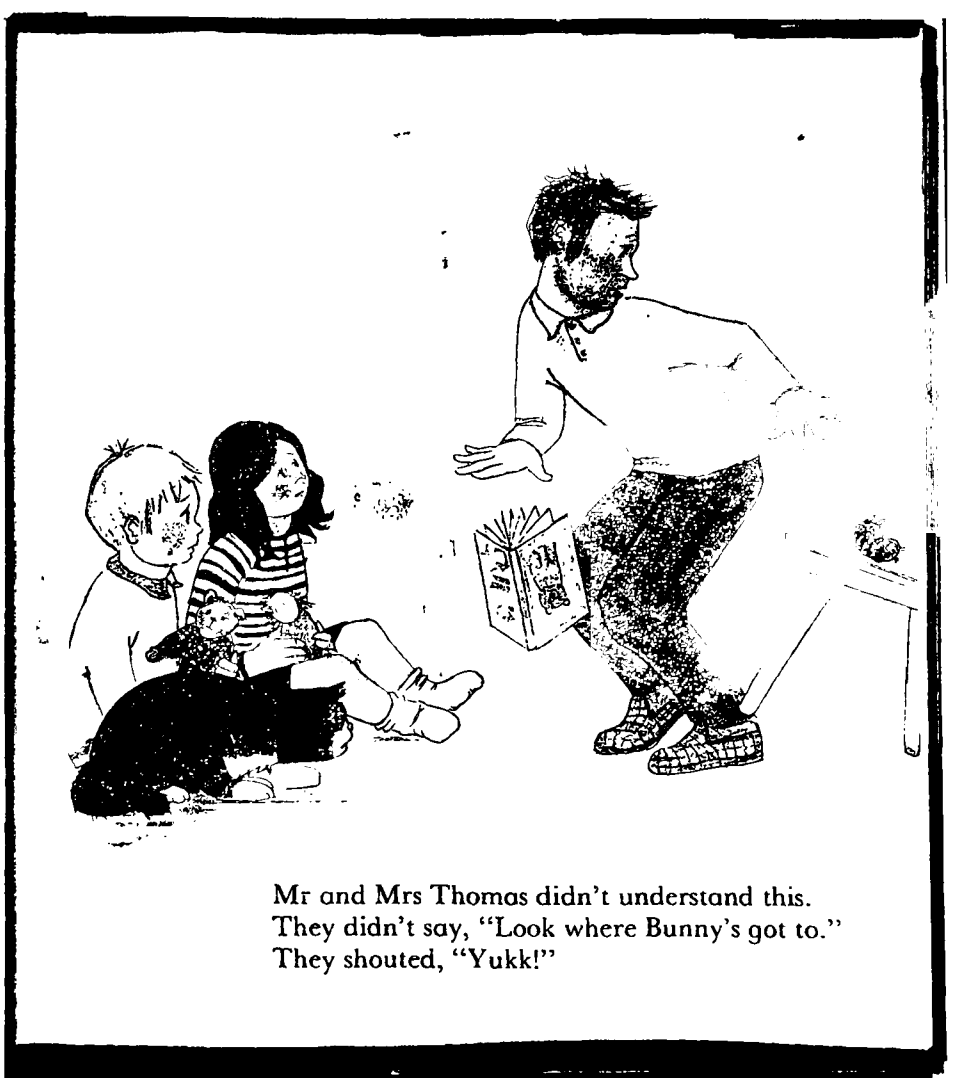
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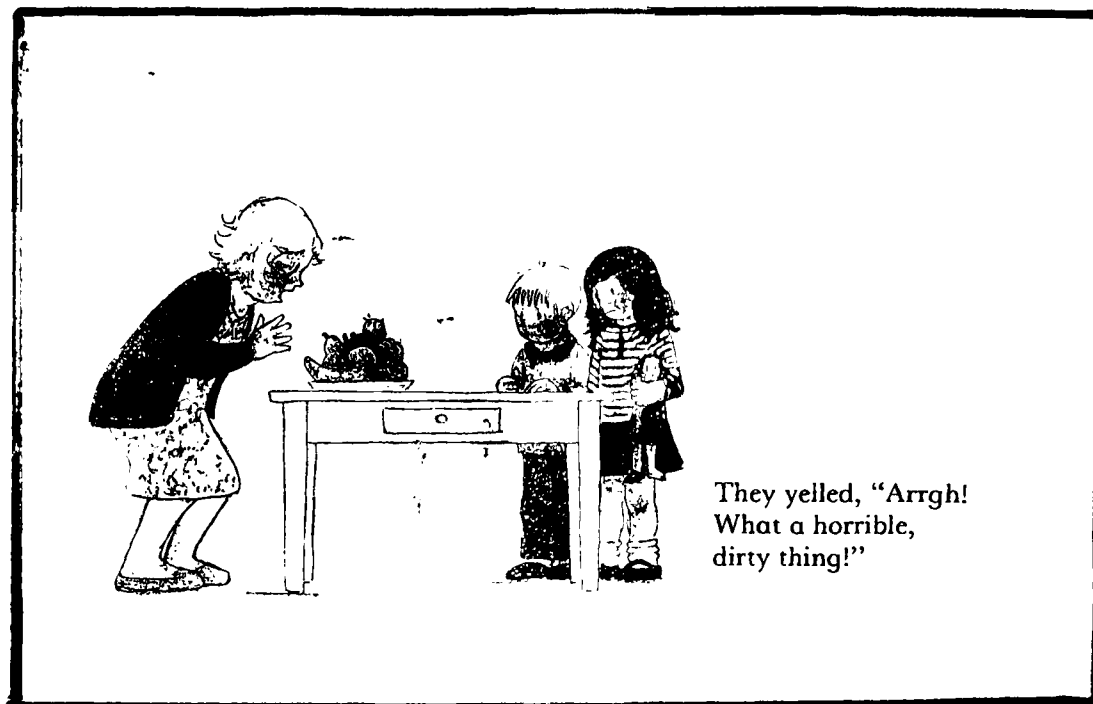
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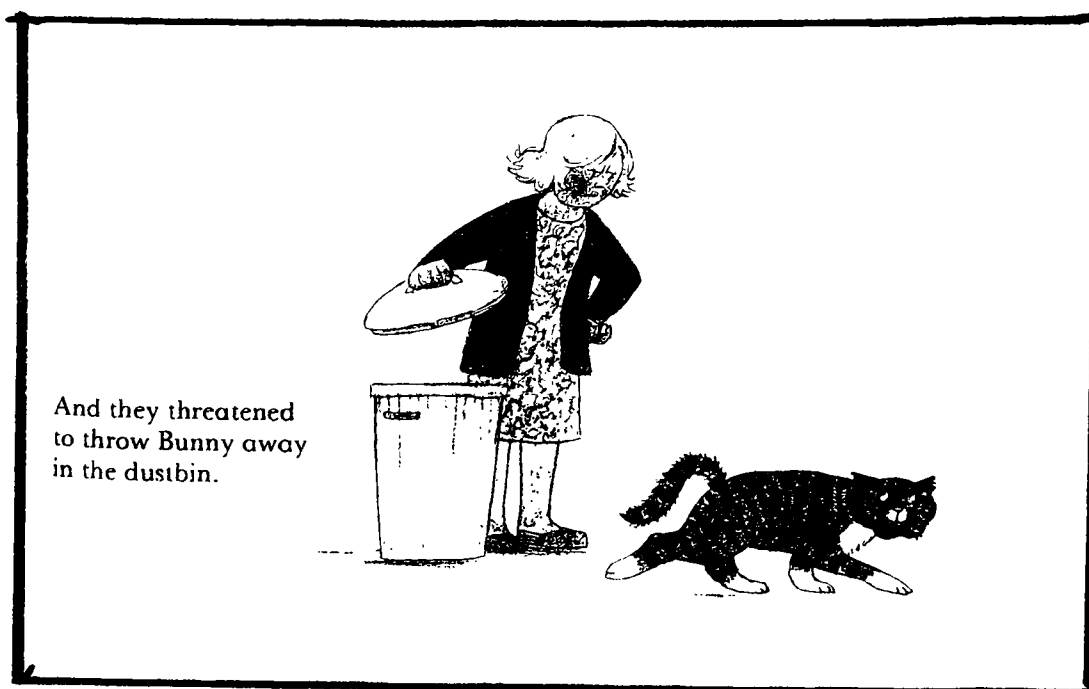
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L



M



N

Appendix Sixteen: The Weather Forecast Lesson (Parkway School 13/3/01)

Mrs Heatherly, 'Now I'm going to tell you what I expect you to do in your written weather forecasts. Shh.. shh...'.
Mrs Heatherly talks about the recent earthquake in Stoke on Trent and then continues, 'OK, Dean...'. There is a short discussion about Dean's behaviour.

Mrs Heatherly, 'OK. Your weather forecast. The title will be weather forecast' (this is not written on board). 'You're going to have to write it in two bits. There will be a sub-heading for the first bit. It will be today ...and the second bit will be a title tomorrow' (this is not written on the board). '....So, be quiet please Jack. OK. I expect you to describe the weather for today, made up. Remember one you can choose one bad day and one good day, and don't forget that the weather can change during one day. For instance you see it was quite gloomy and wet and not very nice as I came to school but looks like it might get better later on, it's beginning to be sunny out. Shhs shh..I'm trying to explain'. (Charlie and some others are shouting out 'brightening up').

'Um ...shh shh...No I didn't write that did I Jack? Brighten up...yeah because I couldn't get up in the space so I wrote it below Jack. Um so you might like to say today in the morning it will be blah, blah, blah, blah. Shh shh shh sh. And and then you might like to write later on in the afternoon it will become and you will describe how it will change. OK? Then you need to write tomorrow it will be like this. Now there's a bit more to it, Joe. Sometimes in the weather forecast they don't just tell you what the weather's going to be like but they also issue a

Charlie calls out 'Warning'.

The teacher coughs..... 'Shh.. what will the weather warning be about possibly?'

A child says 'Floods'.

'Floods. You've got a very rainy when its going to rain all day really heavily then you might like to say a warning has been issued, there's the word issued (writing it one the board), that there may be floods..... If you've got a terribly, terribly windy day what might the warning be about?

A children calls out, 'Damage'.

The teacher, 'Gales cause damage. If you have a very foggy day what might the warning be about? Particularly to, who would it be to?

The teacher is coughing again.

The teacher, 'Charlotte? Who? Who's in danger during fog, foggy conditions? Cars, drivers. Right you get a lot of car crashes on a very foggy day. Um if you've got a really hot sunny day what do we sometimes get warnings about or told that we need to do?'

A child says, 'Heatwave'.

The teacher, 'Right yeah heatwave'.

Charlie says, 'Sunburn'.

The teacher, 'Sunburn you get warned about sunburn, its terribly hot and sunny you may need to use suncream. Right I think we're just about, anybody want to ask any questions before we go and get started?'

A child asks how much they must write.

The teacher, 'How much am I expecting everybody to write. I think about half a page for today and half a page for tomorrow you might want to write a page for both of them that's fine, not more that two pages and I'd like them to be interesting please. I notice a lot of you have got the voice right you are actually thinking about television weather forecasters and how they speak'.

(Fieldnotes and Transcription: Mrs Heatherly 13/3/01)