

Editorial for 24(1) Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties

Welcome to Issue 24(1) of 2019. This is an important issue in that, in one way or another, the articles explore the challenges of the wider social aspects of the emotional lives of troubled young people.

Leanne Greenwood and Catherine Kelly conducted a systematic literature review concerned with the ways in which staff in schools describe how a sense of belonging is created for their pupils. They argue that those pupils who are more motivated, engaged and dedicated to their education will experience a sense of belonging in their school environment. Although only 5 papers passed their search criteria, they were able to identify methods that were perceived to be useful when supporting pupils to develop a sense of belonging within their secondary school environment, both at the individual staff and whole school systemic levels.

In the next paper, Joanne D. Worsley, Jason C. McIntyre and Rhiannon Corcoran explored the moderating role of attachment security, social support, and coping styles in situations of cyberbullying victimisation and mental distress. They surveyed 476 adolescents aged 13–19 years using measures of cyberbullying victimisation, attachment styles, perceived social support, coping styles, and mental distress. Compared to non-victims, victims of cyberbullying experienced higher levels of depression and anxiety and endorsed more self-statements indicative of anxious attachment. Importantly, their results suggest that peer support, security in attachment relationships, and the endorsement of positive coping strategies attenuated the positive relationship between cyberbullying victimisation and mental health difficulties. They argue that peer relations should be the target of intervention programmes within school settings.

In the third article in this issue Maja Kuronja, Branka Čagran, and Majda Schmidt Krajnc investigate primary school teachers' sense of efficacy in their work with pupils with learning, emotional, and behavioural difficulties both in mainstream inclusive classrooms and in special classrooms. They deployed an online questionnaire survey of teachers' self-efficacy, efficacy beliefs on their ability to teach vulnerable pupils, and perceived ability to apply knowledge from different socio-pedagogical areas. Important differences are suggested in the comparison between teachers in mainstream and those in special settings.

Joan Mowat discusses the transition from Primary to Secondary school for pupils with social, emotional and behavioural needs. She argues that such transitions represent a critical period that can have a long-term impact. The paper examines the socio-emotional aspects of the transition through an exploration of the findings derived from an evaluative case study of a group-work intervention to support children with Social, Emotional and Behavioural Needs across the Primary-Secondary transition, seen through the eyes of an adolescent boy and related stakeholders. The study took place in two local authorities in Scotland. The findings highlight the importance of: building trustful and respectful relationships between adults and children; creating a safe environment in which children will be listened to and cared for; high quality pedagogy and continuity and progression across the transition; and understanding the complexity of factors which may

impact on the transition for individual children, particularly for those who may be at greater risk across the transition.

In paper five Yvonne Karlsson examines boys' socialisation and agency in a Swedish special educational needs unit. In a thought-provoking article, she engages with children's agency and institutional category work. Related topics will be explored in a forthcoming special issue later this year. The results of an ethnographic study conducted in a Swedish special educational needs unit (SENU) attended by a group of five boys aged between 7 and 12 show that the teachers' categorisations of the boys' emotional and behaviour problems and attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) could be interpreted as an attempt to guide the boys' development so that they will change and improve. However, from the boys' perspectives, the daily activities could themselves be problematic. This finding points to the need for detailed and nuanced analysis of patterns of communication in special settings. It may be that through enhanced understanding of the subtlety of teacher student interaction that we will be able to make better adjustments to pedagogic practice.

In the penultimate paper, Andrew Malcolm, also turns to students' experience of provision. He complains that very little research explores the longer-term outcomes of attending special provision. He reports the outcomes of retrospective life history interviews undertaken with 18 former alternative provision attendees in their early to mid-20s. Analysis of interviews focused on schooling, exclusion, attending Alternative Provision and the impact of this on what they had done since leaving school up to their present situation showed that the experience frequently constituted a turning point in their life stories. This was due to the qualitatively different kind of social space experienced there.

In the last paper in this issue, Lucas Shelemy, Kate Harvey, and Polly Waite turn to teachers' training needs in order to best support students' mental health in schools. Participants in focus groups wanted training on how to identify and provide early support for students who are struggling, without taking on the perceived role of a therapist. They also emphasised the strong need for practical, interactive and expert-led training that provides resources that can be adapted to individual settings.

All these papers point to the complexity of working life and being a student in alternative provision. This is not a sector for simplistic solutions, rather a setting which calls for enhanced professional expertise.