An exploration of Key Stage 3 girls’ peer group friendships outside the class-room and their influence within the class-room

Thesis

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### Oppositional Barriers to Identity:

- 'Them' Versus 'Us'
- 'Same' Versus 'Different'
- 'Break-time' Versus 'Class-room'

### Communication Networks

### Resistance to Homework

### Friendships as Developmental and a Learning Process

### Spatial awareness

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**Transcription of an interview with a Key Stage Three Co-ordinator for the Pilot Study.**

1. **Have you noticed any changes in Key Stage Three ‘friendship patterns’ over the years that you have been here?**

   Mm, not so much in the patterns. Obviously in years 7, 8 and 9, friendship groups are very important. I’ve probably noticed that in the last year or two, there’s more falling out.

5. **Right.**

   Sometimes, there are things that seem rather minor, but to those girls they seem important. Sometimes it’s major things, but in most cases it is just lack of communication between the groups.
How have you managed to sort this out?

What I do is, either the girls will come to me with usually someone else in their friendship group. I’ll then talk to them on their own and I suggest with their permission to get them all together and we talk around a table and we sort it out that way, where I’m usually the mediator. Always it seems to resolve the situation. They go out and they are usually happy, but they are told to come back if things go badly wrong again.

So they need your help?

It’s somebody to just mediate and usually it’s just lack of communication, where something little is misconstrued or they hear something that somebody has said which has been hear-say that has not been relayed back to them.

Like Chinese Whispers?

They don’t seem to be able to go up to each other and say let’s have an honest talk about it, they don’t have that maturity really.

No,... progressing now, do you notice any patterns in the times of the day that pupils are sent to you?

There is a lot more falling outs during break-times, where it is often brought into lessons...often the teacher is not aware of it...er... it might be body language, or what I notice is when they choose to sit somewhere else when I have not asked them to..they separated themselves, but you usually think ah, something has happened. You might pick up vibes.

Can you actually give some more concrete examples of any problems that you have witnessed that have started within break-times and carried on?

I have noticed something in Year 8, where there was obviously a fall out where they mixed themselves up in class without me asking...very well-behaved, but there was this distinctive atmosphere and I think when I did get to the route of it later, it was just a falling out; lack of communication in the group.
What do you think they talk about during break-times?

Usually, what I here about is if someone has being going around with them at break-time and that person has not wanted to talk to them. They come to see me with ‘Oh, I don’t know why so and so is not talking to me’. I will ask, ‘do you think you have said anything?’ The answer is usually, no or I don’t think so, but… I did say this….

What do you think about the possibility of having warning bells to indicate that you should finish break-time business ready for the final lesson bell?

There was a problem a couple of years ago, causing lateness to lessons, which had become a problem. Again they said they were so engrossed in what they were doing, that by the time they’d actually registered, the bell had gone or they were late.

So, they weren’t actually being naughty?

No, so obviously it’s gone a full circle again and come back again.

Do you think that teachers understand that trying to resolve some problems during lessons may actually make the situation worse?

I think also that their attempt at resolving it is probably not the most sensitive which is linked to levels of maturity. …..(583)

(590) Can you think of how we can help children with transitions between break-time and lesson, or do you see school as one whole environment?

I think that teachers are not aware of how much the lesson is affected and it’s only whether or not you are able to pick up the vibes or not.. mm.. one way I use to tackle it, is maybe spend the next two minutes talking about break-time.
as I register them, talking about what's happened, if I sense an atmosphere, however, there's a danger then that the whole lesson is taken over with sorting out a problem. Maybe a five minutes during break-time. Also, they could come to me if they have a problem during break-time. They do need a mediator sometimes, especially the younger ones and that is what I perceive my role as and I've always said I am available at break-time and make myself available at break-time and make sure I'm here or in my room so they are able to talk to me, and they do.

Do you believe other teams in the school could help during break-times, for example, sixth-formers being trained as councillors?

The idea of sixth-formers as mediators is a possibility; it would be good for them as well. I certainly do think it is a growing thing where the younger ones are unable to deal with things and I have noticed this in the last couple of years, more so than when I first started. Maybe they just bottled it more then or that there are more pressures on them.

Do you think group language has changed over the years?

Yes, it's probably stronger now, actually.

Have you noticed any changes in behaviour due to the advancing technologies, especially internet and mobile phones?

I think that an awful lot of the problems that I hear about or are brought to me are due to the fact that they can never get away from when communication is working but may not be working terribly well, but they can't get away from it; there's this awful feeling that if you don't put on the messaging site or your mobile phone, you're actually out of the loop, you're missing out on what all the others in the group are feeling, so when you come back to school the next day, you don't know what's being happening...there's this awful compulsion, that even though it's not good news that you're hearing, that you've got to hear what's been said about you. I think that's terribly sad and one of the downfalls of having a society where we have constant communication. In some ways, they don't communicate when they fall out, and that's when they should be communicating. I am convinced that the homework problems that we have are
because they are too hung up on the messaging sites due to this compulsion of needing to see or read what’s going on and they’re not doing their homework.

Do you think that break-time’s perceived as ‘non-school’ time by the pupils, i.e. not lessons? (713)

Yes, it is...to some extent I think that’s good, but they do need a break-time. I know when I’ve been on courses, how difficult it is to concentrate all day listening to somebody talking and how wearing it is, so I think a break out in the fresh-air is good.

Do you think that pupils are being educated socially during break-time?

Yes, social-networking, talking to each other, very important, extremely important.

That way they learn to communicate, articulate and er...friendships are important, and it’s about the only time when they can be with their friends, but obviously out of school, but sometimes all their friends can not get together.

Do you think that break-time is perceived as non-school time by parents?

No, I think that parents don’t give it much thought and probably don’t think about break-times unless their daughter says, I fell out with so and so. It is missed out, and by teachers. Yes, break-times are a time for my mediating but I am made available.

Do you think we need some course or training to highlight the changes in expected behaviour from year 6 to year 7, when they tend to move from structured play to independent (no ropes, balls, teachers etc).?

Yes, in year 6 they are closely monitored and suddenly they are allowed the freedom to go around and this is where, you know and hopefully it doesn’t happen, but the bullying instances might crop up. As staff can’t be everywhere, and this could be a flash point for some of them.

Yes, there is only 6 weeks from using structured play in year six and becoming ‘free’ and independent in Year 7.
It is something that needs to be drawn out in transition and you need to look at it as a whole and we all know that there is a bit of a plateaux in Year 7 (rather than a rise) and it could be due to social things as well that is affecting their work. And it maybe something we haven’t really looked into – that is a point. If a child is unhappy over something that has happened at break-time, obviously it is going to affect their concentration for the next lesson. If they see it as the same context where break-time forms part of their education, then that may have a dramatic effect on the rest of their day, mightn’t it?

Yes, and a happy child is a child who is going to learn and who listens. Even a little, little problem, they’ll be thinking of that instead of what the teacher is telling them?

Do you think that some children who see school split into micro-contexts may struggle between the expectations of these? (For example, roles in the play-ground, class-room, school and home). (779)

Just not being able to switch off from break-time… It is supposed to be a break for them where they can come back rejuvenated, but quite often more is the case, it becomes a battleground of disagreements or whatever…and if this is the case, they are not focused because they are busy about the problem after falling out.

Any possible solution that teachers could use?

I have on occasions stopped the lesson and asked if it’s something I’ve said but suggest it’s a problem brought in with them and would they like to share it, but you are relying on a person speaking up… you realise nobody wants to stick their neck out, but quite often what will happen is that at the end of the lesson, somebody will come up and say yes, there was something; I can then talk to the whole class next lesson, if necessary or go into registration etc. I can
understand not telling due to repercussions, but staff can emphasise that they have picked up 'vibes' and pupils can talk about it or come at the end of the lesson, which might be enough to stop them worrying about it now. If you have a quiet girl, you rely on her friends to tell you.

Do you think KS3 is a learning process in terms of peer group friendships or is there need for intervention?

I definitely think it is a learning process they go through and they nearly all come out the other end, with stronger people. I remember my own children saying which part of the school did they enjoy most, and they all said sixth form and I would say to them what was the worst period... years 7, 8 and 9 and we perceive that Year 7, 8 and 9 are the better years, but it isn’t... all of them have said... well obviously Year 11 has it’s own stresses with G.C.S.E.’s, that they’ve all said the A-level years are the best. It is a learning process and they all do come through it, some better than others.

..providing the support, monitoring..

..providing they do get the support and it is important they do get it.

It could come from sixth form etc?

Yes, sixth-formers, L.S.A.’s – our L.S.A.’s are wonderful, aren’t they and very approachable; it’s got to be a member of staff that’s prepared to spend the time, and the worst thing will be ‘I haven’t got time for you’. I don’t know anyone here that would actually say that and if they didn’t they would suggest they saw someone else.

But that’s what they need, and they do come through it. A lot of problems I see in year nine, I do actually say to them, honestly, you will find in Year 10 and 11 and look back and it won’t be a problem. When you talk to sixth formers about it, they say they can’t believe they were so worried about that...

(881) Just one more question, because I think we’ve covered most of the material. In the class-room, what is the influence of peer groups in the class-room, in relation to teaching?

They do have quite a strong influence and mm.. it can be very positive, but it can also be very negative..mm.. I think that if I notice it is actually affecting their learning, I will split them up, and I think that’s what most staff do. You
very quickly realise that the group is not working very well and in some cases having a peer group working together in a practical for science...obviously people who work well together will produce very good practical results, providing they’re not arguing.

There’s a lot of work with benefits of ‘peer-tutoring’, but you have to match up levels, because as I see it, if you have the wrong levels (e.g. a genius and someone who struggles)....

Yes, or different personalities. Yes, it could work if the genius was especially caring and willing to give the struggler a lot of extra support, but if it’s someone who doesn’t have the patience, it could be very detrimental...group work is a very good idea if they work well together, because they both benefit. I certainly think that peer groups working on the same table in a non-practical situation is probably not a good idea...because of the temptation to talk or carry on the conversation that started at break-time, so in cases like that it is a good idea to split them up.(905).

Is there anything else that you would like to add within the focus on break-time and peer groups?

Er..there’s certainly been a lot of issues this term and last term that I have been quite concerned about regarding messaging sites, that has been taken further with outside agencies involved.

It’s back to labelling of certain groups again isn’t it?

What’s particular worrying, what I find particularly worrying is...we’ve got a quite strong little group in Year 7 who have formed a little cult group who appear to be going around the school.....intimidating or I’m not sure intimidating is the right word, but manipulating other classes, which I’ve never come across in this school, where...girls so young have been going around actually upsetting other year groups and Year 9’s...and I’d had a group of Year 10’s come to me at the beginning of the week saying that they had been bothered by it as well;I do find that very worrying.

Yes and during break-time. Yes, I had a small group of Year 7’s standing outside a mobile making
comments to the Year 10’s inside, unpleasant comments...so, I do find that
worrying. There’s a new aspect that we’ve never had before, or that I’ve never
been aware of...it’s the first year I’ve noticed...it’s a group I’ve been working
with and you know, and they’ve been having extra help in the form of
counselling...but the worrying thing is despite all this work that I and others
have put into it, erm...as soon as they’re out in the school grounds, it appears
still to be going on.

If they thought of break-time as a lesson......?

In the class-room they are O.K. and I teach them and know that they are there
listening and well-behaved...but it is a lesson, it’s a social lesson, but quite
often it depends on how they use it.

.....I also think this group regard adults as ‘I’m not myself when adults are
around and when adults are away I can be myself’. When you get to hear
about how this little group is behaving around the school, you think, gosh,
that’s a side I don’t see in lessons. That is an interesting thing about break-
times. But certainly something in the future has to be done about...mm...the
social side of helping them with transition as it is a huge problem.

Could break-time become part of the P.S.E. curriculum?

Yes, or even discuss what you do in break-times.

Thank you very much for taking part, and I will let you have access to the
transcript if required when they are available.

Transcription of an interview with Year 7 (lesson 1 and
2)

Do you think it is important to have friends?

All together – yes
If you didn’t have friends, you’d just be lonely all the time.

Voice – I think it’s important to have friends, because if you’re alone at break-time it’s not very nice and...

Voice – In the Junior school if you had no-one to play with you’d go to the friendship post.

Ah.

Voice – But it’s so horrible when they just don’t come to you though ‘cos you just stand there.

[loads of little kids just stand there looking]

Ahh!

How many friends do you think are enough?

Voice – As many as possible.

Voice – You can never have too many friends.

Voice – It has to be an even number.

Voice – Yes, ‘cos if you have five people (with Y) and that didn’t work ‘cos she wasn’t my friend....then she just sat there,

Voice – It’s better now because we can sit in twos.

Did you stop talking to her?

Voice – No, she went off and we said if she’s not going to hang out with us she should go off with somebody else and she started crying, and we’re like what’s the point of crying ‘cos you’re the one that’s leaving us.....and she’s an ‘EMO’ now apparently.

Was that in a different group then than you?

Voice – Yer.

So, you’re not EMO’s then?

Voice – No.
Voice – No way!
Voice – That’s why people start having ‘clicks’
Voice – Once in the form time, some people in our class decided they were
organising ‘clicks’ and they sat round..
And this is in lessons?
No, in form time...
[and they organised it as well]
Voice – Whenever we were there we had to sit there and they organised where
you sat and they said to people, you’re the ‘popular’ click and you’re the
‘geeks’ and you’re the ‘friendly’ table and stuff like that.

Voice – There’s like girls in our class who’re like..... ‘trendy’ who can be
really nice to us, but sometimes go behind our back and make fun of us. In
Maths, like when we... (inaudible) they’re like why do you keep doing that, why
don’t you just be normal pupils, stop being freaks and stuff...

Have you actually got names for each group?
Voice – My nickname’s ‘Fish’
What’s that to do with?
Voice – It was B’s birthday and she called me a Penguin....
Voice - No... It was B’s birthday and her fish died and it was just floating...
You don’t mind being called ‘fish’?
Voice – No, she likes it!

Do you have names for the groups?
Voice – We’re just the ‘bonquers’ group, ‘cos they don’t understand us.
Voice – They’re not EMO’s ‘cos they don’t harm themselves.
Voice – Yer they do!

Voice – Well not badly... they like wannabe EMO’s

Do you want to be EMO’s?
Voices – ER, no
[no...]
Voice – One girl who used to hang out with us said it was taking over her life.
Voice – Yes... when she stopped being an EMO she said she doesn’t like being
it anymore 'cos it takes over her life.
Voice – Like mean girls in our class.
Voice – EMO’s are not even cool...

Are there certain groups that will stick together?
(or are they individuals?).
No, they stick together, because one of them is and then they all try and be.
Voice – They’re all really tight.
Voice – the Voodoo doll
[Bratz doll]

Voice – It’s like a Bratz doll and its got felt tips all over it....and they throw it out of the window at you.
Voice – They pull them off...oo, it’s horrible
Voice - [I’m going to have nightmares now]

So do they think they’re just being funny?
Voices – Yer.
Voice – I was looking at one of the girl’s BEBO’s and it’s called a ‘day as an EMO’....she’s having trouble with her friends, harms herself.
Voice – It’s really disturbing

Voice – She’s having problems at home....
Voice – They write poems like.. I’d rather be (inaudible).........to death
So you’re not like that?
Voices - No
You’re the sensible group?
Yes
[yeah.

Voice – They printed off their profiles to show Mr. X and Mrs. Y....
Can we change the subject?
We certainly can

So, as a group then, most of the stuff that goes on at break-time?
Does anybody find the notes?

Voices – Yeah!

Do you concentrate...?

Voice – We do concentrate, it’s just that like sometimes you go a bit off and then you come back to it.

Inaudible

Voice – At break the reason why you’re miserable and unhappy is that you’ve had an argument and you have to sort it out, you have to do it.

If you fall out at break-time, how does this affect the next lesson?

Voices

Voice – You can’t concentrate, you feel low and you’re not as positive with yourself.

Voice – Miss. J. is really... she notices and takes her mind off the lesson... she knows...

How much time do you think you need to sort out arguments? (675)

Voice – Five minutes....

Voices – Me and X had a massive argument a few days ago and we were...
talking about when we were younger, and we fell out about that.....and then C fell out about something outside of school so B started crying and then we all started crying.....
Voice – Nothing’s O.K. anymore....
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Voice – One thing we all got told off for and can’t do anymore is climbing trees...

Voice – Have you seen the ropes in the office?

Yes

Voice – They thought we’d used them for climbing, but we didn’t and I’m too scared to get them. I hid them in the forest, but they found them.

If you had them back would you become responsible this time?

Voices – Yes.

Voice – We had a big argument about this Alton Towers’ group thing; we were in a group, then kicked out, then put back in, and kicked out...tossing in and out...and one of the girls she came up to me and said, why are you in a mood with me...I’m not...

I just wanted to ignore it and move on and get over it.

(723)

Do you think she concentrated in lessons then, or still thinks about you?

Voice – Sometimes, in lessons in the junior school if you fell out with someone the teacher would make you be friends, but you still wouldn’t be friends..you just pretend in front of the teacher.

Voice – Yeah.

How would you like to make-up then?

Voice – Just have a discussion and get it off your chest.

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Voice – Like in lessons, if the teacher notices we’re upset, they’ll take us out of the class-room as a group.

Voice – I think it should be just us, ‘cos you feel you don’t want to say anything if a teachers’ there.

Voice – If it was all over a note, you can’t tell the teacher that you were sending notes in class. Then you’ll have to change the story and the others will say it didn’t happen and cause more arguments.

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So, after break-time now, a lot of the time, it doesn’t finish?
Voices – No.
Voice – You need a longer break-time
Voice – Sometimes in the lesson you always answer questions and you put your hand up and everything, and then you fall out with your friends… and you go quiet… some teachers suss it out…
When somebody notices, are you quite quick at sorting it out?
Voice – Yeah
Voice – But sometimes you pretend to do it and you don’t feel you’ve had time to sort it out ‘cos the teacher’s given like five seconds to do it.

How long would you say you would need?
Voices – FIVE
Fifteen minutes
Five to ten minutes!

Can you not finish it off at break-time?
Voice – It’s because like we normally we’re like friends for the first part of break-time and then you’re not friends for the last part of break-time, so the second half of break-time you’re not friends, then when you feel you need to say sorry or stuff like that, the bell goes for the lesson.

Would it make a difference if there were two bells?
Voices together – Yeah

If you were friends by the first bell, what would stop you falling out by the second?
Voice – No
Voice – No
[no..]
Voice – no we’ve got five minutes
Voice – It takes five minutes to get to the lesson.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line</th>
<th>Text</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>410</td>
<td>Voice – If the first bell has just rang, you know that there’s five minutes to get to your lesson. <strong>So what difference would that have meant to the next lesson?</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>415</td>
<td>Voice – If people have fallen out at break-times it’s really awkward in lessons ‘cos… <strong>(772)</strong></td>
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| 420  | **(788)**  
**When do you fall out most?**  
Voice – If we fall out at break-time and then there’s one lesson before dinner, we’d probably send notes or give people dirty digs and then at lunch-time you’ll fall out more because you’ve done that in class.  
Voice – I think you should have half an hour lesson after lunch talking about friendships ‘cos that’s the last break-time…getting everything off your chest.  
**What if some people refuse to sort it out?**  
Voice – Well, it’s their problem then….  
Voice – I think if you had a little bit of time between lessons… **(812)**  
**Time in the class-room or in between?**  
Maybe not have a break, have a five minute gap…….  
Do you see break-time as separate from the class-room teaching or part of the whole school environment?  
Voice – Yeah  
Voice – because you’re not allowed to talk **(830)**  
**Do you mind sitting in different groups in class or do you want to sit near friends?**  
If we get to choose we’d sit together, but if we’re not allowed to we get put into separate groups.  
Voice – Sometimes it causes fights because we work well when we work together. **(8) 274**
If you hadn’t fallen out would you work better with your friends in class?

All – yeah

Voice – I think the teachers should say you’re with them, you’re with...’cos it’s not fair when one gets left out.

Alternatively, stick to even numbers?

Voice – Yeah

Voice – It sometimes works, but some people take things to heart sometimes; I’ve known her from nursery and we’ve always been best friends, but suddenly one day just wanted to be friends.... I was confused then... why suddenly now? I’ve just left her to it now.

Voice – You know when you go into lessons and there’s only so many chairs on the table...

Voice – What we normally do in X is when there’s already three people sitting there, me and X just joined onto the table.

Voice – In X there are certain places everyone swaps them around and then there are a couple of girls..’cos we try to get in early so us four can sit together, but some girls sit in different places so we can’t get together.

Would you prefer to sit in the same places, even if you’ve fallen out?

All together – yeah!

Voice – ‘cos then we can make it up.

Voice – Yesterday there was four seats and X went to sit directly in the middle and then there were only four seats......

So is it back to even numbers again?

Together – Yeah.

Voice - I have to sit at the front, but if I don’t get in I have to sit right at the back and I can’t hear or see what you’re doing.

Do you see break-time as your time and lessons as teachers’ time?

All together – Yeah, yes.

Voice – Like two separate worlds.

Voice – Teachers, certain teachers, they won’t let you talk, I think if you can explain to someone who would understand you but not the teacher, you should
be able to talk; you say I’m just trying to explain it...this happened in one
lesson when we had a ‘supply’ and she said you don’t tell them what to do,
that’s my job....

Voice – In the break it’s your break-time and you can do what ever you want
to do ‘cos it’s your break-time....

[Detention – I think that should be after school!]

Voice – You’re meant to have fun at break-time, but you can’t do anything
‘cos the teachers tell you off.

Voice – You’re not meant to climb the trees, but if we still had that adventure
play-ground, we could go on that.....

Voice – The Juniors - They have skipping ropes and all that, we don’t have
any of that.

Well you may not want them when you’re older...

Inaudible

What do you talk about at break-times?

Three voices – boys:

Voice – Sometimes we have too much homework and we have to do it at
break-time and have no break-times.

So do you fall out over homework?

Voice – Yeah, you fall out, because your friends want you to do something
and you’ve got to do homework.

Voice – Like when me and X wanted to do homework and X and X wanted to
play and we’d say we can’t ‘cos we’re doing our homework and then they’d
Voice – When we do homework, we have so much, you’re doing it in school
because out of school I do piano, singing, disco, modern, tap and ballet....plus
I have loads of pets, I don’t have time to do homework at home, so I do it all at
break-time and lunch-times and the odd homework at home, but

So you still need break-times?

Together – Yeah, definitely.
Voice – In the Junior school when you first get to school you have all that time in the morning, then you have first break, lunch break and last break and they come out much earlier than us – they have lots of time to do whatever they want. We’ve got in the morning first break, dinner break and then you’re running to the buses at the end to catch them...then you get home and it's doing homework.

Tell me what you learn at break-times?

Voice – You learn how to like mix with your friends and bond relationships and stuff like that, because if you don’t have that time...

Voice - [I think you learn to socialize; in lessons you can’t socialize, unless you’re doing group work or such.

So it’s part of education?

Together – Yeah.

Voice – When we’ve done something, we learn to do that thing again.

Can you think of any examples of how your break-time talk is different to your class-room talk?

Voice – It’s more open and it’s...in class you feel you can’t, er......

Voice – When you speak in the class-room, yeah, the teacher says what are you speaking about....

Voice – Personal stuff, body

Voice – certain people may have the same thing happening as you and you feel confident talking to them, not during the lesson.

What sort of language do you use?

We use gobbledegook – ‘Shuck’, a mix between

Voice – We don’t want to swear

Voice ‘s’ ‘h’ ‘t’ ‘i’ ‘t’ and ‘f’ ‘u’ ‘c’ ‘k’

Voice – It’s when we’re annoyed.

You don’t use it in class?

No, else she would shout at us.

Do you know what each others’ signs are?

Voice – No.

Voice – We usually make up hand things, like...
Voice – Hi-5 scooby dive...
Sometimes, you know you were saying about homework. I don’t believe the teachers really know how busy we are... outside. It’s like carrying on with school day at home and that actually means we’re really really busy...

Do you have different friends at home?
Voices – Yeah

Voice – I don’t.
Voice – I have an out-of-school best friend next door to me
Inaudible.

One last question, you’ve done so well, can you give some examples of positive things that come out of having your friends?

Voice – Parties
Voice – Yes, parties!
Voices – Somebody you can talk to
Voice – And can feel confident talking to them about certain things you wouldn’t talk to anyone else about.

Inaudible
You’re all different and keep your own identities?
Voice – You need your friends ‘cos in school you have to work on your relationships, ‘cos in the lessons you learn to have a good job, but if you’re good in work but not very sociable, they’re not going to hire you

So, your break-times are very important to you?
Voices – Very
Voice – Very.

Thank you so much.

INTERVIEW – YEAR 8

First of all, it’s an obvious question, do you think it is important to have friends?

All voices together: Yes.
Why? Why are friends so important?

Voice 1 – Because you don’t want to be lonely.

Voice 2 – And you can trust them.

You can trust the friends from your group. That’s the main thing. What is different about the group that you’re in. Why do you stick to the group that you’re in?

Voice - Because we’ve got things in common.

Voice – You find you get on with them more.

Voice – More like reading magazines and taking pictures.

Voice – You going home with them.

Voice – Yes, like other groups don’t take loads of pictures. They haven’t got memories like ours.

Voice – they don’t like to do things we do.

Voice – .............our cameras.

In terms of other groups why is your group different to theirs?

Voice – Because we laugh a lot.

I know you change around, but it’s just at the moment. Why aren’t you a member of their group now?

Voices altogether.....................each other, we’re just in groups.
Why, I can see that you’re friendly, I’m not saying you hate each other, why have you chosen this group?

Voice – We like the people we’re with.

But why? You’ve already said because you read magazines, take camera pictures of things, why?

Voice – Interests.

I’ll ask you about interests in a minute, but what do you think their interests are in their group, otherwise let’s ask you a different question now because you’ve made a point that they’ve got different interests. Why have you chosen this group. You’ve given me reasons.

Voice – Because they’re friends.

Voice – Because we were friends, me and Katie were like friends, and then Alex in Year 7 became friends with Ronnie, and then it was like us four but then Lorraine.

............and then we all just. And me and Anna.

In Year 7 then were you in smaller groups, one’s and two’s.

Voices – Yes.

And then in Year 8 the groups were bigger.

Voices – Yes.

Voices altogether.

You stick together don’t you.
Voice - There’s always one person left out.

Voice - Yes it is quite hard.

Voices altogether.

When you split your group into half you have an odd number again, so do you split into two’s, two’s and two’s or...

Voice - Yes.

Nobody goes into three....and a three.

Voices - altogether.

So you are six aren’t you?

Voice - No because of Amy.

How do you get over that problem then, at break time, or doesn’t it matter.

Voice - No.

Do you swap the extra, or is it always the one person who is like....

Voice - Yes.
Discussion to say that it was not always the same person that was the odd one out.

Voice – We halve it when someone falls out it’s like half the group.

All the friendship groups, but you tend to make-up in the end. Go back to your interests. Why are you two together and not with these, I know you’re friends, I’m not saying you’re not, but you’ve given me examples of how you’re more interested in magazines and cameras, and you’re probably interested in them as well but what makes you stick together rather than Lorraine can join Natalie and ………..join Natalie, or another group. What do you share.

Voice – …You know they’re weird………..If they say something and I didn’t like it I can’t help laughing ‘They just laugh all the time.

Laughing?

Voices – altogether.

This is at break-time presumably, I know in lessons you have a giggle but this in break-time? As you say weird things. Have you got different language as a group.

Voice – We speak French.

At break-time, how do you talk to each other ………….do you make up your own words or do you have your own actions, that they might not understand at break-time.

Voices – altogether.

Tell us what you talk about at break-time? Because you hang around together
at break-time not just in lessons. You hang around at break-time. What makes your group gel together. Do you talk a different language, I know you say you speak French do you have normal conversations. Do you have any words that you know and nobody else knows or any actions that you sort of have like.

Voice – we do this a bit....

Voices

Does it only mean something to you (looking at one group) or does it mean stuff to you as well (looking at the others)?

In your general defence, that’s what I’m saying, you have things that you sort of talk through. You giggle, right. Do you spend all break-time giggling?

Voice – Vaguely, yes.

Voice – In the morning.

Voice – they’re so loud.

Voice – in the morning, we come in and.............

In terms of break-times now, which is what I’m concentrating on, do you see them as yours or part of school, just like class-rooms. Nothing to do with teachers.

Voice – No.

Voice – We’re talking.

Where you chill out?

Voice – Yes.
Voice – Break times are our times, we try like to arrange something for the week-end.

Voices – altogether.

Voice – We get too much homework.

Voices – altogether.

Voice – Sometimes we try to arrange things at week-ends but sometimes we can’t because we’ve got too much homework.

So does that cause a problem?

Voices – Yes.

Voice – Homework

Voice – You’re still being with friends at school and there’re things you’d like to do together so we’d like to do them at the week-end but you can’t because.........

Do you live near to them?

Discussion at to where they live and the friends they have outside school.

The friends in school, could you like cope without having them?

Voices – No.

Voice – They mean everything to me.

Voices – Ahh.
Inaudible...
Voice: We talk about everything.....

Inaudible

What do you think you learn in breaks?
(That you may not learn in lessons)?

Voice: You learn about each others' personalities.Voice: You learn something new like all the time.
So what sort of skills are you learning?

Voice: Social skills...
Voice: inaudible

Voice: Yesterday I had my awful... it's really bad and I told them and they said never mind.

So they're positive in your group

Voices: Yes

Don't worry about it, you probably had a bad exam

Voice: yeah.
Put it behind you

Voice: Yeah

What happens when you fall out at break - what does it mean for your next lesson?
Do you always resolve it?

Voices: no!

Voice: Sometimes, when you’re not talking, and in the lesson, you’re partners...

...just pulled a face or something...

Inaudible.

Voice: It could be a couple of days before we speak...

Voice: If we’re sitting in a class-room, we’ll sit on the other side....

Voice: Sometimes, if you’ve fallen out in break-time or register, then in the lesson after you’ve fallen out, that’s all you think about.

Does it stop you working?

Voices: Yeah! Sometimes, say two people have fallen out, sometimes you’re like.

Inaudible

So, if they have fallen out, what do you think is the best way to resolve it?

Do you think it would help if there was a five minute bell to warn people to sort out their problems before their next lesson? Do you think it would help?

Would it help the ‘boundaries between the break-time and the lesson?’

Voice: I’m not sure..

Voice: No, not really!

Voices: NO!

So, five minutes isn’t enough?

Voice: You don’t really have a choice, ‘cos you’ve got to sit with that group anyway...so, if someone’s really nasty to you, you’re not sure to be....

So, how long will it take before you concentrate again?

Voice: It depends on the time, ‘cos if it’s last lesson on a Friday, you all make
friends again, 'cos of the week-end.

So, isn’t it all of an act? If it happens on a Monday, you’ve got nearly a full week and don’t have to worry too much; would you make more effort to make friends if you fell out at break-time, if it was a Friday, near the end of the week?

Would you make more effort at break-time to make friends if you fell out on a Friday?

Voice: Mmm! Sometimes I’d feel guilty, I’d think about it over the week-end...

Voice: If you did fall out, like on a Friday, you’d forget about it at the week-end and get on with your life.

Would you not worry about it at all?

Yes....

So, would you make more effort to try and sort it out before you went home for the week-end rather than if it happened on a Monday?

Voices: Yes.....(together).

So, it does basically make a difference as to when you fall out?

Voice: Mm...If you’ve done something wrong, if you know you’re in the wrong, then you should say sorry first.

What positive things do you have by being friends?

Voice: Some of us work together.

Do you get annoyed if you’re not sitting together in class?
Does it matter that you may not be with the whole group?

Voice: Well the teacher put them together and I was on my own.

Voice: You can't concentrate when you're sitting next to someone you don't know.

Voice: You daydream 'cos you're so bored!

So, you'd rather sit next to someone you know than someone you don't know, but in terms of the amount of work you would get done...would you say, gossiping included that you'd still do more work, next to someone you know?

Voice: I'd say you'd do more work either by yourself or with your friends.

So, if you worked with someone in your class that you didn't hang around with or you may not like...would you not concentrate more?

Voice: Half and half, 'cos you'd be bored because ....

So, what would you be thinking about, then?

Voice: You'd be thinking about your friends.

**Do you think you're old enough to take responsibility for the amount of talking that could be productive and not just negative in class?**

Voice: Yeah

Voice: NO, I don’t think so.....

Would you use your groups to help you and manipulate the class-room
environment to your benefit?

Give an example of how you have got into trouble being in your friendship groups.

Voice: Getting told off about talking....

Voice: It’s really annoying in twos in rows, ‘cos they turn around and talk to yeah and some teachers take it really seriously.....there was one girl in year 7 the other day and she just turned round and one of the teachers, she gave her a detention for just turning round.

Voice: Say if you turn round to ask for a rubber....

Voice: There’s one teacher, she won’t let you talk, sometimes if you just whisper, she won’t let you talk....so...some of the teachers don’t have respect for you as you have respect for them....

Voices: Yeah.

Voice: You know when a teacher gives you homework and you’ve spent ages on it and they give it back next lesson without even marking it....they say ‘oh sorry’, so if they forget our homework it’s time for us to forget some of the work.

Do you discuss that afterwards at break-times?

Voice: Yeah, it’s like...art..we’ve done loads of pictures and she Voices together......didn’t even mark them.

Voice: Then you think I won’t do it this week, ‘cos she’s not going to mark it, but she does and you get really shouted out.

Voice: In our art lesson....which we had to have in the I.C.T. mobile, the art teacher was on the phone.....
Voice: OH, yeah!
Voice: It’s like they say to us we’re not allowed to use them, and they just break the rules.
Voice: Yes, like drinking in the Science lab........
It’s possibly to do with ‘expected roles’.

What ever happens in lessons, do you ‘gang up’ on the teachers?

Lots of laughter...

If something happened and talked about it at break-time, what would it mean for the next lesson?

Voice: Would you have things planned, would you come in chatty, would it make any difference if you talked about it...would it make any difference the next time you had that teacher?

Voice: (Laughter) –
Voice: The teachers – if you were turning round just to ask for scissors or something like that, and they shout at you,
Voice: They have favourites..
Voice: Yes, mm. and then you try to explain to them, they say ‘don’t backchat me’....
Voice: Yeah. One teacher, and... the sweetest girl ever...she tried to tell the teacher why she hadn’t got the homework and the teacher asked her a question, which she answered politely, and then the teacher said ‘don’t backchat me!

So, homework is important and the amount as a group?

Voice: Yeah, you don’t want to get into trouble....
Voice: Some people will forget their homework and other people have worked really hard, sometimes they don’t get shouted at
Voice: That's not fair.

Voice: And they don't mark ... I haven't done the last two.

Break-time – Just to recap - What do you learn at break-times?

Voice: All the food people eat.

(Laughter)

Voice: You can never learn enough information about them.

Voice: If we talk about our families and stuff, then you know they won’t tell anyone about it.

Trust:

Voice: If the teacher did a lesson and said right you’ve got an hour to talk like break-time – off you go ....(in the class-room)....how would you feel?

Voice: I think it'll be odd...like the teacher’s recording everything we said.

Voice: I think it would be fine...

Voice: Do you know when you come in and you’re really excited to see your friend, and then your friend has a bad day, you feel they’re ignoring you......I felt awful.

(Inaudible)

Right...you know.....like this morning during our Welsh, she said ‘Hi’ to me and I didn’t really hear her, and then she went off in a mood and she ignored me and then when she’s in a mood with us....

How does that affect the lessons afterwards?

Voice: You just can’t think.....

Do you get into trouble for turning round and trying to make-up?
Transcription of an interview with Year 9 pupils (lessons 3 – 4 before break). [2]

Question – Do you think it is important to have friends.

All – Yes.
Why then? I’ll let you speak one at a time.

Voice 1 – Because like in school you’re really bored and they send you to school and see your friends and then…...

Voice 2 – …………. in groups, ‘cause you’ve got your friends.

In Groups? How many sort of friends have you got in groups? Are there one’s two’s, five’s…….

Voice 3 – There are two major groups in the class, and the two major groups there’s about 15 either side.

Discussion about where they sit in class in the two groups, circulating everywhere even in the two groups, even though there is a division of two groups in the class.

Question – At break time, what do you do? Do you talk. What do you talk about?
You haven’t got that major group have you.
Voice 1 – Everything.

All talking together.

Voice 2 – Your families.

Discussion altogether voices.

Do you have your own language, that is different, that teachers may not understand at break time. Voice 3 – we all start laughing and if a teacher walks past…..

Some make sounds or signs that one group knows and the other group doesn’t.
Voice 2 – We lip read.

The girls agreed that they lip read.

Has anybody else got language that they share that’s different to the classroom.

All voices together shouting........they said they had nick-names, for groups and people.

Voice 3 – people get labelled.

The stuff that goes on, does it carry on into the lessons basically from break-times.

Voices – Yes, sometimes.

Voice – And if you fall out with your friend, they’re sitting on the other side of the room.

Voice – And someone’s sat with different people.

Do you have to sit in the same place? So what happens then.

Voice – You’re embarrassed – and the other person on the other side you talk to them.

Do you see the break-times as something, you know, what are they?

All voices together.................some of like to move around like, standing and stuff like that.

So when you’ve finished the lesson you don’t see it as break of a lesson, your time?
Voices – yes. Voice 1 – you can do whatever you like.

Right tell me what you can do?

Voice 2 – we can mess around.

Voice 3 – games that we can play by the school.

Voice 1 - ......We can hang out of the window .......

Is that your class room, your form room?

Voice 1 – yes.

Noisy shouting.

Basically break-time is your time?

Voice – yes.

And in terms of, obviously you talk about personal things that you said, you talk about some things you have a laugh, how do you know when it finishes because obviously sometimes, I’m not talking about you generally, I’m talking about your year, some people get into trouble more than others and often it is to do with break-time and it continues into lessons. How do you know, do you feel that break-time, because you obviously enjoy it finishes or do you carry on stuff into the lessons sometimes?

Voice – Sometimes if you’re talking about something and you have finished with it and you’re sitting near and you start taking about it

And do you get told off?
Voice – No.

All voices talking together.

Is it a major problem?

Voices – No.

Voice – The only thing is you have to stay in one playground.

Voices talking about play-grounds. One voice said that in her old school she had really long break-times and in primary school they had a break-time in the afternoon.

One voice said that in summer they sat on the grass and sunbathed or stood on their hands.

In break-times what do you learn? Tell me what you talk about, what do you learn at break-time?

Voices – our social things. Things your friends do.

In terms of education do you think the break-times are part of education.

Voices – Yes.

They’re not just a dos?

Voice - No. We’d get bored just doing school.

If we didn’t have both, what would you miss out on, what would your education miss out on?

Voice – You wouldn’t have any friends really.............
All voices together

Voice - If you were shy, you wouldn’t have a hope in hell. Okay. You’ve
got, like, break-time like it’s kind of talk, it kind of happens, you talk to other
people, because nobody wants to be lonely so if you didn’t have break-times
and stuff you’d be on your own, what would you do at the week-end and stuff
if you’re not hanging round with your pals. I don’t know about anybody else.

Anything you see at break-times that you wish didn’t happen that you see?

Voice - you get fall outs.

Voice - Everyone argues

Because I’ve got you now you’re the last in my line basically, then you’ve got
your options in Year 10 and you get on with it, or the ones that don’t, don’t get
the results.

Now because you’ve gone through it then going back how have you changed;
your friendships changed.

Voice - All the friendship groups have changed because when we got to year 7
we had like, we were just making friends because we’d all come from different
schools, and then, now everyone’s in different friendship groups.

What’s the difference, is it the numbers or have you labelled each other? You
know, like they say.

Voice - You changed your friends completely.

Voice - Some people haven’t changed their friends but some people have.

Identity then?...Year 7’s.....Was there major fall-out between groups?

Voice - It was mostly groups.
Voice – It was...constantly arguing.

Voice – And then the whole class were involved in it. All talking together.

Talking about Year 8 having problems, did you get into trouble then, you've sort of found your feet now, did you find that some of them who weren't involved were getting into trouble in lessons because of the problems of certain groups in play.

Voice

You are a good group.

Voice

It was stated that merits were awarded in school and were collected by years 7 and 8 but year 9 didn't seem too old for it.

Voices

Basically in year 9, what would you like.

Voices

Voice – All the people who find it difficult

Voice - .......exactly the same as us but they get more praise than us. Inaudible discussion

Groups are useful, are you using groups in a positive way now?

Voice – Yes
Is that in lesson time or?

Voice – No

In a way do you go out to argue at break-time or?

Voices

Is that just to see what they are like? Whether they like your friends or?

Voices

Discussion about what Year 7 and Year 8’s are like.

Stated that these interviews are confidential with no names mentioned.

…………..Friendship group, depends on how clever they are or how clever they aren’t, are those still your friendship group.

Voices

…………..competition

Voices

In your group do you seem to back each other up. You are quite a big group..so you’re all agreeing with each other all the way through this interview. So, are you learning from what went wrong in Years 7 and 8 and you’re coming out now into year 9.

Voice 5 – Yes, we had a stupid phase in year 7 and 8.
Voices inaudible.

1025 So to you, leaving break-times as they are is fine?

Voice - If there's an argument, you've got time to get to your next lesson to sort it out.

What happens if you don't realise break-time is over and you've fallen out, will it be taken into the next lesson?

Some people have implied that in Year 7, do think it would be useful to have say five minutes before break finished to sort out your arguments before the lesson started?

Voices inaudible.

1025 So to you, leaving break-times as they are is fine?

Voice - If there's an argument, you've got time to get to your next lesson to sort it out.

What happens if you don't realise break-time is over and you've fallen out, will it be taken into the next lesson?
Voice – It’s really annoying when teachers ask you to make up...
Voices together – Yes.

Voice – maybe you don’t want to be friends with them ever again!

So, do you think that some teachers need to understand that sometimes you may not need to make up and just want to move on away from the argument? Voice – One time my parents locked us in a car and made us make up.

Voice – Forgive and forget
Do you think it will all sort itself out in the end?

Voice 1, 5, 6 + Yes....

Do you see break-times in terms of the whole context of school and a learning process?

Voice Yes
Yes
Yes

Voice – Cos you’re not allowed to talk in lessons, so if you didn’t have break-time, you wouldn’t make friends and you wouldn’t have anyone really...

It’s not on the curriculum is it?
It’s not part of your KS3 or KS4, is it?

Voice – Yeah, but they chatted when they were at school.

Do you know where the boundaries are between break-time and lessons?

Voice – Yes
I Why do you still chat if you understand boundaries and expectations?

Voice – You know you can talk to some teachers.
Voice – Like --- where you talk as you work and don’t learn anything.
Voice – Some don’t realise just how old you are...

I What did you all do?

Voice – We still talk in the first five minutes cos that’s when we’re settling down.

Voice – That’s when the teachers shout at you.

Do you gang together if you think it’s an unfair request?

Voice – Yeah
Voice – Yeah

I’ve noticed your eye-contacts between some groups in lessons; you don’t still send notes round do you?

Voice – No.
Voices   No
Voice - I used to do that some time ago.

One teacher in year 8 insulted a job that one of our friends had.

What did you all do?

We planned what to do at break-time and went to Mrs.X.
Voice – We don’t go and see Mrs. X anymore.
You’re getting older?
Voice – Yes

Voice – If we’re having an argument and you bring a teacher into it, the teachers always take sides.
Voice – Know like the person who goes to her, she always takes that persons’ side and it makes it worse.
Voice – They don’t look at what’s happened.
Voice - I don’t think it’s fair being split up in class.
Voice - It’s good though ‘cos it gives us a chance to talk to each other.
Voice - I know, but in alphabetical order it may be that you sit next to somebody you really don’t like, a personality clash, where none of our views are the same,........

Voice - Would you learn to work together?
Voice - sometimes
Voice - But if you really don’t like them....
Voice - But you can get to know different people...
Voice - some of our class are seen as the naughty ones, but underneath, they are really nice people.

They’re not normally naughty on their own are they?

Voice - No, if someone’s off they’re usually really good.

Looking at those who get into trouble more than others, do they miss out at break-times; is that why they need more attention in lessons?

Voice - Inaudible
Voice - No, X just stares, but doesn’t mean to, just likes staring....
Misunderstood perhaps?
Voices Yes.

Do you think you need these experiences as a learning process ready for Year 10 and new direction?

Voice - Yes

Voice - Yeah, if you don’t go through this stuff, you’re not going to know for later on, as it always gets harder, never easier.

A lot of this is happening at break-times?
Voice – Yeah
You can’t do it in lessons, so what about before and after school before you get on the buses?
Inaudible…computers
So the computers are like catalysts really, and mobile phones.

Voice – I fell out with a girl who was sending horrible text messages…
So, sometimes are you coming into school with an angry disposition from messages received at home on the internet or phone?
Are you all on the computer systems?
Voices – Yes

So, stuff that is happening in school may not be school’s fault, because it’s happening the previous night?

Inaudible
If you came in from break-time as a teacher and notice you have fallen out, would it be pointless for the teacher to try to sort it out at your age?
Voice – We’ll deal with it ourself ‘cos you’re old enough to realise…….cos you’ve had so many arguments, you know what to do.

Voice – It makes it worse..

Do you think teachers should be able to recognise friendship problems and allow them to be sorted by yourselves at your age, but hep sort any other worries unconnected to peer groups?

Voices – Yes…..

What would you say to the teacher?

Voice – the teacher should ask you if you wanted help to sort it out.

Thank you again for taking part, I’ve thoroughly enjoyed your contributions.
## Appendix 1b - Questions relating to the emerging themes from Pilot Study

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### B) Communication Networks

**How has technology influenced your communication patterns (both positively and negatively) between you and your friends both in and out of school?**

**What are the positive and negative effects of technological developments in relation to learning?**

**What are the positive and negative effects of technological developments in relation to learning?**

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### C) Resistance to Homework

**What is the function of homework and why do you think teachers give you it?**

**What is the function of homework and do you think pupils have the same understanding?**

**What is the function of homework and do you think pupils have the same understanding?**

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### D) Friendship as developmental and a learning process

**What have you learned from good and bad friendships? Give examples.**

**Can you give any examples of when pupils learning is enhanced through friendships and any negative examples of friendships being detrimental to learning?**

**Can you give any examples of pupils who have fallen out, but who's work has either not suffered or has improved as a result of learning from the experience?**

**Or Vice Versa?**

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### E) Spatial Awareness

**Is it important where you sit in class-rooms?**

**How is your class-room organised? Do certain groups sit in certain areas? What are the implications of this?**

**Are some class-rooms better than others for learning?**

**Do you have to make any**

**How is your class-room organised? Do certain groups sit in certain areas? What are the implications of this?**

**Are you aware**
| alterations because of this? | of any teachers who have to alter the way they deliver a lesson, or have to rearrange the class-room layout after break-time due to the influence of pupil friendships? |
Appendix 2a – Main Study Transcript - Teacher Interviews

Interview with teacher number 1.

© Have you noticed any changes in the types of friendship patterns amongst friends within KS3?

(T1) I think there’s a shift going on in year 8 and there a couple of problems going on in year 9, but nothing...

© That’s fine: What sort of effect do you think members of particular peer groups have on KS3 pupils?

(T1) Huge! Especially if there are a number of pupils who are underachieving because it is not seen ‘cool’ to be doing well at school.

© Because they hang around with..?

(T1)...certain others who have that attitude.

© Can you give me any examples from KS3 where friends have fallen out during break-time and problems have occurred during the subsequent lesson, where break-time has really acted as a catalyst?

(T1) We had one actually this afternoon where mm pupil A and pupil B had told pupil C that mm pupil D had said she was a ‘mong’ and her hair colour made her even more look like a ‘mong’. So pupil C was upset....so I got pupil D, and she said that she wouldn’t use the word ‘mong’ wouldn’t be allowed because she had a cousin with downs and she would never use the word ‘mong’. When they were in Superdrug, she had the same blusher as pupil C...so that is overspill and it took about 15 minutes out of the lesson time to get to the bottom of it.

© So it was basically about blushers and copying?

(T1) Blushers and people around saying things.

So that kicked off at break-time?

(T1) It kicked off at lunch-time and over-spilled into the next lesson. When I got them out of lessons, she was sobbing her heart out. She also wants to have new friends but people don’t want to be her friends because she’s friends with pupil A and pupil B...
Is the time in lessons perceived differently than break-times by staff?

(T1) They are by staff aren't they...but I don't think pupils see them as different, I think for some pupil's school is one big social life and that includes their lessons too. (Inaudible). What’s really helped is comments on Sims, you know when you did a register, somebody puts a comment on and you can flag it up and you see a student with a flag and they’ve done something in a particular lesson, maybe passing notes or something, so you’re forewarned.

Do you think that some pupils or even some teachers struggle with the transition between break-times and lessons?

(T1) Erm, I personally feel that in some ways...it depends on...they will play up for some members of staff more than others, won’t they. When a teacher next door was off last week, the noise coming through my store room was huge and on some days it’s nothing at all.

Supply teachers seemed to have this stigma from children, like an invitation to try out their little games and things.

(T1) Yes, I can think of Mr. A.

People who are established and respected, there’s less issues?

(T1) Yes, yes.

Is there anything pedagogical within the school context that could help to promote learning due to these sorts of things that are going on?

(T1) I think flagging things on Sims helps because when they come in you won’t allow any conversation to continue. I also think the way they perceive the comments on Sims...they know that I’m putting ‘talking too much’ or...and another teacher’s going to see, maybe they’d speak to them or tell their parents and with that sort of...

What are the positive and negative effects of technological developments in relation to learning?

(T1) Mm, well for me, the positive ones are that I don’t have to write on the board much with untidy writing.

PowerPoints?

(T1) Yes, so I’m prepared beforehand and I’m facing the class, whereas before you use to have to, with certain classes, practice the art of writing on the board with your head turned
the other way. The other side is my laptop died the week before we had the mini-inspection, thank God it was that week, and all my lessons were on PowerPoint. I couldn't even print off sheets because I needed my laptop to get the sheets and it was just...you could win yourself through in a way that in olden days that when you're banding off sheets for photocopying.

® You rely on it, in a way?

(T1) Yeah.

® In terms of issues regarding technology in relation to the children in terms of Bebo, MSN, phones, Facebook etc...those issues that are really outside of school and brought back into school...?

(T1) Have you heard about my recent, my recent, er (sigh) thing on Facebook?

® I have but more of the same time you found out, to be honest.

(T1) So, mm...tick here and join a group who hate T1. Apparently according to pupil 15C she sent it out to hundreds of people in the school and a number of people had signed up to her. Year 8 then decided that they would tell me because it was 'tight' on me. So then I said 'oh well, if that's true, 15C is in trouble. In the meantime 15C found out that I knew and ran away from school, so that was great, and then er of course when the rest of the group found out I was on to it a lot of people who had signed up were signing off.

® You see I'm not sure how it works, but I know people were saying you can delete, but you have to officially get on Facebook to do this. People with the internet on their phones in school could delete, whilst those without would not be able to delete.

(T1) Yes. The deputy head had to go home to print it off and by the time he got home, there were only 6 names on there.

® So people had deleted names, somehow?

(T1) Yes.

® Presumably, the people who hadn't got it on their phones couldn't delete it.

(T1) No, so anyway that wasn't fair, but the head teacher's stance...there are two after school head teacher's with her and then they had to wear school uniform on own clothes day.

® Year 8 turned up but I'm not convinced all the Year 10 did?
(T1) The year 10 didn't; one of them has been self-harming and that her parents said if she had to come in school uniform they wouldn't know what she would do, so the head teacher told them to keep their daughter at home. But it's one of the biggest things and it's also mm when they're quarrelling in school, one of the things that there's an overlap is that a lot of quarrelling continues on MSN at home. When we went home, perhaps if we were being bullied, we were safe, but now whatever is put on MSN or whatever...comes into our homes.

® I don't understand what the benefit of these sites are for the person who sets it up because they know that people may pass on the information and get them into trouble, like your example above?

(T1) I don't either – it's one of the things I'm quite concerned about 'cos it's not happening in school, it's not a school issue, but it's being brought for some reason into school, it follows them into school, follows them then home.

® I haven't gone onto Cyber-bullying, but it is obviously a part of it.

(T1) But a policeman comes in and he does a talk and mm he's very good and also he came in and put the 'frighteners' on these 'I hate T1' club.

® They seem aware of the problems of it but still go ahead and abuse it.

(T1) The assistant head in another school spends a lot of time dealing with the group set up called 'Rape my teacher' which has caused huge problems with staff there being off with stress and what have you because they just, I don't know...

® The mobile phone business especially taking inappropriate pictures, has that died down, it doesn't seem to be around this year?

(T1) No, it was last year if you remember the incident with pupil E; putting it on there and getting other children to comment on how stupid she looked in the photograph.

® It's ridiculous isn't it?

(T1) It used to be left at the school gate.

® Do the children come to you first thing about any issues from the previous night or do they let them develop over registration etc?

(T1) They have to...they have to get into a fight about it in school before it... The useful thing is that because it's there, you can
usually print it off or get somebody to print it off as evidence against the group. Equally it's quite handy, because when they have an argument and it's one child's word against the other, at least if it's an argument on MSN you can see it.

® What do you see the function of homework being and do you think the pupils have the same understanding?

(T1) (laugh) No, obviously not. Well I do say you've always got homework in a language, learning vocab., there's always something to be looked at, run through again, mm but quite often if I'm setting learning homework unless I actually test them, most of them will not do it.

® I think some may get away without handing homework in?

(T1) It depends on the teacher. It certainly has a function for language, but I don't see the point of handing out homework for the point of having to do homework, I can see consolidation and extension as valid points, but sometimes some subjects may not need to give certain homework just for the sake of it. It was interesting today, I said to Year 8, 'why do we learn poems, as part of the curriculum we learn the poems that are set by the Urdd (a different two poems every year) and why do we do it? One of them said, 'just because teachers like to annoy us' and they could see no point to learning a poem by heart. I said a) it shows you how your memory works and the best way for you to memorise stuff, it improves your pronunciation and intonation and secondly it also helps with your self-confidence and the ability to stand up in front of people and talk. Why do you do speech and drama? (Oh, that's different) – No, it's not. They couldn't see a point to it.

® Can you give any examples of pupils who have had friendship issues and have learned from those in a positive way?

(T1) O.K, I shouldn't say this, but pupil F has turned over a new leaf. There were a lot of problems last year, she was forever in trouble with the 'other two', terrible threes and she is keeping her head down, her work, she's working hard.

® Yes, my little girl is in Year 6 and she knows her and says she always speaks to them and is really nice to them.

(T1) Her little sister, about 2, 3; it might be that relates to them; certainly a huge change in her this year.

® Do you think that's through her punishment...

(T1) I think it's a combination of very supportive parents who see education as a way for her to get on.

® Has she moved herself now away from the other two?
She's moved herself away from them and she's still seeing them at break-time and so on but she's done it herself really through I think parental and school mutual support.

I hope she's learned from them!

I'm hoping so, I'm hoping that pupil H stops having the tantrums she was having mm where she would scream and cry and what have you, and I think that's calmed down, but I'm not sure about how much of that has something to do with another pupil who left.

They also seemed to be competing and pushing each other out in that group as well?

32F, pupil G and pupil 33F were forever bickering and it was affecting the lessons and it was starting in a lesson and going all the way through break-time going onto the next lesson because they were having to do group work together and they wouldn't do it pupil H's way. Is that growing up, I don't know?

I personally think it may be a learning process for some individuals or groups and maybe some pupils never get to experience that.

Or maybe you take one child out of the equation and...

Is it also a learning process for staff because pupils are moved and suddenly you think wow (quiet, or everyone's working), or if someone's off, just one person.

Mm, which reminds me I've got to put an e-mail out to staff to tell them not to let 42H, 43H and 44H to sit together.

What have they done now?

Well they took themselves off for a day truanting and then what else did they do?

42H seems to be sat on the stairs a fair bit as punishment?

Yes, they were writing an obscene note in a maths lesson which a teacher assistant confiscated, then 44H, 42H...

What was it about?

It was 'I need a ""

About boys, sex etc?

'My mum is a tease' and they just left it lying for anyone to see and then 42H told them if they all denied it there was
nothing I could do, but through bluffing I got them to confess. So 43H said it wasn’t her, it was 44H and 42H. 42H said it wasn’t her it was 43H and 44H and ..... 

® It’s the ‘odd numbers’ problem again?

(T1) Well that’s interesting because the year 7 group have, there is a threesome there with pupil H, pupil I and pupil J. I have them for 2 hours on a Friday and they take it in turns to choose where they’re sitting and they’ve done that themselves.

® You’re lucky in your class-room as it’s a newer mobile, but you have it organised in a certain way don’t you?

(T1) If I do group work it’s probably only for a couple of minutes and they can turn round and I like them in rows.

® If you had to move to another class-room for whatever reason and the desk weren’t in rows, would you alter them if you could?

(T1) I wouldn’t alter them, but I wouldn’t like them. The D.O.L. (lab), I don’t know how you can teach in there ‘cos when I’ve done cover in there, because they’ve got their backs to you and that drives me mad that.

® Are you aware of any teachers who may alter the way they teach a lesson or re-arrange the class-room if they have a lesson after break-time?

(T1) I think Mrs. B does stuff like that, doesn’t she?

® Right.

(T1) I think she does circle time and things like that.

® Depending on the slots?

(T1) Yeah.

® Have you got any preference for slots in the day where you would like your lessons to be?

(T1) I’d like all my lessons in the morning! I hate them at the end of the day. The worst one of all, Friday I have year 10 at the end of the day and they’re rubbish.

® There’s no break-time, you’ve got the 2 hour slot...

(T1) A lot of them do go to the toilets and they know my rule of going to the toilet before, so they will quite often come in drop their bag and go to the loo and I’m sure they don’t want to go to
the loo, I'm sure it's just to have a bit of a wander, a run around or something.

® Are you aware around the school of all the groups that congregate in their set areas?

(T1) Yes, well not all of them. Year 11 are down here outside the hall window. The year 8 are by my room playing tick in the woods.

® The roundabout?

(T1) There're various children on the roundabout but I don't pay much attention to them, but they're the ones playing tick or something, running around aren't they?

® Yeah – Lockers?

(T1) Then there're the lockers and some on the steps outside the door here. We have a day when we go round and check and also I usually need to find somebody and need to know where they might be.

® I saw a little group of year 11 sat outside the hall the other day singing with a guitar.

(T1) Oh, pupil K's group. There's a different Year 11 group by the other hall door over there.

® Are you aware of any names each year may label groups?

(T1) They don't like the year 9 – they don't like the 42H... (some year 9 and some of the year 11) just don't like the threesome.

® Do they have names for them, like Chav etc?

(T1) Erm, I've just heard them call them 'those horrible girls in year 9'.

® Just that little threesome?

(T1) Yes. There was a spate when pupil L and those were doing the EMO thing but....

® Is there anything else you want to add about the abusive nature of friendship?

(T1) One of the sad things I've seen a couple of times now is where children are copying parental relationships or dysfunctional parental relationships. The worst one for that, do you remember pupil M, she used to fascinate us by getting people to do a face to face slanging match and she used to
engineer situations where that would happen and because her parents had a very nasty divorce.

® She was copying?

(T1) She just copied behaviour from home and within her own friendship groups. There are a couple of kids I've seen doing that which isn't pleasant. There is also the other thing, we have got a number of 'princesses' here whose parents treat them like princesses and they expect to be treated like princesses by their friends as well and a lot of their failings out quite often will be relating to the fact that peers don't treat them like the princess that they perhaps feel that they deserve to be treated like.

® Thank you for talking quite openly to me. I enjoyed our chat.

Interview with teacher number 2.

® What is the importance of friends in school?

(T2) I think it's really important, especially in school, because it allows them to settle and allows them to feel safe and secure.

® Can you describe your role as a teacher and a pupils' role? (What do you do that makes you a teacher and what do they do that makes them a pupil?)

(T2) In theory, I'm supposed to lead and set by example I assume and I am there what I call to guide; I wouldn't say to instruct. I like them to try and find their own feet and I am there as a sort of tour-guide through education to guide and bring them on, get them to do the best they can, get them to feel safe and secure and to get them to feel good about themselves.

® And to learn really?

(T2) Well through all that, we hope that rather than stand there and go 'you will do this and you will do that', the idea is to try to guide them through it and let them come to the ideas themselves and deal with them.

® Do some pupils seem to learn more in your lessons than others?

(T2) I don't know...I can't say...they say...mind you they do say they prefer learning my style than the style they've got, but I wouldn't like to say whether they learn more in my lessons.

® O.K. – In terms of groups within your lesson, do you notice that some groups work really well together and better than other groups and if so why?
(T2) Oh, yes, definitely some groups work better than others. Definitely, yes, because, because, I think they feel... If I've got one group and looking at that group in particular (Group A), erm, there are three groups in there that I would say are working together at the moment that are working really well. They are all on the same page, they all want the same thing, they are thriving, desperately to learn and they want to do well. The other two groups are more fractious and they tend to bring the outside into their groups, so that I think the successful groups are those that concentrate on the real and the now, whereas the less successful are the ones that bring the outside in.

® Do the groups get on?

(T2) No, there are a lot of personality clashes within those groups.

® Do various things that have happened during break-time continue into the class-room?

(T2) Always. The best of it was, they did it during an Inspection.

® Lovely. How did they manifest their behaviour then? How did they show that?

(T2) Well, (sigh) It wasn’t that extreme...for me or you, but...

® No.

(T2) But the Inspector just happened to be sitting near them at the time and everyone else was working in their groups very well and on task, but it wasn’t until I got there that I realised that they were bickering about what was going on outside. No work had been done, because an incident had happened at lunch-time and this was..

® Was this one group or between groups?

(T2) This was one group and it just escalated and escalated and escalated.

® Were they trying to sort it out in the lesson, was that what they were trying to do or had it gone beyond that?

(T2) Oh, it had gone beyond that, because one of the group (there used to be one person who was in that group who was the peacemaker and the mediator), she had removed herself from that group intentionally and she moved herself last year and now she has made an absolute effort to steer herself away. Without her in that group there is no-one to offer any peace. And because there's another person in that group who actually enjoys the fun and the frolics and actually tends to sort of poke the bear and sit back and watch the entertainment.
Do you think they see it as a game, because they seem to plan thing?

(T2) To be honest I think that would be crediting them with a little bit more intelligence than I think they have. I think it just overflows.

Do they have boundaries or rules?

(T2) Well one of them certainly doesn’t have very many boundaries at all.

When you plan your lessons, do you plan for distinct groups of girls?

(T2) Oh no, you have to plan around the specific groups.

Do you see them in terms of their friendship groups who have a type of identity?

(T2) Yes, again, if you’re going back to one particular class, then I have actually had to break-time that group up.

What was the reaction of that?

(T2) Horrendous, it was like ‘why?’ and they couldn’t understand why.

Once you’ve split them up, how did you (or did you) get over any barriers that were formed between you and them?

(T2) Yes, we had to and I just said to them, that’s it, it’s as simple as that and when it came to selecting groups for the new term, I literally put names in the hat and whatever group they’re in, that’s how it will fall.

Is it fairness for them?

(T2) The problem I have is that In a class like that you have eight potential fireworks and some very delicate pupils within that class too, so if you destroy the balance then the delicate people will fall by the way-side, so how do you balance them up how do you mix them up so the simplest way is just to put names in a hat. People came out at random.

Are you strategically planning..?

(T2) I tried....I actually tried to sit down and plan the groups and it didn’t work, and I sort of had to tear them up and tear them up because whatever group I looked at I thought no that could present a problem that could present a problem.
What effect (if any) did the layout of the classroom have on your planning of groups?

(T2) The problem you have is, like in the English mobile where you have no manoeuvrability.

What is the negative and positive effects of technology (computers, Bebo, Facebook, mobile phones etc.) in relation to patterns of friendships and the effect of these on learning both in school and out of school?

(T2) I think they’re really detrimental to them. I really, absolutely. I really, due to personal experience can’t see a positive... even now they pay less attention to their work because they multi-task while they’re on the computer... they have Facebook.

Is this at home or lessons?

(T2) No not in the lessons, (at home), I rarely have computers and work in an I.T. suite... but you still have to watch as they will have the screens up and can switch so quickly... and at home it is completely detrimental, they can literally, they don’t shut themselves down and they can multi-task.

Do you have any issues of people leaving school as friends and due to these sites, arrive back into school the next day with friendship problems?

(T2) Oh, we’ve just had a problem where ‘you said this on line’, ‘you said this on-line’ or I saw it on my eBay, I saw it on my phone.

It’s nothing to do with school or learning?

(T2) Texting seems to be the problem.

Who texts, as phones are banned in lessons... but it does go on!

(T2) Well, I actually took a phone away from somebody in year nine.

Blatantly the fingers are going aren’t they? Is there a knock-on-effect of this texting outside of school?

(T2) They text somebody on the bus (one is on one bus, the other is on another) coming in on the bus and come in in a strop ‘cos that one says this and...

What do you think is the function of homework and do the pupils have the same understanding?
I don't actually believe in homework...I think that homework is an unnecessary burden...I think we ask an awful lot of them......whatever they do, they need to get away from school and the school regime. I think it's good to have a good link with school, but that link has got to be a decent...and it's not. I set a lot of coursework and we do a lot of coursework. They do that because they want to do it and are desperate to do well. The minute you say this has to be in by and I want this by...you take the fun out of learning and I see homework as a way of pressuring, from learning.

Can you now give examples of when learning is enhanced by friendships and also when friendships can be detrimental to learning?

I've got plenty of....points when you actually see them help and I think that's wonderful. Mmm, one of the things that I do, when I do 'Our Day Out', I do a super school trip and what I've got them to do is to put the ideas to class and I say any suggestions, how could you improve it...because the groups stand back and are very nervous as this is what their group want to do.. and then what you've got is other pupils saying, 'Oo, why don't you do this?' and 'ooh, I'd love to do that.'

It's about being involved, isn't it?

They feel comfortable and therefore it's positive. You can see it within groups, you can see it with pupils sitting next to each other...what's lovely, again going back to that class (GROUP A) there are two people who moved away and the other one is very bright anyway, they have taken on one of the troubled who decided not to be a troubled pupil anymore and they are helping her.

Any negative behaviour?

Loads negative; distractiveness, not getting on with the work, arguments in school affecting their ability to do the work, their concentration.

Are the arguments from break-times or elsewhere?

Oh, yes it can come in from break-times. I would say that 99.9% of the time it was from outside the lesson and very, very rarely comes from the lesson.

What happens if they refuse to move from their friends or focus on work, do they have to go to the Key Stage 3 co-ordinator?

The problem we've got...yes...what they've done was (inaudible) because this was done so publically...I've been used
as a scapegoat and so things have been set in motion...so basically they've got a red card to attend my lesson.

(ro) So that's come from Key Stage 3 Co-ordinator and it's being monitored?

(T2) Yes.

(ro) So the original low-level disruption has developed into something from nothing really, hasn't it?

(T2) Yes.

(ro) Is there anything pedagogical that you feel could be done within the school context which would help promote learning that hasn't already been done by yourself?

(T2) No, what I try to do (as I've said to you before), I try to get them to want to learn themselves and encourage them, rather than talk and talk and bark down at them. Guide them, give them ideas, what about this or that, rather than actually prescriptive.

(ro) Are some lesson slots better than others?

(T2) Yes, definitely, yes. Last lesson, ah, awful, awful.

(ro) Is it anything to do with planning things for after school or friendships or something else?

(T2) It depends on your groups. When I had year 10 last year I had them last lesson every lesson, all my three lessons were last lessons. They're tired and fed-up, they were talking about what they were going to be doing when they left school, they were more interested in who was going where, who would be on MSN at a certain time.

(ro) Lunch-time is their last break-time really?

(T2) Yes, they've shut off, we've lost them.

(ro) And in some lessons even in Year nine, they have been split up from their immediate friendship groups?

(T2) Yes, so you have friendships that change, certainly in year 10, because they are split up they're not with their social net, down to the day, definitely.

(ro) So, your best slot?

(T2) I would say the one coming back from break-time and from lunch 'cos it's just one lasting an hour and they know they've had a nice break-time and they've only got one lesson.
Are some class-rooms better for learning than others?

(T2) Definitely.

Can you give me some examples?

(T2) Eh, I find teaching in the D.O.L. (science lab) horrendous because the tables are rigid, trying to split up a disruptive group in that class is a nightmare 'cos you have to try...and some have got their back to you, er...to stand back at the whiteboard is the only way you can see everyone, if you want to move around, you've got kids playing (inaudible) and the acoustics aren't very good, so in that I feel you've really got to work extra hard to teach in that room.

Is there anything else now that you would like to add in relation the effect of break-time on subsequent lessons?

(T2) I think really we've got to take into account, you know it's no good saying, 'ooh, it's a petty squabble, we've got to...you know, I know it's difficult, because at the end of the day to them it is life or death. And I think you can't just necessarily dismiss them, as much as you'd like to say, 'right come on, this is ridiculous'. I think it's something that has to be intervened.

Well, certain 'petty' things can go further?

(T2) Yes, there's an incident I can think of, the class, not the group, the class that we've had in here actually with some of them from this group, alienated the person and that was horrendous within the class...she wouldn't talk and was isolated. Then I thought, 'what do I do' and in one point of the lesson had to intervene and I had to have those pupils outside of the room to sort this group out because it was having a sort of back domino effect within the whole class.

When did this start?

(T2) It happened at home actually. Somebody said they were going to phone and they hadn't phoned, or they had phoned...

Nothing to do with school at the time?

(T2) Nothing whatsoever! But the whole thing cascaded down and could actually see it almost moving through the class because they were in a mood, and split themselves there and there. There are occasions when I have pulled out the said people and said 'let's get this sorted'. There are times when I wish I hadn't. The problem you've got is that you can't make it separate because there are girls going through all sorts of things and you hear about it and they come to you and say my dad's going through chemo and my grandma's... and what's amazing is that you have the friendships supporting them. If you
took away or if you separated the break-times from the rest of
the school, then how do you do it? It's like because they never
switch off and the thing is, it's important, they're there for each
other. I think what I find very hard is when one is upset and
they've got their best-friend with them one of the traditions is to
take the best friend away and to deal with the problem and no,
the best friend needs to be there as well because that person
needs to be involved in. That best friend needs to be there,
they're too important, they're linked, you can't separate.

© How far should they be allowed to deal with it themselves?
How do you know who can deal with it and who needs help?

(T2) I think you start to learn, once you know the class, it
doesn't take long, you start to realise who's quite capable of
resolving and you realise that at some point you have to step in
for those who can't necessarily speak for themselves.

© Do you think some pupils will just come to school to observe
and be part of a friendship 'game'?

(T2) I know one of them that I'm sure just comes just as a
spectator sport.

© The importance of friendships may often be overlooked by
some teachers...

(T2) I think it's an important dynamic of the class. I think in
certain cases if you remove certain friends I think you notice it
then. Totally different dynamics...you can change the whole
make-up of the class by one person being off.

© So this affects how you teach and the way pupils learn then,
really?

(T2) Yes, definitely.

© Thank you very much for taking part, I really enjoyed sharing
your professional thoughts.

Interview with teacher number 3.

© What do you see as the role of friends in school from a pupils'
point of view?

(T3) Well usually in this school it is fairly ongoing and it's not
difficult, but there are issues sometimes, can be bullying and
this type of thing and you don't expect it here, so it becomes a
lot more hidden. On the whole, good friendship groups, I think.
They don't change that much, they seem to be ongoing.

© What do you think your role as a teacher is and that of a
pupil?
(T3) Right, well obviously it's a relationship and you build up the relationship over time, there's got to be respect on both sides and really you have to play it by ear, sometimes. Every individual is different.

® It changes?

(T3) It does and I think you have to treat them as individuals, if you treat them as a whole class of course you've got to do that sometimes, but if there is an issue or they want to talk to you sometimes you can go beyond looking at them as a whole class, you've got to look at what they need.

® What do you expect them to do in your lessons?

(T3) Generally, again this school is slightly different in this respect; they stand at the beginning of the lesson and you have a very controlled beginning and you have a controlled lesson throughout really and you know they're respectful all the way through and they leave you and say thank you, this sort of thing. Many schools have lost that and I think because of that there is a much more adult relationship. You don't have to tell them off that much or if you do you have to say something to one or two individuals. There is never as a class, it is always to one or two individuals. I think relationships are very good in class.

® When you are teaching them do you see the class in terms of set groups (2's upwards)?

(T3) Well you can do, because it obviously comes back to friendship groups who tend to sit in the same place. You think that groups will work well with that type of activity, so although you always think of them as individuals, sometimes you do think of them as groups as well, depending on what you are doing at that particular time.

® What has their reaction been if you have had to split them up?

(T3) I hardly ever do that unless it is severe. It doesn't help them because they become resentful and I don't think it helps the teacher in the long-term either.

® Do pupils learn skills in break-times and if so, are they different or complimentary from those learned in lessons?

(T3) Once again you don't have that much contact with them at break-time; it's very difficult to answer that one. Every time I see them around, they tend to be far more relaxed. They do have time to be themselves, they can.
So basically do you see that there's a gap in teachers' knowledge of pupils' break-time behaviour in secondary school?

(T3) Yes.

® We don't know?

(T3) No, no absolutely. There is break-time duty but you don't actually speak to them during that time and I've never done break-time duty actually.

® Have you experienced having to deal with issues in class that have arisen during break-time?

(T3) Obviously the first thing you think of there is if they're late coming to your class following a break-time, obviously you wonder...always, no not always, occasionally a few stragglers and you have to deal with that, but generally it's quite unusual, on the whole they are usually there waiting for you.

® Have you ever experienced a problem from break-time continuing into your lesson?

(T3) No, no, no. They tend to leave that behind and when in class they tend to focus pretty well on what they're doing in class. They don't bring their personal issues in.

® Is there anything pedagogical which would help to promote learning even more?

(T3) Obviously you have the spectrum of learning support and you have the other end, the gifted and talented. I think we at the moment are doing pretty well as well as giving support but we are really not doing enough for the gifted and talented we will do more from the beginning of January...We need to extend them and make them ambitious as well. There are children here who could have applied for Oxford and Cambridge and who haven't done so and enter outside competitions etc.

® Are there certain lesson slots better for learning than others?

(T3) Yes, without any doubt whatsoever. By the afternoon they do tend to learn better if they're doing a specific task and they can get on with it. If you want more input from them, the morning tends to be better.

® Could the two hour block after dinner possibly have something to do with their concentration?

(T3) Possibly.
What are the positive and negative effects of technological developments for learning?

(T3) It's a big issue; there are positive and negative. Positive is what we do in class, working with PowerPoints or interactive whiteboards, all of those are all positive things and allows them to get involved with technology as well. Recently year 10 did a PowerPoint on the Plague as part of their G.C.S.E. - they're really good you know - professional. On the negative side of it, I think, what I mentioned before that there is a, bullying issue in school and it can be through I.T., or through MSN or through other sorts of technology.

At home or?

(T3) Yes.

Sometimes it can be within school as well?

(T3) It can, it can, exactly, absolutely, absolutely. You know, there's a big difference from children even fifteen years ago. If there was an issue in school they could forget it. Now, it follows them home as well, 'cos once they're on-line, all these people still have access to them.

Which inevitably in my opinion affects learning the next day?

(T3) It does, it does. Absolutely!

You've been on Facebook last night and...

(T3) Absolutely. Especially in registration time when all these things come out, it can be unpleasant.

Well, I also wonder if it does continue into lessons?

(T3) That's right, it hasn't in mine, but it's quite possible, it might.

The fact that somebody is not talking to someone but remain unnoticed as they're carrying on with the work set (If It Is Individual)

(T3) Well that's right, it might very well happen.

What is the function of homework according to you and do you think the pupils share the same understanding?

(T3) We've got a homework timetable and generally I like to keep to the homework timetable. I don't think it's very heavy in this school to tell you the truth. It's very manageable and in fact some of the better ones could have more homework and could
benefit from more homework. Obviously the policy is to give everybody the same homework and you can’t differentiate.

® What would you see as beneficial?

(T3) The homework I give is usually an extension of what we’ve done in class, it’s not a separate thing; it’s a reinforcement more than anything else and the chance to add to it or to research.

® Do you think the pupils have the same understanding?

(T3) Of homework?

® Of homework.

(T3) No (laugh), absolutely not, no; they’re never too keen to do it, no. But on the whole definitely good at bringing it in, so we can’t complain really. Technology comes in here as well, as they can use the VLE in this type of thing and I think another thing that is probably underused as a lot of them say they hardly ever use it.

® Do you find any of the class-rooms more conducive to learning than others?

(T3) I do all my learning support here in this room and it’s very easy as you can have a group here or individuals and they can’t even see in very much.

® In terms of the mobiles you teach in?

(T3) The New Mobile.

® That’s nice.

(T3) It is, very nice – you know you’ve got your PowerPoint there. The one I find most difficulty with is the D.O.L.

® Is that because of the way the tables are/shape?

(T3) Exactly, you don’t feel they’re with you, but you know they’re so spread out and it’s very difficult to have very close contact with them somehow.

® The Chemistry room is horrible for other subjects?

(T3) Yes, exactly, and they can’t hear you properly. Although in the D.O.L. you do have an interactive whiteboard.

® I was thinking more of the Chemistry lab. – It’s the wrong way round except for Chemistry.

(T3) It is – exactly.
Can you give examples when pupils' learning is enhanced through friendships and others when it is not?

(T3) Yeah. Well it's again, when they're working as a group, I think generally if they are friends, they do research at home bring it in, share it and this type of thing.

Even if you're not teaching certain girls, it is widespread that there have been instances of girls falling out?

(T3) Yes, that's right. But you try and control that within your lesson and they shouldn't bring that in, if you can avoid it.

Is there anything on friendship that you'd like to add that you've been aware of here or have you noticed patterns of friendships changing with time?

(T3) I think when comparing children to 10 or 15 years ago they're much more mature when they come in year 7 now and they're not so much in awe of the school and that sort of thing, they really have friendship groups established if they've come up from the junior school and that can cause a bit of tension because a big group have come together from the junior school and then lots of individual (perhaps only one or two from other schools). And some, one child has come from one school and you know that can cause a little bit of tension while that all sorts itself out and settles down.

It seems to do with identity – some they don't seem to know where they belong, don't you think?

(T3) Yes, yes. They have this added confidence compared to the others and that tends to carry them through for quite a few years.

Finally, as you move around the school, do you notice certain groups of children regularly meeting in the same places?

(T3) It's the form rooms they congregate in and they just tend to gravitate back to their form rooms and they tend to gravitate back to their form rooms. Again if there are tensions there, that could be unpleasant. But on the whole unless it's a very fine day or the weather's is good, they tend to go into their form rooms.

Final finally, do you think the children themselves see other groups around and label them?

(T3) They were mentioning older pupils that they found not working or behaving in an unacceptable manner, so they do notice what happens around them, but generally it's within the year that they're most concerned about. They see it and notice it but don't get more involved than that.
Thank you very much, that was fantastic!

Interview with teacher number 4.

What do you see as the role of friends in school?

(T4) Personal view?

Yes that’s fine.

(T4) It’s who you feel comfortable with. I think to me a friend in school, for the girls, isn’t necessarily someone that you will talk about everything to. But it is someone that you will hang around with; not necessarily be in contact with after school but in school, not many of them have the skills of communicating and socialising, so it’s almost like an associate sort of thing, as we would call it, to them it is a friend still mm. and then you’ve got the best friends who are best friends for three minutes, hate each other for the next three and then back to being best friends again.

Yes and they seem to be a smaller group?

(T4) Yes. I think it’s, it can be quite tough when there’s three of them that are the best friends.

Numbers!

(T4) It is – for me it definitely makes a difference. I mean I don’t know, I’ve only been teaching the girls since September, so I don’t really don’t know their backgrounds or anything like that, but in terms of friends and friendships it can be used in so many different levels and there’s so many different meanings to it, I mean it depends on the girls themselves as well, but for some of them it’s just someone that you can just talk to and just hang around with at lunch-time, you know...

Some groups are split aren’t they?

(T4) Yeah, mm. normally 26E and 28E normally sit over here.

29E - Is she supposed to be here, because she is part of that group?

(T4) Yes.

One of your pupils worked extremely hard today and for homework. Is this usual for D.T. as she is split up from half of her friendship group and her closest members in terms of who she normally sits next to?
(T4) That's how I know 26E as being. I've not seen another side of 26E. I've only just got them as a form in the morning and I know 26E as being quite concerned and the initial ideas she's done before and done it all, over again. I think with some girls, if there's a leader or two leaders, they will do their utmost best to keep on the right side of them.

® They're lovely girls.

(T4) They are, but they are trying to be part of that group that probably for them is known as friendship but it's not really.

® In what ways is your role as teacher different to those of a pupil?

(T4) I would hope that I've got, what I try and go towards, is that, in technology you can't just sit quiet and do work, but anyone who enjoys design and technology it would not be possible, because they should be fidgety and doing something.

® And thinking?

(Y4) Yeah, exactly! What I try and say is that I don't mind you having a good natter as long as you're doing your work, your head's down and you're doing your work, that's fine by me, you can talk to the moon and back.

® It doesn't matter about what?

(T4) It doesn't, it really doesn't — it could be anything. I hope that I can have a strong relationship in terms of they know they can talk to me but during the lesson they know where the line is in terms of behaviour and...taking the register (something as simple as that), you know, it has to be done, I need to have a rant at them (I say rant) I need to talk to them at the beginning of the lesson and then...

® Do you see a hierarchy with teachers above pupils?

(T4) They can see me, I'm not one of the older teachers, they can relate to me in terms of I'm a girl, and...

® The top...

(T4) Yeah, the top, and younger er, hair...I've just showed year 8 earlier how I put my hair up in a pencil and they were trying to do it themselves. I try and make them aware that I am human; it's not all about school, you can enjoy school, that's what I'm trying to get through to them. This room was just awful. I tried ...

® How do rooms affect learning?
(T4) Well even having the laminator plugged in has made 'the' world of difference. I'm going to get to a stage when they've obviously finished a topic and they can decide as to who's work really deserves to go on there (new empty display). I have decided now that 26E will be going on the wall and I made a big deal out of that.

® The group aren't jealous?

(T4) Not at all, because in some schools you're going to get... they're not going to accept me as being a friend, you know what I mean, I have that comfortable relationship. In a bigger school it wouldn't happen, but in a school like this it is so good. I try and make sure that you come here and you talk about whatever you want; if you want to have a quiet talk, come and talk to me.

® You're available.

(T4) Yes, exactly.

® When you're teaching do you see the girls as friendship groups.

(T4) Yes. I think what happened is, only now they're starting to move tables. I'm not one for saying you're sitting there...Taking them out of their comfort zone; I want them to feel comfortable.

® If they do argue, they'll move themselves?

(T4) Exactly, yeah! If there's anything that came to the point of...I actually had one lesson where pupil 38G and 37G had a massive falling out, so I had to have a chat with 38G here and 37G was on the computer, no, 38G wasn't having anything, she was on the computer! She, personality wise, she shuts off; if something angers her she gets aggressive and she shuts off. 37G will pour her heart out and I saw that instantly. She wears her heart on her sleeve. She (they had a big bust up because S boyfriend mm) and so I took them into that room there and I said to them 'You missus are just like me in terms of something upsets you, you get aggressive and shut-off, you are the other half yin yan, where you wear your heart on your sleeve and you've got to let it all out now. 37G had told 38G that she shouldn't be going out with this boyfriend and all this malarkey. I said to 38G have any of your other friends said that to you? No. but they talk about it behind my back! Then you're looking at your best friend here; she's got the guts to tell you that you know...so now they...I said do I need to come and meet this (like a mum would say) and they were laughing and joking. Basically, it came out that they had a laugh and a joke and I got them to laugh about it and they basically got friendship back to scratch again.

® They are a big group of friends aren't they?
(T4) Such a big big group with such big personalities in such a big group as well.

1260 © Do you think these sorts of problems are brought in from break-times and out of school?

(T4) Both! Pupil N here, she can be fine, chatty, or really upset, really upset, really upset.

1265 Depressed?

(T4) Yeah, big time.

1270 © Worrying?

(T4) Yeah – you’ll just get a smirk or a smile now and again, and I’ll ask her to turn it upside down. It’s really worrying, because, luckily now I am their form teacher I have more of an opportunity to ask ‘are you alright?’ - that sort of thing, because she’s not one to talk about it in class.

© Do you think this originates from home, or?

1280 (T4) I mean she comes in at reg. sometimes and she’s in that mood...so it’s obviously from home. Some of the girls (whatever has happened with T1 at the moment, they’re coming in from lunch-time because they all get the chance to talk to each other then, then they bring it in at lunch-time erm, you know it’s things like that, if something big’s happening, you are guaranteed that the school know about it because they text each other in lessons.

© Like on Monday?

1290 (T4) Off the site – that’s what 37G told me she said she got texted.

© Have you seen many things being brought into school and often carried on in lessons?

1295 (T4) The big thing is the group that was made on Facebook. I’m sure, I’m pretty sure there’s loads more other stuff out there that it’s not been shed any light on.

1300 © It’s pretty obvious it’ll be seen by someone (many teachers with daughters/teacher assistants with daughters here).

(T4) Absolutely.

1305 © They know that, so surely they must have taken a risk, or is it power, what?
I think it’s, if, it’s down to the relationship you have with your parents or something like that...I used to hate my mum when I was younger; we didn’t get on at all, but we’ve got such a strong relationship now. Then I would go against everything she said because we didn’t click. I mean those girls have that with some of the teachers and if there’s something and one of the teachers said by accident you know we’re all prone to doing it, say ‘do that, put that’ whatever and shout at them in front of the whole class, you are on the death trail there from that point on with that pupil.

And the groups?

Yeah, exactly. Their majority of time is spent In school, people are going to pick up on that. If there’s negativity or anything like that. You’ve got staff-room politics and everything going on, so it’s not just pupils it’s staff as well; they’ve got the mentality of ‘so and so said this, she’s done that, so and so can’t teach, she’s out of her depth’ about me even, you know, you just hear it and it’s just come on, they’re doing it on the school yard, let’s not bring it into the staff-room: do you know what I mean?

I do know what you mean sometimes.

Some humans do not have the capabilities to switch off. You need to be able to not talk about school.

Do you notice different groups in different areas around the school?

Oh, yes, there are certain areas where especially there’s one (obviously you notice it ‘cos you go into the staffroom) outside the hall there are little areas there where only they could sit there. If you sat there you would be looked at, as if Year 11’s?

Yeah.

The roundabout?

Yes, the roundabout, younger ones on the roundabout and they sit on the log and then some other younger ones lower down, in the forest. Some of them do go into their form rooms, erm. It depends what they have to eat as well and how much time they’ve got.

Are you aware that they do try to text each other and try to arrange to meet at break-times?

Absolutely! I mean I think 42H did try to do it in my lesson the other day, erm. When they’re split up in my lessons they
can't speak to each other about it. 42H had just been told off by KS3 Co-ordinator: 42H had been taken out of my lesson by T1, and when she comes back, 42H goes onto her phone which is down her sleeve erm, texts, whoever and goes 'Miss, can I go to the toilet please?' I said 'yeah, you'd better be quick', she's back within 2 min. which is a lot shorter than you go to the toilet for and I just said 'You'd better not just have text your friend there and met someone 42H, that's a warning. I think some think that when I'm helping some pupils around the class I can't hear what they're saying, and you soak it in. Some of them will say, 'Oh, my God, Miss, did you hear this, this and this, because they think they can say this to me because I'm younger.

They know where they can push the boundaries too, don't they?

(T4) Yeah.

What do you see the function of homework as a teacher and do you think the pupils share this perspective?

(T4) Erm, sometimes, I don't really, it depends on really, it depends on their age group. In terms of when we're in D.T. and we've got projects to do, it's good to have homework to keep the momentum going and they think of things they would never think of in classrooms and they're on their own doing something at home.

Projects work?

(T4) It really does work, I think. If, we're having complaints of not giving enough homework from some parents, but to be honest...

But thinking's homework isn't it?

(T4) Exactly, exactly.

You're pressured to give homework now then?

(T4) I think we're going to be, I think we're going to be, mm. I think putting too much homework on a pupil wouldn't help them to come into your lesson, because if they haven't managed to do it, or for goodness knows how many reasons, you hear it all, don't you, you get all the excuses under the sun, but they can't do it as well. Some of the pupils if they can't do it, won't say they can't do it.

You spend more time worrying about it than doing it?

(T4) Exactly! I just say have a seat and we're going to do the register, as a group, rather than embarrass them in front of everyone else. Basically with my lessons, what's good is that I
have a lesson on one day and every group has it the next day. If they haven’t done it that day, I want it next morning, but they don’t get a merit for doing it. Everyone who does the homework will receive a merit.

@ Can you give examples of when learning is enhanced through friendships and when it can be negatively affected? You mentioned 37G and 38G — was that brought in from break-time?

(T4) Yes it was probably lunch or something. (Or from another lesson maybe)

It was brought into the lesson. That’s where it started outside and escalated. They came into this lesson and I thought you’re not wasting your time. It’s not my time, it’s their time. As soon as 37G came in she had tears down her face and you just...and it’s horrible to see as well.

@ After it’s got past a certain stage, do you feel you have to intervene?

(T4) They just see red!

@ Then the other group members get involved?

(T4) Yes.

@ 26E was really supportive today do you find they usually help each other?

(T4) Yes, it’s quite refreshing to see, and I’ve been to a few schools and stuff. It’s more you sit down at the table and you do your work and that’s it as fast as fast, but in here I’m trying to get them to understand that if you spend that extra couple of minutes on it, it makes such a difference and they get proud of their work as well.

@ It makes them proud knowing it could go on your ‘Wall of Fame’, as well doesn’t it?

(T4) That’s the best thing I’ve done.

@ And a good bag of goodies?

(T4) Yes, the children are just, oh wow! I kept it to a little one in case any parents will say unhealthy snacks.

@ Do you see the day as separate contexts or as a whole that must include outside etc.?

(T4) Oh, Gosh it’s life isn’t... I mean you can’t just switch off as soon as the first bell goes, crikey, you’re not human if you can... you’re a robot. I think it’s not just pupils, it’s teachers as well, staff anybody. If something is going on, you can tell
Interview with teacher number 5.

® Why are friends important to pupils?

(T5) Support primarily and giving you that sense of belonging and putting things into perspective really; having somebody to talk to who you trust.

® How (if at all) are your roles as a 'teacher' different from those of a 'pupil'?

(T5) Erm, I would expect them to behave with respect to other pupils and including teachers. We just basically treat both everybody as we would like to be treated themselves.

® Do you think some pupils learn more in your lessons than other pupils and if so, why?

(T5) Yeah, I think perhaps some pupils just come from a sort of, a more appreciative learning environment at home and others are just more interested in Geography, I suppose.

® Do you see the class in terms of distinct friendship groups or do you view them as a whole class (especially in terms of planning your lessons)?

(T5) I just see them as a whole class, what are the outcomes of the lessons? To be honest I don’t really get bogged down with, in sort of friendship groups or anything like that. If they’re behaving in class then that’s fine. If they’re not behaving, then I move them accordingly.

® Do they sit in their own places?

(T5) Yes.

® So, there’s no seating plan and they can choose who to sit by?

(T5) There’s no seating plan. The penalty is that if they don’t behave then they get moved away.
So as they know the consequences, do they move without backlash?

(T5) No, there shouldn't be because I like them to know what is expected of them. I do expect certain things and if they don't, (sometimes you forget because the lesson's so busy)...but, generally speaking, they know what the consequences of not following instructions, basically. I think it's about being fair and consistent isn't it and erm, it's just like being a parent and you try your utmost to be fair and consistent with them all and it's basically 'three strikes and you're out'. It's a two fold situation; the teacher has to teach and the pupils have to learn.

Do you think pupils can learn things at break-time and if so are those skills complementary to anything they do in lessons?

(T5) Yeah, I'm quite often here in class when my class, when my tutor group (Year 9) come in and I stay here, walk away and listen to various bits, but most of the time, they're interacting quite nicely, some of the interactions...I mean like I heard something very interesting the other day, when there was a scenario where two girls had been erm reprimanded within the school environment and when one of them came back in they were, one of the other girls, er,...when one came back in and there was a girl already here in class and she apologised straight away 'Oh, I'm really sorry for what happened the other day, I didn't really mean you, I meant the other one and I hope you're not offended...come here,' and I think they gave her hug or something.

Did they actually pick the two out or weren't sure which one it was?

(T5) Yeah, the other one got lumped in by default. It's quite surprising how open they actually are with each other. They're quite honest about their feelings, which I think is good really, because I think er with lots of pressures on them and I think it's better if they can openly apologise and be honest about themselves.

Have you had any 'unfinished business' that has been brought into your lessons from break-time?

(T5) Not really, the odd little snippet of what happens at home, deal with it at home scenario. I try not to let....from outside affect, but obviously...They can move themselves...lick their wounds quietly and then...Generally in the fullness of time I believe that in certain situations, especially amongst young people do tend to resolve themselves anyway, and I think sometimes the more fuss you make over it, the bigger a deal it becomes. They quite like the safe haven of knowing that the learning is separate from the emotional outside.
Do you see it as a learning process, then, that they have to go through?

(T5) Yes! It is, it is, it's about learning to deal with different people.

It's quite interesting to see how they decide on their groups and how some belong to many?

(T5) Yes, I would be quite interested to see how they are put into their groups when they come into Year 7, what parameters are used.

Is there anything pedagogical that you feel could be done within the school context that would help promote learning even more (possibly in terms of friendships)?

(T5) Don't know really.

In the infants they have these friendship benches etc.

(Mm. I don't think they'd like that in secondary at all, they'd hate it because it highlights it and nobody would want to go and sit there or ostracise themselves, when they're little it's quite different because they're quite happy about it, expressing their emotions very openly, 'cos they don't realise that the social, the social shall we say 'protocol'.

So you're quite happy with what's in place?

(Mm...well, I deal with my whole domain in the way that I feel is comfortable and works best for the teaching and learning of the pupils.

Like setting tables out as well?

Yeah...I keep changing, it varies, they did use to be in groups. I like that 'cos I like them working together and exchanging ideas and sharing er. The only problem I have found is that they tend to cluster into terms of ability, so you get the good ones all sitting together and the weaker ones all sitting together and then they don't bring each other on. So, what I've done now is, two fold, I've moved half the desks in groups and half the desks are in pairs, so what I can do is; a) it gives me the flexibility to er move the pupils about if there's any misbehaviour and to isolate them and secondly, in terms of pedagogy is concerned, it helps...I can move them about on some other pretext if I feel they're not learning as much as they could do.

Do you get pupils who are more able with those who need help and....peer tutoring.
(T5) I'm finding that particularly with year eight at the moment because year eights tend to mix don't they, to mix with each other, they tend to group cluster in ability groups more so than any other of the girls I've had.

★ What are the positive and negative effects of technological development in relation to learning?

(T5) I'm quite cut and dried about it really, I have a love hate relationship with technology, I think it has its place, but it shouldn't be over-rated...I'd rather have less of it than more of it to be honest, because I think there's a lot more mileage to be had out of direct contact, with facial expression...rather than downloading information from the internet and I think there is probably far too much of that going on at home and there needs to be, therefore, less of it at school and so I would not be advocating any further introduction of technology really.

★ Have you personally had to confiscate any mobilies?

(T5) I'd say I've never really had any problem in my classes and I think it's because they know I'm so anti it anyway. I don't ever, mine is all locked away in the cupboard and I might take it out at lunch-time...If they had theirs out at lunch-time, policy changes from year to year, but they know...IPods have been banned and as they come into class, you know, there might be one, you know...basically if I don't see it...I think if it was causing an interference I would intervene, but the girls, they're all so...so pleasant anyway, I don't want to create problems where there are no problems really. So if I don't see it and it's not interfering with the class, then fair enough, but if I do see it I would take it away and follow......rules, instructions within the school.

★ Some pupils can leave school happy and then through MSN, Facebook etc. during the evening, can fall out and can't wait to arrive at school to sort out what someone's said about them...?

(T5) Because there's no emotion there.

★ That's right.

(T5) And that's the biggest problem, shall we say of 'social networking'...all this technology...there is absolutely no emotional involvement there and it changes the complexion of everything that is in reality. You don't know the flavour of it at all.

★ We as teachers don't even know if that has happened?

(T5) No, sometimes there is no evidence, is there?

★ What do you see the function of homework as being and do you think the pupils share this perspective?
(T5) I can't understand how that fits into friendships and peer
groups and...er relationships.

® O.K. In terms of when they do homework they may see it as
getting in the way of their 'social' time.

(T5) Aarh!

® Why do you set homework, basically?

(T5) I set homework to back up what we've been doing in class.

® Not because you have to from policies above?

(T5) No! I...probably...sometimes...I will only set homework if
it's relevant. It maybe two little bits in one week, it may be a
large bit over 3 or 4 weeks. There's no hard and fast, but as long
as they achieve the task that I set, er. Then some will take a
long time, some will take a long time over it.

® Anything else you want to add about friendships or the
Influence of boys?

(T5) I've taught boys before I came here, so I think it may
sadly see the results go down, I hope it doesn't...er...because of
the pressure, the peer pressure is completely different when
boys are around as girls grow older.

® Early stages at the moment?

(T5) It's very early stages at the moment and I think we won't
see that until another 3 years yet.....year 10 probably.

® The girls seem to have separate peer groups and the boys
seem to sit together or to arrive together?

(T5) Well the boys when they first came in in year 7, they all sat
together at the front, and that was awkward because they were
demanding a lot of attention, so I made them split up, I actually
moved them so that they could sit in twos around about the
room but spread around the room. Because their hands were
always up constantly, and I could see that they did want to be
near each other because it's comforting in an environment that
is predominantly female and then they might feel as though they
needed to assert themselves academically because they were er
in the minority, basically. They're fine now, just a little bit of
misbehaviours, but nothing to...

® It doesn't seem to affect what they learn or get in the way of
girls' peer groups, they all seem set in their little groups, don't
they?
They probably are.

Thank you very much.

Interview with teacher number 6.

® What do you think is the importance of friends in school is?

(T6) Role of friends, gosh, that’s a big question...mm. I suppose I would see the role of the school as helping friendships develop, er...if you asked me what the role of friends are in class-rooms, I would, potentially where I would see friendships coming in is where mm students help each other with work and I don’t mind that, mm and would expect some of that to go on, so maybe it’s something to do with to help others...in class to be honest, I try normally to...I don’t like friendship groups staying together, I try to split them up. If I’m doing group work I will sort of steer towards letting them choose who they want to be with, mm but I might intervene?

® I know you have a seating plan with one class (’cos you mentioned it with the Year8)?

(T6) Yes, now I do have seating plans.

® Is that in alphabetical order – how do you do it?

(T6) If it’s a mixed class I would do it boy-girl, boy-girl, mm I understand that essentially the pairs work better in as much as the girls bring something to the boys and the boys can bring something to the girls. When they’re just girls, again, I tend to steer away from letting them sit where they like, because for me it just helps maintain a little bit of, I suppose class-room management and I’m not really for them talking about other things other than History.

® Do you prefer any lesson slots in the day?

(T6) Yes, the first period of the day is quite a nice one. They tend to be much calmer, if a little bit dazed, er and so that will take more of the kind of activity...trying to make them excited...break-time they come in quite excitable so sometimes can use that in...I suppose last lesson in the day, I’ve not actually had a problem with that, they’re pretty good actually, so...I have a year 9 group last period on a Thursday and they’re quite lively, so it’s quite good.

® Have you ever had to deal with any unfinished business that has carried over at break-times?

(T6) Yes, yes, it does happen, mm and...
How do you deal with it or does the KS3 co-ordinator (T1) deal with it?

(T6) Well I tend to play it down so ....it does happen, normally it's often to do with arguments and I think...in a single-sexed school there is obviously a bit more mm...can be a bit...there can be some unpleasantness and so I do notice it occasionally the girls will come in and be very miserable and won't say anything er and to be honest if I can leave it like that I'll mention it and say 'are you O.K.?' but it's not really the forum to talk about it, they don't want to talk about it...it's certainly something that I sometimes offer if they want to talk about and do, more often than not they don't.

And that's brought from?

(T6) Break-time or lunch-time; I mean suppose you take each one as it comes really. Sometimes, the girls are in tears; they're O.K. to sit there a bit weepy, if I was to do something about it, it'd draw attention to it all.

So you're quite happy having them and the others just get on with their work?

(T6) Well, they tend to do that. If it's bad I'd send them with a friend to the office.

How has technology enhanced learning and how has it shown up in negative ways amongst friendships?

(T6) What I love about technology; first of all, the photocopier I know it sounds old hat, but, photocopying for me...it stops it being such a stodgy...lesson and there's a problem, if I'm limited...cos it just speeds things up. I'm not very good on the books. It's very flexible...i think in the days of recycling it's not so bad.

You use PowerPoints as well?

(T6) I love using pictures, pictures for me, shove it on a projector, will unlock, basically allow students of all abilities to access some practical concepts. They just react much more to it. I use DVD's a lot. What I don't do, I don't do much ICT work as a group...I do wonder sometimes how much mm it's good at keeping attention, but, ICT keeps people stimulating by its very nature, but whether you're focused on the actual, depth and richness of the task, whether you're sort of enticed by the screen, that's more difficult. Most of my work doesn't need research.

Have you seen any negative effects on the children of technology?
(T6) Well I'm much more interested in arguments and ideas, mm so I'm not testing language so much.

® In terms of bringing technology into school from previous night etc. (Facebook arguments, mobile phones on in lessons etc)?

(T6) I don't like them, I can tell if they're not talking about what I want them to talk about and I'll try and stop that...I've not really noticed it actually.

® It's probably their own little world really?

(T6) This is why I try and stop their own little world.

® What is the function of homework and do you think pupils share this perspective?

(T6) I see homework really as two things; it allows me to teach more of the course...so I can add contact, add detail, so as where we might do a lot of...I wouldn't say sort of writing in class teacher, so I (inaudible).

® Consolidate what they've done really?

(T6) Yes, so mm me it's kind of like an important part of it just to re-advance the course.

® What do you think they think about homework?

(T6) Mm; I think, I think they expect it...I think it's a burden (it's obviously not something they like), mm...well I don't know really...but I think if I didn't give it to them they...(inaudible) but I do find this chasing up...that's a bit of a pain.

® Structure of timetable?

(T6) Yes, we're quite lucky to see them twice a week, well I don't say lucky, 'cos that's the way it should be, but some schools don't and I'd never teach in schools. To expect 2 hours is too much really; I don't actually mind half hours. I have to share, I don't like sharing that's difficult, although sometimes (the other teacher) is O.K. and I'll say do something on Mary and he'll give his reinforcement. I don't like it because the person in the hour does all the work, mm but er, in terms of timing, I'm quite happy with period 1. I'm quite happy with period 2, I'm quite happy with period 3, although you do need to use lunch-time as a sanction, er periods after lunch, can be a bit tricky...nobody likes Friday period 5.

® In some lessons some pupils may learn more than others, what techniques do you think they may use?
(T6) Well one of the ways, one of the great problems is questions and answers, when you get students, the same students answering the questions: What I try to do is to have a mixture of hands up so... normally they would have thought about it in pairs first, so they've got something to say.

® Thank you, that's brilliant.

Interview with teacher number 7.

® What is the importance of friends in schools?

(T7) Personally, myself, I see them as (particularly lower in the school)... It's very important that they are in friendship groups, because I feel it helps with mm the day to day, almost like 'grind' of getting through school, but, however, I feel that particularly in some groups, that friends start to act as role models er. Particularly in girls, 'cos I've worked in two girls' schools and I think they do see themselves as role models within the group, be it in a good way or bad way, not always with a positive front.

® What age?

(T7) I'm talking as soon as they get to Key Stage 4, particularly year 11 onwards.

® What about year 9s'?

(T7) Yeah it's maturity tends to kick in at the age of year 10, er, it starts in year 9, but it's not throughout, it does depend on year groups.

® How would you say your role as a teacher varies (if it does) from that of a pupil?

(T7) O.K. The role of a teacher in my personal opinion is mm to act as a role model to the pupils and it is my job to instil on them good positive behaviour and also to treat each other with respect and that is what I expect and demand from my form and also the students that I teach.

® Two-way?

(T7) It is, they have to know it's a two-way process.

® Do you think some pupils in your lessons learn more in your lessons than others and if so, why?

(T7) It's like everything, you can't click with everyone, but as a teacher you have to find the correct learning style for that pupil and that, that is my job and it is a role through even marking
books and a test er, not everyone is going to be an A* student, but to get the best out of them then I'll be doing my job.

® In terms of pedagogy (that you were talking about), do you adapt your lessons for any particular slots in the day?

(T7) My lessons are all adapted as in how they go in, I do not teach any two lessons the same.

® Would the placing of the lesson influence on what types of activities you do or would it depend on the group?

(T7) I never think like that, for example, the children's behaviour will be different but I will always get through to the end of what I wanted to do.

® Flexible in terms of your approach?

(T7) You have to be flexible, if you're not flexible, your lessons will go vitally wrong instantly.

® Do you notice any differences between certain lessons and others, from a pupils' point of view when they turn up?

(T7) Yes – it depends on how they got on with their friends, whether they're tired, what they've had to eat, whether it's snowing outside, that will all happen to some degree and influence on whoever you're teaching.

® If the friends have fallen out, do you notice a difference in their behaviour?

(T7) Particularly working in girls' schools, you notice that straight away er, but I do not get involved, if they come into my class, then they're here to learn not to carry on the argument.

® Do you have a seating plan?

(T7) No.

® So if they come in and have fallen out, you're aware of it...?

(T7) But they usually sit in different places, different girls. I always allow flexibility.

® Is there any times when you have had to intervene for any reason?

(T7) No.

® Fine.

(T7) I've been teaching for 10 years and never had to.
© Do you think it’s a learning process for them to go through?

(T7) Course it is!

© By intervening...?

(T7) You’re interfering because it’s nothing to do with their learning, it’s its, it’s, it’s their social. What I would call their social life outside the class, it’s nothing to do with the learning that goes on here...I would still expect them to actually engage with the learning.

© Do you see break-time and class-room as separate?

(T7) It is separate and they should know the difference! If they carry on the break-times into the lesson you know you’re not going to have a very good learning environment.

© Do you see the class in terms of friendship groups or as a whole class?

(T7) No, actually, I do see the class in friendship groups because it helps with my teaching, because if I can encourage the sort of healthy rivalry among the friendship groups, it does have a tendency to improve their marks.

© Do you strategically put them in certain abilities?

(T7) No, they... naturally. You tend to have similar abilities within groups rather than someone who is A* and someone who’s low C, you do tend to have similar abilities sitting together.

© If you have a less able child working with a more-able child, can they not bring the less-able child on?

(T7) It’s an interesting thing and this is obviously why I’ve started looking at sets in here. We seem to have the mixed ability approach and we don’t seem to have had the marks that go with it. So, for example, we’re very good at C’s, we’re very good at bringing up the low ability, so the high abilities, the ones who should be achieving the A* are not getting it.

© Possibly because of this mixed ability approach?

(T7) Yes. In a perfect world, what would happen, is for example, the low ability ones would be brought on by their peers and for example, the teachers would stretch the more able to achieve...but that doesn’t really happen.
By doing the mixed ability, you’re bringing on the E grades to C grades, but at the same point you’re not bringing on the potential A*?

(T7) Yes and the thing looking at my results over the years, I’ve got evidence of that. If you set properly and I mean really set properly, everyone then gets brought on and it’s up to the teacher then, it’s up to the teacher then to...

What are the positive and the negative effects of technological advances in relation to learning?

(T7) Social-networking, I really don’t know much about...I don’t do it myself and I don’t have children who do it at home...so, I really don’t know about that. I see that home life and that should be obviously regulated by their parents. Er, now as for technology, technology...it has a place for example, everyone’s (inaudible) to it, but the thing is everything in moderation, you should vary everything, If you came into the lesson and everything was on data-stick every single lesson, you may as well go back to chalk and talk.

Are you aware of some of the negative influences that are openly known in school?

(T7) I am.

As a form tutor...

(T7) Not with year 7’s. As a teacher I think it’s disgusting, I know what happened...erm, but that is something that is up to senior management to send a strong message that’s it’s completely unacceptable because it’s cyber-bullying basically. To be fair I try to leave Issues that have happened outside the class-room, outside of my class-room.

What is the function of homework and do you think pupils have the same understanding?

(T7) Er! I think homework has its place, I think it’s personally er, I...it should be discussed at senior management level the actual value of homework in my opinion. Are we giving it because parents think we should be giving it, is it of great value? How much have the teachers used it to actually influence the planning of their next lessons, or is it just...because we have to mark it. I know some schools that have actually abolished it. Also as well from a teaching point of view, you pick up files from various subjects, and you could look at marking, and for example, how much is being marked, how much isn’t and so you have some teachers who do a lot of work in files, and homework etc. and others who get away with it, and so you know, you want to be as fair as possible to the teachers, because, you know. I went through school in the 80’s and we
never had homework, ever had homework, because, we lived through strikes, etc. I think I wrote about two essays, two English essays the whole time.

Were you happy with that?

(T7) Yes. If they work too hard in school, should they be taking it home, but that's a discussion at senior management level. It's an interesting thing. In a perfect world, see for example, in one school, they would have an hours prep at the end of the day so they did between 4 and 5 their homework, which is brilliant, but for example, you know, you've got some pupils who would go from home to home on different nights.

Some children have clubs, pantomimes, etc. and come back late in the evening?

Yeah and they have to have a life as well.

Do you know what KS3 get up to at break-times?

No, I've only just come back to KS3...

Are you aware of what happens with your form at break-times?

They play football outside here.

Are you aware when you walk around the school in break-times of any other groups?

No, no.

Do you have break-time duty?

No, I don't do break-time duty.

Thank you for our chat.

Interview with teacher number 8.

What do you think is the importance of friendships in schools from your point of view and from that of the pupils?

From the children's it makes life nicer, doesn't it, social time to meet their peers, if they don't have little sisters or brothers, an opportunity for them to have fun.

You understand that as well?

Yes.
In what ways (if any) are your roles in school different from those of a pupil?

(T8) Aarh! Er, well I'm the socialite of the teachers...so I like having friends in work so I can understand why if you didn't have any friends in work.

What are your duties and what are the pupils' duties?

(T8) I'd expect the pupils to have respect for me when I'm teaching and in turn I let them have their say, providing they have their hands up in an orderly manner.

Give and take?

(T8) Give and take, yeah.

Do you see the classes in terms of distinct friendship groups or do you see them as a whole group?

(T8) Er, year 7, I see them as a whole group, year 8, I see them more in their friendship groups, and I know for example not to put so and so and so and so...

Together?

(T8) Yes, because you know one, they make too much noise because they just chat or, two, I know that there's potential for them to clash...particularly in year 9.

Do you have year 9 split into ability?

(T8) Yes and I have red and green mixed together, I sat the (inaudible) beside each other, so that's why I have in one corner 38G and 41G. The second week in they created havoc and I split them up for a week and I said they could go back to sitting in the place they were as long as when I'm speaking you're not talking to each other.

Do pupils learn skills during break-time and if so, are they different or complementary to those learned in lessons?

(T8) Both I think; they're learning social skills in lessons and kind of on a different atmosphere at break-time.

Have you experienced having to resolve issues that have spilled over from break-time in your lessons that immediately followed a break-time?

(T8) I've had coming in at break-times in tears and wouldn't sit near anyone else – it was year 11.

Any KS3 – is that similar?
(T8) Yeah – sometimes in the queue they won’t stand beside each other, they won’t get in the queue.

® From something beforehand?

(T8) Obviously from something beforehand.

® Is there anything pedagogical that could be done in the school context to promote learning within these peer groups that isn’t being done already?

(T8) Like an anonymous worry box?

® They assume it’s for the Infant age, don’t they?

(T8) Yeah, you’d have to have a valid reason otherwise you’d just have you know what with everybody.

® It’ll be full? What are the positive and negative effects of technological developments on learning?

(T8) Oh, my gosh...I think in a way it’s good they can keep in contact, but I think life was a lot simpler when they couldn’t keep in contact wasn’t it?

® Again, there are issues going on in school and I presume you’re aware of them anyway?

(T8) Yeah.

® But have you noticed anything that has been brought in to your lessons from home in terms of...

(T8) Technological and stuff; no, I haven’t. I know there’s been issues about pupils who should have been in my lessons who have been accused or being bullied, cyber-bullying, but they usually sit where they want in their friendship groups and I say they can sit there as long as you draw my attention to you and you work and they know that I move people who don’t. Generally they don’t sit beside each other if they’ve fallen out.

® You’re quite flexible and maybe it doesn’t erupt?

(T8) Yeah, Yee. (Inaudible).

® Mobile phones – has that been an issue at all?

(T8) I’ve confiscated a couple of mobile phones but because they rang and drew my attention to it er I haven’t caught anyone texting.

® But they have obviously got them turned on?
(T8) Yeah – they have got them turned on in their bags, haven’t they?

® What function do you think homework has and do you think pupils share this view?

(T8) No, no I don’t think pupils share – homework given for the wrong reasons doesn’t support learning – if you’re giving homework just for the sake of homework ‘cos it’s homework day and you’re making up a homework, other pupils know that and get annoyed...so if you give a genuine homework at the end of a lesson because they found it difficult to understand or extension or try these three questions...yeah. As long as you’re not giving them homework for the next day, as long as it’s for two or three days, they can’t really complain too much, can they?

® Can you give any examples of how learning can be both enhanced through friendship and also any negative examples you may have seen?

(T8) Mm, friendships when they’re working together, especially if they’re doing something visual like a poster, and if there’s, a competition...

® Negative?

(T8) Negative...when you put them in a group and they just shout about what they’re doing tomorrow night...which they do.

® Other subjects there may be a problem of matching abilities to encourage learning, but in Maths. you seem to be lucky because you have them set, don’t you?

(T8) Yeah – that’s what’s hard in year 7 and 8 to gauge – to try and get groups that are of similar ability, because you could have a strong person in each group and a weak person in each group but the strong person does everything and the weak doesn’t learn anything.

® Because it’s too above as well?

(T8) That’s what we’re trying to change in Maths. Year nine is set.

® How is your class-room organised –Do you have yours all the time?

(T8) Yes, I’m in there all the time.

® Did you re-arrange the class-room from last year?
(T8) Yes into a kind of horseshoe – 'cos I couldn't move around the class-room as it was because it was in 4 rows and if you wanted to get from this end of the class-room...there was no space for me at the front either and I like to be able to move around loads.

@ You can see everyone?

(T8) You can see everyone, yeah. (Interruption which changed the direction of the interview towards asking about boarders: The teacher was responsible for looking after the boarders and a teacher interrupted and asked a question about a specific boarder).

@ Is there any difference between their social life?

(T8) When they come up the stairs, if you're sitting here then it's like, 'you never guess what happened in...miss? And like if you're like sitting here it's like..

@ So you're like a surrogate mother for all of them?

(T8) Yeah or whoever's sitting here at the time.

@ Do they still need the technology?

(T8) Well they do, they contact the day girls a lot. But one pupil was downstairs in the library and speaking to her friend on Facebook (above her here).

@ Boarders? How is your time divided?

(T8) Squabbles between the rooms.

@ Is that to do with friends again?

(T8) Friends, yeah personality clashes or issues with space, rooms. You've got two Chinese girls in the same form group. Most teachers put them beside each other because they reckon they can help each other.

@ Don't like each other?

(T8) No, but they're in a room together.

@ Oh, No!

(T8) They're O.K. for a week when they come back from a holiday but they definitely need a break-time every two.

@ Oh no! Going back to their technology do they use MSN or such literally between floors.
(T8) Yeah, yeah...I have to take theirs off them at night time, otherwise they'd never go to sleep.

© Thanks, there's some really interesting information.
APPENDIX 2b) – Pupil Focus Groups: YEAR 7 – Focus group A.

2370 ® Can you tell me why friends are important in school?

(1A) I think it's important to have friends because they always stick by you.

2375 (2A) If you get hurt, you can always depend on them to be there for you.

® In what ways, if any, are your roles as a pupil different to those of a teacher?

2380 (1A) Because if you go to the teacher you feel you can't tell them everything. If you go to your friends you can tell them whatever you know; they'll keep it.

2385 ® Do you see yourself as different from teachers or the same?

Different (unanimous)

(3A) Cos we ‘rock’

® As a group or separate?

(4A) As a group.

2395 ® So you don't rock as much if you're separate?

No (unanimous).

® Why are you in this group and not someone else's? (How do you protect your group's identity?)

(1A) We have things in common...

(2A)...like hobbies and what you're like.

2400 ® What makes your group ‘rock’ compared to someone else's?

(5A) We're ‘random.’

2410 (6A) We've all got differences, but we said like it doesn't matter, 'cos we get along really well.

® What makes your group stronger?

2415 (2A) I think it's because the other groups in class, they come from the same school; we've all just come from different schools.

(3A) They'd known each other for longer and we just come together.
© And you’re sticking together?

(6A) Yeah.

© Do you think you learn more in some lessons than in others, and if so, can you give some examples?

(2A) Yeah, I think in English, even though we don’t do loads and loads of work, we, miss makes it fun, so we want to learn more and we want to be able to like interact.

(1A) Science we hate it.

(4A) Boring! We just write, two pages and we don’t understand it. The teacher didn’t say did you want to come up and show us your example, she just writes it out on the board all day and copy it.

© You want it to be fun, basically?

Yeah (unanimous)

© Is it the teacher or is the subject?

(5A) It’s the subject.

(2A) I like a lot of teachers, but if a teacher’s really fun it will make a difference.

© What’s fun?

(1A) Like T2 – she makes it fun, she tells jokes.

(2A) You know the legend of the Minosaur, we’re going over that and instead of just telling us the story and getting us to do stuff about it.

(6A) She let us make our own animal so we could see.

© So you reckon you learned more?

Yeah (unanimous).

(4A) She put it on the interactive whiteboard and then it broke, so she said she’d show it next time and she did.

© How do you protect your group from other people entering your group?

(Quiet).

© Do you?
We let people like join in but they don't really like to stay with us, we're weird.

Is that because you try and chase them away, or?

No, we invite them in and then.

We invited a girl in yesterday actually 'cos she was all on her own...come on the roundabout with us, but she only lasted about 5 seconds, she just walked out.

Why?

I think she saw other friends and thought maybe that they've let me come in their group, so.

Do you play basically?

We played like a hide and seek game.

Do you think it's because you know how to play that and somebody coming into your group may think they don't know what to do?

Maybe it was because we had three against three and then it would have been three against four.

We're not shy around each other and she may be shy.

What qualifies you to be a member of this group?

We write good songs.

Individually what do you add?

Courage.

I think madness.

We're not embarrassed around each other, we're not shy.

We all add our own little bits. If we have to go in a group, we always go together.

How do you feel in lessons when you are not with your whole friendship group and does it affect what you learn?
(2A) It doesn't affect our learning, but it just...I don't feel like upset, but...

(4A) I don't sit near any of my friends in Science, but I don't really mind because at break-time you're going to come back and gather again.

(1A) Us three are together.

(2A) As much as we'd like to be together, it doesn't affect anything.

(6A) We'd prefer to be as a group, but...

(4A) All the class are friends.

® Do you send notes?

(2A) No.

(1A) We don't have any paper.

® Do you signal?

(2A) Yeah.

(6A) Every day.

® What are you signalling about?

(2A) Signal each other, 'cos I sit opposite 4A in Science, I'd be like (signals).

® Do you have your own signals that no other group know?

Yes (unanimous).

(5A) Some we have; instead of doing (signal) which everyone would do, we probably do this (varied signal).

(1A) In Science, 2A sits opposite me, what we do is when she gets bored she goes like this (1A plus signal).

® You communicate even if you're not next to each other?

(5A) Yeah.

(2A) Something funny, when we auditioned for the 'Nutcracker' (school pantomime), me and 1A were stuck for something to do, and she said I dare you to do a piece from Romeo and Juliet, so all through Science we were sat there going...

® When did you decide to do that?
As we were coming to school, she said what are you doing? – oh, I completely forget. Why don’t we do something from Romeo and Juliet, I was like, ‘No!’ and why don’t we do a comedy act and through science we sat there going...

You actually acted it out?

Yeah.

Did you practice in Science?

Yes.

Can you describe the activities you do at break-time – I know you talk and do mad things?

I play the X-Factor, play on the roundabout.

Play pretend games like the X-factor, ‘cos we all love the X-Factor and...

Cheryl Cole, she’s really good and can do the accent (pointing to one of her group).

At least you’re not wearing that dress she wore?

I didn’t like that one.

We chat...songs.

Do things that you do at break-times continue, discussions about parties, discussions about good lessons, bad lessons etc – Once break-time has finished do you continue break-time business on into lessons?

Yeah (unanimous).

Definitely!

How do you do it then?

Say we’re doing the X-Factor, 4C looks at me and I’ll go (X shape with hands).

It must affect your concentration a bit?

No.

Not really actually

You must miss something in the lessons – no?
Sometimes lessons are so boring, we just carry on.

With really boring lessons we miss a lot and we're just like signalling each other and...

Would you signal if your friendship group wasn't in there?

No (unanimous).

There would be no point 'cos no-one would know what we're on about.

We don't do it in every single class.

6A on her own unfortunately and 1A and 4A are together. When they've got French we've got D.T. When they've got D.T. they've got French.

So what we do, even if 3A is not there we still signal.

Do you plan when to signal?

No, not really.

Random.

At the end of break-time do you switch off?

Never, we walk up to classes together and then we divide into two or three.

Do you ever fall out?

No.

Well, we've only ever had one...

If you do fall out how does affect your learning in the next lessons?

A little bit – we feel a bit upset because we might hurt somebody else’s feelings. Like yesterday we fell out and 5 minutes later we were friends again.

Like if me and 1A were to break friends half way through the lesson, we’d be laughing our heads off again.

How do you sort it out?

Well me and 1A sometimes sit next to each other.

Do you whisper?
(1A) We whisper if we're next to each other and if we're not we give the odd nod and see...

(6A) We never have paper.

2690  How has technology influenced your communication patterns within your friendship groups both positively and negatively?

(2A) Positively if we had missed something in lessons and been ill and we know we're going to get told off for homework, I can ring anybody and they'll say oh, we've got to do this and if I'm really bored you can chat to them.

(3A) I rang 6A the other week and asked what the art homework was.

® Home phone or mobiles?

Mobiles (unanimous).

2705  (4A) I can't use my home phone 'til after six.

® Negatively?

(1A) Negatively, if we've had an argument that day, and they ring you, you're like, 'I really don't want to speak to you', but you speak to them and by the end of the conversation, you'll be friends again.

® Do you ever use your phones in school to text etc.?

(6A) No.

(4A) Sometimes in break-times.

2720  (5A) I did at break-time 'cos I didn't know where she was – I was in school, I couldn't find her.

(6A) We always go to the roundabout or on the field.

2725  (5A) We usually turn them on to listen to music and then hide them when a teacher comes.

(2A) After school, some of us are on MSN so we chat.

® You carry on when you get home?

(5A) Yeah.

(2A) Yeah.

® How many of you are on MSN or other site?
(4A) I'm on MSN.

(2A) I've got Bebo and MSN.

(1A) Facebook.

® What do you talk about on those sites then? Do you talk about what's happened at school?

(6A) No, not really.

® Do you talk about teachers, good lessons, bad lessons?

(1A) Yeah.

(2A) Yeah. Say if we've had a really bad lesson and 6A and 3A are on MSN, I've got their MSNs, need to get theirs off them (pointing). That's one thing I have to do, and they'll be like, 'we had Science or Maths or something like that today' and I'll be like, I know, 'that teacher hates me; she always has a go at me.'

(1A) Some teachers do hate you.

(2A) Yeah.

(4A) They hate me as well. They always have a go at me, even if I was like, I was sitting next to 3A before we had to move places and I was sat there and I was working things out and...

® Hold on, why were you moved from 3A?

(4A) No, the whole class were talking, the whole class were moved.

(2A) I was working things out for myself and I got told off for speaking to 3A when 3A wasn't even sitting next to me, and then 3A was ill and I was muttering again I got told off for someone behind me and then I just always get told off.

® Just get caught?

(1A) No, giggle, just always get told off. She always goes, 2A, remember get on with your work, 2A.

® Do you do your work?

(2A) Yeah.

(1A) You do do it.

® Any other technology issues – if you fall out on MSN or other sites during the night, what does this mean for the next day?
Can you actually leave school as friends and fall out on the computer?

(6A) Yeah.

(1A) Yeah.

(2A) Me and 3A fell out once...

® When you come back into school the next day, what's that like?

(1A) 'Cos you say 'why did you say that?' and they say they didn't and they're like, 'no, I didn't.'

® Nothing to do with school?

(2A) No.

® So you go home, go on MSN and then literally fall out and come to school in a horrible mood the next day?

Yes (unanimous).

(6A) But we make up later.

® Break-time?

(3A) No.

(1A) No, probably lunch-time.

® That long?

(2A) Yeah – it can.

® When that happens then what about learning, 'cos if you’re in a bad mood...

(1A) I text 4A saying something I didn’t mean to be bad, but......

® They might interpret differently?

(1A) Yeah – and she thought I meant it badly and she was in a really bad mood with me the next day.

® So in school what did you do in lessons that you wouldn’t normally do?

(1A) Well she looked at me and I looked at her she looked really angry.

® How did it affect your learning in that lesson?
(1A) Yeah... I usually just don’t bother with that lesson – it really gets on my nerves and it’s one of my worst lessons...

® If it was a different lesson and the same thing happened?

(1A) I wouldn’t have concentrated as much, but I would still have got on with it – end up daydreaming more.

(2A) I don’t know, I’m weird. When I fall out with everyone it makes me concentrate more, so I’m not looking at them, I just concentrate more on what I’m doing and I just get more done, it’s strange, ‘cos when you’re talking to your friends you don’t get as much done! When you’re not, you get a lot done.

® When you get to the end of the lesson are you thinking about what you’re going to do if you haven’t made up?

(4A) Yeah.

® You must lose some time at the end of the lesson?

(4A) Yes.

(1A) I’m counting down the minutes.

(5A) When we’re friends, sometimes just at the ends of lessons we’re like (signal) ‘we’re going on the roundabout’.

(2A) It’s quite hard as well ‘cos although we’re really good friends, I’ve known 1A a year or two now cos we both go to TIC (drama club). I’m friends with another pupil in another group as well which is really hard because I go and play with them... but...

® So outside of school you’re friends with the other pupil, but in school?

(2A) I stay with these.

(3A) I’ve known 6A for 9 years, we used to go to the same primary school. We have like fallen out, but that’s what makes our friendship stronger.

(4A) I was all on my own.

® Do you think you need to fall out?

Yes (unanimous).

(1A) Otherwise it just gets boring.
(2A) You need to learn from your mistakes. It helps you deal with life.
(5A) My mum, she said, that fate has bought me and A3 together. How strange is it, my mum was in the bed next to her mum at the hospital?...That is scary.

® What is the function of homework and why do you think teachers give it to you?
(1A) Oh, no. (Groans).
(2A) ‘cos they’re evil!
(1A) ‘cos they want to ruin our social life.
(4A) I like doing homework.
(3A) It gives you something to do, but I don’t like it.
(4A) It depends what it is...
(2A) I think it should be your time after school.
(1A) It’s work time in school, and then it should be your own time at home.

® Some people do it at school?
(1A) I do my geography homework at break-time.
(2A) We need to do our R.E. at break-time (laugh).
(5A) In the summer holidays I forgot, so on Sunday, I was rushing to do all the homework....
(6A) All of mine was on my computer, and my computer crashed and I rewrote it all by hand and I lost it, so I rewrote it again and I didn’t bring it, so I’ve got to do it all again.

® Oh, no!
(3A) We had an R.E. essay that had to be in by Thursday, but I was printing out and my computer crashed so I put it on a disc and was up at 9 ‘o’ clock last night.
(5A) I’ve got a new pair of ink jets and one of them was fake.
(4A) I think homework, it doesn’t bother me, because as soon as I get in I do it and then I’ve got the rest of my night, so I think if people do it like that it’s not going to...

® You don’t really mind it?
(1A) I do, I hate it.

(3A) I like it, I'm weird.

(4A) I like school and I like homework!

(3A) I don't mind homework, but I would prefer if they didn't give it us because, I bet they hate marking our books, but it's something they have to do.

(2A) If they didn't want to do it, they shouldn't have been a teacher.

(1A) They have to do it, because it's like their job.

(4A) It's their job yeah, and the headmistress or headmaster tells them to do it otherwise they get told off.

(1A) If they didn't want to do it, they shouldn't have been a teacher.

Are some class-rooms better for learning than others, and if so, why?

(2A) The mobiles.

(6A) The windows.

The layout?

(5A) I think the Maths room is a bit 'squishy'. They could have kept it the way it was!

How does the layout of the room affect you learning?

(6A) If it's really bad, horrible, it makes you annoyed.

(2A) If it's...It puts you in a good mood and it's like I want to learn something.

(4A) Some of the mobiles are really dull.

(2A) Me, A1 and A5 we just sit in the big table and we all mess about.

(5A) We sing the Meercats song.

(2A) In our classes there's only like two boys and they tell jokes and people laugh and people carry on...

So how have boys affected your friendships?
(2A) It's not really bothered me.
(1A) I've got knick-names for them all.

(6A) I quite like it.
(1A) (She's evil).

® Have you got names for other groups in the school?
(5A) We're called the 'Randoms'.
(3A) Oh, yeah.

(5A) That's lollible...I'm bananable....

® Do you have names for other year groups?
(3A) No.

® Do certain groups own certain areas of the school at break-times?
(2A) Yes.
(6A) Yes.

(2A) We own the roundabout.
(1A) Our roundabout.

® If you had to draw a map for people's groups during break-times where would others be?
(2A) The lads own the field, play football with some year 8s.
(3A) This Year 8 girl she plays football all the time and we sat on the field once and she didn't like it.

® Is that because it was her area?
(1A) Yes – she started throwing berries and conkers at us.

® Is that because you were there?
(3A) Everyone ran away and I was just stood there and she was throwing them.

(2A) Me and 1A always torment this lad and he doesn't mind.
(4A) He threw a conker at 1A, so she threw one back.
Chavs?
(2A) The dark horse, the dark horse, Year 9 – the dark horse.

Why?
(3A) They’re horrible.
(2A) They’re mean.
(4A) They don’t like us.

(3A) Year 9/10 all sit in locker room. (Inaudible)
(1A) The woods are usually our form group. They usually climb the trees.

Definitely set areas?
(1A) Yeah.

(4A) Yes.
(1A) People sit over there (pointing to tables outside) – the people who like doing homework.

(2A) We sit there. (Pointing outside towards the roundabout).

Do you have any names for the other groups?
(1A) Homework people.
(4A) Geeks.
(1A) Pencil people ‘cos there are pencils there.

Is anyone in the play-ground?
(2A) Yeah the year 6.
(4A) I’ve got some really good friends in that class and I talk to them and they just play.
(2A) The 6th form go in the library.

That’s their study room as well. Have we missed anyone out?
(1A) Yes.

Who?
(1A) Pupil P (a boy). He’s with the older girls.
(6A) Pupil P and pupil Q (another boy).

(1A) He tells them when he’s going on holiday.

(2A) The girls were curling his hair and putting makeup on him. All the girls think he’s cute.

(1A) Some girls with pupil P were asking him where he was going in the holidays – He said London and they asked him if he bought Heat magazines and they just talk.

® There’s not those many boys anyway is there?

(2A) No.

(1A) Hallelujah.

(5A) More girls than boys.

(2A) For most of us we’ve been in classes with lads since we were little.

(3A) In all my old classes it would be half girls, half lads, now it’s like a little tiny group of lads.

(1A) The lads all tend to stick together.

(2A) In every class we went in up to year 6, we had more boys than girls. It’s really funny because, one of the lads actually came from my old school. It’s really annoying, ‘cos he’s in every single class, makes you feel like...

(3A) Which one?

(2A) Pupil Q.

(6A) Oh yeah.

(2A) I kept on going, ‘Go away’.

Thanks ladies for your very interesting chat, I hope you enjoyed it too.

Year 7 Focus group B.

® Tell me why your friends are important? Brilliant, yeah, anything....

(7B) I think friends are important because like if you came to school knowing that there’s like nobody to enjoy the day with you’d just be like on your own for the whole of the day and you’d be like what do I do.
They like help you out and you feel safe with them.

Fantastic. I know a couple of you belong to at least one group, tell me, do you have to behave differently within your different groups?

I've got groups out of school as well.

The group that I'm with who aren't here, I can't be really stupid with them and be really 'goofy' the other group which is here we just have a laugh and don't care. We can act normal.

Is this group more laid back?

Yes.

Do you have to put on a little act – is it hard work?

Yes.

Is your out of school group also different and if so in what ways?

Yes, they're in different schools and I text them more than everyone else.

Do you actually change who you are with each group and if so do you ever get it wrong?

Yeah, I do.

This group won't mind, will they?

No.

What makes your group 'your' group and you're not in here (pointing) with these?

We play together outside.

Do you have areas to play with your group and can you identify areas around the school used by other groups regularly?

Yes.

Some people, Year 7 hang out in the forest. Some Year 8's.

All year 7's usually go in the forest and mm the boys own the field.

What about your group?
We normally go on the roundabout.

Aren't there other groups on the roundabout?

Yes!

So what happens?

They have one half, we have the other.

You share it – do you have like a boundary?

Yeah – 'cos there's like two different groups in one area, it doesn't mean you're rivals as such...

But we don't know them that much, it's not rivalry... We just don't talk.

Do you do different things than the others on the roundabout, so you wouldn't want to join their group?

No.

No, not really.

What other groups, apart from year 7, hang around the school? (If you had to draw a map and say, locker room, year? toilets Year?).

Year 10 are in the locker rooms.

Year 9 hang around in the toilets.

Year 11 in R.E. room.

Some year 9s go to the forest.

Do you have any nick-names for your own or these groups?

I have nick-names for people in our group. Me and 8B used to call the other group the 'cooleo'.

My other group are quite a lot popular than these.

Yeah, everyone likes them.

What makes people popular?

Everybody likes them.

'cos they're so kind.
In my old school being popular was getting into trouble and like goofing off and I wasn’t that popular.

® What are you now then – popular and cool?

No, laid back, relaxed. When I was in my old school we had to have snow-ball fights and one of the popular tried to throw snow-balls at me and I wouldn’t throw them back at her.

Ah!

We had to have water-fights that made us popular and we had to sit outside the office.

® So did you have to do something naughty there to make you popular there did you?

Yeah.

® It’s not the same here?

No.

® What makes you pupils and what makes teachers – is there any difference?

Yeah.

Yeah.

We’re lower hierarchy than them. They’re like in charge and if we get into trouble that meant that we, if we mis-behaved you would not be very popular here. You’d just be sitting in the outskirts.

Teachers are in charge, so.

(13B) When we have teachers that we really like and they tell you off, we sort of feel disappointed because you don’t really want them to be disappointed in you.

® Do some teachers have different roles than others?

Yeah.

We kind of listen more to the kinder teacher because we kind of know she’s not going to tell us off.

® You concentrate more?

Yeah.
(10B) You can do what you want.

® What makes one teacher ‘kind’ and what makes another
teacher ‘not kind’?

(9B) Fun.

(8B) When you’re copying out of the book; that’s not fun.

® What about the lesson itself, because lessons are different
aren’t they?

(14B) Some lessons you can really enjoy because of the
teacher.

(14B) Yeah.

(8B) Yeah.

® Is it making it meaningful to you so you can remember it
better?

(11B) Yeah.

® When you’re in lessons do you communicate with your
friends and if so how?

(7B) Sometimes, you just mouth to them and send them notes.

(10B) My friend sits next to me, I really like her and she’s really
nice, in lessons when I’m bored, I write ‘I’m bored’ and I pass it
to her.

(10B) Yeah.

(7B) Yes.

® How do you pass notes – once written do you keep it a while
before passing it on to delay suspicion or?

(8B) Yes, definitely.

(10B) Yes, when you’ve been told to do work and you’re writing
a note, all you can do is, ‘cos when you write, they can’t see
what you’re writing. They can just see your pen moving.

® It’s like a skill?
Yeah – or if it’s put under your book, and if they come, just move your book and go back to your work.

You can write down and on the note and have it in the book, but you’ve got to make sure that you’ve written something down.

We make up little codes, symbols and then forget about them.

Do you pass them in notes?

Yes.

Yes.

When do you plan to write these notes?

It just happens in lessons.

If you get bored, it just makes the lesson still interesting.

How do you get bored then?

When you’re writing down off the board and they go on and on and on about what to do and...

I think it’s the voice a teacher teaches with...

It’s sometimes the language when the teacher speaks in the same tone.

They have to make it more exciting, not going on and on in the same voice, because that gets boring...

Like when T2 reads a book she goes ‘BANG’ and the door opens.

Do you keep your notes, by the way, or throw them in the bin after?

Sometimes.

I keep...

Are they like nonsense notes a lot of the time?

Yeah.

No, we plan what we’re doing at break-time.
So you plan in lessons what you’re doing at break-time, not the other way round?

(10B) Yeah.

(8B) Yeah.

(10B) If it’s a really, really exciting lesson, then we don’t bother doing notes, but if it’s really boring we do notes.

Is it to do with games or where you’re meeting or something else?

(10B) Where we’re meeting.

How has technology influenced your communication patterns within your friendship groups, positively and negatively?

(14B) MSN.

(12B) MSN, Bebo, Facebook...

(13B) 11B lives quite far away from me and yeah I can’t say to 11B come to my house after school because you have to plan it with the parents.

(12B) It sort of influences your writing sometimes…’cos you can’t be bothered on MSN with stuff, writing normally.

So when you come back into school, do you still use the way you write on MSN?

(12B) Yeah.

(7B) Yeah.

Yeah sometimes.

What about texting – is that the same?

Yeah. (unanimous).

(12B) On Facebook, mm. If you, in school you can like plan to go on Facebook later (inaudible) at home.

When do you do that?

(12B) You can plan to go to meet each other on Facebook at school.

(7B) On Facebook you’ve got a request, say somebody accepted your request, it tells you what happens and then you’ve got…(inaudible).
On Facebook you can keep the messages you get, on MSN it just...

You can save it.

If you get hate mail on MSN, you can’t save it, but on Facebook you can always have it on your computer.

® Have you had any horrible messages on MSN at home?

I’ve had some hate mail.

® When? Not from school?

The night before.

...and chain mail.

There are people I know that can be quite mean to you and they used to say over MSN can say some horrible things about my parents.

® It doesn’t happen in school?

It doesn’t happen in school, but they’re in school; they come to this school.

® They do it at night-time when you’re at home – is that what happens?

Yeah. They still do it sometimes, when they get chance.

® Do you ignore it?

Yeah, most of the time. When they do it to my parents I would have to answer back to them, ‘cos it’s like family.

® Do any of you text each other in school?

I text my old friends in a different high school, but that’s at lunch-time.

® What?

How’s your day...

I turn off my phone, ‘cos she (pointing) keeps on telling me that she will text me in lessons.

® Do you keep your phone on?

I’ll keep it on at break-times and lunch-times.
I don’t really text in school. I do sometimes.

I listen to music at break-time. I haven’t for a while.

Homework – Why do you think teachers give you homework?

I don’t see the point in homework.

We do it in school why should we make it boring at home.

Is it not to help you learn?

Yeah.

Yeah.

Some homework is really interesting but some is horrible.

It gets in the way the whole time, ‘cos if you want to go out, your dad says you can’t go out until you’ve done your homework.

Why don’t they just give you schoolwork, to save having to do the homework.

Because...because they...

We have to write in our books, so why do they have to check up on us, if we’ve like already told them that we understand.

...the homework like triple checks.

Why do you think teachers do that then?

Who knows.

Some people do it in the middle of the lesson some people do it before the lesson.

I never do homework.

If I’ve forgotten to do homework, I just have to say I’ve forgotten it and then most of the time I do it at the last minute...because I want to go out, I tell my dad that I haven’t got any homework so I can go out, so I do it at the last minute..’cos I can’t go out and he always threatens me.
A project that I had to do and I got really told off because it took me nearly a whole day and I couldn’t go out.

Do you feel good when you get it back?

Yeah.

In my old school I asked my mum to get the baseline for my project...she basically did the whole project for me.

I enjoy getting it back, especially if it’s got a merit with it.

Sometimes you can get it wrong and you work ages on it and then they, then you have to do it all over again and it makes you sad.

Sometimes they don’t even grade it ‘cos they don’t think it’s enough.

Sometimes you don’t want it back, because you’ve worked your hardest and you have a really bad grade.

The highest grade I’ve ever gotten is A minus, because I always get Bs and B pluses since I started this high school, I was really surprised because she gave me an A minus for my art work.

Fantastic – I’ve just one more area left to ask you to discuss. What happens when you fall out?

People fall out loads.

How does falling out affect the next lesson, or does it?

You have to sit next to each other and then you have to share, and it’s really annoying ‘cos they slap the book up...it’s really annoying because if...

Does the teacher realise?

No!

No!

Only when we start shouting.

Do you tell the teacher?

There’s no point.

Why is there no point?
Because if it’s a small petty argument you know you’ll sort it out but if it’s a really big argument, you’d have to because...

I would never tell the teacher because as soon as the lesson’s finished we’d probably smile at each other and make up even if it’s major – that’s what we’d do.

Do you learn from falling out?

Yeah.

Yeah.

Not really – you do but it’s just part of you...It’s what annoys you about them...If they don’t like you then they wouldn’t have made up, it’s sort of like you.

I would never tell the teacher ‘cos in my old school I told the teacher about someone when I got in an argument with them and they started calling me snitch and I felt it just got even more worse. I told them and they didn’t do anything about it and I kept telling them and it got to the point where...they had to have a conversation with them.

Did that sort it?

Yeah.

So it is useful sometimes?

Yeah.

You can go into the lessons not friends and you come out and some way in the lesson have made up.

From your notes being passed round maybe?

Yeah.

With the note thing, I’ve just thought about something. I’ve read about secret ways of sending notes round, cartridge pens or buy one, you can roll it up and put it in.

What I did was we kept on borrowing pencils from each other and I wrapped it around pencils.

What you do at break-time seems to continue into lessons from what you’ve been saying, doesn’t it?

Yes.

Yeah.
Then you have to sort things out from lessons at break-time?

(12B) Yeah.

(10B) One of my friends was giving out sweets to everyone and I had a lolly and you know how long it takes to eat a lolly it was only 5 minutes to the start of the lesson. I was trying to get the lolly off the stick.

Did you crunch it?

(10B) Yeah.

(14B) I did that once in year 5 or year 6. I didn’t realise it was the end of break-time and was stood at the door with my lollipop in my mouth.

(11B) And sometimes when people give sweets out at the end of the day in primary school you start eating them even if you’re not meant to.

What happens when some lessons don’t have a break-time after them?

(12B) You discuss it on the way.

So walking, you use as a break?

(13B) Yeah.

Do you see break-times as separate to lessons?

(12B) Separate.

(7B) Sometimes you wait outside a class for ten minutes but we have a little book thing we carry on reading.

Thank you for your interesting discussion and I hoped you enjoyed taking part.

Year 8 Focus group C.

Why is it important to have friends?

(15C) If you’re doing work with someone you’re not on your own.

To help you.

(15C) I think you it helps you feel happy in school knowing your friends are there and feel comfortable.
(17C) If you've got more than one friend and you fall out with one of your friends...

® Back up isn't it?

(15C) I use to just have one close friend and then we fell out, so now I've realised I need more than one friend.

® What qualities do your group have? Why do you belong to your group and not another group?

(19C) In our group, there's a few of us we're all similar but different, we do things differently.

® You get on?

(19C) Yeah.

(17C) We can talk about the same things but are not exactly like each other.

(15C) It helps with me and 16C because our lives when we get home and such...our parents are always going to courts and stuff.

® So you can share with each other?

(16C) You...understand each other, all about each other you know that if something's wrong you can tell.

® In what ways are your roles as pupils different than those of the teachers? (If they are?)

(16C) Sometimes teachers help but you can't trust them.

® But you can trust your friends?

(18C) Yeah.

(19C) Yes.

(18C) They're like the same age and understand you better.

® A teacher's role – what's different than your role?

(15C) They can tell you what to do.

(17C) Commanding.

(19C) Cos they're older, they've already been through...

(18C) I think that sometimes they understand us, but there is an age gap.
There's a different atmosphere than it used to be in school.

☑ So you don’t think teachers can understand you?

(15C) No.

(19C) Some understand some things but friends understand more though.

☑ What do you see school as?

(17C) Somewhere to learn.

(16C) Boring.

(19C) Somewhere to meet friends.

(15C) To escape from home.

☑ So it has a purpose?

(16C) Yeah.

(17C) Yeah.

☑ Do you think you learn more in some lessons than in others and if so, why?

(18C) Yes.

(19C) Yeah.

(17C) Definitely.

(15C) In Maths.

(16C) In other lessons we’re not allowed to sit next to each other. In Maths, we do so well in Maths.

☑ Is there a reason for that?

(15C) Yes.

(16C) It’s embarrassing.

☑ Do they know you?

(16C) Oh definitely.

(15C) You don’t feel comfortable with everyone.
Do you learn more with each other?

(15C) Yes.

(16C) Yeah.

(15C) If I'm with someone I don't feel comfortable with I don't.

How does that affect your work?

(15C) I can't concentrate and if I was over there with like 16C I'd work.

(16C) When we talk we talk about the work; we can talk and work.

(15C) At my old school my teacher said 15C you can talk and work but most people can't do that, but I found that 16C can as well, so we can enjoy it.

You can multi-task?

(15C) Yeah. Some people don't feel close to people in class, but like in drama or something or even in netball when we get put into groups, they don't have that connection.

So, you're telling me that it can help you to learn?

(16C) Yeah.

(19C) Yes.

So it's not always negative, but it can be if you're talking too much...?

(17C) Yes.

(18C) Yeah.

In some lessons, if you connect to certain people they just...they talk about home stuff and if it's a lesson you like and they don't, they like distract yeah.

How do you protect your group from new members or other groups?

(15C) We've got our group, 'cos we've got similar situations at home and not many people in my class have.

(16C) People know not to like to 'hang' with us because they know that we're together and we don't let them in.
® What do you do to prevent them...say something, glare or what?

(15C) I sort of, if they've got like a perfect life, I just think they could hang. At home, they're fine with mum and dad got a little brother...

(16C) They don't know how bad it is.

(15C) ...they don't understand and they don't listen.

(16C) They know not to speak to us.

® You don't want anyone in and they know...Do you have boundaries then?

(16C) Yes. If they're perfect...(laugh).

® You (18C) are allowed into this group aren't you?

(18C) Yes. It happened this year. Me and 15C we stuck together at the end of last year and at my party, and started playing football together.

® You're lucky being allowed entry into that group, but you don't stay the whole time do you?

(18C) It's just because, it's...

® Do they have rules that you understand?

Yes. (Unanimous).

® Are you happy for that?

(18C) Yeah.

(15C) Sometimes, I really like 18C she's cool, but...

(18C) ...it's just awkward, because those two have got similar lives...

(15C) Connection.

(16C) Them two go off and play football sometimes. In a time of need or something like that it's always 15C I turn to.

® What about your group?

(17C) Well, we don't really mind. We obviously have our own people we trust more, but if someone was upset and had fallen out with their friends, we wouldn't exactly say, 'no you can't come and speak to us', we'd just let them.
(19C) Well obviously you have your own discussions with the people you trust most, but we don’t really mind…there was a new girl coming to this school and she was really nervous about coming in and I saw her coming into school and we started talking and I introduced her to everyone, so she’s now started coming into our group now and we don’t mind.

(17C) My group…we don’t ‘mind’ but certain times it’s just better to be in your group, but we don’t mind other people just coming in.

® Do you manoeuvre within smaller groups as well? (Talking to larger group)?

(18C) Yes.

(17C) Yes.

® How has technology influenced your communication patterns both positively and negatively within your friendship groups?

(16C) Yeah. No well… it enabled us to arrange stuff: I don’t want to go into too much detail.

(15C) Well the reason we became closest friends was…I was moved in an English class to sit next to 16C. and she was telling me how sad and how she missed her mum, and I’d been through that with my Nanna and taken off my mum, but now my mum’s back, but we all decided we were all going to visit her mum. Planned stuff…internet, text them and we met in this school and got a bus and went.

(16C) Anyway it’s bad.

® Through technology? At home, once you’ve finished school, have you ever had any negative messages left on your computer from people who go to this school?

(19C) I had that last year. I thought I was really close to some people but then, one day they started turning on me and they were talking about me behind my back and I thought that…I was close to moving schools and I was really upset.

® And that was people who hadn’t spoken much in the day but left messages at night cowardly?

(19C) Yes and It makes you feel dead like down.

® When you came to school what did you feel like the next day? Did you know who’d done it?
Yeah, I knew who'd done it because some people had overheard them doing it and told me. In school they acted like my friends again and then it was at break-times really.

You know they say sticks and stones can break my bones, but names can never hurt me?

Not nice.

So technology in a negative way – you can actually be friends at school and then fall out in the evening when using the computer and sites?

Yeah.

Do you text in school?

Yeah.

Why do you text in school?

You're not allowed to say a word, you know if your friend is just there, and you just want to say 'oh, pass me a rubber'...

You don't write notes...or do you write notes?

Yeah.

Some people are really skilled at writing notes and have technical methods, don't they?

Yeah. In my old school, me and this girl wanted to talk to each other but we had this really strict teacher so we took the bit out of the pen and wrote a note and stuffed it in and passed it along.

In a way technology's good, 'cos say for example, I don't think we live in the same place, we can talk to each other and say do you want to come down and meet, especially in the holidays.

But every evening even though...

shouts 'TEXT QUEEN' to 19C.
I'm always texting, I can text really fast or I can text loads of people.

® In school?

(19C) No outside of school. At home on my house phone: I have a free hour after six ‘o’clock to ring anyone and am on for 59 minutes.

® Everyday?

(19C) Nearly everyday.

(17C) I text everyone else and am always on Facebook as I like to contact my friends and see how they are.

® You've only seen them like an hour or so before. Is it all social, that's why it's good?

(17C) Yeah.

(19C) Yeah.

(15C) If you're not in school, to spread rumours going round you could...put 'em right.

® Would you text or use the computer?

(19C) It depends, ‘cos some of my group don't have...some people I'd text, some are on Facebook.

® Do all of you spend time on Facebook everyday?

Almost unanimous yes, one no, and one sometimes.

(15C) I read in a newspaper about this girl, there was this group made about her ‘I hate, what ever her name was' and it had over a thousand members and she killed herself. So. I think it's bad.

® Do you think Technology is like a phase – everything is coming out new and if you don't do it you feel pressured.

(18C) Sometimes, but I do a lot of gymnastics and dance so I'm too busy.

(15C) I feel that if you don't go on it I'm going to miss something. The next day everyone's going to be talking about it and I'm not going to know...

® In school, yet it's nothing to do with school is it?

(19C) Yes.
I hate it when you have a day off school and the next day everyone's talking about the day before.

Say something big happened the day you were off, say a big argument you didn't know about.

That wouldn't have happened if you didn't have the computers, would it because when you went into school the next day everyone would be queuing up to tell you first?

That wouldn't have happened if you didn't have the computers, would it because when you went into school the next day everyone would be queuing up to tell you first?

Yeah.

I've just come off holiday yesterday and made loads of friends out there and they've all got me on Facebook and I can still talk to them and because I might be going back in July I can see them all again. I came back from holiday not last time but the time before, just before the beginning of the summer holidays and then some random people had got my Facebook from people's Facebook.

Negative then?

Yeah.

After what me and 16C did, we were labelled like the 'runaway kids' on Facebook and I got people like from year 9 and 10 like adding me and then chatting to me 'Hey, runaway kid'

You'd be amazed how many people are labelled in different ways.

I think my group's labelled as the comedians we always use to do this 'Little Britain' type thing.

Do you have areas in and around the school that are usually occupied by certain groups during break-times?

Yes.

D.O.L. – lockers, Year 10s

Who owns which spaces in the school?

Year 9 – that picnic table.

Year 7 – forest.

Year 8 own the football pitch.

8R take three benches up.

What about the roundabout?
(16C) It's all Year 7.

® Toilets?

(17C) Year 9 and some 11s.

® Library?

(18C) Sixth form?

® They have a study room there anyway. Any groups sit in gangways around the building?

(18C) Oh, yes, I've seen some by the steps, six people.

(17C) Year 11 in the corner.

® Do you have any names for any of your year groups?

(15C) Popular.

® What's 'popular' and who is 'popular'?

(16C) 19C's group.

® Why is your group popular?

(19C) They know about style.

® Have you got the best magazines?

(17C) Yeah.

(19C) It's when like, it started off with just me and 16C and then we started getting people who were like us who were, like me and 16C have always been in to fashion 'cos we have older sisters and people started joining.

(16C) Probably 'cos they've got a lot of people in their group.

® How would they be popular?

(19C) 'Cos we've all got groups and if someone wants to join in with their group some people don't like that...

® What other names?

(16C) Year 9s; a group always back-comb their hair.

(15C) I'm really happy. 19C is like, you know when you send a letter?
Agony Aunt?

(15C) Agony Aunt, that's it.

And a champion texter?

(15C) Yeah.

(18C) 15C is happy on the football pitch, she's happy with the boys.

Have you noticed on mine (referring to consent slip) I wrote boyfriends as well?

So how have boys had an influence on you and your friendships now?

(19C) I came to this school because it was an all girls' school. I've been best friends with boys all my life 'cos the schools I've been to always had boys. I'm used to them. Since I've been here, I've been really close with some of them, but the year 9s always go 'you fancy them' and I don't, I just really think of them as best mates. I'm quite similar to them, really stupid. In football, when we've got the ball or score or something they call me cabbage or something.

Anything you've done at break-time that has affected your next lessons?

(16C) In the forest and we're 10 minutes late.

(15C) Oh, yeah, there was this girl called pupil O. she used to say stuff about people on Facebook and text and MSN and I 'stupidly' sided with her during an argument and we had a huge argument in the forest and missed a bit of the lesson and I said I'm staying out of this 'cos I was friends with both sides and basically pupil O was making a bit of a reputation for herself.

I don't want to say anything as I still like her.

(16C) She used to be in our group and then ended up on the other side and she sort of left me and then came back and forth. She used to use 18C.

(18C) I realised.

Do you think you have to go through this learning process?

(15C) Yes.

(16C) When you do one thing people think that's what you're like. They don't know what you've done.
But if you do something good more recently, people tend to forget old and remember the latest.

(15C) Yes me 16C and another girl we were waiting over there, but the boys started a stone fight didn't they and we threw a few back that didn't hit anyone they sort of rolled. Then pupil R, a boy, he threw at a girl and it whacked her on her eye. She couldn't do the lessons properly.

© So you got into trouble for it?

(15C) Yeah.

© So what happens if you fall out at break-time?

(17C) You can't concentrate you're worried, you're nervous.

© When break-time finishes and you know you've got to go through next lesson, how do you sort it out?

(15C) You don't want to talk to them.

(16C) You don't talk to them as they're acting gay.

(15C) What we do if we fall out because we're next to each other in most lessons, it's kind of awkward because you're not allowed to move 'cos teachers will shout at you if you move but you don't want to sit next to them.

© So how does it affect your learning?

(19C) It really does 'cos you're concentrating on like when we're ever going to be friends.

© Are you thinking about the next break-time and when to sort it out?

(15C) Yes. All the time.

© So you're planning stuff?

(18C) I've never really fallen out with anyone except one person, but that was...I wasn't really bothered about making friends with her, I was just worried about losing my other friends.

(19C) I fell out with pupil T because at that moment at school I thought it was the right thing to do ...but then it all came back on me and so I don't want to go to school in the morning, 'cos I'd kind of worry.

© Was that in school?
(19C) On MSN.

® Would you have gone back if there weren’t any messages?

(19C) Yes, ‘cos she’s normally on MSN.

® Spreading rumours?

(19C) Yeah.

(15C) I think the reason is...you feel that everyone’s better than you, higher than you.

(17C) I was friends with 19C and friends from the other class kept saying I was following 19C, I wasn’t, she wanted to hang around with me and we both trying to hang around together.

(15C) 19C helps me.

(19C) I’m quite friendly with my class at the moment because I like if someone’s upset or something ‘cos I was form captain last year, everyone used to come to me with their problems.

(15C) I look up to 19C, ‘cos 19C hasn’t done anything wrong, that bad.

® Why do you think teachers give you homework?

(16C) Because they’re evil.

(19C) I think, you can’t spend time with your family.

(17C) It’s to show that you’ve understood the lesson, but I think you should only get one piece in the last lesson to show that you’ve understood all the lessons all week.

(16C) Say, I go to my mums at the weekend but I get up late on a Sunday.....(inaudible) – it’s not fair, because I’ve got to stay up to do all of my homework.

(18C) One week I had homework every day and I had about.....

(17C) Every month I have gymnastic squad thing and it’s on a Sunday, six hours...that week before I had hardly had any homework (I had about 5 pieces) I had loads and stayed up really late Friday night and waking up really late for gym.

® You can see the purpose of it to consolidate learning?

(17C) You can, but definitely we get too much.

(19C) Definitely.
(18C) Art – sometimes you get about an hour.

(17C) I like – I don’t like homework, but I know we have to have it, I’m not just saying this but I really do think that we get too much homework.

(16C) Yeah.

(19C) Like other schools, they get about 2 pieces of homework a week.

(17C) It’s like an hour everyday just to do homework.

® You could do it in your break-times, couldn’t you?

(19C) They’re like why haven’t you done it at home.

(16C) Never got time to do stuff.

(18C) I get home and I have loads of things to do like going out with my friends... I have to spend about an hour doing that.

® Seems to get in the way?

(16C) A lot.

(15C) It does.

(17C) I’ve got archery and then I’ve got tennis. I get home from tennis about 9 ‘o’ clock, which means I have to do my art homework, which I haven’t even started.

(18C) I use to enjoy art, but it takes up a lot of time doesn’t it?

® Yes.

(17C) People think you should go downstairs and stay with the family, but you don’t have time; you’ve got homework to do.

® Do you learn better in some class-rooms than others?

(15C) Yeah.

(19C) I like just two tables. Doubles, ‘cos you’re not in huge groups in conversations just between the two of you and there’s not that much distraction and still get on with work.

(15C) In Maths, (inaudible) our Science teacher... and I’d done a few things.

(16C) She put her on her own on separate tables and put me on my own right next to her desk.
Did you work better?

(15C) No, I refused to work, I refused to work.

Thanks, that was brilliant: Any Questions?

YEAR 8 Focus group D.

What is the importance of friends to you?

(20D) Comfort.

(21D) You have someone to talk to.

(22D) They mm help you.

What ways do your roles in school (as a pupil) differ from those of a teacher?

(22D) They give you homework.

(20D) Wear your uniform correctly.

(22D) They’re there to teach – If you need any help with anything.

(21D) The teachers have got more responsibility.

Do you think you learn more in some lessons than others? (If so why and can you give some examples)

(20D) Yeah because sometimes teachers...some teachers you like the way they teach better.

What sorts of things do you like In a teacher?

(22D) Like easy to understand.

(20D) I like getting involved.

(22D) Mr. C he just writes it on the board and you copy it off and sometimes he asks you to do stuff so you’re not just copying off the board.

So, a mixture?

(22D) Yeah.

(20D) I like practical work, It makes you feel like it’s all your own and there’s nothing like artificial about it and it’s just all yours.

(21D) Art.
(20D) Science.

(21D) I like English 'cos... T2 always gets us doing stuff; yesterday she was doing, what was she doing?

(20D) She sometimes tells stories.

(21D) She tells really good stories.

® So it makes it more relevant for you, does it?

Yes (unanimous).

® How do you protect your group from new members?

(22D) Me and my best friend have stayed together and then it's not changed members or anything, we're all friends with everyone, and then it's just got like drifted in to Year7 two of my other best friends as well and they've stuck this year but we're still friends again now.

® So you acquired a few more members?

(21D) Mm.

® So what qualities do you have to have to be in your group?

(21D) You don't have to do anything, but like we all have the same interests and we just got on first time we spoke to each other.

® What's different between your two groups then – why are you with them and not them?

(20D) It's the same with ours really, you don't have to do anything really you just have to get on with each other.

(22D) We've all got such different personalities in our group which makes us together 'cos there's more to talk about.

® What about yours?

(20D) It's not really personalities, because we all like different things mm, but it's sort of like we all think the same way.

® Do you hang around in your group in different areas of the school?

(20D) Last year for our group, because we had a different group, it used to be always on the roundabout, then our group became really big cos we had like four new people so we went to that (you know that) little pencil place, that's where we use to go, but now it's just in the form rooms.
Do you stay in your form rooms?

Yes, if it's warm then we go outside on the field, but now it's too cold so we stay in our form room.

In the summer last year and in September, we sat on the same bench over there.

How do you feel in lessons when you are not sat next to your friendship group and does it affect the way you learn?

Sometimes you feel disappointed, when somebody else sits by them.

Is that kind of jealous?

Yes.

Is that because they have been put there or have they chosen to?

Sometimes they choose to.

In our group we have four of us so I don't care who I go with, 'cos there'll always be two together, but you sort of feel like disappointed when there's a seating plan and you don't learn as well because if you talk in the lessons, then you get the work done with the person you really know and they can help you and you can help them, so it's a lot easier.

Do you use each other to support each other?

Yeah (unanimous).

Can you describe what you do during break-time?

We usually just sit and chat, but sometimes we play like who knows each other best.

We use to play the Mr. and Mrs. Game when we'd like answer questions and see how well you know each other and we were just doing that then.

Just in your group of 4?

Yeah, but sometimes more people come in, like yesterday and you just talk about what you did yesterday, 'cos we all do different things and you just catch up.

Are you the same?

Yeah. We played the game we play in drama.
Do you bring in magazines?

(20D) Yeah.

® How has technology changed the way you communicate with your friends?

(20D) MSN, Facebook.

® What do you talk about on it?

(20D) Stuff that’s, not secrets, but say like if you wanted to tell them something and you couldn’t really tell them, then you’d tell them there. Say, if you wanted to meet up or something on the week-end, ‘cos me and 22D we meet up like every Saturday and mm.

® So to arrange things?

(22D) Yeah.

® Have you ever had any horrible messages left on there?

(21D) On Facebook - (laugh) there were those Interviews.

® What are those?

(21D) They sort of give you questions about people, like what would such and such be doing in 10 years, and you put (laugh).

(22D) I, mm, it said ‘Who is 20D’s dream celebrity partner?’ and I said Jonathon Ross.

(21D) Then you said ‘What will 20D be doing in 10 years?’ and you said ‘she’d be a stripper’. (laugh).

(22D) We just joke and stuff.

(21D) They have really good questions sometimes like would you trust 22D to drive, to be a pilot on your flight (NO).

® Do you think it could upset anybody anytime?

(20D) Yeah.

(22D) You can skip the questions if you want to. I usually skip the ones I don’t think are...

(21D) We look at people’s pictures. I look at 20D’s pictures...ones with guys.

® Do you text in school?
(20D) No.

® Do you use your phones or not really much?

(22D) If I have an emergency, I have it in my bag all the time, but it's always turned off.

® What is the function of homework and why do teachers give you homework?

(20D) To re-cap on what we've done in class.

(22D) To see if you've learned in the lessons.

(21D) But I do actually think we get a lot of homework. Some can be really strange.

® Why else?

(21D) It depends some seem to set it just for the sake of it.

(22D) Yeah and you get really annoyed with it.

(20D) Like, my mum and dad think I do get a lot of homework 'cos I'm always sitting on the top and writing, but there are a couple of homework's I like doing, my reading..., art homework and...

(22D) We've got English homework and 'cos we're making commercials our English homework was to watch T.V. commercials.

® What have you learned from good and bad friendships?

(20D) If you don't argue at all, you'll be too perfect.

(22D) Yeah, because in our group we've never had any big, big arguments, we've always been, us four, we've never actually fallen out, but you have those little spats like debates and stuff, but never ever fallen out.

® If you do fall out in break-times however, would it continue into the next lesson or how would you sort it out? (It could just be a small disagreement).

(22D) Yeah.

(21D) Probably yeah.

(20D) My friend always knows if, not in a mood, but...I'm really quiet, I never talk and she goes 'What's wrong, and I go nothing
and she goes I know ‘cos you’re really quiet.’ It should just resolve itself.

® Does it mean you won’t concentrate as well?

(20D) If you don’t work it out though...you start thinking about...

® When you should be concentrating on lessons?

(20D) Yeah.

® How do communicate in lessons generally (some send notes, others have codes etc)?

(22D) If we’re looking at the board and stuff and the teacher’s like writing stuff down and we understand it and we’re like we know what to do but she says to look anyway and you write a little note and you pass it.

® Do you do it secretly?

(21D) Yeah.

® Is it a skill?

(22D) Yeah.

® Do you plan how you send your notes?

Yeah (unanimous).

® Do you all send them or is it just a couple?

(20D) No.

(21D) Sometimes.

® Do you get caught or do you remain skilful and escape being caught?

(21D) We’ve never been caught but we don’t do it that often.

® Do you keep them?

(21D) Throw them away. I keep, I throw a few.

(22D) I keep them. I keep them, wherever.

® So it’s not evidence?

(21D) No (laugh).

® And you don’t mind throwing the evidence away?
(21D) No. (laugh).

® What would be on your notes if you had them occasionally?

(21D) Nice words, like 'sorry' and such.

(22D) Yes.

(21D) And you can write them why you're upset and stuff like that and mm.

(22D) You just write about what you're doing this week-end and I bet I can guess your favourite celebrity and...stuff like that.

® So nothing about work whatsoever?

No (unanimous).

® Why do you learn more in some lessons than in others?

(20D) I think you have to enjoy the subject to actually learn because you want to participate more.

(22D) In English T2 gets you involved in stories and such and anyone can tell her something and you just enjoy it.

(21D) For our cancer jab, we had half the lesson talking about it and stuff and then...

® Do you see your schooling as home, school, lesson, break-time, lesson, lunch, lessons, home or as a whole? (You weren't having a lesson on jabs but that was part of your day and your thinking that day).

(21D) Yeah! I don' understand why like in Welsh and French and D.T. we're all split up, I'm with my friends and everything, but she's across the class-room...you're sitting next to a couple of people but you're thinking how all your best friends, your really close friends are not there...

® Would you learn more if your close friends were there?

(21D) Yeah.

® Do you learn more in certain class-rooms because of what they look like?

Yeah (unanimous).

(20D) I don't like the French mobile, it's really cold.
® It slants?

(20D) Yeah.

(22D) I'm not keen on English because it's so cramped.

® It's so small isn't it?

(20D) Yeah.

® What about things on walls?

(21D) In Geography there's loads of posters and there's one of Ice Age 3.

(20D) I like the D.O.L. because it's like, it's so close together and it's really big and you can see each other round the tables.

(21D) I like the Welsh because it's new.

(20D) The history mobile there's loads on the walls.

® You like computers?

(20D) Yeah.

® Do you see Year 8 as two separate forms? Is there any competition?

(22D) Yeah.

(20D) Yeah.

(21D) Nobody really talks between forms.

(20D) I've got a best friend, since I was 3, in the other form and when I hear people talking about it in our class I feel really bad about it.

® You have a divider?

(20D) Yeah.

® Are they in their forms or out and about?

(20D) We've got the Welsh room and they're in theirs. I try and go over to speak at registration.

(22D) We're not really allowed in your form room and you're not really allowed in ours.

® Do you have like boundaries?
(20D) Yeah.

(21D) We’ve got a couple who do come into our form room but they mess it all up and we...

(20D) We get the blame.

® Are you protective of your class-room?

(20D) Yeah.

(21D) Because we’ve been threatened to be kicked out so...and it’s not our fault.

(22D) Because we’ve been kicked out so many times in year 7 then, we’re like protecting, yeah.

® Do you see groups around the school at break-times and do you have names for any of these?

(21D) Down here on the field outside the hall there’s a little group and in the corner there’s a little group.

® Who owns the roundabout?

(21D) Year 10? When we were there, we always used to go on the roundabout (Year 7) and it always used to be the Year 10.

® They do?

(21D) Yeah.

(22D) Year 7 always meet on the roundabout.

® Is that safe, do you think?

(20D) Yeah, cos when we were in primary we were only allowed up to...Year 7 you can go everywhere.

(22D) Every single day we used to go to the forest, but this year, I don’t know what happened this year.

® Changing rooms?

(20D) Year 9s.

(22D) Yeah year 9 – 9R.

(20D) They’re the Chavs – 38G, 37G.

(21D) They just hang out there break-times, dinner and just chat.
Would you dare go, past them?

No, I'd go round.

So they own that area?

Yeah.

Lockers, D.O.L.?

Year 10s.

What do you feel when you walk past little groups around?

Scared.

Do you have names for any groups?

No.

Chavs.

Do you have Chavs in your year?

A couple.

Are they friends together?

Yeah.

Definitely.

7R, I know a couple of Chavs, 8R, 8R!

How do they stand out as being Chavs?

Hair and short skirts.

They have Chav bags and stuff.

Do they keep their top button undone as well?

Yeah.

Yeah.

I have to roll my skirt up really 'cos it's down here...so long.

What are Chav bags, what's the difference?
(20D) They're like plasticy and they've got like a gold handle.

(21D) I think I know who you're talking about, but I'm not talking about her.

® Oh so what are your Chavs?

(21D) I'm thinking about...thick make-up and er...

(20D) Heavy foundation.

(21D) Shoes - they wear like rubbish, like shoes that always like...

(22D) Thin shoes.

(20D) I'm begging my mum for dolly shoes, but she won't let me...'cos the backs come down... but she won't let me.

(21D) I had them once...and all that's in them is like one piece of cardboard.

(22D) I don't wear stupid ones I get like Clarks' ones. My mum says you're not having anything but Clarks ones.

(21D) Mine are really comfy. One pair of shoes I had in Junior school lasted me a whole year.

(22D) These are the only pair of dolly shoes that I've worn and they're not dolly shoes, all since reception have been Clarks shoes, but these ones aren't.

(21D) Marks and Spencers' ones are really good.

® Basically your 'Chavs' - have you seen them out at week-ends as well?

(21D) Yeah.

(20D) Yes.

(22D) They always hang out with X high school.

(20D) I once hung out with X high school, but I'm not a Chav.

(22D) When I go to town with my friend, we don't dress up, I mean like, we don't wear jeans and stuff, we wear like our nice, smart...we always meet with X high school pupils.

(20D) Who I meet up with was EMO.

® What are 'posh tottles'?
(20D) Really posh people like on St. Trinians.

® Do we have any of them?

(20D) I think so yes.

(22D) 7R?

® How would you tell the difference?

(20D) I met this girl who's in 7R and she's like a mix between two and when we met her up in town she had a three inch fifty pound little bag.

® Thank you so much for your information. I hope you enjoyed taking part: Do you have any questions?

Year 9 Focus group E.

® How important are your friends in school?

(23E) A lot.

(24E) Loads.

® Why?

(24E) Because if like you've had a fall out it affects your school work. If you've fallen out with someone and you're upset about it and you don't do any work.

(25E) If you've got like a good... It improves your school work.

(24E) Sometimes when you've fallen out with people, your minds like I want to make up with them, but I don't in a way. You'd rather think about them than do your school work.

® When you fall out, when does that tend to be, for example, in break-times, in lessons or both?

(26E) It depends.

(23E) We fall out on MSN as well.

(29E) Anywhere.

(24E) I fall out with everybody.

(23E) Right, in science one time, we had this massive fall-out, 'cos we all sit one table.

® All of you?
Yes, all of us sat round one table and you've got the piece of paper in your pockets and...

There was like two pages.

Yeah, you're like I'm not talking to...

That you'd all written?

Yeah.

How do you pass your notes?

It's like this you just go...

Does anybody notice?

Sometimes they do actually.

What we use to do in junior school was to put in your pen and go here's your pen.

If the teacher's caught one of us out, we'd go, 'oh, it's nothing', so we stick up for them even though we've fallen out with them.

You don't really want anyone to know.

You're quite happy to pass this A4 piece of paper round?

Yes.

If one of us gets targeted on by the teacher, like 'what are you doing?' we're all like nothing, we all stick up for one another.

Does the teacher keep hold of any notes or do you get rid of it?

Yeah, we burn it.

We put it in the bin.

What sorts of things are written on there?

Weird things.

Why did you do that? And everything.

And saying, yeah I am upset, because...

Most of the time it isn't even true.
The argument could be because of the note, because at the beginning of that Science note we were all friends and by the end we'd all fallen out.

Yeah, like 'say something you don't like about me'.

Why do you do it? Bored?

Yeah.

Yeah.

Don't you take part?

No: They wanted to get everything out of the way so we're all friends with each other, but in the end...

In year 7 me 25E and 23E we were awful, like we fell out nearly every day and one time we were sitting outside our mobiles just crying and the reason we'd fallen out was because we decided to have a fake argument that turned real.

Our arguments in Year 9 are a bit more...

Different?

Yeah.

Do they involve boys?

No.

No.

It involved a boy once but that was year 8.

So what sort of things do you fall out about then?

It's different things really because if me and 27E are into different music than 25E and 23E, if they say one little thing, that's meant to be a joke, but is taken serious, it just carries on to a massive argument then. Another thing, we bring stuff in...

That happened ages ago...

It started in Science and then into break-time.

How did it go through all your lessons?

It started in Science.

...cos you can't talk.
(24E) ...carried on through Science, carried through Geography...

@ How did you carry it on?

(26E) It’s not talking.

(23E) It got worse and worse.

(24E) Then it gets louder and louder.

(25E) Then we’re screaming at each other.

(23E) I really regret that.

@ This was year 9 and out of nothing again?

(26E) Yeah.

(24E) Yeah.

(23E) The worst thing is, you’ve got like say 25E fallen out with 24E, I want to be friends with both of them. If you go to one person, they’re like ‘oh look’ and you go with the other, ‘why you going off with her?’

(29E) It’s hard when there’s a lot of you, to be friends with everybody all the time.

@ Apart from notes etc that you pass round...

(27E) We don’t now.

(24E) We’ve gone through the note phase now.

@ How do you communicate in lessons?

(24E) Talk over everything.

@ Are you sat next to each other every lesson?

(28E) Yeah, most lessons.

(29E) Sometimes, we’re spread across the room.

(28E) We’re never on our own, but we’re always like in groups. Them four and them four.

@ You’re all even?

(26E) Yeah.

(25E) Yeah.
(26E) We’re right next to each other or close.

® If you’re not sat near each other, you make sure you communicate verbally across the room?

(24E) Yes.

(23E) Yeah.

(28E) Yes.

(25E) I don’t like to talk, I tend to keep quiet and ...

(29E) ...And me.

® You’re also in other groups though as well?

(27E) Yeah.

(24E) One time we sat down and the whole class was moved away from us and as you walked in it was like...

® Why – ‘cos you used to say things to them?

(23E) It wasn’t even normal.

(24E) Everyone was in their groups and we said you can sit over there, you’re the mean group you’re the cool ones.

® Did you pair them off as they came in and group them up?

(26E) Yeah.

(24E) It wasn’t us really...

(23E) Yeah, it was.

(24E) It wasn’t.

® This was year 7?

(25E) Yeah.

(25E) The Bratz movie.

® Oh.

(25E) None of us ever used to talk to each other, only us four.

(28E) It’s changed like, we didn’t used to get on with everybody; we didn’t used to get on with 27E.
Are you protective of 9G as opposed to 9R?

(27E) Yeah.
(23E) Yeah.

Does it feel like your year is split into two separate groups or?

(24E) I'm protective of groups within the class, if another person from the other class turned on one person then we'd protect them.

(23E) If someone insults 29E we all...
(28E) Yeah.

But if it's between people in our class we try to stay out it, but somehow we all get involved.

In terms of your group now, what are your boundaries - why won't others be allowed in?

(25E) We are all different, but we're all the same.

(29E) I was never in the group 'til the end of year 8 - I was best friends 28E since nursery and in Year 7 R came to this school, I was best friends with another pupil who found 28E, so there was just me and then...

How did you manage to negotiate getting into the group?

(23E) 29E made this thing and 24E said to me 'should we let 29E in'

(25E) We've never done that with any one else except 29E.

(24E) Because 28E and me had this massive argument. I didn't want to be friends with her and said... 'I'm getting out of the group'

(23E) We said to 29E she could be in the Ace Gang.

(24E) I went to Australia and came back and pupil P wasn't with us anymore.

(27E) Yeah, because we had a massive argument.

(25E) I had a birthday and I could only invite eight people and I could only invite 6; so I didn't invite 23E and I didn't invite pupil P as we'd only known each other for a couple of months. And then 23E was fine with it and kind of kept it a secret, until 28E shouted out... Then, pupil P appeared at Pizza Hut, where my party was.
Did you take 29E under your wing?

(24E) We used to call our self the Ace Gang because it was on Angus thongs and perfect snogging (film)...'cos they had a group of friends.

(26E) It was 23E, 24E, and 26E.

Do you have names for any of your groups?

(29E) Us.

(23E) The scary dull people, that are like...want to kill themselves, EMO's, but they're not EMO's.

(24E) The clever people.

(27E) (Inaudible) us as cool.

(23E) When we walk into the class-room, everybody kind of looks at us in a way. We are loud.

So you've got yourselves that could possibly be 'cool' popular? Are you popular?

(28E) Oh, yeah (laugh).

You call yourself the Ace Gang, so that's you?

(26E) It's not really a 'gang' out on the streets, it's just a name for all of us, together.

(25E) Oh, my gosh, 24E and 23E - wrote the Ace gang and she said, 'what's this word 'gang' about, it's not very nice.' What do you think of when you hear the word 'gang' and all these year 5's were like, 'crime, knives, horror'. We were like, we're not like that and everyone who knew we were called the Ace gang were looking at other.

(25E) It's a label, isn't?

(23E) All of the year 8's saw us laughing..

(24E) Oh, Miss D...(old head of KS3). We were there nearly every week.

(23E) I thought she was really nice though.

She helped you though?
Yeah (unanimous).

(23E) There was a cleaner once right and I started choking on my sandwich and the cleaner thought she was laughing at her, 'oh you find it so funny', but you were choking. So, I walked out of the room and then walked back in and she was taking all the names down, so I walked back out again and they were saying my name, so we were going to get reported to Mr. E (old head), so we told Miss D and it really wasn't fair and she got it all sorted out.

(25E) Did you like me in year 7?

(silence)

(24E) No (Ahh). I remember when we made friends in Maths. I made friends quicker with 26E and 23E.

(23E) When I came here from junior school, I was split up from all my friends because I was best friends with all the boys, they all left. I was walking to Welsh together and I went 'I never thought I'd be friends with you' and you went, 'me, neither.'

® Have you got names for the other half of the year?

(28E) Yeah.

(24E) Plastics.

(26E) Sometimes

(29E) Orange.

(27E) Orange people.

® What else have you got?

(23E) Chavs.

(24E) Chavs – 42H, 43H and 44H.

® How do you define a Chav?

(27E) Police definition: Can't stop arguing and violence.

(23E) They talk like, 'Alright babe, how are yer?'

® What do they wear? In school do they look differently than you? (Language?)

(26E) Yeah.

(28E) Makeup.
(29E) Skirts hooked up.

(23E) They're like 'I wouldn't go out with anyone my age...they're like not developed.'

® Do you think a lot of It Is talk?

(26E) Yeah

(24E) Yeah.

® What else, apart from Chavs?

(25E) EMO's.

(Inaudible discussion about who's EMOs then back onto Chavs). You beeping little beeping.

(28E) They talk too loud even teachers hear what they're saying.

(25E) They said I was like all over this lad and I don't even know who he is.

(24E) You should hear them like, they're texting and they're like 'me and 24E'

® Boys then?

(25E) A lot of boy Influence on them.

® How has technology affected your groups in a good and negative way?

(24E) Me and 27E argue over it.

(25E) Me and 24E kind of argued.

® If you're in an argument you can sort it out before you can come to school.

(24E) It depends.

(24E) Me and 25E fell out before half-term in school and I kind of made up with her on the Saturday.

(25E) I was quite upset what they were saying 'cos it had happened all week.

® It started in school?

(23E) Yeah, R.E. – we said that 25E...
(25E) Yeah well it wasn’t very nice.

(27E) Then 29E said...

(24E) I was trying to say to her ‘grow up’ ‘cos she was being like quite annoying. ‘You weren’t being as mature as you could have been’.

® So, technology?

(23E) I don’t text anymore.

(27E) I do text sometimes in school.

(24E) I don’t use them often.

(26E) T1 and my phone started going off and it was my granddad.

(28E) And in Maths. It started going (noise) what was it? It’s Oh right.

(23E) Mine’s gone off. ‘I feel good, nnn’ (ring tone).

® When you’re at home?

(24E) Facebook.

(27E) We fall out on MSN.

(25E) On MSN we fall out.

(26E) I’m being ‘hacked’ on MSN and I don’t know who by and they’re going on it every night.

(24E) Facebook and MSN - I don’t really talk to my school friends on it, and neither does 27E. We talk to our ‘on-line friends’.

(23E) Me and 25E always talk on MSN.

® Do you use your friends as like ‘support’?

(24E) My on-line friends, like one of mine said to me you can tell me anything and I did, no I didn’t but mm, but it’s easier to talk to them because they don’t know who you’re talking about......

(23E) I view them both the same. I just talk to 25E on the phone every night.

(25E) I talk to 27E if like I’ve got problems with my computer, I don’t know what to do and I talk to 24E if she asking me about homework.
In terms of homework, why do you think teachers give you homework?

(23E) To make your life miserable.
(24E) To make you understand your school work.
(24E) We always copy each other; it's all right to copy each other.

Some people get caught.

(24E) Me and 23E got caught in Science, I copied 23E's. I don't really do homework and I did it on the bus.

Why don't you want to do homework?

(23E) Because it's boring.
(27E) Because you don't have time.
(24E) All the things you've got to do.
(28E) It's not fair.

On a Monday, like after school clubs. On a Monday I go to dancing, Tuesday I go to Guides, Wednesday...somewhere...Friday I go to dance.

I'm on-line 'til half 11. 27E on-line 'till half 2.

Are you not tired the next day?

(27E) No.

I'd rather talk to people who are interesting, like those I met on RAF camp. There's a few people on there I talk to a lot.

The other night I got really upset and I started crying, because it just got to me that I'm not going to everybody again (from junior school); it's just got me. I saw a picture... still got them and the rest of our year, people you don't talk to. They don't recognise me.

In terms of break-times, there are different groups in areas around the school?

Yeah.

Me and 25E go for a walk quite a lot...

Just go round the school.
(23E) We go to the roundabout and round the roundabout.

@ Who owns the roundabout?

(28E) Year 7.

(24E) See that tree (looking out of the window), that's our tree right there.

(26E) We own that area.

(25E) We have our names on the top.

(23E) That is ours.

@ You don't own the football pitch, do you? (Part of that area).

(29E) No.

(28E) No, that's owned by year 8.

(24E) Year 10 are at the top of the hill.

(23E) Year 7 boys sit at the bottom of the hill 'cos they play football.

(29E) Year 10 – some are over there by the little garden.

(23E) Year 11 are in the corner by the hall.

@ Lockers?

(29E) Yeah, a lot of year 10 hang around in D.O.L.

(25E) Year 11...

(23E) Toilets – year 9 – 37G and 38G are always in the toilets.

@ If you're on your own and walk past how do you feel?

(25E) A bit like, 'woo'.

(28E) Yeah.

(27E) I don't.

(29E) I do.

(24E) Someone was trying to steal our tree.

(26E) Year 10s.
They sat on the bench.

© So what did you do?

(24E) We like went up to them and sat on the bench and they went.

© If somebody did come around your tree, as a group what would you do?

(27E) Shout at them. (Inaudible) ‘You don’t own it!’ – ‘yeah we do!’

(28E) One of the girls who ran over there and tried to steal it from us, she walks home with me on the bus, so I was asking her, I said ‘why did you steal...’ and she said ‘we got kicked out of our new place and now we’ve got a new place.’ and I said, ‘no you can’t.’

© So you protect your tree?

(26E) Yeah.

(24E) Oh, it was really funny. T1 came and I’d just come down (the tree) and 23E just shot down the tree and we’re like ‘ssh’ (the others were still up the tree). She was shouting at them and we were still at the top of the tree.

(28E) We were all laughing.

(23E) We could tell she knew.

(24E) It’s too cold now. That tree is called the ‘hicle tree’ (hide out read wrong) and someone wrote on a piece of paper and everyone signed it and I put it in my purse.

© So that tree is really important?

(24E) Yeah.

(23E) Yeah.

(24E) Very.

(26E) We Tippex up the thingy and we made a cross, and buried the purse with our note in it.

(23E) We buried a ruler.

(26E) I have a twenty minute video of...tree.

© From your phone?
(26E) Yeah.

5700 (28E) 23E can’t get off the tree...we’re writing our note, 24E gives a talk....27E starts singing.

(23E) I dropped 24E.

5705 (24E)...on my head. She said put me down on the tree, but I put her down on 25E. (Inaudible).

(29E) It’s like hide, but she wrote the ‘d’ with a gap in it’

5710 © So ‘hicle’, instead of hideout?

(27E) Yeah.

(23E) Remember when I fell out of the tree?

5715 © Is that like your friendship tree?

Yeah (unanimous).

5720 (24E) It brought back our memories.

(26E) Remember when...(inaudible).

(24E) 25E used to get me a lavender every day.

5725 (28E) Ah.

© Lessons following break-times – how do you cut off?

5730 (24E) You don’t.

(26E) We go, ‘bye, meet you at the form room yeah?’

© So you miss each other?

5735 Yeah (unanimous).

© What do you do after dinner when you’ve got a big two hour slot?

5740 (25E) We’re mostly together in those.

© In terms of your learning – how would you learn best?

5745 (23E) Being with our friends to be honest.

(24E) ..because we were bad, and we were like...

(26E) That’s why we got split up.
I think that if she put us back together and gave us another chance, it'd be good.

Next year is going to strange as you chose your options soon? How are you going to choose your options?

We've already said that it's going to be nothing to do with friendships.

Yes, you all want to do different things, don't you?

I want to be a scuba diver!

If we're not together for lessons we're just going to have to try to be together at break-times.

Because you're in a small school you're going to be together anyway, even passing in the playground as you change lessons?

I know but.

You want more, like.

None of us are going to take music, I want to take French.

I want to take ICT.

I don't think I'll be going anywhere near that subject.

I'm doing media.

Oh, I'm doing media.

I want to be on the radio.

You should take art then.

No, I don't want to take art. I want to do Geography though.

We know what we're good at though. Say 23E said I'm taking GCSE Art, 'are you sure?'

It's nice to see you looking after each other. Thank you so much for your chat, I've really enjoyed, I hope you have. Any Questions?

No. (Unanimous).

Year 9 Focus group F.

Why is it important to have friends in school?
(30F) So you're not alone.

(31F) Company.

(30F) School would be boring without friends; that's the fun part of school.

® Aah! The 'only fun part'? 

(32F) It's the only reason why people come.

(33F) I find Science quite enjoyable.

® Thank you, you like to learn, there we go. Are you with your friends in that?

(33F) Yes.

® That's absolutely fine. In which way are your roles as pupils different to those of teachers? (How would you describe yourself as a pupil?).

(31F) I make a lot of noise.

(30F) We're like learning and they're trying to teach us stuff that we may not already know and I think it's better to have your friends there when you're learning it because they can help you like...

(32F) They don't have to wear uniform, yeah!

® What is the main difference between them and you? Do you see the teachers as 'them' and you as 'us' – How do you see it?

(34F) Yes.

(35F) They can expect things from you but you can't expect things back, like they can expect you to do homework but you can't expect them to mark your books.

® Yes.

(32F) Some teachers, you hand in your books and they'll never mark it.

(30F) Because teacher F took in our books, had the whole of half term to mark them and the majority of the class handed the work in and he said 'I'm not going to mark them because not everyone had handed them in, and he was going to wait for everyone to hand them in before he marked them. And I was thinking but we wouldn't be able to do that with our homework if
we were like 'ah! No-ones done the homework, so I just won’t do it'.

® And talking about homework, what do think the function of homework is and why do you think teachers give it to you?

(32F) So you can show your knowledge. (Inaudible).

® So they just do it to check you are learning?

(35F) Sometimes they just give it for the sake of it and it's obvious when they do that.

(33F) 'Cos in year 7 this teacher gave us a booklet and we had to copy out the whole booklet. But we got to keep it anyway!

(34F) 'Cos you don't have free time.

® Do you can see a purpose of it but at the same time some homework is pointless? What would you rather be doing?

(30F) I wouldn't mind doing it if it were more fun.

(36F) Yeah.

(34F) Yeah.

® Projects?

(34F) Yeah, I love projects.

® Because you get more involved personally with it?

(30F) Mm.

(36F) Mm.

® Do you learn more in some lessons than others and if so, why?

(35F) Yeah.

(31F) Yeah.

(32F) If the teachers are, not necessarily stricter, because if they're stricter, they can put you off learning, because you just like don't want to listen, because they're not being nice to you. Have you got a bit of OCD about that? (Pupil was making aeroplane with chocolate wrapper).

® So why do you learn better with some teachers – what's 'nicer' about them?
(31F) They let you talk.

(36F) Yeah.

(35F) Yeah.

(34F) Some let you talk and some say be quiet for a bit and you can talk a little bit after.

(30F) I like to talk whilst I'm working because I get more done.

© Does it matter who you talk to?

(32F) Yeah.

(33F) We all liked T2 more 'cos she just let us get on with the work. I find if I'm talking I get more done.

© Talking about your friends or talking about the work?

(30F) I think just talking generally.

(31F) But I end up talking about the week-end.

(30F) Yeah. But I still do the work. (Inaudible).

(32F) But if they make us work in pure silence, we're like oh, no we can't do this, it's so boring.

(35F) And you just end up giggling when you have to work in silence.

(33F) And in the Art lesson we all went in a circle and that was really good because everyone was like...

© In terms of class-room layout?

(34F) 'Cos the French teacher decided to rearrange the class-room.

(35F) But she was a student and not even a proper teacher.

(30F) It's like this (U-shape) and like this (line down middle) and my set seat in down the middle, so I felt like everyone was staring at me when I was trying to do my work. It was horrible.

© What about the rest of you?

(34F) I don't like seating plans.

(30F) I hate seating plans they're the worst thing ever.
What makes you learn with your friends and what makes you not learn?

(30F) When you’re sitting with your friends you learn more ‘cos I don’t feel stupid, like when you go blank and can’t remember the spelling of a word, a simple word, you don’t feel stupid to ask them.

(32F) You don’t feel stupid to ask your friends, but if you’re sitting next to someone you don’t normally talk to you feel stupid asking how you spell this or what’s the answer to this? It’s obvious you just can’t remember.

If you fall out at break-time would you continue sorting it out or would you stop, have the lesson and then sort it out on the next break-time?

(35F) I wouldn’t sit next to them until lunch.

(31F) Say you forget and end up talking to them.

(33F) If I was sitting next to them I’d try and talk to them.

And see if it resolves itself? You don’t fall out much this group do you?

(31F) And if we do, we’re like friends again in five minutes.

Some groups fall out all the time – Talking of groups do you find some groups ‘owning’ certain areas of the school during break-times?

(33F) Cadet mobile.

Is that you?

(32F) Yes (list of friends).

(33F) And on the field.

What about other groups in the school?

(32F) We hang out with some of the year 7’s as well.

(31F) Year 7’s is the forest.

(33F) Your group’s the form room.

(36F) Yeah.

Who’s at the locker room?

(36F) Year 10.
(35F) Year 10.

® What about the toilets/changing rooms?

9R (unanimous agreement).

(33F) They sit in the changing room.

(32F) Year 11 tend to sit – 11R hang out (points to back of hall) and they’re there now.

(30F) 11G (my sisters’ class) hang out in the form room ‘cos they have the maths mobile.

® Do you have names for other groups? (Such as Chav popular).

(30F) We’ve kind of grown up since year 7.

® Did you have names then?

(31F) Do you remember when they set those tables into cliques?

(34F) Popular, cool, O.K. friendly.

(31F) Friendly – I was in friendly.

® So where were you allowed to sit – no teachers set this out? So they’d already set this out?

(30F) We were ‘friendly’ cos we’re nice to everyone.

® They’d labelled everyone – was it like a game to them?

(30F) Yes.

(33F) We’ve kind of matured since year 7.

(30F) Everyone’s is mixed and not in cliques anymore.

(34F) Everyone’s a lot closer now.

® There were certainly some falling outs although not dramatically?

(30F) 31F and 30F always falling out. They don’t really fall-out anymore ‘cos they’ve fallen out over everything.

(31F) I know what ticks 30F off and she knows what ticks me off.

® If you hadn’t of done it before, would you still be falling out?
(31F) Most likely!

(31F) So have you seen it as a learning process?
(31F) Yeah.

(32F) Me and 33F went on holiday together and we learned more about each other – I learned that 33F has excessive sweet tooth.

(31F) How has technology influenced communication patterns within your group positively and negatively?
(30F) I try to text people but 31F is the worst as she never texts back.
(31F) I think you’ve got the wrong number, seriously.
(34F) I phone people or I go on Facebook an awful lot and I text people who I know text me back.
(35F) You haven’t got the right number.

(34F) Does anyone here text in school?
(34F) No.
(31F) I’ve done it once – to my mum.
(30F) Some people get their phones out at lunch, if they weren’t round at break-time, you just text them....

(34F) How has technology changed your friendships as once you leave school you can text, e-mail, chat etc. and not leave school as such behind?
(34F) We make plans for the week-end.

(32F) Anyone else use mobiles, Facebook etc?
(32F) I like Facebook.
(32F) If I want to speak to 33F I will ring her.

(33F) Has anyone had any negative comments on the computer?
(33F) I have....there are two reasons why I don’t use MSN – one it’s broken and one I don’t really like it.

(32F) Facebook.

(30F) Why aren’t you one big group?
(30F) We have different personalities within our group.
(34F) Music.

(32F) Opposites attract – I have nothing in common with the types of things like music, she likes Alice Cooper and I like Paramore.

© You do different things at week-ends?

(34F) Me and 32F sometimes talk on MSN – We talk about boys usually.

(32F) Everyone is there to give you advice – if anyone’s upset everyone can go there to help you.

(34F) 32F gives me good advice.

© When you have your lessons do you prefer certain slots to others and if so, why?

(32F) I like Science.

© Would you do that all day?

(32F) Yes.

(35F) Between break-time and lunch-time.

(34F) Between break-time and lunch, I like.

(30F) After break-time (cos you’ve just had a twenty minute ‘refresher’) and then you come into lessons and you’re ready to learn and you have lunch to look forward to, but when you’ve had lunch after lunch there’s two hours and the end of the day and you’re not going to see them until the next day...

© So it’s all to do with your friends then, it’s not to do with the lessons you’re getting?

(34F) It is to do with some lessons, yeah.

(30F) (Inaudible) slots, ‘cos the first lesson you’re watching the clock for break-time and then you’re looking at the clock to see when lunch is and then after that you’re constantly looking at the clock to see when it’s home-time.

© Is that because of the social link to break-time, lunch and home-time or is it because of the lessons?

(31F) I can’t wait ‘til my choices next year.

(32F) Geography, everyone’s like, oh my God, let’s go, come on.
(33F) Not everyone.

(30F) Every lesson I watch the clock...to the end of the lesson ........and I watch how much time we have left. Like in Geography, I always sit next to 34F in Geography, I use 35F to look at her watch on her wrist.

(31F) I don't even have a clue what I want to be yet.

(32F) Most of my friends don't want to do Welsh, but when I go to Uni. I want to be a Welsh teacher.

(31F) No. I'm not going to base it on my friends.

(36F) Neither am I.

(31F) I'm used to doing everything in Welsh.

(30F) It depends, 'cos 31F agitates me in class because she says 'R' 'R' (girls' name). But, in Welsh we have a piece of paper between us (me and 35F) and she'll tell me and I'll say how do you spell that?

(30F) No, I'd have to keep asking T1 and she'd get really annoyed with me.

(32F) I try.

(32F) I'm used to doing everything in Welsh.

(36F) Yes 30F.

(36F) I try my best.

(33F) Does anyone else have a friend who supports?

(36F) In what way?

(36F) In helping you to learn?
(36F) Yes.

® How do you talk, write things down?

(36F) I do the lesson, but I just don’t get it.

® So she helps you and you learn from 30F?

(32F) T6 talks all fancy and no-one understands him: Me and 33F always support each other in social and in school, but in school we talk about random things.

(33F) A monkey the other day.

® At break-times?

(32F) Sometimes it’s in lessons.

® You don’t pass notes round, do you?

No (unanimous, but also joking).

® So you do sometimes, but I only want to know the purpose, that’s all?

(31F) Probably like, ‘Hi, I’m so bored’ – in year 7.

® How would you pass it round without anyone seeing?

(31F) She’d go (put hand to mouth and whispered the name of the receiver of the note).

(32F) If someone’s not feeling well, you’d notice and pass a note round.

(34F) If she hasn’t asked you in school she’ll ask you on MSN.

® How do you protect your group from other members coming to join you?

(30F) We don’t really care.

(32F) I have a group at school, but go to a Karate club as well, so I have a different group.

(35F) My school friends are my only friends

® Aah! But your school friends are your outside friends as well. Boys?

(31F) They can be a pain, I hate em.
(30F) I don't really know many outside of school because I do dance.

® Do you talk about them at break-time?

(31F) Yeah.

(32F) Yeah.

® Do you talk about them in your groups at break-time?

(30F) 31F does.

(31F) No, they're horrible.

(32F) My friend's just got a boyfriend, because she's nervous...(Interruption at door).

(32F) I've got my group and I've got other groups as well.

® Do you think teachers actually understand the importance of friendships?

No! (unanimous).

(31F) They're like, 'Just sit there', it won't affect you, but it does.

(30F) It really does. Like in French the teacher did this weird thing, where she organised us in birthdays, funnily enough we ended up next to our friends.

(35F) 'Cos everyone had their birthdays next to each other, so she had to move us again.

® So the idea of that was to move you away from your friends because?

(30F) Yeah.

® Why?

(30F) I work better sitting with my friends, I hate sitting away from my friends.

® So why do you think the teacher did the plan then?

(30F) 'Cos she wants to wreck our lives.

(31F) I end up talking more when my friends are away from me.

(33F) Yeah.
(35F) Yeah.

® Do you?

(34F) Yes, 'cos I end up talking to them on the other table.

® Why 'cos you want to talk to your friends and not the person you're sitting next to?

(31F) Yeah.

(36F) Yeah.

(35F) And I tend to be sat near the real talkative person. I don't know if the teacher expects me not to talk, but I do.

® You know in some lessons in the group and you bounce off each other?

(30F) Yes, we got the highest mark in Science, me and 34F 'cos we worked together.

(35F) 'Cos I made the little boxy thing

(30F) I made the PowerPoint.

® How much does your friendship mean to you and do teachers have the same view?

(30F) I know this is a really important year.

(31F) I think teachers should bring their friends into school.

(30F) If they want us to do well in our GCSE's they should put less pressure on us, like yesterday in Welsh, we'd just finished the end of the lesson and she went through all these levels that she expected us to get.

® Yes – Isn't that like a target?

(inaudible).

(30F) I don't think they should put pressure on, as you seem to do it worse with pressure on.

(32F) My dad's the worst at putting pressure on because my brother is supposed to be doing his GCSEs next year and no offense to him, he's not the brightest spark, but he is quite bright he just wants to play rugby.

® Yeah – Boys tend to be different don't they?
(30F) You know like in test conditions we just have the test in the lesson when there's like people around you, you probably wouldn't cheat anyway, and not panic, but if you're just sat there on your own you tend to panic.

(35F) And there's more chance of you cheating if you're not allowed to.

(36F) Yeah.

(30F) Yeah – If you're told you're not allowed chocolate it just makes you want chocolate more.

® If you were allowed to sit with your friends, what happens if one doesn't have a friend to sit with?

(31F) Ah!

(30F) It's like come and sit down, 'cos everybody's so nice, come and sit with us.

® So it wouldn't be obvious?

(32F) I'm going to say this truthfully – I hated someone in Year 7.

(33F) Yeah, we all did.

(32F) But now, it's like we're friends...(inaudible).

(31F) There aren't many people without any friends at all.

(34F) Everyone has someone.

® If I asked you to say how friends are important and how you've changed over the Key Stage, how would you describe it?

(30F) I've become less shy. (I wasn't really shy to begin with). I am friends with people I didn't really like.

(30F) In year 7, I thought she's really annoying ...she's become less agitating.

® You're honest now! You've seen your friendships develop over the Key Stage?

(30F) In year 7 and beginning of Year 8, I didn't bother what I wore when I went out, I didn't care what my hair looked like.

(34F) As you get older with your friends you're all kind of think it is important not to just look like....like what your hair looks like today. We all go through the change together.
Like in Year 7 you got your haircut I was like ah no way, but now when you get your haircut it's just like oh OK.

Do you think everyone else in your year group is as good friends with each other as you are as a class?

We're quite similar. There's different personalities some are very different though like 42H and 37G.

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We're quite similar. There's different personalities some are very different though like 42H and 37G.
(30F) Not in our class, you can't see it our class, but in the other class you can see who are friends.

® I wonder if they think the same as you?

(32F) Me and 30F, we went sking, well actually sking was a bad experience but never mind, and we like actually became quite close. She looked after me.

® If you were looking at the other half of the year, how would you group them? You've got popular, so if you were to describe them, you've got almost popular, what other groups in the other half would you see?

(30F) Funny.

(31F) Loud but not in a bad way.

(33F) There's a couple with like plastered make-up.

® Are they in the same group?

(33F) Yeah.

(36F) Yeah.

® What would you call them, a well-made up group?

(32F) Well it doesn't look nice it looks like they've got a layer of orange round their face.

® What did you call them?

(31F) I'm not going to say, it's offensive.

® We have Chavs and Emos, there's lots of different labels, you've mentioned popular. What else would you label them?

(30F) You feel quite isolated if you start to talk to people, not so much in our class. I speak to some people in the other class, but like some people in the other class, the people with the make-up and really nice hair, if I went and started talking to them I would feel isolated, I'd feel self-conscious.

® Are you threatened in a way?

(30F) Yeah.

(35F) Yeah. 'Cos you know if you're being really nice to them they don't like talk back to you.
(30F) Some people do like I get on really well with like another pupil from the other class, but I was friends with her in Year 6 before we came up to high school.

® Do you see the other class as different to you?

(31F) Some people. You feel like really like self-conscious because they've got like all the boyfriends and stuff.

(30F) You feel like a loser.

® How would describe them then?

(32F) I don't know. I don't think people like them as much as they think they do.

® What names would describe parts of the class?

(30F) 31F we all know what you're thinking.

® Have we got any Emos or Chavs?

(31F) Yeah.

(30F) Yeah.

® Are they still there?

(30F) Yeah.

(35F) Yeah.

® So you could identify Emos, have you got any in your class?

(33F) No, I think we've grown out of the whole labelling thing.

(33F) 30F is like kind of...mmm...yeah, 31F is like really kind and comes out with like random stuff. 35F is just like...

® So you're more individuals together in a way?

(34F) I don't think that some of the other class are actually that different 'cos I was talking to someone at CCF camp and we had actually quite a bit in common.

(33F) It's kind of like OK.

® Is it just a front?

(30F) It is for some of them.
® Is it a game?

(34F) Some of them are so....It's weird, they're like in that class and they're completely different to the people who are in this class.

(31F) I think they put on...

® Right-for who?

(30F) I think they like hide...For themselves.

® For friends, teachers?

(30F) Maybe they're really self-conscious.

(31F) I think they just want to fit in.

(30F) It's really odd how they change, 'cos I can talk to like 37G on her own and we get on really well, but then when another member of her group comes along I can like say something and they'll just look at me like that. (Pulls face).

® Because you're trying to get into their group? Some groups have boundaries.

(30F) But me and 34F will go up and talk to 24E and 23E and 25E and 26E and they'll talk to us.

® You don't see 9R amongst your groups do you?

(30F) When we're split for like D.T and stuff like that, there are some people in 9R who I will talk to, but they're still 9R.

® Do you know West Side Story with the groups?

(31F) I love that.

® Is it a bit like that, where you've got one side and the other side? It's not like bulldog, but you see yourself as...

(30F) One big group. I don't know, maybe 9R are like that, but we're seeing it from the outside.

® So you see 9R as different?

(31F) I think they're really different compared to us.

(33F) Not all of them.

® How?

(30F) They just didn't talk to me at first. (Inaudible).
You do work with some of the other class when you are split for some lessons don’t you?

(33F) Yeah I think that some people there aren’t that different to us.

(30F) They sometimes like act really...They seem really grown up.

(34F) Yeah.

(34F) They like think they’re all that because they text in class and have their phones.

(30F) But I think that’s more immature to do that.

(36F) Yeah.

(31F) Yeah.

Does it annoy you?

(31F) It does.

(30F) It makes me feel like a looser. They look at you like you’re not good enough.

Do you think that they think that everybody doesn’t notice or do you think that they want the teachers to notice?

(35F) They want you to notice.

Are they doing it for you?

(30F) No I don’t think so.

(35F) No.

(30F) They’re doing it for themselves. They’re doing it for their own egos.

(32F) They don’t actually know what we like doing, because I like playing rugby and going swimming, but they just think I’m....

They wouldn’t know outside of school. Do you speak to them outside of school on MSN and stuff?

(32F) No I don’t talk to them.
(30F) I think some of them, some of them really are so nice.

(34F) The others are nice, but they don’t think you’re as good as them. They push you away if you try to talk to them.

(31F) You can act yourself when you’re with your group of friends, but when you’re with someone else you can’t act yourself.

(30F) In our group, we’re all just comfortable in our groups. From the outside, the other groups it looks as if they’re trying to be something and don’t seem comfortable and seem as though they have to put on loads of make-up and have their hair in and do stuff in certain ways to make people like them. I think like, I wouldn’t come to school looking a mess and I know my hair does, I’m sorry! (Laughs within the group as pupil 30F has already discussed and apologised for her hair). I couldn’t come to school without wearing some make-up, I can’t do it. I feel funny.

® But there’s make-up and make-up!

(30F) They’re saying 9R are completely different, I think it’s a tiny little bit of 9R that like, a small percentage and they’re hiding more from themselves and if they’re all like that they’re not all the same.

(31F) No not all of 9R just a tiny little group of them.

® Labelling really isn’t it?

(35F) Yeah.

® How do you think the groups see themselves then, do you think they see themselves as popular?

(32F) Yeah.

® Or do you think they’re competing against the other half?

(33F) They always have.

® Do you notice anything at break-times the ‘other half’ do?

(35F) We’re on the opposite side of the play-ground.

® Finally, from what has been suggested, have you got boundaries from 9R? You said you were separate in the play-ground?

(33F) We used to eat our lunch in the Geography room, but when T5 got 9R as a form class it was their form room so we kind of stayed away.
(30F) We did that without realising though. We didn’t do it on purpose, we like them but we just decided it was their form room so we don’t go in there. ’Cos we hated Year 7 and 8 they were always coming into our form room and we hated it ’cos it was our form room.

® Could it be anyone else, it’s just you are 9G?

(34F) The teachers have told us they’re not allowed in, so maybe the teachers have kind of stopped us from...

(30F) Yeah, it’s ’cos they told us “don’t share your form room.” So I think it’s the teachers splitting it. It’s not their fault, but they could have allowed us to mix with their form rooms, but they were like ‘no’ you’re not allowed in.

® I’ve not really thought of this ‘divide’ that seems to be there...you are protecting the whole class.

(30F) If someone like comes up to you to like have a go at you, you’ll have someone behind you like, “leave them alone.”

(32F) Yeah.

(31F) And you’ll be like “Oh, thank you!”

(30F) Like yeah, if you see your friend getting.......even by a teacher, you’ll be like, “hang on a minute...”

® Defensive?

(34F) It’s like your sister, you don’t always get on with your sister or your brother but as soon as anyone else says anything to them, it’s like it’s my sister.

(32F) Do you know what? On Sunday I went to watch my brother play rugby and someone punched him yeah, so at the end of the game yeah, I went and had a go at him ’cos he broke my brother’s thumb.

® Thank you for all your information and sharing your friendships.

Year 9 Focus group G.

® How important are friends to you?

(37G) Very.

(38G) Very.

(37G) You need your friends.
(39G) You talk differently to your friends than you do to your parents.

® How do you talk differently?

(37G) Right, some things are embarrassing to talk to your mum.

(40G) You can tell your friends.

(41G) Because they’re your age.

® And it’s about boys a lot of the time?

(38G) Yeah.

(39G) Yeah.

(37G) Not all the time.

® How would you describe a teachers’ role and how would you describe your role as a pupil?

(37G) We’re supposed to listen to the teacher. (We don’t).

(39G) The teacher is, can be boring sometimes.

(37G) Like when they go slow, you think ‘get a move on’.

(37G) We’re lower than the teachers.

® In terms of?

(37G) Like, say you got that triangle thing, what’s it called?

(41G) Oh, hierarchy.

(39G) We’re lower on hierarchy than them.

® Who’s above you, anyone else?

(40G) 6th. Formers.

® Where do they sit on the hierarchy?

(40G) Before teachers.

® Who’s below you?

(41G) Primary, Junior, Senior, 6th formers and then teachers.

(38G) And then like staff like cleaners and dinner-ladies.
© O.K. what about teacher's roles?

(38G) Meant to listen.
(40G) Teach what they know.

© They're there to help you learn?

(38G) Yeah.

© What makes you learn more in some lessons than others?

(37G) Whether or not if you're interested in what they're saying, is how the class behaves. So, if one person is talking, the whole class talks, but if everyone's sat down quietly, no...they think I shouldn't talk 'cos no-one else's talking.

(38G) Yeah.

© It's also what you're doing?

(37G) Yes, if the teacher's just blabbing on for ages, it's just...turned off...

© So you want to be active?

(39G) You only talk when you're bored.

© In terms of friendship groups, when do you learn best; sitting by them or away from them?

(38G) If I'm sat with someone I don't like, I'll just be sat there bored and thinking about something else.

(41G) I wouldn't concentrate.

(37G) I'd do like signs and...

(40G) It's like knowing that they're there, I don't know what it is.

© So you talk more when sat next to your friends...do you still think you do more in that lesson?

(39G) Yeah so you're looking at your mate and what she's done and you're thinking yeah, she's doing that as well...

(41G) I don't think that being in complete silence while working is...

(39G) No, it's boring.

(38G) I know how to work and talk at the same time.

(40G) I like iPods when we're working.
(37G) Active learning's better, than sat down doing the same thing week after week.

(39G) Like we've being doing Muslims now for how long now and I'm just bored.

(40G) A whole two terms.

(37G) Since the beginning of September, we've been doing Muslims.

® In terms of class-room layout, are some class-rooms better for learning than others?

Yeah (unanimous).

® Why?

(41G) The English room is awful.

® Is that the one that slants like the French room?

(39G) The one with the hole in the floor, with the hole in the floor, yeah.

(40G) We need to spread out more in our classes rather than all be sat...in the English room, for example, we all...say you want a teacher to help us, you actually can not...

(41G) Our teacher had to shimmy over to our table.

® Which class-rooms do you like then?

The D.O.L. (unanimous).

(40G) Also mobiles like art room, I.C.T. Welsh, History, Geography, D.O.L.

Geography, Maths.

® They're not set out the same are they?

(37G) The History room – cos we only have him for half an hour now, you haven't got time to talk...we get an hour lesson in half an hour 'cos he just does it so fast.

® How do you protect your group from new members or other groups?

(37G) Say if someone said something.

(39G) We've known each other for about three years and we never used to get on in year 7 at all; we always argued with each other.
We didn't really get on and there used to be one member of our group that used to stir everything up all of the time, used to cause us all to argue. Since she left, we've all got on a lot better and have become closer, don't fall out 'hardly' at all.

What qualifies you to be a member of your group? And why aren't you a member of another group in your class?

Different ways of...

Different egos.

They like...we like, we've all got things in common as friends and the other groups have their things.

...their things in common that they like.

People have different reputations than we do.

If you had to label your group what would it be, and do you have names for other groups?

We class ourself as 'normal'

There are EMOs and Chavs.

We have the Chavs, we have the Goths we have the Geeks.

Cliques – Who owns which parts of the school at break-times? (I know you own the...).

Toilets!

Yeah...showers!

Showers!

Year 11 are over the little corner up by the hall (inaudible) the toilets or the back of the hall.

Locker room?

Year 10.

Year 7's?

In their form rooms.

Or roundabout.

In the tree area, climbing trees.
The reason why we don't hang out in our form room is because we never used to have one anyway (tutorial two - small mobile), but it was always really ice cold in there, and now...

If someone's sat there and getting changed there, we just say we go somewhere else.

@ So you usually meet there because you all know you'd be there?

(40G) Yeah.

@ Can you identify groups with names?

(38G) Yes.

(37G) 42H, 44H and 43H – They’re the Chavs.

@ Define Chavs...

(41G) O.K. All go round in a circle and say one word for Chavs...

(39G) Burberry.

(37G) They try and act hard, like saying what they think and not caring about people's feelings.

@ What about the way they wear their clothes?

(40G) Their hair.

(38G) Chavs think they're hard when they go out and they think it's cool to hang round street corners and like, smoke, drink.

(39G) They think that's all cool and...

(37G) They have different activities out of school than we do.

@ Do they, do they actually have any activities or is this why they have time to 'hang out'?

No (unanimous).

(38G) That's what I mean about them, they think they're amazing, hard and everything in school, but as soon as they're out and you see them in Rhyl, they walk round and they're dead scared of you...

(40G) They leg it.
...These hard Chavs, but out of school, they bunk and everything and they think they're clever.

What happens in our group like...'cos we're all girls, then to us they might be different, to what we're like, not Chavs compared to us...but when they go out, they're not a Chav at all. They might wear the big ties and all the stuff they wear, but the Chav outside of school...(inaudible) and their mum and dad are an alchi and all that and that's a Chav, but 42H and 44H are nowhere near a Chavs; they just think they are.

In school then what discriminates them between other groups?

Because people see them as Chavs.

Do they carry anything?

No! They wear make-up.

They put orange make-up on.

Other people see them as Chavs, and we don't want to be known as Chavs, we don't hang around with them.

If we congregate with Chavs, we get called Chavs. So, if we were to join their group, people would even say to 'what you doing hangin' around with them?'

Chavs here?

Orange make-up...

Oh, there's another group...the wannabees.

They want to be something but just nothing.

We've got one or two phases of girls in our class, who we call them 'Emos' — they went through a phase of cutting their wrists and if we hang round with them, people think 'oh, my God what you do hanging around with them'...hanging around with people who do things like that.

What distinguishes 'wannabees'?

Say you wear your hair in a way, next day they will wear their hair in that way.

They're copying what we have.

Are they jealous of you?

I wouldn't say jealous...I just think they want to be like us.
Do they see you as popular?

(38G) Popular and we shouldn’t take as an offence ‘cos she’s copying us.

You get annoyed?

(41G) Yeah.

But you must be popular, because a group is looking up to you?

(40G) We’re such a big group, so we’ve got the right to sit in the corner and do what we want to do and chill out and...

(37G) The thing is we are extremely loud and happy and people see us as ‘gobbers’.

(41G) We try and help people even if they’re not in ours.

(39G) We still speak to them we don’t entirely blank them out.

(38G) They’re like intimidated by us.

(41G) In year 7 nobody had their groups, but now, everyone’s got their own friends group. (Inaudible).

You don’t seem to mention the other half of your year as your group?

(39G) No.

(41G) No.

They are completely different.

(37G) The other half of our year, we see them as really good. We use to get bad press all of the time, ‘you are the worst out of your two years’, you know what I mean? We see them as the people that we’ve got to beat.

(40G) 9G are all a big group we feel.

(38G) There are some EMOs, but no Chavs and that though.

(40G) No Chavs though.

What are Geeks? Are there any?

(40G) They are really clever people.

(41G) Clever – (inaudible).
(37G) Dedicated.

(40G) Like nice people, but very, very dedicated to their work.

(41G) They're like a special group on their own.

® Technology – how has technology influenced your communication patterns between your group, both positively and negatively?

(37G) Arguments on the computer, keyboard...

® At night?

(37G) Yeah.

® Facebook, MSN?

(38G) Yes.

(39G) MSN.

(37G) I think it is that some people talk to you on MSN you tell them one thing, they take it the wrong way. They misunderstand it, then that's it, and you think, 'oh, my God, she's done that...' they go about telling everyone, then everyone.

(39G) You can tell someone something...and in an hour, the whole of Facebook will know.

(41G) We tend to keep ourselves to ourselves.

(40G) But we'd add them to our friendship group and when we did something, all six of us would find out, but some of us would get the wrong end of the stick.

® When would you find out – would it be at school, the next morning?

(39G) Yeah.

(38G) Not all the time, it could be Facebook.

® Some stuff outside of school is brought back into school isn't it?

(37G) Going on the computer all the time, excludes you from the rest of your family.

(38G) You're spending all your time like arguing over the computer...
(37G) We see each other, what 6 hours a day at school, then we still need to talk to each other at home.

(38G) It's just like you need to speak to them.

(37G) We're the type of girls who like to gossip and talk about...

7235

® You come into school at different times...what do you say?...'I'm in school now, zip!' First lesson?

(40G) Yeah it is (laughing).

7240

(37G) I shout out of the window, I've got goss for you.

® As soon as you get here?

Yeah. (Unanimous).

7245

(37G) I've got gossip, me...

® Where do you get different gossip from that you don't already know?

(39G) Being on Facebook.

(41G) What we've found out on Facebook.

7250

(37G) Something happened with...so and so is going out with...relationships.

® So bearing in mind you've only got about 10 mins. for registration and your buses will have only just arrived, when do you fill your group in on all of the previous evenings' gossip?

(37G) Registrations, lessons...

7260

® Obviously, you want to get to break-time for more details, do you see break-times as separate from lessons?

(40G) Yeah.

7270

(41G) We spend the whole day talking to each other in school, then none of us get on the same buses for an hour, and then when we go home, on Facebook...in the morning (inaudible).

(40G) Then we go over everything from the night before.

7275

(37G) We go over the stuff about five times, 'oh, my God'.

® Do you have codes in lessons if you're not sat next to each other?

7280

(37G) We just shout and wave.
(39G) We just make it big, and the teachers see it and then we start talking.

7285 (37G) They know what we're like, we're bubbly and we can't help it.

(40G) The only time they get annoyed is when we don't shut up and we just carry on going.

7290 (41G) We want to know what we've got to do.

(37G) If I know what I'm doing, I get bored and I know what I'm doing, I want to do it.

7295 (38G) We don't need to be told like ten times.

® In terms of fallings out – how have friendships got you into trouble and how have they been supportive?

7300 (40G) They have got us into trouble.

(37G) If someone said something to one of my mates...about one of us...I will protect them.

7305 (41G) All of our friends...they're part of us, like.

(37G) 42H got (inaudible) I was fuming, 'cos she was one of my mates and I wanted to protect her.

7310 ® Would this have been a problem at break-time or in lessons?

(38G) Well, yesterday in class we had an argument, didn't we?

7315 (41G) In Science.

(40G) Oh, I wasn't there.

® Was that just an opinion?

7320 (39G) It was just me and 38G: it was just a disagreement.

(41G) But, our whole class tried to join in, didn't they?

7325 (49G) We had a little bit of a disagreement.

® There have been instances over the last few years when you and other groups have fallen out in your class. Do you have any examples?

7330 (40G) Yeah, we have. We fall out with 42H all the time.

(37G) 43H assaulted 41G.
Where did this come from?

(37G) Before registration, 41G was assaulted.

Verbally?

(37G) No, well as in 'punched', then in that lesson I will say something, whether or not the teacher's there.

(38G) But with me, It's texting my friend all the time, right, she'll make me feel really bad, but in school she doesn't talk to me, she avoids me, she won't say a word to me, then later on that night she'll give me loads and loads of rubbish, then in school, she doesn't dare say a word to me. (Inaudible).

The behaviour shown outside, doesn't match the behaviour in school?

No (unanimous).

Which Is put on – home or school?

(37G) Home.

(39G) At home, what they want, and they'll say what they want – come to school they will...

(41G) In a sense they feel it's not actually happening...

(41G) Virtual?

(41G) Yeah.

(37G) I went to her and asked If she said it (Facebook) she denied it to my face.

Were you annoyed for lessons?

(37G) No, I wasn't annoyed, I wanted to warn her that not everyone would be as kind as I was...other girls will go over and smash her face.

A little warning?

(37G) Yes.

When you shout across the class-rooms, is that sometimes to back up your friends?

(41G) Yeah.
Yes.

(37G) Shut your mouth, when I'm still talking, I say don't you tell me to shut my mouth while I'm still talking...

® Does it escalate out of something often small?

(39G) Yeah.

(38G) Afterwards, we're mates and after the lesson, we don't like talking about it after the lesson, it was in the lesson, so leave it there like.

(41G) Like yesterday in P.E. when we were all having an argument about who won in the rugby thing and who cheated...

(40G) We weren't arguing about it, we were just like...

(41G) As soon as we got into the changing rooms...

(37G) We were against each other.

(41G) As soon as we got into the changing rooms, it was all laughed about and it wasn't serious...

® Homework?

(39G) Arh!

® Why do you think teachers give you homework?

(37G) If what they've taught us, if it's actually gone into our heads.

(39G) Isn't that why we do a test, so why do a test and homework?

(40G) I think homework should be for... when you go home you should spend time with your family and like friends that aren't in school with yeah.

(37G) ....you actually like to do some activities, so why spend all the time doing the homework, when all you do is just sit down staying in school doing work. When you need to see your mum and dad when they've been at work all day, so if you're sat in your bedroom doing homework for an hour...

® Or getting on MSN or Facebook?

(37G) I go on it twice or three times a week.

(39G) I don't run my life around Facebook.
When you’re older you’ll regret.

Use it as a social to chat to each other?

Yeah.

And to talk to people you don’t see in school.

It’s healthy.

You know the people you’re friends with out of school, you can’t...

You know the boarders and what have you, they’ve got family and friends in Spain and things like that, and they need someone to talk.

Have you learned from your friendships?

Too much.

Yeah.

What we use to do when we use to be horrible to each other.

You look back now and see how nasty we were.

We took the mick out of each other and it used to really hurt.

I take everything to heart you see.

If you hadn’t of gone through that...

We wouldn’t be the people we are now.

I use to be quiet in year 7, then I was friends with 39G, who was friends with Group H who was friends with 37G and we all went together.

We did go through a phase with all of us going in two’s.

...and if we do fall out we separate for about three days and then go back together.

Do things that you do during break-times carry on into the next lesson and if so, how do they manifest themselves?

They can do.

Sometimes.
(38G) Like that time with the inspector, we can’t say anything about.

(37G) We had an argument and T2 was telling us to leave it and shut up, but we didn’t want to leave it.

® Was it trivial?

(37G) I just told T2 it wasn’t me. It was between them two.

(41G) Personal.

(37G) 41G and 39G.

(37G) And someone said something about the family and they got offended and...

(40G) But 41G brought all of us into it and we didn’t...

(38G) By accident.

(40G) Yeah, by accident.

(37G) 41G retaliated, but in the wrong way.

® Was it said in lessons or in break-time?

(41G) It was said in the last lesson.

(39G) It kicked off in the lesson, when...

(41G) I just burst out with it, ‘cos I was annoyed.

® What made you annoyed?

(41G) We were working in groups and it...I don’t know why. I feel like stuff’s carried on from that English lesson, ‘cos I’m not being funny guys, but sometimes you do bring up things that don’t make me feel...hurt me and you don’t realise they do.

(38G) ‘Cos some people make comments...someone really close to yeah and yeah like, about your family and stuff.

(37G) If you said something to me, I wouldn’t be as offended as much as if you said it about my friends.

® It’s what 39G said something about you as a friendship group, one of you. Are you sorted now?

(37G) Yeah (uncertainty).

® It’s raw – will it heal?
Yeah.

I don't think it will.

certain things in year 7, we don't like talking about them...

Will you just leave it and move on?

Yeah.

We don't think about it, but if it's brought up it's serious, it's like, 'shut up now'.

Things you fall out about are usually stupid little things.

If you carry it on, it's stupid, if you say sorry there's nothing else you can do about it.

So things escalate within the lesson?

Yeah, what annoyed us...(inaudible) someone reported us and...

It was between them two, but we all got into trouble 'cos we were friends with them.

So you're seen as a group then?

Well, 'cos we're slightly louder than everyone else in class, we get told off...

Do you find it easy to switch between break-times and lessons?

We talk about different stuff, than we talk about in front of the teacher.

It is similar, but you see it as different, don't you?

I do.

Do you own break-time?

No.

We own our own break-time.

We earn it don't we?

Does your hierarchy change at break-times?
If a teacher went 'be quiet' at break-time, I'd just go it's break-time, we're allowed to talk.

Are you level at break-time?

No, they're still higher than you, but we have different rules, like the IPod thing, but we are allowed to......

When was it, Monday morning on the way to school, I was listening to my IPod, and a teacher went to me, it was before school even started, 'take it out of your ear'.

Do you text now in school?

Yeah.

Yeah.

We use to, but now we don’t.

The same with Bebo?

We've all moved on from Bebo, we used to be on Bebo.

I didn’t.

In terms of your phones...?

I text.

Didn’t you use to 37G?

Yeah.

So, have you moved on?

You don’t need to.

Who do you text, inside the school or out?

People outside the school.

In other schools?

Yeah.

Sixth formers, boys etc?

Yes.

I don’t think it’s fair that we’re not allowed to use our phone at break-time or dinnertimes, ‘cos it’s not affecting our learning.
® You don’t have one?

7655 (37G) No.

(40G) Me neither.

® Was it taken off you or?

7660 (37G) It broke. It broke and then I got into trouble and had it taken off me.

(40G) I broke mine. Monday afternoon we were in English and a pupil texted her mum to tell her to pick her up from...and the thing she should have done was to tell the teacher that she needed to text my mum, rather than sit there and let the teacher take it off her.

7670 ® What do you two do now on the bus without your mobiles?

(37G) I never used to text on there.

(40G) My friend rings me every night.

® House phone?

(40G) Yes.

7680 (38G) I ring mobiles every night for about an hour. (Inaudible).

® Has Facebook taken over from the mobile?

(41G) No, I talk on my phone and on MSN at the same time and Facebook. I have the headband to keep the phone up (laugh). (39G) ...so she can type at the same time.

(41G) For about three hours.

7690 ® You’re not just talking to her on all three of them? Who are you talking to, different people?

(41G) Yeah! She talks to people and I talk to the same people as she does, but then...

7695 ® So you’re talking to someone on the phone and then someone else on Facebook?

(41G) Yeah.

(40G) Yeah.

(41G) So confusing though.
So what happens if you get it wrong?

(41G) MSN pops up, carrying on with that conversation, something else pops up...

Is it good for your brain?

Yeah (unanimous).

(41G) It keeps your brain active.

Have you got anything else to add on friendships or have you got any more questions?

No. (Unanimous).

Thank you for sharing all that information and I hope you enjoyed it.

Year 9 Focus group H.

Why are friends important to you?

(42H) For them being around.

Would you tell your parents what you tell your friends?

(43H) No (unanimous) – If you tell your parents then they’d make a big massive thing about it and it’s nothing.

What are you expected to do as a pupil and do teachers have a different role?

(42H) Age.

They went to college and they went to a University.

(44H) They’ve got the qualifications.

What about the way they and you act?

(43H) Strict.

(42H) We’re not strict, we’re just normal.

(43H) And they wear normal and we’re not allowed. (They’re not nice).

(42H) They’re allowed to shout at everyone.

(44H) Some teachers... They’re allowed to shout at everyone....
It's not fair, right...they're allowed to shout at you, but you're not allowed to shout at them.

Do you learn more in some lessons than others, and why?

Yeah (unanimous).

Why?

We like the teacher.

Yeah.

Is that what rules whether you listen or not?

Yeah (unanimous).

You don't like some teachers and you don't listen to them.

Is it because of the subject?

No.

Because of the teacher.

Sometimes if it's a like nice teacher, then they like just explain it and let you do work...it's alright, but if they like carry on talking and go on and on and on, you just...

You get bored and blank off and then you start talking and then you get shouted at for talking.

Yeah but even if it's like your worst subject, and it's a nice subject, you still learn.

What would you say is a nice teacher?

Like a fun teacher.

Your best lesson?

English.

If the teacher lets you sit next to your mates where you can talk and explains all the stuff in a fun way and...

Would you still learn if you were sitting next to your mates?

Yeah.

Yeah.
(43H) Me and 42H can talk and work, 44H can talk and work...everyone knows that.

® If you had a nice teacher, is it basically based on the fact they'll let you sit next to your friends?

(42H) Yeah.

® Do you have a nice teacher who has a seating plan?

(43H) T2, Mr. F.

® But you still sit together in Mr. F's (even though there's a seat plan)?

(42H) Yeah.

® So, what about T2? (She has a seat plan, you like the lesson, but you don't necessarily sit together?).

(44H) No.

(43H) No, those two are next to each other in one lesson.

(42H) Not anymore.

® Oh, no.

(44H) We're on the opposite sides of the room.

(44H) If she likes talks for ages, us two will just like start shouting across the class-room.

® At each other?

(44H) Yeah.

(42H) Yes - but if she just, mm talks for a little bit, then...

® Then that's O.K. and you get on with your work?

(44H) Yeah.

® Do you still communicate?

(43H) Yeah – we look at each other like.

® Do you have a code, do you send notes?

(43H) We send notes.

® You don’t aeroplane them over?
(42H) No.

© Where’s your note hidden?

(42H) Under your book.

(43H) In your book.

© So you don’t put them in your pen?

(44H) In your lid.

© What will your notes be about?

(44H) What you’re up to.

(43H) Messing about and...

(42H) Just more fun than...

© Is it a game?

(42H) Yeah seeing how long you can get away with it for.

© How do you protect your group from new members? (I know you used to have one other pupil and she left before 44H came).

(43H) She left.

© What happened with that friend (who left)?

(42H) She chose to leave.

© And you’re alright about that?

(42H) Yeah.

(43H) Yes.

(42H) She was annoying really anyway, like.

(43H) She wanted to be better like, ‘cos she thought us two were holding her back, which we probably were, but like she could have done much better than she did when she was with us and now like...

© You understand that?

(42H) Yeah, but...
(44H) You can stay mates with your mates but you...

(43H) Like I still talk to her, but don’t hang round with her anymore...but like if me and 42H weren’t friends anymore, we’d probably still do the same in school, ‘cos it’s how we are.

® Has ‘she’ changed?

(42H) Yeah she does all her homework.

® So she wouldn’t really fit back into your group?

(42H) No.

(43H) No.

® Because you’ve been friends, you’re not rude to her you’ll still speak to her?

(42H) I don’t speak to her.

(43H) 42H doesn’t but I do.

® 44H how do you now fit into this group? You’ve replaced their other friend on the stairs, haven’t you? (I’ve only been in a few times since, but last year 42H was often sitting on the stairs on her chair that she seems to own along with...).

(42H) I owned yeah.

® How was 44H allowed to enter your group?

(43H) She was like hanging around with another group, and we felt sorry for her because she didn’t look like the sort of person who would hang around with them.

(42H) She didn’t look as though she was having fun either.

(43H) She looked like a little loner.

® Did you discuss between you how you were going to go up to her?

(42H) No, we just started talking to her.

® Because you then knew her, did you realise you had more things in common than you thought? (42H’s mum knew 44H’s mum when they were about 3 years old).

(42H) We’ve known each other since we were babies. We use to see each other all the time, then like when I was three, I moved away and so I haven’t seen her since then.
(44H) It's really strange how me and 42H have like...
You're not jealous?

(43H) No. We don't get jealous of each other. Like me and 42H have known each other for ages and like we don't, no one of us owns the group.

® Why won't you let people into your group (apart from 44H who got this special quality)?

(42H) They've got to be like us.

(43H) Yeah.

® What makes your special group and why don't you want to belong to another group?

(43H) I think it's like there's a group where they have a leader and a popular group...

® Have you noticed any difference between the two classes (44H has just been moved into the other class)?

(44H) Yeah – they're like all together, like.

(43H) They're like on big group...then they go off into their little groups.

(42H) Our group – like one group falls out with another group, then we'll be like, 'go away', you're like not joining our group and they'll be a loner 'til they make friends again.

(43H) Like our group and another group, who actually get along with each other most of the time.

® When you don't you don't?

(42H) Yeah.

(43H) No, when ...war.

® What makes you alike?

(42H) We don't do what we're told.

(44H) Yeah.

(42H) We like the same things.

(44H) That's the thing, I'm different from these two, but I'm still like...
(43H) She does what she's told more than us two.

(44H) I like the same but I'm different in some respects.

® Do you all want to leave with decent qualifications, or is that not important?

(43H) Yeah I do.

® Will you knuckle down next year?

Yeah. (unanimous).

® I don't know 44H properly, but I do know you two have got good brains but may not use them all the time.

(42H) 44H has.

(44H) I haven't.

(43H) Yeah you have.

® So next year with your options?

(43H) I don't get it... when from year 7 to 9 they're all dead strict and then you get to year 10 and 11 and they're proper 'light' on yer and you're like these are the years you actually need, so I don't know why they're not nice to us...

® Do you see failings out as a learning process?

(42H) No.

(43H) Me and 42H have never fallen out.

(42H) We've had little arguments.

® How do you stop people coming into your groups?

(43H) Don't talk to them... don't look at them really.

(42H) They just know that it's a sense, they just know that...

(44H) They don't even ask.

® Like a dog that growls?

(42H) This is my territory, not yours.

(43H) When someone comes into our class, like new, if we didn't like them, they'd soon...

® You sort of warn them off by glaring?
(44H) Yeah.

® You wouldn’t have to say anything?

(42H) We’d probably laugh at them.

(43H) Not on purpose or anything...

® You’re not welcome?

(43H) Yeah.

® What labels do you have (if any) for other groups within the school and what labels do you think you may have acquired so far?

(43H) We’re Chavs.

® You’re Chavs?

Yes (unanimous).

® Define Chavs.

(43H) Trackys, all them Burberry stuff, like.

® Is it the posh stuff though?

(42H) Yeah.

® You’re looking casual, but you’ve got all designer labels?

(44H) Yeah.

(42H) Like Burberry jeans and trackies.

(43H) If you look at 37G’s group and our group, they wear proper, posh, not posh stuff, like but different to what we wear. We wear design labels, but we don’t... we don’t go out in Chanel and all this.

(44H) They’ve got the little bangles and look all fancy and stuff.

® They’re real?

(43H) Yes.

(42H) We all wear the same as each other but like in a different way. Like a Chav mix; Lacoste, Nike, McKenzie.

® What are they classed as if you’re Chavs?
(42H) Snobs?

(44H) No.

(43H) They’re ‘popular.’

® Are you not popular?

(42H) No, they’re like cool but popular people.

® Because?

(42H) Everyone likes them.

(43H) Everyone knows us, but like not for good stuff (no).

® Are they known for good stuff are they?

(42H) They’re known for more good stuff than we are.

® Does their group size add to them being popular?

(44H) Yeah, yes.

(42H) No, because the year 10 have two massive groups and like they’re not really popular.

® Any other names?

(43H) Geeks.

® Where’s the Geeks?

(44H) Pupil H and...

(42H) The ‘wannabees’.

® Do they copy people?

(42H) Yeah like they’ll just stare at you in a lesson like and the next day she’ll act like you and the day after she’ll act like 38G or 37G or someone like that.

(43H) She’s like your shadow, like your twin.

(42H) And then she’s got like pictures on Facebook, like er, trying to take pictures like other people do, like.

(43H)...and it really doesn’t work.

(42H) Like me and she’s got her own style.

(44H) I’ve got my own style.
When you meet at the week-end, you don't look at each other and say, 'huh, I'm not hanging around with you!'?

(44H) We wear the same kind of stuff.

(43H) We'd usually look exactly the same.

(42H) Like people use to ask me and 44H if we'd planned it before.

(44H) And people have asked us if we're sisters.

Are you aware of groups meeting in certain areas during break-times?

(43H) Oh yeah.

(42H) 37G and that (Year 9), in the toilets.

(44H) Forests.

Have you lost the contact you had with year 8's, because you use to go into their form, didn’t you?

(42H) Oh, yeah, we're not allowed in there because pupil T said it was all our fault.

(43H) And pupil T doesn't like me anyway.

So are you happier over there (the other Year 9 form room)?

(44H) Yeah: A lot better.

(43H) Like in there everyone gets on, where in our room you've got your own little groups and like.

(42H) It feels like awkward.

(43H) When I walk in, 37G's group just turn round and start glaring at me and giving me dirty looks.

(42H) And the whole room goes quiet.

Are you happier now you’ve moved?

(44H) I'm not happier that I've...I wanted to stay with these, but like I might be moved back at Christmas, but I do want to be back with 43H and 42H.

Will your friendship affect what you choose next year?

(43H) No.
You don’t like being told what to do. What happens when you get into trouble? Do you plan what you’re going to do?

They do stuff they do stuff together, but don’t mean to do stuff together.

What sort of things are you getting into trouble for? (Apart from talking).

The latest one is where we wrote something down on paper and got caught.

Why do you do it?

It’s just note-writing really.

And we got caught by Mrs. G.

You didn’t mean to get caught, not for attention?

No.

Why did you do it?

It was the lesson.

We don’t like the teacher and the lesson...

The lesson was just boring, we had nothing to do.

So you were all together?

Yes.

Were you next to each other?

Me and 43H there and 44H behind us.

Was it near the end of the lesson?

Beginning.

So you hadn’t given them much time, really?

It just got really boring, and ‘cos me and 43H weren’t allowed to turn around.

Who started it?
I just wrote on a piece of paper, 'Hello' and then...

® You're 'Queens' at this at the moment, why do you do it?

(43H) We are probably the worst ones in our year, me and 42H.

® You're not the only ones, but you must be aware of the fact, here we go again?

(42H) Yep.

® Top buttons etc.?

(42H) Not that bad today.

® So what happens?

(44H) When the teacher shouts at you, you just want to burst out laughing, it's just so funny.

® Why?

(43H) It's the facial expressions.

® You are young ladies soon and you can leave and get jobs?

(43H) Yeah, life's too short.

® For what?

(43H) For everything.

(42H) ...hardly anything you can do in life.

® You've got a few good years of life, come on. Name some things you've got in trouble for over the past couple of years.

(44H) Sneaking out of school; bunking.

® Right.

(42H) Me and 44H went to Rhyl instead of coming to school.

® Was that arranged the night before?

(42H) Yes. I stayed at her house that night and we arranged it there.

® What happened to make you do it?
(44H) Well, we both had two boyfriends and then they were both like best mates and they had Mondays off college and it was a Monday and we decided to go down and see them.

® Did you check to see what lessons you had on Monday? Would it have made any difference? Was it based on what you had the next day?

8345 (44H) Yeah.

(42H) I hate my first lesson.

8350 (43H) Them two were down in Rhyl and I was ill, right, so T5 thought 'Oh, my God they're all skiving', or T1 did, so she called home right and I was like 'hello' I'd just woken up and she's like 'are you O.K.?'. I was like...

® You didn't know about these two?

(43H) No, and the next day I went to school and everyone's like, oh my God 42Hand 44H skived yesterday, I was like 'Oh, my God, that's why I got woken up'.

8360 (42H) That's the reason why they caught us, 'cos they thought we were all bunking together.

® They do catch you, was it worth it?

8365 (43H) They always catch up in the end.

® You've learned from that?

8370 (42H) Yeah.

® On Friday, did you have any intention of bunking off on Monday?

8375 (44H) No, it was the Saturday we arranged it.

® So your last lesson on Friday was as normal?

(44H) Yes.

8380 (42H) It was Saturday. We were just talking face to face. I was staying over 'til Monday.

® Did your family think you'd gone to school?

8385 (42H) Yeah.

(44H) Yes. My mum thought we were. We said we were going to get a bus down to school, but...
® What other things; notes we've got?

(42H) Yes, me and 43H. In year 7, we got done for taking photos of pupil H.

® When was the picture taken?

(42H) It was at break-time, 'cos I was in the D.O.L.

® Do you still use your mobiles in lessons?

(42H and 43H) Yeah.

(44H) Yes.

® What do you use them for and why?

(42H) Texting.

(43H) Texting.

® To each other?

(44H) Sometimes.

Pictures in the class when your teachers aren't looking.

® Of what?

(44H) I've got one teacher.

(43H) (Oh, my God).

® Do you text each other between lessons when you're split up?

(44H) No.

(43H) Sometimes, yeah.

(42H) If we're together, we'll just like, if the teacher's doesn't like us talking, we'll just like text on the phone...

(43H) ...and you give it to the other person.

(42H) We'll text it and then give the phone to 44H.

® Where are your phones, in your bag?

(44H) Yeah.

(43H) In my shorts.

(42H) Up my sleeve.
If you're split in lessons, do you still text?

(43H) Yeah.

(42H) I text 43H.

Messin' and being bored.

(43H) I've only done it once.

(42H) I text everybody outside school...not just people in school.

Is it planned or...?

(42H) Bored.

It's because they text yer.

And you just need to text back.

(42H) Or you're bored.

Is this why you end up on the stairs for these things?

(42H) Yeah.

And make-up!

You're not bad today.

I haven't got any on: I'm not allowed any while I'm on report.

I did notice; yours is alright?

I've taken it off.

I can see your mascara and you've got away with it?

(42H) It's just me and 42H who don't get away with it, isn't it?

In physics, we just messed around and laughed in a teachers' face.

I have nerves and when I'm nervous right, when a teacher shouts at me, it makes it worse 'cos of the facial expressions.

He banged on the table right...

Everyone's got a petition and signing it.
(42H) But I was supposed to be in it, but 38G (from their class) got me out, because apparently she likes me

® Why were you moved then?

(44H) Because me and 42H got...

® What was it?

(42H) Misbehaving.

(44H) Misbehaving.

® What chatting?

(44H) All the things we've done, like because I've only just got here, I've been naughty in nearly all of my lessons, and it's like when 42H left me, and 43H were all right with each other, I was behaving and that...

® Why, is it exciting or what?

(44H) I don't know.

(42H) It got a bit boring being good.

(43H) Yeah.

® I know you can be good.

(43H) Yeah we can be good, but...

(44H) I think it was a bad option splitting me and 42H up because if they put me back in December I know it's just going to start again.

® People remember the last thing you've done and if you turn a new leaf they remember that.

(43H) Me and 42H had a label and we started being good and it didn't work and that's why I started being bad again afterwards.

® What would stop that?

(42H) Right, if they didn't go back to what we've done and if like...

(43H) If 37G was bad for one day and the next day she was good, oh, 'well done 37G, you're like good today, you weren't that good yesterday.'

(42H) But we're like bad all the time and then one day we're good.
(43H) But some people talk as much as us and don’t even get shouted at it for it.

(42H) We’re known for it, they’re not.

(44H) If we’re bad, right and we try and turn ourselves round...

(43H) If the teacher praises you, you carry on, but if they say ignore you being good then it doesn’t work and you go back to be being naughty.

® If teachers praise you, you will be good?

(42H) Yeah.

® Technology ladies, how does it influence your friendships?

(42H) I always talk to 43H on Facebook because us two don’t live like close. We arrange to go out.

® Do you use MSN?

(43H) I don’t use it as much.

(44H) It got really boring.

(42H) I only go on Facebook.

® Do you use it regularly?

(42H) Yeah, near enough every night.

(43H) I’m on my phone all night.

® During some break-times is there anything that’s being carried over into lessons from any arguments etc?

(44H) No.

® It doesn’t have to be between your group, it can be other groups.

(43H) Yeah like when one group has an argument everybody joins in.

(42H) Everybody in our class will join in, like they take, the whole class takes one side because they’ll prefer one or the other and then right instead of just being two people, just being the whole class either one side or the other argues with everyone.

(44H) It happened yesterday.
® What happened?

(44H) Pupil H upsetted the pupil who left. Near enough the whole class was having a go at pupil H.

(43H) But, I started having a go at pupil H. I just like upset her and that...

® So they all joined in and took sides?

(42H) Yeah.

(43H) Yeah and I had to be taken out of the room.

® So what happened in the end?

(44H) Pupil H started crying.

® Was the other pupil alright?

(42H) Yeah.

® Do you then have a personal attack as groups on one person or the group itself?

(43H) Yeah, just the person you prefer, like you stick up for them.

(42H) You stick up for them and the other person just like.

® Is that like a game then?

(43H) Yeah.

® Is it something you’ve always done?

(42H) Yeah.

(43H) Always.

® Although it isn’t your group falling out, some groups fall out regularly, don’t they?

(42H) Yeah, like 37G and 38G always fall out.

® So what happens then, who do you join?

37G (unanimous).

(43H) What does my head in is that all the year 8 go round and saying a load of rumours about the year 9. They did it about me because I went out my friend’s brother.
They started making their own rumours, horrible rumours like.

When this falling out of groups happens, does this mean you don't concentrate during the next lesson?

It means like, if it carries on and then say that person says something to that person you prefer in the lesson, then the whole class...

...the whole class.

Then it'll all start off again and the whole class will be arguing.

Do you all look forward to your break-times? (I mean break-time, lunch, home space).

Yeah. (Unanimous).

Me and 42H have arguments on Facebook all the time.

Fun arguments or does it sometimes affect the mood you're in when you come to school?

Sometimes.

I do – she's the stroppy one, she can't like let it go.

So you two could leave school fairly happily, next morning come in and she's got a cob on because of some argument on Facebook?

Yes.

But, if me and 42HJ have an argument on Facebook we'll be friends next day. (Different two combination).

Yeah, like it lasts literally two minutes.

When do you two sort out your differences, before lessons?

We just don't really talk really, do we...we just sit there like.

We'll smile at each other once or twice.

O.K. thanks, all these things you're doing, on your own would you still do them?

No.
(42H) No.

(44H) Yeah – I was the same in my primary, so I wouldn’t change now, because I got away with it in primary.

® Have you learned from all this low-level disruption behaviour?

Yes (unanimous).

® Much of the stuff you’ve done has been in a small group, you wouldn’t (or couldn’t) do it on your own?

(43H) But, it’s like top buttons and make-up, you don’t just learn from that.

® Do you do your top buttons up in some lessons and not others?

(43H) No.

(42H) Yes – T1.

® Is that respect?

(42H) Yeah. Me and 44H on report should have it done up all the time.

® Ties and skirts as well? Some groups wind the skirt up.

(42H) Some groups don’t, some leave them to their ankles.

® Homework – why do you think teachers set homework and do you think pupils have the same view?

(42H) No.

(43H) They shouldn’t make you do homework because school’s just school and we’ve got lives.

(42H) They shouldn’t, they don’t like interfere with social lives, but yet they give you homework to do in your social lives, they shouldn’t do that.

(44H) Yeah, and it’s just like teachers, teachers should have like time off, like in school time, to mark, because it shouldn’t interfere with their social life either.

® You’re having a good social life in school? How do you see school; break-time, lesson, break-time, lesson, home etc?

(42H) No, friends, friends, friends, all the way through.

® What about you?
(44H) I don’t know I just can’t wait to get home...

8765
® To see your friends again in a different atmosphere?

(42H) And boys.

8770
(42H) When you’re grounded, I can’t wait to get into school like. I’m grounded now like (she’s not grounded, but I am) and like can’t wait to come into school.

® Can you see the point of homework, sometimes?

8775
(42H) No.

(44H) Non-whatsoever.

(43H) No.

8780
(42H) Even if you don’t understand what you did in the lesson, they give you homework on it and they have to help you.

(44H) Like in Maths., I don’t get most of the stuff he goes on about, and then he gives me homework on it.

8785
(43H) She got 3%.

(42H) I got 3% on a Maths. test.

8790
® You need a bit of help on that, but don’t ask me.

(laugh)

8795
® I can do equivalent fractions, percentages, etc. ‘cos I’ve been sitting in observing 7, 8 and 9, so anything on the board or in their curriculum covered these last two weeks, I can help you with...

8800
(laugh)

® Thank you for your information, I hope you enjoyed our chat (I did). Do you have any questions?

8805
(42H) Me and 44H have to go to see T1 at half three. We have to go every morning and every afternoon.
Appendix 2c - Year 9 participant observation: 10th November.

8810 I welcomed my group as they arrived and popped into the form-room to say hello to the rest of the class who I was not directly shadowing (but had taught last year).

The form-tutor arrived for morning registration and pupils sat in their usual places.

8815 Then 24E shouts T1, (Key Stage Co-ordinator) (and the majority start checking their top button and doing their tie correctly).

8820 When T1 arrived, it wasn't about uniform at all, it was about 'friendship issues' as she stated at the beginning and looked at me (as she knew why I was here).

The speech included the fact that Year nine is a year when hormones are raging, some pupils can be happy one time and crying another. The main emphasis was on empathy and the fact that home lives seem to be integral to school but that often little is known about pupils' life at home and the idea that we must understand this and allow the pupil 'a moment' if that is what they want.

8825 Pupils agreed and looked pretty confused and perplexed.

8830 The form tutor then read out details of the non-school uniform day/tombola on Friday (my second day of observation with Year 9). One pupil questioned the necessity to arrive with parents (24E) as the tutor said that no-one could stay after-school and in the evening they must be with an adult- 'My parents/guardians don't want to come. Can they come in and then go?' The form-tutor said she'd check.

8835 I left the room and went towards the next lesson to remind the teacher that I was discretely observing a small group. However, I met up with KS3 Co-ordinator and she acknowledged my work and focus by explaining to me the issue in hand, the fact that the person involved was not even in!

8840 (26E was at an appointment and would be in later).

8845 HISTORY:

The teacher made them stand behind tables and then asked them to say whether they had understood or done their homework (yes, yes). Any yes, no had to meet briefly at lunch-time.

8850 (9.17) – Teacher referred to this as a 'tiny, little lesson.'

8855 23E doodling.

8860 23E smiles at 25E.
23E hand up – answers question.

25E answers question on iron.

28A looks at 24E for sheet.

28E suggests to 24E that she may have a ‘mans’ voice by tomorrow (sore throat).

23E answers questions with correct answer of ‘underground.’

Work on sheets: Teacher suggests scribble down answer (as usual on Tuesdays).

25E answers question.

24E fills in sheet.

27E asks question.

23E pupil next to her.

29E answers – a lot of people needed coal for heat.

28E fills in sheet.

T fills in sheet and looks to 24E and 26E.

28E is hot and waves hand over face.

Other group members read out sheet.

29E fills in questions.

Task is set and there is an option to work in pairs and threes.

23E her neighbour where the questions are.

27E talks to 24E to confirm where the questions are.

29E asks teacher for clarification of questions (and is offered the chance to move next to 24E – which she declines).

24E referred to 29E using her nick-name (an abbreviation of her name) and asked her to ‘come here’ (Her reply was that she was O.K. and she’d nearly finished).

Teacher calls out the time left: 24E asks 29E for answers.

25E says ‘I can’t write fast.’

27E asks 24E ‘what points?’
The group need to agree which two are important.

The teacher asks 29E if they all agree. (I asked if they agreed).

'We trust 29E. 29E told us the answers.'

The answers were given by the teacher, whilst 27E doodled on diary, 29E doodles with felt and rubs it out, 28E reads the pictures on the sheets, along with 24E.

The other table – 25E sits still and 23E focuses on her fingers and pens in pencil case.

23E answers question in relation to an air pump and danger to life.

Teacher tackles problem 3 on the sheet – What do I need?

24E yawns.

23E answers with 'dynamite'.

Teacher refers to the limited time in the lesson and continues to explain how a water pump allows you to dig deep and an air pump leads to shallow digging as Oxygen runs out and doesn't circulate.

I notice 27E has pink felt on her fingers.

29E takes her hair down for a while.

27E yawns.

Teacher asks next question relating to where Iron comes from?

23E answers with charcoal and the teacher kindly reminds the class not to shout out.

Teacher continues explaining iron oxide, leaving iron out in the open to get to the answer 'rust'.

The teacher 'thanks' the girls for their reasoning.

24E yawns while teacher explains the process and results of heating iron ore.

Through question 2, 29E still fiddles with hair, 28E highlights on her pen.

Teacher then refers to 'kind of run out of time'

25E listens and focuses on the teacher.
Teacher asks ‘why do we need pure iron?’

27E answers with ‘because it lasts longer’ and teacher acknowledges 27E answer with ‘Yes 27E’ but then rewords the question to stress the ‘pure’.

29E then answers with ‘better quality.’

Teacher offers a present to individuals in the class once questions 2 and 3 are complete.

24E responds with ‘I want this present’.

23A replies to 24E by telling her ‘it’s a folder!’

24E acts disappointed and responds with ‘Is that it?’

28E meanwhile is busily writing, along with 23E and 25E on the other table.

Another pupil on 23E and 25E table exclaims, ‘Come on guys we want our present’.

25E looks at 23E.

23E looks over her left shoulder to read another pupil’s answer and copies it down discreetly.

25E talks to 23E.

23E said that she’d forget to bring the new folder as well as the book etc.

24E uses 28E’s work and thanks her afterwards.

29E states that she hasn’t done question 3, only 2.

28E helps the others.

The folder is given out by the teacher to all class members.

The teacher sums up the lesson, while 28E has a conversation with 24E about the film ‘Taken’, and an Indian man at the end of a film that scares her.

The teacher reminds those who have not handed their homework in about the meeting at lunch-time in the History room.

The class leaves and head towards Geography across the yard.

GEOGRAPHY ROOM – T5.
Group chats across the table:

25E – ‘She sent me a message’.

27E – ‘I've never heard from her.’

24E puts her hand up and asks the teacher if she has her book.

Teacher explains that they are going to be shortly doing a project.

24E asks her table, ‘What project?’

23E points to what they have been doing on the sheet in front of them or in their books.

23E meanwhile puts her hand up to volunteer to read.

Teacher reminds girls to make sure their top buttons are done up.

27E fiddles with hers.

23E reads from the text book.

24E and 25E laugh as 23E reads without being distracted.

Other table turn and look towards 23E, 25E, 24E table.

29E reads.

24E and 23E help 29E pronounce ‘equatorial’.

24E counts bar charts and looks at 25E and pokes her on cheek.

25E, 23E and 29E all smile at each other.

25E answers a question for the teacher.

24E answers about ‘prevailing winds’ and checks the book.

28E and 29E write information from text book.

24E discusses picture in book with 25E.

Another pupil on the other table points to a drawing of a camels’ tail by 28E.

A climate map is given out to 23E first (which 24E grabs and takes off 23E).

Teacher asks 24E to remove her one black glove.
24E then tells the table that 'I haven't got my advent calendars yet'.

There is a general discussion then about who received Geography postcards through the post for good work.

24E spurts out, 'I'm good at French'

On the other table, 28E borrows glue off her friend.

23E, 25E, 24E continue discussing subjects and teachers.

25E says no to Geography and says 'Mr. H he's the best'.

23E says that Mrs. I is her best friend.

24E acknowledges that they had her for Welsh and takes responsibility for not paying much attention, 'our fault'.

23E replies that 'she's given me 50 merits'.

23E then counts the merits from Mrs. I.

The groups continue with climate graphs.

23E sings quietly whilst doing work.

24E accidently tears her graph.

On the other table 27E is half way through a conversation explaining to 28E that she had been texted at 1 ‘o’ clock in the morning and admitted she couldn’t sleep.

28E responded by saying, ‘He’s cute’.

Meanwhile 23E and 29E answer questions about precipitation and the colour of the bar (blue) for rainfall and red for heat.

27E confirmed to me that she had met him on U-tube and talked regularly and that 24E and 27E were going to meet him (Mat) in February half-term. I think he lives in Ireland and she stated that the parents were aware of this and happy with it.

23E discusses food, ‘cabbage, carrots, chicken pie’.

24E then moans that she has dance today – seemed to have forgotten.

26E arrives from a hospital appointment (with about 1 minute to go, before the end of the lesson).

'26E!!' – all shout together.
Teacher gets the class to write down homework in books.

26E asks the table of girls if there was any History homework and then pulls ‘Glamour’ magazine out of her bag and says ‘look what my dad bought me’. The girls looked pleased for 26E.

The lesson finished and some of the girls made their way back to a class-room near to their first lesson. (A Chemistry lab). 25E, 23E and 27E remained, the other friends were split.

D.T. – T4

To help settle the class as there seemed to be lots of conversations going on, the teacher puts hands up in the air, then down and so on until they were all quiet. One pupil asked, ‘Is this till we shut up?’

The response was In order for them to pay attention – the sequence was repeated a further 5 times.

23E accidently rips work and 25E replies with an ‘oh’.

The class then carry on with their project.

27E talks to a pupil in front of her and pulls out a few new pencils and offers one to her and to her next door neighbour.

23E complains of a sore throat to another pupil on her table who reciprocates by complaining that someone ‘stresses’ her out when talking about other people and continues to discuss a problem encountered on Facebook where a girl had been mean and ‘had a go’ at her and then pretended to be her friend and is related to a Year 10 who she thinks is being horrible to her. She decided to be horrible back and also said that it also involved texts but won’t say anything on the bus.

The conversation then becomes work related as the teacher approaches and the pupil asks, ‘What do we do on here?’

The teacher explains.

23E then tells 25E that at the age of 3 she fell off a bike and shows scar on eyebrow.

Another pupil at the end of the table asks if anyone has coloured pencils to borrow – 23E shouts pupils’ name and throws them across sideways.

23E talks about Dance to 25E.

I walked over to speak to 27E as I noticed writing on her hand when she asked the teacher a question.
I looked at 27E's work and she explains what she is doing. I notice that her work has recycling and peace symbols on the design. The peace symbol matched one in ink/marker on her hand, so I asked her about the writing. She said that she uploads pictures of her hand/drawings on it onto a new group that she has set up on Facebook and was surprised and excited that it had already got over 100 members. Her hand also had smiley faces on the fingers in red. She also explained that she also used MSN regularly and spoke to 25E, 23E, 28E and 24E. 26E had been hacked by a girl and her mum has prevented her from going back onto MSN.

27E continues with her work and tells me that she does usually fit homework in but has slots when she is on these sites (8-10 and 12-1 sometimes), she also says she doesn't need sleep, probably has a maximum of 4 hours. (I suggest she may make a good politician as they don't need much sleep – she then asked what one was). 27E concluded our brief chat (still doing some work) by stating that her sister has now also set up a group for 'girl problems'.

I go back to 23E and 25E who are talking about G.C.S.E. dance with another pupil (who also dances) and then 23E moans that she needs help, such as the computer.

25E asks the teacher about using a newspaper for her project.

Another pupil at the end of the table asks if the rest have revised for Maths. and then the conversation moves towards the teacher, who is asked if she went to the Bonfire. She replied that she did go to the one in Ruthin, but it was good.

The teacher then emphasises that pencils should be used, not felt tips.

23E exclaims to the group on the table that she hates everything!

Another pupil says she doesn't hate dance!

23E replies that at the moment she even hates that.

The lesson finishes and the girls go off to break-time. 27E says she's hungry and heads off to eat in the form-room.

At break-time 27E and 28E listened to their iPods.

25E and 23E went to show me their special 'hicleout' tree. When we got there (on the small field) they pointed to a kind of jagged circle on the trunk about 5 foot and 7 inches above the ground, but they had scratched ‘hicleout’ on it. There were also a number of Tippex marks in the form of letters, below it. They seemed to think it had been there before and was an old group.
However, there were also markings near theirs and they said it was a group of Year 10 who ‘know it’s ours in Summer’.

We went back to the form room and the majority of the group were listening to their own or sharing iPods.

CHEMISTRY.

Originally the whole friendship group sat on the one table, with 29E on the one next to theirs in the middle. However, the lesson started with the group being split up from something to do with previous lesson or their books. 26E moved to Zone A, 27E moved to Zone E, 25E moved to Zone B.

23E, 24E and 28E remained but were joined by 2 more pupils.

23E acknowledges 25E and 25E puts up thumb in response.

26E puts both hands up to 24E.

24E says, ‘We’ll have to start making a code.’

Teacher gives books back marked.

23E got an A grade for homework.

26E puts hands in front of her aiming to catch the others’ attention.

24E waves to 25E.

(11.40) – 24E says that 25E is going to enjoy being where she is.

25E listens and smiles.

26E tries code to 23E.

(23E doesn’t understand).

23E and 24E shuffle their stools closer together.

25E notices and watches.

The lesson begins with an introduction on Convection and a quick description.

23E tries to answer question.

24E puts hands up to 26E and then 23E does a ‘Phones’ (hand up to ear) ‘4’ (made with fingers) ‘U’ (points) back to 26E.

23E then gets ready to answer another question giving the answer ‘anorak’ and explaining it in relation to heat.
24E points to her one black glove.

24E peers towards 26E with an exaggerated expression.

26E acknowledges.

27E meanwhile has her back to most of her original group.

29E goes to put her broken scissors into the bin by the door (and smiles at me).

24E talks about a phone-call that one of her friends did not receive and gets told off for talking by the teacher.

The teacher requests the class to write answers down and allows them to work with their neighbour.

29E asks if she needs to answer in full sentences. 24E discusses Tinchy Stryder (pop singer) and the teacher threatens to move 24E if she mutters one more word.

The class are reminded of a test next Wednesday.

(Teacher read my notes).

23E exclaims she's found it and discusses work with neighbours.

24E turns to her neighbour and suggests an answer – second house is insulated.

23E says to her neighbour, 'Oh, fine, go on without me!'

23E – jokingly says 'stop messing around and get some work done.'

24E speaks briefly to 23E.

26E gets on with work.

24E (referring to split) says, 'it works, we're actually doing it.'

She continues with 'when I'm a teacher, I'm going to separate everyone!'

23E quickly replies with 'they'll all hate you!'

26E puts her hand up and asks for help.

24E borrows Tippex animal pen off neighbour and is extremely careful with it and even asks her if there's a special way to hold it.
24E then drops it on the floor! (And appears very embarrassed).

24E is asked to remove her black glove again.

26E seems to be talking to pupils on her new table, especially to a pupil opposite.

28E asks 23E the answer to one question in terms of how much was saved.

23E puts hand up and explains that she hates doing energy transfer diagrams.

24E states that ‘normal Tippex is much better.’

26E still talks to pupil opposite her but they seemed to be talking about an emotional topic as they were excluding others and looked very serious and carried on talking as before once the teacher wasn’t looking. (Afterwards, 27E said she was helping this pupil with personal things!).

29E was working well on own.

The neighbour of 23E verbalises her thinking about an answer to a question.

23E reacts with ‘Think it in your head!’

Neighbour ignores first request, 23E puts her hands over her ears and says, ‘Be quiet, my ears!’

26E points to her mouth.

23E responds with an acknowledgement.

23E (having heard the answer from the other table) says ‘I’ve got it’.

(12.05) - Next door neighbour tries to help 23E.

23E responds with ‘I know that!’

24E says ‘no back seat driving.’

23E says ‘no back seat-driving, men say.’

24E struggles with the Tippex.

28E carries on.

Neighbour to 23E helps 24E with Tippex.
9390  23E (knowing how clever one member of the other table is) leans over and tries to get her attention to answer the question about the energy transfer diagram, but then gives up and says 'it doesn't matter.'

9395  26E waves to 23E.

23E sings quietly and 24E joins in.

(12.10) - Teacher goes through the questions using the interactive whiteboard.

23E has hand up.

29E still has hand up.

9400  24E says 'shut up'.

23E says thank you.

9405  29E says 'I don’t understand...teacher explains.

23E correctly answers with £1000.

23E is asked if she wants to come and put her answer on the interactive white board, with which she jumps straight up looking very pleased.

26E asks if she can do one next.

9410  A begins her drawing and smiles directly at 24E, 25E, 26E, 28E.

When 23E sits back down she turns to the class and requests an applause (which she gets).

9415  24E taps her on her shoulder once back. (Inaudible chat).

24E says, 'I want a go Teacher J! Can I draw House B, I've never drawn on it?'

9420  26E is offered the chance to draw her answer on the interactive whiteboard.

26E draws on board.

9425  27E speaks to her neighbour about something other than work.

25E looks at the board.

9430  29E writes the information down.

24E draws.
23E answers with draughts/door.

25E answers with ‘floor’.

27E writes in book.

28E writes in book.

Lesson is brought to a close and homework is mentioned.

24E puts her black glove on and talks about her mum etc.

As 26E table is let out before 23E, 24E, 28E, etc., 26E passes by and shouts ‘loser’ to her friends, discreetly as she goes out of the door.

DINNER.

23E, 25E, 29E all went to Dance practice in the hall, while the others stayed in their form room eating dinner or listening to music on IPods. There was the occasional chat between members of the group, but this was usually to do with type of music or pictures on phones etc.

27E was devising a letter to Mat.

When 23E+ arrived back, there wasn’t much time after eating, but they invited me on a walk (their normal routine walk with a set pattern that takes you all the way round the grounds in almost a full circle).

REGISTRATION

Religious Education – (1.35)

Pilgrimage to Mecca: Four of the group (27E, 24E, 26E and 23E) were sat at the back of the class-room (near me), with 25E and 28E sitting in front of 26E and 23E on the second row from the back. Each table had two people on it.

29E was sat right at the front in the middle next to the teachers’ desk and seemed happy to be there.

Teacher started to explain lesson.

26E began to colour on her pencil case.

23E (as teacher pointed at her) – ‘You forgot my name!’

24E had glove on.

26E speaks to 23E.
28E turns round and looks at 27E (who acknowledges her with a smile).

28E talks to 26E.

23E borrows marker and draws a face on right hand.

28E and 23E speak and pen is passed back.

Meanwhile instructions are being discussed by teacher.

Anyone not there last lesson were told to come round the teachers' desk (My group were with me for their focus group).

On route to the front, 24E jumps onto 23E's back.

24E tickles 26E (who exclaims, 'get off me!'). The teacher says, 'Stop laughing girls'.

27E says 'Girls' in a similar fashion to the teachers' voice.

In response, the teacher asks them 'Do you want to sit at the front with me?'

27E explains instructions to group.

The group go back to places sitting down and 23E complains of being hot, so opens the door and nearly falls through it.

Group laugh!

24E immediately responds with the fact she's cold.

The teacher walks over to 23E and 26E's table (as 23E asks what to do again).

26E puts her mascara on directly under the nose of the teacher in a very exaggerated manner, smiling and looking to her left as she does about 3 sweeps of her eye lashes. The teacher then realises and confiscates it, but 26E negotiates and can get it back at the end. She was able to keep it on and did not have to wash it off.

It was actually 28E's mascara.

28E was threatened with the act of her being moved, but again through negotiating and promising to be good, she remained where she was and said, 'I'll be good.'

28E drinks her bottle of water and turns to 23E and 26E.

23E gets the work explained again.
26E was again asked to move or leave the lesson, but replies that ‘I’m working well and not disturbing 23E.’

28E reads.

Teacher returns to front.

26E throws small bits of rubber at different members of her group. (28E and 24E).

24E discusses the Davinci Code and discusses the character going with a prostitute and having a baby.

28E asks for help.

26E reads.

28E works in book.

25E works in book.

29E remains focused throughout and is working well.

28E asks if anyone has any cough sweets (extended beyond the group).

24E asks the teacher if she can shut the door now, after complaining of being cold again.

23E shuts the door.

24E explains art homework to 25E.

Teacher calls out ‘girls’ and goes through a diagram on the board.

26E has been sitting with her legs bent upwards on the chair and the chair the wrong way round.

23E asks where the answers to fill in the diagram come from.

26E suggests she just reads it.

28E writes.

27E draws part of the diagram.

24E talks to 27E.

23E discusses diagram with 26E.

29E asks a question about where to find the information.
23E also asks a question.

24E does hair.

23E complains of having her hand up for ages and says: 'I hate it when teachers do that'.

26E asks the teacher if she can go to the toilet. (She says yes).

28E talks to 25E about boys on their bus.

23E discusses how young 24E's grandmother looks.

26E discusses her dads' job.

23E asks 25E what her favourite helicopter is and says she knows the Hawk is her favourite plane.

25E confirms the Chinook as possibly her favourite.

25E says she likes the name of 'Chinook'.

23E says she always goes on about RAF camp.

I wandered over to 29E and asked why she wasn't sitting with the others. She said they weren't talking to her, but it was O.K.

When I went back to my seat, 28E and 25E were still talking about boys.

Conversation turned towards teachers and T1. They discussed Mr. A taking them to T1.

The teacher comments on some of the class doing fantastically.

23E responds with 'Well thanks Mrs. K.'

The teacher comes over and 23E asks why she has five sheets the same – the teacher replied that she kept asking for them.

26E throws rubber again. 24E throws it back.

26E hits 28E on head and calls out with, 'Mrs. K, 23E and 26E are throwing rubbers at me!'

The teacher comes over and says no whinging.

23E says 28E is whinging.

(2.15) – 27E starts crying.

Teacher talks to her outside class.
28E tries to mouth to 24E what she thought was wrong with her.

23E says ‘I’m always in the dark. I didn’t know ‘til last night that Miss K is moving to Australia in December.’

23E calls over teacher and asks teacher to say ‘bubbles’ again.

26E says we won’t laugh at you.

Wasp enters and exits.

28E and 25E talk.

29E asks if she can colour work in.

Homework is mentioned and 24E says she’s not got it with her. 24E said she doesn’t do it and she’ll forget eventually.

23E had hers.

The lesson finished and the group split into two maths. groups. I followed 24E, 26E, 27E and 25E.

MATHS – T8 (25E sat next to 26E then there was a gap in the tables with 24E then 27E)

The class were reminded of a test next week.

26E wrote notes to 25E and rubbed them out. 26E said that 25E helped her.

24E wore her black glove.

24E talked to 27E.

26E got on with work.

25E speaks to her neighbour about the work.

24E and 26E speak across the gap.

24E tries to talk to 27E, but 27E doesn’t seem to be concentrating.

27E seems to be coming more and more agitated and wipes nose on sleeve; tears appear.

27E gets a tissue from the front.

Standard form is explained by the teacher along with rules, including the number must be between 1 and 10.

26E works on her own.
24E looks tired and 27E doodles.
24E rubs eyes.

25E admits she's stuck on one question, which the teacher runs through on the board.

25E is asked a calculation and answers quickly.

Another member of the opposite form was amazed at how quickly 25E answered the sum and said, 'How did she get that?'

26E said 'she's clever' and then answered, 'weird'.

Other sums were explained and methods/rules discussed.

27E continued to doodle on Maths book in a small corner.

26E asks for a drink.

24E tries to talk to 27E again. 27E is not very talkative.

27E begins to cry again.

26E laughs quietly as she looks in her shoe. 25E looks in 26E's shoe.

24E stops talking to 27E and looks at sheet.

25E doodles as she talks to 26E and rubs off the pen drawing she made of a smiling mouth, eyes and nose.

25E shouts '26E!' who seemed to be annoying her, as she hits 26E gently.

27E begins to write.

Both 26E and 24E have their hands up to suggest one of seven rules.

27E writes down the rules from the board.

24E looks at clock.

24E puts hand up.

27E puts pen away and gets out another one.

24E puts hand up again.

27E wipes eye with sleeve.

Teacher runs through long division.
25E and 26E talk briefly to 24E.

Another neighbour to 25E and 26E ask 26E for the seven rules.

26E looks at clock.

24E looks at clock (3.25) then watches an example of long division, along with 26E and the others.

26E picks up bag from floor.

Teacher ends lesson and reminds of test. 27E rushes off.

Class go off to bus or to parents' cars and home.

**Year 9 participant observation: 13th November (non-uniform day).**

**REGISTRATION:**

Over the week there has been a group set up on the website on Facebook where some pupils have joined. The site was 'I hate' a certain teacher in this school. It seemed to have over 40 members in this school (so my informants told me), but many realised that school knew so deleted their name off the web-site before the head teacher could trace them. Those without internet or phones seemed unable to delete their names. There were six remaining names on the site all of which were being dealt with and as part of their punishment they had to come in with school uniform, even though it was a non-school uniform day; two of those involved were in this form, one was in my observation group. (They both arrived, later than normal, but during registration).

In registration, a letter was read out from the head teacher that stated that iPods were banned and scarves must only be worn to and from school.

23E commented on it being like a prison and said along with many others in the class that they would still bring them to school. (like they did with their phones).

25E was planning to make a pocket just for it in her blazer.

**CHEMISTRY – Miss J.**

24E remains in school uniform and is moved to zone C – the rest of the group still remain separated from the previous lesson.

26E does a ‘Phones 4 U’ to 23E and 23E does a ‘Phones 4 U’ back to 26E.
Last lesson the teacher was ill and the class were supposed to have revised. The test will be one week's time.

The topic of heat and how it travels was discussed by the teacher and she addressed questions to the class.

25E answered with 'radiation'.

24E complained of not being able to see the board.

26E 'nor can I' (who is seated in a similar position, but opposite her).

29E – 'There's one here' (meaning spare place).

24E moves next to 29E.

23E says 'just me and you 28E. I hate being a loner.'

The teacher discusses 'convection' and sets light to a taper and asks what happens.

23E answers with, 'cos hot air rises.'

The teacher thanks her for the answer and explains heat rises etc.

The class are told to turn to page 28.

23E asks 28E if she has a text book.

27E and another pupil share their text book.

23E turns to me and then the group and says four of us on this table all the others are cramped with people. (5 in zone A, zone B are 7, zone C are 6 and E are 5).

Class were asked to do questions a and b in their books.

The teacher came over and spoke to me (read a few comments and spoke about a professional matter).

All the group write information.

29E talks to 24E.

29E clarifies a question—Is it the top or bottom part of the house? (Could be both). The teacher explains.

23E announces she's finished and is rewarded with a 'very good.'
25E talks to 24E and 29E about hair.

27E puts her hand up to attempt to answer a question.

Teacher asks why smoke goes up a chimney?

26E answers with 'it rises and if no chimney smoke will fill the room.'

25E answers 'carbon' to teachers' question.

The teacher then tries to explain how a convection current works through a practical experiment involving potassium permanganate and heating it up in water.

The group are asked to come round table in zone B. 28E joins 29E (who is already there) and shares her stool. 27E joins 24E (who is already there) and shares stool. 23E stands directly behind 24E.

27E offers to be an assistant to hold a piece of equipment. 24E then pokes 27E to try to make her laugh.

25E turns gas on (half and half flame).

The class watch the flow of the purple dye.

23E suggests it rises.

25E mentions 27E’s hair.

The teacher helps the class see the dye by putting paper behind the beaker to prevent the condensation getting in the way of seeing.

29E speaks to 24E.

24E told 28E that her friend said she’d cut 27E’s hair. 25E and 24E discuss hair changes as the group return to original places.

The teacher asked the class to write down what they saw happening.

28E takes off her cardigan, as she announces that ‘it’s quite hot now.’

27E and the other pupil talk and include another pupil from their table about hair.

29E tries to answer question from teacher and when she is picked says she hasn’t written it all out yet.
28E jokes about a lady knitting in a picture in the text book looking like 23E.

23E says that everyone in the pictures looks like us (the group) and says the man on the bike is 28E.

25E answers a question about insulation.

24E tries to explain an answer after a discussion on under-floor heating. (Is it why it's hot at the top and cold at the bottom?).  

24E then turns and waves to 28E and fiddles with tweezers left from the experiment. She pokes them towards her eye brows as if to pluck them but slowly and looks for a reaction from any of her table.

24E then asks 29E about their shape.

28E's ruler then flew out of 24E's mouth and over her head.

25E laughs quietly.

27E is complemented on her hair by the teacher!  
28E mentions a hot air balloon (as part of the questions).

28E said to 24E 'I heard my name'.

29E draws on hand and then rubs off (like a smiley face in creek of thumb and forefinger).


23E shouts '25A' (As she tries to use book).

Homework is mentioned.

28E asks other pupil the answer for the hot air balloon, who offers support.

24E puts 29E's hat on again.

24E then says she's going to buy a beret and go to France and walk around (then speaks in French accent).

23E is stuck between conversation on either side of her and says 'Oh, my God'.

23E asks a question about a hand-glider and the sun (to do with science).

24E writes on hand.
A Year 7 boy comes in to borrow books and 28E makes a comment to 27E about the boy's trainers. On the way out 27E looks at them, smiles and nods to 28E in agreement.

25E answers a question about high and low pressure.

29E talks about the way the wind blows to the teacher and 23E talks about convection currents.

(10.05) – Topic was radiation

28E passes 23E a hair bobble.

25E says she doesn’t understand the beach answer, so the teacher goes through it on the board and 23E consolidates her understanding by saying that it was a convection current and relates it to the heater in the old ladies lounge (in one of the earlier questions).

23E says the current is carried along water and the whole thing starts again. The teacher says, ‘exactly’.

The lesson concludes and the group join up again out of the class-room and prepare to walk to geography (across the yard).

GEOGRAPHY: T5.

(10.10) – 24E talks to 28E and 25E and 28E says, ‘Did she go mental?’ (referring to 24E's mother in response to the incident that 24E had been reprimanded for and one punishment was to wear school uniform).

24E says that she was not allowed to go on Facebook for a week but could do homework.

Both 24E and her friend stated that 24E (when I asked how she'd cope without it) replied that she had it on her phone, but 24E said that her mum didn’t know this.

28E asked when the letter from the head teacher arrived at her home and 24E quickly muttered that she thought her mum got it yesterday.

The teacher reminded the class that they were to continue with their climate graph.

23E talks quietly to 25E.

28E talks to 25E about a cool hat she wants while continuing with her graph.

27E than asks 28E about the bus she gets on to go home and where she gets off.
28E looks puzzled and answers ‘Mold’.

27E turns to 28E. 27E says she’s bored this weekend and she says she wants to come and see her she says ‘I’m coming to see you’.

28E changes the subject and asks if 27E spoke to Mat’.

27E said it was boring.

29E talks to 27E.

27E mentioned a delivery man coming to the door that morning with a Marks and Spencer bag and called him ‘Homo’. 24E heard this (and was also at the house as she travelled to school with 27E) and added he looked like a ‘homo’.

26E mentioned going to Rhyl.

24E and 27E talk about kissing boys.

29E draws a peace sign on 27E’s right hand.

Another pupil off table 5 talks to 24E about a boy on a bus.

I notice 27E’s arm and hand again and ask her what she has on there and how her website of drawing on hands is going. She says she’s not allowed to write on hand anymore as her mum says she might die.

24E interrupts and says she’s still got it on her back.

On her left arm is written ‘Never shout never’, mushroom kids, drawn music notes, and a peace sign on her hand with the words lovers, love, liars, lie (song). Also the words ‘I love you’ were written up the arm. The smiley faces on the fingers have been taken off!

The teacher then introduces the video including rainforests.

24E spurts out ‘my texts – I’ve just gone and read them all’.

There was then a discussion about schools between 23E, 26E and 25E and 24E with those on Special measures mentioned along with 6th forms.

The video is still running.

24E moves chair.

26E sits on it as a joke but then moves.
27E gives 24E a hug as she gets in place and joins her table. (24E reciprocates).

27E sits on 24E then the table.

The teacher then told pupils not to move chairs or sit on tables. (Due to health and safety).

The group managed to sit around one table, whilst watching video.

23E said that her dad calls it Big Mac – let’s go to Big Mac for an ice-cream.

27E does her hair with hand.

24E was requested to do her top button up (in school uniform).

29E gives 24E her boots back.

26E mentions squirrels.

Teacher asks those talking to stop.

The video carries on with ‘trade winds.’

29E and 28E laugh and smile at each other.

25E rests head on desk.

26E probes her head with a pencil.

28E hits 29E on the back and pulls funny face.

28E than talks to 27E and pulls 24E’s hair.

26E looks at 24E.

23E is requested by the teacher to look at television screen.

24E continues fiddling with her tie.

24E takes her tie off and ties it in a bow on the top of her left leg and then covers it up.

24E boogies from side to side.

26E squeaks her chair.

28E pulls her eyebrows up.

24E takes tie off leg and sits on floor in front of 29E.
The video mentions a name of a pupil in the class and many giggle with her.

26E scratches chair again.

27E concentrates on the screen.

23E says 'Ah' (at picture of old man).

26E and 28E laugh.

There is a camel on the video and most of the class like it, the teacher refers to it as their favourite creature.

26E jokingly says, 'It's 28E.'

26E clicks fingers. 23E says 'Stop it!

24E fiddles with 29E's socks.

26E and 25E try to copy each others crossed fingers.

A pupil on the table takes 24E's tie and puts it on, whilst watching the forest being cleared on the video.

29E says she'd 'love that job.'

24E says she'd 'like to garden.'

28E acknowledges 26E, 26E does funny mouth shape and points to wrist for time.

26E then asks 27E, who doesn't know.

23E spots coconuts and says how much she hates them.

The teacher mentions 23E and 25E.

28E yawns.

The video ends with a summary of facts and figures (e.g. no temp. difference between South and North, and 7% of tropical rainforest is destroyed, hot etc.).

Pupils go back to original places.

29E passes the tie back to 24E who proceeds to put it on.

28E asks group 'what time is it?' (usual clock at back is broken).

Re-cap on video by teacher.

26E answers with, '10% cut down used, but 90% burnt.'
26E tells 25E she has something in her eye.

The teacher then says ‘26E’ and she repeats it with the teacher responding that it ‘is probably mascara.’

24E smiles at 27E and pokes towards her eye.

29E tries to explain to the teacher about a program she’d seen recently.

The lesson ends and 24E volunteers to collect the exercise books in at the end.

(DURING BREAK-TIME and the following lunch, 24E was given an extra-large hoodie to wear, that covers her school uniform up, by a friend in the class).

Pupils congregated in form room and mainly listened to iPods and talked (whilst some went out for a small walk).


Teacher takes registers by trying to beat the last record time; they took 18 seconds this time.

They check list and confirm the date to hand in their project (or in detention); they repeat Thursday a number of times.

A friend jokingly asks 28E why she needs to be on her table. 28E sticks her finger up at her.

Her friend says she’s moving!

The teacher talks about the final design.

29E says ‘as much information as you can.’

28E puts cardigan back on.

The teacher tells them that they have all got an ‘A’ at the moment. If you haven’t done enough, it goes down a grade.

28E goes onto the computer and comments on the keyboard, ‘I hate this keyboard, it’s well manky...This keyboard is mankified.’

28E then turns to her friend at the table behind her and asks if she saw ‘Dan’ yesterday.

Her friend said ‘yes’ and she asked if she had a nice time.

26E was on task.
28E asks a general question to the table (when her friend moves from the table) with relation to what they were buying for Christmas for their mutual friend.

Another friend said ‘A hoodie with her name on the back. We’re getting one each, so it’s fair.’

A girl on the same table as 26E said, ‘Oh, 26E, I love your little Robot man’

26E smiles and says ‘Thanks’.

The friend says ‘I’m only joking.’

26E seems to take the alleged joke well.

28E asks another acquaintance if they’re still going out with...guy. They answered ‘yes’.

28E tries to help a pupil by reading out a checklist of work.

29E moves tables.

28E tries to help another acquaintance.

29E gets on with her work independently.

28E jokes at a comment made by an acquaintance.

26E asks for a pencil from one of her friends.

26E asks the teacher if her work was what was wanted and does a ‘High 5’.

26E has her work used as an example for the rest of the class to follow.

26E is rewarded for her work by choosing a gift from a bag. She selects rubbers (and is given chocolate drops anyway).

The table with 26E on all look at 26E’s rubbers and examine them.

One pupil is not aware of ‘the wall of fame’ (where 26E’s work will probably be displayed); it is in the small corridor as you come into the mobile.

26E found extra little faces (stick on) for the rubbers.

29E is asked if a pupil can borrow some colours, but before she can answer, the pupil finds some.
26E is still playing with the rubbers.

There is then a discussion between two tables of pupils about how dangerous it is for the Queen not to wear a hat when horse riding.

29E shows teacher her work so far.

General discussion initiated from one pupil who asks why one pupil is so small. 29E suggests being premature may explain it.

The conversation moved on to the weather when the baby came out of hospital and how two of the group couldn’t get home because of the snow.

29E asks teacher where to put her first pieces of work.

(12.20) – 26E looks for her ‘initial ideas’- it is in the laminator.

28E asks what 23E is doing tonight.

Someone said that 28E had a sex change does everyone know?

Discussion on boy with 28E.

28E pays teacher a compliment about an ‘I love New York’ top (no school uniform) and the lesson finished with discussions on Traffic cops and T.V. chat shows.

LUNCH:

Much of lunch-time for 23E and 25E was spent taking photos of each other around the school. The others remained in their form-room eating lunch, listening to music and making general chit-chat.

MUSIC.

The teacher told the class to stand quietly by their chairs and took the register. She reminded them of the Friday mass and said they may have to practice ‘Peace I give to you’ (a hymn they need to sing).

24E and 27E, 25E and 28E still needed to be assessed along with other groups who were dispersed around the room to the keyboards to practice. They put on their headphones so only they could hear the music.

One group who had already been assessed were sent out to practice a song (which included 26E), whilst the remaining (including 23E) stayed in a group in the room and were asked to
practice (or learn) a song from Bugsy Malone for the forthcoming pantomime.

The girls on the keyboard have their own compositions written on pieces of paper to practice.

28E asks 25E if she needs a tambourine. 25E says, ‘Yes’ (28E gets one from the front).

27E helps 24E by showing her an ‘E’ etc and a few chords.

25E helps 28E.

25E requests that 28E waits for her as she was going fast.

28E tries to start from the beginning and counts, ‘1,2,3 go.’

24E says to 27E ‘I don’t know where you are?’

25E tells 28E to go from a particular place (and points).

25E tells 28E that she must wait for her as 28E was still going at her own pace.

25E tells 28E she is going ahead too much.

25E then tells 28E that ‘you need to hurry up on that one.’

Meanwhile, 24E suggests that her piece is too high.

27E tells 24E to ‘keep it down there’ (and shows her where on the keyboard).

24E asks 27E how to do some of the chords and 27E shows her.

25E shows 28E how to do the tambourine.

23E rushes over to tell her group that Mr. D (a teacher running the pantomime) has cut one of their dances out.

28E acknowledges but asks her to tell them later because they have to do their work.

23E is given a job by the teacher to be in charge of rewinding the tape for their Bugsy song.

28E says to 25E, ‘Don’t stop this time’ and continues to practice.

Meanwhile 24E says, ‘Just do anything’.

27E says, ‘I can’t do that!’

27E plays her bit.
24E watches 27E play and then looks the other way and turns around away from her again.

24E tells me that they hadn't practiced together and they were just going to ad lib.

The assessment took place and the class were asked (for each) to fill a sheet that said whether the piece was in Binary, ternary or rondo.

24E and 27E went third; there piece was in binary.

27E whispers to 24E, 'I do G first. 1,2,3.'

27E smiles on last chord and both concentrate throughout.

24E laughs quietly when they get to the end.

26E smiles at 25E and 28E just before they perform.

Both say '1,2,3 go.' (Their piece was also in binary).

Their paper falls down near the end and 24E reaches over and holds it up for them.

They finish and look pleased with their performance.

They had a few pieces of paper but decided to cut down their performance.

The class are then questioned as to whether they knew the hymn for Friday, but due to time were not able to practice it today. They then left the music room and made their way to Maths., where the group was split. I followed the other half to Tuesday’s Maths. (23E, 29E and 28E).

MATHS:

The class had previously had a supply teacher for the last two lessons and the teacher announced that he wasn’t feeling well today either.

The lesson was about ‘gradients’.

To gauge an understanding of their ‘understanding’ pupils either put their thumbs up completely for complete understanding, waivering up and down for some understanding and pointing down for no understanding. There seemed to be a mixture of understanding and unsurlty. A number of methods were revised first; graphs, pie charts.

28E yawns.
23E chats to her neighbour from the other half of the year who she sits next to.

29E is doing her pony-tail again.

23E answers a question with, 'Science'.

There is a very repetitive knocking noise that is noticed by the class again and especially the teacher who links it to the pipes and acknowledges it has been going on for a while.

The class have to explain an exercise that requires them to describe three different coloured lines.

23E suggests they all run from left to right and is praised by the teacher for her suggestion. ('Pretty good').

28E drinks water from her bottle.

The teacher clarifies that the green line has a negative gradient, the blue has a positive gradient etc.

29E starts to answer a question related to the black line, but says, 'I don’t think it’s right'.

23E and 37G (neighbour) chat briefly.

The class then write information down into their books and are informed that they will get their test back next week with apologies for not marking it this week.

One pupil got 80%, but would not say who.

37G chats briefly to 23E.

28E chats to her neighbour.

23E chats again to 37G (neighbour).

37G (neighbour) says 'I want to know…'

23E puts pencil up to try to stop her talking.

23E then puts hand up and answers a question for the steepest gradient.

The teacher calls 28E by a shortened surname and she shakes her head and refuses to give an answer, when the teacher says, '28E – if you don’t answer (in a friendly way) and describe to the best of your ability…'
28E then turns round to table behind and asks a pupil for the pink flexi ruler (which was her friend's next to her) and she plays with it and then returns it to her neighbour.

23E asks (regarding a different gradient graph) 'how do you know where to start from?'

'Wherever you start from, you get the same answer', stated the teacher and gave a demonstration.

28E writes in marker on her water bottle (x...).

28E neighbour goes out of the class to collect her maths calculator that she has paid for.

When she goes out of the room, 28E calls 29E and 29E doesn't seem to hear.

28E then turns to the table behind her and asks one pupil what they were doing that evening.

28E wrote note on friend's diary.

Lesson on board continues.

28E passes water bottle to table behind and one pupil puts the bottle in the bin at the back of the room near their table.

29E gets the jigsaw out that I gave as a thank you for taking part in the research.

L doodles and writes the word 'Hello' on a tiny piece of paper to pass to her neighbour. She also drew a smiley face with two eyes on their side on her plastic covered exercise book and then rubs it out.

The lesson finishes and the group go off to buses in the school grounds, parents that collect them and the service bus outside the gates.
I met 15C and 18C on the schoolyard and they welcomed me in a friendly manner but seemed unsure and indifferent to where 16C was. They were with a couple of other friends. At one time both suggested that 16C may already or probably was already in the form room. When I went over, 16C was there and I introduced myself again to her. (She was sat around her table).

15C said she would explain the fall-out later.

During registration, 16C said she would not be in first lesson because she and another girl were giving a ‘clogging’ demonstration to children in a local primary school during their assembly. (She was going with her form tutor who was also the P.E. teacher).

The class were also reminded that there was a Mass at 2.25 on Friday afternoon. They also began to discuss their lines for their class assembly on Friday morning.

15C asked me if I’d noticed her outside walking/balancing on her toes, to which I replied that I had indeed and how cleverly she balanced on them. I asked her if she did Ballet. She said she used to.

DANCE for the Pantomime

Both 15C and 18C were in the ‘gangster mice’ group. 16C group had been split amongst the other groups due to shortage of time to practice.

15C chats to friend. 15C tells me that she can sing and is singing in Mass on Friday (although she’s not Catholic, but 18C is). 18C says she is Catholic and must put her name down on the Confirmation list.

18C says she can’t sing. 15C says she loves singing, but is really nervous about Friday. She also checked that I would meet her at break-time on the yard where she and 18C were this morning (to talk about the situation while 16C plays football with the boys).

18C had her dance kit (black leggings, dance shoes, white t-shirt), 15C wore her school blouse and tie and blue shorts which she wore under her school skirt, along with trainers.

The gangster mice say their words and the teacher arranges them in lines (whilst the soldiers in the other group practice on their own and one large group go and sing ‘Barbie Girl’ on the stage with the dance teacher).
Eighteen Year 3s are then brought in to the front of the hall and performed their song for the pantomime to the Year 8s.

The girls were told to sit down and listen.

15C and 18C stood (eating her nails).

The teacher tells 15C and 18C to sit down again.

15C still kneels and moves to the front and watches the Infants.

The teacher congratulates Year 3 for remembering their lines.

(9.50) – 15C and 18C group do their performance. Two pupils at the front make a beat noise (beep box).

The words were: We’re going to beat the soldiers, so listen up to me (18C’s line), it’s up to you and it’s up to me. Huh! (15C’s line). We’re going to make mice history.

ALL (including 18C and 15C): We’re doing it for the Mouse Queen.

15C asks if she can do the ‘Huh!’

(Carrying on)...crackers and cheese, fricka, fricka fresh. Don’t push me ‘cos I’m close to the edge. We’re trying not to lose our tails!

The teacher moves to the other group.

16C arrives back and sees the teacher who puts her back into 18C and 15C group on the back row.

I asked if she’d had a good ‘clogging’. She said it was embarrassing.

16C than watches group and grabs lines to learn.

15C and 18C go over to talk to 16C.

15C whispers to 16C and then hugs her neck.

15C whispers to 16C again and 16C shakes her head and moves away and watches the other group.

18C moves towards 16C.

18C then moves to her other friend.

15C goes back to 16C and talks again.

15C touches 16C’s jumper and 16C smiles. 16C moves away again.
15C then asks teacher if she can go to the toilet, but there were only less than five minutes left, so could wait.

18C is still with her friend who is playing with her long plat.

There seems to now be reciprocal conversation between 15C and 16C.

The group practice again and 15C and 16C speak across 18C friend.

The group are running late and leave their kit on to go to the next lesson (D.T.).

Design and Technology – D.T. mobile – Mrs. R.

(They sit anywhere, but certain areas of the room and certain tables are designated for certain activities, such as painting, laminating, sanding, hot-wiring etc.).

The teacher asked 15C if she’d found her pen-drive and she says ‘yes’. 18C sits on the painting table and goes over to 16C to ask her to move onto the painting table.

16C and 18C sit on the painting table as their Perspex needs painting. 15C remains on the front table.

16C speaks to her neighbour as she carries on with her work.

The teacher asks the class who needs mirrors and a few put their hand up.

The teacher said: ‘I thought an order would have gone in, but at the moment it hasn’t’

After a few minutes, the teacher says again, ‘I’ll see if we can put an order in today.’

15C tries to open a new pack of paint brushes with difficulty and a lot of noise.

The teacher says to 15C to leave them for a minute and ‘stop fiddling while I’m talking.’

18C eats her nails.

The teacher explains about new aprons and looking after brushes etc.

18C talks to 15C and gets told off by the teacher.

The class get on with their work and 15C mentions 16C to 18C and her neighbour.
15C turns to me and says she's rubbish at D.T. and can't draw. She also said that each year she decided to be good at D.T. but it didn't happen.

16C puts her hand up and asks about the task.

18C tries to take the tape off her frame and her neighbour helps her.

15C tells me that 16C can't sit next to her because 16C was painting and she wasn't. She then asked me to smell a jar that had been passed to two others, including 18C. It was a water jar but smelt of vinegar or pickles.

16C comes over to 15C and 18C's table with teacher to check some paints, and then 15C whispers to her and both walk over to the class-room door.

15C then sits down and gets on with painting her hearts. 15C's other friend called 15C a 'Whiz-biz' at Maths. 15C says she loves Maths.

18C said she liked Science because of the experiments.

The conversation then moved on to J.L.S. (band) and their appearance in Rhyl after Christmas and who's going and on which row they're sitting.

The teacher told pupils off for mixing up the jars (no water jars with lids, they are for paints so they don't dry up between lessons).

18C gets told off and has to empty the pink water out (She does on the outside steps to the mobile as 16C tells me – We now have a pink step, which both 16C and 18C found amusing).

(10.40) – 15C says she doesn't have anything else to do. She helps a friend tie her apron.

16C asks 15C about work and what to do next.

15C then went back to 16C to ask her about her piece of Perspex.

15C writes the word 'DANCE' in permanent pen onto her frame but mixes letter size as it went wrong, she then looks at the clock (10.45) and asks why when you hate something time goes slowly.

16C comes over and asks 15C to help her place her double-sided tape on her plastic. 15C holds it down for her (and stands on her toes).
18C is on the computer making a logo of CF (which means C for 15C and F for 18C herself).

15C then tried to peel off her double-sided sticky tape and was struggling on her own. I offered her help and she said that she'd never had anyone offer help to her before and accepted gracefully. She said that because she was a 'whiz' in Maths., people thought she was good at everything else.

The teacher called the girls round for a 'glitter' demonstration.

18C dries her red rectangle.

15C sits next to 16C who had her glitter on in the demonstration and 15C then tried to put hers on but when she knocked her excess off it went over 16C work and they giggled. The teacher noticed and 16C tried hard to clear the mixed up glitter and return to the appropriate bottles without the teacher coming over.

I was asked if the purple looked purple and the silver, silver.

The teacher called the group over for a quick demonstration of how to use sticky-back tape effectively.

15C says she hates those 'gatherings' and sits at the back.

CI said to me as she passed between 16C table and 18C at the computer, that she finds it hard being in the middle as 16C and 18C are not close. 15C circulates between 18C and 16C.

The lesson finished but equipment remained because after break-time, they came back for another hour.

BREAK-TIME:

The girls played football on the yard with the boys, who 16C and 15C introduced to me one by one.

On the way back to the class 15C started to explain what happened in the incident last week when she ran away from school to escape initial punishment.

She said it started when she brought in a French book instead of her Welsh book and was told off.

She said she'd tell me more in D.T. whilst doing work and asked me if I was ready for her chat (she was queuing for the hot-wire machine), 18C was laminating and 16C was on the computer.

15C said that she set up this 'I hate T1' web-site on Facebook (she mentioned joke), which members joined. During the early hours of the following morning, word got back to CI and she
became scared that T1 knew, so she ran away on the Monday last week.

When she returned, there were about six members that remained on the site that could be traced (including 15C) and these met with P.C. Chris the next day and were required as part of their punishment to wear school uniform on a no-uniform day on the Friday.

15C and 16C seemed friends up to this point but then 15C said that 16C said she was using her and 15C said sorry but they didn’t seem to speak after that much. 15C had had Facebook closed down and hence couldn’t contact 16C and after 16C had the cervical cancer injection on the Wednesday, she was ill and only returned today. This explains the behaviour this morning when 16C was in the form-room whilst 15C and 18C were on the yard. Because they hadn’t spoken for almost a week they weren’t sure what to do and who should make the first move.

In the lesson 15C came over to talk and laugh briefly with 16C and 15C helps a class mate with designing her final design on the computer who joined in with their small discussion. 15C mentioned ‘fake dad’ and the class-mate questioned this description and 15C went to her bag and pulled out a message which she showed the others that seemed to explain the use of the original term. 15C and 16C both moved towards the centre of the room whispering, but laughing.

(12.05) - The girls go off into the middle again but his time are more serious. I go over and state that they sound like two old ladies! They then get involved with another class-mate who this argument involves and is related to in terms of a rumour being spread.

The rumour relates to somebody setting up ‘I hate 15C’ group (not on web but ‘real’ as 15C says). The class-mate who was being accused (also a supposed friend) genuinely seemed to know nothing at all about this, I explained how dangerous rumours could be and even 15C said she didn’t think it would be true but the person who told her this she trusted. This situation seemed to disperse as quickly as it originated.

15C said to me that she was getting nervous of Friday. I said the singing (she said no), then the speaking in assembly (she said no). She told me she had to have a counselling session between 11 and 12.

I suggested (15C) (as she was still waiting for her work to melt enough to bend) could help the teacher (as she’d helped a lot of class-mates today) by washing up the water pots in the next mobile. The teacher agreed.
The lesson finished and I helped to clean up the painting tables. The girls went off to play football, (15C) on the yard, 18C went to football training on the top field with the P.E. teacher. (16C) had to go to finish off some I.T. work (as she was off) and waited outside the room after her dinner, but at 1.15 she gave up waiting (no teacher to open up) and went back to the form room.

I went back to the form-room and it was invaded by three girls from Year 9 who 16C knew and often visited, complete with foundation etc.

REGISTRATION:

After registers, the whole class do a Mexican wave (except 15C who was really the last link).

ENGLISH – T2 + inspector, plus learning assistant.

The English room had been rearranged in terms of the shape of tables to encourage group work.

The lesson was about persuasive language and had three outcomes on the board for pupils:
- To recall from previous lesson how the language is used to promote and sell.
- Have an understanding of how persuasive language can be used when selling houses.
- Work with others to produce a house description of their own.

Once these outcomes were met, the class were going to play a version of ‘Through the Keyhole’ and ‘Who lives in a house like this?’

18C sat there consuming her pink ruler.
16C was fiddling with her hair slide.
15C faced the front with her back to 16C and puts her glasses on to focus on the board.

15C answers a question relating to rich vocabulary in the Marks and Spencer’ adverts..

16C leans across her table to catch the attention of the pupil opposite and has a brief conversation which ends in shared humour.

The teacher then puts up a number of descriptions to sell properties and then asks what the dwelling will look like (and then shows the real and often amusing picture that was often economical with the truth).

15C says, ‘that one’s mine!’ pointing to a clapped out derelict caravan.
The class find one picture especially interesting as they gasp and laugh. A crocodile was stood up on its back legs against a property for sale in Florida and described as coming with its very own a wild-life garden!

18C mentions a property by the sea having lots of wind and explains compact as being too close.

15C suggests 'light and airy' means coming without a roof (which was exactly as the picture depicted).

15C also suggested that by implying a 'rural location' meant in the 'middle of nowhere.'

16C has a small coughing spree.

15C and 18C smile at each other.

15C turns round to 16C for a brief second.

16C has her head down on her desk (still with slide in right hand).

15C puts her hand up and removes her glasses. She says, 'wouldn't it be funny if you sold a house and it was a kennel?'

The teacher then hands out estate agent brochures to the groups on each table and directs them to describe the property using persuasive language.

18C and 15C discuss their brochure with each other (briefly) and then with the rest of the group.

16C still has her head down and then takes part in her group.

15C reads the brochure. 18C tries to move and sit next to 16C and 15C. 16C then talks to 15C.

Teacher asks what they're doing and are told to return to their seats.

16C asks teacher a question to clarify task.

15C says she 'can't think.'

15C comes over to me to complain about the situation. I sent her back quickly (She was annoyed at the support worker who was with the pupil next to her interrupting their group (as she said) and wanted the pupil to be part of the group without the interference as she was capable of including and helping her.
After about 5 minutes, the groups then report back their description of the property in the brochure.

15C answered for her group and noticed a low maintenance garden and said it would be rubbish and that it didn’t show the garden.

18C looks at the brochure again.

16C has her hand up to answer for her group and answers the task by referring to small print and that fittings etc. had not been tested.

18C says there are no stairs and the price is £600,000 and is by a stream with carpets included in the sale.

15C asks to looks at that brochure that 18C is describing by pointing at it. 18C turns it round and holds it up to her. 15C nods.

The next tasks was 'Who lives in this house?' and each group was given a secret brown envelope that had the picture of a famous abode in it that the group had to use persuasive language to describe it.

15C suggests to the group that they pass the envelope round when they get it and when the envelope arrives 15C says 'ssh!' and puts her finger to her mouth.

15C turns round to the other table and tries to catch a glimpse of the other groups’ envelope.

15C goes to the teacher but is sent back to her seat.

15C group have Spongebob Squarepants’ house and 15C has Shrek’s house.

(2.15) – All on task.

16C reads out the description to her group.

The groups all then present their work.

16C mentions ‘outside spa’ (swamp).

18C answers with Dr. Who for another group.

15C had her hand up to guess another groups’ house. The house was ‘set in London and had its own Alarm clock’ (Big Ben).
15C and 18C group go to the front and say a line each of their description in turn and then another line, before the class guess the answer.

Another group present their work and 16C has her hand up first, then 15C and 18C put theirs up (the answer was ‘Simpsons’).

The last group presents their work and 15C puts her hand up and then 16C and 18C. 16C is desperate to answer as she shoots her hand upwards and leaves contact with her chair.

18C puts two hands up. (The answer ‘Hogwarts’ was then given).

The teacher summarises the lesson.

15C roles up what looks like a strip of blue tack.

16C still fiddles with hair slide.

18C eats her nails.

15C makes an S shape with the tack and holds it up.

The teacher asks each group what their market is for their advert they are continuing next lesson. 16C says theirs was for families with young people.

The table next to me when packing their things up mention ‘Facebook’ and a group.

16C pokes 15C’s bag on way out.

WELSH – T1

I reminded 16C to do her top button up and she quickly thanked me non-verbally.

16C is asked what she is doing by the window, like a prisoner.

16C is then asked to sit properly in case she falls off her chair.

The objective of the previous lesson was to explain why learning poems was so beneficial. Various reasons were highlighted; for pronunciation, improve memory, to build self-confidence, for intonation (not robot voice) and to encourage fluency in the Welsh language.

A pupil is told to do their top button up and 16C looks at me and discretely gives me the thumbs up.

15C pokes 18C.
PowerPoint of a poem put on board as the class recite.

11065

15C was off last lesson and seemed appropriately impressed when the class began reciting.

The class had small groups and one person recited one line, another did the next line and so on.

11070

18C said first line (Bydd craig ar draeth Llangrannog – There is a rock in Llangrannog).

11075

16C said second line (Er dechran cynta’r byd – since the beginning of the world).

The other pupils in the group finish the verse (teasing the wind and waves and it is still there).

11080

The teacher then put the next part of the poem up on PowerPoint and gave the groups time to learn it. (A phan fo’r storm ar ddyfod, brydd gwylain y un cor, yn crio’n drist ar ysgwydd, y graig ar lan y mor – when the storm comes, the sea-gulls sing as one choir and they sadly cry on the shoulder of the rock by the sea).

11085

16C group do theirs first followed by 15C who add actions to theirs with 18C speaking last.

11090

15C does the first and last line.

11095

16C does the second line.

The teacher is pleased with their learning and then introduces ‘book work’.

11100

18C moves back (next to 15C).

(3.00) – 18C and 15C talk as they look at the rain.

11105

15C tries the first verse without looking then 18C has a go.

15C has her hand up.

The group try to learn the next verse from the PowerPoint. (Dan bwysau’r maith ganrifoedd, fe aeth ei chefn yn grwm, a thyfod crach o gregyn, dros ei hystlysau llwm – under the pressure of centuries, its back went curved and the scab of a shell grew over its bleak sides).

The teacher asked the groups to learn the verse and practice.

16C was told off for swinging on three legs.

11110

11115

18C tries to poke 15C with a pen twice.
The teacher explains the illustration of chefnyn grwm crach o gregyn (barnacles on the rock), and explained that the sea tried to demolish it.

The poem continues: Bu’r mor yn celsio’l chwalu, sawl milwalth, ar fy ngwir, ond dailodd hi, i’w herlo, dyna i chi herio hir? – The sea tried to demolish it, truly, many thousands of times, but it continues to tease/challenge, will it continue to tease/challenge?

16C asks if this is true?

The teacher says the rock is still there.

15C puts white on her nose.

18C puts pen in mouth and 15C wipes it off with white out and cuts her lip.

15C shouts ‘ah, I’m bleeding!’

18C is worried about her pen going from white to red.

15C goes out and wipes her mouth in the toilets.

18C tries to get the blood off her pen.

18C asks if she is going first?

18C turns round.

16C eats her pen lid on her finger.

15C returns.

15C says she’s not talking to 18C. (In a joking manner).

The teacher puts up the final verse on PowerPoint - A phan a’n llwch ein cestyll, a thyrau ucha’r byd, bydd craig ar draeth Llangranog, yn herio’r mor o hyd – and when our castle and the high towers of the world are dust, there will be a rock on Llangranog beach.

16C talks to 15C about what happened, mainly non-verbally.

(3.15) – The class are requested to copy the whole poem down.

16C tries to ask 15C again what happened?

15C does an action on her mouth and points to 18C. 16C goes ‘Oh!’

15C talks about the rain (Concerned about their football match).
11170 (3.20) – The teacher sets the class a homework to think about preparing an information pamphlet of 100 words of the local area.

11175 16C is still eating her pen lid.

15C checks the rain again.

(3.25) – 18C checks the clock.

11180 The class were asked if they knew anyone who was famous in their area?

Mark Webster was mentioned (world number 1 darts player).

11185 HM Stanley and the mission in Africa was mentioned.

Lisa from Steps was mentioned along with Isaac Roberts.

11190 There was then an argument about how bad Rhyl was with some of the class disputing this point.

15C and 18C have a small non-verbal conversation before the class are asked to pack away.

11195 Year 8 participant observation: 20th November.

The class were originally doing their class assembly today, but it has been postponed as there is a full school Mass last thing in the afternoon (it was also the first Mass for the new Head teacher). The Nun arranging the Mass wanted to speak to the school about this important event.

11200 I went with the class and stood at the back of the hall (where I used to stand when I was teaching there) – I think some children think I have come back on supply teaching and accept me as part of the furnishings.

11210 Sister likened the emotions of Jesus (our special guest) to feelings we may have if JLS or our favourite band were coming, the excitement etc. and put a special box at the front if anyone wanted to put a message in it. She also explained the system where people who hadn’t been Confirmed could only take a blessing and keep their hands crossed in front of them, whilst others who had been Confirmed could take the bread and wine and needed to go to the Priest.

15C was not Catholic.

11220 18C wanted to put her name on the Confirmation classes list.
HISTORY:

Both 15C and 16C entered the class-room with a glass of water each and having made their way to their seats, were asked to place their glasses at the front.

Homework lists were called out (yes, yes means they were here and have done the homework):

16C was not here the lesson before.

15C said ‘yes, yes’

18C said, ‘yes, no’ and was asked with others to come and explain at the beginning of lunch.

15C reminds me that she has her meeting at ten to eleven and has to leave early.

15C goes through her big bag and emerges her head in it. She pulls out her homework diary and a pen.

The lesson started with a question: How and why did the Church change under Edward VI? And the word ‘Protestant’ was explained.

15C speaks to 16C (she has the sun in her eyes).

18C does her tie up.

16C re-does her hair in a bun.

The teacher asks the class to write three things that the people in the picture on the board are protesting about.

15C turns and smiles at 18C and then back.

15C looks at the clock (9.25).

15C writes down ‘going to church’ and then asks me for another answer.

15C puts her hand up and explains ‘heretic.’

The teacher has a seating plan and asks if she has moved? 15C points to behind and they are asked to sit there next lesson.

15C answers a question with ‘goes against their religion’ and the teacher adds ‘King wanting Catholics’ cash.’

16C redoes hair.

15C puts her hand up again.
15C has money in her hand.

The teacher asks, 'Why did Protestants protest against Catholics?'

15C goes into her bag for her glasses. (9.35).

The teacher shows some slides on the board with torture.

16C answers the teachers' question with 'to get stuff out of them.'

15C adds 'stuff about other heretics.'

18C also chirps in with 'confess all bad things.'

Both 15C and 16C answer questions regarding a map on the board.

18C has hand up as she continues to eat her pen.

The teacher introduces the word 'defenestrate' (throw out the window) and says they will never need it, but he liked it anyway (in relation to the action on the picture).

Teacher then pointed out that he was related to the Archbishop on the source. However, Archbishops are not supposed to get married!

16C then answers the question as to why they were killing each other. Catholics don't agree that...

15C mentions the Pope.

(9.45) – 16C turns round and smiles at me and plays with 15C's glasses (on the desk).

15C looks at the time.

18C smiles at me.

16C chats to 15C.

15C answers another question.

18C bends ruler and eats it while listening.

A picture was put up and the class were asked to guess the expression that was linked to it. Both 16C and 15C called out.
15C says '2-faced'.

16C says '2-faced liar'.

16C and 15C talk about the answer and then write it down.

15C puts her hand up and 15C looks at the clock.

15C reads 16C's answer and then carries on with her answer.

The teacher asked the class how you make a Pope and asked them all to put their hands up and he said 'like that' (vote).

15C asks who's the Pope now (Pope Benedict).

15C looks at clock.

A picture was put up to talk about and describe.

16C shouts out that 'there are eyes on his ar....bum!' (laughs with embarrassment).

18C writes.

Teacher suggests the class leave the bit about the bottom out of their books in case of inspection.

15C and most of the others go 'ooh! I've already written it!'

15C asks the teacher what he believes in (Anglican – Church of England).

The class then describe in their books the definition of the 'tithe' (tax, one tenth collected by the Church).

16C shows 15C something she's written on the page before in her book (both laugh).

15C looks at the clock again and asks me if I can tell the teacher and hand in her homework.

16C says 'Good luck'.

15C leaves for the counsellor.

When 15C has gone, 16C moves up to 18C.

The teacher asks what 'the most impressive building in Chester is?'

16C puts her hand up and answers 'Chester Zoo'.

18C then makes one large moan (the teacher says 'Moan?').
18C says 'I don’t like writing.'

The teacher introduces the word ‘Pluralism’ and asks what it means.

18C puts her hand up.

16C puts her hand on her chin and asks ‘what’s a plural?’

15C looks at clock (10.02).

18C nods at 16C.

18C writes in book.

16C also works.

The teacher sums up the lesson.

18C talks to 16C and 18C smiles.

16C eats rubber bit off pen to make it bigger to fit back on it again.

The question of Henry VIII's religion was posed – Catholic or Protestant and the class discussed this.

18C meanwhile shows 16C her chocolate milk drink for break-time and me her crisps in her bag.

Homework sheets were given out and I took one for 16C and wrote down the instructions on it for her.

On the way out, 16C collected her glass of water from the front.

FRENCH

18C was asked to move after the register because a few were off and she would need to work in partners; she moved near the front in the middle section.

16C was also asked to move up (into 16C’s chair) but she says it was 15C’s chair and she may be back.

18C moves.

The class were learning about the weather: Quel temps fait-il?

The class all answer as a picture is shown:

16C says ‘Il pleut’.
18C says ‘Il fait chaud’ and ‘Il neige.’
The teacher says, ‘Ecoutez.’

16C asks what the picture is depicting — fog.

The teacher realises that there was a chart with all of the answers on it, so made the whole class turn round — she came to the back and used it as the front.

18C tried ‘Il y de bll (teacher says, ‘not easy’).

‘Il y a du brouillard’ says the teacher.

The teacher asked for anyone to do all eight for a merit.

16C clapped for everyone doing it.

18C does it.

16C looks at neighbours’ homework diary.

16C sneezes twice.

18C smiles and has a go and with help she achieves a merit (‘Bravo’ says the teacher).

Teacher says ‘doesn’t anyone else want a merit?’ — 16C shakes her head negatively.

16C asks about merits on her neighbours’ diary and explains where she is up to.

16C doodles on lined note paper before she copies down her weather phrases

16C asks what ‘chaud’ is? — I told her to look at the chart on the door.

16C then asks how to draw certain symbols for her weather.

16C is then asked to move her bag under the table as it was sticking out.

16C asks the teacher if she can teach them Welsh as well? (teacher can teach both).

On the lined paper, 16C writes ‘Will U marry me’ and passes it to her next door neighbour who wants to keep it and puts in her bag.

16C talks about hair and curls to her neighbour.

Her neighbour has to do up her top button.
The next section of the lesson involved answering the question 'what do you do when it’s raining?' (Que fais tu quand il pleut?).

16C says she plays on her computer in her bedroom (Je joue à l'ordinateur dans ma chambre).

18C looks at the clock (10.55).

15C has one blue hair bobble on right wrist.

18C says ‘Aussi regarde la tele.’ (with help).

16C looks at the clock.

16C yawns.

16C moves next to her new partner and tries to begin answering, ‘Quand il y a du soleil?’ and asks the teacher for the whole French phrase for ‘I go swimming in the sea?’

The teacher says to look in her folder. With help (mainly from the teacher in stages) she manages to write it.

16C’s neighbour bites her orange pen and looks shocked.

The teacher ends the lesson and the girls leave saying one type of weather.

BREAK-TIME

I went to the art room with 16C and 18C as 18C was finishing her art work.

16C said that she was moving school and going to the school down the road where all of her old friends were.

I asked if she’d see her friends again and she said ‘no’.

She said that she didn’t like the teachers here and although she may not like all the teachers at her new school it’d be O.K.

I then went into the play-ground and 15C had been waiting for me. I took the ball that came over and ‘tackled’ 15C without contact and passed the ball to another pupil – 15C seemed to be amazed and went on to tell her friends.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The class were sitting in alphabetical order so spread out. I sat at the back next to 15C.

When a pupil gave out the Bible, 15C and her had a brief comical conversation and 15C told me that the girl didn’t feed
her cats (obviously had a different interpretation within a previous lesson).

16C is asked if she needed to go out: (She replied 'no').
15C volunteers to read first and then points to the next line for her neighbour.

The lesson revolves around the Garden of Eden.

15C takes out her ‘special’ book and writes in it.
16C then reads (her neighbour declined first, but 16C still read).

18C fiddles with her tie.

15C reads again and then writes more of her poem in her special book: (The unwanted Child – crying at night, Left alone, never wanted...).

16C reads again.

15C carries on with her lists in her special book.

18C eats her pen.

The class were then asked to read quietly and imagine they were there.

15C asks me what she needed to do, closed her book and began writing the story of Adam and Eve from Adams’ point of view in her exercise book.

The class were asked to pack away and leave quietly.

The class moved more or less to next door mobile to Geography:

(I sit near 18C and 15C) – The lesson was about ‘siting a settlement’.

18C speaks to 15C.

18C shows 15C a smiling face on her Geography book. 15C tells her to rub it out.

15C writes title from the board.

16C asks what the title says.

The class look at a map taken from the air of Warkworth, Northumberland.

The register was to be taken but the teacher couldn’t get onto Sims.
The text is read and 15C asks me if she can write me a poem.

15C gets her glasses ready, book on desk, but says she's only brought a pen and doesn't have a pencil that she needs to draw the map.

18C shares her pencil with 15C.

The teacher reminds the class to use a sharp pencil. 16C checks the sharpness of her pencil.

15C puts her hand up as she had been to Northumberland in response to the teachers' question.

The teacher asks why was the castle built?

18C answers with 'water all way round it'.

15C writes in her book.

18C plays with her pen/ruler.

The teacher asks what do they need to put on their map that are features on the photograph?

16C, 15C and 18C put their hands up to suggest an answer.

The teacher adds the features suggested from the pupils onto a picture on the board.

15C carries on with her special book writing in it with one hand and putting the other up (whilst waiting for 18C's pencil).

18C sharpens her pencil.

18C borrows rubber from table behind her.

15C writes more poems, one about 18C.

15C then stops and borrows 18C pencil.

18C puts her hand up to answer with 'bridge'.

15C goes back to her special book.

18C sighs.

Teacher asks the difference between the two bridges and clarifies that the big bridge is the newer bridge and explains why.

15C carries on with her poem in her special book.
The teacher asks about ‘travel’ and 18C answers with actions included for a ‘horse’.

The whole class finish drawing the features from the board and 15C says her Church is in the river!

15C then complains to me that her wisdom teeth hurt.

The class pack up and go to lunch.

LUNCH-TIME

15C and 18C play football all lunch-time. I observe and occasionally pass the ball back into play. 15C suggests I referee.

16C remains in the class-room. When asked where the three Year 9 are, she says (along with other form members) that they have been banned from coming into their form room as they left it in a mess, writing on board etc.

MATHS – T8.

The class are given their own whiteboard and pen (including me).

The class were given their work/books back. 15C, 16C and 18C let me read their comments. All three comments were excellent and read something like this: excellent (or very good) work so far this year. You show a really good understanding of all the topics covered. Keep up the good work.

15C had a note about neatness.

The register was then taken.

18C draws a cat and writes ‘15C’ next to it. 15C draws a happy face.

15C then writes on her board: ‘My name, what more can I say, she brightens up the room, every day!’

The teacher introduces ‘Ratio’.

The teacher looks at me and says the class are acting ‘giddy’.

15C looks at a pupil behind her as she answers the allegation with, ‘cos we’ve got Maths’.

15C smiles at her and under her breath says, ‘sucker’.

Ratios were then practiced and I held my board up along with the group on the table.
15C was always very quick at getting the answer (with 16C and 18C not far behind).

15C told me that we were going to get five questions.

To split the groups up into ability the teacher tried to set five questions and then ticks were counted. However, most people admitted to getting all five right.

16C tried to raise her board on one question and caught the edge so it fell under a chair; 15C helped her to retrieve it.

When an example was given using chocolate brownies, 16C goes, 'erh'.

15C then says 'I love this' when percentages are introduced.

The teacher reminds the class of Mass.

The lesson concludes and I go with the girls to Mass which follows a rigid structure. 15C and 16C smile at me during the service and I reciprocate.

At the end of Mass I say goodbye to the girls and thank them for letting me 'hang around' with their group this week. I wish them a good weekend.
Appendix 2e - Year 7 participant observation: 24th November.

I met up with 1A and asked her to re-introduce her group to me as it was three weeks since I'd met them and needed reminding of faces matching names on the tape I'd transcribed. They were happy for me to follow them and seem to be looking forward to it, but I was told that two of the group had fallen out. (1A and 2A). They had fallen out on the bus and 1A was there but 2A had gone off with 4A. 3A said they were talking on the bus to school (she was there) and 2A got annoyed 'cos she thought 1A was being silly and noisy, so she fell out.

1A explained their timetable to me.

The form room was in the Chemistry lab. and the boys sat around one long table, the group I was observing were mainly together except for 4A who was with the next group along, but nearby.

The class were reminded of their class service but told that although they were scheduled for the Christmas slot, due to other classes being moved or missing their slots (due to practices for Mass etc.), they may not have to do theirs until after Christmas. To cover their backs, the teacher asked if anyone could sing or play an instrument if necessary. One pupil volunteered to sing and 1A volunteered to play the Flute and Jingle Bells.

1A and 2A talked in registration and were friends again.

MATHS – T8.

A sheet was given out for a multiplication test.

5A lends 1A a cartridge.
The teacher explains how to fill the grid in. If 5 on top, 12 to left, multiply at the top of the grid and asks for an answer.

Hands go up (answer 60).

1A has scarf on.

1A starts filling in a square and the teacher says not to start yet (1A covers her answer up).

2A and 4A talk.

The teacher times 8 minutes and 20 seconds.

3A asks 5A a question about the work.

1A speeds on in a methodological fashion with what looks like a plan.
1A asks 3A one answer.

1A talks briefly to 3A.

1A finishes the grid and fills in the bottom columns (extra) and then puts her hand up to say she’s finished. (The teacher is busy, but soon says stop and put pens down).

1A puts her hand down.

Both 2A and 4A ask to borrow colours to mark their work from 6A neighbour.

When 131 is mentioned, 5A says ‘Oh’ in disappointment (then lost where she was up to).

Then another pupil said it was 132 and teacher says it was correct and 5A went ‘yes!’

3A helps 5A (by pointing).

3A says ‘got 2 wrong and only 1 off’.

5A and 3A compare marks for the 5 times table.

2A says a couple of words to 4A and smiles.

Some pupils get a calculator from the front.

1A turns round and asks what 3A and 5A got.

They said they were still adding it up.

1A got 140 out of 144 (138 really).

5A said ‘She’ (meaning 1A) and then said ‘I only got 81, what did you do 1A?’

6A turns and asks what 1A got. 81 (5A tells 1A, 3A had 81 like her).

Two volunteers were selected to give out books and sheets (6A and 2A).

When 6A gave the books out, she told the group she had got 80.

(9.45) – continue from last lesson.

5A leaves seat and walks passed 1A’s table onto 4A’s table and talks to 4A male neighbour. A small conversation occurs about the sheets and 5A is sent back to her seat.
She tells me that last lesson she answered the questions (and 3A) onto the sheets and not in her exercise books and was seeing if the pupil had the sheet with her graph on.

The teacher sets the questions and reminds pupils of where they should be up to.

3A puts her hand up when the teacher explains and is told to listen first.

5A and 3A giggle quietly.

5A is concerned that her watch is displaying 25th as a date (not 24th).

2A and 4A have their hands up.

5A is still trying to alter her watch.

3A gets on with work.

2A and 4A laugh again but both have hands up and ask a question about one of the sums.

The teacher takes their concerns and explains them to the class (equivalent fractions).

The wind gets up outside and 3A looks at me and smiles.

2A and 4A listen well.

5A, 3A and 1A get on with work.

I ask 2A if she's now O.K. from across the class-room she nods.

When I go over to them they seem to be getting on with similar questions to those explained on the board and seem to be fine and 2A says she's drawing brownies to work it out.

5A rubs her grid out and asks 3A to do it for her (‘cos she's rubbish).

2A and 4A stare obviously at one of the boys next to 6A.

5A says she's bored and thanks 3A for doing her grid.

3A says she needs to draw the lines on the grid.

1A drops her ruler under 5A chair and turns round to pick it up and taps 5A's leg in the process.

4A and 2A gossip and smile again, so I go over and ask them what they're talking about; they say they're playing a game by
matching up the boys to girls in the class, but they were stuck on one boy on the next table, but 2A thought 4A should be put with him (and smiled).

Equivalent fractions were explained and all calculators, sheets etc. were collected in before the group made their way to the changing rooms to get changed for dance and pantomime practice.

DANCE (In the Maths room because of year 11 Mocks in the hall).

Tables were moved back to the edges.

2A and 6A were puppets and in the group in the studio.

4A, 1A, 5A and 3A were all dolls.

A had to lean on the shoulders of another pupil and giggled and found it difficult to keep her back straight, so was swapped for the pupil next to her and 5A sat on the chair with a doll-like position.

1A yawns.

The teacher has ‘workers’ who help change dolls’ positions and winders (who wind toys up) and actual dolls who move mechanically and sing.

The teacher rehearses the seven movements of the dolls and the head movements from side to side (when the song reaches ‘under a spell’).

Boys peer in (10.50) and are told to go back to the library as there’s no room here for them.

1A looks at 3A.

All the dancers are put in a comedy position by the helpers. 1A walks over to 5A and says ‘I’m a reindeer’. (She had her thumbs in her ears like antlers).

5A had her hand on her tummy and one on her head.

4A and her partner point their first fingers at each other in a sideways position.

6A helps to re-arrange the toys into their positions.

The class have another practice and then are sent to get changed before their break-time; they have to put tables back.

BREAK-TIME
1A and 2A go for a quick snack in the dining room and then because the weather is not very nice (windy) they all meet in the D.O.L. (lockers). 5A made up a song about Barney the dinosaur that she sang, something like: Barney is a dinosaur from our imagination, he stuck his finger up his bum, which gave him constipation!!

The girls just generally sang and chatted during break-time and shared the space with a number of other years as they're not allowed in the Chemistry lab during break-times.

I asked a group of girls whilst waiting to go into R.E. what they did last lesson. They explained that they meditated, had a 'weird' supply teacher and talked about the Big Bang, but implied they didn't understand or learn anything as he taught science and not Religious Education.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION – Miss M (supply teacher).

Last lesson they also had a supply teacher and this supply teacher had become aware of an issue that had arisen from the previous lesson where the class may have misunderstood and believed that the Big Bang created the Earth etc. and not God (as the teacher put a very scientific slant on the lesson, as the pupils stated). The teacher had to clarify that all things are created and if there was a Big Bang, who instigated it and where did the rocks come from or the chemicals that reacted come from. She reiterated the fact that God created everything and brought the class's attention to the notion of Faith, Adam and Eve, the Bible etc. and the fact that we can trust God, he is our friend etc.

During the discussion, 2A, 6A and 3A pass their homework diary around with notes to each other in it. The notes said things like, 'Hiya 2A, I'm so bored', with smiley pictures. At one point the teacher walks over and 2A says, 'She's coming!' and give the book back to 6A who pretends to be writing on her paper.

Comments were still being called out about last lesson like 'Don't get it – It was Science...he was trying to put us asleep!'

The three girls passed me their diaries and notepads to look at and there were odd notes to each other in there, relating to being bored, one read, 'Dear Miss H, 6A doesn't understand the spider diagram' (written by a friend). There was also a list of nicknames for the group in two of the diaries (relating to what was said on the tape) and 2A explained these to me: Lolable (2A) – just because she kept being called ‘Lol' Flicable (3A) – because 2A kept flicking her on the bus and she didn't mind or notice. Ponyable – (4A) because she likes horses and riding.
Bananable (SA) – because she likes bananas.
Catable – (1A) because it's similar to her name and probably because she likes cats!
Blankable – (6A) because she doesn't talk as much as some of the others.
(I was reminded that my nickname was 'watchable').

The teacher then put definitions of 'religion' and 'secular' on the board with the title 'Christmas or Xmas?' The class were expected to make a list of what was religious and what was secular.

The class completed the small task and then packed away quickly and made their way to Geography (next door mobile).

GEOGRAPHY.

The class watched a 22 minute video on Volcanoes in more or less silence. The teacher asked them to look out for peanut butter and tomato sauce.

2A tries to contact one of the boys, but he doesn't hear.

3A is giving the job to press 'play'.

5A smiles at and mutters briefly to 3A (opposite her).

4A smiles at 3A and 3A reciprocates the smile. (5A goes to the toilet).

At the end of the video, the teacher gives a general summary of the video and asks class questions.

The class then pack away and go to lunch.

LUNCH-TIME.

Again it was windy and not very pleasant...The group went for their lunch in the dining hall.

Most of the group went onto the field and played, but according to 1A, 2A walked off to join 4A. They were discussing boys and the fact that one boy liked 4A but 4A said to 2A that she didn't like the idea...

1A, 5A and 3A tried to tell me why they'd fallen out over lunch. They said that they were on the field and playing, but 2A just left. They thought she wanted to be with 4A. I spoke to 4A and 2A who were with another group including a couple of boys and they were all teasing 4A about a boy who they were trying to match her up with, but she wasn't having any of it and seemed to be getting a bit upset about it. 2A said that 1A and the group were being silly and left the field because of this.
1A, 5A and 3A arrived back and were all ready to complain about 2A's behaviour and seemed annoyed that she didn't seem to be their friend and was partly jealous of her other friendship group. 1A said that 2A wasn't her friend and that would put her in a mood for later. 5A and 3A backed up the fact that 2A kept doing this (breaking friends and going off with 4A).

REGISTRATION:

During registration the group seemed O.K. and amicable and went off to their separate lessons: I followed 5A and 2A to Design and technology.

The group sat in their chosen places and continued with their 'Resistant materials' poster. There was general chit-chat as they continued with their poster and checked their files for any outstanding work to complete.

2A spent a majority of the lesson chatting (including with the boys) and singing excerpts from songs with her neighbour. The songs included Acmed, Barney the dinosaur (adaptation), Fifi, Balamory (many young children's programs with catchy tunes).

The conversation involved 5A who said, 'you just don't have a gun' (to 2A) And 'You don't have a gun licence'

Another pupil suggests 2A is 'too young'.

The conversation moves onto the Urdd and what it is.

2A tells a pupil where his crayon box is and then bursts into (with help) a verse of 'Postman Pat'.

The teacher then exclaims the class is 'so rowdy'.

2A continues with her front cover and is asked by the teacher to check font etc.

The teacher asks pupils to get their homework diaries out.

2A reminds the teacher she owes her a merit from last lesson. (Teacher puts merit in book).

The teacher then says: 'Listen, listen, listen, listen' (to get their attention and stop their chit-chat).

5A eats her pen lid.
The homework was to finish the front cover and find out where plastic comes from.

Meanwhile, 1A, 3A and 4A (having finished French) wait outside the mobile and 1A waves.

When the other two come out, 1A and 4A seemed to be involved in a fun 'water fight' (not much water was used, just some from their drink bottles) and ran around the play-ground before the start of English (in the nearby mobile).

ENGLISH (Geography mobile).

The teacher states to the class that they always have the last lesson of the day, but then says they're saving the best till last.

I asked 2A about 1A and she said they were 'friends'.

1A seemed to think that they had not made up yet.

1A tries to lock 5A's thumb into her metal lock.

Then 1A attaches her lock to a pencil case.

The teacher asks pupils about reading and who reads every day and enjoys it (hands go down, but 1A stays up).

The teacher reads and asks what is needed to make it more interesting?

3A answers with 'more detail'.

3A talks to 1A.

Whilst the Lion, Witch and Wardrobe extract is being read out, 1A puts 3A's and 5A's pencil cases together with her lock.

3A uses Tippex.

3A guesses the combination and undoes the pencil cases.

3A doodles on her rubber.

5A hits 1A on her nose.

The teacher asks the class to think about their view from their house window.

(2.55) – The teacher says to the group of; 5A, 1A, 6A and 3A 'Ladies can I ask you for your attention, please?' (They were caught drawing attention to themselves).
The teacher proceeds with, ‘Out of my window I can see the sea.’

The teacher says that nobody should have been fiddling with anything! She then puts three descriptive paragraphs on the board.

I asked 1A if they all knew her lock combination as 3A had unlocked her pencil case – she said no.

5A eats her headband.

The paragraphs on the board were read out and began: ‘It’s late afternoon and the sky is grey...Dogs bark in the distant...In the distant, I can see the yachts hastily...’ (21 lines).

The class were asked to do dictionary work if they hadn’t finished and then write ‘What can you see from your window.’

The teacher suggests the class needs to master basic skills (capital letters and full-stops etc.) to make their fantastic work even richer.

Meanwhile 1A has both pencil cases locked together and 3A doesn’t seem to be able to open hers.

5A thinks she knows the combination and whispers to 3A, something like 1,2,3.

2A forgot her book and didn’t seem to have started dictionary work.

3A asks number again.

1A gets a line of pen above her lip (And asks if she looks bad).

3A asks again what’s the code?

3A pleads, ‘Please tell me?’

2A asks for a dictionary.

3A puts her hand up and says she’d been given a thesaurus not a dictionary. (She swaps it with the teacher).

3A asks again what the code is and begins to look annoyed.

1A sticks small plastic clip on her bridge of her nose.

5A says ‘545?’ (It wasn’t).

The group seems to be lacking a dictionary and sheets to do the work.
(3.10) – 1A says ‘there’re cameras in this room, you know’.

(I asked if they’d missed each other last lesson? – 1A said she’d missed them all).

1A puts clip on ear.

2A talks to her neighbour.

5A – not doing anything.

(3.15) - The teacher comes over as they are talking and asks what they have done this lesson.
1A points to her page in her book that had over half a page of definitions on it. She didn’t look at the teacher when pointing.

They were told that if they couldn’t be trusted to work together, they would be moved.

I asked 1A if the work she pointed to was last lesson’s as she hadn’t written anything yet this lesson? She smiled embarrassingly as I suggested that this time she had got away with it.

3A asks where 1A got her ink eraser from?

1A said ‘Staples’.

2A talks to her friend.

4A is talking to her friends as she continues with her work, but talks about hair and her friends mentions a picture as a baby.

1A discusses with her friends that she usually goes to sleep at 11.

3A said she went to bed at 10.

1A said she went to bed at 3 recently as she reads, but her mum doesn’t know.

(3.25) - There is a brief discussion about 7G.

2A shows her neighbour a word in the dictionary and laughs at it.

5A goes to the toilet.

2A seems to join in with 4A group sometimes as she links via the gap to their table and is often included in the other group.
The teacher states that, 'a garden isn't just a garden' and explains about pretend play as a child etc. and wildlife that may be there.

5A returns and eats clip.

The teacher finishes the lesson by being disappointed in those pupils that have not finished the dictionary work still! Others had done 'the view from their window', so told the group who were behind (including my group) to get themselves sorted.

The group pack up and make their way to the buses or car lifts and as I walk with them, I thank them for their company and remind them that I will be shadowing them again on Friday.

**Year 7 participant observation: 27th. November.**

I met the group as they arrived and they waited outside the form room for each other. All of the group were talking and any misunderstandings were sorted out on the bus into school.

**Registration:**

The form teacher talked about the arrangements for the pantomime week.

5A goes to the office to collect two letters she missed the other day.

1A stated that she had done her Christmas cards.

1A asks one of the boys if she had any homework in Maths.

1A and 2A turn round to the boys’ table.

The form teacher reads out the register and pupils respond with 'Yma' (which means 'here' in Welsh).

The teacher reminds the class that on the following Monday they have Chapel with the School Nun.

5A returns.

1A starts talking to the boys about the make-up they'll be wearing for the Pantomime and state 'it's orange.'

One of the boy's replies that he'd had loads on before.

Conversations revolve around 'step-mums' boys (who 2A was going out with), time off school.

The form teacher says noise levels were too high again and states that there will be no talking for five minutes.
5A and 3A smile at each other.

The teacher then breaks the silence early and offers them the chance to talk quietly for the next five minutes.

3A bangs her toe on a fan at the edge of the room and then complains quietly of one of the boy’s burping.

1A asks a boy opposite why his scarf is like a girl’s.

1A then asks 5A the date as 5A was fiddling with the date on her watch and is now correct.

Registration finishes and the class make their way to Welsh.

WELSH – T1: Some of the group are split up.

The lesson is about ‘school rules.’

The class call out dim yn gwm cnoi (no chewing gum), dim yn rhegi (no swearing) then dim colur (no make-up), dim ymwythgar (no pushing) dim ysmygu (no smoking).

The teacher then asks the class to devise four rules for teachers.

Another pupil calls out ‘dim ffôn’ (no phones) dim bisgedi (no eating biscuits) and they should be kind, dim coffi and dim trainers (only for P.E.). – although they don’t wear them anyway.

Finally, the pupil calls out ‘dim gwaith cartref i blant (no homework for children).

Another pupil calls out ‘dim gwm cnoi’ and ‘dim siocled.’ They also suggested changing the uniform omitting kilt and blazer (dim gwisgo kilt neu blaser) Also ‘time-out’ was suggested.

2A suggests that teachers shouldn’t shout (even if the pupil is naughty) and the teacher should ‘listen to the children.’ She then added that teachers should listen because they are ‘wise’.

The teacher agreed and said ‘very true.’

The next task was explained. It was a story: Yr Eneth Ddrwg. The pupils had to devise a story board of someone breaking rules.

The pupils had to decide which rules were broken.

2A did her work then ripped it as she pulled it out of her book.

(9.30) - The class were then split up as eleven left for a Carol practice for the Christmas Advent service.
2A sorts out her pencils and shows her ripped work to her friend at the front.

T1 helps 2A.

5A gets on with drawing her storyboard.

The teacher says ‘Da lawn.’ (Very good).

2A asks her friend if she can use her ruler that’s snapped in half.

2A lends her pencil case to the pupil on the front table.

5A just starts with her rules and 2A tries to help. 2A suggests her list; no chewing gum, no sleeping in class, no make-up, no answering back, no chewing sweets. 2A tells 5A to think of random school rules, turn into Welsh and put into a comic strip.

Some pupils read their rules out in the comic strip and 2A seems to appear in most of them.

The teacher suggests that 2A appears in a lot of stories.

2A says she’s also in 4A’s as well.

2A asks if she can appear in hers.

The teacher jokingly says ‘why not, you’re in everyone else’s.’

5A does her first picture.

2A has her hand up and wants to know how to say ‘whatever’ in Welsh.

The teacher says ‘Beth bynnag.’

A friend asks 2A if she has any more colours and 2A lends it to her.

One pupil calls out ‘wedi gor ffen.’ (Finished).

I walk over to 5A and check where she’s up to: Don’t chew gum, don’t bully, don’t swear.

2A calls her friend at the front and they both smile.

A pupil turns round and 2A explains the task to her.

As the class are working well due to smaller numbers, the teacher decides she needs to plan an extra lesson for the
afternoon (when they have another Welsh lesson on their timetable).

2A asks what one word means in Welsh.

2A points to her friend’s picture and discusses the rules in the drawings.

The teacher asks the class to finish off what they’re doing and says she’ll see them again later that day.

The class pack up and make their way to the changing rooms for P.E.

Year 7 – Mixed Physical Education.

The P.E. teacher (female) took the lesson with the male deputy head assisting with supervising the boys changing and helping within the lesson with the boys.

4A had forgotten her trainers so stood on the side-line chatting to me. She did have a football match at lunch and 3A was going to lend her the trainers she was wearing so she could play.

The class run round the netball courts in pairs for their warm-up. They were asked to think of somatic body sensations that they felt as they were running.

The lesson was tag rugby and the class were given a demonstration and then asked to practice what they had seen in pairs. They were not allowed to pass forward.

3A was with 5A, 1A was with 6A and 2A was with another pupil. 1A and 6A were working within the boys’ grid.

The pairs join another pair. 2A explains what to do again and reminds her group that if you’re tagged, they must stand still.

Two boys are used for demonstrating, who are paired with 2A and her partner.

The groups play a small game within their area.

A number of arguments occur between various groups.

4A informed me that last week there were loads of arguments within the groups.

3A and 5A seemed to have got mud on themselves from the ball that landed in a mud puddle.

Meanwhile, 4A tells me that she hates rugby and states that it’s a ‘boys’ game’ and ‘girls don’t get mud on them’.
1A overhears 4A and says ‘it’s boring’. 3A then says she ‘hates playing’ and she ‘just doesn’t like rugby.’

The boys group kick their ball at a loose chicken on the other side of the netting. 4A went over to the chicken and spoke pleasantly to it.

The teacher did another demonstration showing how to run and pass effectively by running forward and passing back to the next person in the group. The groups went off to practice.

2A group practice well, but 1A and 6A groups have a few problems. 3A got hit in the face accidentally by the ball and it hurt her because her face was cold. 1A offered to swap places with her to avoid it happening again as the person passing to her threw more gently. 3A accepted and wiped her tears away.

The teacher helped the groups and advised them of how to improve their practice.

5A returns – I cross her back over the road safely. The lesson finished with ‘team x-country.’ One pupil starts running between two lines and then collects another pupil who both continue running together and drops off the first at the other line (after two full runs). The game carries on until all the team members have done it. The winner is the team who finish ‘as a team’ and have no stragglers not the team who finishes first. It encourages co-operation or Key Skill of ‘working together.’

The teacher gathers everyone round and explains next week’s lesson on Rugby tag and a different team x-country.

1A offers to collect the bibs and 3A volunteers to collect the tags.

Walking back to the changing room, 1A puts a muddy bib over her head.

5A goes off to the toilet and I cross her back over the busy road.

The class did one and a half hours of P.E. (missing the natural break-time), so they had their own break-time whilst the rest of the school were in lessons. This brought them up to lesson 6, starting at 12 o’clock.

YEAR 7 – History T6.

3A comes into the room eating crisps and the teacher says, ‘you can leave them now.’
The rest of the class come in spasmodically. The teacher starts the lesson and then 1A and some boys arrive and try to walk in. The teacher makes them wait outside and then asks them why they were late and told them there was no excuse for being late. He then warned them that if they were late again, he would take some of their time. A picture of Llys Gwen Lilian Castle was put on the board and the teacher said it was near us. He then showed them some facts relating to the type of site being a Motte and Bailey.

The group all listen.

The rest of the lesson was related to the castle and its ruins in relation to how William controlled the country he conquered.

The class then had to label a castle in their books (from information on page 28 of their text book) – they worked in pairs and were given three minutes in a competition.

1A and a boy discuss.

2A asks the teacher for help – he tells her to read the information.

4A and 3A work together.

1A and her partner finish fairly quickly within the three minutes.

4A asks 1A for a pencil eraser (please) and then throws it back when finished with.

4A tries to borrow another ink eraser from a girl and then a boy, which drops on the floor, so shouts in annoyance; another pupil tries to reach it, but 4A has already managed to pick it up.

The class are asked to design a castle and are asked to think carefully about certain aspects of their design before starting.

The teacher asks what the enclosure could be made out of.

1A answers with 'wood'.

The teacher then asks the group in pairs again to write down two strengths and two weaknesses of this – they are given two minutes.

1A lets her partner look at her idea and then they discuss other answers.

2A talks to 6A (helps).
The teacher then asks a series of questions about the design in the book.

4A says ‘tower’ and the teacher acknowledges this as a good answer.

5A suggests the moat could be used for protection of the castle.

2A suggests building on high ground so people can be seen.

1A suggests the wood connected to the tower may be set fire to.

The teacher expands 1A's point and asks how it could be set fire to.

2A answers, ‘throw a stick at it.’

1A shouts out: (teacher writes down a warning).

The class put forward lots of suggestions.

The teacher asks the class, ‘what’s more important than food?’

The class respond with ‘water’.

The teacher asks, ‘where from?’

The class respond with ‘the moat’.

The teacher then asks ‘what’s the point of the tower?’

3A talks to 4A about the rubber on the pencil.

The teacher asks for any other advantages and 2A responds with, ‘tricky to get into.’

Homework is set and they have to label a diagram and write an explanation in 75 words why the castle in the picture was difficult to attack.

4A thanks the teacher for her homework and sarcastically says, ‘I’m really excited about our homework.’

The class pack away for dinner and 4A prepares for the netball match that has been arranged by the P.E. teacher across forms.

After dinner in the canteen, 4A played netball and 1A, 2A, 3A, 5A and 6A were at the roundabout playing ‘twig factor’ with Ant and Dec. They were auditioning singing ‘Frosty the Snowman’ whilst holding their nose.

They mentioned the Ace gang and the film Angus, thongs etc.
A worm then became the centre of attention and the girls screeched as it began to be thrown around by 1A.

The girls then sang ‘Barney the Dinosaur’ with their own version (Barney was a Dinosaur from our imagination, he stuck his fingers up his bum and gave him constipation).

I reminded the girls of the time and they made plans for registration.

Registration was brief and the class were sent to their next lesson.

WELSH (French mobile) – Madame – 6A was on her own in D.T.

3A and 1A speak quietly.

4A gives assessment sheets out and the teacher asks her, ‘did you keep one for yourself, 4A?’

She replied, ‘no’ and went to get one.

3A tries to borrow the glue from the boys’ table in front of them.

1A adds a mark onto 3A’s book, while she is gluing and then rubs it out.

The class had to self-evaluate their Welsh learning so far this year and fill in the sheet. (including; effort, achievement, comments on their work as to what to and how to improve). – They were given five minutes to complete the task, in the back of their books.

I look at 1A book.

1A sneezes and the boys turn round.

The class are set four things to do, depending on their progress so far: catch up, finish last lessons work, poem (with partner) and read Welsh magazines (darllen).

1A opens her water bottle and puts her coloured pencil in it, then puts the lid back on and drinks from the bottle, whilst looking at 3A.

3A says, ‘erh!’

3A draws and 1A talks to 3A. 1A points out that ‘you wouldn’t see a head like that’ in 3A’s drawing and smirks at her.

3A asks 1A about her drawing and says the object pointed at is ‘tights.’
1A tells 3A she has dirt on her nose (laughs).

3A says, 'no, you've just drawn on me!'

There is then a discussion between another small group of girls of where to meet up and what they are doing after school. One asks the other if they can go round to their house. The other girls see the teacher looking their way who tells the girls that they were supposed to be doing work, not talking.

I go and visit 6A in D.T.

(2.05) – 6A says she does miss the others.

The group are working on a sheet entitled, ‘From oil to plastic.’ The teacher explains the task for homework and asks the class to ‘shush’. The teacher suggests that if they are stuck they can use the sheets, use the Internet or use others in their house.

One pupil is told off for swinging on the stool legs.

The teacher decides to run through the questions and point the pupils in the right directions for the answers.

She asks for two types of plastic; shrinking plastic, thermoplastic. One of the class get told off for writing down the answers in class and it is pointed out by the teacher it is for ‘homework, HOME, that’s why it’s called homework!’

As the teacher gets the class to follow the answers from the sheet, one table of girls also read along with the teacher (6A finds this funny and reads to herself mouthing the words quietly).

The teacher gets the class to use hand actions to recreate thermoplastic process (heat up, plastic can be put over a mould, cool, it sets and when heated up again it goes back to being flat).

The teacher congratulates the class, ‘cool’.

I help locate a spelling mistake on 6A’s sheet, by pointing.

Time is short and the teacher needs to explain their ‘badge task’. The teacher pleads to the table of girls to ‘come on please, none of this funny business, now, we’ve only got a few minutes left.’

The class are asked to draw a badge they can think of and to take their folder home and keep it nice and tidy.
They finish on a variation of a game using wood, plastic, metal and glass, but the group would not listen to each other, so it only worked momentarily.

The teacher said ‘be quiet’ continuously and said to the boys specifically, ‘You now understand what teachers go through.’

A boy responded with a question – ‘If it’s boring, why be a teacher?’

Another from the same group shouts out, ‘cos it pays well.’

The teacher then tries to say how rewarding it is and that she ‘wants boys like you in every class.’

The class on a whole had been noisy today and the teacher wasn’t even sure if they would be given merits today as they’d ‘brought each other down.’

The boys were asked to stay behind and talked to, but the girls including 6A were told to pack up and go.

English – English Mobile; T2.

The majority of the group were sat at the back next to me (6A, 1A, 5A and 3A). 2A was sat two desks in front and 4A was sat by the door on a table of four.

It was supposed to be a ‘Chili out Friday’ so the group had informed me, with reading etc. which was 1A’s favourite pastime. She had her reading book out almost before she had sat down.

The teacher welcomed a few of the group back (who were away last lesson running in a cross-country competition). She asked how it went.

They responded by saying they had been pushed and sent the wrong way, but still got through to the finals.

The teacher points out to some pupils who were muttering that when someone is talking, ‘you listen; I show you respect, you show me respect’. (And then congratulated the girls).

1A’s book was entitled: Girl is Flirting for England.

The teacher said they needed to concentrate on ‘capital letters’ and the sheet given out previously. Chill out Friday went as due to the Panto season readily approaching, many lessons will be missed.
3A puts her hand up about the sheet. 6A says she's finished hers.

5A writes her name on 3A's book.

5A does scribble on her book and turns it over.

3A tells me she has done the dictionary work at home (since last time I saw them).

2A meanwhile plays with her friend's orange pipe cleaner.

2A speaks to her friend.

The friend asks to go out and stands at the door looking at 2A with the pipe cleaner on her finger.

5A has a problem with the Tippex.

1A runs through her evening schedule: Monday (Facebook), Tuesday (lifeguarding), Wednesday (I'm a Celebrity)...read.

1A then tells me that after I left Welsh, the teacher was in a bad mood and kept shouting.

1A gets on (starts and finishes a small paragraph that seemed to be for homework) and begins to whisper to 5A who is filling in her sheet.

The teacher mentions the homework (to finish off the view from a window in their house), when 1A shouts out, 'done it!'

1A gets the teacher to read it (after reading 3A's, who comments on the need for more depth, but good use of visual ideas).

1A then got in a conversation with 3A about homework and said she does 'some' homework, to which 3A replied, 'she does homework she likes.'

6A chirps in with 'I have to do my homework every night and I'm not allowed to watch telly till I have.'

5A then gets into a conversation about sisters and that her five year old bites her.

One of the girls on 4A table (opposite her) is messing.

1A asks 6A where her pen lid is. (Having put it in her hair). The teacher asks the class to help a pupil use prescriptive language for describing a mountain.

2A answers with 'trees are big and overgrown...one looks like a lollipop.'
6A has her work checked.

1A, 5A and 3A talk about football and ask me who I support.

2A and friend (with orange pipe cleaner) pretend to put a spell on 4A and her friend in front of them. On 4A's table, the girl opposite her puts a note in her pen lid (seemingly unseen by 4A and her friend) and passes it back and forward between her neighbour, with much smirking going on.

I alert the teacher assistant to this (by pointing to my notes as she peers over my shoulder) and she discreetly meanders to the front having spotted it in action and takes it off them. The teacher is then also informed discreetly and reads the note put on her desk.

The teacher then takes the two girls involved off 4A's table outside the room for a chat and requests to see them at the end of the lesson.

1A giggles (no relation to above), and adds marks on 5A's work (and 3A's). 5A whites it out!

1A draws 6A a picture of her.
A couple of visitors briefly come into the class-room for material for panto. costumes in the cupboard at the back.

A pupil's work and use of prescriptive language is praised and read out.

1A carried on drawing, but 5A this time.

2A looks up her sleeve and her friend pulls her.

2A has friend's pen under her foot (friend is looking everywhere for it).

3A works.

5A works.

1A draws on 5A and 5A rubs it out.

1A then does a lot of quick work.

6A wants a KS3 book but doesn't have the money with her. The teacher doesn't see that as a problem and 6A is reassured.

The teacher concludes the lesson, the group pack up and the two girls are again questioned at the end about the note and the consequences of 4A and her friend finding it are spelt out. The note was written about them, but apparently started off as fun
and was not meant maliciously. The note was passed on to me and 4A and her friend knew nothing of it.

I caught up with the girls and thanked for their cooperation and wished them a good weekend.
APPENDIX 3a – Ethical Approval.

Human participants and materials
ethics committee (HPMEC) Proforma
Please complete and send to:

John Oates (j.m.oates@open.ac.uk), Chair,
Human Participants and Materials Ethics Committee (HPMEC)
Centre for Childhood Development and Learning (CHDL),
Briggs, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes
Also send a copy to Research-ethics@open.ac.uk

If you have any queries before you fill in this form please look at the
Research Ethics (intranet) web site:
http://intranet.open.ac.uk/research/ethics/

Title of project
A short, descriptive title.

AN INVESTIGATION INTO HOW KEY STAGE THREE GIRLS’
PEER GROUP ACTIVITIES DURING BREAK-TIMES AFFECT THE
TEACHERS’ PEDAGOGICAL DECISION-MAKING FOR ANY
SUBSEQUENT LESSONS.

Schedule
Time frame for the research and its data collection phase(s).

Initial study:
One full morning required for Year. 7, 8, and 9 focus groups
(lessons are one hour, and I would expect this time to set up,
introduce, record and debrief). Pupils will also need to submit a
time-table and I will need to check that teachers will let children
attend my research sessions.
I will also try to interview the Key Stage 3 co-ordinator in the afternoon (Thursday would be ideal as there is nothing major happening in school and the co-ordinator is 'free'). The semi-structured interview will last up to an hour – if we are interrupted, I will pause the tape and leave the room if she needs to speak to a parent on the telephone.
I will hope to do this before the end of term, but if the focus groups can not be done, I will carry them out in September.
For the Final study, I will require time to interview subject teachers and time to follow each of these focus group peers around for a day (as part of ethnography). I will also need to gain access into my next school.

Abstract
A summary of the main points of the research, written in terms easily understandable by a non-specialist and containing no technical terms.

My research aims:

1. TO EXPLORE KEY STAGE 3 TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDING OF SOCIAL INTERACTIONS OUTSIDE THE CLASS-ROOM.
2. TO EXPLORE KEY STAGE 3 PUPILS' MANAGEMENT OF SOCIAL INTERACTIONS OUTSIDE THE CLASS-ROOM AND DISCOVER HOW THESE MIGHT INFLUENCE LEARNING WITHIN THE CLASS-ROOM.
3. TO INFORM PEDAGOGICAL DECISION-MAKING (teaching and learning) IN LIGHT OF SOCIAL INTERACTIONS WITHIN THE CLASS-ROOM.

THE RESEARCH WILL FOCUS ON EXPLORING PUPILS' AND TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF PEER GROUPS BOTH DURING BREAK-TIMES AND WITHIN THE CLASS-ROOM AND TRY TO SEE IF THERE IS ANY UNFINISHED BUSINESS BROUGHT INTO LESSONS FROM BREAK-TIMES – IF SO, IS THERE ANYTHING
THAT CAN HELP THIS SITUATION?

My research will be underpinned with work from Lave and Wenger (1991) on 'legitimate peripheral participation/communities of practice' and Bronfenbrenner (2005) (eds) using ecology as its emphasis. Context becomes central.

Source(s) of funding
Details of the external or internal funding body (e.g. ESRC, MRC).

PERSONAL.

Justification for research
What contribution to knowledge, policy, practice, and people's lives the research will make?

I believe that my research may help both teachers and pupils become aware of the importance of peer groups, and realise that lessons and break-times may not be separate contexts, but sub-contexts within a larger context; surely, identity from break-time cannot be just left behind for the start of the next lesson? There has been some work on break-times and play, and some on the theories of teaching and learning, but very little (if any) on the implication of break-time for subsequent lessons. This is where my interest lies.

Investigators
Give names and units of all persons involved in the collection and handling of individual data. Please name one person as Principal Investigator (PI).

Myself – Sally Louise Roberts.
Published ethical guidelines to be followed
For example: BERA, BPS, BSA (see Research Ethics web site for more information).

I WILL FOLLOW THE BERA (2004) GUIDELINES.
(+ code of conduct).

Location(s) of data collection
Give details of where and when data will be collected. If on private, corporate or institutional premises, indicate what approvals are gained/required.

The initial study will take place at (removed for confidentiality) secondary school in Wales – The head teacher has shown tremendous interest in my initial ideas for this research and has been very supportive so far and verbally is willing to allow me to carry out my initial study here.

Participants
Give details of the population from which you will be sampling and how this sampling will be done.

I will require three groups of peers in total; one group from Year. 7, one group from Year 8 and one group from Year. 9. There are only two classes in each year group, so I will initially look to sample one half of the year. (That is 7R, 8R because my daughters are in the other half of the year, and 9G because I teach them and this may give a more balanced sample. (Not all from the 'red' side).

Recruitment procedures
How will you identify and approach potential participants?
Participants will be a group of peers from Years 7, 8 and 9; I would like a group of between 4 and 8. I will ask for volunteers from form groups and then send letters to all interested parents/guardians, via the child. The letter will first have to be looked at and 'passed' by the Head teacher.

Consent

Give details of how informed consent will be gained and attach copies of information sheet(s) and consent form(s). Give details of how participants can withdraw consent and what will happen to their data in such a case (see the Research Ethics web site for an advisory document).

I have drafted a letter to parents explaining my research. Firstly, I will gain the Heads'/Governors' permission (who has already expressed interest in my work) and ask to go to tutor groups with my letter. I will simply but openly explain my research to the pupils from one Years 7, 8 and 9 class at their registration (once tutors have allowed me to) and only distribute letters to those pupils who express an interest in my research.

(See an example of the letter attached).

Methodology

Outline the method(s) that will be employed to collect and analyse data.

In the initial study there will be three focus groups (one each for Years 7, 8 and 9), lasting between 30 minutes and 50 minutes. There will also be a semi-structured interview with the Key Stage 3 co-ordinator.

In the final study, in addition to the above methodology, there will be extra teachers' semi-structured interviews (those who teach KS3
and teach after break-times). Also, I will accompany one peer group from the focus groups around for a day of ethnography and observe their behaviour.

Data Protection

Give details of registration of the project under the DP Act and the procedures to be followed re: storage and disposal of data to comply with the Act.

All raw data will be kept with the investigator in a secure place; any data will be confidential and anonymous. Participants will be given the chance to view any data that belongs to them. When the Ed.D. is completed, non-relevant data will be destroyed.

Recompense to participants

Normally, recompense is only given for expenses and inconvenience, otherwise it might be seen as coercion/inducement to participate. Give details of any recompense to participants.

None.

Deception

Give details of the withholding of any information from participants, or misrepresentation or other deception that is an integral part of the research. Any such deception should be fully justified.

None involved.
**Risks**

Detail any foreseen risks to participants or researchers and, based on a risk assessment, the steps that will be taken to minimise/counter these. If the proposed study involves contact with children or other vulnerable groups, please confirm that an enhanced Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) Disclosure has been obtained for each person involved in these contacts.

I already possess two CRB checks in my present institutions where I work (one of which will be where the initial study will occur). I have been a teacher and lecturer for a number of years. I also do not anticipate any risks and there should not be any deception.

**Debriefing**

Give details of how information will be given to participants after data collection to inform them of the purpose of their participation and the research more broadly.

Participants will be reminded of how their input will contribute to new research in a much under-researched area. They will be given time to ask any questions and reminded that they will be able withdraw their information if they are not happy (in which case all tape-recordings and relevant transcript material will be destroyed). Pupils may read their contribution if they ask to at a later date. Full access to analysis will be given to the school.

**Declaration**

Declare here that the research will conform to the above protocol and that any significant changes or new issues will be raised with the HPMEC before they are implemented.
From John Oates
Chair, The Open University Human Participants and
Materials Research Ethics Committee
Research School
Email j.m.oates@open.ac.uk
Extension 52395
To Sally Roberts EdD student FELS
Memorandum
Subject AN INVESTIGATION INTO HOW KEY STAGE THREE
GIRLS' PEER GROUP ACTIVITIES DURING BREAK-
TIMES AFFECT THE TEACHERS' PEDAGOGICAL
DECISION-MAKING FOR ANY SUBSEQUENT
LESSONS.
Ref HPMEC/2008/#458/1
Date 21 July 2008
A Final Report form will need to be filled in once the research has ended
(you will be contacted by HPMEC on the date for final report below).

Signature(s) Sally Louise Roberts.
(this can be the typed name(s) of investigator(s) if electronic copy is
submitted (which is preferred))

Date 9th July, 2008.

Proposed date for
Final Report Year 1 – April 09 Year 3 – Sep. 2011.

This memorandum is to confirm that the research protocol for the above-named research
project, as submitted on 15th July 2008, is approved by the Open University Human
Participants and Materials Ethics Committee, subject to satisfactory responses to the
following recommendations:
You are asked to:

1. Give the name of your EdD supervisor and ask him/her to email me with an endorsement of your ethics application, as revised in the light of the following recommendations;

2. Give an outline of the questions that will be asked in the interviews;

3. Give an outline of the ground rules that you will set for the focus groups, and in particular your means of obviating or minimising the risk of disclosures, such as of bullying, that might cause you to consider breaking confidentiality, in both the interviews and the focus groups;

4. Explain how you will anonymise feedback to the school, given that there is only a small sample of young people involved;

5. Check with the FELS Data Protection Liaison officer (Hugh Balhatchet – h.n.balhatchet) whether you will need to register your data holding under the Data Protection Act;

6. Give more details of how you will store data securely;

7. Give details of how you will seek and record consent from students and teachers;

8. Add to all participant information an additional contact such as your primary supervisor, who may be contacted if a participant wants to talk with someone else about your research, and add the full title of your research to all participant information

At the conclusion of your project, by the date that you stated in your application, the Committee would like to receive a summary report on the progress of this project, any ethical issues that have arisen and how they have been dealt with.

John Oates - Chair, OU HPMEC
1. My EdD Supervisor is Jane Tobbell. I have asked her if she can e-mail you with an endorsement of my revised ethics application.

2. As I intend to use focus groups and generally in-depth or semi-structured interviews, I will be asking questions around themes and often hopefully will be directed by the individual or group discussions. I will start off with general questions to ease the participants into the discussion, (some of which may be seen below) but will not have a rigid structure and may not ask all of the following questions; instead, I would like to be led by the discussions and responses of the individuals or groups. The outline of the questions that may be asked are as follows:

KEY STAGE 3 PUPILS: (Themes of: importance of friends, activities during break-times and lessons, the role of break-times, pupils' perceptions of school, the effect of context change, how break-time activities affect the next lesson and pedagogical consequences).

DO YOU THINK IT IS IMPORTANT TO HAVE FRIENDS?

HOW MANY FRIENDS DO YOU THINK ARE ENOUGH?

ARE YOUR FRIENDS DIFFERENT IN SCHOOL COMPARED TO OUT OF SCHOOL?

CAN YOU DESCRIBE THE ACTIVITIES THAT YOU DO DURING BREAK-TIMES WITH YOUR SCHOOL FRIENDS?

CAN YOU GIVE ME SOME EXAMPLES OF WHAT YOU TALK ABOUT DURING BREAK-TIMES?
CAN YOU GIVE ANY EXAMPLES OF HOW YOUR BREAK-TIME TALK IS DIFFERENT FROM CLASS-ROOM-TALK.

DO YOU SEE BREAK TIME AS ‘YOUR’ TIME RATHER THAN ‘SCHOOL’S’ TIME?

DO YOU LEARN ANYTHING AT BREAK TIMES?

CAN YOU THINK OF AN EXAMPLE WHEN YOUR FRIENDSHIP HAS HELPED YOU IN SCHOOL?

CAN YOU THINK OF EXAMPLES WHERE YOUR FRIENDSHIPS HAVE GOT YOU INTO TROUBLE AT SCHOOL?

CAN YOU TELL ME WHY YOU CHOSE TO BE FRIENDS WITH YOUR PARTICULAR GROUP?

DO YOU ALWAYS GET ON WITH ALL THE OTHER GROUPS IN YOUR YEAR?

CAN YOU DESCRIBE ANY NAMES GIVEN TO OTHER GROUPS?

DO YOU EVER PLAN WHAT YOU ARE GOING TO DO IN YOUR BREAK-TIMES?

AT THE END OF BREAK-TIME, WHAT DO YOU DO IF YOU HAVE NOT FINISHED YOUR BREAK-TIME CHAT: DO YOU CARRY IT ON IN CLASS OR WAIT AND FINISH IT OFF DURING THE NEXT BREAK-TIME)?

DOES THE ABOVE APPLY IF YOU ARE IN THE MIDDLE OF AN ARGUMENT?
CAN YOU GIVE ME ANY EXAMPLES OF HOW ‘FALLING OUT’ DURING BREAK-TIMES ALTERED YOUR LATER BEHAVIOUR IN CLASS?

HOW DO YOU FEEL IN LESSONS WHEN YOU ARE NOT WITH THE WHOLE OF YOUR FRIENDSHIP GROUP? (Do you mind being with others?)

EXTRAS;

DO YOU SWAP GROUPS?

KEY STAGE 3 CO-ORDINATOR (Themes: peer-pressure in KS3, problems during break-times and lessons, how break-times are perceived in relation to the whole school day etc.)

HAVE YOU NOTICED ANY CHANGES IN THE TYPES OF FRIENDSHIP PATTERNS OVER THE YEARS?

WHAT SORT OF AFFECT DO YOU BELIEVE THE MEMBERSHIP OF PARTICULAR PEER GROUPS HAVE ON KS3 PUPILS?

WHAT DO YOU THINK THE VALUE OF BREAK-TIMES ARE FOR THE PUPILS?

HAVE YOU NOTICED ANY CORRELATION BETWEEN THE NUMBERS OF PUPILS SENT TO YOU FOR MISBEHAVIOUR AND THE LESSONS IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING A BREAK-TIME?

CAN YOU GIVE ME SOME EXAMPLES OF PROBLEMS THAT HAVE OCCURRED BETWEEN FRIENDS WITHIN LESSONS WHERE EVENTS AT BREAK-TIME HAVE SERVED AS A CATALYST?
WHAT DO YOU THINK GOES ON WITHIN AND BETWEEN GROUPS DURING BREAK-TIMES?

WHAT IS THE INFLUENCE OF PEER GROUPS IN THE CLASS-ROOM?

DO YOU THINK THAT BREAK -TIME IS PERCEIVED AS 'NON SCHOOL' TIME BY

PUPILS?
PARENTS?
TEACHERS?

DO YOU THINK SOME CHILDREN MAY STRUGGLE WITH THIS CONCEPT OF SWITCHING BETWEEN CONTEXTS I.E. PLAY-GROUND VS CLASS-ROOM

DO TEACHERS FULLY UNDERSTAND THAT CHILDREN MAY HAVE A PROBLEM COPING WITH THIS?

HOW CAN THE TRANSITION BETWEEN BREAK -TIME AND SCHOOL TIME BE MORE EFFECTIVELY ACHIEVED?

TEACHERS – These questions will not be asked in the Initial (Pilot) Study:

Are some lesson ‘slots’ better for learning than others?

How do you ‘sit’ your class?
Can you describe any positive aspects of working in friendship-groups? (Can they help each other to learn?).

How can peers affect the direction of lessons?

Is there any noticeable difference in some pupils’ behaviour at the start of lessons that occur straight after break-times compared to lessons without break-times between?

Have you noticed any difference in the amount of learning going on (or the ease of teaching) in the same group, but at different time slots on different days?

What do you think pupils talk about and do at break-times?

Do pupils learn things at break-times?

What is the difference between lessons and break-times from a teachers’ perspective and through the eyes of a pupil?

Do you need to change your teaching style or approach for: the age group, the position of the lesson in the day, or for any other reason?

How do you accommodate friendship groups in your class-room? (Do you know who is in who’s group?).

3. An outline of the ground rules set for the focus groups and ways of minimising the risk of disclosures that may cause the breaking of confidentiality (for both interviews and focus groups):

I will read out a brief introduction sheet at the beginning of the data collection and a debrief at the end, which will read something like:
Thank you for volunteering to take part in this piece of research. All information that is recorded today will be treated with respect and any names mentioned will be made anonymous (so that no-one can recognise who says what and about who). Nobody, except myself will have access to the tape and once transcribed, it will be destroyed. The school will remain un-named and be given as general a description as possible to prevent any obvious identification.

As a researcher I do have an obligation to the school and myself (as a teacher) to pass on any information emerging that may have detrimental effects, but this will be done, if at all necessary, discretely.

As a participant, you also have the right to withdraw at any time, with no questions asked.

I hope you enjoy the research and with your data, together we can inform education about the importance and effects of peer groups in schools, benefiting both pupils (you) and teachers (me).

Debrief:
Thank you for taking part in this research on the importance of peer groups during break-times and their effect on subsequent lessons. Please remember that the information you have heard and provided today is confidential. Do you have any questions before you leave?

4. How will I try to anonymise feedback to the school (as there is only a small sample of young people involved)?

The school will be aware of the Year group I wish to research (7, 8 and 9), but I will not need to tell them any more information, just that I require about six to eight girls from each year group. When I speak to the girls during registration, I will ask any interested party to put their slips into a white envelope and hand it to myself or place it in my pigeon hole. I may leave a box in the form room and empty it on a certain day. (That way they can drop the slip in at any time).
No names will be used in transcription, so it would be difficult 'guess' which girls took part. The only problem may be that the girls involved will be required to miss lessons and the rest of the class and class teachers will know who is taking part (Senior management would not know unless they asked the teachers).

5. I am checking at the moment with FELS Data Protection Liaison officer (Hugh Balhatchet) as to whether I need to register my data under the Data Protection Act. (I have just received feedback and a form to discuss with my tutor, whom I will speak on the phone with, over the weekend). It seems at present unlikely that I will need to register my data, but I will clarify this over the weekend.

6. How will I store data securely?

I will record data on my tape recorder and carry the tapes with me at all times when in school. I have a filing cabinet at home where they can be safely locked away until I have the time to transcribe them; which will be done at times when I can be alone to do so. The tapes will then be stored in the lockable cabinet and destroyed on completion.

7. How will I seek and record consent from students and teachers?

Initially, I will speak to the Head (and possibly he may need to speak to Governors) and provide a letter that I would like to be given out to parents, if he agrees. I will then ask teachers for a convenient time during registration to speak to each year group and explain my research. I will only give out letters to anyone who is interested in taking part.

I will seek consent from students/parents by sending out the letter (once it has been looked at and passed by the school), explaining to
parents about the research, who I am, and the commitment time needed. (See below for an example). I would also like (if possible) for the secretary to type it with the schools' crest on, to be more official (but we will have to see).

"Dear Parent/Guardian,

Mrs. Roberts is carrying out research into the importance of friendship groups within school, as part of a 'pilot study' for her Doctorate in Education. The title of the research is:

"An Exploration of Key Stage 3 Girls' Peer Group Friendships Outside the Class-room and their Influence Within the Class-room."

The focus will be on Key Stage Three, which your daughter is part of. She is after a small selection of friends from each year who will be willing to talk about the importance of their friendship group and answer some simple questions; the pupils will be in groups of about eight and their conversation will be tape-recorded. The pupil will only be required once and the interview will last around three-quarters of an hour during the school day at a mutually agreeable time. All information will be totally confidential and pupils themselves will remain totally anonymous. Your daughter has expressed an interest in helping in this much under-researched area, so if you are happy for her to do this, then please can you sign and return the form giving your consent and hand back to Mrs. Roberts as soon as possible?

Name of daughter:
Class:

I give my permission for my daughter..............................to help Mrs. Roberts with her Pilot Study into the importance of school friendships. I understand that all information will be treated with respect and remain totally confidential and anonymous.
I will probably put a box in the class-room with their slips to be put into (or ask them to find me). Once a date for bringing the slips back has expired, I will collect and record the names of the participants and remind them nearer the time of the place and time of the groups (via slips in envelopes in registers). Nobody can take part without a consent form, which again will be stored in my lockable filing cabinet.

Teachers – As it is a small school, I will speak personally to people who take groups in Year 7, 8 and 9 after break-times and ask them if they would be prepared to help me with my research (which would be explained); if they agreed, I would arrange a suitable time (probably after school or during a free period – I realise how important and precious time is to teachers, so I would let them dictate a time slot).

I will speak to Jane Tobbell and ask if she minded me using her as an additional contact. I will also put the full title of my research on all appropriate participant information.
RE: Ethics Approval #458

From: J.M.Oates <J.M.Oates@open.ac.uk>
To: roberts63@talktalk.net
CC: Research-ethics@open.ac.uk
Date: Fri, 29 Aug 2008 13:53

Dear Sally Roberts,

Thank you for these responses to the recommendations of the review panel.

These satisfactorily address the points raised and I can confirm that your ethics approval is now completed.

John Oates
Chair, HPMEC

From: roberts63@talktalk.net [mailto:roberts63@talktalk.net]
Sent: 28 August 2008 08:10
To: j.m.oates@open.ac.uk
Subject: Re: Ethics Approval #458

Dear John,

Please find attached the responses to the questions asked for.

The Open University is incorporated by Royal Charter (RC 000391), an exempt charity in England & Wales and a charity registered in Scotland (SC 038302).
APPENDIX 3b - Letter to Head Teacher requesting permission to carry out research in his school.

Teulu Hapus,
63, Ffordd Idwal,
Tower Gardens,
PRESTATYN,
Denbighshire,
LL19 7PH.
Tel:01745 887488.

Dear Mr. Hayward,

As you are aware, I have recently been accepted onto the Doctorate of Education course with the Open University. The title of my research project is: ‘An investigation into how Key Stage Three girls’ peer group activities specifically during break-times affect the teachers’ pedagogical decision-making for any subsequent lessons.’ I personally feel that break-time ‘politics’ are often viewed as being ‘separate’ to the teaching and learning processes within the classroom environment, but I believe that in some instances (and for reasons that have not yet been explored), certain peer group ‘politics’ remain ‘unfinished business’ and are brought into the class-room, which may have consequences for the following pedagogical environment. I would like to explore and become familiar with this unique break-time culture and understand what impact (if any) it has on the lessons that occur afterwards. I believe that pupils can teach us (teachers) a lot about the importance of peer groups and school day friendships and their influence (if any) on learning within the class-room.

I would really appreciate your support in helping me pilot a very small part of my study in this school. There will be two main methods of research that I would like to concentrate on in Year 1 and be able to
learn from in Years 2 and 3, when the main study will be conducted elsewhere in Wales. The first method would involve a recorded in-depth interview with the Key Stage Three Coordinator: I have previously spoken to Sally Revell about my research proposal, and at the time she offered me her help and expertise in this area. If you agree, she is happy to meet at a mutually agreeable time (when we are both ‘free’) and answer my questions. I would ideally like to do this as soon as possible (maybe within the next two weeks?). Sally has a wealth of knowledge and experience and may form the ‘key’ to the foundations of my research project: she is like ‘gold dust’ and I would really appreciate her valuable input.

Before moving onto my second request, please can I clarify that any information will be totally confidential and remain anonymous and any person involved has the right to pull out at any time and for whatever reason. I will of course inform you of the results etc. and they will be available to discuss at some point in the future.

Secondly, before the end of term (preferably within the last three weeks), I would like to speak to a couple of friendship groups from Key Stage Three; this will be in the form of ‘focus groups’, where they will meet in a room with myself (ideally consisting of between 6 and 9 children) and I will record their conversation about their importance of their peer group; I will guide the session with simple questions and let them talk; this will take about three-quarters of an hour for each group; ideally it would be useful to have one group in each year (7, 8, 9). For this, I will need a letter to parents, requesting permission in the form of their signature. (I have included one at the back of this letter, but this will probably need adapting by Chris). The use of focus groups should provide rich and interesting data and hopefully by including a variety of years, there may be differences occurring as the girls progress through adolescence and towards the end of Year 9.

I would really appreciate any help that you can offer me, but I am excited about my research and hope that you will share my view and allow me to use this school as a ‘pilot’. I also wish to thank you for
taking the time to read through this, as I am sure that you have a million and one other things to do.

Look forward to speaking to you soon,

All the best,

Sally Roberts.
Dear Parent/Guardian,

Mrs. Roberts is carrying out research into the importance of friendship groups within school, as part of a ‘pilot study’ for her Doctorate in Education. The focus will be on Key Stage Three, which your daughter is part of. She is after a small selection of friends from each year who will be willing to talk about the importance of their friendship group and answer some simple questions; the pupils will be in groups of about eight and their conversation will be tape-recorded. The pupil will only be required once and the interview will last around three-quarters of an hour during the school day at a mutually agreeable time, hopefully before the end of Summer Term. All information will be totally confidential and pupils themselves will remain totally anonymous. Your daughter has expressed an interest in helping in this much under-researched area, so if you are happy for her to do this, then please can you sign and return the form giving your consent and hand back to Mrs. Roberts as soon as possible?

Name of daughter:
Class:

I give my permission for my daughter………………………..to help Mrs. Roberts with her Pilot Study into the importance of school friendships. I understand that all information will be treated with respect and remain totally confidential and anonymous.

Signature of Parent/Guardian…………………………..
Dear Parent/Guardian,

Mrs. Roberts is carrying out research into the importance of girls' friendship groups within school, as part of her 'Main Study' for her Doctorate in Education. There is very little research available at present and even where there is some, this seems to have been carried out in Primary schools. The successful 'Pilot Study' was also carried out here just over a year and a half ago, when Mrs. Roberts was teaching within the school. The focus will be on Key Stage Three, which your daughter is part of. She is after a small selection of friends (possibly two groups of three or more) from each year, who will be willing to talk about their friendship group and answer some simple questions; the pupils will have their conversations tape-recorded. The pupils will only be required once and the interviews will last around half an hour during the school day on Tuesday November 3rd. (the first Tuesday back after half-term).

Year 7 – lesson 1 and 2 (9.15-10 a.m.)
Year 8 - lesson 3 and 4 (10.15- 11 a.m.)
Year 9 - lesson 5 and 6 (11.35-12.15).

She also requires to 'shadow' one of the groups in each year, which will entail observing their interaction within the class-room and during break-times for two days in total:

Year 7 –Tuesday November 10th and Friday November 13th.
Year 8 - Tuesday November 17th and Friday November 20th.
Year 9 – Tuesday November 24th and Friday November 27th.

All information will remain totally confidential and pupils themselves will be totally anonymous. If your daughter wishes to take part in this much under-researched area, and you are happy for her to do this, please tick the appropriate boxes and give consent by signing the
slip. It is imperative that the forms are returned as quickly as possible to the main school office so that Mrs. Roberts can pick them up and confirm who is taking part. Please put your consent slip in an envelope marked ‘Mrs. Roberts; Main Study consent slips’.

Name of daughter:
Year:
List of other members in peer group:

I give my permission for my daughter………………to help Mrs. Roberts with her Main Study research into the importance of girls' friendships. I understand that all the information will be treated with respect and my daughter will remain anonymous.

Signature of Parent/Guardian

Letter for staff briefing

Hi, everyone, (and new staff as well who don’t know me yet!). My name is Sally (Roberts).

I am hopefully continuing (with your support) my research on how (if at all) Key Stage 3 girls' peer group activities during break-times affect the teachers’ pedagogical decision-making for any subsequent lessons. I had a very successful Pilot Study here over a year or so ago and everyone (including the pupils) were very helpful.

What I would like (in an ideal world):

I will require a small number of about eight pupils from each year group in Key Stage 3, once, for about forty minutes on Tuesday November 3rd. (First week back after half-term). I am trying to avoid
disrupting lessons too much and also avoiding panto. practices in December (hopefully).

Year 7 – lesson 1 and 2 (9.15-10 a.m.)
Year 8 - lesson 3 and 4 (10.15- 11 a.m.)
Year 9 - lesson 5 and 6 (11.35-12.15).

I then (with your support) would like to shadow one small group around for two days each. This would mean that I would be sat making field-notes/observing the groups' interaction when in the class-room and in their break-times. I hope you won't even notice me as I will be as discreet as possible.

Year 7 –Tuesday November 10th and Friday November 13th.
Year 8 –Tuesday November 17th and Friday November 20th.
Year 9 – Tuesday November 24th and Friday November 27th.

If I complete the above without any undue hitches, I will only have half the picture; I NEED YOU! (well not 'you' as such, just your professional answers). Please sign up if you are willing to shed light on 'the other half', the part from the perspective of the Key Stage 3 teachers. I will need to record an interview with you for 20 minutes (once) and no more. I know time is precious, but these interviews will form 'the icing on the cake' for my research and give a more balanced view of peer groups.

I really am trying to get as much research done in November as possible, as I realise the Inspection looms sometime after Christmas.

I am around on the Tuesday November 3rd. from 12.30- 3ish if anyone is 'free' and 2.00 - 3.15 on every Wednesday. If you can help on these specific slots please leave names and times with Dawn and I will confirm as soon as possible.

Please can staff also give out letters (the one above) to their forms
when they are typed by Dawn and urge them to return as soon as possible: The pupils may need to discuss the letter with their peer groups to see if they want to take part.

Thank you!
Sally.
N.B. Last time I used Tutorial Room 2 for the focus groups, but any room will be O.K. even up in the boarding area. (That is my only other requirement).