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A qualitative study exploring the barriers to reading attainment for socioeconomically disadvantaged pupils.

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Acknowledgements

To the incredible school I work in, both the staff and children- I would not be writing this today if it wasn't for the family that you welcomed me into. Thank you for your endless support in helping me begin the career that I love and, more than anything, making me smile every day!

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A qualitative study exploring the barriers to reading attainment for socioeconomically disadvantaged pupils.

This small-scale investigation explores the research question "How could providing pupils with autonomy in reading, support the attainment of socioeconomically disadvantaged pupils' in Primary School?" From a critical theory perspective, using a case study approach, both quantitative and qualitative data was collected through questionnaires with teaching staff, interviews with a case group of Year 4 PP pupils and analysis of their assessment data. This supported the research conclusions that providing pupils with autonomy over their learning could positively impact on attainment and attitudes in reading, which would in turn, support in closing the gap between PP pupils and their peers.

Key words: socioeconomic disadvantage, pupil premium (PP), deficit thinking, funds of knowledge, turnaround model, pupil autonomy.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Education is paramount in changing the lives of individuals and societies all over the world. The Department for Education (DfE, 2018) outlined the importance of attaining adequate literacy and numeracy skills which not only support individuals in day-to-day life, within communities and in the workplace but also support the country's economic growth by having higher skilled workforces alongside the engagement and social attributes of society. Understanding literacy and using this understanding to provide consistent, inclusive teaching of literacy, will allow for an equity throughout the curriculums taught and support better life chances and economic growth within communities around the world. Freire's (1970, cited in Luke, 2012) educational projects in Brazil highlighted the need to understand the cultural and social backgrounds of learners to effectively deliver inclusive literacy practice. Freire argued that education was centered on a 'banking' model which didn't consider the cultures, experiences, or lives of its learners. Therefore, literacy should, in practice, appear differently in every educational setting as it should be based largely around the contextualised experiences and issues surrounding these communities, ensuring equity rather than equality. Using Freire's ideology, it is apparent that considering the socioeconomic backgrounds of disadvantaged pupils is key in supporting attainment across the curriculum.

This research has identified that the attainment of socioeconomically disadvantaged children in Primary Schools is significantly lower than their peers and therefore aims to discover what barriers

exist for these pupils in reading as well as why they exist and what can be done to reduce the barriers. When discussing 'socioeconomically disadvantaged pupils', this will specifically refer to pupils who are entitled to 'pupil premium' funding. 'Pupil premium' (PP) is funding provided by the DfE (2021a) for socioeconomically disadvantaged pupils in England. The DfE (2021a) states that generally, disadvantaged children often face additional challenges which prevent them from reaching their full potential at school, meaning that often, they do not perform as well as other pupils. In 2019, data demonstrated that disadvantaged pupils performed significantly worse than their peers in all KS1 and KS2 statutory assessments (see Appendix 1). This suggests that a need is not being met to close the gap for this group of vulnerable learners. Throughout each of these national assessments, the gap between disadvantaged pupils and all other pupils continues to widen. There is a clear need to develop a greater equity of education for disadvantaged pupils in Primary Schools.

This project is centred around a critical theory approach and is entitled, 'A qualitative study exploring the barriers to reading attainment for socioeconomically disadvantaged pupils.'
The following research questions were identified to support exploring this research problem:

- What are the barriers to learning for socioeconomically disadvantaged pupils in reading?
- Does the word-gap exist for socioeconomically disadvantaged pupils and if so, how can this word-gap be closed?
- Applying a critical theory approach, could providing pupils with more autonomy within their learning be effective in improving attitudes *and* attainment in reading?

These research questions have supported research towards the overarching question: 'How could providing pupils with autonomy in reading, support the attainment of socioeconomically disadvantaged pupils' in Primary School?'

This small-scale investigation has been carried out with pupils at a mixed, mainstream, 3-form entry, state primary school. Due to poor reading attainment across the board, the setting made reading part of the whole school action plan as at the end of the 2020-21 academic year, only 57.7% of pupils were achieving the expected standard or above for reading. The setting sits close to the national average, with 22.4% of pupils in receipt of PP funding and of those, 53.8% were expected in reading at the end of the 2020-21 academic year (as opposed to 58.9% of non-eligible PP pupils). This demonstrates that the reading attainment of their PP pupils was less than that of their more advantaged peers and again highlights the need for this research. Applying Freire's banking model here, it seems that the socioeconomic backgrounds of pupils may not have been thoroughly

considered in order to support an equity of education, which has resulted in differences in attainment.

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Chapter 2: Literature Review

My ontological perspective as a researcher, developed through the literature below, is that in order to raise attainment levels in reading, educators should develop their teaching and learning approach by ensuring learning opportunities provide a context and are meaningful for pupils. Learning should be relevant to pupils, celebrate what they can do and build on this. However, the UK education system sits within a neoliberal context, whereby the government dictate the curriculum and statutory assessments and determine what age-related expectations are for pupils across the key stages. Where pupils do not meet age-related expectations, the governments solution, particularly since COVID is to 'catch pupils up'. This can be see through the 'catch up funding' provided to schools in the last 2 years (DfE, 2021b). Largely, this is down to the education system resting on the Freire's banking model (1970, cited in Luke, 2012). The constraints of the curriculum remove a certain level of autonomy for teachers. Here, both the education system and the teacher themselves hold a middleclass power over the teaching and learning process (Greenhough and Hughes, 2006). Due to this, this small-scale investigation (SSI) aims to develop a greater understanding of how the teaching and learning process could be supported by redirecting some of this power and autonomy, to the pupils themselves.

This research is based on a critical theory approach, which has continued to develop since the original Marxist theory and now, allows for a greater depth of understanding of the factors that affect social justice and supports educators, to close the gap using praxis (Chandler and Munday, 2011). Horkheimer (1972, cited in McKernan, 2013) explained that a theory is 'critical' when it not only seeks to explain, understand, and interpret society but seeks to change it and liberating people from the circumstances they find themselves in. Keeping this interpretation of critical theory in mind throughout this research supported the focus, to discover how practice could be shaped and moulded to support pupils from socioeconomically deprived backgrounds, specifically in reading. Providing pupils with more autonomy over their learning would support the teaching and learning process to reflect the cultures and backgrounds of our pupils (Comber and Kamler, 2005). This is a more holistic approach which removes middleclass power and deficit thinking (Greenhough and Hughes, 2006). Developing an epistemology through a critical theory perspective will allow me to answer the overarching research question: 'How could providing pupils with autonomy in reading, support the attainment of socioeconomically disadvantaged pupils' in Primary School?'.

When investigating the sub-question: 'Does the word-gap exist for socioeconomically disadvantaged pupils and if so, how can this word-gap be closed?', there was clear quantitative data to explore.

Hart and Risley (1995), concluded that children who came from a family where parents received benefits suffered from a 30-million-word gap compared to those from professional homes. Whilst this data was collected 30 years ago with a sample size of only 42 families, more recent research supports these ideas. An example of this is that The Oxford Language Report (2018) discovered from surveying over 1,300 educators, that 69% of Primary School teachers believe the word-gap is increasing and more than 40% of learners in the classroom lack the vocabulary needed to access the curriculum. This suggests that the premise of the research, by Hart and Risley, was factual and still relevant today. It is key to understanding *why* this gap is there in the first place. Through this research, it would be crucial to determine whether the teachers within the setting in question shared this belief and whether it was evident within their practice.

Problematising this, it could be argued that this research demonstrates deficit thinking by assuming that the word-gap exists only in families in receipt of benefits or living in poverty. Comber and Kamler (2004) aimed, through critical discourse, to remove deficit thinking towards families and children growing up in poverty. They intended to disrupt deficit views which blamed the teacher, the child, and the family and argued that to create positive change quickly, professionals needed to move away from deficit thinking and begin working together to create positive outcomes. Their research heavily influenced this SSI, through their critical theory approach and their research methods. Whilst their project was not specifically linked to reading, it was rooted in supporting attainment progression for pupils experiencing socioeconomic deprivation by recognising and celebrating the whole child. Throughout the research process, ensuring the removal of deficit thinking was key, in order to not only keep an open mind through research, but to provide the dignity and respect that the participants of the research deserved.

As a critical theorist, Luke (1992), discussed the idea that whilst knowledge was privileged within the schooling system, it was concepts such as lived-experiences and interaction that provided pupils with real 'meaning'. Luke explored the sensitivity needed from educators about the 'capital' that students came with to a formal education setting, based on their background. Throughout his research, Luke explored the way in which class determines outcomes within education, through the social reproduction theory. Applying Luke's (1992) ideology to this SSI, it can be linked to the sub-questions: 'What are the barriers to learning for socioeconomically disadvantaged pupils in reading?'; and, 'Does the word-gap exist for socioeconomically disadvantaged pupils and if so, how can this word-gap be closed?'.

More recently, Ellwood-Lowe et al. (2022) carried out research into how financial concerns may systematically impact child-directed speech, and therefore add to the ever-growing word-gap within education. They too discussed that whilst there was well established and up-to-date research on the word gap, there was limited research into exactly 'why' the word gap exists. Through two case studies, Ellwood-Lowe et al. (2022) were able to provide preliminary evidence that regardless of caregivers' socioeconomic status, structural constraints and financial worries affect how much parents speak to their children. This was proven by the difference in communication at the start of the month, when families had recently been paid, versus towards the end of the month when families were awaiting their pay, therefore naturally, more worries may occur. This suggests that families who have a lower socioeconomic status and suffer from continuous financial hardship, could communicate less due to these pressures. If this is the case, young children would not be exposed to the same level of vocabulary than peers from a higher socioeconomic status, where financial worries are not prevalent. Whilst research has often pointed towards these conclusions, there has been little research based evidence to support this ideology, without the risk of deficit thinking.

Ellwood-Lowe et al. (2022) research contributes towards answering the question, 'Does the word-gap exist for socioeconomically disadvantaged pupils and if so, how can this word-gap be closed?' as it clearly identifies that the financial worries of caregivers, has a direct impact on word acquisition and provides evidence towards a potential, contributing reason. When looking at how the word gap could be closed, based on the evidence provided by Ellwood-Lowe et al. (2022), it could be suggested that an answer to this would be removing financial hardship from families. However, this is evidently not a realistic suggestion, nor is financial hardship easing in the current climate, and is in fact, set to get worse. This SSI aims to find a practical way for practitioners to improve classroom practice to provide an equity of education for all pupils, regardless of their socioeconomic background. Deficit views would suggest this should be via catch-up funding to merely close the word gap, however, Comber and Kamler (2005) took a different approach. Through critical discourse, they implemented the turnaround model, which encouraged practitioners to modify their literacy pedagogy and curriculums to improve engagement in reading, with their 'at risk' pupils' in mind. They found that this approach engaged entire classes, not solely those pupils being targeted. This fits with my ontological perspective, celebrating what pupils can do and building upon that, rather than focusing on what they cannot do and 'catching them up'.

Additionally, my ideology has been influenced by Moll et al. (1992) research which also aimed to improve educational experiences for disadvantaged children (thus, improving attainment), through

a qualitative study undertaken in working-class Mexican communities. Moll et al. research intended to improve the teaching and learning experiences of pupils by developing home-school links that allow education at school to draw on both the skills of family members at home and other community resources. This research by Moll et al. (1992) drew on Freire's critical pedagogy. The banking model explored the idea that within education, intellectual development of pupils was hindered as new information was merely 'deposited', with no context and the lack of connection pupils' had with this information, led to a lack of developed understanding. Moll et al. 'funds of knowledge' (1992) removes this and supports the intellectual development of pupils by drawing of the skills of families and the community. Moll et al. (1992) also suggested the importance of seeing beyond stereotypes and learning about the whole child, recognising that a collaborative approach between home and school was the best way to achieve this. Critical theory allows for critique of what we already know (e.g., that attainment of PP pupils is significantly below their peers) and remove the inherent assumptions society has. Therefore, this approach will support the discovery of the underlying barriers that PP pupils face, which prevent them from reaching their full potential in reading and retrospectively, support closing the gap.

Moll et al. work later went on to shape the work of Greenhough and Hughes (2006), as they drew further on the concept of 'funds of knowledge'. They focused their research on the communication between schools and families, with a belief that this communication should be two way, and celebrate the skills of the families within the school communities. Epstein (1995, cited in Greenhough and Hughes, 2006) stressed the importance of home-school communication to aid progress. Without effective and open communication, it is not possible for parents to work alongside school to support their child's progress. This research was key in answering, in part, the sub question 'What are the barriers to learning for socioeconomically disadvantaged pupils in reading?'. The ideology behind Moll et al. (1992) 'funds of knowledge' highlights the need for effective home-school relationships and communication. This suggests a potential barrier to progress in reading is a lack of home-school communication between educational settings and families, which could be aided by taking on Moll et al. 'funds of knowledge' approach. This provides a second research project: discovering to what extent parents and families are involved in their child's learning; to what extent schools communicate with parents about the programmes of study used within the setting, and finally; to what extent schools draw upon the 'funds of knowledge' of the community they sit within. This would allow for Greenough and Hughes' findings to be built upon and would be a positive step towards removing deficit thinking and the barriers to attainment of pupils from socioeconomically deprived backgrounds. The focus of this research remained as listening to the views of pupils and providing

them with a greater level of autonomy, however, as my understanding developed through critical discourse, it became apparent that there was a further need to understand the views of parents, carers and wider families. This data would provide more effective conclusions for settings to build upon and make a greater impact on the attainment of their pupils in receipt of pupil premium funding. Whilst time did not allow to extend the SSI in this way, it would be an interesting secondary research concept to explore in the future.

Continuing to explore the sub-question: 'What are the barriers to learning for socioeconomically disadvantaged pupils in reading?' recent research from Gorard et al. (2021) looks into the attainment gap between pupil premium pupils and their peers. One element of this was the segregation caused by the pupil premium funding scheme, adding to the little evidence the scheme itself works. Gorard et al. (2021) discuss that such evaluations were difficult to come to, based on various demographic, economic and policy changes between 2006 and 2019. This highlighted the issue within this SSI as any conclusions drawn are only relevant to an area of this demographic. In another setting, where the percentage socioeconomic difference is higher or lower, findings and conclusions may vary. However, using a regression model, Gorard et al. (2021) were able to demonstrate that the attainment of pupil premium pupils was improving, and the gap had marginally closed. Whilst this research does not explain why the gap it there in the first place and how this can continue to close, it does provide confidence in the pupil premium scheme, suggesting this is what schools need in order to be able to support pupils. A further investigation could be done here to monitor how pupil premium funding is spent across various settings, in comparison to the PP attainment levels.

It was through considering the above that I was able to narrow down my research aims and develop a focus into providing a greater level of autonomy to PP pupils, within reading. There was little recent research into the impacts of socioeconomic difference in pupils, that actually included or considered the views of pupils within the research. However, the overarching research question 'How could providing pupils with autonomy in reading, support the attainment of socioeconomically disadvantaged pupils' in Primary School?', was shaped by the research carried out by Comber and Kamler (2005) who endeavoured to re-engage at risk pupils in reading by ensuring that their learning was reflective of their home cultures. In order to provide pupils with learning experiences that reflect their culture, background and lived experiences, pupils must be given autonomy to make decisions for themselves. Exploring the sub-question 'Applying a critical theory approach, could providing pupils with more autonomy within their learning be effective in improving attitudes *and* attainment in reading?', allowed me to delve not only into attainment, but into attitudes. 'Attitudes' are subjective

and qualitative, they cannot be determined by a score or mark, in the way attainment can and that is why 1:1 interviews with pupils were important within this research.

Throughout the development of this chapter, I have been able to refine my research intentions and questions from a critical theory perspective. Grix (2019) discussed the importance of planning ahead for research but also emphasised the importance of allowing research aims and questions to be shaped by literature, throughout the process. When beginning this research journey, pupil autonomy was not my intended focus and I solely planned on exploring why socioeconomically disadvantaged pupils showed lower attainment levels than their peers, in reading. It was through both developing an understanding through literature, and discovering the gaps that lie in current research today, which led me to see the immense value in pupil voice within research and support me in moving away from a deficit thinking model (Comber and Kamler, 2004/ 2005). As discussed, since carrying out this research, it has become clear that there are still ways in which I would develop it further, by seeking the views of parents, carers and families in the wider community. This would support an understanding of whether a greater celebration of 'funds of knowledge' (Moll et al., 1992), would have an impact on the attainment of socioeconomically deprived pupils, in reading.

Chapter 3: Research design

My ontological perspective as a researcher, based on the above literature, is that in order to reach attainment levels in reading, meaningful, contextual learning experiences that celebrate and build on what pupils already know is the key to providing an equity of education. I believe this will, in turn, support in closing the attainment gap between socioeconomically disadvantaged pupils and their peers. This SSI aims to answer the overarching research question: 'How could providing pupils with autonomy in reading, support the attainment of socioeconomically disadvantaged pupils' in Primary School?' from a critical theory approach.

Methodology

This project's methodology, informed by my paradigm position, is a small exploratory case study, with a focus on pupil-voice. A case study gave me the flexibility to use a range of research methods to investigate the progress and attainment of a case group of between 5 and 10 Year 4 pupils who are in receipt of PP funding. Case studies are often seen as the preferred method of answering research questions when judgements are context-dependent and centred around pedagogy (Yin, 2003; Elliott, 2007), which is crucial from a critical theory perspective. This research approach allowed me to use both qualitative and quantitative data from a variety of sources, providing me with a more in-depth understanding of the barriers to learning disadvantaged pupils face in reading. This decision was heavily influenced by Moll et al. (1992) and Comber and Kamler (2005) who both used case study approaches within their research, aligning well with their critical discourse approach to research. In Moll et al. (1992) we see how their use of case study methodology, whilst not in isolation, supported the removal of deficit thinking as they can explore deeper into the contexts of the community and socio-historical backgrounds of their participants, who were from working-class Mexican households. Removing deficit thinking within this SSI was critical, so not to suggest that all socioeconomically disadvantaged pupils have poor reading attainment, or as a suggestion that all members of families from socioeconomically deprived backgrounds will struggle to read.

Recognising the dilemmas of being an insider researcher (Mercer, 2007) has been crucial throughout. In the initial stages of developing my research questions, I approached the senior leadership team of my setting (a mainstream, mixed, three-form-entry Primary School) where the deputy head was the gatekeeper and initial ideas were discussed and approved. There then continued to be an open dialogue as the research plans have developed. Whilst there can also be limitations, there are huge benefits to insider-research as it enables researchers to begin closing the

gaps between theory and practice through the extensive knowledge of the workplace, alongside the deepening understanding of current literature and theory (Costley et al., 2010).

A case study allowed me to research in depth by analysing data, carrying out interviews with pupils, and collecting the thoughts and opinions of teachers within the setting through a questionnaire. The mixture of both quantitative and qualitative data provided a rounded picture that considers the social contexts of the research, through triangulation. These decisions around research design support the credibility of the research and later the analysis of findings (Guba, 1981) as the use of different methods, in tandem, compensate any confines of individual methods, allowing us to reap the benefits of them all.

Research instruments

Open-ended interviews proved successful in Moll et al. (1992) research. Chamberlain et al. (2019), discussed the importance of genuinely listening to children to respect their rights by hearing their opinions on research which focusses on them. This supported the decision to use individual open-ended, semi-structured pupil interviews rather than questionnaires, to collect pupil voice. Pupils were asked questions about areas such as: reading enjoyment, personal strengths, areas they struggle with, and favourite texts (see Appendix 2). Comber and Kamler's (2005) research aimed to transform the teaching and learning process through the turnaround approach and re-engage pupils at risk by talking to them and moulding the curriculum to fit their needs. This shaped the next steps and meant that the final question in this interview was to put autonomy into practice and ask the pupils to choose a text they felt they could read and that they enjoyed. Books were chosen from a familiar library space with over 1000 books to choose from. As the researcher, I then developed a comprehension test, based on a section of the book chosen, to determine whether pupils perform better with a text they have an interest in and have chosen themselves or whether, in fact, it had no impact on either pupil enjoyment or attainment.

In order to provide evidence to determine whether the use of pupil autonomy had any impact on attainment, collecting quantitative data from previous assessments was key. Assessment papers for the participants were collected and analysed to assess what areas of reading pupils struggled in. These assessments were carried out in March 2022 and due to the nature of the participants varying attainment levels, were all different assessment papers (see Appendix 3). The analysis from these papers was then to be compared with the analysis from the new assessment data, collected following the pupil interviews.

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<u>Ethical considerations and measures</u>

Letters were sent out to the parents all pupils in Year 4 who are in receipt of pupil premium funding. This letter outlined plans for research, participants rights within research and sought consent for their child to be a part of this research (see Appendix 4). This letter was initially drafted by me as the researcher but then discussed and edited by the head teacher and deputy head teacher, which allowed for the initial communication with participants to be in line with the schools procedures and adopt their ethical approval (BERA, 2018). The school did decide to simplify the letter slightly. This was with the aim of supporting parental understanding, as they may have felt intimidated by large amounts of research and educational 'jargon'. Parents were then able to sign consent and return the letter to school, demonstrating their opt-in consent, or opt-out dissent to take part in research.

The British Educational Research Association's (BERA, 2018) principles of consent apply to adults and children alike. The BERA (2018) also states that children who are capable of forming their own views, should be given the opportunity to do so, taking into account their age and maturity. All of the pupils within the potential case group are able to do so and therefore developing their understanding of the research was essential. Additionally, as outlined within the ethical appraisal form completed (see Appendix 5), no research with young children should be completed without gaining their informed assent. In order to obtain this, when pupils were taken for their 1:1 interview, before any data was collected, they were informed of their rights. Pupils were only taken for this chat, once parents had signed their consent. In order to attain pupils assent, they were taken to the school library on a 1:1 basis. Here, I was able to explain that I was carrying out research and explain their rights to them in an age-appropriate manner before asking for their assent to take part in the research. Prior to this, I had written a script so that I was able to maintain consistency and ensure everything was covered appropriately (see Appendix 6). At the end of the day, pupils were asked to come back out to discuss their decisions with me and all of the pupils provided their assent to take part in research. I was confident that by the end, all participants understood their rights within the research and their assent was informed.

Interviews were carried out on a 1:1 basis, in the morning, when pupils are often at their best with optimum energy. This also meant that pupils were not removed from their more practical, exciting lessons such as PE and Music, which happen in the afternoons. This could have felt more like a punishment to the participants and impacted on their motivation to take part in the questionnaire. Pupils were given a choice on the space in which to use between an empty teaching area within Year 4, the KS1 library or their own library space. Interestingly, all 5 participants chose to sit in their

own library, which was empty for all 5 interviews. As an insider research, it was important to consider the power-relations as the participants were in fact my pupils. Whilst power-relations exist and are fixed in most cases of research, making removing them in any case almost impossible, being aware of them makes this ethically viable (Costley et al., 2010). Providing the pupils with this small, but instant, level of control and autonomy, demonstrated to the participant that their views and opinions mattered and removed some of these power-relations.

Additionally, collecting the views of teachers within the setting will be vital to understand the whole picture of the setting. I would aim to collect views on how their PP pupils perform in reading, whether they enjoy reading, and where teachers believe that gaps to be with their pupils. Furthermore, when collecting their views on their PP pupils, it would be purposeful to discover what their views are on the word gap (see Appendix 7). This will provide further data which will allow me to determine whether the analysis of the small case group fits in with the 'whole school picture'. In Comber and Kamler (2004), they used intergenerational pairs of teachers to support the development of thinking and remove deficit views. Therefore, experience in years features in the questionnaire to see if the same is found with this study. Thinking ethically as an insider researcher, I decided to implement a questionnaire rather than teacher interviews as teacher workload currently is high, due to post-pandemic stresses, and teachers could resent finding the time to sit down for an interview but questionnaires are more flexible and therefore achievable. Through the support of the head teacher and gatekeeper (deputy head teacher), time was allocated for staff to be able to complete this questionnaire, within directed time, if they wished to do so. However, this time was allocated in June 2022, towards the end of the school year. By this time of year, teachers are tired and experience greater amounts of pressure due to assessment data, transition and summer activities such as sports day. It could be that this type of research would be received differently at the start of a new school year, when teachers have had a break in order to recharge. The teacher-questionnaires will also be kept anonymous to remove the barrier of 'insider researcher' influence. Upon reflection, carrying out the same study as an outsider researcher, alongside the study carried out at this setting could have provided stronger credibility to the research. This would have allowed for a comparison of data between two different settings, one in which where insider researcher limitations were removed. If findings were found to be the same in both settings, this would confirm the validity of the analysis.

Ensuring data is organised for security, and plans have been fully considered to ensure ethics and data are upheld, is crucial (Hewson, 2020). Therefore, ethical considerations around GDPR and

maintaining anonymity for all participants was of the utmost importance within the research design process. Any data collected had a data handling plan and this was upheld throughout the research process (see Appendix 8).

Pupil case group

Following the consent proceedings, I was able to create a case group of 5 pupils who took part in the research. All of the pupils were in receipt of pupil premium funding based on their parents financial income, they were between 8 and 9 years of age, 3 were male, 2 were female and all attended the setting as a Year 4 pupil. These pupils account for 19.2% of the PP pupils in Year 4. The case group of pupils were of varying reading abilities and none were working at or above the expected standard for Year 4, in reading.

Teacher participants

Of a potential 18 teachers that could have answered the online questionnaire, 17 chose to opt in to the research. Of those, there was a mixture of those who taught in Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), Key Stage 1 (KS1) And Key Stage 2 (KS2), as shown in figure 1.

Figure 1: a pie chart demonstrating which Key Stage participants currently work within.
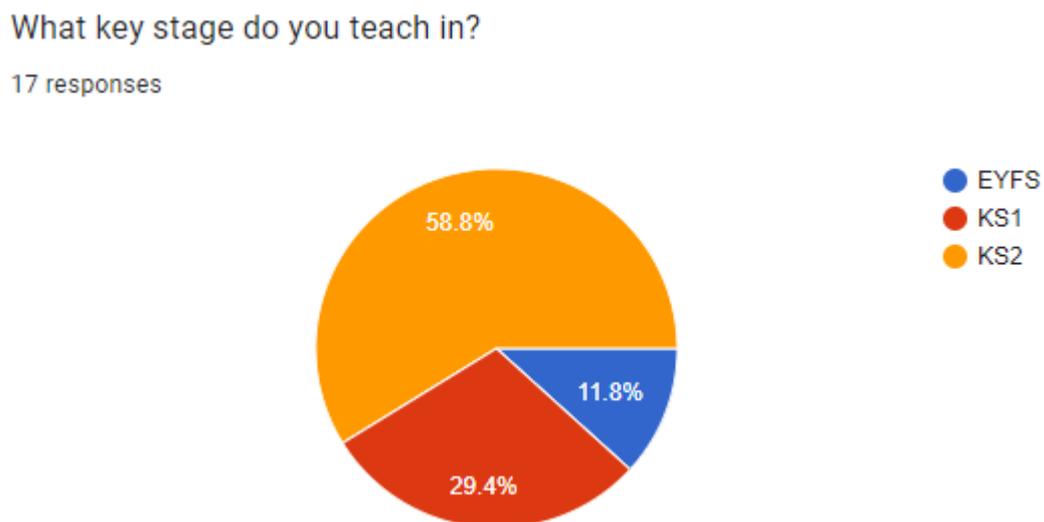

Additionally, as discussed above, understanding the experience teachers had was relevant to the research (Comber and Kamler, 2004). The responses to this question are shown in figure 2.

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Figure 2: a pie chart representing the number of years participants have been in the teaching profession.

How long have you been teaching?

17 responses

- 1-3 years
- 4-10 years
- 10-24 years
- 25+ years
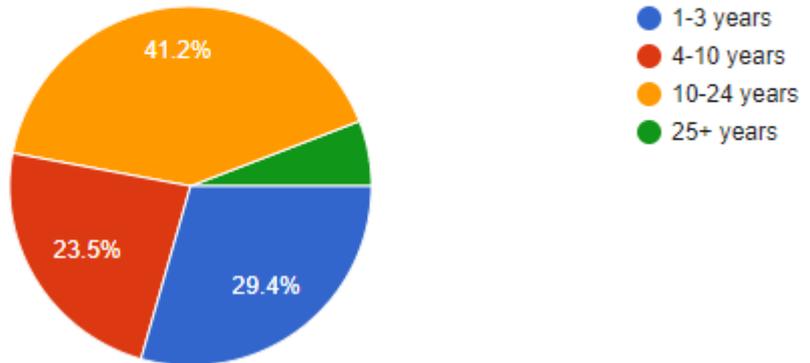
Evidently, there was a wide range of experience level amongst the participants, but few who had been teaching for more than 25 years. For further research, it would be interesting to see a larger case group in the 25+ year's category, to see if results differ based on this.

<u>Reflection</u>

Whilst the above discussion highlights various elements of reflection, overall, the research design and research instruments were effective. They enabled the credible data collection towards answering the overarching research question: 'How could providing pupils with autonomy in reading, support the attainment of socioeconomically disadvantaged pupils' in Primary School?' from a critical theory approach.

Chapter 4: Data presentation and analysis

The data collected using the research methods discussed above was then analysed in order to support developing an answer to the sub questions:

- What are the barriers to learning for socioeconomically disadvantaged pupils in reading?
- Does the word-gap exist for socioeconomically disadvantaged pupils and if so, how can this word-gap be closed?
- Applying a critical theory approach, could providing pupils with more autonomy within their learning be effective in improving attitudes *and* attainment in reading?

This in turn, supported research towards the overarching question: 'How could providing pupils with autonomy in reading, support the attainment of socioeconomically disadvantaged pupils' in Primary School?'.
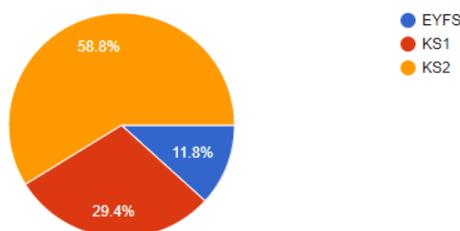
Deficit views

As discussed, the questionnaire of practitioners aimed to gain the views of teachers within the setting and gain a full understanding of the setting as a whole. Figure 3 reminds us of the make-up of the participants who took part in this questionnaire.

Figure 3: pie charts representing the make-up of participating teachers within the setting.

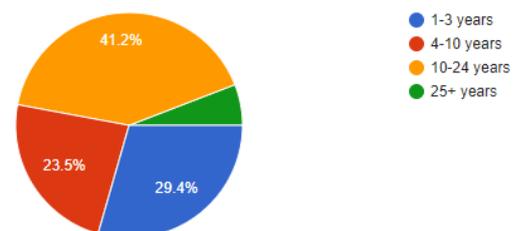Whilst it was evident that the day-to-day practices, as well as level of experience was vastly different across the participants, all 17 teachers said they do teach reading within their role, meaning they were able to provide relevant data towards the research.

In considering the sub-question, 'What are the barriers to learning for socioeconomically disadvantaged pupils in reading?', the results from question 6 (figure 4) were surprising to me. When analysing the results from this question, I was surprised to find that all 17 responses demonstrated a deficit mindset. However, what I found most surprising that the 'blame' was always on either the child, families or the teachers but never the government and expectations of the pupils (see Appendix 9 for all responses).

Figure 4: Question 6 taken from the teacher questionnaire.

Qu6. Using data from the most recent statutory assessments in 2019, pupil premium pupils' attainment levels were statistically lower than their non PP peers. This gap is shown to increase at each statutory assessment (Phonics Screening Check, KS1 SATS and KS2 SATS). For example, in the 2019 KS2 SATS, only 51% of PP pupils achieved the expected standard in Reading, Writing and Maths, compared to 71% of all other pupils. Why do you think this is?

When exploring the sub-question: 'What are the barriers to learning for socioeconomically disadvantaged pupils in reading?' through the data taken from the responses to Question 6, it could be that a barrier to learning for these pupils is deficit thinking within educators. Whether consciously or subconsciously, the responses to this question demonstrate deficit thinking towards socioeconomically deprived pupils, in most cases blaming the parental support they receive. This then becomes an instant barrier to these pupils as the tunnel vision that deficit thinking brings, prevents the reflective and transformative practice needed to reengage these pupils. Drawing on one response from question 6 (figure 5), this participant had clearly considered the question carefully and does draw on the difference of texts that PP pupils are exposed to compared to their peers, however the phrase "quality texts" and "exposure to life experiences", seems to disregard the texts PP pupils do read and the life experiences they do have.

Figure 5: Response 15 to question 6 of the teacher questionnaire

I feel this is because they do not get the same exposure to quality texts as some of their peers, equally their culture capital is significantly lower than other children so their exposure to life experiences is low so they can not/do not relate to some themes in reading. They also may experience less support at home with homework and other school related situations.

Whilst I would agree with the response in terms of the differences of books and experiences between PP pupils and their peers, this does not make one more valuable than the other. Perhaps, drawing on the turnaround model (Comber and Kamler, 2005), if we got to know more about the books our PP pupils read at home and the experiences they do have, we would be able to draw on them within reading lessons to support development rather than 'catch them up'. The question itself did not ask the participants to provide solutions to this, merely to state why they think there is an attainment gap, so perhaps this is not a true reflective of the holistic viewpoints of the participants. However, the final question, question 11 (figure 6), does provide the participants an opportunity to share these views.

Figure 6: Question 11 taken from the teacher questionnaire.

Qu11. How do you believe we should be supporting pupil premium pupils in Reading, at our school?

Responses to this question were more varied (see Appendix 10) although mainly came from the same themes of additional reading/ phonics with an adult, more time with adults reading to children and fostering a love of reading. Pleasingly, 53% of responses discussed the importance of being led by children's interests and a focus on reading for pleasure and enjoyment, demonstrating an understanding that in order to best support our socioeconomically disadvantaged pupils, we must consider their pupil views. A reoccurring theme throughout were time pressures and busy timetables but a seemingly united voice that wants to allocate more time to reading for enjoyment rather than the curriculum. Here, it must be considered that if the practitioners believe that the way we will improve attainment and attitudes is to provide these enjoyable opportunities, then the space within

the timetable for this must be prioritised. If we cannot engage pupils, the rest of what we do within the 'busy timetables' could well be wasted. Within my feedback to the setting, I will be suggesting that they create this time to reading for pleasure, as suggested by over half of their teachers, to promote a love of learning and in an effort to reengage our socioeconomically disadvantaged pupils. It would be interesting to re-analyse the schools PP data at the end of next academic year, after making this time, to assess if it has made any positive impacts towards attainment.

The word gap

The literature review above supports the idea that the word gap is present, but understanding this is only a small amount of the research process; developing an understanding of how we *remove* this is the real challenge. The sub-question: 'Does the word-gap exist for socioeconomically disadvantaged pupils and if so, how can this word-gap be closed?' was explored through question 7 of the teacher questionnaire. In response to the questions: "What are your thoughts on the word gap? Do you believe it is increasing?", 82% of responses indicated that they did believe the word gap to be increasing. Of the remaining 18%, responses lacked clarity one way or another, but no responses suggested that there had been any improvement within the word gap (see Appendix 11). Of those 82%, 43% indicated that COVID, lockdown and online learning were a likely contributing factor of the increasing gap. This is and will continue to remain an issue for years to come as pupils were removed from social environments and forced to communicate online, where technology was available. Many families were working from home and therefore, within the working day, children often found themselves with minimal adult communication which is now evident in learning since the return (DfE, 2021b). The DfE (2021b), looked into the post-COVID effects on schools and whilst they didn't blame parents, teachers, or pupils, their focus now is on 'catching up' and 'recovering' lost education. The impact on reading and phonics is outlined in the education recovery in schools report alongside the impacts this is having on other subjects as reading is apparent within all subjects. Whilst this problem effects all pupils, not just those in receipt of PP funding, it has widened the gap between PP pupils and their peers even further, with a focus on 'catching up'.

Applying Figure 7 to the above issues around COVID-19 implications on attainment. Without asking families what support they need, we risk the gap continuing to widen. Nowhere in the DfE (2021b) report does it state that families or pupils have been involved in any research processes about the widened gap, only school leaders were consulted.

Figure 7: Response 1 to question 7 of the teacher questionnaire

Yes. The gap will continue to widen unless support is given both financially and practically to those struggling families.

Whilst some deficit views were still apparent, they were less so than the responses seen in from question 6. Figure 8 demonstrates an interesting view which removes deficit thinking.

Figure 8: Response 13 to question 7 of the teacher questionnaire

Yes and no - I think that children are exposed to a wider vocabulary compared to 10-15 years ago due to the rise of online services, but this is through streaming such as netflix, gaming etc. and the words they are accessing is not necessarily broadening their reading vocabulary.

This participant appears to answer the question from a critical theory perspective and uses a more holistic view of the word gap. In line with Moll et al. (1992) funds of knowledge, this response suggests that pupils' vocabulary is actually broader than it has been over the last two decades. However, their vocabulary does not necessarily match to the national curriculum expectations and the vocabulary that pupils do have does not appear to align with reading materials. Applying this response alongside Moll et al. (1992), would suggest again, a more reflective approach is needed when selecting reading materials. This would allow learning to build on what pupils do know and allow them to apply learning from their home lives and interests, within the classroom.

Therefore, in response to the sub-question: 'Does the word-gap exist for socioeconomically disadvantaged pupils and if so, how can this word-gap be closed?', participants did agree it existed and many believed it is increasing, in part due to the impact of COVID-19. Whilst closing this word gap is, as previously discussed, more challenging, responses supported the idea of applying the

turnaround model to engage readers (Comber and Kamler, 2005) and provide more support to struggling families, where Moll et al. (1992) funds of knowledge would need to be applied.

<u>Pupil autonomy</u>

The first data collection within the case group of pupils was the Easter assessment. Whilst the assessments they carried out varied by level (see Appendix 3), the analysis of these can be compared with ease as all of the assessments focussed on 5 reading skills:

- retrieval
- inference
- summary
- prediction
- word understanding

Across the case group, all of the pupils appeared to show a weakness within the word understanding questions (see Appendix 12), with 4 out of 5 of the case group scoring less than 40% on the vocabulary questions, with Child D being the only anomaly with this. These 4 pupils also achieved a lower percentage within their vocabulary questions, than they did overall, suggesting that there are other areas of greater strength within reading. In fact, 3 out of 5 of the participants within the pupil case study were event able to identify this themselves, stating that understanding words in a text is something they find more difficult (figure 9). In saying this, this is only a small case study and this data itself only provides a small amount of evidence about each child, therefore results cannot be generalised. However, the data does support the findings of Ellwood-Lowe et al. (2022), that the word gap is present for our socioeconomically disadvantaged pupils.

Figure 9: a table showing the responses to the question "What do you find more difficult in reading?", during 1:1 pupil interviews.

Child	Response
Child A	Reading the words and understanding them.
Child B	Words that are difficult to read, like names, and knowing what they mean.
Child C	Reading too fast means I'm not fluent and I get the questions wrong.
Child D	Pronouncing words I haven't heard of.
Child E	Understanding what the text or questions mean.

Whilst the above data was important to collect, it does not provide a rounded picture, taking into account the holistic child. The data collected from the second set of assessments was analysed in the same way, in order to determine whether pupil autonomy could improve attainment and attitudes within reading. The assessments were written with the child's academic ability in mind and the assessments they sat reflected this, with Child A and B's assessment being easier than Child C, D and E's (see Appendix 13). Interestingly, 4 out of 5 pupils (excluding Child C), chose books with pictures in and through the observations within the reading and assessments, it was evident that pupils enjoyed looking at these pictures and used them to support their understanding of the text and answer the questions given. Within Child A's interview, he expressed that he liked books with pictures because looking at the pictures is his favourite part of reading. For context, Child A also speaks English as an additional language (EAL), therefore pictures in books for him are so important as he develops his word understanding. This is a factor not necessarily considered when exploring the word gap in pupils.

Child C chose the text 'The Famous Five Go Down To The Sea' by Enid Blyton, which as an insider researcher who knows this pupil well, was a text outside of the child's independent reading capabilities. However, Child C explained that he knew these books and stories because his main carer reads them to him at bedtime. Whilst this text was a struggle for the pupil to read, he thoroughly enjoyed sharing it with me, not as a researcher, but as his teacher. This insight into his life also proved that this is why assumptions and generalisations should not and could not be applied to all PP pupils. Being PP does not instantly mean parents do not read to their children or value education. Whilst socioeconomically disadvantaged families do face challenges that those from higher socioeconomic backgrounds may not, potentially making things like additional home reading a greater challenge, this does not mean it never happens. Child C is an example of how this deficit view is unfounded. Additionally to this, in their 1:1 interviews, all pupils were able to discuss the kids of texts they enjoy, as well as being able to list a favourite book or multiple favourites in the case of Child E.

The results (see Appendix 14), all demonstrated that pupils achieved a higher percentage within the second assessment, based on a book of their choice, in comparison to their Easter assessments. However, they did not improve on their word understanding questions. All excluding Child D, who had already presented as the strongest within the case group with word understanding questions, failed to score any marks on these questions. Various factors may have impacted upon this, for example, possibly the wording of questions were unfamiliar, there had been no 'build up' immersion

of the text, the reading, discussion and comprehension all happened within around 45 minutes per pupil. This is not necessarily best practice when thinking about Quality First Teaching (QFT), where pupils would be immersed in texts over a series of days and vocabulary would be taught rather than assumed. This in itself, is a flaw within the research design. However, going back to the overall results, figure 10 shows the difference in 'attainment' between the two assessments. Whilst the drop in Child C's attainment is put down to the text being beyond the child's independent reading capabilities, I believe, as a researcher, the improvements were as a result of enjoyment of the text and therefore an intrinsic motivation to read and complete the comprehension questions.

Figure 10: a table of comparison results for the case group of pupils.

| Child	Easter assessment percentage	Autonomous assessment percentage	Difference in attainment
Child A	47.5%	66.6%	+19.1%
Child B	14%	66.6%	+42.6%
Child C	16%	6.6%	-9.4%
Child D	44%	80%	+46%
Child E	56%	80%	+24%

Considering the results of the pupils following this aspect of the investigation, it shows some promise to the idea that pupil autonomy could have a positive impact on the attainment and attitudes in reading for our socioeconomically disadvantaged pupils. If pupil autonomy was more consistently adopted throughout pupils' time in primary school, these results suggest the gap could be closed.

When exploring the sub-question: 'Applying a critical theory approach, could providing pupils with more autonomy within their learning be effective in improving attitudes *and* attainment in reading?' through the teacher questionnaire, results were varied. Figure 11 demonstrates the responses to whether practitioners felt pupil autonomy would be effective in changing attitudes towards learning. The green response was a response written by a participant using the 'other' opinion. These results appear to be rather inconclusive, with 35.3% of responses not giving a definitive answer, possibly due to the fact participants felt they could not be sure either way without experiencing the impacts of providing pupils with more autonomy over learning, first. It would be interesting to see the contrast in results if this was something participants had trialled within their classrooms prior to answering the questionnaire.

Figure 11: pie charts representing the responses to the impacts pupil autonomy could have on learning.

Do you believe if pupils had more autonomy over their learning, they would enjoy their learning more?

17 responses
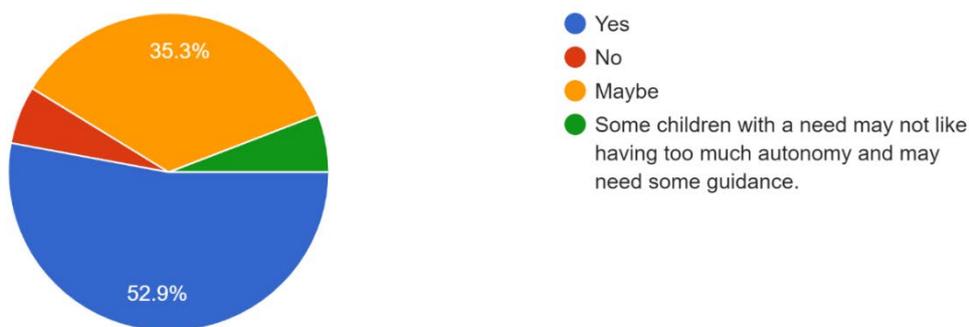
When asked in their 1:1 interview about whether they ever get to choose what they read in reading lessons at school, all 5 pupils within the case group said they never choose and the teacher did it. The next question asked pupils "Would you like to choose what you read?" and pupils mostly said yes. Figure 12 shows the responses of the 5 pupils.

Figure 12: a table showing the responses to the question "Would you like to choose what you read?" during 1:1 pupil interviews.

Child	Response
Child A	Yes, because I will see which ones I really like.
Child B	I don't mind reading any type of text.
Child C	Yes, because maybe I wouldn't listen if I didn't like it.
Child D	Yes, because I'd enjoy it more.
Child E	Yes, because it would be interesting to see what others choose. I'd like it better so it'd help me and I'd try harder.

As an insider researcher, it was pleasing that the pupils within the case study were able to be honest about this. Power-relations may have meant pupils felt because they had explained that the teacher (me) chooses the texts, that they couldn't be honest and say they'd like to change the way I'd do it. Whilst I can't be sure this wasn't the case for Child B, it was pleasing to see the openness of the other 4 answers who said they would like to choose. Child E's response in particular is entirely in

line with Comber and Kamler's (2005) claims that being flexible with the texts we choose as practitioners could re-engage our most 'at risk' pupils.

When exploring the area of reading enjoyment with the pupils, it was interesting how vastly different and specific their answers were. Through the interview, Child C expressed their enjoyment of reading newspapers. When answering the question 'Do you enjoy reading? Why do you feel this way?', Child C responded with "Yes, I like reading newspapers. I don't like books as much. I like learning new things, it's interesting". Had the question been more closed, for example 'Do you enjoy reading books?', the child may have simply answered no, and we would have never been given this insight into his interests within reading. This fits in entirely with Comber and Kamler's (2005) research findings. Perhaps newspapers are readily available to Child C at home and therefore his primary experience of reading has been with newspapers, which is equally as valuable as reading a book, just in a different capacity. Ensuring newspapers are available during reading for pleasure time could be a way of fostering Child C's love of reading. Furthermore, when asked about reading at home, Child B responded with "not many books from school but I like reading my own ones" and when questioned, gave the example of '13 Story Tree House'. This example, from Child B's interview, provides another example of how if pupils are engaged, they will read by choice and enjoy the learning process. For whatever reason, the home-school reading books do not appeal to Child B and he instead chooses to read something of his preference. Here, the theme that comes through from both Child B and Child C is that when they have the autonomy to choose their own texts, they enjoy reading more and appear to be more engaged.

Whilst over half of the practitioners agreed that autonomy would improve enjoyment and attitudes towards learning, only 6% (1 participant), agreed that it was feasible to achieve this within a classroom setting. The other 16 responses state they do not believe it is feasible, many using curriculum coverage, logistics and lack of discipline/ structure as their reasons (see Appendix 15). Unfortunately, with the average class size in the setting being 30 pupils and no additional adult for many classes during reading time, I can see where this would be the case. This would be where the flexibility and reflective practice discussed by Comber and Kamler (2005) becomes so relevant. Whilst views around this being unrealistic to provide autonomy to 30 pupils with only 1 teacher have some grounds, figure 13 demonstrates an interesting and flexible view. Allowing 30 pupils to choose their own texts to study is not feasible 100% of the time, however how they chose to record, as seen in response 14, could be left more open ended and flexible.

> *Figure 13: Response 14 to question 10 of the teacher questionnaire*
>
> **Yes. More autonomy in recording.**

At this setting, recording is used commonly as a general term for mark making (writing, note taking, drawing etc.), to demonstrate ideas and understanding. Providing more autonomy in recording could remove the barrier of writing for some pupils as they may choose to record using pictures, or remove the barrier of recording in full sentences for others as they choose to record through flow charts or mind-maps. Recording is only beneficial if it has meaning to the child, which is why there shouldn't be a 'one size fits all' approach. A more flexible approach could support pupils' attainment and attitudes. Next academic year, this is a method I would like to adapt, after which I would endeavour to use informal pupil interviews which would lead to greater pupil autonomy, inform my own practice before concluding whether, in fact, it has had a positive impact on attitudes. Analysis of assessment data and reflection of lesson engagement would also provide insight into whether this approach was effective.

Chapter 5: Conclusions and implications

The above data analysis supported me to come to conclusions on all three sub-questions, as well as the overarching question. This is a small-scale investigation, based in one setting, with a small case group, and therefore conclusions cannot be widely generalised. However, the below conclusions and implications could resonate with the experiences of other scholars working within the same area of research.

Does the word-gap exist for socioeconomically disadvantaged pupils and if so, how can this word-gap be closed?

All of the evidence provided, from literature (Ellwood-Lowe, 2022), the teacher questionnaire (see Appendix 12) and the assessment analysis of pupils assessments (see Appendix 12 and 14), supports the view that the word gap does exist for socioeconomically disadvantaged pupils. Though the evidence does not confirm whether the word gap exists exclusively within these pupils alone, and as a researcher I would pose that it exists across many of their peers too. Throughout this research, it was identified that closing the word gap is a challenge and requires further investigation. The teacher questionnaire results demonstrate that teachers are aiming to use vocabulary lessons and immersion in high-quality texts (see Appendix 10). It was also evident that the pupils could discuss their enjoyment of reading, suggesting that the school is fostering this love of learning. However, what could support this further was a deeper understanding of the funds of knowledge (Moll et al., 1992), through communication with the families of our socioeconomically disadvantaged pupils. Developing a greater understanding of what pupils do know, will support us as practitioners to teach new learning. For example, if a pupil didn't know what the word 'repetition' meant, a discussion with the family could be around what word they may use in place of the word repetition.

What are the barriers to learning for socioeconomically disadvantaged pupils in reading?

As discussed above, the word gap does present as a potential barrier, however a bigger barrier appears to be the deficit views of teachers, as seen within the teacher questionnaire results (see Appendix 9). By placing blame on pupils, families and teachers, the problem is seemingly identified but never solved. The questionnaire results appeared to align with the idea that both the education system and the teachers themselves hold a middleclass power over the teaching and learning process (Greenhough and Hughes, 2006). By holding this power, meaningful, contextual learning experiences that draw on and celebrate the valuable home experiences of these pupils could be missed.

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<u>Applying a critical theory approach, could providing pupils with more autonomy within their learning be effective in improving attitudes *and* attainment in reading?</u>

The evidence above leads me to believe that at this setting, yes, pupil autonomy could be used more effectively to improve attitudes and attainment in reading. Whilst this cannot be generalised to all settings, it could provide other settings with a conceptual understanding of ways in which they could also develop the use of pupil autonomy to improve attainment and attitudes. The use of pupil autonomy does not need to be formal and in a research capacity, it can be through informal chats that practitioners have to develop positive relationships with their pupils. A focus on discovering pupil views to ascertain interests/ prior experiences that can be built upon will foster enjoyment. Evidence from both the pupils in the case group and the teachers answering the questionnaire, support the claims that pupil autonomy could be used to support attitudes, which would in turn support attainment. Pupils who are engaged and enjoying their learning, are more likely to progress, than those who are not.

The above conclusions, based on data analysis, support the final conclusion that providing socioeconomically disadvantaged pupils with more autonomy about what they read, could support attainment, in reading, at Primary School through taking account of the whole-child and removing deficit views. Providing meaningful learning opportunities that build on contextual experiences and interests of the individuals will enable them to engage more willingly and build on existing foundations, rather than 'catch them up' to their socioeconomically privileged peers.

<u>Next steps for the setting</u>

As a result for the above conclusions, the following points would be my recommendations to the setting. These next steps could support their socioeconomically disadvantaged pupils, as well as their peers with both reading attainment and enjoyment.

1. I would suggest that based off the results the setting would benefit from applying the turnaround model (Comber and Kamler, 2005), to remove the deficit thinking barrier. Deficit views would suggest supporting attainment should be via catch-up funding to merely close the word gap, however, Comber and Kamler (2005) took a different approach. Through critical discourse, they implemented the turnaround model, which encouraged practitioners to modify their literacy pedagogy and curriculums to improve engagement in literacy, with their 'at risk' pupils' in mind. They found that this approach engaged entire classes, not solely those pupils being targeted.

2. Timetabling in reading for pleasure time and use this time to gather pupil views, in an informal manner, exploring the interests and experiences of pupils and use this to provide pupils with more autonomy, thereby supporting the turnaround approach.

3. For pupils that are seemingly 'hard to reach', use parents' evenings or informal chats with parents to ask their thoughts and opinions on how to best support their child in reading. The insight they could give with regards to how reading occurs at home may support the approach a teacher could adopt with this child. Use the 'funds of knowledge' (Moll et al., 1992) of the families in your favour. This does not necessarily mean asking the parent to do additional reading, more an opportunity to build a relationship and demonstrate an appreciation for what is already happening at home.

The above will not only support pupils, but could also support a shift in viewpoint of the teachers, to support them in moving away from deficit thinking and remove the blame from pupils, families or themselves as educators.

Next steps within research

As an insider researcher, I intend on adopting the above suggestions for the setting in question, to positively impact my own practice. Applying the next step suggestions based on this SSI could in itself become a new research project, which could track attainment and attitudes of a group of pupils to see if the suggestions do have a positive impact on these areas.

Whilst I started with a focus on pupil autonomy, it is important to consider the shift in my research position and my understanding of the importance of Moll et al. (1992) research into the funds of knowledge. To improve this research, I would connect with the parents and families coming from socioeconomic disadvantage, through using 1:1 open-ended interviews with parents and carers. This would provide a greater understanding of home lives and experiences which would inform the teaching and learning approach and support practitioners in supporting the whole child. This open dialogue would ensure deficit views were removed. Not only that, but extending the research in this way would improve the credibility and become more relevant to other academics.

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Throughout my Masters study, I had struggled to pinpoint my theoretical position, often leaning towards sociocultural or social constructivism positionality. However, through the theory studied in preparation and throughout this research, it has become clear that I sit within a critical theory positionality, still with some elements of social constructivism in my thinking. This growth, over the last three years, has shaped the researcher that I am, ensured I have remained flexible and open to new ideas and eventually, developed my critical theory perspective. Whilst I don't doubt that through future research, my positionality will adapt, grow and evolve, I am confident in my critical theory standpoint at this point in my academic career and feel is supports both my ontology within research and pedagogy in my professional life.

Whist I found the beginning months of this module a challenge, I have thoroughly enjoyed the experience of being an insider researcher. The conclusions and implications chapter outlines 'next steps for research', which could form the basis of a secondary research project for PhD research, building on my first SSI and further developing both my understanding as an academic and a practitioner.

Beyond the research findings and conclusions, the research process has shaped my own thinking and pedagogy. I began the process with some unconscious deficit views which have been removed through deepening my understanding of the literature. In turn, my ontological position changed from wanting to discover the 'deficits' within attainment for socioeconomically disadvantaged pupils, to being able to appreciate the whole child and recognise the importance and value of other skills, interests and home experiences. Had someone told me a year ago that I had a deficit mind-set, I would have disagreed with them, as it was so unconscious, but this research has opened my eyes and made me more aware of myself as an individual. My first draft of research questions focussed solely on the attainment gap and the word-gap for pupils from socioeconomically deprived backgrounds, but the removal of this deficit mind-set, opened my eyes to the value of pupil views. My ontological perspective has been shaped by this research and I now believe that in order to improve attainment levels in reading, learning experiences should be meaningful and contextual, building on what pupils already know. This is the key to providing an equity of education and in order to achieve this, practitioners must listen to the pupils themselves. I am excited to see how this could shape my daily practice next academic year, not only within reading but across all subjects, which I do believe it will. It is easy to place 'blame'

when pupils do not meet academic achievement targets, and slip into deficit thinking, but my goal as a teacher is to not fall into that trap moving forward and instead, find ways of better understanding the individual in question and build positive relationships, built on mutual respect and trust.

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Appendices

Appendix 1

Government published data from statutory assessments in Primary Schools (2019). This was the last set of statutory assessment data collected due to the 2019 COVID-19 pandemic.	
Phonics Screening Check	In 2019, only 71% of PP pupils met the expected standard in the PCS as opposed to 84% of all other pupils (DfE, 2019).
KS1 SATs	This pattern continues into KS1 where only 62% of PP pupils made the expected standard in the Reading SATs, as opposed to 78% of all other pupils (DfE, 2019).
KS2 SATs	Data is reported differently with the KS2 SATs, which makes it more difficult to track data by pupil characteristic. In 2019, only 73% of pupils overall achieved the expected standard in Reading which was lower than Writing (78%) and Maths (79%). Data reported by pupil characteristic shows the percentage of pupils who achieved the expected standard in all three areas, Reading, Writing and Maths. When looking specifically at the difference in pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds, only 51% of pupils achieved the expected standard in all three areas as opposed to 71% of all other pupils (DfE, 2019).

<u>Appendix 2</u>

Question	Pupil answer
Do you enjoy reading? Why do you feel this way?	
What are your strengths in reading?	
What do you find more difficult in reading?	
Do you read at home?	
Do you get to read just for fun?	
Where is your favourite place to read in school? Why?	
What kind of books do you like to read? (Fiction/ non-fiction prompt if they need)	
Do you have a favourite book? What is it? Why do you enjoy this book?	
Do you ever get to choose what you read in your reading lessons at school?	
Would you like to choose what you read?	
Could you choose a book from the library that you enjoy and that you would like to do some reading work on?	

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<u>Appendix 3</u>

Depending on the attainment level of the child, their initial assessment carried out in March 2022 vary. This is an assessment that all pupils carried out as a standard end of term assessment, in order to inform teacher assessment and individual next steps.

Those working within the Year 2 curriculum completed the 2018 KS1 SATS Reading papers 1 and 2: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/key-stage-1-tests-2018-english-reading-test-materials

Those working within the Year 3 curriculum completed the Year 3 Rising Stars Set B optional reading assessment from: https://www.risingstars-uk.com/subjects/assessment/rising-stars-optional-tests

Those working within the Year 4 curriculum completed the Year 4 Rising Stars Set B optional reading assessment from: https://www.risingstars-uk.com/subjects/assessment/rising-stars-optional-tests

Appendix 4

This letter has been copied from the setting's letter template so to maintain anonymity for the school. Additionally, in red, the names of the Head Teacher and Deputy Head Teacher have been removed for the same and the email address of the researcher has been removed as this contains the name of the school.

Date

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Ms A Clark is currently studying for a Master's Degree in Inclusive Education and as part of her studies is carrying out research into Reading attainment. For this, she needs to complete a small-scale investigation, with a group of Year 4 pupils who are eligible for pupil premium funding, to identify the potential impact autonomy could have on Reading attainment.

As your child is on the pupil premium register in Year 4, we are seeking your permission for your child to take part in this research.

There are a number of formal procedures that the University expects to be in place in order for such a study to take place. All research of this nature requires a setting to allocate a gatekeeper to ensure safeguarding procedures and ethical requirements are upheld throughout. This role is being undertaken by DHT NAME.

If consent is received, your child will take part in a 1:1 pupil interview with Ms A Clark during the school day before the end of the academic year. Notes will be taken from this interview and could be used within the dissertation, which will be submitted to the Open University. Any data gathered from this interview will be fully anonymised. The interviews will be open-ended and informal, taking a similar format to our pupil voice surveys which are carried out each year for all our subjects and should feel familiar to the children.

As your child is under 16, consent must be received by you before any research is undertaken and Ms A Clark will also discuss with the children that they are taking part in research to ensure they understand their rights too. The children will be told they have been selected to help them with their Reading and it will not be mentioned to them that it is linked to the fact they are linked with the pupil premium register as we appreciate many children will be unaware of this.

When taking part in research participants have very clear rights which are:

- The right to anonymity. This will be upheld both for the setting and for the individual children.

- The right to withdraw. This means even after consent is received, you can withdraw this consent at any time throughout the research process (May 2022-July 2022) and any research collected alongside your child will not be used in the final research submission.

- The opportunity to access outcomes of research. If this is something you are interested in, you can request this from Ms A Clark from September 2022.

This is a very exciting opportunity for our school to gain an even greater understanding of how we can best support our pupils in Reading, and we hope you are able to consider providing consent for your child to take part in this research. Please could you return the below slip by *DATE AS APPOPRIATE.*

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Ms A Clark via email (EMAIL ADDRESS).

Yours sincerely,

HT NAME

Head Teacher

Child's name: _____

I **do** give my consent for my child to take part in this research project ____

I **do not** give consent for my child to take part in this research project ____

Parent/ guardian (print name): _____ Signed _____ Date _____

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Appendix 5

E822 Ethical Appraisal Form

Masters: Education, Childhood and Youth

NB: it should be noted that The Open University is unable to offer liability insurance to cover any negative consequences students might encounter when undertaking 'in-person' data collection. It is therefore very important that you follow appropriate research protocols which should include seeking Gatekeeper permissions to undertake any data collection within your setting and adhering to ethical principles for the safety of yourself and your participants.

> **Because ethical appraisal should precede data collection, a completed version of this form should be included with TMA02 for those developing a Small-Scale Investigation (SSI) and as part of the EMA submission for those completing an Extended Literature Review and Research Proposal (EP) form of the Dissertation.**

Fill in section 1 of this document with your personal details and brief information about your research.

For section 2, please assess your research using the following questions and click yes or no as appropriate. If there is any possibility of significant risk please tick yes. Even if your list contains all "no" you should still return your completed checklist so your tutor/supervisor can assess the proposed research.

Section 1: Project details

a.	Student name	Alexandra Clark	
b.	PI		
c.	Project title	A qualitative study exploring the barriers to reading attainment for socioeconomically disadvantaged pupils.	
d.	Supervisor/tutor	Anita Pilgrim	
e.	Qualification	Masters in Education	☑
		Masters in Childhood and Youth	☐
f.	MA pathway (where applicable)		

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g.	Intended start date for fieldwork	01.04.22
h.	Intended end date for fieldwork	31.08.22
i.	Country fieldwork will be conducted in *If you are resident in the UK and will be conducting your research abroad please check www.fco.gov.uk for advice on travel.*	England

Section 2: Ethics Assessment		Yes	No
1	Does your proposed research need initial clearance from a 'gatekeeper' (e.g. Local Authority, head teacher, college head, nursery/playgroup manager)?	☑	☐
2	Have you checked whether the organisation requires you to undertake a 'police check' or appropriate level of 'disclosure' before carrying out your research?[1]	☑	☐
3	Have you indicated how informed consent will be obtained from your participants (including children less than 16 years old, school pupils and immediate family members)? Your consent letters/forms must inform participants that they have the right to withdraw from the study at any time.[2]	☑	☐
4	Will your proposed research design mean that it will be necessary for participants to take part in the study without their knowledge/consent at the time (e.g. covert observation of people in nonpublic places)? If so have you specified appropriate debriefing procedures? [3]	☐	☑
5	Does your proposed design involve repetitive observation of participants, (i.e. more than twice over a period of more than 2-3 weeks)? Is this necessary? If it is, have you made appropriate provision for participants to renew consent or withdraw from the study half-way through? [4]	☐	☑

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[1] You must agree to comply with any ethical codes of practice or legal requirements that maybe in place within the organisation or country (e.g. educational institution, social care setting or other workplace) in which your research will take place. If required an appropriate level of disclosure ('police check') can obtained from the Disclosure and Barring Service (England and Wales), Disclosure Scotland, AccessNI (Northern Ireland), Criminal Records Office (Republic of Ireland), etc.

[2] This should normally involve the use of an information sheet about the research and what participation will involve, and a signed consent form. You must allow sufficient time for potential participants to consider their decision between the giving of the information sheet and the gaining of consent. No research should be conducted without the opt-in informed consent of participants or their caregivers. In the case of children (individuals under 16 years of age) no research should be conducted without a specified means of gaining their informed consent (or, in the case of young children, their assent) and the consent of their parents, caregivers, or guardians. This is particularly important if your project involves participants who are particularly vulnerable or unable to give informed consent (e.g. children under 16 years, people with learning disabilities, or emotional problems, people with difficulty in understanding or communication, people with identified health problems). There is additional guidance on informed consent on the Masters: Education and Childhood and Youth website under Project Resources.

[3] Where an essential element of the research design would be compromised by full disclosure to participants, the withholding of information should be specified in the project proposal and explicit procedures stated to obviate any potential harm arising from such withholding. Deception or covert collection of data should only take place where it has been agreed with a named responsible person in the organisation and it is essential to achieve the research results required, where the research objective has strong scientific merit and where there is an appropriate risk management and harm alleviation strategy.

[4] Where participants are involved in longer-term data collection, the use of procedures for the renewal of consent at appropriate times should be considered.

6	Are you proposing to collect video and/or audio data? If so have you indicated how you will protect participants' anonymity and confidentiality and how you will store the data?	☐	☑
7	Does your proposal indicate how you will give your participants the opportunity to access the outcomes of your research (including audio/visual materials) after they have provided data?	☑	☐
8	Have you built in time for a pilot study to make sure that any task materials you propose to use are age appropriate and that they are unlikely to cause offence to any of your participants?	☐	☑
9	Is your research likely to involve discussion of sensitive topics (e.g. adult/child relationships, peer relationships, discussions about personal teaching styles, ability levels of individual children and/or adults)? What safeguards have you put in place to protect participants' confidentiality?	☑	☐
10	Does your proposed research raise any issues of personal safety for yourself or other persons involved in the project? Do you need to carry out a 'risk analysis' and/or discuss this with teachers, parents and other adults involved in the research?	☐	☑
11	Will financial inducements (other than reasonable expenses and compensation for time) be offered to participants?	☐	☑
12	Will the study involve recruitment of patients or staff through the NHS or the use of NHS data?	☐	☑

If you answered 'yes' to questions **12**, you will also have to submit an application to an appropriate National Research Ethics Service ethics committee (http://www.nres.npsa.nhs.uk/).

Appendix 6

This is a list of what should be covered in the discussion with the potential participants for research. Present will be a child whose parents has already given consent for them to take part. This will enable the potential participants to understand what their rights are within research and what they would be taking part in. This will be located in the school library.

- Thank them for meeting with me.
- Explain to them that I am studying a Master's Degree. Ask them if they know what this means (and explain).
- Then, explain that as part of this Master's Degree I have to complete a small research project which means I have to choose a topic to investigate and discover more about. Compare this to the fieldwork research we have recently completed in Geography lessons.
- Next, explain that my research project is all about helping groups of children improve with their reading and the reason I have called you out is I would like you to take part in the research, if you are happy to.
- Talk the child through what this will mean:
  - I will use some of your previous tests to help me see where your strengths are in reading and what you could improve on.
  - Taking part in an individual chat about reading with me, where I will write up your answers. This won't be a test and there won't be right or wrong answers
  - Then take part in another reading activity which will be a task all about a book of your choice.
- Explain to the children that this information has gone home to their parents, and they are happy for them to take part, but they can also decide not to take part if they don't want to. In research, children have the exact same rights as adults which means:
  1. You can say you don't want to take part in this research now.
  2. You can say yes to join in now and change your mind at any point during the research.
  3. The right to see any research results that come up from this research which means your parents could read my project if they wanted to and maybe you could one day too.
  4. Then finally, your right to anonymity which means you will stay anonymous and your name or details will not be mentioned in any of my research.
- Do you have any questions or anything they don't understand?

That was a lot of information so I'm going to let you have a think about what I've told you and I will come back to you later for your decision. I don't mind whatever you choose, it is important that you make your own decision and not a choice that you think will make me happy or a decision that is the same as your friends.

<u>Appendix 7</u>

The following teacher questionnaire will be sent out to teachers and can be answered anonymously, via google forms. I have added this as snipped images from the questionnaire as the setting is identifiable through the link. This will not be a problem when sending it out to teachers as they will all be from the same setting.

A qualitative study exploring the barriers to learning for socioeconomically disadvantaged pupils in reading

Hello!

Answers to this questionnaire will support my final research project for my Master's and I would be grateful for any responses received. The study is a small-scale investigation, including pupils from Year 4 and is researching the barriers to learning for PP pupils in Reading. Your answers will hopefully enable me to determine whether the results from the study, align with the 'whole school picture', based on teacher views.

When taking part in research participants have very clear rights which are:
· The right to anonymity. This will be upheld both for the setting and for the individuals. All responses for this questionnaire will be anonymous.
· The right to withdraw. If you begin this questionnaire and decide you wish to stop taking part, you can stop answering at any time and your responses will not be used in the research write up.
· The opportunity to access outcomes of research. If this is something you are interested in, you can request this from Alex from September 2022.

Please answer honestly as this will support the validity of research but do not include any child's name in any of your answers.

Thanks for taking the time to read and I hope you are able to consider taking part.

What key stage do you teach in?

○ EYFS

○ KS1

○ KS2

How long have you been teaching?

○ 1-3 years

○ 4-10 years

○ 10-24 years

○ 25+ years

Do you teach reading in your role?

○ Yes

○ No

How many PP pupils are working at the expected standard in your class?

Your answer
_____

How many PP pupils are working at greater depth standard in your class?

Your answer

Using data from the most recent statutory assessments in 2019, Pupil Premium pupils attainment levels were statistically lower than their non PP peers. This gap is shown to increase at each statutory assessment (Phonics Screening Check, KS1 SATS and KS2 SATS). For example, in the 2019 KS2 SATS, only 51% of PP pupils achieved the expected standard in Reading, Writing and Maths, compared to 71% of all other pupils. Why do you think this is?

Your answer

What are your thoughts on the word gap? Do you believe it is increasing?

Your answer

Do you believe your PP pupils have the vocabulary to access the curriculum of the year group they are currently in?

Your answer

Do you believe if pupils had more autonomy over their learning, they would enjoy their learning more?

○ Yes

○ No

○ Maybe

○ Other: _____

Would it be feasible to allow autonomy over learning for every individual, all of the time? Why?

Your answer

How do you believe we should be supporting pupil premium pupils in Reading, at our school?

Your answer

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Appendix 8

Below outlines the safe data storage and data handling plans, in line with GDPR plans.

Data resource	Type of data	Participants	Where is the data stored?	Comments
Easter Reading assessment	Scores and paper analysis	Year 4 PP pupils	Paper copies in locked filing cabinet, in a file named 'pre-assessment data'.	Transfer to spreadsheet and saved into the pass-coded file named 'pre-assessment data'.
Pupil-voice interviews	Notes	Year 4 PP pupils	Paper copy of notes stored in locked filing cabinet, in a file named 'interviews'.	Paper notes to be typed and saved into the pass-coded file named 'pupil interviews'.
Teacher views	Questionnaire	Teachers	Google forms data to de downloaded and saved into the pass-coded file named 'teacher questionnaires'.	
Secondary reading assessment	Scores and paper analysis	Year 4 PP pupils	Paper copies in locked filing cabinet, in a file named 'post-assessment data'.	Transfer to spreadsheet and saved into the pass-coded file named 'post-assessment data'.

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<u>Appendix 9</u>

Responses to question 6- taken from the teacher questionnaire.

Qu6. Using data from the most recent statutory assessments in 2019, pupil premium pupils' attainment levels were statistically lower than their non PP peers. This gap is shown to increase at each statutory assessment (Phonics Screening Check, KS1 SATS and KS2 SATS). For example, in the 2019 KS2 SATS, only 51% of PP pupils achieved the expected standard in Reading, Writing and Maths, compared to 71% of all other pupils. Why do you think this is? What are your thoughts on the word gap? Do you believe it is increasing?	
Response number	Response
1	Reading needs to begin at birth. If children are not exposed to the vocabulary the reading gap will increase. Many of our 'poorer' families simply don't read. This is a generalisation, but often they have no passion for reading themselves.
2	Over a number of years communication and language has been a real concern within early years. The majority of our PP children, have also been pupils with significant delays in their communication and language, which directly affects theiur development in all areas of learning.
3	Word gap, lack of parental support, lack of resources at home.
4	wider experiences, reading at home.
5	Perhaps due to a busier parental home life
6	Lack of home support, parents may struggle with reading themselves. Split families, lack of consistency between parenting expectations. Lack of money to buy books at home. Families may not have the same regard for reading and education. Low expectations of PP children.
7	Less support on average at home. Less positive attitudes to reading at home on average. Socioeconomic factors.
8	The curriculum becomes harder and there is more to teach, so the gap gets wider each year a child is unable to catch up
9	Low expectations of staff, some parents do not value education, poor parent support, quite a few PP are also SEN.
10	Support and provision of reading at home. Lack of quality reading material and opportunity to read that material to an adult who can meaningfully engage with it.
11	Generally less support at home.
12	Could be as a result of lack of support at home, lack of opportunities to take part in activities, inadequate role models, financial restraints to provide resources.
13	Lack of home support, limited exposure to wider reading, too much screen time, other family factors.
14	Home circumstances, lack of language at home for some pupils
15	I feel this is because they do not get the same exposure to quality texts as some of their peers, equally their culture capital is significantly lower than other children so their exposure to life experiences is low so they can not/do not relate to some themes in reading. They also may experience less support at home with homework and other school related situations.
16	Generally speaking - Home support
17	Lots of factors including how much education is valued in the home.

Appendix 10

Responses to question 11- taken from the teacher questionnaire.

Qu11. How do you believe we should be supporting pupil premium pupils in Reading, at our school?	
Response number	Response
1	We are beginning to, but more needs to be done for PP children who we know are not getting any support at home. How can we expect them to develop a love for reading, unless we instill it in them.
2	Daily reading support with a member of staff dedicated to this, so it's takes away from the class teacher or TA having to fit in another intervention.
3	Increased adult support, more funding to support resources at home.
4	Extra reading in school, additional phonics support.
5	I think we should be promoting a love of reading not through how many times a child has read per week but perhaps by allocating time for book chat - similar to book club - within the (already bonkers) timetable
6	Additional reading, extra reading opportunities with both teacher and TA.
7	1:1 reading support Ensuring books of sufficient quality match their interests, rather than what is felt they should be interested in.
8	Reading everyday, creating a love of reading and lifelong readers, adult reading to them everyday too.
9	Regular reading with an adult. Quality texts to access. Opportunities to read for pleasure.
10	QFT strategies, daily readers and other small, group reading interventions, like peer-reading daily reading, comprehension practice etc.
11	Extra reading opportunities provided. Reading for pleasure to promote a love of Reading. Varied texts in Reading and English to open up the world of words and imagination.
12	Access to more reading opportunities within school, provision of books for home reading, access to a specialist teacher to support PP children with their reading skills.
13	We need to foster a love of reading, for all children not just PP. We talk about being a reading school but I don't believe that we are embracing this fully. We should celebrate children that read regularly, and allow opportunities for children to read for pleasure more regularly rather than telling children they are 'reading for pleasure' in a certain time slot. I hold my hands up and openly admit that I don't do this myself, but teachers should be talking openly about what they are reading and what they are enjoying. Also maybe regular book swaps between children to support those that can't afford a wide library of their own books?
14	NELI is working really well to close early word gap. We do alot for reading already so need to stick at it.
15	I feel we should continue to allow them quality time with books, but also to make reading enjoyable - I feel that sometimes we do not allow children time to enjoy books but make it into hard work for them. We need to find a way to make children really enjoy books.
16	Opportunities to access texts that they are interested in. Daily teacher class.
17	Peer reading, 1:1 sessions, apps

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Responses to question 7- taken from the teacher questionnaire.

Qu7. What are your thoughts on the word gap? Do you believe it is increasing?	
Response number	Response
1	Yes. The gap will continue to widen unless support is given both financially and practically to those struggling families.
2	Yes, again because development in communication and language has been poor.
3	Yes, lack of parents speaking to children, illiterate parents, increased technology stopping them engaging in words.
4	not sure
5	yes - definitely increasing
6	Yes, according to DfE research the gap had already begun to increase prior to Covid. Covid will have further increased this gap.
7	Yes, Covid especially will have played a part in this.
8	It's clear that there is a huge word gap between some children, particularly those children that don't engage in reading. I believe that the older a child gets, the word gap increases.
9	Hard to answer. Depends on the child's home circumstances. Perhaps Lockdown made a difference.
10	Lack of exposure to quality texts and regular, meaningful reading at home. Lack of using a variety of vocabulary in and out of school.
11	Yes for some children. Covid. Financial restrictions.
12	Yes, particularly in the aftermath of Covid.
13	Yes and no - I think that children are exposed to a wider vocabulary compared to 10-15 years ago due to the rise of online services, but this is through streaming such as netflix, gaming etc. and the words they are accessing is not necessarily broadening their reading vocabulary.
14	Yes for some children.
15	Yes, children are not learning words as they are communicating online instead of face to face
16	I believe that the word gap is a real issue. I think it could be increasing due the differences in opportunities and that pressure increasing - eg rise of living costs
17	Yes. Children are starting school with less vocabulary.

Vocabulary question analysis from Easter assessments for pupil case group.

Child	Paper sat	Marks achieved	Overall percentage	Vocabulary marks available	Vocabulary marks achieved	Vocabulary percentage achieved
Child A	KS1 2018 Paper 1 and 2	19/40	47.5%	5	1	20%
Child B	Year 3 Set B Rising Stars	7/50	14%	10	0	0%
Child C	Year 4 Set B Rising Stars	8/50	16%	8	1	12.5%
Child D	Year 4 Set B Rising Stars	22/50	44%	8	5	62.5%
Child E	Year 4 Set B Rising Stars	28/50	56%	8	3	37.5%

Appendix 13

Appendix 13a- Child A's assessment questions:

Big Blue Train

1. Can you predict what you think this text is about? (1 mark)
2. Who was waving by the track? (Page 2-3) (1 mark)
3. What word is used to describe how the wheels go round? (Page 4) (1 mark)
4. Who did leopard leap into the train with? (Page 11) (1 mark)
5. On page 12 it says 'Move along now! You'll have to squeeze!'. What does squeeze mean? (1 mark)
6. Why don't the children want spotty cow to get on the truck? (Page 15) (1 mark)
7. On page 17 it says 'Sorry Camel! There isn't room for another mammal!'. What does mammal mean? (1 mark)
8. Whose birthday is it and how old are they? (Page 21-22) (2 marks)
9. Name three places that Ben and Bella visit in the train. (3 marks)
10. What two things do Bella and Ben do repetitively on the train? (2 marks)
11. What was the train called? (1 mark)

Appendix 13b- Child B's assessment questions:

Fantastic Mr Fox- Chapters 1 and 2

1. Can you predict what you think this text is about? (1 mark)
2. On page 1, the text says 'Down in the valley, there were 3 farms'. What is a valley? (1 mark)
3. What adjective was used to describe Boggis on page 2? (1 mark)
4. What happened to Bunce as a result of his diet? (Page 3) (2 marks)
5. Bean never drank any cider at all. True or false? (Page 4) (1 mark)
6. What did the children used to do when they saw the three farmers? (Page 5) (1 mark)
7. What do each of the three farmers do? (1 mark)
8. On Page 9, Boggis says 'Dang and blast that lousy beast!'. What does lousy mean? (1 mark)
9. What plan have the farmers come up with? (2 marks)
10. Where is the hole? (Page 9) (1 mark)
11. Why do the farmers dislike Mr Fox? Explain your answer using evidence from the text. (2 marks)
12. What do you think is going to happen next? (1 mark)

Appendix 13c- Child C's assessment questions:

The Famous Five- Five Go Down To The Sea (Chapter 1)

1. Can you predict what you think this text is about? (1 mark)
2. What has happened to Dick's bike? (Page 1) (1 mark)
3. On Page 1 it says, 'Their luggage has gone in advance'. What does advance mean in this sentence? (1 mark)
4. How does George feel on page 1? Explain your answer. (2 marks)
5. Who is Timmy? How do you know? (Page 1) (1 mark)
6. What adjectives are used to describe the Porter's face? (Page 2) (1 mark)
7. Where are the children going on holiday? (Page 3) (1 mark)
8. What is the Porter's uncle's name?? (Page 4) (1 mark)
9. 'All right', said George doubtfully. How is George feeling here? (Page 6) (1 mark)
10. What did George want at each changing place? (Page 7) (1 mark)
11. How did the train journey go? (1 mark)
12. On page 9, it says, 'He panted along valiantly' What does valiantly mean? (1 mark)
13. What do you think is going to happen next? (2 marks)

Appendix 13d- Child D's assessment questions:

The Brilliant World of Tom Gates

1. Can you predict what you think this text is about? (1 mark)
2. Who is telling this story? How do you know? (1 mark)
3. Give two reasons why Tom is often late for school. (Page 2) (1 mark)
4. On page 4 it says, 'Save precious time', what does precious mean in this sentence? (1 mark)
5. How is Tom feeling on page 6? How do you know? Explain your answer. (2 marks)
6. Why doesn't Tom like Marcus? (Page 8) (1 mark)
7. What nickname did Tom give to Marcus and why? (1 mark)
8. Was Tom listening to his teacher on page 12? How do you know? (2 marks)
9. What is the task Mr Fullerman wants the children in his class to do? (Page 15) (1 mark)
10. On page 16 it says 'Dad and I went to the camping shop to buy a few essential items'. What does essential mean? (1 mark)
11. What kind of teacher is Mr Fullerman? How do you know? (2 marks)
12. Describe Tom in 2 sentences. (1 mark)

Alexandra Frances Clark, E822-21J

<u>Appendix 13e- Child E's assessment questions:</u>

<u>Lucy the Diamond Fairy (Chapter 1)</u>

1. Can you predict what you think this text is about? (1 mark)
2. How is Kirsty feeling on page 9? How do you know? (2 marks)
3. What had Kirsty and Rachael spent half term doing? (1 mark)
4. On page 11 it says. 'The girls exchanged worried glances.' What does exchanged mean in this sentence? (1 mark)
5. What was playing a tune? (Page 12) (1 mark)
6. On page 11, it says 'Just as abruptly as it had started, the music stopped with a clock'. What does abruptly mean? (1 mark)
7. Are the jewelry boxes ordinary enough? Explain your answer. (Page 12) (1 mark)
8. Why does Kirsty get her locket out on page 14? (1 mark)
9. How did Kirsty and Rachael get to Fairyland? (1 mark)
10. How was Rachael feeling on page 17? How do you know? Explain your answer. (2 marks)
11. Who was in Fairyland when Kirsty and Rachel arrived? (1 mark)
12. What do you think is going to happen next? (2 marks)

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<u>Appendix 14</u>

Vocabulary question analysis from assessment based on a book of choice- July 2022.

Pupils were assessed on sections of the books after reading it and discussing it with myself, as the researcher.

No words were read for/ to the child.

Child	Text chosen	Marks achieved	Overall percentage	Vocabulary marks available	Vocabulary marks achieved	Vocabulary percentage achieved
Child A	Big Blue Train by Julia Jarman and Adrian Reynolds	10/15	66.6%	2	0	0%
Child B	Fantastic Mr Fox by Roald Dahl	10/15	66.6%	2	0	0%
Child C	The Famous Five Go Down To The Sea by Enid Blyton	1/15	6.6%	2	0	0%
Child D	The Brilliant World of Tom Gates by Tom Gates	12/15	80%	2	1	50%
Child E	Lucy the Diamond Fairy by Daisy Meadows	12/15	80%	2	0	0%

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Responses to question 10- taken from the teacher questionnaire.

QU.10- Would it be feasible to allow autonomy over learning for every individual, all of the time? Why?	
Response number	Response
1	No. I feel there needs to be a balance.
2	No, as we have a curriculum to teach and the organisation of 30 pupils all doing their own thing would be a nightmare!
3	No, too many objectives to cover, too much assessment pressure.
4	No, it would have to be a majority most of the time as it would be impossible to be specific for each child with the time we are given.
5	no because learning requires a certain level of direction to ensure coverage of curriculum and with 30 different potential avenues it could become unmanageable
6	No, this would increase as the child matures.
7	No, many children wouldn't have the discipline for this.
8	I don't feel it would be feasible for every child as the curriculum is rigid it terms of what needs to be taught and time is limited.
9	No. Children would need support. Perhaps higher up the school then yes. Not in KS1.
10	No - the current breadth of study is huge and there is too much scope of study for children of primary school age to decide on effective ways to use their autonomy.
11	No. Not enough discipline so no learning would actually happen.
12	In an ideal world yes, but we would have to eliminate the way we assess pupils.
13	No, we do not have the resources or the expertise of knowledge base to meet every child's needs.
14	Yes. More autonomy in recording.
15	Not entirely, some children would not stretch themselves and instead would plateau out without the guidance of teachers and other staff.
16	It's not feasible because of the demands and pressures of the curriculum.
17	No. 30 chn : 1teacher