

Exploring the social inclusion of deaf young people in mainstream schools, using their lived experience

Edmondson, Suzanne; Howe, Julia

DOI:

[10.1080/02667363.2018.1557113](https://doi.org/10.1080/02667363.2018.1557113)

License:

None: All rights reserved

Document Version

Peer reviewed version

Citation for published version (Harvard):

Edmondson, S & Howe, J 2019, 'Exploring the social inclusion of deaf young people in mainstream schools, using their lived experience', *Educational Psychology in Practice*, vol. 35, no. 2, pp. 216-228.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/02667363.2018.1557113>

[Link to publication on Research at Birmingham portal](#)

Publisher Rights Statement:

Checked for eligibility: 02/10/2019

This is an Accepted Manuscript of an article published by Taylor & Francis in *Educational Psychology in Practice* on 27/01/2019, available online: <https://doi.org/10.1080/02667363.2018.1557113>

General rights

Unless a licence is specified above, all rights (including copyright and moral rights) in this document are retained by the authors and/or the copyright holders. The express permission of the copyright holder must be obtained for any use of this material other than for purposes permitted by law.

- Users may freely distribute the URL that is used to identify this publication.
- Users may download and/or print one copy of the publication from the University of Birmingham research portal for the purpose of private study or non-commercial research.
- User may use extracts from the document in line with the concept of 'fair dealing' under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 (?)
- Users may not further distribute the material nor use it for the purposes of commercial gain.

Where a licence is displayed above, please note the terms and conditions of the licence govern your use of this document.

When citing, please reference the published version.

Take down policy

While the University of Birmingham exercises care and attention in making items available there are rare occasions when an item has been uploaded in error or has been deemed to be commercially or otherwise sensitive.

If you believe that this is the case for this document, please contact UBIRA@lists.bham.ac.uk providing details and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate.

Suzanne Edmondson^{a*} and Julia Howe^b

^aDerby City Educational Psychology Service, U.K.; ^bSchool of Education, University of Birmingham, U.K.

Suzanne Edmondson, Council House, Corporation Street, Derby, Derbyshire, DE1
suzanne.edmondson@derby.gov.uk

Julia Howe, School of Education, University of Birmingham, Edgbaston, Birmingham, B15
2TT

j.howe.1@bham.ac.uk

Exploring the social inclusion of deaf young people in mainstream schools, using their lived experience

Abstract

Research indicates that children with hearing loss face a number of difficulties in the education system. Although there has been much research with the severe to profound deaf population there has been little research into the life experiences of children with moderate hearing loss who attend mainstream secondary schools. This research sought to address this by examining the experiences of social inclusion for five young people with moderate hearing loss. Data was gathered through semi-structured interviews in the young person's school setting and was analysed using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis. Although each participant had unique experiences, there were a number of common themes that emerged indicating the factors that support social inclusion and those which create barriers for deaf children in schools. Implications for educational psychologists are considered and the limitations of the research are outlined.

Keywords: deaf, schools, social inclusion, moderate hearing loss, educational psychology

Introduction

Defining the term 'deaf'

It is important to define what is meant by the term 'deaf' as it can be used to describe people with a wide range of hearing loss and the terms used have both medical and cultural implications. Medically the level of a person's deafness may be defined as mild, moderate, severe or profound according to their response to sound. From a cultural perspective there are two distinct terms, 'deaf' and 'Deaf'. The term 'Deaf' refers to someone who is a part of the Deaf community and culture and who has sign language as their first language. While 'deaf' in a cultural context is used to refer to someone who has a hearing loss but does not consider themselves to be a member of the signing community (Orlans & Erting, 2000). Within this research the term "deaf" will be used as an all-encompassing term including both those who are 'Deaf' and 'deaf' as much of the literature does not distinguish between the two groups.

Social inclusion

The number of deaf children in the UK has steadily increased since 2011 and there are currently at least 48,932 deaf children across the UK, the majority of whom attend

mainstream schools (CRIDE, 2015). While the below average attainment of these children has been a matter of concern (NDCS, 2015), less attention has been paid to their experiences of social inclusion within these mainstream settings and this is an area where there is limited research available from the UK.

Most of the research that considers the social inclusion of deaf children in mainstream settings suggests that there are a number of potential barriers for these students. Deaf students often experience difficulties communicating, initiating and maintaining interactions with hearing peers (Xie, Potmesil & Peters, 2014) and this can be an obstacle to making friends (Ridsdale & Thompson, 2002). Education experiences can be in unsupportive environments in which the young person feels lonely, rejected, misunderstood, discriminated against or singled out for unwanted attention because of their hearing status (Israelite, 2002). Students can feel isolated, awkward and self-conscious when interacting with hearing peers, not wanting to attract unwanted attention due to their hearing loss and experiencing a need for “normalcy” (Punch & Hyde, 2005). Research indicates that deaf children may be socially marginalised or accepted at a superficial level and are seen as unpopular by their peers (Ridsdale & Thompson, 2002). Hearing students are more socially successful than their deaf peers (Marschark, Bull & Sapere, 2012), prefer to have hearing peers as friends and struggle to know how to solve the communication difficulties they experience with their deaf peers (Nunes, Pretzlik & Olsson, 2001).

Other research suggests that deaf students have been well accepted in mainstream schools (Powers, 2002) and experience no more social isolation and no less social participation with their peers than normally hearing students (Punch & Hyde, 2005). Some young deaf people describe generally feeling happy and describe their social life as rich and varied (Gregory, Bishop & Sheldon, 1995). Students may display resilience and develop strategies for improving their interactions with peers (Punch & Hyde, 2005). Those students who are included may not only flourish academically and socially (Israelite, 2002) but also have higher levels of well-being in school (Wolters, Knoors & Cillessen, 2012). Young deaf people also express positivity about having contact with other children with hearing loss out of school (Hintermair, 2010).

Facilitators of the inclusion of deaf children and young people in schools

Deaf students who perceive classroom participation as satisfying have been found to have higher scores for quality of life in school, social contact with peers and good mental health (Hintermair, 2010). Some studies have found that the majority of deaf children do not seem to encounter strong negative feelings in their relationships with hearing peers (Nunes et al., 2001), are included well socially and achieve reasonable academic standards (Hadjikakou, Petridou & Stylianou, 2008). These factors are related to deaf awareness amongst hearing peers and teachers, which is positively related to the social inclusion of deaf children (Hadjikakou et al., 2008). This includes monitoring the behaviour of other pupils to reduce teasing and exclusion (Jarvis, 2003).

Successful inclusion requires commitment from numerous sources and respectful partnerships among key stakeholders (Eriks-Brophy, Durieux-Smith & Olds, 2006). Itinerant teachers, parents who are actively involved in their child's education and can act as an advocate for the child. Peers can also facilitate inclusion when they accept and include deaf children, while anticipating difficult communication situations and filling the gaps in information (Eriks-Brophy et al, 2006). Deaf pupils often report support from friends in school both in terms of social inclusion and in lessons when additional explanations are needed and ideas can be shared and developed (Jarvis, 2003). At times being seen as different can lead to additional resources being allocated to deaf pupils and this can support an inclusive school ethos, which can be further supported by the teacher of the deaf who can raise deaf awareness within the school setting (Jarvis, 2003). As well as what others can do to support inclusion there are also certain skills and characteristics that a deaf individual can have that facilitate inclusion. These include well developed speech, language and communicative skills (Hadjikakou, Petridou & Stylianou, 2008; Eriks-Brophy et al., 2006; Nunes et al., 2001), their ability to advocate for their own needs within the school setting and assuming responsibility for their own learning (Eriks-Brophy et al., 2006). Communication is seen as crucial for both social inclusion and academic inclusion (Iantaffi, Jarvis & Sinka, 2003).

Barriers to the inclusion of deaf children and young people in schools

In contrast to the facilitative factors there is research to suggest there are a number of barriers to the social inclusion of deaf children and young people in schools. Findings suggest that deaf pupils are generally seen as unpopular by their peers, are socially marginalised and

accepted at a superficial level (Ridsdale & Thompson, 2002). Overemphasis on the hearing loss can lead to unwanted attention (Iantaffi et al., 2003), coddling, low expectations of achievement, setting limits which can create barriers to teaching deaf students in mainstream classes (Eriks-Brophy et al., 2006; Jarvis, 2003). Teachers may struggle to manage or understand audiological equipment, which can add to the embarrassment that the deaf child may already feel from wearing hearing aids or radio aids that make their hearing loss more visible (Ridsdale & Thompson, 2002; Jarvis, 2003). Deaf pupils with a range of needs may have difficulty working collaboratively with peers or in joining in discussion type activities, preferring more practical lessons to language based lessons (Ridsdale & Thompson, 2002). Some teachers recognise the relative difficulty deaf pupils have in group work but tend only to conceptualise this in terms of the deaf pupil's misfortune in being poor communicators rather than conceptualising this barrier in terms of curriculum delivery or teacher effectiveness (Ridsdale & Thompson, 2002). Teachers may have very little understanding of the perceptions deaf pupils have of school due to a lack of time and opportunity to relate to the young people on a one-to-one basis (Ridsdale & Thompson, 2002).

As well as a lack of understanding about deafness the terms used to describe deafness can create further misunderstandings. The terms 'mild' and 'moderate' give the incorrect impression concerning the impact of the hearing loss is. Even hearing loss categorised as mild or moderate can have an adverse impact on education, family and social and emotional well-being, which is greater than has generally been recognised (Archbold, 2015). Research from both the UK (Archbold, 2015) and Canada (Dalton, 2013) suggests that technology such as radio aids and academic support from educational assistants interfered with social interactions (Dalton, 2013). Dalton (2013) suggests educators need to understand the lived experience of students with a mild or moderate hearing loss taking into consideration their self-identity, stereotypes and attitudes, and the difference and shame they sometimes experienced, if they are to show empathy and understanding. Parent reports of children with mild to moderate hearing loss suggest that these children face challenges with low self-esteem and confidence and may experience feelings of isolation. This seemed to stem from communication difficulties that create a barrier to interactions (Archbold, 2015). Research suggests that deaf children face difficulties in communicating, initiating and maintaining interactions with hearing peers (Xie et al., 2014) and are aware that their own communication difficulties pose obstacles to making friends (Ridsdale & Thompson, 2002). This is exacerbated by hearing peers not knowing how to solve the communication difficulties

between themselves and their peers thus creating a barrier to interactions (Nunes et al., 2001). The friendships of deaf children have been found to be more sporadic than those of hearing pupils (Nunes et al., 2001). Research indicates that deaf students who form friendships with children who have similar hearing loss to their own outside of school experience some distinct advantages, such as ease of communication, not feeling isolated and shared understanding (Iantaffi et al., 2003; Ridsdale & Thompson, 2002). Whether having such friendships outside of school protects against feelings of isolation and social exclusion in school is unclear.

Current study

Recent research from abroad and in the UK would indicate that deaf children and young people continue to experience difficulties in school (Xie et al., 2014). Previous research has often generalised results across age groups and children and young people with varying degrees of hearing loss. Therefore, there is little research that recognises the individuality of these pupils. To achieve this different groups of deaf pupils need to be looked at separately in order to build knowledge of the experiences of deaf children and young people. Also by generalising across young people with a hearing loss it is difficult to claim an in-depth analysis that reflects the views of the individuals within the group. This study focused upon Year 9 students with a moderate hearing loss and sought to gain an in depth understanding of their experiences in secondary school. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was used to address the individuality of each participants experience in order to provide current research in the UK that represents the voice and lived experiences of Year 9 young people within mainstream schools.

The following research questions were used to guide the research:

RQ 1: What are the facilitative factors to enable positive experiences of social inclusion in mainstream schools for deaf young people?

RQ 2: What are the barriers to positive experiences of social inclusion in mainstream schools for deaf young people?

Method

Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA)

IPA is an approach to qualitative, experiential and psychological research that has been informed by three areas of the philosophy of knowledge; phenomenology, hermeneutics and idiography (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009). IPA is concerned with the detailed examination of lived experience and aims to enable the experience to be expressed in its own terms, rather than according to predefined category systems. It situates participants in their particular contexts, exploring their personal perspectives, and starts with a detailed examination of each case before moving on to more general claims. IPA suggests that experience can be understood via an examination of the meanings which people impress upon it (Smith et al., 2009).

Research Context

The research was conducted with five young people who attended different mainstream schools in a county local authority in the West Midlands. Due to their attendance at a mainstream school many of the young people participating in the study were the only person in their class or even year to have a hearing loss. It is recommended within IPA that the sample should be as homogenous as possible, therefore all of the pupils were in Year 9. The advantage of using Year 9 pupils is that they have had over two years of experience in their secondary school but do not have the pressure of studying on an examination course, which may have made school staff reluctant to release them from lessons to take part in the research. Three girls and two boys agreed to take part in the research.

Ethical approval

The study was approved through the University of Birmingham's ethical review process. Throughout this paper pseudonyms are used to protect the identity of the participants.

Research Method

Semi-structured interviews were used to gather the lived experience of the research participants, which allowed for pre-identified areas of discussion to be explored with the flexibility to change the order of questions, length of time on each question and level of attention given to areas of interest (Robson, 2011). This allowed the interview to evolve and develop in interesting and previously unconsidered ways, encouraging participants to expand upon their answers (Coolican, 2004). Smith et al (2009) suggest that a schedule with between six and ten open questions, along with prompts can take 45-90 minutes. In line with this seven open ended questions with prompts were identified and the interviews lasted between

1-2 hours. Those that lasted over an hour (four out of five) were split over two days to fit in with the participant's timetable and to give them a break from what may have been an intense and unusual experience.

To support the young people in answering potentially daunting open-ended questions, visual prompts in the form of works sheets were used. This is similar to the approach used by Iantaffi et al. (2003) who used visual aids to help structure discussions during focus groups with deaf pupils. Each interview was video recorded with the consent of the participants and parents. This was so that an accurate verbatim transcript could be created for analysis. The worksheets that were used as prompts also provided relevant notes and participant comments.

Data Analysis

The analysis of qualitative data is often time consuming and should be systematic, comprehensive, grounded, dynamic, and accessible (Robson, 2011). Smith et al. (2009) suggests that there is no right or wrong way of conducting an IPA analysis and provides a helpful framework for those looking for guidance which was used in this research.

Results and Discussion

RQ1: What are the facilitative factors to enable positive experiences of social inclusion in mainstream schools for deaf young people?

Interpersonal relationships

Throughout the interviews all of the participants talked about how their interpersonal relationships with friends facilitated positive experiences in school. Although deaf students may experience some social issues and negative interactions with others there is also research to suggest that generally deaf students in mainstream schools are accepted by their peers (Powers, 2002) and that they experience no more social isolation and no less social participation than their hearing peers (Punch & Hyde, 2005). All five participants talked about their interpersonal relationships and generally, these experiences proved to be positive and supportive. Of particular importance seemed to be relationships with friends and having their support and acceptance:

My friends are fine with it, they're like, they're just like funny and they know everything about it. (Molly)

We just act differently compared to everyone else. We don't, kind of bother with any social media sites or don't, I don't really know how to explain. We're just different to them lot, we're not the normal people. (Sam)

My friends stick up for me a lot and they was like, that's a bit out of order, you can't really be bullying her about something that she can't help, well you shouldn't be bullying her full stop but like, I've had help with a lot of things. (Natalie)

If I say "sorry I didn't hear that" they'll explain it again, they won't be like moody about it or anything, they just understand. (Jenny)

Like friends, they all know about it and they're fine with it. (Nathan)

Previous research indicates that deaf children might be socially marginalised and experience difficulties making friends (Ridsdale & Thompson, 2002). This did not seem to be the case for participants in this research and they all seemed to be a part of an established friendship group. Research suggests that difficulties communicating can be one of the main barriers to deaf children making friends (Xie et al., 2014; Ridsdale & Thompson, 2002), whereas well-developed speech, language and communicative skills act as a facilitative factor for inclusion (Hadjikakou, Petridou & Stylianou, 2008).

Research indicates that young people who form friendships with other young people who have a similar level of hearing loss to their own outside of school experience distinct advantages (Iantaffi et al., 2003; Ridsdale & Thompson, 2002). Of the five young people taking part in this research Nathan was the only participant who was involved in deaf clubs and had opportunities to regularly meet other children with hearing loss. He was the only participant to talk about his experiences with other children with hearing loss and as with previous research (Iantaffi et al., 2003; Ridsdale & Thompson, 2002) seemed to consider these experiences positive and validating:

I notice that I'm not the only one that's deaf. Obviously I have a brother, um, but I know if there's so many more people in the UK that are deaf and it's make me more happier. (Nathan)

Young deaf people express positivity about having contact with other deaf children out of school (Hintermair, 2010) and Nathan's involvement with deaf clubs seems to link with his acceptance of his hearing loss, his positivity towards his identity as a young person with hearing loss, and his willingness to access support and opportunities to meet other children with hearing loss. There is also an indication that Nathan feels less alone by meeting others

who are deaf and previous research suggests that talking with other deaf people reduces feelings of isolation (Iantaffi et al., 2003).

Self-concept and confidence

Another theme to emerge from the interviews was how the young people identified themselves and their confidence in who they were. All of the participants talked about their perception of their hearing loss and how they related to it. Nathan appeared to be the only participant who was able to reframe some of his experiences and reflect on the opportunities he has enjoyed as a result of his hearing loss:

When people ask or say anything, um, it makes me remember myself and think of all the things I've done with deaf clubs and things that have cheered me up. (Nathan)

It appears this positivity may be linked to his involvement in deaf clubs that seem to provide him with something to look forward to. Molly, Natalie and Jenny describe accepting their hearing loss over time. Molly in particular seems to embrace her hearing aids and changes them to reflect her personality rather than the hearing aids defining her:

Now I've like got to secondary school I'm kind of like coming out my shell a little bit more and I'm kind of like, well I just want to make these more special and unique towards me. (Molly)

I feel like I'm confident now, yeah, like I can talk to anyone about them. (Natalie)

I've kinda like, everyone kinda knows and I've grown into them and it's alright now. (Jenny)

For Sam his acceptance of the permanency of his hearing loss meant that he was able to move his attention from the negative impacts of hearing loss to what he needed to do to succeed:

It encourages me to get better at what I can do, instead of just moaning about it, hoping it just goes away. I know it's not gonna go away, so I either gotta get used to it or that's it. (Sam)

Both Molly and Nathan's acceptance of their hearing loss seemed to allow them to move beyond focusing on their own acceptance and onto others acceptance and understanding. Both described wanting to help others understand hearing loss so that others with hearing loss might have more positive experiences:

Because I've got hearing aids myself and I thought like that if like if other people are not very confident with theirs I could like make them more confident, make them more sure of their hearing aids. (Molly)

You can like see that you're different to others and it can make you happier for yourself and who you are compared to the other students but then it can also mean like other people don't know what it is and you're helping them understand so when they grow up, if they see any one out with it then they're not pulling weird faces at other people with it. (Nathan)

Research suggests that a student's self-concept can interact with aspirations and their thoughts around their future occupation (Punch & Hyde, 2005). It may be that Molly and Nathan's acceptance of their hearing loss and their assimilation of this into their self-concept has resulted in aspirations to support others in understanding deafness.

RQ 2: What are the barriers to positive experiences of social inclusion in mainstream schools for deaf young people?

Social issues and functioning

All of the participants discussed their friendship groups and the acceptance that came with having understanding friends. However, when these friends and support networks were not available there was the potential for difficulties to arise, as experienced by Jenny:

If like they're both ill or something then I have to hang around with someone which I'm like not as close to... Cause they don't really understand, like if I'm in a loud environment I won't be able to hear them as well and they don't understand it. (Jenny)

Hearing peers can struggle to solve the communication difficulties between themselves and deaf peers (Nunes et al., 2001) and Jenny seems to find this when her friends with an understanding of hearing loss are not present.

While all of the participants had friendship groups that included them the majority of the participants had experienced social issues that seemed to arise due to a lack of understanding from their peers and hurtful comments that had been made:

I just find it a little kind of frustrating and like a little bit hurtful because like that person doesn't really know what it's like to have hearing loss or hearing aids and they're just kind of like, haha that's so funny. (Molly)

They call me like deaf or they're like "can you even hear me" and stuff like that and they're like "what, what, what" and they just repeat what, so it kind of doesn't get to me anymore. (Natalie)

One of my primary that I knew ages ago... would just be like really moody about it and if I didn't hear she'd be like "oh my god you're so deaf" and all of this and then make me feel really down about myself. (Jenny)

There was a person in my year group. Um, like my friends were just walking around, like me and my friends and he ended up coming up to me and then he went um, “hey are you the deaf kid” and then he started laughing and said “haha you’re so deaf. (Nathan)

For Natalie the negative impact that this experience had on her was exacerbated by the lack of support from school:

I was bullied a few times about my hearing loss and when I told the school they didn’t do anything, they left it for three years...It really upset me and my dad that they didn’t do anything. (Natalie)

Bullying is a common but underestimated problem for deaf children that can have an impact on self-esteem and can lead to questions about why they are being singled out (Edwards & Crocker, 2008). The experiences described by the participants appear to echo previous research that indicates that deaf students can experience negative reactions from peers, resulting in feelings of embarrassment, self-consciousness, isolation and awkwardness (Punch & Hyde, 2005). Kent & Smith (2006) suggest that deaf students can handle such comments by either ignoring the comments or by perceiving the situation as an unwanted and stigmatizing teasing episode. Israelite (2002) highlights that deaf students can become anxious and distrustful of interactions with their hearing peers. This seemed to be the case for Natalie and Jenny who, having experienced negativity, seemed to perceive that others might judge them:

Sometimes people think I’m ignorant when they don’t know that I’ve got hearing aids but like I’ll explain well I’ve got hearing aids, sorry. (Natalie)

They might like judge me by the way I am. (Jenny)

This lack of understanding seemed to create curiosity about participants’ hearing aids and hearing loss. This resulted in Molly and Nathan being approached by peers and although neither seemed to mind the odd person asking questions there was a limit to when and how often they were willing to talk about their hearing loss:

They just ask like a load of questions, and I don’t mind that cause I know that they’re curious and if I were in their shoes I would probably do the same thing. So, I’m a little bit like, I’ll answer your question. (Molly)

When I was in year seven or something it was loads of people come up and ask what it was and when I have to keep repeating what it means to every student it kind of gets annoying.
(Nathan)

These experiences, as well as those described previously, suggest a lack of deaf awareness and understanding amongst peers that can create a barrier to inclusion (Eriks-Brophy et al, 2006; Ridsdale & Thompson, 2002; Archbold, 2015). Out of all of the participants, Sam recalled the least social issues and was the only one not to recall negative experiences with peers. However, at times both Sam and Natalie appeared to limit their interactions with peers:

I don't really know anyone, I don't really wanna talk to them, cause even myself or meeting people, I'm very picky with the people I talk to, yeah. I just, if they're not like me or they're not sort of, or they don't really know me that well I don't really wanna bother with them.
(Sam)

*I sit in *** classroom and she'll get emailed work and I'll just be allowed to sit in my own space and do my own work... I guess I don't really have to socialise with people or talk to people so it doesn't make it awkward or, yeah it's just easier for me.* (Natalie)

Natalie, Jenny and Sam appear wary of spending time with their peers and therefore seem to limit their interactions with them. Deaf students can become anxious about interactions with their peers (Israelite, 2002) and can experience communication difficulties (Xie et al., 2014) which hearing peers struggle to solve (Nunes et al., 2001). Natalie is clear that when she is unable to use her hearing aids she avoids potentially awkward social situations and prefers to spend time away from others in a separate classroom. However, overuse of such resources can make it more difficult for deaf children to feel socially included (Slobodzian, 2009). Generally participant experiences indicated that there seemed to be a lack of deaf awareness in secondary schools. This seemed to result in a lack of understanding and curiosity from peers, which overall seems to have resulted in negative experiences in the school environment and concern over being judged with some seemingly avoiding peers.

Social embarrassment

The majority of the young people seemed to feel some social embarrassment in relation to their hearing loss. Molly, Natalie, Jenny and Nathan described covering up their hearing aids with their hair because they either did not like them at some point or because they did not

want people asking questions. Therefore it is likely that this is linked to the previous sub-theme ‘social issues’ in relation to peer curiosity about their hearing loss:

When I was younger, when I first got them I didn't really like them and I would always want to cover them up with like my hair or trying to get skin coloured ones and it would always like put me a little bit on edge and make me shy. (Molly)

I put my hair down sometimes when I'm not in the mood to talk about them so I just put my hair down. (Natalie)

Implications for Educational Psychologists

With the number of Teachers of the Deaf declining since 2011 and reduced resources available to support deaf children, educational psychologists (EPs) may be increasingly likely to be asked by school staff for advice on how to support young people with a hearing loss. While most educational psychologists will work with some deaf children, their teachers and families as a part of their role, as part of their statutory role. Considering the social inclusion of these children and young people is an important aspect of this role and to be able to do this effectively EPs first need to understand deaf children and young people's experiences of school and the potential barriers and facilitative factors to both academic and social inclusion.

This study provides information for EPs as to the potential barriers and facilitators deaf young people may experience in mainstream schools. It suggests that when working with deaf young people it would be good practice include to consider how socially accepted they are within their educational setting, whether they are included by their peers and are a part of a supportive friendship group, in addition to considering their levels of attainment. EPs may need to explore the young person's self-concept and their acceptance of their hearing loss, taking into consideration any social embarrassment that a young person may be experiencing. As language development is an essential precursor to effective communication and the development of social relationships any assessments should consider how the young person's language skills may be impacting upon their ability to form effective relationships in school.

There is some limited support in this research to suggest that it may benefit young deaf people to form relationships outside school with other young people in the deaf community. While previous research has indicated that this is beneficial for deaf pupils only one young person in this research attended a Deaf club. So EPs working with deaf young people may

want to consider how such extra-curricular activities may be beneficial for them while understanding that not all of these young people will want to have access to these groups.

While only one of the young people in this research makes explicit reference to being bullied in school, other participants make reference to unkind comments from some of their peers. As bullying is often hidden there is a role of EPs to play in ensuring that school staff understand that deaf young people are at risk from bullying and ensuring that there is a system in place that makes it safe for deaf young people to report such incidents.

This research suggests that some of the social embarrassment experienced by deaf young people in secondary schools is a result of the curiosity of other pupils about their deafness. This suggests that there was a lack of deaf awareness in the school that they attended. EPs have the training and skills to support schools systemically in developing deaf awareness and practice working alongside other specialist colleagues such as teachers of the deaf with specialist knowledge in young people with hearing loss. This may take the form of training packages and workshops can be developed to support schools to become more deaf aware. In addition to this follow-up observations and support for teachers can be offered to support them in teaching young people with a hearing loss and developing their practice, consulting with the young people they are teaching as necessary and appropriate.

This study indicated that young people may be struggling to communicate their needs to school staff and at times can feel misunderstood or persecuted for their hearing loss. With training in group work and interventions with young people EPs are well placed to work with groups of young people with hearing loss to develop their advocacy skills so that they are able to not only able to advocate for themselves in meetings but also able to inform others, such as school staff, how they are best supported on a daily basis.

Limitations

It is important to recognise the limitations of this study and to consider these when interpreting the findings. Due to the adherence to an IPA methodology and the small sample the findings are not generalizable to other populations. IPA does not seek to find out one single answer or truth but rather to provide an account that attends to the words and experiences of the participant (Pring, 2011). Due to the interpretive nature of IPA and the unique experiences and discourses that people draw on when considering information, it is inevitable that two researchers may have the same data and produce a variety of differing

headings for themes (Coolican, 2004). Thus the findings represent the researcher's interpretation of the young people's interpretation of their experiences and what they felt able to share and experiences might have been communicated and tailored by the participant in an attempt to gain a shared understanding (Yardley, 2000). Researchers must also take into account the socio-cultural setting of the study, for example the normative, ideological, historical, linguistic and socioeconomic influences on the beliefs, objectives, expectations and talk of participants (Yardley, 2000). In this study many of the young people participating were the only person in their class or even in their year to have a hearing loss and that the discourse surrounding their hearing loss might be one of disability and being 'different'. Therefore, these young people may report very different experiences to young people in city schools, with access to resource provisions for children with hearing loss, and access to the Deaf culture and community.

References

- Archbold, S., Yen Ng, Z. & Harrigan, S., et al. (2015) Experiences of young people with mild to moderate hearing loss: Views of parents and teachers. The Ear Foundation report to NDCS: Mild-moderate hearing loss in children. Retrieved from <http://www.earfoundation.org.uk/research/recent/young-people-with-mild-to-moderatehearing-loss>
- Consortium for Research in Deaf Education (2015) CRIDE report on 2015 survey on educational provision for deaf children. Retrieved from http://www.ndcs.org.uk/professional_support/national_data/cride.html#contentblock1
- Coolican, H. (2004) *Research Methods and Statistics in Psychology* (4th Edition). London: Hodder Arnold.
- Dalton, C.J. (2013) Lessons for Inclusion: Classroom experiences of students with mild and moderate hearing loss. *Canadian Journal of Education*, 36(1), 125-152.
- Edwards, L. & Crocker, S. (2008) *Psychological Processes in Deaf Children with Complex Needs: An Evidence Based Practice Guide*. Jessica Kingsley Publishers: London.
- Eriks-Brophy, A., Durieux-Smith, A. & Olds, J., et al. (2006) Facilitators and Barriers to the Inclusion of Orally Educated Children and Youth with Hearing Loss in Schools: Promoting Partnerships to Support Inclusion. *The Volta Review*, 106(1), 53-88.
- Gregory, S., Bishop, J. & Sheldon, L. (1995) *Deaf Young People and their Families: Developing Understanding*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.

- Hadjikakou, K., Petridou, L. & Stylianou, C. (2008) The academic and social inclusion of oral deaf and hard of hearing children in Cyprus secondary general education: investigating the perspectives of stakeholders. *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, 23(1), 17-29.
- Hintermair, M. (2010) Health-Related Quality of Life and Classroom Participation of Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Students in General Schools. *Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education*, 16(2), 254-27.
- Iantaffi, A., Jarvis, J. & Sinka, I. (2003) Deaf pupils' views of inclusion in mainstream schools. *Deafness and Education International*, 5(3), 144-156.
- Israelite N., Ower, J. & Goldstein, G. (2002) Hard of hearing adolescents and identity construction: Influences of school experiences, peers and teachers. *Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education*, 7(2), 134-148.
- Jarvis, J. (2003) 'It's more peaceful without any support': what do deaf pupils think about the support they receive in mainstream schools? *Support for Learning*, 18(4), 162-169.
- Kent, B. & Smith, S. (2006) They only see it when the sun shines in my ears: Exploring perceptions of adolescent hearing aid users. *Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education*, 11(4), 461-476.
- Marschark, M., Bull, R. & Sapere, P., et al. (2012) Do you see what I see? School perspectives of deaf children, hearing children and their parents. *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, 27(4), 483-497.
- National Deaf Children Society (2015) NDCS note on Department for Education figures on attainment for deaf children in 2015: England. Retrieved from http://www.ndcs.org.uk/for_the_media/press_releases/deaf_children_slip.html
- Nunes, T., Pretzlik, U. & Olsson, J. (2001) Deaf children's social relationships in mainstream schools. *Deafness and Education International*, 3(2), 123-136.
- Orlans, M.K. & Erting, C. (2000) Deaf people in society. In Hindley P, Kitson N. (eds). *Mental Health and Deafness*, (pp 3-24). Whurr Publishers: London.
- Powers, S. (2002) From Concepts to Practice in Deaf Education: A United Kingdom Perspective on Inclusion. *Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education*, 7(3), 230-243.
- Pring, R. (2004) *Philosophy of Educational Research* (2nd Edition). London: Continuum.
- Punch, R. & Hyde, M. (2005) The social participation and career decision making of hard of hearing adolescents in regular classes. *Deafness and Education International*, 7(3), 122-138.
- Ridsdale, J. & Thompson, D. (2002) Perceptions of Social Adjustment of Hearing-Impaired Pupils in an Integrated Secondary School Unit. *Educational Psychology in Practice*, 18(1), 21- 34.
- Robson, C. (2011) *Real World Research* (3rd Edition). Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.

Slobodzian, J.T. (2009) A cross-cultural study: deaf students in a public mainstream school setting. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 15(6), 649-666.

Smith, J.A., Flowers, P. & Larkin, M. (2009) *Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis: Theory, Method and Research*. London: Sage.

Wolters, N., Knoors, H. & Cillessen, A.H.N., et al. (2012) Impact of Peer and Teacher Relations on Deaf Early Adolescents' Well-being: Comparisons Before and After a Major School Transition. *Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education*, 17(4), 463-482.

Xie, Y.H., Potmesil, M. & Peters, B. (2014) Children Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing in Inclusive Educational Settings: A Literature Review on Interactions with Peers. *Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education*, 19(4), 423-437.

Yardley, L. (2000) Dilemmas in qualitative health research. *Psychology and Health*, 15(2), 215-228.