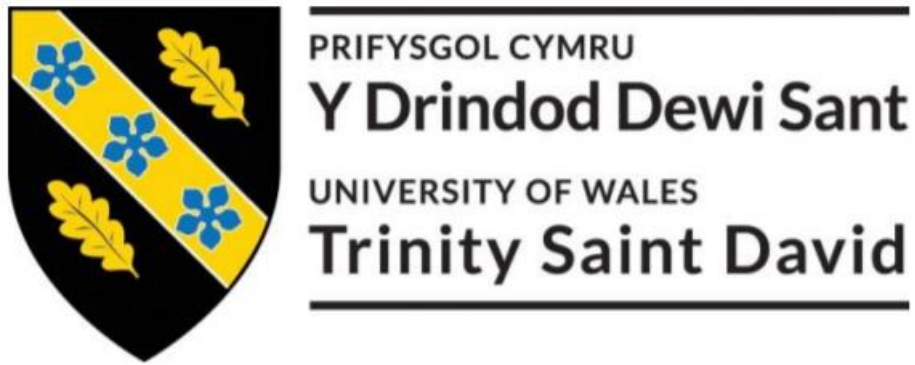




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Frontispiece.

This is to certify that, except where specific reference has been made, the work presented in this research project is based on results from an investigation carried out by the author. This research project nor any part of it has been presented, or is currently being submitted in candidature of any award other than in part of the degree BA (Honours) in Primary Education with QTS of the University of Wales, Trinity Saint David, Carmarthen Campus. I understand that any work I use without reference constitutes as plagiarism, which will result in the failure of this module.

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Chapter one: Introduction.

This dissertation will consider the current research and philosophy underpinning the use of animal therapy with children who are diagnosed with Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties (BESD). The author's primary motivation for the research was to gain a greater understanding of how children with BESD can develop greater social skills, thus aiding them to access education. The Additional Learning Needs reform (ALN) (WAG 2018) promotes access and inclusion for all children regardless of their needs, Moss, (2012) and Wilkins, (2010) agree, advocating the use of animals and nature as a therapeutic intervention to encourage the relationships and social skills required to access a schools community.

Currently, both personal and social developmental needs are considered significant elements within the four main purposes of the new curriculum (Donaldson, 2015) and therefore it is paramount to develop these skills so that all learners can benefit.

The author will examine how interventions such as horse riding, dog walking, classroom dogs and general care of animals can help, key stage two children with BESD self-regulate behavioural patterns and develop communication skills. Thus, helping them to build relationships with their peers and significant others through the role of 'the common third' (Cameron and Moss, 2011). Such an approach is welcomed by the Welsh Government, who support a flexible and alternative approach to teaching in order to help develop social competence and emotional maturity (WAG, 2014). This correlates with the main findings of this research project, which demonstrates that the use of animals can have a positive effect on social development of children with BESD.

The author will consider literature referring to theories which question what BESD is, how the home environment effects BESD children and the implication of trauma in relation to the severity of behaviour and overall cognitive development of BESD children.

1.1: The research question and hypothesis.

The research question that guided this objective was: Does animal assisted therapy aid the development of social skills for BESD children? To formulate a hypothesis for this research project, it will be speculated that BESD children, aged seven to eleven, will benefit socially and/or emotionally from participation in activities that involve animals. Thus, providing a greater basis for forming and sustaining meaningful relationships, resulting in higher well-being and a greater trajectory of learning than expected. The hypotheses was determined from observations and interviews with teachers and support staff during the author's recent placement in a specialist behavioural school.

1.2: The research.

All research adheres to the BERA (2011) guidelines, therefore all participants were able to remove themselves from the process at any time and all data collected will be destroyed by 30th July 2019.

This research project draws data from primary sources which should provide sufficient information to determine if the social development needs of BESD children are being accounted for through the use of animal therapy.

1.3: Personal interest in BESD.

The author's interest in BESD stems from several encounters with BESD children within the classroom. SnapCymru (2018) believe that there are 96,847 BESD children, aged from three to eighteen, within mainstream school. Furthermore, the Social, Emotional, Behavioural Difficulties Association (SEBD), (2019) identifies a lack of knowledge and understanding of the pedagogy needed to enable these children to progress throughout their education. Therefore, it could be considered that schools cannot cater for the complex needs of BESD children. However, that conclusion is outside of the range and abilities of this research project due to the need for substantial, empirical research over a sustained period of time, referring to educational attainment whilst considering the well-being of each participant.

Chapter two: Literature Review.

This chapter aims to critically review and analyse the theories and practices which form the basis for the primary research within chapter three. In order to begin to understand the requirements of BESD children, it is important to contextualise BESD and the multi-faceted way in which issues manifest within education.

2.1: How has BESD historically been defined.

There has been much debate regarding the definition of BESD, (Cole, Visser and Upton, 1998; Kauffman, and Landrum 2018). In the past, many terms have been used when describing children and young people with the condition. These have included, but are not limited to; mental defectives, maladjusted, moral imbeciles, minor delinquents, disruptive children, disturbed children and psychiatrically ill (Cole, 1989). This multitude of terms has meant that children have been 'mythologised, demonised and pathologised' (Lloyd-Smith and Davis, 1995, p.5). However the publication of the Underwood report in nineteen fifty five (Min. of. Ed., 1955), attempted to clarify BESD by identifying contributing factors of the condition, claiming that the condition should not be equated solely with bad behaviour, delinquency, oddness or educational sub-normality. Believing that the defining difference BESD children and children who exemplify unwanted, disruptive behaviour is the that BESD children do not wish to do harm to others and their actions are not pre-meditated (Min. of. Ed., 1955, part 12 p.3). Cole, (1989) agreed believing that the behaviour is a response to a situation or circumstance that BESD children cannot process, rather than a deliberate act and therefore, a distressed form of communication.

According to Cole and Knowles, (2010) negative titles such as maladjusted, remained in common use until the 1981 Education act used the term Emotional, Behavioural Difficulties (EBD). This change in title and subsequent mindset, was heavily influenced by Laslett's (1977) re-definition of 'maladjusted' children, which noted that behavioural and emotional difficulties, regardless of the cause, were preventing these children from benefiting from ordinary social and educational experiences. This is the first definition that considers barriers to learning and places the emphasis on the setting rather than the children.

As knowledge and understanding of EBD grew, the definition altered. By 1994 the Department for Education (DfE) published the 2014 Special Educational Needs (SEN) Code of Practice, (DfE, 2014) which builds on Laslett's. (1977) theory, clearly outlining barriers to learning and expected behaviour patterns.

'BESD children set up barriers between themselves and their learning environment through inappropriate, aggressive, bizarre or withdrawn behaviour and who have developed a range of strategies for dealing with day-to-day experiences that are inappropriate and impede normal personal and social development, making it difficult for them to learn.' (DFE, 1994 paragraph 2:1)

The 1994 SEN Code of Practice listed what was thought to be the causes of BESD firmly placing the blame on the parent or child. Cole, (1989) agreed with the DfE, (1994), stating that environment counteracted the effects of inherited 'defective genes' (Cole, 1989). Moreover, Layarad and Dunn, (2009) considered Coles, (1989) theory from a modern-day perspective and found that whilst medical explanations remain the same, childhood had changed dramatically contributing to even more complex behaviour difficulties.

However, Weare, (2000) argued that mental health should be considered because BESD children have difficulties socially and a lack of social interaction can lead to diminished mental health. Therefore, to encourage practitioners to look beyond the behaviour to underlying causes, Weare, (2000) strongly believes that the term BESD should be replaced with Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) (SEBD, 2019: Weare, 2000).

However, for the purpose of this assignment, the term BESD will continue to be used and the behavioural, emotional and social aspects of the condition analysed.

In conclusion, BESD children experience barriers to learning through a struggle to process emotions and/or an inability to conform to social expectations, Often resulting in behavioural outbursts hindering their overall academic and/or personal development.

2.2: Provisions for BESD children?

According to WAG, (2017), issues that present a barrier to learning for BESD children still persist, despite the implementation of effective school behaviour policies, pastoral support and Individual Development Plans (IDP's) (WAG, 2017). Therefore, schools need to consider elements of their wider school community, their current curriculum agenda and how they can provide a supportive, caring, understanding and cultivating environment. However, Cooper, Smith and Upton, (1994) and Cowie, et al (2004) believe that the ethos of a general mainstream school may negatively contribute towards BESD traits and more specifically social issues. Wilson and Evans, (1980) concur, stating that there are limited psychodynamic approaches to learning and socialising for BESD children within most schools and therefore, it could be argued that the social expectations of BESD children are predisposed to fail.

Whilst the responsibility for educating BESD children is placed on the school attended, they are not isolated in their duty of care. The SEN code of practice, (2014) and the ALN, (2018) reform act, both recommend local authorities cater for high tariff BESD children through specialist schools. This is due to these children often having a wide and varied spectrum of additional needs which Cole, and Knowles, (2010) and Cameron and Moss, (2011) believe include becoming withdrawn or isolated; disruptive: disturbing themselves and others around them; presenting challenging behaviour; hyperactive and lack concentration. Which the majority of mainstream schools are not equipped to deal with (Cameron and Moss, 2011).

Furthermore, Mcleod, (2010) and Thomas, (2005) believe that specialist schools cater for individual needs through practices such as reduced subjects. This helps BESD child because as the work becomes more abstract within mainstream. The new curriculum, BESD children can struggle with the required objectives thus resulting in unwanted behaviours and an inability to process emotions such as disappointment.

However, Cole, and Knowles. (2010); WAG, (2018); Estyn, (2012) and Donaldson, (2015) believe that, wherever possible, ALN children should remain in mainstream school. Moreover, the DfES, (2004) believe that it is primarily about the quality of

experiences encountered rather than the school attended, which help children to learn, achieve and participate fully throughout life. (DfES 2004 p.25). Conversely, Pillay, Dunbar-Krige and Mostert, (2013, p310) express concerns over the effect specific pedagogical approaches for BESD pupils, will have on the other children.

Overall, the general consensus is that in order to meet the more complex needs of severe BESD children, special schools are still required and for children who require short-term specialist help a Pupil Referral Units (PRU), would be better suited than a specialist school. Thus, allowing for a return to main stream education eventually Ofsted, (2008); Millham, Bullock and Cherrett, (1975); Cole, (1989); Mcleod, (2010) and Thomas, (2005); Wilson and Evans, (1980).

2.2.1: Pedagogy used within the listed provisions.

Through primary research, the author found that PRU units and specialists schools tended to use three predominant and discrete models of intervention which Gardener, (2000) summarises as behaviourist, psychodynamic and personal construct.

2.2.2: The behaviourist approach.

The behaviourist model is based on Skinner's, (1988) theory that all behaviour is learned behaviour and therefore, unwanted or unacceptable behaviour can be unlearned through a series of positive reinforcement. Bridgeland, (1971) explains that animals do not react in the same manner as humans when confronted with unwanted or negative behaviour. Thus, enabling practitioners to use positive reinforcement in a non-judgemental environment.

2.2.3: The psychodynamic model.

The psychodynamic model, focuses on the child's internal world (Winnicott, 1991), assessing what trauma has caused the emotions being expressed (Rollinson, 2006), before assessing the best approach.

Cole, Visser and Upton, (1994) describes trauma as a combination of external events which accumulate in an internal experience. BESD children struggle to process events/traumas and are therefore, far more susceptible to depression, low self-esteem and isolation (Cole, 1989). Ofsted, (2008) explain that many 'special schools' use Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT) to work through complex issues

arising from trauma. Beck and Katcher, (1996) believe that dog walking/care is an effective method of CBT, enabling the 'common third' approach to be used (Cameron and Moss, 2011). Thus, building a trusted relationship from which key social skills can be taught through modelling behaviour.

2.2.4: The personal construct model.

The personal construct model believes that an individual's interpretation of experiences are then exemplified upon all similar experiences (Butler and Green, 1998). The author feels that a significant limitation to this method is the inability to fully consider a child's past experiences. Whilst this method aims to re-construct the child's beliefs through positive and continued reinforcement and experiences. There are some children for whom the trauma is so severe that this method may not work. For example, whilst on teaching practice, the author worked with a Looked After child (LAC) with BESD. This child had been exposed to situations beyond their control, which had negative connotations in relation to how they viewed authoritative figures, positive re-enforcement within any similar situation triggered a traumatic response. Hence, limiting the effectiveness of this method.

Furthermore, limited effectiveness of these approaches is well documented with Harris, (1991, p.153) warns that this approach can create greater distance between adults and children when what is actually needed is care, understanding and the opportunity to be at the centre of an approach through the use of pupil voice (Donaldson, 2015). Thus, enabling the child to direct their therapy/learning at a suitable and non-confrontational pace

2.3: The use of animals for children with BESD.

'Planned environmental therapy movements' (Randel, 1940 as cited in Cole and Knowles, 2010) places the emphasis on shared responsibility and the benefits children gain from being involved in their immediate environment, especially farms and farm animals. Kellert and Willson (1993) and (Lorenz, 1971, p.165) concur, believing that humans have an intrinsic need to connect with nature and animals. Odendall, (2000, p.300) and Serpell, (1996) agree, believing that animals help children develop empathy whilst Hergovich et al. (2002) and Limond, Bradshaw and Cormack, (1997) add that animals help reduce anxiety and anger, increasing a child's ability to focus and work collaboratively. Furthermore, Odendall, (2000, p.291)

claims that animals help BESD children care for another living creature which enables them to fulfil emotional and social needs that they cannot always be met within society. Thus, providing the basis for a mutually positive interaction which satisfies the child's 'attentionis egens' (Odendall, 2000, p.301)

Bridgeland, (1971) explored the development of therapeutic education with BESD children and found that schools frequently incorporated the use of animals until the late nineteen eighties. Most schools had access to a farm environment, which offered the children an alternative method of learning, allowing for a diverse and need driven approach to education (Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens, 2018; Department for Education and Skills (DfES), 2004 and Growing Schools Programme, 2006). However, by 1988 the use of animals had been significantly reduced and although there were still a few schools offering rural science, the introduction of the new curriculum and Local Management of Schools funding meant that a great number of schools were forced to sell off their land (DfE, 2004), thus, abolishing the subject all together. Furthermore, by 2004 the DfES had issued a warning that school who worked with animals were liable for the risk these animals posed to the children (DfES, 2004). Whilst the final decision remained that of the headteacher and governing body, this does explain the demise of animals in schools during the last two decades.

The author believes that animal assisted therapy could benefit all BESD children, Foster and Smith, (2010) agree, claiming that the use of animals provides a more efficient therapeutic facility than traditional social interventions. Furthermore, Richardson, (2014), states that the use of 'reading dogs' has increased reading levels within BESD children in mainstream education aged between seven and eleven. (Richardson, 2014[online]) Furthermore, Randler et al. (2005) found that children aged nine to eleven performed better than expected in achievement when exposed to animal therapy within their primary school. However, Beck and Katcher, (1996); Melson, (2010) and Quayle, (2007) express the need for significant, quantifiable, research in to the effectiveness of animal assisted therapy before a comprehensive conclusion can be produced. To overcome this barrier to the research, the author believes that an Electroencephalography (EEG) could be used. The device can be worn as a head band and is non-invasive. Therefore, could be used with children of primary school age. It is an evolving method hence; not being

used before. However, according to Rahman, (2019), this method of tracking has been proven to accurately measure emotional responses, hence providing reliable, quantifiable, primary data which the author feels, would strengthen the argument for the use of animal assisted therapy within schools when used to measure engagement, enjoyment and sustained 'energised focus' within a set task or classroom Csikszentmihalyi, (2014).

2.4: Conclusion of the Literature review.

This chapter has examined animal assisted therapy for BESD children, primarily within key stage two. It has critically evaluated a range of literature including definitions of BESD, key theories such as attachment and trauma and the notion of incorporating various animal activities and the benefits in relation to the development of social, emotional, behavioural, educational and cognitive skills, then how these skills can be transferred to other areas of a child's life, not just education.

Whilst many agree that animal therapy is something to be embraced the risk and consequences should something happen, are placed upon the school and at present there is no current guidance on how to support practitioners should something happen. Therefore, the responsibility for incorporating animal assisted therapy interventions, relies heavily on the skills, knowledge and understanding of teachers and schools and their ability to adopt forward-thinking pedagogy; such as the use of horses to decrease physiological arousal (Katcher and Beck, 1983) or dogs to initiate positive relationships within groups Melson, (2001).

Chapter three: Methodology.

Within this chapter the author will discuss their methods, methodology and their use of primary research. It should be noted that due to the time constraints and the word count, the use of active research to inform and improve teaching was not possible. It should also be noted that consent was sought and granted by the participating school and individuals. (Appendix two)

The methodology used for this research is a qualitative interpretative paradigm, utilising personal experiences, observations and interviews with staff; which Clarke and Hoggett, (2009) refer to as psychosocial research tools. The methods use valid data collection allowing for changes in circumstance, opinion, context, contribution and co-operation. Therefore, adhering to BERAs (2011) guidelines for educational research.

3.1: Personal context and conceptual framework.

The author has a strong interest in animals and has witnessed the effects both horses and dogs can have on children with additional learning needs. The use of animals within education is underpinned by a psychotherapeutic approach (Foster and Smith, 2010). Therefore, the author feels that this approach should also be central to the research.

By using psychosocial research methods, the author will focus the research on the participants, their stories and their perspective (Hollway and Jefferson, 2000). However, it was decided not to use personal or group interviews due to the participants vulnerability which could result in 'conscious answers,' skewing the results (Kvale, steiner and Brinkman, 2009).

Due to the social science element of the question, the chosen methodology is an adaptation of Glaser and Strauss (1967) Grounded Theory (GT). This allowed the author to work through a synthesised epistemology approach whilst scrutinising results. For example; at every stage of the process, the research strived to answer the questions 'How does it work, when it works?' and 'Why does it work, when it does?'

Whilst the author began this research with limited parameters to allow for the organic growth of a focus (Thomas and James, 2005), it became clear that this would not be possible due to the broad scope of the topic 'animal assisted therapy'. Therefore, the author moved away from the conventional GT approach enabling the exploration of personal interests within the general parameters of the focused research question; Does animal assisted therapy aid the development of social skills for BESD children?

3.2: Constructing a focus.

As demonstrated within chapter two (2.3), there is a plethora of research suggesting that animal assisted therapy is of significant value to a child's education.

Furthermore, the author feels that there is limited historical data surrounding this topic due to the aforementioned restrictions placed on the curriculum in the 1980's which were discussed in chapter two (2.3). Therefore, this research may be of benefit when considering the future potential use of animals within the curriculum as a social intervention. However, given the time constraints set for the research to be gathered, the author feels that the findings may be questionable under scrutiny.

3.3: The approach.

A qualitative approach gives the research validity and meaning (Thomas and James, 2005), and allows for individual needs of the participants and setting to be met whilst enabling the author to fully immerse themselves into the social setting (Denzin and Lincoln 1994). Thus, providing an accurate interpretation of events.

A qualitative method also allows for a conclusion using a small group of participants which the author found benefited the educational settings being used for the study. However, the author felt that only using one setting was a significant limitation and given more time would have liked to have compared the provisions used by this school with other ALN school's, animal assisted provisions.

3.4: Observations.

All children, participating in these observations were made aware of their participation. However, to reduce the 'Hawthorne effect' (McCambridge,j.,Kypri,K. and Elbourne, D. 2014, p.252), a few children within the group were selected at random, by the participating school for the author to focus on. This ensured that the

author remained impartial throughout the selection process and reduced the limitations to this method of research.

During the observations, the author adopted the 'conscious use of self' (Rollinson, 2006), combined with reflexivity; drawing upon their own knowledge, experiences, assumptions, perceptions and internal processes whilst questioning what is observed and the dynamics created by the research situation. This provides a non-bias and a true observation of events. Etherington, (2004) calls this 'cause and effect' and advises that it may influence the direction of the research and therefore allowances should be made for re-direction if needed.

During each observation, a focus area was identified. Each area was based around a set of secondary research questions. These questions were:

What effect is the activity having on the children academically, emotionally and socially?

Is the aim of the intervention understood by all the participants?

How do the participants engage with the activity?

This method of research makes it possible to 'explore the meaning below the surface of communication' (Clarke and Hoggett, 2009), thus allowing for an unconscious response from participants. The author felt that this is significant, when examining BESD children and their interaction with animals due to communication difficulties and social mis-understandings.

However, a significant limitation of observation within a pre-existing intervention is the inability to conduct a baseline assessment. Such an assessment could provide quantifiable data which, when used in conjunction with a well-being questionnaire (appendix three), focusing on friendship or the child's perceptive of their ability to engage with the wider school community.

All observational notes taken at the time of the observation, can be found in

3.6 Interviews.

Concerns regarding vulnerability, prohibited the author from interviewing the children directly. However, selected staff members from the school and trekking centre, were used for the primary case study. They were therapeutically interviewed (Kvale and Brinkman, 2000, p.48) and the findings were only used for the purpose of this research project.

A good qualitative interview has two key concepts, it needs to flow naturally and contain rich content (Dörnyei 2007). Whilst Barber and Schostack, (2005) believe that a good interview should be expected to last at least half an hour to unravel the investigated phenomenon. Dörnyei (2007) questions this theory, by asking whether a single interview is sufficient; regardless of time constraints. The author believes that the answer to this depends on the research questions and sources available. Therefore, considering both opinions and in an attempt to reduce limitations, the author used a Free Association Narrative Interview method (FANI); using questions which were purposely kept open, allowed for the interviewee's ideas, thoughts and beliefs to emerge in their own words (Hollway and Jefferson, 2000).

According to Baxter, Hughes and Tight (2006), interviews offer researchers the opportunity to uncover information that is "probably not accessible using techniques such as questionnaires and observations". Moreover, they add that interviewing is a natural way of interaction. However, Hammersley and Gomm (2008) warn that researchers should use caution when analysing responses because:

'What people say in an interview will indeed be shaped, to some degree, by the questions they are asked; the conventions about what can be spoken about and by what they believe he/she would approve or disapprove of.' (Hammersley and Gomm, 2008)

The author experienced elements of the above whilst interviewing teaching staff. Some interviewees gave guarded answers in regard to their perceptions of events and opinions.

Cohen, Manion, and Morison. (2007) explain that because of such limitations to this research method, interviews alone are insufficient when gathering data and conducting a study regarding social life. Hence, the author has also chosen to use observations.

Before concluding the interviews, the author provided an opportunity for the interviewees to bring up comments or ask questions the author then expressed their gratitude to the interviewees and discussed ways of future contact, should the interviewee require it (Nueman, 2007).

3.7: Conclusion of chapter three.

Research with BESD children is problematic as changes in behaviour and attitude whilst temporary are multi-factorial and can skew results. Therefore, the choice of methods and/or methodology relies heavily on the considered judgements of the researcher. Within this research project the author has chosen to use observation over two sessions of equine therapy and then compare the findings to the understanding of staff through interviews, thus minimising the risk of personal judgement.

Chapter Four: Results and Discussion:

Stake, (1995) believes that each human-being has their own version of the world. Therefore, the author felt that it was pertinent that each child observed told their own story, providing a different viewpoint on the same intervention which is explained through the notes taken (appendices one, three and eight) and the assessment of all findings below.

The data is triangulated through:

Interviews conducted with staff which aim to investigate the relevance of animal assisted therapy for the development of social skills with BESD children.

The observations at the trekking centre.

Data collected during an elective experience (appendix four and five), which has been used for a comparison between settings.

Prior to the observations at the trekking centre, the author felt it was important to gain an understanding of how the children reacted within a traditional educational setting. This information could then be used to compare and contrast behavioural patterns that may have an effect on social skills. (Appendix six)

4.1: Observation at the trekking centre.

It is important to note that permission was given from the school to use the observations carried out over two sessions at Ogmores trekking centre, Bridgend. The trekking centre is also a working farm and the children were expected to join in with all aspects of daily farming life, not just the horses.

The observations took place six weeks after the intervention started and involved two Teaching Assistants (TA's) and the trekking centre staff. The sessions ran from 10:00am to 2:30pm every Wednesday and pupils were only allowed to attend if their behaviour had been deemed satisfactory during the week. The author felt that this did not correlate with the purpose of the intervention. If a child requires a socially based intervention and the school deems equine therapy appropriate to meet this

need, then the behaviour of the child within the school setting should not limit their access to an educational intervention.

Through the role of a practitioner observer (Stake, 1995), the author was able to deduce that the overall aim of this intervention was to reduce anxiety and increase self-esteem. If a child can identify and control their emotions and feelings then they are more likely to socially interact with their peers (Bowlby, 1969). The format began in a classroom with an informal chat about what was expected of these children whilst they were on the yard. General safety and manners were also discussed due to the stables also being a working farm. The educator presented this information in an informal manner and the children clearly knew what to expect. After the meeting, the author was informed by staff, that it had taken a few sessions for the children to settle in to this routine

The author primarily focused on three members of the class over two sessions. The case studies were considered high tariff by their teachers and for the purposes of anonymity they will be referred to as child A, child B and child C. A brief overview of each child, their behaviours, characteristics and mannerisms, within this setting, can be found in appendix seven.

Throughout the sessions observed, all three children were able to engage or disengage with the activity at will. This enabled the children to return to an activity in order to complete the challenge set. For many of the children, including the case studies selected for observation, the completion of any task was hindered in school due to personal struggles and/or issues. Staff members discussed this problem further within interviews (Appendix one). The author concluded from these findings that the children struggled to use a growth mind set (Dweck, 2014), due to the continued disappointment of struggling to fulfil a task asked of them. However, whilst the focus of the research is the development of social skills for BESD child, the author noted that the use on animals to develop such skills had a secondary, positive, effect of enabling the children to complete tasks asked of them which increased confidence.

4.2 Child A.

Through the interview process, the author discovered that child A would run away from the environment if an activity was too challenging or if they perceived that activity to pose a threat to them. At the beginning of this intervention, child A, would often run to the mini bus and refuse to come back to complete the task. However, the author witnessed several incidents where child A left the stable mainly due to their own temper, which was a result of an inability to process emotions, or the horse moving in a certain way thus, posing a threat. Rather than retreating to the mini bus, child A would run to the stable door and use the door as safety barrier. Here a significant change in mannerism's was witnessed; child A was observed assessing the situation enabling them to self-regulate their temper and/or make a calculated judgement in regard to the threat level they preserved. Child A, was now presenting aspects of executive thinking/functioning, in particularly 'inhibitory control' (Understood, 2018) thus allowing them to begin to regulate their emotions and reactions.

For the author, a substantial advantage of animal assisted intervention is the inability of a BESD child to manipulate the actions of others through their own behaviour. As referred to in chapter two, animals provide a non-judgemental environment, Therefore, the author observed the dynamics of this relationship helping child A to develop an understanding that friendships are built on a mutual trust and its okay for each party to react differently to different situations.

As noted in appendix seven, child A clearly struggles with social interaction, verbal and non-verbal communication. Therefore, the dynamics of these relationships will aid child A's ability to interact with their peers who often do not acknowledge child A due to child A constantly being withdrawn from the group.

4.3 Child B.

The author observed child B talking freely with the horses in the pens, however not with their own horse when in the stable or riding. Despite this, child B was demonstrating enhanced confidence and self-esteem with reduced anxiety when compared to their behaviour within a classroom setting. Moreover, whilst on the farm the TA's had noted an increased confidence when taking responsibility generally.

However, it should be noted that this impact was short-term, with teaching staff noting no discernable changes within the classroom setting.

The author observed that child B, significantly benefited from the ability to finish a task given to them. This environment enabled child B to complete tasks and challenges, in a time frame that suited them best. Donaldson, (2015) advocates progression in this way to develop capable and ambitious learners. The staff remarked on child B's positive shift in attitude since the beginning of the intervention which they accounted to an increase in confidence. Although child B was yet to leave the farm on horseback they were happy to be led around the menage.

The author concluded that the intervention was beneficial to child B, however, they would require multiply sessions to develop the confidence needed to increase social interaction.

4.4: Child C.

As discussed in chapter two, BESD children often demonstrate elements of other ALN. Child C showed signs of attachment disorder (Bowlby, 1969), in particular ambivalent behaviour (Braveheart, 2018). Child C, would insist on sitting closest to the teacher, offering numerous answers to every question and constantly scanning the environment for an authoritative adult figure to provide security. Therefore, a non-judgemental and non-responsive environment was evidently a struggle for child C.

Docker Drysdale (1990) and Perry (2010) strongly believe in the power of group culture in influencing an individual, for good or otherwise. Conversely, child C, refused to conform to the collective group culture, thus hindering the development of their social skills and ability to form and maintain meaningful friendships.

Within the two sessions observed, this inability/unwillingness to conform did not change. Staff even tried pairing child C with younger children, enabling them to take the lead, complimenting their ambivalent behaviour style. However, within class, staff noted (appendix one) that child C was 'less needy' when the requirements of a task were clearly understood. Overall, the author feels that this intervention was overwhelming for child C and that an intervention focusing on small group activities to build friendships within child C's immediate peer group would be more suited to child C's current emotional and social needs.

4.5: Conclusion of findings.

In general the author would consider equine based, social interventions a success. The children were engaged with the horses and involved at an appropriate level which was understandable and relatable to their current needs. Child C, whilst not fully engaged at the farm, has demonstrated improvements within school. Hence, the evaluation of a success.

All relationships within this setting are based on conditional care, for many of the children relationships of this kind represent significant risk to their emotions. However, animal assisted therapy remains predictable and safe. This allowed the children to explore their emotions and self-justify their relationships within defined parameters.

The children were offered a level of responsibility that meant another with living being, heavily relied on them. Child A, B and C responded to this level of responsibility by conducting themselves maturely, safely, demonstrating initiative, enthusiasm and autonomy. Many of the children have not experienced this form of trust and responsibility before, furthermore, managing to sustain relationships past their own personal needs and goals. Whilst the author noted that this intervention contained limited, directed educational activity; upon reflection, subtle reinforcement of social skills, listening, turn taking, cooperation, trust, and responsibility were embedded throughout the intervention.

Chapter five: Conclusion.

To form a conclusion, the author aims to synthesise all findings presented. The overall aim of the research was to assess if the use of animal therapy can aid the development of social skills for children with BESD within key stage two.

Throughout the study, reference has been made to a diverse range of educational literature that suggests there is a strong relationship between animal interventions and social development. However, there is limited, high quality, research available for promoting the use and understanding of animal therapy for the development of BESD children's social skills. This suggests the use of such interventions is heavily dependent upon the practitioner's own knowledge and understanding of both pedagogical approaches and the animal husbandry.

The author strongly believes that the findings of this research project show that contact with animals through carefully constructed interventions, promotes the development of emotional and cognitive well-being, social skills, verbal and non-verbal communication, confidence, self-esteem and provides an understanding of how to develop and maintain friendships. In the author's opinion these factors are significant precursors to successful learning.

Therefore, this research project has shown, animal assisted therapy and interventions support children with BESD to develop the social skills required to be accepted by a group of their peers, contribute to their community and progress educationally.

Finally through exploration of this subject as a research project and a combination of first hand experiences and interviews the author has gained confidence and understanding in the professional management of children with BESD. Particularly within the development of social skills for children ages 7 to 11. In summary, a clear scope for the use of animal assisted therapy has been identified across the curriculum however, knowledge and understanding of this form of therapy would need to increase for it to be effectively used throughout educational settings.

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Appendix One: Interviews with staff.

Interview conducted with the Higher Level Teaching Assistant (HILTA) in blue.

Interview conducted with the trekking staff in purple.

All answers were recorded at the time of the interview for accuracy.

Child A:

What effect is the activity having on child A academically, socially and emotionally?

Child A, often struggles with school and the expectations placed on them. With the horses they are able to choose what they want to do and with whom. This gives them the freedom to explore and become interested in activities and find people they want to work with. Here they are far more settled and content.

I've noticed that child A does more away from activities mind, but I think that's why this environment works for them. They can still go back and finish off the job and that gives them a sense of achievement and self-worth.

Socially, I feel child A has started to talk to their peers and is beginning to acknowledge adults with more than a grunt but you have to understand, it's a long process so we won't know how the intervention truly effects child A till July.

I believe that working with the horses has brought child A out of their shell a bit. They still pick the biggest coat to hid in but now and again child A will interact with members of staff even if it's just laughing at a joke one of the girls has made whilst mucking out. Not sure about school however, here child A is starting to listen and then do what is asked of them. Don't get me wrong, child A will argue with the others over the smallest of things but overall their getting on okay much better then when they started any why.

(Can you tell me about when Child A started?)

They would refuse to join in and kept running off, now child A still hides if they feel in danger but at least they return to the activity and complete it even if it is slowly. They are starting to understand that these animal need them for food water and general care.

Do you think child A fully comprehends the purpose of the intervention?

No, they take part and fulfil the requirements, but they have no idea that it is designed to improve their social skills.

(Do you think they need to know the purpose?)

No, child A has a very negative attitude towards school and learning. If they knew this was aimed at helping them develop social skills they would refuse to attend.

Child A thinks this is a day off from school and reminds their friends every Wednesday that they don't need to stay in school.

No, the children just come and play with the ponies. They consider it a day off from school.

How does child A engage with the activities?

Yes, at their own pace and in their own way. Child A is starting to develop a growth mindset though. I often catch child A talking to themselves, convincing themselves that they can do this and finish the job. This is a huge step for child A as they really struggle with confidence and self-esteem.

Happily would be an exaggeration however, child A just ploughs on with the tasks. Hood up and off they go! Not particularly fast mind, but the job always gets done.

Child B:

What effect is the activity having on child B academically, socially and emotionally?

Child B, is underconfident and will withdraw themselves from the situation. When they first started coming to the trekking centre, they wouldn't talk to staff or the horses. Slowly this is changing, and they are starting to interact. Although this is very much on their terms. Academically, child B is not really showing any signs of improvement although their listening skills are a little better. This could be because we are spending more time together, so they are respecting my more within class mind. Emotionally, its hard to tell, child B keeps themselves to themselves.

Child B, doesn't really talk to staff at the trekking centre. They are very underconfident with the horses although the horses respond well to child B. Child B is the first one to start an activity though, they will just wander over and start, sometimes without telling you they are going to do it.

Do you think child B fully comprehends the purpose of the intervention?

Yes, they asked me the other day why we come every Wednesday, so I told them. Since then child B's attitude has changed slightly for the better, not sure if it's because they like knowing what is expected of them or if it's because they are slowly getting the hang of the horses.

No, the children just come and play with the ponies. They consider it a day off from school. (same answer for each child.)

How does child B engage with the activities?

Yes, child B is quietly positive about most activities, they just start them and then carry on until they are finished. Child B never makes a fuss about it, they just crack on with the activity required.

Yep, often the first one to start and seems pretty content just pottering along with a job.

Child C:

What effect is the activity having on child C academically, socially and emotionally?

Child C, is very needy, constantly looking for gratification for the slightest of things. This hasn't changed really although they are now able to be left alone to complete a task. Emotionally, child C is not very stable and often cry's when things don't go their way. The horses are non-responsive to such episodes and I think this is gradually helping child C to self-regulate. Academically, child C is less intense within the classroom and seems to settle quicker should there be a change of teacher or room where as before, child C would become distressed and often be unable to self regulate.

Child C, has struggled with the farm environment and seems very under confident around the horse. After six weeks we managed to get them to led their horse but still haven't managed to get them to leave the yard for a trek.

Do you think child C fully comprehends the purpose of the intervention?

No, if they thought it was optional they wouldn't attend. Child C is not very confident and hates anything that is unpredictable. They seem the nearest adult for security

and this intervention allows children to explore and investigate in an environment that is always changing. This intervention is well outside child C's comfort zone.

No, the children just come and play with the ponies. They consider it a day off from school. (same answer for each child.)

How does child C engage with the activities?

No, although they are getting better. They will go through the motions of the activities but their heart is not in it. However, if they are asked to do an activity at school that they do not like their reaction is extreme at least at the farm they don't have an episode.

Not really, we often have to call child C back to finish a job.

What is your opinion of the intervention?

I think the intervention works for the majority of the child who attend. The children develop perseverance and reliance. It's one of the few activities they do where they cannot control the participants through their own behaviour. The horses are so good and just don't care if a child is having an 'episode' near them. The children find this strangely soothing which enables them to return to the activity and carry on.

Socially, the children are learning that they have responsibilities within any relationship and have to fulfil their commitments and responsibilities in order to receive a response back from the animals. These horses see so many people that unless you have something to offer them, they cannot be bothered with you. These children are not used to being ignored, they used to being the centre of attention in a negative manner.

Appendix Two: Consent form.



Consent form

Trainees must gain the following written consent of the head teacher before taking photographs, filming or audio recording learners.

I agree to Caroline Pound and Matthew Noyes as a representative of Yr Athrofa to:

Take photographs	Interview ✓	
Take video	Quote school policy documents ✓	
Tape-record	Questionnaires ✓	(Tick accordingly)

Name of Head teacher: Mrs Helen Ridout

Signed: pp



Name of school: Ysgol Bryn Castell

To be completed by the trainee:

If I am granted such permission, I agree to abide by the ethics embodied within the EWC Code of Conduct and will not distribute any such material to audiences beyond the University authorities without their permission.

Name of trainee: Caroline Pound

Signed: C Pound

Telephone number: 07932231233

Email address: Caroline Pound

Programme (e.g. BA Ed/ PGCE Primary/PGCE Secondary):

Date: 14th February 2019.

Appendix Three: Well-being questionnaire:

Pupil Wellbeing Survey

Pupil Name: Class: Date:		Always	Sometimes	Never
<i>Please tick the box that best suits your answer</i>				
1	I'm happy in school	☐	☐	☐
2	I have a fixed mind set	☐	☐	☐
3	I feel Safe In school	☐	☐	☐
4	I stay at home even if I'm well enough to attend school	☐	☐	☐
5	I enjoy my lessons	☐	☐	☐
6	I feel sad	☐	☐	☐
7	I have good friends in school	☐	☐	☐
8	I'm anxious in school	☐	☐	☐
9	I have a good attitude to learning	☐	☐	☐
10	I'm late to school	☐	☐	☐
11	I sleep well	☐	☐	☐
12	I speak to staff if I have a problem	☐	☐	☐
13	I show resilience	☐	☐	☐
14	I misbehave in class	☐	☐	☐
15	I eat healthy food	☐	☐	☐
16	Homework is handed in on time	☐	☐	☐
17	I like to exercise	☐	☐	☐
18	I'm angry	☐	☐	☐
19	I enjoy spending time with my family	☐	☐	☐
20	I'm bullied	☐	☐	☐
Sub Totals				
60 - 45 44 - 30 29 - 20		Total		

Appendix Four: Elective Report.



Ysgol Bryn Castell.

5.1: The School.

Ysgol Bryn Castell (YBC) is maintained by Bridgend County Council and caters for children between the ages of seven to nineteen who have Behavioural, Social and Emotional Difficulties (BESD), Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD) and Additional Learning Needs (ALN).

There are approximately one hundred and forty pupils who attend daily. According to Estyn's 2013 report, forty-nine percent of the children have a statement of special needs. However, the school are awaiting the results of a recent Estyn inspection and therefore, this data may be outdated. The school's 2019 self-evaluation document, states that 11.7% of pupils are looked after and 51.7% of pupils are entitled to free school meals. Class sizes are significantly below the national average and the staff to pupil ratio is high due to pupils various identified needs.

Whilst the school predominantly caters for pupils with BESD, they have a specialist autistic unit which has expanded to four classes over the past few years and an on-

site speech therapist. They also cater for children who are identified as having General Learning Difficulties (GLD).

5.2: Good Practice.

The school prides itself on having 100% of pupils leaving with a recognised qualification. This has been achieved by offering pupils a wide range of opportunities to access the curriculum through various venues and courses, both academic and vocational, thus breaking down barriers to learning. A contributor to this achievement was the introduction of a three-year literacy framework programme in 2011. When examining the resulting data in the self-evaluation document (2019), it should be noted that there is significant data missing within the reference points 2010/2011 and 2011/2012 and therefore, a true analysis of this programme cannot be interpolated. An indication of the effectiveness of this intervention would be the increase of 14% in pupils who either progressed or maintained reading ages between 2013/2014 and 2016/2017. However, the 2017/2018 data demonstrates a reduction in pupils who either progressed or maintained their reading ages by 11%. There is no explanation for this decrease. However, it is the author's opinion that this is most likely due to absence and/or behaviour.

The school is striving to achieve Donaldson's four purposes of the curriculum ahead of its statutory implementation in 2021. The author has witnessed the benefits of this approach with pupils with the above identified needs due to the ability to look beyond the typical academic and prescribed nature of education and consider how pupils can be prepared for adulthood and what society requires of them. One aspect of this school's curriculum that meets these needs and provides essential learning opportunities for the children is the opportunity to complete work experience. The author considers this to be a significant factor towards the school's zero number of young people who are not in education, work or training.

This school is unique in its approach to learning and the learning environment it provides the pupils. Therefore, it can provide a slightly alternative curriculum where needed. It prides itself on the ability to develop meaningful and strong relationships

with each pupil being viewed as an individual, which is self-evident when staff are interacting with pupils.

5.3: Research area and rationale.

The chosen area of research is; “Does a kinaesthetic approach to education improve children with BESD ability to access education?”

The original question related to how animal therapy can reduce the effect which stress has on a child’s educational experience. However, after spending time within this school, especially class 7F, the protentional of researching BESD and the different opportunities to observe how different lessons/topics and environments can affect the children’s ability to access learning was realised by the author.

Furthermore, although the school does use animal therapy, research for the original question would have substantial limitations due to need for confidentiality whilst the children are in therapy. The given time-scales for in school observation meant there would only be two opportunities to experience canine therapy and one for equine therapy which would not provide enough evidence to draw a strong conclusion.

5.4: The elective experience and how it has affected personal practice.

(N.B. This is a reflection of a personal experience and therefore, has been written in first person.)

Based on previous experiences, at schools with a high proportion of BESD pupils, I thought I knew what to expect when entering this setting. I knew not to react to adventurous and/or unexpected behaviour or out-bursts and recognise that certain reactions and behaviours are not a representation of my ability to teach or support these pupils. However, I was not prepared for the level of emotional support these children required. They were a mixture of anxious and insecure whilst wanting continuous approval and support. This has made me evaluate how I manage myself in the classroom, resulting in me trialling a series of approaches and strategies with varying results. After observing staff interaction with pupils and reflecting upon my own interaction, I have come to the conclusion that the children respect and respond

to 'firm but fair', thus enabling them to understand their boundaries whilst allowing them to explore and develop socially, personally and academically.

Through observation of 7F, I have witnessed how a kinaesthetic approach to learning can benefit the children.

1. Music: The music teacher is extremely passionate about their topic and this shows when they are engaging the children. This was the first lesson I observed where behavioural outbursts were limited. On the keyboard, the children learned part a theme song by listening to the teacher and watching them play, then experimenting to see if they could replicate the tune. They were engaged and engrossed in the learning which I believe was due to the activity being kinaesthetic and providing instant feedback/reward. They were able identify if they were incorrect and immediately correct/learn from it providing them a level of autonomy.
2. DT, Cooking: The children exhibited a range of behaviours and emotions both negative and positive. However, due to the kinaesthetic nature of the lesson, the children were able to keep returning to the learning to complete the task. My observation of this lesson has led me to believe that children with BESD cannot decompartmentalise their emotions from their thought process. Therefore, the ability to return to a kinaesthetic task without repercussion appears to be significantly de-escalate behaviour issues.

In comparison to the above, I observed a humanities lesson where the children were expected to concentrate on a video resulting in them being unable to exit and enter the learning as and when needed. The level of teaching observed was consistent and of good quality; however, the children needed to focus on a video for several minutes which, for some, was unachievable. This led to disruption and a volatile environment which resulted in one member of the class being restrained and a further four missing part of their lunch break. Therefore, based on my observations I believe that a kinaesthetic approach to teaching and learning is beneficial for children with BESD. They appear to be able to self-regulate their behaviour, to varying degrees, when they can access the learning intermittently and the

results/feedback are instant. The new curriculum allows for a learning by doing approach to be developed across the curriculum and age ranges. From what I have witnessed, many of the staff are capable and willing to further develop such a pedagogical approach in order to reap the benefits.

(Whilst the above relates to the research question in terms of kinaesthetic activities, the following relates more to personal development and what I have gained from this experience.)

I would consider myself to have advanced literacy and communication skills, however at the beginning of this experience I was shocked at my inability to communicate with some of the children. The children will frequently use negative and/or abusive language in the hope of raising a reaction. The staff will reply modelling a positive method of communication whilst still using language and communication strategies the children can understand and relate to. At first, I did not know how to reply in a correct and relatable manner, which neither disciplines excessively nor draws attention to the language. However, after observing the Learning Support Officer's (LSO) communication, I subsequently practised the methods they used within the classroom, resulting in various levels of success. Due to the benefits of developing this type of transferable skill, I will continue to consider how I can develop my communication and language skills further through observation of various social skills exhibited by the children and the interaction from professionals.

5.6: Recommendations/questions.

I do not feel that I have enough experience of special schools and the diverse, complex and unique challenges they face to make recommendations. However, based on my experiences as an impartial observer I do have some questions formulated which could help shape future recommendations for the faculty staff and governing body.

“BESD children struggle with disruption, therefore why are they moved around so much? “

Rationale: Certain subjects need to be conducted in certain environments, with certain teachers. However, I have witnessed the children take up to ten minutes to settle down with some pupils arriving late, consequently not understanding what is expected of them thus, triggering behavioural issues. Therefore, if a single room and single teacher approach was adopted, much like that in primary school, up until year nine would it reduce disruption, increase learning and strengthen the relationship between teacher and pupil.

“Why is the use of media as a reward inconsistent and why are children playing game that are inappropriate for their age?”

Rational: (I have been asked by the school not to include my rational)

“Why prohibit points being added, in bulk, for good behaviour, especially when they can be removed in bulk for bad behaviour? “

Rationale: I have observed some children really struggle to avoid becoming involved in or distracted by bad behaviour. However, I have been informed that good behavioural points cannot be added in the same way they are removed for bad behaviour. Therefore, does this not discourage the correct behavioural patterns from the pupils? -

5.7:

Closing remarks.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the staff at YBC for enabling me to have this experience. I feel I have expanded my knowledge of special needs and how to tailor my personal practice as and when required which will in turn enable me to cater for more individuals within my future classes.

Caroline Pound

Appendix five: Personal notes from electives experience.

Please note that for increased accuracy these notes were typed up at the setting and, within reason, in really time. Therefore, they are a personal point of reference which the author feels will enhance the reader understanding of the children's behaviour rather than a formal piece of writing.

Day one am.

Children y5 & y6. One new pupil leaving at 12 noon, however, wouldn't leave. Proceeded to throw themselves around and repeatedly strike a Staff member who later required hospitalisation.

Within the classroom the children relied heavily on ICT, one child was playing a violent game on the pc for a while whilst another was watching YouTube minecraft and a third was using an iPad with head phones. The remaining three members of the class were moving around utilising different areas of the classroom. In general the behaviour of the class is unsettled and fractious however, I believe this may be due to a lack of structure.

Day one pm.

Children have returned from lunch fractious, there is limited educational input witnessed. At one point the teacher tried to engage the pupils with a piece of art however, only one child tried to do the work. They didn't finish and became distracted from the activities of others. One boy was continually swearing without being corrected, then the girl swore and was reprimanded accordingly however, retaliated with "you don't tell him off for swearing sir" this was repeated until home time every time the girl swore. The situation escalated.

Day two am.

Today there is 3 pupils to 3 members of staff however, one boy aged 11 is missing suspected to have gone to the shop. There seems little to no concern over where he might be. Children are constantly given rewards even for the smallest of accomplishments and wonder around as they want. When asked to sit down one child proceeded to turn over a number of chairs and tables. The other children did not respond therefore, I assume this is normal behaviour. Once again the children

and staff are heavily reliant on computers often playing inappropriate games with Peg ratings of 18. I was informed by a TA that this was a usual day.

Day two pm.

Behaviour escalated during a geography lesson with one child being forcible removed from the class and another storming out then requiring full frontal restraint. I was left with two TA's one of whom is on supply when a third member of the class had an episode. At this point I feared for my safety because he proceeded to launch himself at me with sharp pencils in his hand whilst I blocked the door. He insisted he wanted to leave the room whilst he was launching himself at me, threatening me using graphic verbal descriptions of what he was going to do to me. It is important to remember at this stage that the child reacted like this out of fear, and whilst at the time I had concerns over my safety I was assured later, by the TA, that this is regular behaviour for him and should it have been another member of the class who really did pose a threat to myself or others the code button would have been pushed and help would have arrived quickly.

The child who was placed in a full-frontal restraint, including head coverage, returned to class less than an hour later and continued as if nothing had happened.

Overall, I feel Behaviour is extremely poor, objects are often thrown around the classroom, no regard for staff with myself being hit in the head with a bottle and other staff members much worse. Children are allowed to wander freely around the school and little caution is given if they leave school premises. Whilst swearing is not encouraged nor is it discouraged, and the children seem to have very little expected of the educationally. However, I question how much of this is behaviour that has been allowed to build up over a period of time through miss management rather than a condition of BESD.

Appendix Six: Baseline assessment of general behaviour.

Overall the children's behaviour is unsatisfactory.

- Children wander around the school as and when they desire, disrupting the few who are trying to learn.
- Bad language is constantly used regardless of who they are speaking to or with.
- Violence is used between the children and towards staff members regularly.
- Children will use threatening actions such as punching the wall to get their own way.

Due to the behaviour demonstrated over the two-week elective session many of the children did not complete their work. This meant that a simple graph in science could take up to four sessions to complete. The children seem to respond to each other and behaviour escalates quickly.

Appendix Seven: Brief Overview of the child A, B and C.

7.1: Child A, an eleven-year-old male.

Child A was outspoken and loud with his movements, giving the impression he may be confident, possibly the most confident of the group. His speech was clear and confident however, often too loud the author believes this was an attempt to try and control or gain the other children's attention.

Often reverts to coping mechanisms to hide being shy and reserved.

When child A was preparing to muck out, they would consistently choose an oversized coat from the boot room. During any activity the hood was drawn up to cover their face and regardless of the weather the coat remained zipped from top to bottom. Initially the author thought this may be a sign of lack of investment or engagement in the activity however, it was later discussed through the interview process that child A used the coat as protection, finding it hard to focus with people around them. Within school child A had a booth to work in however, the school believed that working with animals would benefit child A because of the lack of verbal and/or negative physical feedback. Therefore, enabling child A to develop the skill of interaction at a pace that suits them and in a non-judgemental environment.

Child A, found it hard to be involved with any form of group work. After the children had mucked out their horse they were instructed to muck out the barn where the majority of trekking ponies lived. At this point child A, instigated an argument because he refused to share his pitch fork. The author later discovered that this was a normal reaction for child A due to issues expressing their feelings and emotions. The trekking centre hope that child A's ability to process different emotions and senses will be improved through riding because there is a distinct element of secondary control (BHS, 2018). This means that the individual cannot control the response of others through verbal or physical actions, thus meaning that child A has to deal with the situation as it presents rather than after the fact.

7.2: Child B, a ten-year-old male.

Child B was visible withdrawn and seemed uncomfortable within a group of their peers, speaking only when spoken too. Through an interview with child B's key worker the author discovered that they had been an elective mute throughout foundation phase and the early part of key stage two and now has communication and interaction difficulties.

The author observed that child B, made little impression on the class with many children actively ignoring him. However, the animals naturally responded to him and he showed great aptitude for the outdoor lifestyle.

7.3: Child C, an eleven-year-old male.

Demonstrate elements of other ALN's in particular signs of attachment disorder resulting in ambivalent behaviour. Child C would insist on sitting closest to the teacher, offering numerous answers to every question, constantly scanning the environment for an authoritative adult figure to provide security.

Through the interview process, the author learned that child C and been subject to systemic abuse in the home however, is now settled with long term foster parents.