

Durham E-Theses

The Apparatus of Queer Inclusion in English Primary Schools: A Foucauldian Insight into Policy and Teachers' Discourses

LECUYER, ARABETHAN

How to cite:

LECUYER, ARABETHAN (2024) *The Apparatus of Queer Inclusion in English Primary Schools: A Foucauldian Insight into Policy and Teachers' Discourses*, Durham theses, Durham University. Available at Durham E-Theses Online: <http://etheses.dur.ac.uk/15419/>

Use policy

The full-text may be used and/or reproduced, and given to third parties in any format or medium, without prior permission or charge, for personal research or study, educational, or not-for-profit purposes provided that:

- a full bibliographic reference is made to the original source
- a [link](#) is made to the metadata record in Durham E-Theses
- the full-text is not changed in any way

The full-text must not be sold in any format or medium without the formal permission of the copyright holders.

Please consult the [full Durham E-Theses policy](#) for further details.

The Apparatus of Queer Inclusion in English Primary Schools: A Foucauldian Insight into Policy and Teachers' Discourses

By

Arabeth Lecuyer



Durham
University

Thesis submitted for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

School of Education

Durham University

United Kingdom

2024

1 Table of Contents

2	<i>Abstract</i>	<i>VIII</i>
3	<i>Acknowledgements</i>	<i>IX</i>
4	<i>Terms & Definitions</i>	<i>X</i>
5	<i>Introduction</i>	<i>1</i>
6	<i>Literature Review</i>	<i>8</i>
6.1	Anti-bullying	10
6.2	Curricular Inclusion	14
6.3	RSE & Resources	18
6.3.1	RSE Provision	19
6.3.2	RSE & LGBT Policy	23
6.4	Backlash & Barriers	25
6.4.1	A Controversial Issue	25
6.4.2	Negotiating Rights.....	27
6.4.3	Queer Teachers.....	31
6.5	Hypersexualisation & Homonormativity	34
6.5.1	Innocence & Hypersexualisation.....	34
6.5.2	Homonormativity	38
6.6	Conclusion	43
7	<i>Theoretical Underpinnings</i>	<i>45</i>
7.1	The Apparatus of Power	48
7.1.1	Discourse	50
7.1.2	Subjects.....	51
7.2	Gender & Sexuality	53
7.2.1	Heteronormativity.....	55
7.2.2	Reconstructing Heteronormativity: Common Sense & Surveillance	58
7.2.3	Labels	61
7.3	Resistance, Reparative Reading & the Paralysis of Paranoia	63
7.4	Conclusion	65

8	<i>Methodology & Methods</i>	66
8.1	Methodology & Research Design	67
8.2	Participants & Policy	69
8.2.1	Policy	70
8.2.2	Teacher Participants	76
8.3	Methods of Data Collection	80
8.3.1	Interviews	80
8.3.2	Questionnaires	81
8.3.3	Interview & Questionnaire Design	82
8.4	Data Analysis	96
8.4.1	Transcription & Process of Analysis	96
8.4.2	Methods of Analysis	97
8.5	Methodological & Ethical Issues	101
8.5.1	Being a Queer Researcher	102
8.5.2	Legitimising the Debate & Influence	103
8.6	Conclusion	106
9	<i>Findings Part 1: Encouraged & Enabled</i>	107
9.1	Heteronormativity & Non-mandatory LGBT RSE	110
9.1.1	From Banning to Encouraging	110
9.1.2	LGBT Content in Primary Schools	120
9.1.3	Conclusion.....	133
9.2	Parental Consultation & Governance	134
9.2.1	Parental Consultation in the RSE Polycscape	135
9.2.2	Teachers' Responses & Parental Consultation.....	142
9.2.3	Conclusion.....	163
9.3	Encouraged & Enabled: Overall Conclusions	165
10	<i>Findings Part 2: Appropriateness</i>	166
10.1	Age-appropriateness	168
10.1.1	Age-appropriateness in the Polycscape	169
10.1.2	Teachers Responses & Age-Appropriateness.....	171
10.1.3	Conclusion.....	186
10.2	Appropriateness in Teaching	188
10.2.1	Rights & Appropriateness in the Polycscape	190
10.2.2	Rights & Appropriateness in Teacher Responses	203

10.2.3	Conclusion.....	222
10.3	Appropriateness: Overall Conclusions.....	223
11	<i>Findings Part 3: Different Types of Families.....</i>	225
11.1	Homonormativity.....	225
11.1.1	Families & the RSE Polycscape.....	229
11.1.2	Homonormativity & Teachers’ Responses.....	238
11.1.3	Conclusions of Homonormativity: Predictable, pernicious, practical, & progressive?.....	253
12	<i>Conclusion.....</i>	257
12.1	Key Findings	258
12.1.1	The Queer as Other.....	259
12.1.2	Subjecting the Queer	262
12.2	Future Directions.....	265
12.2.1	Methodological & Theoretical Directions.....	265
12.2.2	Research Directions.....	268
12.2.3	Policy & Practice Directions	270
12.3	Closing Words.....	272
13	<i>Appendices.....</i>	273
13.1	Recruitment Email	273
13.2	Interview Consent Form	274
13.3	Participant Information Sheet.....	276
13.4	Questionnaire	280
13.4.1	Cover Page & Password	280
13.4.2	Consent & Anonymity Notice.....	280
13.4.3	General Information	281
13.4.4	Your Thoughts.....	282
13.4.5	‘Yes’ to LGBT Content	283
13.4.6	‘No’ to LGBT Content	284
13.4.7	Children’s Literature	285
13.5	List of Codes.....	289
13.6	Example Questionnaire Response.....	291
13.7	Email to Ofsted	297
13.8	Email to the Department for Education	301

13.9	Reply from the Department for Education	303
13.10	Rapid Onset Gender Dysphoria	305
14	<i>References</i>	307

List of Tables

Table 1: Number of participants identifying with certain sexuality and gender identity labels divided by data source.	79
Table 2: The number of responses stating whether LGBT content is present in their school, and if so, where, alongside number of responses stating whether they thought LGBT content should be present in primary schools, and if so, where.	123
Table 3: Number of participants who stated that they lacked certain resources and the type of resource they lacked.	131
Table 4: The number of responses coded as either making a ‘ <i>Supportive (Overall)</i> ’ or ‘ <i>Unsupportive (Overall)</i> ’ reference to potential or experienced parental reaction to LGBT content in their school.....	144
Table 5: The amount of responses coded for various types of reaction to each of the LGBT children’s literatures in the questionnaire divided by to whom this reference pertained.	145
Table 6: Amount of responses coded as ‘ <i>Outing & Issues</i> ’.	153
Table 7: The number of teachers who referenced LGBT children, or stated that children could not be LGBT themselves, and the age at which they stated LGBT content should be included in primary schools.	173
Table 8: The total number of teachers coded as referring to the ‘child’ as <i>too young</i> for LGBT content, and the number of these codes sub-coded as referring to LGBT content as <i>sexualising</i> or <i>promotion</i>	178
Table 9: Number of responses coded as referencing direct discrimination alongside whether such responses stated that LGBT content should, or should not, be present in primary schools.	205
Table 10: Responses coded for referencing faith alongside responses coded for referencing the presence of LGBT content as a matter of balancing rights or views in primary schools.	208
Table 11: The number of responses referencing pupils using LGBT identities as insults and of staff members mirroring this use in response.	219
Table 12: The count of different types of LGBT representations and teaching content reported to be present in schools by teachers.....	239

List of Figures

Figure 1: <i>A Day in the Life of Marlon Bundo</i> front cover.	88
Figure 2: Sample pages from <i>A Day in the Life of Marlon Bundo</i>	89
Figure 3: <i>The Paper Bag Princess</i> front cover.	90
Figure 4: Sample pages from <i>The Paper Bag Princess</i>	91
Figure 5: <i>When Aidan Became a Brother</i> front cover.....	91
Figure 6: Sample pages from <i>When Aidan Became a Brother</i>	92
Figure 7: <i>Maiden & princess</i> front cover.....	93
Figure 8: Sample pages from <i>Maiden & Princess</i>	94
Figure 9: The letter Hinde’s school sent to parents to inform them of their participation in the No Outsiders charity programme.	158

2 Abstract

This thesis examines the elements forming LGBT inclusion in English Primary Schools. In recent years, the presentation of sexual and gender diversity in schools has become a deeply polarised issue. Parental protest, particularly to LGBT inclusive education in primary schools, has been at the forefront of media attention (BBC, 2019; Morgan & Taylor, 2019). In the midst of, and perhaps because of, this controversy, the 2019 changes to the Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) curriculum made “LGBT content” compulsory only for secondary schools. Primary schools, by contrast, were “encouraged and enabled to cover LGBT content when teaching about different types of families” but were not required to do so (Department for Education, 2020b, para. 25). Primary schools may decide whether such content is “appropriate” to include in their RSE curriculum, and the guidance requires them to consult parents and consider ‘political impartiality’ when planning this teaching (Department for Education, 2019d; 2020c, p. 11). This optional status is significant given that previous research has suggested LGBT inclusion in primary schools is sporadic and formed in mind of potential parental backlash, ideas of age appropriateness, and neutrality (Carlile, 2020b; DePalma & Jennett, 2010; Johnson, 2022; Wilder, 2019).

As limited research has yet extensively examined the shape of LGBT inclusion in primary schools alongside the new RSE guidance, this thesis aims to fill this gap in the literature. This thesis used policy analysis alongside interviews and/or questionnaire responses from 363 teachers to understand the meaning of LGBT inclusion in policy and its enactment in schools. Using a Queer and Foucauldian lens, this thesis grapples with the discourses and power relations underpinning the multiple meanings of LGBT inclusion. The findings of this thesis suggest that the notion that LGBT content is ‘encouraged and enabled’ overlooks both the prohibitive impacts that discourses of appropriateness, whether in terms of age, sexual content, parental rights, or political impartiality, has on inclusion attempts, and that the very designation of the queer as optional *otherly* content subjects LGBT content to these discourses. LGBT inclusion in this manner was allowed, but not necessarily practicable, being subject to parental and school judgements of appropriateness.

3 Acknowledgements

The greatest thanks must go to all those teachers who participated in this thesis. In the midst of a global pandemic and with seemingly ever-increasing workloads, these teachers gave their time. Thank you for your thoughts, views, and insight. Thank you to my supervisors for the truly invaluable guidance, encouragement, and humour. You have been the guards against waffle and nonsense. Thank you to all my friends and family for your love and support. Lastly, thank you to Sandy and Milo, our walks on the beach have given me sanity and joy.

4 Terms & Definitions

LGBT

Lesbian, Gay, Bi, and Transgender are sometimes used as umbrella terms. Transgender, for example, may refer to binary trans people (a woman assigned male at birth etc.) but it may also be used to include gender diverse, gender fluid, agender and other identities (Monro, 2015). Lesbian, can refer either to a woman or a non-binary person attracted only to women, but likewise to spaces, relationships etc associated with or describable as women loving women (WLW) (Llewellyn, 2022b). Etymologically suggesting an attraction to both genders, bisexuality is now more commonly used to refer to attraction to more than one gender with gender sometimes as a relevant factor to attraction (Coletta, 2018; Flanders et al., 2017). Pansexual and queer, are sometimes favoured to escape the notion of a gender binary or to denote a lack of relevance of gender in attraction, but all these terms remain somewhat contested and sometimes interchangeable, depending on the personal identification (Flanders et al., 2017; Lapointe, 2017; Sprott & Benoit Hadcock, 2018; Winer et al., 2022). Gay is sometimes used as a kind of homogenization for the queer community, a catch-all term for sexual and gender diversity. This can be used disparagingly but has also been thoroughly taken up by the queer community as a colloquial term to describe non-heteronormative identities. For example, a pansexual non-binary person may not be the typically thought of meaning of gay which tends to refer to men being attracted to only men, but they may identify with the overall term of gay, or as part of the ‘gays’, ‘gay community’, or as a ‘babygay’ if they are new to the community (Grant & Nash, 2019; Musto, 2020).

Queer

Queer may be used as a more inclusive term for the LGBT+ community which acknowledges the diversity and lack of fixity of such. It may also be used as ‘Queer Theory’ to refer to this critical theoretical approach (See chapter: Theoretical Underpinnings). As a term, ‘queer’ can be controversial, given its long history as a pejorative, but it has recently been reclaimed by some in the queer community. For further discussion of my reasoning for using the terms ‘Queer’ and ‘LGBT’, see both the Introduction and Theoretical Underpinnings chapters of this thesis.

LGBT Content

A phrase used within the RSE curriculum to refer to representation of those in the LGBT community or discussions thereof.

RSE

RSE stands for Relationships and Sex Education and refers to part of the curriculum in English primary and secondary schools.

Ofsted

Ofsted is the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills. In England, Ofsted is a non-ministerial governmental department which inspects and reports on institutions providing childcare, education, and training.

Primary/ Secondary School

Primary schools in England are the educational institutions provided for children aged approximately 4 to 11. Secondary, or sometimes senior, schools generally run from ages 11 to 16.

Apparatus

Apparatus is a term used by theorist Michel Foucault to describe the total sum or structure of institutions, discourses, and ideas, and the power relations running through them, which sustain certain phenomena (See Theoretical Underpinnings chapter The Apparatus of Power section).

5 Introduction

The overarching aim of this thesis is to understand the shape of LGBT inclusion in English primary schools, and the elements forming it. The rights of the queer community have changed significantly in the decades following the turn of the 21st century. Campaigns for LGBT inclusion surrounding issues such as the equal age of sexual content, marriage equality, and legal recognition of trans lives, have seen significant success (Stonewall, 2016). Though research into societal attitudes towards the LGBT community in the UK points to more overall acceptance (Kelley & Santos, 2022), tension has accompanied the incremental increase in rights (Ayoub, 2019; Browne & Nash, 2020; Dunne, 2019, 2020; Small, 2018; Zanghellini, 2012). With reported LGBT-based hate crimes more than doubling since 2017/2018 (Home Office, 2022), and vandalism, assaults, and even murders targeting members of the LGBT community peppering the news in recent years (BBC, 2023; Bird, 2022; Jackson, 2023; Murray, 2023; Perry, 2021; Weaver, 2023), the position of the LGBT community remains precarious both in the UK and worldwide.

Support for LGBT inclusive curricula has been positioned as one means amongst others to remedy continuing marginalisation of the queer community at large, and to address the bullying, social exclusion, and wider *othering* disproportionately experienced by queer youth (Mitchell et al., 2014; Stonewall, 2017). Indeed, nowhere has the tension in LGBT inclusion been more keenly felt than in the context of schools. Internationally opposition has centred on concerns for protecting childhood innocence, the potential for such curricula to have a sexualising, adverse effect on children, and the rights of parents to impart their own moral or religious views (DePalma & Atkinson, 2009b; DePalma & Jennett, 2010; Herriot et al., 2018; Martino et al., 2019). Straddling these divisions, schools are rather awkwardly positioned, having to balance the rights of parents, students, and religious communities.

In the UK, perhaps the most publicised opposition was the parental objection to LGBT-inclusive education in Birmingham primary schools which erupted into months-long protests (BBC, 2019). Resistance has also included court battles over whether schools should be able to teach LGBT-inclusive views without parental consent (Perry, 2023) and similar calls for the limiting or exclusion of such in schools (UK Government, 2023b). This has not been a phenomenon isolated to the UK. To give only two example countries, eight schools in Belgium were set alight or vandalised in response to LGBT inclusive Relationships and Sex Education

curricular (Le Monde, 2023), whilst widespread, sometimes violent, protests have followed both introductions of, and legislation against, LGBT curriculum in US schools (Olmos, 2023; Wait & Rodriguez, 2023; M. Yang, 2023). The increased acceptance of LGBT rights and representation has been a polarising issue in schools more generally, but it is in primary schools where it has been most contentious. In 2019 after multiple protests relating to potential LGBT inclusion in the new RSE curriculum, the UK Government stated that the “majority of the objections relate to the teaching of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) content, particularly in primary schools” (Department for Education, 2019a, para. 3).

The polarisation surrounding LGBT inclusion and the unevenness in its provision are apparent throughout this thesis, but more anecdotally both my personal school experience and the last three years of PhD research have been something of an informal study in this area. When meeting new people and answering the standard ‘what do you do for a living?’ enquiry, I have found my answer, that I’m researching LGBT inclusion in primary schools, has led to reactions ranging from enthusiastic interest to mild confusion, from suspicious clarification of why I was ‘promoting’ such things to simply walking away.

It is important to note here that my experience of researching this thesis¹, and my motivation for doing so, have been formed by lived experience as a queer woman. At the time of writing, it has been 20 years since one great shift in LGBT inclusion in schools, the repeal of Section 28. Part of a 1988 amendment to the Local Government Act, Section 28 forbade schools from “promoting homosexuality”, effectively banning them from making positive reference to same-sex relationships (UK Government, 1988, Section 28, Clause. 2A). Being born in 1996, I received only two years of formal education under Section 28. And yet, whilst schools were now not forbidden from making such references, I saw no representation, no reference to queer lives. The queer was not taught to be inappropriate compared to cisgender and heterosexual lives but seemed implicitly so in its conspicuous absence. In the entirety of

¹ As is reflected upon within the Being a Queer Researcher section of the Methodology & Methods chapter of this thesis, I therefore did not approach this topic as a kind of neutral, disinterested researcher, but rather as an active agent explicitly aiming to better the experience of a community to which I belong. Such is not to imply the imposition of these values onto the research; rather, it entails a deliberate acknowledgment of their presence in forming my motivation for this research and its underlying imperative.

my school career, the queer existed not in the formal school curriculum or environment but suffused the slurs, expectations, and rumours of informal peer cultures.

Of course, in the intervening years, significant strides have been made in terms of LGBT school-based inclusion legislation. The period since the repeal of Section 28 has seen the passing of the 2010 Equality Act, a consolidation of anti-discrimination legislation which outlawed, amongst other things, discrimination based on sexuality or gender reassignment in schools and the wider society (Department for Education, 2018b). However, the Equality Act, notably, did not include the curriculum within its remit for discrimination (Department for Education, 2018b). In 2017, the UK Government announced that as part of their implementation of a new RSE curriculum, they would be launching a public consultation to help form its content (Department for Education, 2017a). The later publication of this consultation predictably reflected the contentious nature of the issue, reporting that much of the contention revolved around LGBT teaching (Department for Education, 2019e). Perhaps as a result, whilst “LGBT content” was made mandatory in secondary school RSE, primary schools were “strongly encouraged and enabled to cover LGBT content when teaching about different types of families” but were not required to do so (Department for Education, 2020b, para. 25).

These changes make the examination of LGBT content in primary school particularly important, given that it is unclear to what extent this non-mandatory content will be included. LGBT inclusion in the primary school curriculum has thus remained optional since the repeal of Section 28, raising the issue that this thesis aims to address of how, or if, it is included in schools, and whether the silence surrounding the queer that characterised my own experiences of English primary schooling can continue in schools. This thesis is particularly pertinent given that research has yet to extensively examine the shape of LGBT inclusion in primary schools considering the changes to the RSE curriculum.

Previous research has suggested that since the repeal of Section 28 certain schools still act as if it remains in place, with inclusion in the curriculum remaining sparse and unevenly implemented (Allan et al., 2008; Atkinson, 2021; DePalma & Atkinson, 2009b). Though the shape of LGBT inclusion in schools is an emerging field of research, previous research has suggested that LGBT inclusion has largely been defined by challenging more direct forms of marginalisation, such as bullying (DePalma & Jennett, 2010; Horton, 2020; Johnson, 2020; Rudoe, 2017), but not as frequently tackling the wider cultural attitudes in the school which more subtly sustain negative perceptions of the queer community (Bower-Brown et al., 2023;

Browne & Nash, 2020; Formby, 2015; Horton, 2020). This thesis aims to understand to what extent primary schools are now *encouraged and enabled* to include LGBT content, in mind of the research suggesting that this has not always been common practice in primary schools and the uncertainty of its inclusion that accompanies its non-mandatory status.

Though LGBT inclusion is non-mandatory in primary schools, the requirements here are separate from those for secondary schools, where LGBT content must form part of the RSE curriculum. Opposition to LGBT content in schools has in part centred on it being perceived as age-inappropriate for young children, too sexualising, and potentially confusing (Carlile, 2020b; Cuthbert & Taylor, 2019; DePalma & Atkinson, 2010; Gray, 2010; Hermann-Wilmarth & Ryan, 2019; Johnson, 2020; Meyer et al., 2019; Nash & Browne, 2020). How this age differentiation in the requirements for LGBT inclusion is set out in policy and interpreted or reflected by teachers is an area of study that requires close attention, given the potential discourse it may construct around the queer community and the suitability of LGBT content for children.

It is likewise essential to understand how the emphasis on families in the RSE policy guidance for primary schools relates to the kind of LGBT content now present. Previous literature has noted that when content is included in the curriculum, a preference for presentations of different kinds of families, some of which could be same-sex parents, has been noted (Carlile, 2020b; DePalma, 2016; Lester, 2014). Such an emphasis, both in the RSE guidance and previous practice, raises questions about the extent to which *LGBT* content, and all of the diversity in this initialism, is included. This research is thus timely in its examination of not only whether LGBT content is present in primary schools, but the kind of content present.

Though primary schools were thus left to “make decisions about what is appropriate to teach on this subject” regarding the inclusion of LGBT content in RSE, they were also required to “involve their parent body in these decisions” (Department for Education, 2019e, pp. 8, 9) and to “ensure their teaching reflects the age and religious background of their pupils” (Department for Education, 2019c, p. 2). The requirements in the new RSE curriculum for primary schools to consult parents and to reflect religious background when deciding the content of the curriculum seem consequential in mind of previous research suggesting this is an often-prohibitive factor. The issue of religious rights to teach in line with beliefs has been found to be a strong component forming LGBT inclusion in schools, as has the matter of parental rights (Callaghan, 2015; Hooker, 2018; Rudoe, 2017). Concern for, or experienced, backlash in these areas has been suggested to engender hesitancy around the inclusion of LGBT

content (DePalma, 2016; DePalma & Jennett, 2010). This thesis aims to understand how parental consultation, and the reflection of religious background, is navigated in mind of its newly required status in policy. How these requirements to consult parents on the inclusion of LGBT content will be felt by queer teachers themselves, and how it affects their ability to talk about their lives in class, also remains uncertain. Backlash has been cited as a particular issue for queer teachers, who may be open to more personal pushback (Dykes & Delport, 2018; Endo et al., 2010; Ferfolja, 2009; Lee, 2020a; Rowan-Lancaster, 2022). As part of the subject under consultation, the research in this thesis into how queer teachers experience discussions around LGBT content is deeply significant.

Governmental descriptions of these changes have held them up as a mark of the RSE curriculum now being “inclusive for all children whatever their developing sexual orientation or gender identity” (Government Equalities Office, 2019b, p. 2). Whether this curriculum is *inclusive for all children*, in mind of the optional nature of LGBT content, what *inclusive* here refers to, and how it fits into the wider climate of LGBT *inclusion* in schools, still, however, remains unclear. It is this lack of clarity that this thesis aims to address, by examining how LGBT inclusion is conceptualised and implemented in primary schools, why this is the case, and how this relates to policy.

My intentional dual use of the terms ‘queer’, as in the title of this thesis, and ‘LGBT’, should be acknowledged here. In navigating the terminology within my thesis, I carefully consider the implications of using labels such as ‘LGBT’ and ‘Queer.’ ‘LGBT’ poses challenges as an umbrella term, potentially homogenizing diverse sexuality and gender identities, reinforcing silences, and oversimplifying individual experiences. Using ‘LGBT’ uncritically risks predefined notions of inclusivity, potentially defining either the bounds of what may be ‘included’ or homogenising experiences of inclusion/exclusion. The term ‘LGBT’ is, however, a very popular term, and carries a great deal of research currency in both its intelligibility and the way in which it reflects the language used in current educational policy.

The term ‘Queer’, meanwhile, is embraced for its capacity to acknowledge intersectional identities beyond the conventional ‘LGBT’ framework and to trouble the constructed nature of such categories. Recognised as an anti-signifier, ‘Queer’ underscores the fluidity and dissonance in labelling, emphasising that identities are not static but shaped by dynamic discourses. However, the intentional unintelligibility of ‘Queer’ and its historically pejorative use somewhat limits universal usability.

As a result, in this thesis, I employ both terms. I use ‘LGBT’ when speaking to participants or when discussing the content of specific policies which reference ‘LGBT content’. I likewise employ the term ‘Queer’, speaking of inclusion of the ‘queer’ or of ‘queer content’, to draw on its intentionally unfixed nature in troubling what ‘LGBT content’ is and its inclusion means in schools. This intentional duality reflects an awareness of the varied connotations and implications associated with each term, fostering a nuanced exploration of the subject matter (See Theoretical Underpinnings chapter Labels section for further discussion).

This thesis addresses the topic of LGBT inclusion through a mixed-methods approach of interviews and/or questionnaires with a total of 363 teachers and an analysis of that policy relating to, and surrounding, the new RSE curriculum for primary schools. Exploring teacher views alongside policy analysis allows for a broader insight into the elements informing current LGBT inclusion in schools compared to either one alone. The combined analysis offers the additional benefit of seeing how multiple elements interact to inform the current shape of LGBT inclusion in primary schools. Both the Queer and Foucauldian theoretical basis of this analysis aided in this objective, helping to understand the multiple shifting elements of policy and discourse forming LGBT inclusion and the power relations this (re)creates.

The first three chapters of this thesis lay out its research context, theoretical underpinnings, and methodological framing. Chapter one, *Literature Review*, lays out the previous research conducted into LGBT inclusion in schools, focusing on the gaps in this research that have in part prompted the research question of this thesis. Chapter two, *Theoretical Underpinnings*, details the theoretical tools used in this thesis by considering the key elements of Queer Theory and Foucault’s oeuvre as relating to discourse, subjects, power, gender, and sexuality. Chapter three, *Methodology & Methods*, examines the methodology and methods used in this research. In this chapter, following on from the gaps identified in the *Literature Review* chapter, I will describe how the methodology and methods of this thesis address the research question: What is the apparatus of LGBT inclusion in English primary schools considering the 2019 Relationships and Sex Education curriculum changes?

The findings chapters of this thesis are split into three parts. Each part is based on analysing a different element of the RSE policy guidance, which suggests that “primary schools are strongly encouraged and enabled to cover LGBT content when teaching about different types of families” (Department for Education, 2020b, para. 25) and should “make decisions about what is appropriate to teach on this subject” (Department for Education, 2019e, p. 8).

Findings Part 1: Encouraged & Enabled, grapples with the statement that primary schools are *enabled and encouraged* to include LGBT content. The first chapter, *Heteronormativity & Non-mandatory LGBT RSE*, of this part examines the optional nature of LGBT content, and broadly lays out where, and if, it was said to be present in schools. The second chapter, *Parental Consultation & Governance*, of this part then looks at the requirements to consult parents, how this affected the inclusion of LGBT content, and particularly what impact this had on queer teachers.

Findings Part 2: Appropriateness examines the allowance for primary schools to include LGBT content if they consider it *appropriate* to do so. The first chapter, *Age-appropriateness*, of this part examines appropriateness in terms of age-appropriateness and considers how the inclusion of LGBT content in the mandatory secondary, but not primary, school curriculum coincided with discourses surrounding its (lack of) suitability for younger children. The second chapter of this part, *Appropriateness in Teaching*, looks at appropriateness in terms of how schools balance the rights of various groups, including those who disagree with LGBT content on moral grounds, and queer students.

Findings Part 3: Different Types of Families, the final findings part, enquires into the containment of the encouragement for primary schools to include LGBT content when they are *teaching about different types of families*. This part, which contains only one chapter, *Homonormativity*, considers the policy emphasis on teaching LGBT content as part of a discussion of family types and how this aligns with the dominance of this kind of teaching in schools, and the converse paucity of other kinds of identities being represented.

The ***Error! Reference source not found.*** chapter reflects on the substantive, theoretical, and methodological contributions of this thesis, before moving on to give recommendations for future policy and practice based on its findings.

6 Literature Review

The previous chapter laid out the convoluted, contradictory landscape of LGBT inclusion in schools, pointing to a picture of unsettled progress and fraught controversy, of increasing appeals for inclusion in schools and a lack of clarity around the meaning of such. Against this background, this thesis aims to examine the multiple elements informing LGBT inclusion in English primary schools, and the relations of power running between them. The purpose of this chapter is to foreground this investigation with a broad examination of the existing literature on this topic to see how it has previously been approached in terms of both methods and subject.

In this context, this review of the literature aims to understand how research has found LGBT inclusion to be conceptualised, and how research itself has conceptualised it. It examines where LGBT content has been found to be prominently included in schools, the diversity of such across schools, and the reasons behind this picture. In doing so, I aim to both review the sum of, and gaps in, what is currently known about LGBT inclusion in schools and to demonstrate the necessity of contributing to this existing understanding.

The scope of this literature review is intentionally broad, spanning both secondary and primary school research, research relating to international policy contexts, and research older than is considered contemporary. Though the scope of the research in this thesis is confined to contemporary primary schools in England, this review is intentionally wider in order not to ignore patterns in the discursive and non-discursive elements forming the picture of LGBT inclusion. As this review details, discursive constructions of, for example, childhood innocence or parental rights are pervasive. Whilst the extent to which research from different policy locations or time periods can be wholly generalised to this area of study is unclear, my aim here is to not assume a fixity or over-arching uniqueness to this policy context. Considering the limited amount of research in this area, this broad scope thus allows for a richer consideration of the elements surrounding LGBT inclusion in schools. I do, however, signpost both the origins and time period of such literature, using such to detail the need for contemporary research in England to which this thesis aims to contribute.

This chapter is split into the following six sections. The first section, Anti-bullying, examines how bullying has been (sometimes over) emphasised in discussions of LGBT inclusion, and the research problematising this emphasis. The second section, Curricular

Inclusion , discusses research into where LGBT content is included in schools, and how certain kinds of inclusion may maintain its status as outside of the *norm*. The third section, RSE & Resources, then moves to discuss one particular area of the curriculum, Relationships and Sex Education, and reviews both how LGBT content has been sporadically included in this area, and how this part of the curriculum itself has been cited as lacking in schools. The fourth section, Backlash & Barriers, considers research suggesting why LGBT content has been rather sporadically included in schools, broadly focusing on issues of parental and religious rights. The fifth section, Hypersexualisation & Homonormativity, likewise considers the barriers to curricular inclusion but with a focus on how the queer has been perceived as too sexual for inclusion in primary schools. The final section, Homonormativity, discusses how certain presentations of LGBT content have been considered to be less sexual or controversial than others.

Policy Summary

Although a critical engagement with the current LGBT-related policies forms part of the data of my thesis, before moving to the main body of this literature review, I provide a brief overview. This summary aims to give context to some of the research below, which often references these key policies.

Section 28

In 1988 the Conservative Thatcher government in the UK added a clause, Section 28, to the Local Government Act 1986, prohibiting local authorities from any activity which could be seen to “intentionally promote homosexuality” or “promote the teaching in any maintained school of the acceptability of homosexuality as a pretended family relationship” (UK Government, 1988, Section 2a). Section 28 effectively banned schools from teaching that included positive representations of LGBT lives and was repealed in 2003 (Greenland & Nunney, 2008).

The Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 designated age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation as protected characteristics against which schools, under the Public Sector Equality Duty, cannot discriminate (UK Government, 2010). The UK Government has, however, stated that the requirement in the Equality Act 2010 not to discriminate *does not* necessarily apply to what should be included in the curriculum (Department for Education, 2018b).

Equal Marriage

In 2013, following the legalisation of same-sex marriage in England, there was a renewed inquiry into the requirements around representing same-sex relationships in schools. Responding to this concern, the Equality and Human Rights Commission issued guidance to reassure schools that there was no obligation for them or individual teachers to actively support, promote, or endorse the marriages of same-sex couples. The guidance, titled *The Marriage Same-Sex Couples Act 2013: The Equality and Human Rights Implications for the Provision of School Education*, explicitly states that no school or teacher is under a duty to endorse same-sex marriages. Furthermore, it emphasises that teaching about sex and relationships should not favour or promote any specific sexual orientation (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2014, pp. 2, 3, 4). The legal recognition of same-sex civil partnerships in England, dating back to 2005, preceded this development.

Relationships and Sex Education Curriculum

The 2019 curricular guidance for Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) represents the first area of the primary school curriculum to explicitly reference LGBT content. It states that Relationships Education is now mandatory for primary schools, but that whilst primary schools are “enabled and encouraged to include LGBT content” within RSE (Department for Education, 2020b, para 25), this section is not mandatory and the policy on such content should be made in consultation with parents (Department for Education, 2019d, 2022a). There is no requirement for primary schools in England to discuss, represent, or teach about LGBT identities anywhere in school.

6.1 Anti-bullying

LGBT inclusion, both in the literature and in the school settings that this research has studied, has often been conceptualised as a matter of documenting and countering anti-bullying. This section examines the prevalence of LGBT-based bullying in schools, as well as the research suggesting the large focus on this kind of exclusion may limit the extent to which other kinds of inclusion are discussed.

A wealth of international research, mainly from the global North and West, has documented high levels, and negative effects of, LGBT bullying or harassment in schools. A recent meta-analysis spanning 55 primary and secondary school-based studies from Belgium, Canada, Guam, the Netherlands, Northern Ireland, and the United States found significantly higher rates of bullying for LGBT and questioning youth (Myers et al., 2020). Another project,

covering 18 international studies, reported similar findings and significant negative mental and physical effects (Fedewa & Ahn, 2011). This research additionally noted that much of this data came from the US and largely studied participants over the age of 13 (Fedewa & Ahn, 2011). Canadian secondary school research further shows a level of nervousness in intervening in LGBT-based bullying, with school staff reporting they were uncertain how to do so (Meyer, 2008).

Similar findings have been found in England, the focus country of this thesis, with a higher proportion of the research focusing on secondary schools (Formby, 2015; Kurian, 2020; Mitchell et al., 2016; Warwick & Aggleton, 2014). Research from charity and governmental surveys tends to report higher rates of bullying for LGBT students than others. For example, the LGBT charity and lobby group Stonewall's *School Report* represents one of the largest reports of LGBT youth school experience in the UK (Stonewall, 2017). Focusing on secondary school pupils, the report found that just under half of LGBT pupils experienced bullying at school, and seven in ten reported that this was sporadically or never challenged by staff (Stonewall, 2017). UK Governmental reports have also reported elevated levels of bullying for LGBT students, and have often focused on anti-bullying interventions as the main means of LGBT inclusion (Department for Children Schools and Families, 2007; Department for Education and Skills, 2002; Government Equalities Office, 2018, 2019b; UK Government, 2011).

One should note the limits, however, of using pupil surveys of this kind, whether from charity or governmental sources. McCormack draws attention to the ways in which Stonewall and other charity surveys, given their purpose of advocating for greater resource allocation to, and media/policy coverage of, LGBT inclusion, may be inclined to broaden their definitions of bullying to include relatively minor forms (for example, over-hearing the term gay used as a pejorative) in order to increase the perceived seriousness of their bullying statistics (McCormack, 2020). As such, McCormack notes that these reports may claim "higher levels of homophobia than academic research" (McCormack, 2020, p. 90). Survey reports may likewise give quite a blunt view of LGBT marginalisation. Questions around the experience of bullying may be subjective, as definitions of what constitutes negative treatment can vary with groups' expectations. For example, Flander's research into how gay, lesbian, and bisexual adults rated others' reactions to their identity suggested that for bisexuals particularly "a lack of negative response or neutral response was considered positive" (Flanders et al., 2017, p. 1027). It is thus unclear from the survey data referenced above to what extent all forms of

experienced marginalisation are being reported, but it does suggest bullying and differential treatment remains an issue.

Research in schools suggests it is not only overt bullying but the more ubiquitous ‘everyday’ ways in which queer identities are othered in schools. The acts of heteronormativity which symbolically or literally exclude queer identities and create a sense of non-belonging in which a person’s identity is implied to be invalid, inauthentic, or incongruent with the school are known as micro-aggressions (Caraves, 2018). Secondary school research within the UK suggests that micro-aggressions can take the form of ‘banter’ or ‘jokes’ (Warwick & Aggleton, 2014). The small body of research examining LGBT inclusion or identities in UK primary schools consistently cites the use of LGBT-based terms as insults being framed as banter. Not only are LGBT terms used as insults by students (Horton & Carlile, 2022), but certain research points to their use being dismissed as trivial or treated as if the terms themselves are insults by staff (Gray, 2010; Kurian, 2020). Teachers have been found to react to the use of the word ‘gay’ particularly with “that’s disgusting” (Carlile, 2020b, p. 20). Punishing this use as “offensive language” (Atkinson & DePalma, 2009, p. 25) suggests that gay itself is the insult, rather than the use of it as a pejorative. Coming even from teachers who have otherwise supportive views, ‘banter’ and ‘jokes’ with heteronormative undertones are sometimes treated as too light-hearted to be prejudiced, suggesting a lingering acceptability of prejudiced attitudes, as shown in research in Scottish secondary schools (McIntyre, 2009) and UK primary schools (Atkinson & DePalma, 2008b).

It is important here to draw attention to the dates of this research. 2010 saw the implementation of the Equality Act, the landmark piece of legislation referenced at the beginning of this chapter which drew together and updated previous legislation to ban discrimination against certain ‘protected characteristics’, including sexual orientation and gender reassignment (UK Government, 2010). This legislation represents a great shift in the policy and social context of UK schools, and as such, it should be noted that though certain parts of this cited research were conducted previous to this policy change (Atkinson & DePalma, 2008b, 2009; Gray, 2010; McIntyre, 2009), those conducted after the Equality Act suggest the continuation of such practices in spite of the consolidated legal duty not to discriminate (Carlile, 2020b; Horton & Carlile, 2022; Kurian, 2020).

Bullying towards trans youth is cited to be significantly higher, with trans youth experiencing greater misunderstanding of, and hostility towards their identities. Research from UK secondary and young adult trans youth suggest over 85% reported being bullied in school, a significantly higher proportion than the LGBT population more broadly (Witcomb et al., 2019). The Government Equalities Office research into LGBT bullying in both primary and secondary UK schools additionally found that homophobic bullying was better addressed than transphobic bullying (Mitchell et al., 2014). Research from UK trans and non-binary youth suggests a high prevalence of micro-aggressions, including teachers and peers using incorrect pronouns and deadnaming² (Bower-Brown et al., 2023). Phipps and Blackall, in their study of UK trans youth in secondary schools, reported one pupil stating “my teachers would punish me by using my birth pronouns” (Phipps & Blackall, 2021, p. 9).

In light of the wider focus on bullying as the most prominent kind of LGBT exclusion, inclusion initiatives, mostly from the US, have focused on bullying-focused policy development and student support for LGBT youth (Earnshaw et al., 2020; Gower et al., 2018; Kull et al., 2016). Though insightful into the marginalising culture of schools, a small but growing body of recent research has begun to problematise how a sole focus on anti-bullying comes at the expense of acknowledging the multiplicities and subtleties of the heteronormative system³ (Bower-Brown et al., 2023; Formby, 2015; Horton, 2020; Snapp, McGuire, et al., 2015).

Research into the culture of specific UK primary schools has pointed to such a phenomenon, suggesting that more emphasis is placed on tackling outward manifestations of othering attitudes than changing the cultural normalisation of cisgender heterosexuality (DePalma & Jennett, 2010). After working in UK schools, and evaluating research in the area, Ringrose and Renold summarised that anti-bullying measures “are now so accepted (formally and informally) in schools that they have gained hegemonic status” (2010, p. 590). Whilst this research was conducted previous to the Equality Act, Rudoe’s research post-Equality Act from 12 teachers in English and Welsh schools shows similar findings, suggesting that LGBT inclusion was more often considered in relation to anti-bullying initiatives than to inclusive curricula (Rudoe, 2017). Likewise, Horton explored this phenomenon specifically in relation

² ‘Deadnaming’ is the practice of using a person’s pre-transition or birth name, rather than their current name.

³ The ways in which anti-bullying policies seem to dominate in schools are also referenced within the Backlash & Barriers section of this literature review, in the context of such measures being seen as a less controversial form of inclusion.

to trans youth in UK schools, examining the charity and local council resources available to them, and concluded that often expectations of trans inclusion revolve more around pupils “surviving”, that is to say not being directly harassed, than “thriving” in schools (Horton, 2020, p. 67).

As the research above has tended to focus on instances of focusing on anti-bullying as a mechanism of LGBT inclusion within individual, or a small number of, schools, it can give only limited insight into the current picture of how LGBT inclusion relates to anti-bullying narratives. Likewise, research in this area has not tended to thoroughly examine how governmental policy interacted with this emphasis. Horton’s analysis provides insight into how policy emphasised a lack of direct discrimination as a vision of transgender inclusion, but this research could be furthered through an examination of policy in this area at the governmental level (Horton, 2020). I aim to contribute to these gaps in the literature in this thesis through offering an analysis of a wider scope of teachers alongside a more in-depth discussion of how current policy does, or does not, reflect the emphasis on anti-bullying found in this review.

6.2 Curricular Inclusion

The previous section suggested that anti-bullying measures are a significant, prevalent, but also somewhat problematic conceptualisation of LGBT inclusion, demonstrating that much research has detailed the state of LGBT exclusion in terms of bullying data. This section moves to examine the inclusion of LGBT content within the curriculum, focusing on the benefits, examples, and limits of this kind of inclusion. I review the issues of tokenism, where inclusion is limited in comparison to representations of the cisgender or heterosexual, and reactivity⁴, where inclusion is not embedded within the school but rather is dependent on the presence of queer individuals or the efforts of individually motivated teachers, found within this research.

⁴ Whilst examining gendered access to bathrooms etc. is beyond the scope of this thesis, it is important to note that a substantial amount of research has started to focus on reactive inclusion in relation to trans children accessing gendered spaces in their schools (Payne & Smith, 2014). Research mostly from the US and Canada has pointed to trans access to school bathrooms as a hotly contested topic (Cavanagh, 2008; Davies et al., 2019; Wernick et al., 2017) which can lead trans children to limit eating and drinking at school to avoid their use (Herriot et al., 2018) and generally feel unsafe or unwelcome (McGuire et al., 2022). UK research from the parents of primary school-aged trans children and the children themselves suggests a culture of institutional cisnormativity with some reactive access to gendered spaces being granted, but some denied to the detriment of these pupils’ wellbeing (Horton, 2023). Upholding cisnormativity as the assumed state of pupils (Horton, 2020), this approach of individual accommodation has been cited as problematic given that it requires both a level of parental and school support which may not be present in the current climate of misunderstanding, legal uncertainty, and panic surrounding trans youth (Meyer & Leonardi, 2018).

As the following section, RSE & Resources, examines LGBT inclusion in RSE in its own right, this section focuses on inclusion in the wider curriculum.

Research has examined how LGBT content can be included in a variety of curricular subjects, including language learning (Cahnmann-Taylor et al., 2022), history (Snapp, Burdge, et al., 2015) and literacy through children's literature (Blackburn & Clark, 2011; Clark & Blackburn, 2009; Martino & Cumming-Potvin, 2011, 2016; Ryan & Hermann-Wilmarth, 2019; Schieble, 2012). Curricular inclusion has been suggested to be broadly beneficial in schools. US-based research has consistently suggested the success of decreasing LGBT marginalisation via a wider approach which prioritises curricular inclusion of LGBT content (Greytak et al., 2013; Kosciw et al., 2012; Kosciw et al., 2013; Russell et al., 2021; Snapp, Burdge, et al., 2015). To take one large example, a study using a sample of 911,001 middle and high school students from the California Healthy Kids survey found that LGBT inclusion policies, including LGBT-inclusive curricula, were associated with significant positive outcomes (including reduced truancy and a better outlook on school), for all students, regardless of sexuality or gender identity (Day et al., 2019). Other research in the global north, including the UK, suggests that from lowering bullying to helping children feel more comfortable being themselves in schools, seeing positively represented LGBT content can improve the experience of LGBT youth (Durwood et al., 2017; Morgan, 2020; Pullen Sansfaçon et al., 2023; Stonewall, 2017).

In mind of these benefits, it is significant to note that the literature suggests an uneven picture of how LGBT content is included in the curriculum. Small-scale interview work has shown LGBT representation to be lacking in the UK secondary school English curriculum (Sauntson & Simpson, 2011). Research studying a larger secondary school population, which used both interview and survey methods to elicit data from pupil and teacher participants across 6 schools, suggests similar findings (Harris et al., 2021). In this study, the inclusion of LGBT content was suggested to vary greatly between and within schools. The research suggests that inclusion was largely limited to ad-hoc presentations. Students cited that LGBT content had once been included in the history curriculum as a side note that Nazi persecution had included homosexuals as well as Jewish people (Harris et al., 2021). Notably, there was a discrepancy between teacher and pupil perspectives, with teachers being unaware that their students were dissatisfied with this level of LGBT inclusion and wished for more (Harris et al., 2021).

Much of the UK-based research into LGBT curricular inclusion in primary schools derives from the No Outsiders project (Allan et al., 2008; DePalma, 2011; DePalma & Atkinson,

2009b; DePalma & Jennett, 2010). No Outsiders began life previous to the implementation of the Equality Act as a two-year series of Participatory Action Research projects in which researchers and 26 teacher-researchers aimed to disrupt heteronormativity in primary schools through the use of LGBT themed-books, assemblies, plays, and lessons (DePalma, 2011). The researchers reflected on their experiences throughout the project through methods such as journaling and documenting the successes and difficulties of their work. This research project is separate from the registered charity later set up by teacher Andrew Moffatt (No Outsiders, 2023). In this thesis, when No Outsiders is referenced, it is the Participatory Action Research project set up by Elizabeth Atkinson and Renée DePalma unless otherwise stated. By contrast, when the No Outsiders charity work is referenced, the phrase ‘No Outsiders charity’ is used.

Whilst largely taking place previous to the Equality Act, and other significant policy and social shifts in LGBT related inclusion (e.g. the legalisation of equal marriage), the No Outsiders project gave significant insight into the state of LGBT inclusion in primary schools. The project found that whilst the project-affiliated teachers were successful in including certain kinds of representational diversity, this inclusion stood against a backdrop of school heteronormativity, and was largely dependent upon the efforts of motivated individual, often queer, teachers, who reported that the implementation of such was not without the difficulty of navigating their lack of resources, time, and parental or school resistance (Allan et al., 2008; DePalma, 2011; DePalma & Atkinson, 2009; DePalma & Jennett, 2010). Though the No Outsiders projects offer significant insight, and as a result are discussed repeatedly throughout this chapter, this thesis aims to build on this research in two main ways. Firstly, given that the No Outsiders research examined teachers who were highly motivated to include LGBT content in their teaching practice, this thesis aims to offer a broader view of teachers who did not necessarily share this enthusiasm. Secondly, as this research was largely conducted over a decade ago, before aforementioned policy changes in this area, there is scope for more recent insight into the shape of LGBT inclusion in schools, and the elements impacting such.

One piece of more recent research into LGBT inclusion in English primary schools came from Atkinson who compared two schools, one that had participated in the No Outsiders project, and one that had not (Atkinson, 2021). Atkinson suggested that the persistent pro-LGBT curricular messages seemed to have engendered the *speakingability* of LGBT identities, with those in the No Outsiders school often talking comfortably about gay and lesbian identities, including those in their own families. In this school, homophobia was “unspeakable” in the formal classroom space in its non-alignment with the official messaging of the school

but persisted within certain pupils' informal peer groups and more covert interactions (Atkinson, 2021, p. 457). In the non-participatory school, by contrast, "it was not homophobia but homosexuality that was unspeakable" with the absolute lack of positive LGBT representation being interpreted by the pupils to signal disapproval from the school that aligned in large with their own heteronormativity (Atkinson, 2021, p. 457).

When asked about the possibility of a man being married to a man, the children attending the No Outsiders school were generally knowledgeable; "That's fine!" "Mr Graham [the Headteacher] is married to Mr Graham [the Headteacher's husband!]" (Atkinson, 2021, p. 462). In the other school, when asked "So what if your teacher, who (is) a girl, was married to another girl?" the inconceivability of being queer, and certainly of being queer and a teacher, permeated students' answers: "that would just be, incredibly weird", "I dunno- I- I wouldn't see how she would be a teacher" (Atkinson, 2021, p. 463). In the school without LGBT-inclusive schoolwork, and no openly queer teachers, children attempted to de-queer same-sex relationships in conversation. Upon learning that the researcher herself has two mums, certain children attempted a "re-casting" of the relationship as the researcher's mum and her "sister", "aunty" or "mum's twin" (Atkinson, 2021, p. 462). As one student summarised of their school, "They don't really talk about it cos they don't think it's right" (Atkinson, 2021, p. 457). When reading the story *King and King*, which features the titular romantic relationship between two men, these students, whose school had previously had no LGBT curricular inclusion, were shocked that the book had been allowed into the school, hiding it when another member of staff approached (Atkinson, 2021). Students in both schools drew on heteronormativity and homophobia, but they were experienced in different ways, as retrospectively transgressive to the official school stance or reflective of it.

It must be noted here that this research is somewhat limited in both its scope and the extent to which one can draw conclusions about the effect of the No Outsiders project without accounting for the ways in which schools likely to participate in LGBT-inclusive initiatives may already show a greater degree of LGBT acceptance. This again necessitates the further study into the wider picture of LGBT inclusion provided in this thesis. Nevertheless, Atkinson's research certainly offers insight into these particular cases and into the way in which the inclusion of LGBT curricula in schools can be both impactful and limited.

Similar to Atkinson's findings around the complex thread of heteronormativity in two English Primary schools, Hall's research examined two schools participating in the Stonewall 'School Champions' programme (Hall, 2020). Much as in Atkinson's insights into the No

Outsiders school, Hall found that the school's work, which involved curricular inclusion of, for example, same-sex families, had been successful in a generalised acceptance of LGBT identities in formal spaces. However, in certain peer cultures, homophobia remained: "the word gay has been banned but people use it in the boys' toilets whenever you go in" (Hall, 2020, p. 36). Hall likewise suggests that the school's emphasis on gay and lesbian⁵ identities being 'good' did not necessarily challenge the primacy of heteronormativity in pupils' views; students were found to still refer to certain gendered actions as "natural" (Hall, 2020, p. 27).

Both Atkinson and Hall's recent research gives significant insight into how LGBT curricular inclusion can be both transformative and indicative of the entrenched nature of heteronormativity being difficult to counter. Although a growing body, this research into curricular and wider LGBT inclusion in general is very limited, and in English primary schools more so. It has largely analysed cases of individual schools, often those that are part of wider research or charity projects. As it remains unclear where LGBT content fits into the curriculum of a wider, more recent sample of schools, who may not be as motivated as those participating in charity projects, this thesis aims to clarify this position. This research is likewise limited in the extent to which policy is considered. Studies so far, in examining in-depth small numbers of schools, have not considered how patterns of discourse running through multiple teachers' views on LGBT content are reflected in, or shaped by policy. As I discussed in the following section, the work of this thesis is particularly significant in light of the new RSE curriculum policy for English primary schools.

6.3 RSE & Resources

In the introduction to this chapter, I laid out the recent changes to the RSE curriculum and how this guidance represents the only area of the primary curriculum to reference LGBT content through the non-mandatory encouragement of its inclusion (Department for Education, 2019d). Little research has yet thoroughly engaged with how LGBT content is being implemented after this guidance change, or how the current place of LGBT content relates to

⁵ I discuss this absence further later in this literature review, but it is of note here that bisexual and transgender identities are often absent in discussion of primary schools' LGBT inclusion.

this policy, but from examining previous research into the general status of RSE it is possible to give context to this area of the curriculum.

6.3.1 RSE Provision

RSE has been described by European research as a low-priority subject that receives little attention in schools (Kjaran & Lehtonen, 2018; Renold & McGeeney, 2017), and by Australian research as one in which teachers receive little training and lack confidence (Duffy et al., 2013). Research in UK secondary and primary schools has concurred with the low status attributed to RSE (Mitchell et al., 2016; Rudoë, 2017; Toft & Franklin, 2020). One study which examined over 900 UK primary schools reported that two-thirds of RSE was taught once a year or less (Formby et al., 2011), though more recent research suggests that RSE is now more common (Cumper et al., 2023; Wilder, 2019).

A report from the Sex Education Forum into the preparedness of teachers in England for the new RSE curriculum suggested that primary school teachers rated the current provision of RSE as lower quality than secondary school teachers did (Sex Education Forum, 2018). Secondary school data from the UK suggest schools outsource RSE teaching, inviting guest speakers to fill gaps in teaching knowledge (Boyer & Wood, 2023) and teach with a primarily biological focus that has been critiqued for failing to equip pupils for real-world experiences (Maslowski et al., 2023; Reiss, 2018). In light of the above research suggesting its previously lacking provision, that LGBT content is only referenced in the RSE curriculum, and no other curricular areas, is deeply significant, underlining the need for this research to examine its provision in schools.

More particularly in terms of LGBT inclusion, when RSE is present in schools, a substantial amount of research from secondary schools in the US suggests LGBT content is rare (John Elia & Mickey Eliason, 2010; John Elia & Mickey Eliason, 2010; Elia & Tokunaga, 2015; Estes, 2017; Hobaica & Kwon, 2017). These findings are reflected in research from Irish secondary schools (Coll et al., 2018), and those in the UK (Blyth & Carson, 2007; Epps et al., 2023; Stonewall, 2017), where research with LGBT students suggests RSE was almost entirely heteronormative, emphasising sex and relationships between male and female partners only. Teachers have suggested that whilst homophobia can be challenged, discussions of homosexuality are reserved for conversations with the school nurse (Abbott et al., 2015) or specialist lessons delivered by external providers (Gray, 2010). Older research in English primary schools has also attributed this lacking RSE to several elements, most prominently

teacher's lack of training in the subject creating a nervousness around delivery that is then exasperated by the potential for parental backlash to the subject (Mason, 2010).

Very limited research, mainly from secondary schools in the US, has also pointed to a specific lack of asexual (Y. Yang, 2023) and bisexual representation (Elia, 2010), and the prevalence of cisnormativity in the emphasis in some RSE on biological gender differences (Hobaica et al., 2019; Jones et al., 2016). Research which specifies which identities in the LGBT initialism are (not) included is rare. As such, this thesis aims to address this absence by examining what kind of LGBT identities are included within LGBT teaching in schools and policy. Research from Aotearoa New Zealand secondary schools suggests that this heteronormativity and lacking status can persist even when RSE is mandatory (Ellis & Bentham, 2021), pointing again to the need for research in this thesis into how the now mandatory status of Relationships Education in English primary schools interacts in the apparatus of LGBT inclusion.

The most recent analyses of RSE provision in English primary schools found in this review come respectively from Wilder's (Wilder, 2019, 2022) and Cumper et al's research (Cumper et al., 2023). Wilder's PhD thesis research used in-depth interviewing to examine how RSE was implemented by three English primary schools (Wilder, 2019). Cumper et al's research likewise used interviewing, but in the form of focus groups, to examine the perceptions of the new RSE curriculum amongst 12 primary or secondary school teachers (Cumper et al., 2023). Neither study examined LGBT inclusion in RSE in-depth but in studying RSE both referred to it as part of their wider study.

Both studies cited a lack of consistent training for, or emphasis on, the RSE curriculum, with time to teach or prepare materials being limited (Cumper et al., 2023; Wilder, 2019, 2022). They each found inconsistency between how teachers delivered RSE. As one teacher in Cumper et al's research stated: "one teacher's saying one thing, one's saying another. And there's not a similar message" (Cumper et al., 2023, p. 5). Wilder concluded RSE in general to be a "fiercely political subject" in primary schools (Wilder, 2019, p. 1), and in both this research and Cumper et al's teachers cited that part of the hesitancy concerning LGBT inclusion came from a fear of parental backlash. In Wilder's research, this hesitancy also came from personal reservations about the extent to which children should be taught about sexuality. This was seemingly not the case in Cumper et al's research, in which the 12 primary or secondary school teachers largely described the inclusion of LGBT content in the guidance as a "welcome change" (Cumper et al., 2023, p. 9). Some did, however, also state that they were unsure of

how to include such content, with one participant stating: “I don’t know if saying gay or straight is fine or if it’s not” (Cumper et al., 2023, p. 9).

The unevenness of RSE provision even across the three primary schools studied in Wilder’s research, and the 12 teachers in Cumper et al’s focus groups, is significant when considering that primary schools are encouraged, but not required, to include LGBT content in their RSE teaching under the new guidance (Department for Education, 2019d). This signals that provision may be uneven too regarding LGBT inclusion in a wider section of primary schools, but the research above can only give limited insight here. Wilder’s research was conducted before the changes to the RSE curriculum, and Cumper et al’s does not distinguish between the different perspectives of the primary and secondary school teachers, meaning that one cannot differentiate the effects of the now non-mandatory encouragement of LGBT RSE in primary schools.

Likewise, the in-depth interviewing process in this research may have given insight into these instances, but they offer a relatively narrow breadth of teacher views. As aforementioned, both projects looked at RSE more broadly, and resultingly dedicated limited space to considerations of LGBT inclusion. Though in Wilder’s research, a level of dissimilarity was seen in the views of LGBT content, with some seeing such as inappropriate, within Cumper et al’s research this kind of diversity was either not found, or not elaborated upon (Cumper et al., 2023; Wilder, 2019, 2022). This may be attributed to the focus group nature of the interview process; those with negative views of LGBT content may have been unwilling or hesitant to discuss them in a group setting. As further research is needed here to see the variety in views and implementation of LGBT content in primary schools, this thesis aims to provide such.

All three schools in Wilder’s research had bought a private-sector curriculum package to provide their RSE lesson plans and resources (Wilder, 2019). The schools stated the preferability of buying these resources given that RSE was an area in which teachers often lacked expertise and confidence, and the council-recommended nature of the resources gave a level of legitimacy and therefore a protection against parental backlash to the materials (Wilder, 2019). This curriculum featured some LGBT content (as this was not a research question of this thesis the extent of this was not elaborated upon), but whilst one school seemed to largely skip LGBT content due to parents’ backlash and personal opinions of appropriateness, one school spent “laborious and not always successful” time negotiating with parents to explain their inclusion of it (Wilder, 2022, p. 13).

The resources likewise described sex only between a man and a woman, and preceded by male but not female arousal, whilst one teacher described the school's description of how babies are made as using the terms "'mummy and daddy'... because there is always a mummy and a daddy" (Wilder, 2022, p. 9). Previous research into English primary schools has suggested that LGBT content is lacking in part due to a perception that it is advanced RSE, as opposed to the more child-friendly heteronormative presentations (Gray, 2010; Nixon & Givens, 2007). Though this again has not been discussed in relation to the new RSE, this research raises questions as to how the guidance allowing schools to decide the age-appropriateness of LGBT content, will be interpreted. This is an issue that is central to this thesis (See chapter: Age-appropriateness).

Though not the focus of the research, Wilder's work also references certain cisnormative practices in the provision of RSE. The resource package bought by all three schools featured teaching on the biological differences between boys and girls. Whilst in one class containing a transgender child this teaching was changed to state that some people have penises or vaginas etc, this was an isolated occasion (Wilder, 2019). Horton's research interviewing UK-based parents of trans children who transitioned at, or before, primary school likewise references the particularly cisnormative nature of teaching around bodies, suggesting that primary schools gave biological descriptions of 'girls' and 'boys' bodies (Horton, 2023). Delegitimising the identities of the trans children, these lessons were reported to intensify inappropriate questioning towards them (Horton, 2023). Horton reports parents stating that the lack of trans-inclusive education and this cisnormative teaching around bodies left their children both exhausted from explaining themselves and othered from peer groups (Horton, 2023). Wilder and Horton's research represents recent research pointing to heteronormativity, and cisnormativity in teaching around relationships and bodies, but these references are quite brief in this research. Similarly, as Wilder's research was a small sample of three schools, and Horton's came from parental reports, it is unclear to what extent this is common in schools. This opportunity for further research into current teaching on bodies and gender as part of RSE is taken up by this thesis (See chapter: Homonormativity).

The research discussed above points to multiple areas to be examined specifically regarding primary school RSE, and LGBT content in this, raising questions as to the status of RSE, the resources provided for it, and the onus on teachers to navigate parental resistance. These issues are examined in this thesis not only in relation to teachers' views on and implementation of LGBT inclusion, but also regarding how the RSE curriculum, and the wider

policy surrounding it, are tied up in this picture. I turn now to examine research into the nature and interpretation of RSE policy.

6.3.2 RSE & LGBT Policy

Policy analysis is an integral part of this thesis. In this section, I examine what the literature has suggested about both previous and current RSE and LGBT inclusion-related policies in schools.

Limited research has suggested that though the repeal of Section 28 allowed for the inclusion of LGBT content in schools, there was nothing in the previous RSE curriculum which either encouraged or mandated this (Atkinson, 2002; Nixon & Givens, 2007). As Gray summarised, Section 28's "repeal has not been accompanied by developments in SRE that means that homosexuality is on the school agenda" (Gray, 2010, p. 57). Studies examining the previous RSE guidance have suggested that this silence around LGBT identities is a clear signal to LGBT youth about the perceived appropriateness of such content (Atkinson, 2002) and that LGBT youth do perceive this silence as such (Formby & Donovan, 2020). It is not only silences in policy but specific exemptions that may be impactful. Vanderbeck and Johnson have criticised the Equality Act 2010 for exempting the curriculum from requirements around discrimination, allowing schools to teach negative perspectives on homosexuality, and have suggested that such is placed as an aim to balance religious freedoms to teach in line with faith perspectives, but does not consider the potential effect on LGBT pupils (Vanderbeck & Johnson, 2015).

The very small body of research referencing current RSE policy in English primary schools suggests RSE policy is a relatively unique area in which decision-making for the content of this controversial subject has been located at the school level, instead of the central government. Beauvallet described this decision as the government having "kicked the issue into the long grass by letting schools have their say" (Beauvallet, 2021, p. 36). Wilder, meanwhile, wrote of the dubious nature of schools' authority in these decisions:

The government has delegated responsibility for deciding what knowledge should be represented in RSE, but that delegation comes with restraints and scepticism of schools' actual power to deliver RSE appropriately. The government's ongoing reluctance to staunchly defend the position that schools are appropriate places for children to learn about relationships and

sex, against any group who would beg otherwise, and its failure to qualify them accordingly, has placed schools and educators in an untenable position

(Wilder, 2019, p. 182)

The implications of the complex position for schools regarding non-statutory⁶ content in RSE more widely offer significant scope for further research that is built upon in this thesis. Wilder's contention that the governmental delegation of RSE decision-making in the new curriculum does not account for restraints *and scepticism of schools' power* is perhaps particularly significant regarding LGBT content. In the polarised, hotly contested context of its inclusion, and in light of the RSE requirements to consult parents on the content of the curriculum, it is unclear whether teachers can straightforwardly make decisions around its inclusion, or whether considerations for others' reactions may canalise decision making. In this thesis, I aim to more fully understand how teachers make decisions around LGBT content and the power relations informing these decisions.

In this review, I found only one researcher thoroughly examining⁷ LGBT identities in the new RSE guidance for English schools. Sauntson's research examines RSE in both the UK and Brazil and found that in the UK there was a general silence around LGBT identities (Sauntson & Borba, 2021). Sauntson suggests these silences reflect a lingering influence of Section 28's banning of their teaching (Sauntson, 2018). In the following section, the wider research on the impact of and discursive underpinnings to Section 28 is examined further, but here it is significant to note that the silences mandated by Section 28 have been noted to now be *optional* in the RSE guidance description of non-mandatory LGBT content (Sauntson, 2018). In this thesis, I aim to extend this examination through a more extensive look at the RSE curriculum itself and whether this heteronormativity persists more widely in policy for primary schools.

⁶ It may be of interest to note that even in the academic literature certain papers have not been clear about the non-mandatory status of LGBT RSE in primary schools. Johnson's investigation of current LGBT inclusion practice stated that "the 2020 mandatory relationships and sex education legislation which makes schools legally required to educate about LGBT+ relationships as part of their relationships and sex education provision in primary and secondary schools" (Johnson, 2020, p. 19). Likewise, Johnson and Falcetta's work into parental and religious backlash to the curriculum stated "All primary schools in England are under a statutory requirement to provide 'relationships education', which includes 'lgbt content'" (Johnson & Falcetta, 2021, p. 90). The UK Government has clarified that "Primary schools are not required to teach LGBT content but can choose to teach it in an age-appropriate way. The Department for Education has no plans to change its advice to schools on this subject" (UK Government, 2023b, para. 5).

⁷ This is to say taking RSE as a subject of analysis, rather than referencing the requirements in passing.

6.4 Backlash & Barriers

After reading thus far in this literature review, or, indeed, after any passing familiarity with this topic, it may be rather obvious of me to state that LGBT inclusion in schools is a highly contested subject. In this section, I examine this controversy, including research into the pushback against LGBT content originating from parents and teachers, and how others have navigated this. Queer teachers have so far in this review been only nominally mentioned. As such, at the end of this section, I examine how this sometimes-fraught context is navigated by queer teachers themselves.

6.4.1 *A Controversial Issue*

The idea of parental, or school, backlash and discomfort are common themes in the literature examining resistance towards LGBT content in schools (Blyth & Carson, 2007; Farrelly et al., 2017; Mason, 2010; Robinson et al., 2017). Whilst critics at the time decried that the repeal of Section 28⁸ would lead to an outpour of gay presentations (or ‘promotions’) in school, much research in the UK has shown schools often still operate as if Section 28 is still in place through their lack of positive queer representations (Allan et al., 2008; DePalma & Atkinson, 2006, 2009b; Lee, 2019). Very recent research from English pre-service primary school teachers has suggested for some this discomfort is related to beliefs about the correctness of introducing such a topic and for others it’s the backlash they may receive (Rowan-Lancaster, 2022). Research from the No Outsiders project, which as aforementioned was conducted in an earlier, different policy and social context, repeatedly documented the backlash experienced by participating schools (DePalma, 2016; DePalma & Jennett, 2010). Whilst more commonly parental backlash is reported, resistance may also come from schools. I found two, somewhat dated, instances in the literature of teachers reporting that their attempts to include LGBT-inclusive literature in their classrooms were thwarted by others in the school, such as teaching assistants, hiding the books (Allan et al., 2008; Gray, 2010).

More recently, Johnson’s research on UK primary school teachers reported an incident of parental backlash towards a gay teacher’s LGBT content in the classroom rousing support and solidarity around the work (Johnson, 2022). However, backlash to LGBT content can also act

⁸ As aforementioned at the beginning of this chapter, Section 28 was a clause of the 1988 Local Government Act which forbade that which would “promote the teaching in any maintained of the acceptability of homosexuality as a pretended family relationship” (UK Government, 1988, Section 2a).

as an effective deterrent. In both more recent and older research, comparatively few teachers are reported to reference that queer parents, or any allied parents, may commend their work, (DePalma & Atkinson, 2009a), with some reporting fear of backlash even when none has been personally experienced (Horton, 2020; Rudoë, 2017).

Sensationalist media coverage may be impactful here. Incidences in which queer representation in the curriculum has caused huge backlash have punctuated the last 20 years (DePalma & Atkinson, 2009b). As DePalma and Atkinson write, “the silencing effect of each tabloid story reached far beyond the subject of its ridicule” (DePalma & Atkinson, 2009b, p. 879). Morgan and Taylor analysed the news coverage of one UK primary school’s attempt to make their school more trans-inclusive. In 2016, a primary school in East Sussex received headline news coverage from five national newspapers. One, for example, proclaimed “*Fuming parents blast Headteacher for organising ‘transgender day’ which will help kids ‘explore’ sexuality*” (The Sun, 2016, cited in Morgan & Taylor, 2019, p. 20). Morgan and Taylor cite how the “vague and non-specific nature of equalities terminology allows for both heteronormative and transgressive interpretation, thereby locating the risk of public criticism with primary schools” (Morgan & Taylor, 2019, p. 19). With no specific requirements for such curricular inclusion, the school was positioned as purveying inappropriate material, pointing to both a culture of controversy and one of dubious legitimacy for LGBT content. I investigate further these insights within the main body of this thesis.

Disapproval from religious bodies and personal religious beliefs are common themes in the literature examining some teachers’ reluctance to include LGBT representation. International research, from the global north, suggests religion is sometimes understood as antithetical to positive LGBT representation in schools, both by teachers and students (Barozzi & Ojeda, 2014; Grace & Benson, 2000; Newman et al., 2018; Pérez-Testor et al., 2010). This research has cited that whilst queer teachers had legal protections against dismissal because of their identity, expectations to follow Church guidance on promoting the sole acceptability of married heterosexuality and heteronormative culture can create difficulties (Callaghan, 2015; Hooker, 2018; Rudoë, 2017).

Research from the UK suggests this perception of religious doctrine can likewise be felt by students. A child in one UK primary school study said a boy “can’t have a boyfriend because he will burn in hell fire” (Johnson, 2020, p. 101). Concurrently, Stonewall’s 2017 *School Report* found that children attending faith schools were around half as likely to report they had learnt about same-sex relationships at school and more likely to report that homophobic and

transphobic bullying was not deemed wrong by the school (Stonewall, 2017). As one young person participating in the report detailed: “In religious education we learnt that the Bible was against anything other than heterosexuality. I was so scared... What we learnt in religious education about how we are viewed by our peers, teachers and parents made people terrified” (Stonewall, 2017, p. 24).

It must be noted that it is not the purpose of this section to problematically divide groups into religious and secular, anti-LGBT and pro-LGBT, but to point out a common discursive theme. Though school-based research has reported institutional heteronormativity in religious institutions (Neary, 2017; Neary et al., 2018), religion is not uniform in its beliefs on LGBT content (Blum, 2010; Taylor & Cuthbert, 2019), with research also reporting faith school-based support (Cuthbert & Taylor, 2019; Maher, 2012; Taylor & Peter, 2011). UK research has recently attended to the ways in which the “Muslim other” has been created by a mediatised contrast between ‘their’ intolerance and ‘our’ values (Crawford, 2017, p. 199). Kitching reports that this dichotomised rhetoric was common within reporting on the 2019 protests against LGBT content in Birmingham (Kitching, 2022). The recent *culture war* type discourses distort the truth that institutional heteronormativity is by no means an isolated or universal phenomenon in religious institutions (Duffy et al., 2021).

6.4.2 *Negotiating Rights*

The backlash to LGBT content sits within a wider landscape in which teachers navigate their own, parents', religious institutions', and pupils' views. Research ranging from Canadian (Herriot et al., 2018; Martino et al., 2019) to UK (DePalma & Atkinson, 2009b; DePalma & Jennett, 2010) research contexts has suggested LGBT inclusive teaching in schools may be seen as a potential incursion on religious and parental freedoms, leaving some in religious schools, or schools with religious parents, to worry that school-wide inclusion initiatives would encroach on their beliefs. Browne and Nash use the term ‘heteroactivism’ to refer to the way in which opposition to LGBT content cannot only be thought of as straightforwardly phobic, but rather a range of discursive strategies that over-achingly orients towards a heteronormative school landscape, sometimes in the frame of respecting religious or parental rights (Browne & Nash, 2020).

Though their research has not exclusively examined LGBT inclusion in schools, spanning a range of issues such as opposition to abortion and equal marriage legislation (Browne et al., 2021; Browne & Nash, 2017, 2020; Browne & Nash, 2023; Nash & Browne, 2020), Nash and

Browne suggest that anti-LGBT discourses increasingly style themselves not as “vilifying homosexuality” but as arguing for traditional values (Nash & Browne, 2020, p. 1). They suggest that such arguments “reassert the superiority and centrality of hetero- and gender-normative, individuals and families as the foundation for strong healthy societies” (Nash & Browne, 2020, p. 2). Nash and Browne examined a case in England in which after a trans child was allowed to socially transition and their classmates were asked to refer to them using the correct pronouns, the Rowe family took the school to court for the confusion they state this caused to their child (Nash & Browne, 2021). In this, they suggest that the discourse of the Rowe family and the lobby group Christian Concern which funded their legal expenses framed the inclusion of a trans child as interfering with their both parental rights to impart their views, and the wider ‘neutral’ space of the primary school (Nash & Browne, 2021).

Once again in looking into the 2019 protests against LGBT content in Birmingham, research suggests opponents’ discursive strategies focused not in the main on the immorality of LGBT people, though arguments suggesting the knowledge of such is sexualising for children were common, but on how the presentation of such constituted discrimination against (religious) parents (Sauntson, 2021; Vincent, 2022). Vincent writes of the “complex relationships between liberalism, faith, and democracy” at play in these instances (Vincent, 2022, p. 2073).

The current neoliberal climate of education positioning teachers as accountable to both parents as consumers of education for their children, and to state educational targets and policy is vital context to these discourses. Decades of research has documented how neoliberalism has come to characterise the discursive, as well as the material, landscape of education (Apple, 1999; Ball, 2017; Jessop, 2007). Neoliberalism in education is a political rationality characterised by an emphasis on economic productivity as a means of social reform and a consequent shift to running education both as, and alongside, businesses (Davies & Bansel, 2007). Monitoring schools’ performance in narrow ‘core’ test-specific skills is done without strictly prescribing a pedagogy, allowing curricular and teacher training resources and packages to be outsourced to private companies or charities and bought in by schools to fulfil governmental targets and retain funding (Olssen & Peters, 2005). This context is significant to note in mind of the potential backlash to LGBT inclusion. Research has documented that teachers, overworked and “subject to a myriad of judgments, measures, comparison and targets” (Ball, 2003, p.220), must consider the added burden of doing something for which they are not assessed in terms of physical and mental workload (Ball, 2018; Mitchell et al, 2016;

Torres, 2016). This thesis aims to elucidate how this context interacts with the current state of LGBT inclusion, how the current educational climate interacts with such workloads and the considerations around parental objection adding to it.

Research in the area of neoliberal education has noted a discursive thread in which teachers view themselves as accountable to parents for providing a kind of ‘neutral’ educational climate and delivery of knowledge (Filippakou, 2023; Kitching, 2020; Medeiros, 2019). Within this context, a small body of international research spanning the USA, UK, and Canada has documented how some teachers suggest that whilst they personally endorse sexuality and gender equality measures, they believe it is their place to be ‘neutral’, given that they must have regard for parental rights (Clark & Blackburn, 2009; DePalma & Atkinson, 2010; Malins, 2016; Thein, 2013). In a study of Scottish schools McIntyre found that this climate led some teachers to opt out of talking about LGBT content, but to continue to treat “all pupils alike” (McIntyre, 2009, p. 301).

Concerning policy, teachers have been found to capitalise upon the performative imperative of governmental policy to meet targets as a way in which to introduce LGBT inclusion into their classrooms, using knowledge of policies relating to inclusion to offer a legitimate, less contentious rationale. Teachers have used policies such as the Equality Act 2010 as justification for LGBT inclusion (Carlile, 2020b; Morgan & Taylor, 2019; Rowan-Lancaster, 2022; Stones & Glazzard, 2020). However, given that these policies, and indeed no other policies, require a queer-inclusive curriculum in primary schools in England, the use of supportive policy for legitimacy remains rather an unclear strategy. As alluded to in the previous discussion of RSE policy, the recent RSE guidance allocates the decision of whether to include LGBT content to schools (Wilder, 2019), but no research has yet examined how this guidance is used or interpreted by teachers, and as such it remains unclear how it relates to the navigation of views on LGBT content.

A few papers have centred around teachers’ strategies for negotiating including LGBT content in their schools with unsupportive, or hesitant parents. US research shows success via not emphasising the LGBT content, but rather inserting it as part of an intentionally vague ‘inclusion’ drive, and being flexible upon allowing individual students to be withdrawn from the lessons, but not the lessons themselves to be changed (Hermann-Wilmarth & Ryan, 2019). Carlile’s research in UK faith-based primary schools using LGBT-inclusive teaching found that teachers at one school, who in a large part reported fear of parental backlash or school disapproval, used a similar method (Carlile, 2020b). Capitalising upon the relatively lesser

controversy of bringing in anti-bullying initiatives as a frame to their work, they explained the benefits as a way to curb bullying, not as a celebration of LGBT identities (Carlile, 2020b).

Meanwhile, Johnson's research into UK primary school teachers who were already including LGBT content suggested that although most reported experiencing some pushback to their work, either from the local diocese or parents, support from leadership was a significant enabling factor (Johnson, 2022). Alongside supportive leadership, research from Canada suggests having LGBT-inclusive resources enormously helps teachers to include such in their curriculum (Peter et al., 2018).

Other research has focused not on how teachers can strategically implement this content, or what support they need, but on the process of parental consultation in itself as a means of dissipating negative feelings towards RSE, which may apply to the inclusion of LGBT content. After examining a seven-week case study of a programme running in one London primary school in which parents participated in weekly meetings to discuss the RSE curriculum, Alldred found parents reported the RSE curriculum to be less "scary" than they had anticipated (Alldred et al., 2016, p. 6). Wire's research likewise examined consultation through a case study of one UK primary school examining how parental consultation allowed parents to discuss their opinions in a supportive environment (Wire, 2022). This, Wire found, allowed some parents to become more supportive of, for example, same-sex relationships being shown in RSE because they could hear others' support (Wire, 2022).

However, there are a few issues with the notion of consultation, in that such a process may not be an insignificant undertaking, requiring resources such as time and knowledge of the subject under discussion. Consultation may be useful in some settings, but the idea of teachers' curricular decisions being accountable to parents may be prohibitive. As one teacher in Carlile's aforementioned research in English faith schools stated:

I think that teachers do have a great deal of fear over the sort of hangovers from Section 28 and just thinking 'can I say it, can't I say it, do I need to check with the parents first, will I get in trouble, am I trampling on their religion, is it going to just open up a whole can of worms that I just... haven't got time to deal with?' and 'oh maybe it's just best not to say it'

(Carlile, 2020b, p. 20)

In mind of the policy surrounding English primary schools' decision to include LGBT content (in RSE) in negotiation with parents, the above research throws the impact of

consultation into question. In this thesis, I aim to clarify further how this consultation sits within the landscape of the school, including time constraints, and concerns for parental or religious rights. Wire's case study of one school's RSE consultation does engage with the notion of consultation, writing that the RSE guidance leaving the decision of RSE content to schools curriculum "leaves (them) in an invidious position" (Wire, 2022, p. 2) with regards to being open to direct criticism. However, this research gave insight only into one school and did not focus on LGBT content. As aforementioned, Wilder's research into RSE implementation in primary schools in England suggested schools were non-uniform in how they responded to parental backlash, with some changing the content of the curriculum and others spending time convincing parents of the usefulness of such work (Wilder, 2019). As has been shown to be significant in the literature, teachers may differ regarding leadership, resources, time available, or personal opinions, and as such it is timely that this thesis examines a wider scope of teachers' interactions with navigating differences in opinion. Research has also not yet extensively engaged with the notion of consultation particularly around LGBT content, either in relation to school policy or teachers, and how this policy informs knowledges around LGBT content in primary schools. This thesis aims to extend the research in this area, giving further insight into how, and whether, LGBT content is negotiated in primary schools.

6.4.3 *Queer Teachers*

A growing body of research suggests that navigating the controversy surrounding LGBT content is particularly difficult for queer teachers themselves.

Queer teachers have been described as sitting in a fraught position in schools (Lee, 2019; Saxey, 2021). International⁹ and UK-based research suggests they are open to discrimination because of intolerance towards their identities (Francis & Reygan, 2016; Taşkın et al., 2022), and as such fear coming out, given this may affect either their employment (Hooker, 2018; Toledo & Maher, 2021) or change how they are seen by parents and the school (Dykes & Delpont, 2018; Endo et al., 2010; Ferfolja, 2009; Lee, 2020a; Rowan-Lancaster, 2022). Indeed,

⁹ Research into the experiences of queer teachers seemed to offer a slightly wider focus than the previous research discussed, being less contained to Western nations. Taşkın et al.'s research was conducted in Turkey, and Francis and Reygan's in South Africa (Francis & Reygan, 2016; Taşkın et al., 2022). The majority of this research, however, is situated in the US, Canada, the UK, or other Western nations.

research from primary schools in Canada found that queer teachers were more likely to receive criticism for their LGBT-inclusive curricula (Meyer et al., 2019)¹⁰.

Research mostly in the Irish context suggests queer teachers in faith schools particularly have been found to be hyper-aware of their situation, due to either anticipated intolerance, or actual warnings not to show their identity at school as it conflicts with religious doctrine (Fahie, 2017; Neary et al., 2018). This issue is reported to create difficulties for teachers wishing to be role models to their students (Callaghan, 2015; Fahie, 2017; Grace & Benson, 2000; Russell, 2010). This phenomenon, is, as aforementioned previously, not isolated to faith schools, and there are examples in the literature of highly supportive faith school leadership (Llewellyn & Reynolds, 2021).

Research has suggested that Section 28 was deeply impactful in instilling fear in queer teachers (Clarke, 1996; Sullivan, 1993), and continues to do so. Lee's questionnaire research of 106 LGBT+ teachers found that those who qualified before Section 28 was repealed were less likely to feel they could be *out* and reported greater fear of parental perceptions (Lee, 2019). Certain queer teachers themselves fear accusations of recruitment, given that the discourse of *promotion* associated with the queer is particularly poignant when contrasted with the perceived *innocence* of children and has been long associated with accusations of paedophilia (Borg, 2015; Cavanagh, 2008; Russell, 2010; Thompson-Lee, 2017). The following section discusses these discourses further. Such a discourse has been found to be most associated with queer, but not heteronormative, teacher identities (Piper & Sikes, 2010). Accusations of pushing a 'gay agenda' have been found to cause hesitation for LGBT teachers regarding either coming out or including LGBT content in their teaching (Bower-Phipps, 2020; Ferfolja, 2010; Malins, 2016; Neary, 2017), including in UK primary school research (DePalma, 2016; DePalma & Atkinson, 2009a).

The experiences of teachers are, however, greatly varied. Though such barriers examined above are impactful, UK primary school teachers have been found to navigate them and become active in changing this in the landscape of their schools (Llewellyn, 2022a; Stones & Glazzard, 2020) and be celebrated by certain parents for their efforts (DePalma & Atkinson, 2009a). Indeed, queer teachers are frequently cited as those providing best practice in school

¹⁰ This research likewise found that teachers of colour were more likely to receive criticism than white teachers (Meyer et al., 2019). Though it is beyond the scope of this thesis to review this subject thoroughly, it is of significant note that intersectional lines of marginalisation affect teachers' experiences in schools.

LGBT inclusion, having a heightened awareness towards its importance. This has been suggested by research from the US, Canada, and Australia (Beck, 2020; Coda, 2023; Gray et al., 2016; Richard, 2015; Taylor et al., 2016) and from the UK (Lee, 2020b). Johnson's research in UK primary schools, for example, details an example of one queer teacher inviting his boyfriend in to give talks on his laboratory research as an effective way of normalising queer relationships to children (Johnson, 2020). Relying on a partner to signal queerness, this kind of inclusion via personal representation has been cited to be particularly difficult for single and bisexual teachers, whose (lack of) partners may not be able to represent sexuality as easily (Gray, 2013).

The emphasis on queer teachers as 'role models', however, has been criticised. Llewellyn and Reynold's recent research suggests UK LGB teachers navigate deeply complex positions and that the pressure to be a role model has a "resonance within the current neoliberal climate, in which schools are heteronormative yet cognisant of performing diversity" (Llewellyn & Reynolds, 2021, p. 14). Llewellyn and Reynolds use the term "super-teacher identity" to describe the phenomenon in which queer teachers must work to build a reputation that, when faced with prejudiced attitudes, "would be difficult to criticise" (Llewellyn & Reynolds, 2021, p. 19). Neary's work examining the experiences of teachers in Ireland entering into same-sex civil partnerships summarised similar findings to the above, suggesting that enacting a "high-performing professional subjectivity" that cohered with neoliberal expectations of excellence was central in the act of coming and being *out* (Neary, 2017, p. 57).

This research sits within a wider field outside of LGBT inclusion (Holloway & Pimlott-Wilson, 2012) which has started to point to the ways in which issues of social justice and minority inclusion have been individualised (Martínez Herrero & Charnley, 2021; Sen, 2022) and framed as a matter of minority individuals conforming to "neoliberal notions of respectability" (Singh, 2021, p. 1). In terms of LGBT inclusion, individualising the issue of representation does not address the wider privileging of heteronormativity in schools, or the reasoning why being a queer 'role model' is necessary. Hawke, examining UK teachers' experiences, found that whilst in the past teachers almost uniformly felt pressured to keep quiet about their sexuality, the liberal imperative to counter that which has marginalised them now also pushes teachers to come out, creating a kind of double-bind (Hawke, 2020). So too has research pointed to the idea that the 'role model' may ignore that this shifts the burden of LGBT inclusion disproportionately to the shoulder of queer teachers themselves (Henderson, 2019). This is a significant consideration not only when taken alongside not only the already high

workload of teachers, and the personal nature that the backlash to such inclusion may take (Johnson, 2022; Rudoe, 2017; Vega et al., 2012), but also when one considers the conditions of acceptance inherent in aligning certain embodiments and enactments of queerness with excellence in productivity.

A small body of research has pointed to the way in which policy relates to queer teachers experiences in schools. A certain complexity has been cited in English policy in which queer teachers are legally protected from discrimination such as being fired under the Equality Act 2010, but they can still experience negative school climates relating to the marginalised position of the queer in relation to schools (Lee, 2019; Nixon & Givens, 2007; Stones & Glazzard, 2019). Research in English schools by Gray points out the way in which allowances for schools to decide not to allow LGBT content in the classrooms affect how queer teachers can talk about their lives (Gray, 2013). Given this potential contradiction in the kinds of protections afforded to, and climates experienced by, queer teachers, in this thesis, I explore the nature of policy in relation to queer teachers lives more closely.

Whilst this section has discussed the backlash towards, and the controversy surrounding, LGBT inclusion, the following section moves to examine some of the key discourses underpinning such. This section examines discourses of childhood innocence as compared to the perceivably corrupting, hypersexual influence of the queer, and how this has been suggested to impact LGBT inclusion in schools.

6.5 Hypersexualisation & Homonormativity

6.5.1 *Innocence & Hypersexualisation*

Research into sexuality, gender, and schooling has consistently described how discourses of innocence in childhood can interact with hypersexualising discourses of the queer to inform discussions of the appropriateness of LGBT content in schools.

To give context to the perceived innocence of children, primary school in the UK has its roots in a conceptualisation of childhood as a separate state of being. Speaking of the historical educational campaigns to create widespread mandatory schooling, Renold concluded that “the British primary school, effectively institutionalised childhood innocence” (Renold, 2005, p. 18). Given the Romantic notion that children’s natural state of innocence must be protected from the opposite and corrupting adult world, it was argued that children should have their own protective space (Ariès, 1962; Jackson, 1982; James & Jenks, 1996; James et al., 1998; Wilson, 1980).

Within the literature, the neutrality of heteronormativity appears to underpin discussions around childhood innocence and LGBT content, informing both assumptions of children's own sexuality and gender, and a kind of hypersexualisation of the queer that is seen as disproportionately visible and connected to *sex*. Both Canadian and UK research has suggested school children are often assumed by teachers to be asexual or without a concept of gender and at the same time heterosexual (Bragg et al., 2018; Llewellyn & Reynolds, 2021; Meyer et al., 2019). When teachers or parents do acknowledge the possibility of children being queer, this tends to be framed as the need for protection of the child's future self; queer-inclusive education in Irish primary schools was found to be commended by certain teachers because it will help their self-acceptance and general well-being when they are older (Neary & Rasmussen, 2020). As Atkinson and DePalma summarise after extensive work in UK primary schools, "Based on what people told us, it might seem as if LGBT people suddenly come into existence after finishing primary school (or even secondary school), never have children, and certainly don't become teachers" (DePalma & Atkinson, 2010, p. 1671).

Persisting as a common-sense definition of what is appropriate for the 'child' (Meyer, 2007; Stockton, 2009), the relatively small body of research in this area has shown that the discourse of childhood innocence has been used in UK policy debates and teachers narratives when describing why children should not learn about sexuality in schools (Gray, 2010; Moran, 2001). Indeed, in an Australasian context, certain researchers have suggested that the very subject of this research impedes its progress when concerns around discussing sexuality in primary schools limits access (Allen et al., 2014). The subjects of sexuality and gender are not uniformly perceived within this discourse of appropriateness; studies both in the UK (Carlile, 2020b; Cuthbert & Taylor, 2019; DePalma & Atkinson, 2010; Gray, 2010; Johnson, 2020; Nash & Browne, 2020) and North America (Hermann-Wilmarth & Ryan, 2019; Meyer et al., 2019) have reported many participants believe children's innocence will prevent them from understanding queer, but not heteronormative, presentations, and yet cause them to be affected by this knowledge for which they are not ready. As aforementioned, primary school research from Ireland and England suggests knowledge about queer identities can be construed as a form of advanced sex education, beyond the understanding of young children (Neary et al., 2016; Nixon & Givens, 2007).

The neutrality of heteronormativity is reported to be key in maintaining an uncertainty around the appropriateness of the queer in classrooms. The No Outsiders work in UK primary schools cites multiple examples of a "failure to recognize the ongoing implicit instruction about

heterosexual relationships that children receive in school settings through casual representations in books and other classroom resources” (DePalma, 2016, pp. 833, see also Allan et al., 2008). One example of such came from an assistant teacher, ‘Daffodil’, and her attempts to introduce King and King as part of a primary school literacy unit on alternative fairy tales (Atkinson & DePalma, 2008b). Daffodil’s idea was rejected by her class teacher as inappropriate. As Daffodil explained: “We had done SO much on heterosexual relationships during the topic – even making ‘wanted’ posters... to advertise Cinderella to Prince Charming” (Atkinson & DePalma, 2008b, p. 33).

This excessive visibility of, and sexuality¹¹ associated with, queer identities has been suggested to feed into the discourse of promotion which has long positioned queerness as an unnatural sexual deviance liable to affect the ‘child’s’ innocence (Robinson et al., 2017). There are two main strands to the discourse of promotion. Firstly, it can be used to refer to the promotion of the acceptability of queer relations, drawing on the ‘child’ subject as the symbol of reproducing cultural values, and as such its access to queer knowledge as the transgression of continued heteronormativity (Berlant, 1997; Bruhm & Hurley, 2004; Robinson, 2012). Analysis of the discourses drawn upon by the parent protestors against LGBT-inclusive No Outsiders charity work in primary schools in Birmingham, England, has found this to be a common thread (Beauvallet, 2021; Sauntson & Borba, 2021; Vincent, 2022)¹².

Secondly, arguments against promotion, relying on the asexual/heteronormative child, may suggest that to introduce LGBT content would be to unnecessarily push ideas onto children that they are unaware of, potentially confusing their identities (Malins, 2016; Neary, 2017; Renold & McGeeney, 2017). This discourse may at times be rather explicit, linking the presentation of LGBT content to a kind of paedophilia, a sexualised knowledge that becomes conflated with the act of sex, and as such with a corruption of innocence for children (Borg, 2015; Cavanagh, 2008; Thompson-Lee, 2017; Vincent, 2022). In this sense promotion and the corruption of innocence is something of a euphemism for corruption of the child’s cisgender

¹¹ Readers may note that being transgender or gender-diverse is not a sexuality. However, such discourses of sexual deviance and promotion also surround non-normative gender identities (Morgan & Taylor, 2019).

¹² For further analysis of the contradictions between parents’ rights to have their morals reflected in the curriculum and the position of LGBT content, see the Negotiating Rights section of this literature review, and the Parental Consultation & Governance chapter of this thesis, for my findings.

heterosexuality. In Atkinson's study of two English primary schools, one participating in the No Outsiders project and one not, as described earlier in this chapter, a discourse of promotion was found to be drawn upon by children themselves: After reading *King and King*, one child stated: "I don't think [King and King] should be for young kids cos then they would probably... be, gay!" (Atkinson, 2021, p. 458).

However, this discourse likewise persists more implicitly as a suggestion that children would not be ready for, and as such would be affected by, LGBT content. Johnson found in PhD research on English primary school teachers' implementation of LGBT-inclusive content that some encountered a narrative from colleagues that, as children are not thinking about sexuality or gender, introducing such would only cause them confusion (2020).

In a review of the history of RSE and the recent change to Relationships Education as mandatory for primary schools, Wilder's research aforementioned in the previous section suggests that a discourse of childhood *innocence* and *protection* has long been formative to RSE (Wilder, 2019). Receiving knowledge *about* sexuality, Wilder suggests, has been conflated with a kind of abuse, sexualising children, quoting one primary school teacher as stating that "the school is very proud of... allowing children to be children" as a reason for limiting the provision of RSE (Wilder, 2019, p. 122). This discourse of protection, however, can likewise be mobilised to necessitate some level of RSE education. Wilder writes that "the lynchpin that secured the majority vote in parliament to make RSE statutory" was the need for children to be educated on how to avoid sexual exploitation (Wilder, 2019, p. 131). Though Wilder's research does not extensively review the changes to the RSE curriculum given its data collection was previous to these changes, this evidence nevertheless suggests the presence of this discourse in schools, gelling with the research explored above.

I would like to stress here that the consistent evidence concerning this discourse of innocence should not lead to the assumption that such is uniform, or dominant in schools. One may note, as has been discussed in previous sections, that many teachers wish for greater inclusion of LGBT content in their schools. In a recent study of UK LGBT primary and secondary school teachers, Llewellyn found that conceptualisations of children as 'innocent' were not in the majority (Llewellyn, 2022a). This research found support for LGBT content, and teachers stated that they found young people to be "socially aware, active agents" (Llewellyn, 2022a, p. 8). Work with children themselves has concurred with these teachers' perceptions, showing a notable difference between how young people are perceived, and how they perceive themselves. Findings from the No Outsiders project in English primary schools

(Cullen & Sandy, 2009) and UK secondary schools (Bragg et al., 2018) found pupils can actively engage with sexuality and gender diversity. Research with trans youth has consistently found that youth actively engage with their own identities and presentations (McGlashan & Fitzpatrick, 2018; Neary, 2021a, 2021b), leading to recent calls to respect child voices in work with them (Carlile, 2020a; Horton, 2020; Luecke, 2011). Meanwhile, students, mainly from secondary schools as this is the largest researched population in this area, have been found to wish for better quality RSE (Buston & Hart, 2001), with more LGBT inclusion in this area (Fisher, 2009; Gowen & Wings-Yanez, 2014; Jarpe-Ratner, 2020; Roberts et al., 2020; Sondag et al., 2022; Stonewall, 2017) and in the wider school climate (Diaz et al., 2010; Lapointe, 2016; Lapointe, 2017; Tropiano, 2014).

The research above suggests the discourses of innocence and hypersexualisation represent a significant, though not totalising or all-encompassing, element forming the landscape of LGBT content in primary schools. Further research, as explored in this thesis, is required into how these discourses are drawn upon in light of the recent changes to the RSE curriculum. This is particularly the case given that the RSE guidance emphasises schools' judgements of *appropriateness* in relation to LGBT content, and the literature suggests *appropriateness* in this context is formed by a discursive landscape encompassing multiple ideas of the 'child' and 'queer'.

In the following section, I build upon this discussion of what has been documented as perceivably appropriate for children by examining the literature on the dominance of same-sex parented presentations as LGBT content in schools.

6.5.2 Homonormativity

In recent years, although very much still on the *fringes* of visible sexualities, in a phenomenon termed *homonormativity*, identities which mimic monogamous, nuclear families, have gained ground. Discussion of same-sex parented families is the most commonly cited type of LGBT content in UK primary schools (Allan et al., 2008; Atkinson, 2021; DePalma, 2016; DePalma & Atkinson, 2006, 2009a, 2009b). Whilst small, the literature in this area points to multiple reasons for this relative dominance, including reduced controversy, availability, and school policy.

6.5.2.1 Factors in Homonormativity

Research has suggested this trend has occurred, in part, due to these 'family' presentations offering a more palatable, de-sexualised, and generally more child-friendly option that coheres

with conceptualisations of childhood ‘innocence’ (DePalma, 2016; Lester, 2014). For example, in an article examining four primary faith schools in England that included LGBT content, Carlile found the perception of ‘safety’ through an emphasis on representing children’s family types made such content preferable (Carlile, 2020b). The No Outsiders project also offers examples of teachers attempting to introduce LGBT representation who found that it was much easier to introduce homonormative representations (Cullen & Sandy, 2009; DePalma, 2016; DePalma & Atkinson, 2006). Books in which same-sex parents are background characters irrelevant to the plot were popular; DePalma notes that *Spacegirl Pukes*, in which the main character happens to have two mothers, was seen as an easy queer inclusion option (Watson & Carter, 2006, cited in DePalma, 2016). Whilst primary school research from Aotearoa New Zealand suggests teachers are more comfortable discussing same-sex parents than trans children (Morgan, 2020), in the No Outsiders research, teachers were found to differ in their opinions of homonormative presentations. In one discussion about the male-male couple in the children’s book *And Tango Makes Three*, one teacher described how she was “concerned” that she was being “led to this safe, middle of the road place by the project books which inscribe these notions of romantic, monogamous relationships” before another teacher replied that it is “fantastic” that they had managed to include any representation at all, so should not “worry” as they “are in the early stages of this nationally” (DePalma & Atkinson, 2009a, p. 851). The latter teacher’s reference to LGBT inclusion being *nationally* in the *early stages* may be a reference to the recent, at the time of this research being collected, 2003 repeal of Section 28 which, after Section 28’s ban on *promoting* homosexuality, allowed for the inclusion of LGBT teaching. As has been expanded upon earlier in this chapter, as this research was conducted in the decade following the repeal of Section 28, and before the introduction of the Equality Act in 2010, we should note that schools now exist in something of a changed policy context. Nevertheless, the relative comfort of homonormative teaching is suggested here, but so too is the tension between teaching with diversity and negotiating access to schools. Noting their usefulness, DePalma nonetheless criticises the emphasis on ‘vanilla strategies’ relying on homonormativity (DePalma, 2016, p. 828)

Homonormative presentations are also more available in resources. Children’s literature is becoming a more popular (Carlile & Paechter, 2018) means of including LGBT content in primary schools, even if these texts are still less well-known in certain circles (Hedberg et al., 2022). Reviews of the kinds of content in LGBT books have noted that, as opposed to, for example, presentations of queer students themselves, same-sex families are more common

(Epstein, 2013; Huskey, 2002; Lester, 2014; Lo, 2019). Neglecting the lived experience of many queer families with more diverse family structures (Morgan, 2020), such an emphasis has been cited to "silence other types of family (and)... legitimise those who most closely resemble the heterosexual nuclear family" (Cloughessy & Waniganayake, 2019, p. 126). It may also be noted that in line with the emphasis on normativity as a potential means of widening the appeal of these books, research has found that animals are often favoured over humans in books depicting queer characters (Morgan, 2020). Whilst this may reflect the general magical tropes of children's literature, the use of animals has been highlighted as a strategy deployed to add political distance (Morgan, 2020). However, there is a relative dearth of research examining how teachers differentially interact with different queer presentations in children's literature, rather than solely the content of the literature itself, which this thesis will attempt to address.

In a study of two English primary schools using Stonewall's *Same Love Different Families* programme of LGBT inclusion, Hall cites that this was popular in these schools, and is emblematic of homonormativity (Hall, 2021). Eponymously centring around families, some of whom may be same-sex parented, the programme, Hall writes, is consistent with the homonormative rights-based discourse that has long characterised discussions of LGBT equality. Hall suggests this has created a 'reverse discourse' in which LGBT inequality is defined only by a denial of LGBT people *doing* certain things that heterosexual couples can do, such as marry and adopt children, and as such confines equality only to the realisation of such goals (Duggan, 2002; Hall, 2020; Weeks et al., 2001). Hall notes that this reverse discourse has been codified in Ofsted's guidance suggesting that teaching about different types of families constitutes good practice when tackling LGBT-based bullying (Ofsted, 2012, cited in Hall, 2021, p. 59). Discussion of *families* becomes the remedy to prejudice. The prevailing emphasis upon monogamous, nuclear, family pairings is ignored and identities that are less easily visible within family presentations are glossed over.

Research pointing to school policy guidance being homonormative is very limited. Alongside Hall's above analysis of Ofsted guidance Lawrence and Taylor cite homonormativity in the school policy landscape in their analysis of the then Minister for Women and Equalities Penny Mordaunt's speech launching the UK Government's LGBT Action Plan (Lawrence & Taylor, 2020). Lawrence and Taylor write that "Mordaunt articulates LGBTQI+ equalities... as 'driven by love', tacitly positioning normative partnering as the way in which LGBTQI+ lives can be validated... This rhetoric is explicitly desexualized, and

positions ‘strong and lasting relationships’ as those which are defining principles of acceptab(ility)” (Lawrence & Taylor, 2020, p. 9).

The emphasis on monogamous pairings here reflects the homonormative conditions of acceptability reflected in the research presented thus far in this section. However, research into homonormativity and primary school policy in England in itself is very limited and has not yet explored either a wide scope of primary school policy or how these discourses relate to those drawn on by teachers. As such, these issues are explored within this thesis (See chapter: Homonormativity).

6.5.2.2 Critique of Homonormativity

Moving on from examining homonormativity to the research into the significance of it, homonormativity has been critiqued for both presenting a vision of LGBT inclusion which neglects to reflect a diversity of these identities and for doing little to disrupt the dominance of heteronormativity through mimicking its structures.

The research around the emphasis on *families* in primary school inclusion initiatives implicitly suggests that these can result in *LGBT* inclusion with very little diversity¹³. Trans inclusion appears to be largely in reaction to individual trans students, with very limited, sporadic trans representation in schools (Carlile et al., 2021; Warin & Price, 2020; Wilder, 2019). Research from international secondary schools suggests bisexuality is largely invisible (Elia, 2010; Helmer, 2016; Lapointe, 2017), and research from US secondary school students, and pre-service teachers suggests a similar absence for discussions of asexuality (Bower-Phipps, 2020; Y. Yang, 2023).

Research into children’s literature has noted a similar absence; disability, lower-paying professions, racial diversity, bisexuality, gender fluidity, and queer presentations without children tend to be under-represented (Epstein, 2013, 2014). Transgender and gender-diverse presentations may not make up a majority, but they are becoming more common over time with books such as *When Aiden Became a Brother* (Lukoff & Juanita, 2019) and *Julian is a Mermaid* (Love, 2018) becoming popular. A bisexual silence or stereotyping running through children’s literature has been noted frequently. Bisexuality tends to be represented in Young Adult, not lower primary school-aged, literature (Coletta, 2018; Knoblauch, 2016). To my

¹³ In this review I could not find any research on non-monogamous or polyamorous presentations in schools.

knowledge, until recently there was a complete lack of named bisexual picture books for children, when children's biography of Frida Kahlo became the first (Knopp-Schwyn, 2020). These few positively depicting examples, whilst promising, are rare and potentially speak to the previously examined discourses around what kind of sexualities are seen as appropriate for the figure of the child.

Only a small body of research has looked into this issue in English primary schools, and as such evidence here is mainly from research which looked at LGBT inclusion more generally but notes an absence in bisexual and trans identities. Research from the No Outsiders project has suggested that homonormative books, for example, can be used as a jumping-off point for exploring wider LGBT identities and issues (Cullen & Sandy, 2009), but this practice does not seem to be representative of wider primary schooling. For example, there are brief references in papers examining English primary schools not speaking of bisexuality, even from bisexual teachers themselves (Carlile, 2020b). Likewise, as part of the No Outsiders project Atkinson and Moffatt quote a teacher explaining their homonormative exclusion of bisexual and transgender representation:

I haven't even thought about [transgender stuff], to be fair. And I wouldn't know where to start. I am taking it one step at a time. Let's just deal with gay and lesbian things. Even bisexual, I mean, really, you know, it's hard, it's hard. Because what I am saying to people, what I am sort of preaching in my lesson plan to people, is that you don't choose to be gay. It's like having blue eyes or red hair, you know, you are gay or you are not gay. But bisexual fucks all that up ... let's deal with [the more complex issues] when we are all talking about gay people existing. At the moment gay people don't exist in the primary curriculum, you know, and in schools.

(Atkinson & Moffat, 2009, cited in DePalma, 2016)

Here, being transgender or bisexual is represented as a more complex, less 'child-friendly' area of discussion. As this research is so limited currently, with the above being from research collected over a decade ago and before the Equality Act 2010, in this thesis I examine the silences around diverse queer identities more thoroughly in policy and teacher discourses.

Critique of homonormativity in schools has also centred around a propensity for tokenism. In the aforementioned research with two schools adopting the *Same Love, Different Families* programmes, Hall suggests that presentations of same-sex families may be limited in their

ability to disrupt the culture of heteronormativity (Hall, 2020). When presented with a same-sex family, though “some children suggested that these could be same-sex partners, more often children dismissed this possibility in favour of elaborate heterosexual explanations” (Hall, 2021, p. 65). These included children suggesting “the mums went on holiday and this guy didn’t want to stay on his own so he went with this guy” in response to two fathers (ibid, p. 65) and that two women with children were “child-minders” or a “mum” and an “aunty” (ibid, p. 66). Whilst a few children assumed the two same-sex parents were a couple, and one even called two mums “lesbians” (ibid, p. 63), this was reportedly rare. Hall suggests that whilst homonormativity may be seen as a less controversial kind of inclusion, the extent to which it disrupts heteronormativity is doubtful (Hall, 2020). This is, however, an area where further research is necessary, given the small sample of only two schools used here.

Walking the line between gaining access to schools and relying on normativity in schools is thus illuminated in this review to be a contentious area for those seeking to implement LGBT content in their schools. Though seen as comparatively ‘safe’ in some circles, evidence suggests the inclusion of same-sex parental presentations remains hugely fraught (Atkinson & Moffat, 2009; Khan, 2021; Martino & Cumming-Potvin, 2011; Neary & Rasmussen, 2020; Young, 2011). Further research is needed into both the current place of homonormativity in a wider scope of schools, and if (and if so, how and why) this kind of content is dominant in primary schools, leading to one of the focuses of this thesis.

6.6 Conclusion

The main implication of this review is a need for work specifically examining how primary school teachers in England interpret and implement LGBT inclusion, whether that amounts to anti-bullying measures, tokenistic or homonormative representation, or a more thorough queering of heteronormativity in the school. This must then be considered in light of how it relates to policy, particularly in relation to the recent changes to RSE.

Considering the body of research detailing the hesitancy surrounding LGBT inclusion in England, particularly as a lingering impact of Section 28, the recent changes to RSE suggesting primary schools are now “enabled and encouraged” to include LGBT identities is significant (Department for Education, 2020b, para 25). It remains to be seen how schools and teachers are *enabled and encouraged* to do so, and how this interacts with the lack of preparedness in RSE and LGBT inclusion found in the research of this review. In relation to the RSE guidance around parental consultation, further research is also needed into how this is currently

navigated in schools, and more particularly how this is navigated by queer teachers given the complex situation of identity management and professional burden cited in this review.

Considering the well-documented discourses surrounding the appropriateness of LGBT content for the ‘child’, the allowances for primary schools to decide the appropriateness of LGBT inclusion in schools bring up significant questions around how the term ‘appropriate’ can be interpreted. Given the wider homonormative nature of LGBT inclusion in primary schools cited in this review, it remains unclear as to what kind of identities are included in LGBT inclusion, whether in RSE or more widely in English primary schools. As elaborated upon in the following chapters, this thesis aims to address the above gaps in the literature.

7 Theoretical Underpinnings

The aim of this thesis is to elucidate the multiple meanings and current state of LGBT inclusion in English primary schools. Doing so involves teasing out the discourses surrounding LGBT identities, primary schools, and how *including* the former into the latter is conceptualised. This chapter foregrounds the theoretical underpinnings of this research. At the beginning of this chapter, I will briefly outline the main theoretical concepts I employ, Michel Foucault's work and Queer Theory, before discussing the problematisation of *inclusion* within this work. Following this, I will move onto exploring these theoretical tools and how they relate to this research in more depth, outlining the notion of power, discourse, subjectification, *apparatus*, gender/sexuality, heteronormativity, labelling, and resistance.

I dually employ Foucault's work and Queer Theory given that together these theoretical toolboxes build upon or conceptually complement one another, and each reject static, stable, natural assumptions of terms such as 'inclusion', 'gender' and 'sexuality' in favour of a focus on the shifting discourses and power relations at play in these terms and their use. Together these tools offer a means to address how discourses (re)produce social boundaries of the 'normal' and 'inclusion' and how this constructs the current state of LGBT inclusion in English primary schools (Foucault, 1978, 1980, 1982b; Green, 2010; Lesnik-Oberstein, 2010; Lingel, 2009; Spargo, 1999; Warner, 1993).

Foucault's dynamic, discursive concept of power is used to contemplate the multiplicities and fluidity of these mechanisms, thus conceptualising power as the "very complex systems endowed with multiple apparatuses" (Foucault, 1982b, p. 792) which span across, but are not limited to, discursive assumptions, processes of subjectification, and institutional systems. Foucault used the term *apparatus*, or *dispositif* in the original French, in his later works, and this is used in this thesis to understand the broad system of power, including the institutions, discourses, subject positions, and policies which forms the current state of LGBT inclusion (Foucault, 1980).

I chose to weave in conceptual tools from Queer Theory which expand upon or build from Foucault's work in the analysis of this apparatus of power to give a theoretically richer underpinning. Foucauldian theory has been called a "point of departure, an example and antecedent" to Queer Theory (Spargo, 1999, p. 10). The Foucauldian method of studying the

ways in which knowledge and power relations are sustained through, and create, social categories or subjects, and particularly the discursive construction of the *other* with a focus on sexuality and gender diversities are central tenets of Queer Theory (Grzanka, 2020; Honeychurch, 1996, 2012). Although ‘queer’ as a term has been used as a widespread pejorative, the term’s roots in the strange, the alternative, have led to it becoming “provisional academic shorthand that denotes an unfixed set of subjects and that also flags an affiliation with critical analytic approaches” (Wilson, 2006, p. 1). Queer Theory has built up, and in some cases away, from Foucault’s work. Unmooring the boundaries of identity and troubling not only normative concepts of sex and gender but also the powerful discursive systems of *heteronormativity* which flow from and prop up such concepts, Queer Theory is used in this thesis to critique assumptions that hierarchically construct appropriateness in primary schools (Britzman, 1995; Renold, 2005). As further expanded upon later in this chapter, the concept of heteronormativity, alongside a more thorough conceptualisation of denaturalised gender/sexuality and other theoretical tools, is employed here to build on and complement Foucault’s work.

The Queer and Foucauldian theoretical basis here reflects Foucault’s tendency to regard theory “as a toolbox of more or less useful instruments, each conceptual tool designed as a means of working on specific problems and furthering certain inquiries, rather than as an intellectual end in itself or as a building-block for a grand theoretical edifice” (Garland, 2014, p. 366). Theory in this thesis is thus adopted as a kind of inspiration to problematise, a lens through which to trouble taken-for-granted assumptions of what *inclusion* of *LGBT* identities in primary schools looks like (Ball, 2015).

Inclusion in schools is perhaps most commonly spoken of in terms of access to education for pupils with disabilities (Florian, 2019; Krischler et al., 2019) or social or economic barriers to attainment (Messiou, 2017)¹⁴. In terms of *LGBT* inclusion, this is often used in reference to anti-bullying initiatives or more generally of *LGBT* students being better included *into* the school culture (Allen, 2014; Campos, 2017; Department for Education, 2018a; Farrelly et al., 2017).

¹⁴ There has recently been something of a shift towards conceptualising inclusion in terms of feelings of belonging within the structures of the school in school (Qvortrup & Qvortrup, 2018).

However, there is something of an issue with a concept of ‘inclusion’ that does not problematise that which one is being *included* into, or the connotations of bringing the *outside* in. Inclusion is not a fixed point to be sought and the LGBT community is not a homogenous group to be *included*. By departing from the concept of inclusion as access, I aim to trouble the notion that a lack of barriers to attainment within the classroom (lack of manifest social exclusion), or accommodation within an unproblematised school culture constitutes an ‘inclusive’ environment. By problematising the notion of inclusion in this manner I aim to ask: Is to be included to be tolerated within the heteronormative order, or it is to trouble the heteronormative order in itself? What discourses inform LGBT inclusion in primary schools? When topics of LGBT inclusion in primary schools are spoken of, which kind of identities are salient within these discourses, and which are left in silence?

Inclusion may therefore be a signifier but it is not a uniform concept (Foucault, 1978). Having neither inclusion, nor indeed the object (LGBT identities) of it, as fixed concepts may seem paradoxical as objects of research. However, it is exactly the shifting nature of the discourses imbuing meaning to these concepts which forms the basis of my enquiry. Rather than seeking some “hidden secret” (Foucault, 1971, p. 12), in the meaning of inclusion, I follow Foucault’s encouragement to examine the “exteriority” of discourses forming the “external conditions of existence” of the multiple discourses and constructive forces guiding the meaning of LGBT inclusion in schools (Foucault, 1971, p. 22). One of Foucault’s aims that has certainly continued to characterise Queer Theory is the critiquing of supposed ‘neutrality’ and the loudening of the silences, any silences, that marginalise (Atkinson, 2021; Chomsky & Foucault, 2015; Goldman, 1996; Hammers & Brown, 2004; Loftus, 1997; Ruitenberg, 2010; Seidman, 1994). This is key in critiquing the inclusion of LGBT identities as it emphasises the limits, silences, or gaps in certain conceptualisations of inclusion. To expand on this, I use Queer theorist Deborah Britzman’s following three angles in Queer Theory:

...the study of limits, the study of ignorance, and the study of reading practices. Each method requires an impertinent performance: an interest in thinking against the thought of one’s conceptual foundations; an interest in studying the skeletons of learning and teaching that haunt one’s responses, anxieties, and categorical imperatives; and a persistent concern with

whether pedagogical relations can allow more room to manoeuvre in thinking the unthought of education.

(1995, p. 155)

The *study of limits, the study of ignorance, and the study of reading practices* is a particularly apt way to understand how discourses impact how teachers read policy and what this means for what they know about and how they interpret what ‘inclusion’ of LGBT identities means. Britzman’s *interest in studying the skeletons of learning and teaching that haunt one’s responses, anxieties, and categorical imperatives* is likewise found here. Examining the *skeletons of learning and teaching* acknowledges that teachers and policy are constructed by/learning from and constructing/teaching the hidden assumptions surrounding how we see LGBT inclusion. Much like a bouncer letting only those with the right look into a nightclub, inclusion has its limits. We may include, but only up to a point, under the right conditions of normality.

Foucauldian and Queer Theory are well-equipped to explore these patterns of normative conditions and the rhetorical paradoxes of inclusion. In this chapter, I start by outlining in more depth the theoretical basis of the apparatus. I then move on to discuss certain theoretical elements that constitute the apparatus, such as discourses, subject positions, and binary concepts of gender/sexuality, discussing my theoretical conceptualisation of these elements in turn.

7.1 The Apparatus of Power

Ultimately, to trace the social boundaries around inclusion and LGBT identities is to trace forms of power. It is a search for the power of policy to set out normality, the power of interpretation, the power of discourses that shape *who* is included in the classroom, and what inclusion itself means. The Foucauldian concept of the “micro-physics of power” (Foucault, 1975, p. 26) helps us to imagine the nuances in the power relations between and within those making inclusion decisions. This conceptualisation allows for analysis beyond examining the things that a person is able to do, should their abilities and other constraining elements allow it, through accounting for how discourse shapes what subjects of the discourse *feel* they can and should do. Such is not a top-down interpretation of what constrains us but an interpretation in which power runs through all layers of society, being resisted and enacted in the minute actions of the everyday (Haugaard, 2022). It is not that we are under the will of the top-down

ideological power of the governing bodies, but subjects constituted by, and constituting, our discursive landscapes (Mills, 2003). All *subjects* of power, be that teachers, policymakers, are therefore framed as the “effect of power, and at the same time...the element of its articulation” (Foucault, 1980, p. 98).

The various and moveable discourses available to us instead constitute the “limits of the horizon of possibilities and practices” (Ball & Olmedo, 2013, p. 87) that seem acceptable. Rather than conceptualising policy, for example, as a top-down repressive force flowing from those in power, this thesis sees power as the interplay and effect of discourses running throughout both government policies and those disseminating and interpreting it. Power is thus viewed through the patterns of discursive assumptions that create and sustain real acts, such as one identity being mentioned and another not. Rather than forcing a person to do something against their will, power is constitutive to their will.

To aid in an over-arching conceptualisation of the elements forming the landscape of LGBT inclusion in primary schools, I employ Foucault’s concept of the apparatus. As Foucault explained the concept:

What I’m trying to pick out with this term is, firstly, a thoroughly heterogeneous ensemble consisting of discourses, institutions, architectural forms, regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific-statements, philosophical, moral and philanthropic propositions- in short, the said as much as the unsaid. Such are the elements of the apparatus.

The apparatus itself is the system of relations which can be established between these elements

(Foucault, 1980, p. 194).

Translated as *apparatus* or sometimes *device*, from the French *dispositif*, this concept allowed me to grapple more thoroughly with power relations by offering a means to visualise the diversity of heterogenous elements forming the state of LGBT inclusion in primary schools. The distributed nature of the apparatus as a conceptualisation of all those elements coming to bear on the construction of LGBT inclusion appropriately offers a view of agency in this thesis by not pre-ascribing more power to policy structures etc. than to teacher enactments, or to discursive elements (eg. discourses drawn upon by teachers) than to partially extra-discursive elements (eg. funding in schools). After all, the reasons for teachers’ visions of inclusion may be drawn from multiple sources, rather than being totally formed by policy. This allows consideration not only of what teachers *can* do, but what they *will* do, and the multiple

formative elements at play. The discourses suggesting what is appropriate when creating legislation and policy, those things constraining what teachers *can* potentially do, may likewise affect what teachers *will* do.

The apparatus extends beyond examining only formal educational imperatives as mechanisms of power and into all that which influences inclusion decisions, all that which forms what teachers are likely to do given the discursive constructions and resources available to them. In short, what effects inclusion. The heterogeneous nature of these elements allowed me to concentrate both on discourses flowing through objects and these objects in themselves. Curricular mandates, for example, have power through setting out the *normal*, in the discursive conditions they (re)create, but also in their internally set out conditions for practice, physical funding and resources. The *apparatus* includes not only the discourses imbuing meaning to concepts of ‘inclusion’ and ‘LGBT’, such as various subject position concepts forming ideas of sexuality and gender, and subsequent appropriateness judgements of how this can be *included* into the primary school setting, but also those elements of the apparatus affecting its feasibility such as time for lesson planning.

7.1.1 Discourse

Part of the way in which this pervasive, fluid concept of power acts is through *discourse*. As Foucault writes in the *Archaeology of Knowledge*, discourse surpasses static definitions; it surrounds language and imbues objects with meaning, inhibiting the space of taken-for-granted assumptions (Foucault, 1972). Discourse is always “secretly based on an ‘already said’” (Foucault, 1972, p. 27) but the concept of discourse is much more nuanced than a reduction of power to language. Instead, it is the concept of power acting through language to (re)produce its own parameters and shape our social worlds (Joseph, 2004a, 2004b). Discourse allows us to understand, without explicitly stating, “what can be said, and thought, but also about who can speak, when, where and with what authority” (Ball, 1993, p. 14).

The power of discourse thus lies within its acting as an “archive” in the creation of normality (Foucault, 1975/2002, p. 145). The “density of discursive practices” forms an archive imbuing our language with meaning (Foucault, 1975/2002, p. 145) in a way that “is neither uniform nor stable” (Foucault, 1978, p. 100). Archival discourses act as “socially organised frameworks of knowledge and meaning” (Renold, 2005, p. 3) with some becoming so prevalent, so well-repeated, that they are afforded the status of ‘truth’ (Fairclough, 1993, 2013). These regulatory ‘truths’ are pervasive; they are constructed by those institutions and social

actors creating formal social regulations, and they likewise construct them, networking through the social world. The unconscious element of this discursive reproduction must be stressed. A subject's archive is "routinised, normalised, performed without conscious planning" (Blommaert, 2005, p. 127). When I say that language and social landscape produce and are produced by discourses, I do not imply a prerequisite intentionality. As Foucault writes in *Madness and Civilisation* "People know what they do; frequently they know why they do what they do; but what they don't know is what what they do does" (Foucault, 1982a, p. 187). Discourses may be intentionally drawn upon, but they likewise operate and perpetuate through assumptions, without thought.

As Foucault summarised this concept of power:

It is a total structure of actions brought to bear upon possible actions; it incites, it induces, it seduces, it makes easier or more difficult; in the extreme it constrains or forbids absolutely; it is nevertheless always a way of acting upon an acting subject

(Foucault, 1982b, p. 789)

By using this concept of power this thesis was able to better elucidate the mechanisms which induce, seduce and make things easier or more difficult in creating current LGBT inclusion, and to locate these elements not only in formal constraints but within the discourses forming subjects' concepts of the normal, the appropriate, or even the accessible.

7.1.2 Subjects

It is worth elaborating here on what is meant by the subject. In both Foucauldian and Queer Theory, 'subject' has multiple meanings. Subject may mean subject to as in to a relation of power, or it may refer to a particular subject position, for example, the 'homosexual' or the 'child', though the process of subjectification is always to be subject to a relation of power (Foucault, 1982b).

Stating that identity labels are not natural but rather naturalised powerful discursive constructs, Foucault was interested in the ways "human beings are made subjects" (Foucault, 1982b, p. 777). He used 'subject' to connote both "a form of power which subjugates and makes subject to" "by control or dependence" and the self-constructive subjection of identity with "conscience or self-knowledge" (Foucault, 1982b, p. 781). This process should not be construed as multiple actors (the individual and others) coming together to construct a single

self, but rather a constantly shifting constitution of multiple subjects cohering around one individual.

Whilst Foucault's work on sexuality is sometimes interpreted as examining the subjectification of the coherent present *homosexual* subject, Queer Theory has taken "this analysis as the cornerstone of a politico theoretical enterprise, and then (worked) decisively against the insight" (Green, 2007, p. 29). For example, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick influentially suggested that Foucault's work examining the subjectification of the sexual subject was too coherent and instead shifted analysis to a more contradictory shifting concept of the subject (Sedgwick, 2008). This is, however, a contested reading of Foucault's view of subjectification (Halperin, 2002a, 2002b). Foucault's contention that the "sodomite had been a temporary aberration; the homosexual was now a species" (Foucault, 1978, p. 43) or his analysis into how subjects come to see themselves as certain types of binary subject positions, "the mad and the sane, the sick and the healthy, the criminals and the 'good boys'" (Foucault, 1982b, p. 778), for example, could be collectivising, suggesting a kind of stable subject. My reading, by contrast, is that it is a commentary on the process of naturalising sexuality and of the tendency to give an illusory coherence to the *other* rather than of the coherence of the subject itself (Halperin, 2002a, 2002b). Nonetheless, this is an instance in which Queer Theory's constant *explicit* conceptualisation of the subject as shifting added to the theoretical toolbox of this thesis.

Whilst the idea of multiple and fluid identities has a long sociological tradition, Queer Theory and Foucault's work take up the idea of the subject position as a site to examine processes of normalisation particularly in relation to sexuality and gender (Halperin, 2002a, 2002b). To elaborate further upon the idea of the subject position, these are identities that discourses rendered recognisable. A kind of lens through which society views the individual, subject positions act as a heuristic or stereotype that powerfully ascribe traits, assumptions, and connotations to certain groups of people (Martino, 1999, 2000). Although we may step into these positions ourselves, we may also be ascribed to them by others due to certain actions, looks, or ways of being (Wodak, 2011). This is not to say that this analysis loses sight of the 'person', but rather that the person may take on multiple subject positions, may be involved in multiple processes of subjectification. It is important to acknowledge this in this research as it made it possible to analyse how multiple subject positions could cohere around single people, and how these positions are located within multiple lines of knowledge, authority and power.

The concept of the subject position acts as a springboard for understanding how ideas cohere around a subject, and how this subject is shifting, holding different currencies and meanings in different spaces, with each subject being located in the particular moment of governance by the self and/or others. The idea of subjectification complements the conceptualisation of constructed, ascribed notions of sexuality and gender used in this thesis that are elaborated upon in the following section of this chapter. The discursive patterns of stereotypes and connotations around the subject position of the ‘queer’ person (etc) render them meaningful, potentially marginalised or powerful. Ball and Olmedo suggest that by thinking “about subjectivity as a site of struggle and resistance” and “focussing on particular cases of struggle” (Ball & Olmedo, 2013, pp. 85, 86) we start to see the friction caused when such subjection leads to marginalisation. This insight was used within this research, to give one example, to examine how LGBT content, or the ‘queer’, was seen to be *appropriate* for the ‘child’ subject (See Findings Part 2: Appropriateness).

Using this conceptualisation of power, discourse, and the overarching apparatus, the following section examines the way in which this thesis positions the perceivably natural status of sex/gender coherence and ensuing preference for the opposite gender as discursively constructed elements of the apparatus in themselves.

7.2 Gender & Sexuality

Opening this section, I discuss in depth the constructed nature of gender and sexuality posited here and the relevance of this construction when studying the apparatus of LGBT inclusion. I then move to a discussion of how cisgender heterosexuality is perceived as natural, how this leads to othering of the ‘queer’, or a mechanism of ‘heteronormativity’, and how this is maintained. At the close of this section, I discuss the potential dangers of seeing too great a uniformity in the ‘queer’ as a contrast to the heteronormative and the potential for resistance to heteronormativity.

Hierarchical, normative ideas of sexuality and gender are deprivileged within Queer and Foucauldian theory (Ahmed, 2016; Berlant & Warner, 1998; Blumenfeld & Breen, 2017; Butler, 1993; Callis, 2009; Warner, 1993). The very idea of coherence or stability within sexuality and gender labels is posited to be a powerful discursive force that affords cisgender heterosexuality the status of ‘natural’, given in part its traditional association with having children, and designates anything which is not itself as a deviation from normality. This assumed ‘naturalness’ means the queer “can never have the invisible, tacit, society founding

rightness that heterosexuality has” (Berlant & Warner, 1998, p. 15). This analytical framing diverges from structuralist analysis through asserting that our identities are “volatile, contradictory and changing, rather than rational, unified and static” (Robinson, 2005, p. 20). Inseparably twinned constructed concepts based on an essentialist conflation of biological sex and gender identity, gender and sexuality are *real* only in the sense that they are pulled into being and ascribed meaning when we talk about them and enact them (Dillabough & Arnot, 2001). Developmental structuralist perspectives in which a person learns the expected role of their essential *male* or *female* identity are eschewed along with any idea of a natural ‘core’ being (Janssen, 2008; Owen, 2020; Zaman & Anderson-Nathe, 2021).

Gender particularly is an area in which Queer theoretical works are said to have expanded upon and fill in the gaps of the “lacuna in (Foucault’s) theoretical oeuvre” (Stryker, 2014, p. 39). Shunning previously held assumptions of the natural flow between sex and gender, between gender and congruent (hetero)sexuality, Judith Butler, queer feminist scholar, was seminal in expanding on Foucault’s work into how processes of subjectification in sexuality constitute interpreting acts and desires into socially ascribed, internalised frames (Butler, 1993). One of Foucault’s projects within *The History of Sexuality* volumes, for example, was to trouble the figure of *the homosexual* to show its constructed nature and the figure of the *other* inherent to its subjectification (Foucault, 1978, 2020a, 2020b).

Expanding on this alongside Simone de Beauvoir’s work in *The Second Sex*, Butler states that gender is “a process of interpreting the body” rather than a natural, stable fact of the self (Butler, 1986, p. 36). Butler breaks (or *queers*) the naturalised link between sex, gender, and sexuality that assumes gender attributes and roles are the natural outcome of sexual differences, thus “laying the blame for gender inequalities at the door of society rather than biology” (Renold, 2005, p. 2-3). Butler also deals with sexuality, applying this lack of naturalness to unthinking heterosexuality “as a uniform, natural and all-embracing primordial sexuality” (Rosenberg, 2008, p. 6). In their works, Butler constantly puts forward that gender and sexuality cannot be legitimately separated from one another. They suggest that as the construction of one assumes the ensuing presence of the other, in any theoretical separation, we would always see a “spectral return” of one or the other in our analysis (Butler, 1997, p. 3).

In their work *Gender Trouble*, Butler laid out the process of *performativity* to underscore that we *act out* gender and sexuality (Butler, 1990). Multiple, transient identities, such as gender or sexual identity, are repeatedly enacted and labelled to such an extent that they gain an illusory nature of fixity and stability; they seem *real*. These performances may “congeal

over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a natural sort of being” (Butler, 1990, p. 43). We *do* and *ascribe* gender and sexuality but there is no concrete identity that prefigures these acts, labels, and behaviours (Harrison & Hood-Williams, 2002). Gender and sexuality are thus conceptualised not as natural facts about a person at all, in the sense that one *is* a gender or *has* a sexuality, but are contradictory, inconsistent and shifting patterns of discourse that we ascribe with meaning, “grounded as they seem to be in (our) bodily configuration” (Joseph, 2004a, p. 6).

This theoretical basis in this research aims to acknowledge that this assumed naturalness has gained a kind of powerful self-evidence (Spargo, 1999). Fixed, naturalised ideas of an obvious biological sex forming a stable, matching gender (and assumed sexuality preference for the *opposite*) propagate through fulfilling their own normative criteria for what constitutes *real* sex or gender, or *normal* sexuality. Ultimately, this Queer non-normative notion of gender and sexuality provides a good fit for both examining the gaps and assumptions woven into normative ideas of sexuality and gender, and for analysing discursive patterns of LGBT inclusion in all its diversity.

7.2.1 Heteronormativity

The concept of *heteronormativity* is employed here to describe how the discursive naturalisation of normative ideas of sexuality and gender act to simultaneously create an *other*; the *queer*. Heteronormativity as a term is credited to Warner’s *Fear of a Queer Planet*, but the term’s intellectual roots are fully emerged in the Queer tradition, including, but not limited to, Foucault’s oeuvre and Butler’s concept of heterosexual hegemony (Butler, 1990, 1993; Foucault, 1978; Rich, 1980; Warner, 1993). Heteronormativity is a concept almost synonymous with Queer Theory. Pervasive in its use in queer educational research, and aligned and developed partially out of a base of Foucault’s work, heteronormativity offers an in-depth theoretically consistent basis to this thesis (Blumell et al., 2019; DePalma & Atkinson, 2010; Ward & Schneider, 2009). As conceptualised by key Queer theorists Berlant and Warner, by “heteronormativity we mean the institutions, structures of understanding, and practical orientations that make heterosexuality seem not only coherent—that is, organized as a sexuality—but also privileged” (1998, p. 15). In the context of this research, these *institutions, structures of understanding* encompass the diversity of the elements of the *apparatus* forming LGBT inclusion in primary schools.

The term *cisnormativity* is often employed specifically in reference to those structures, assumptions and general discursive constructions which prop up being cisgender as the *normal* or *neutral* state of being (Few-Demo et al., 2016). Whilst I do sometimes use cisnormativity when specifically speaking of gender, but not sexuality, heteronormativity here is used as the encompassing term given that heteronormativity refers to the structures maintaining a normative conflation of sex characteristics with gender and ensuing assumed heterosexuality.

The perceived neutrality or naturalness of cisgender heterosexuality is underpinned by an implicit contrast to an opposite (Carrera et al., 2012). Whilst heteronormativity inevitably requires a *silence* to create the conditions of the *sayable*, this is not a blunt dichotomy between the acceptability of hetero and homosexual, between cis and transgender, etc. Heteronormativity involves “policing those who fall within its porous and shifting borders, and abjecting those who find themselves relegated to the fringes or outside of its borders” (Wieringa, 2020, p. 291). These shifting borders of heteronormativity accommodate some queer lives in some spaces more than others, strictly policing *homonormativity* whereby the conditions for visibility require strict adherence to relationship normativity, including marriage, family kinships, monogamy, and normative gender roles (Duggan, 2002).

This conceptualisation drew in part upon Butler’s concept of heterosexual hegemony to describe the mechanisms behind the maintenance of heteronormativity (Butler, 1993). I use Butler’s notion of *heterosexual hegemony* rather than the earlier *heterosexual matrix* which, whilst influential, has connotations of a structure outside of and above us (Butler, 1990). The heterosexual matrix was conceived by Butler as a theoretical tool to describe the societal unintelligibility of identities “in which gender does not follow from sex and those in which the practices of desire do not ‘follow’ from either sex or gender” (Butler, 1990, p. 24). Butler was strict in compounding the mutually exclusive nature of performing aspects of one gender or one sexuality and identifying as another sex. Whilst seminal, the matrix came under fire for its propensity to suggest that boundaries of othering are static and seemingly immutable. In their paper *Un-believing the matrix: queering consensual heteronormativity*, researchers Atkinson and DePalma (2009) suggest that as a metaphor, the heterosexual matrix can create a discourse in which the matrix is always *out there* until it is completely broken. I concur with Atkinson and DePalma when they suggest:

Metaphors of ‘challenging’ and ‘stamping out’ homophobia are widely used in gay rights activist work. While these images may be useful in garnering political and popular support,

they do obscure several important things: that heterosexual hegemony is a collective process, that it requires constant construction, and that it can't exist once we withdraw consent.

(2009, p. 18)

The conceptualisation has likewise been criticised as “a curiously aspatial and atemporal concept” (Patil, 2018, p. 1) given its connotations of immutability. Consequently, Butler later became uneasy with the theory as a kind of boundary-making device in itself, and consequently changed the conceptual terminology to heterosexual hegemony denoting a more fluid structure (Butler, 1994). Retaining the idea that normative assumptions of sexuality and gender connote hierarchical binaries, Butler steered away from heterosexual hegemony as an external force, subjugating us from above (Ingraham 1994; Letts 1999). They clarify the position taken up in this thesis, that we construct fluid boundaries of difference; they are not simply heterosexual is the norm, homosexual is the other, but change in different discursive landscapes (Atkinson & DePalma, 2009).

To dwell on the metaphoric difference may seem pedantic but the two framings suggest very different views of both agency and diversity in the queer. Acknowledging our role in creating and maintaining heteronormativity or heterosexual hegemony through the discourses we draw on, consciously or not, highlights its (re)constructed, changeable nature, giving insight into future directions for primary school LGBT inclusion. My theoretical concepts steer away from the fixity implicit in the heterosexual matrix, and instead, as outlined previously, draw upon discourse as pervasive, yet ultimately always in the process of production.

Using heteronormativity allows for nuance in elucidating meanings of inclusion in that it does not imply coherence in the othering of the queer. I use the concept of heteronormativity to focus upon the potential for othering outside of the heterosexual/homosexual cisgender/transgender binary. If we think of anything outside of cisgender heterosexuality as automatically an ‘other’ how do we account for changes in what is considered to be queer in different spaces and places? What of the patterns of normativity that may persist in what kind of LGBT presentations are made more discursively acceptable? Such thinking blankets the queer and shuts down analysis after designating it into the space of other. There would be no room to consider differences, distinctions, and hierarchies of acceptability within identities other than cisgender heterosexuality and *other*. The fluid concept of heteronormativity is thus used here to view how cisgender heterosexuality may be viewed as a neutral presence within primary schools but leaves the interpretation of other queer identities open to investigation.

These theoretical frameworks offer a path to viewing how constructions of difference can also run through seemingly ‘inclusive’ practices. Discourses of inclusion or resistance to heteronormativity are infinitely diverse. Therefore, discourses of resistance are viewed with criticality as not to assume that all forms of inclusion or resistance are liberating to all queer people through being completely free of heteronormative assumptions.

7.2.2 Reconstructing Heteronormativity: Common Sense & Surveillance

I may have already laid out the concept of power adopted here as that which “induces, it seduces, it makes easier or more difficult” (Foucault, 1982b, p. 789) but I have not yet fleshed out how this inducement and seduction occurs within the production of heteronormativity. Drawing upon the polymorphous view of power here, I posit that heteronormative discourses persist through multiple mechanisms: common-sense assumptions and surveillance.

Michel Foucault's theoretical framework on surveillance provides a nuanced lens through which to comprehend the mechanisms by which heteronormativity perpetuates itself within societal structures. This analytical framework sheds light on the intricate ways in which surveillance practices contribute to the persistence and reinforcement of heteronormative ideals, enriching the understanding of the complex interplay between power, normalisation, and sexuality within societal structures. In his metaphor of the panopticon, Foucault took Jeremy Bentham’s design for a prison in which one guard could observe prisoners without being seen, thus leading to a system in which the subject, or prisoner, comes to internalise a sense of permanent visibility and act accordingly, and applied it to the process of disciplinary normativity via surveillance (Lim et al., 2012; Proudfoot, 2021). Relating this concept to sexuality and gender, the subject of power creates and is influenced by heteronormativity by internalising surveillance consciously or unconsciously, and self-policing accordingly; “(the subject) inscribes in himself the power relation in which he simultaneously plays both roles; he becomes the principle of his own subjection” (Foucault, 1975, pp. 202-203). Heteronormativity in this data may be enacted due to feared or actualised, implicit or explicit, negative repercussions when deviating from the norm, or the internalisation of said norm and the subsequent self-surveillance.

It is important to differentiate between these mechanisms of heteronormativity as it acknowledges that those who position themselves as inclusive may discursively construct a vision of inclusion which marginalises certain identities by explicitly positioning them as outside of the normal or by failing to have the idea of their inclusion within their discursive

landscape. Attending to surveillance as a possible mechanism of heteronormativity also aided in understanding the constraining elements which change and shape behaviours, ideas, and policies, and then grappling with the discourses that flow from teacher responses. Teachers and policymakers do not make decisions in a vacuum, they perform their actions within the visibility of their social systems, as part of and subject to the power relations in their discursive landscapes. I use this idea to search for the forms of power through surveillance, whether internal or external to the individual, that are drawn upon in the primary school setting to locate how inclusion decisions come into being.

I particularly use the Foucauldian concept of power as “governance”, acting not only through prohibitions and permissions but through that which makes actions, thoughts, or concepts “easier or more difficult” (Foucault, 1982b, p. 789), to examine how parental consultation can act as a mechanism of surveillance. This framework underscores that guidance regarding parental consultation not only places teachers under surveillance but also shapes a particular perception, casting teachers as subject to parental authority. As explored in the Literature Review of this thesis, the prevailing neoliberal discourse portraying schools as arenas of ‘consumer choice’ has entrenched itself as conventional wisdom (Ball & Olmedo, 2013).

Surveillance as a mechanism of heteronormativity not only helped to analyse elements shaping behaviours forming inclusion but also what inclusion can mean in itself. In the *History of Sexuality*, Foucault ponders the significance and connotations of increased visibility for queer minorities. He asks:

What does the appearance of all these peripheral sexualities signify? Is the fact that they could appear in broad daylight a sign that the code had become more lax? Or does the fact that they were given so much attention testify to a stricter regime and to its concern to bring them under close supervision?

(Foucault, 1978, p. 40)

Given that this thesis aimed to clarify the apparatus of LGBT inclusion in light of recent changes to the RSE curriculum which state primary schools are now “enabled and encouraged to include LGBT content” in RSE (Department for Education, 2020b) it was pertinent not to theoretically assume that representation as a form of inclusion was unproblematic, was without disciplining effects of surveillance. The theorisation of surveillance here thus helped to

conceptualise the mechanisms forming inclusion, and its consequences. Foucault's ideas of normativity maintaining itself through internalisation of what the normal entails is drawn upon by the contention that heteronormative discourses act through common sense (Butler, 2005; Fairclough, 1989). Continually constructed by a kind of stealth by common sense, the neutrality of heteronormativity lies in a "tautology that explains things must be this way because this is the way they are" (Atkinson & DePalma, 2008b, p. 27).

Erasure and invisibility are good examples of heteronormativity as common-sense assumptions in action. From seeing a person's assigned sex and conflating it with their gender, to seeing two men living together and assuming they are roommates, heteronormativity may be maintained when subjects' assumptions of cisgender heterosexuality act as a kind of effortless "straightening device" (Ahmed, 2006, p. 562). Even if subjects are aware of gay identities and transgender identities, discursive archives may canalise our conclusions. This may be self-perpetuating; heteronormative achieves may beget, for example, a lack of queer representation in schools, further encouraging heteronormative discursive achieves. However, it likewise shows a kind of hopeful changeability to our discursive landscapes through the possibility of interruption.

The distinctions between the various mechanisms of heteronormativity are particularly important here as it affects both the analysis and implications of this study. A teacher may neglect to mention queer people in their classroom because they believe queer identities are inappropriate for the classroom, or they may fear retribution from parents or peers, increased workload, or awkward questions. Alternatively, these identities may not be in the discursive archive immediately available to them. It may simply not occur. Heteronormativity is not a set of stable ideas, out there and above us, sustained only through those who will it. This analysis steers away from that kind of structuralist imperative to evidence some deep-rooted, implacable societal framework or truth (Foucault, 1972). Elaborating upon Foucault's aphorism that "all is surface" (Foucault, 1972, cited in Scheurich, 1994, p. 303), Scheurich contends that "'deep structural phenomena' and 'surface phenomena' both occur at the level of daily human micro-practices" (Scheurich, 1994, p. 303). Micro-practices of the everyday matter in interpreting how teachers narrate discourses of inclusion, and for this reason theoretical frames which acknowledge diversity and contradictions in motivation are followed. This generative, surface level theory of heteronormativity also has connotations for the theoretical implications of this kind of research. By examining the possibility unintentionality in heteronormativity, we expand our notions of inclusion education for teachers beyond solely a matter of changing the

intentions of teachers who do not wish to include LGBT content in primary schools and into enriching the discursive landscape of how queer identities could be better included in schooling.

Moving on to understanding the processes forming the identities potentially detailed above, the very language and terms we use may act within heteronormative discourses to construct and marginalise sexual and gender identities.

7.2.3 *Labels*

It is for this reason that I am conscious of the label ‘LGBT’ and the grouping coherence that potentially occurs when one tries to designate the subject of marginalisation. ‘LGBT’ is a discursive construction potentially acting as part of the apparatus, reifying silence around certain sexuality and gender identities and thus potentially (re)creating the difference it names, stepping away from the uniqueness of experience to see the defining common denominator (Nixon & Givens, 2007). Lesbian, Gay, Bi, and Trans may contain umbrella terms¹⁵, but this may not be commonly understood. Use of the initialism may mean identities like pansexual, gender-diverse, non-binary, asexual, polyamorous etc. may go relatively unspoken.

To use only this label uncritically, either in this thesis or elsewhere, may be to ignore this element of the apparatus, to use a “function of a discourse which... set(s) out certain limits to analysis” (Butler, 1990, p. 13) by pre-defining the scope of who ‘matters’ and who needs to be ‘included’ (Hammers & Brown, 2004). It may seem quite odd to use the term alongside Queer Theory, given that by designating a fixed, initialised group in the label ‘LGBT’, I may be suggesting a binary between the *normal* and the *other* by bundling the *others* into a neat category (Fuss, 2013; Haywood & Mac an Ghail, 2012; Waites, 2005a, 2005b).

As an identity and community label, *queer* embraces more sexuality and gender diversity. Queer also goes further to acknowledge the converging intersectional identities (ie. race, age, class), which may make some presentations more *other*, more *queer* along lines other than sexuality or gender. Power relations are interconnected and fluid and may lead to different, intersectional, unequal experiences of marginalisation (Duong, 2012; Gray & Cooke, 2018). The term queer in this analysis is a kind of shaking off, as much as I can, of the inherent

15 *

connotations of otherness that comes from designating the subject of this study as a opposition to the heterosexual and the cisgender (Sumara & Davis, 1999).

Queer is, therefore, almost an anti-signifier. It is a reminder of dissonance in labelling. If identity is unfixed then the queer identity is that which at a certain time and place is *made queer* (Brah, 2005). Identities are not out there in the world ready to be described, it is the certain fluid, changeable discourses surrounding them (whether in policy or teachers' descriptions) that bring them into being as *normalised* or *queer*. The lack of definition as to what kind of behaviours and attributes constitute being queer is essential in this study, given that what kinds of identity are othered is to be clarified within the analysis of this data, not pre-set. This may be a process in flux, subject to change within individual and policy discourses.

However, there are connotations to 'queer' that dissuade me from using it as a term all the way through this thesis, most particularly in the interview or questionnaire portion. Loaded with its intentional political intelligibility, the term queer is often reserved for those within queer communities and academic circles. Meanwhile, as a long-used pejorative, many people in and outside of queer communities would not use such a term, finding it to be too heavily associated with the verbal and physical violence that has dogged queerness (Berlant & Warner, 1995). Although I have outlined the potential limits of LGBT as an identifier here, the term is claimed and celebrated for its unifying, community building potential by the wealth of identities squeezed into it (Formby, 2017; Hulko & Hovanes, 2018; Sinclair-Palm & Gilbert, 2018). The use of LGBT also holds social currency in its recognisability. Whilst queer identities may be too diverse for initialisms, the usefulness of categorisation can be drawn upon in good faith when the imperfections of LGBT are acknowledged (Ghaziani & Baldassarri, 2011).

I use the term LGBT alongside queer within various settings of this research. 'LGBT' was used within my contact with participants as to not to alienate, confuse, or project an expectancy to be familiar with the relatively esoteric term 'queer'. Meanwhile, I refer to LGBT inclusion and LGBT content in schools given that this is the problematised area of this research and reflects the terms used within the policies I examine. I likewise refer to queer identities, using the terms often interchangeably unless specifically problematising or analysing the use of one. In the end, I cannot control the trajectory or the connotations of the terms that I use, but I can consider their implications.

7.3 Resistance, Reparative Reading & the Paralysis of Paranoia

Nearing the close of this chapter, I would like to address the nature of resistance to power. If I am to follow the limits of, the discursive patterns of, the silences within, and ultimately the overarching apparatus of LGBT inclusion in primary schools, there must be a concept of *resistance* to these power relations.

To start, one may ask, if the subject is a discursive construction, does this leave no room for the subject of power to interact with these formative discourses or resist them? To engage with this question, I would clarify that it is not that, say, a subject enacting policy cannot resist policy imperatives or the pressure from peers to act in a certain way (Foucault, 1997). The subject is not a set figure, one locked within its power relations, but an individual who has been *made subject to discourse*. There is still the possibility of resistance through the subject recognising that they are an agent of this production and critically engaging with their position. The subject may then be subject to a different relation of power, working within other normative confines, but this does not undermine the process of criticality. The concept of power through discourse not only forms the understanding of marginalisation within this study but also gives a kind of hopeful agency to its purpose.

This idea of rendering silences and neutrality manifest fits well with the queering framework used here. Whilst our discursive constructions can be powerful in positioning some identities as acceptable and marginalising others, these constructions are just that; they are *constructed* by us. With better understanding comes the opportunity to limit our investment in them. By elucidating the heterogenous elements of the apparatus of power creating the current form of and limits to LGBT inclusion, we may simultaneously clarify the most effective ways to resist marginalising elements.

The act of *inclusion* that may stem from this resistance is not, however, uncomplicatedly liberating. Within this fluid vision of normativity, are all attempts at inclusive practice not going to be entrenched in some sort of normativity, leaving some identity or some practice in silence? If, say, a teacher, a subject of heteronormativity, starts to critique their own practice and, for example, bring in representations of certain LGBT identities, would this not be contained within other bounds of normativity?

To explore this, I would stress that the critical approaches in this study are not purposed only to seek out, name, and ruminate on the hidden oppressive practices all around us. This is not a framework which “buy(s) into those versions of feminist post-structuralism which

become councils of despair”, and whose only purpose is to treasure hunt for oppressive potential (Kenway et al., 1994, p. 188). I draw upon ‘Paranoid reading’, the name seminal Queer Theorist Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick gave to this practice of minutely searching out any oppressive connotation, any potential future injustice, to such an extent that we put our “faith in exposure” alone and forget that exposure itself is not our end (Sedgwick, 1997, p. 9). As Hawthorne writes of this phenomenon:

as a response to the acute injustices enabled and disseminated through the academy, critical theorists have necessarily engaged in paranoia as a means of avoiding absorption into the dominant paradigms of oppressive knowledge production

(2018, p. 157)

The paranoid reader is thus one who sees knowing as foreseeing the worst possible injustice in each critique (Love, 2010; Sedgwick, 1997). The paralysis of paranoia becomes the only place of safety when we fear suggesting any liberatory practice for fear of its imperfection or our own naivety. It “disallows any explicit recourse to reparative motives, no sooner to be articulated than subject to methodical uprooting” (Hawthorne, 2018, p. 158). Foucault’s theory of power is associated with paranoid reading, when its polymorphous, pervasive nature is conflated with constant oppression, leaving the theorist at an impasse moving forward (Hawthorne, 2018). As an alternative to thinking of oppression as unendingly deep-rooted, Sedgwick offers the idea of ‘reparative reading’ as a kind of plea not to view discourse as an innate binary of either liberatory or oppressive (Sedgwick, 1997). Sedgwick does not suggest ignoring potentially marginalising discourses but rather acknowledging that their constructed nature allows potential to change. Reparative reading therefore “enables complication but resists paralysis” (Hawthorne, 2018, p. 160).

This kind of reading categorises this thesis. The use of critical Queer Theory grapples with mechanisms of othering but does not see them in perpetuity. Foucauldian and Queer theory are used as frameworks to allow for better analysis of potential oppression, but this practice is a means to the overall aims of bettering educational practice. Critiquing practice is a process; incremental steps towards representing more diversity, towards disinvesting in heteronormativity in schools may still *other* some identities, but this does not disallow their potential as an improvement. The theorisation of heteronormativity, of the dual potential of the labels LGBT and queer as *both* marginalising and emancipatory depending on use and the

emphasis on the changeable, constructive potential in discourse all speak of the attempt here to steer away from stagnation through paranoia.

7.4 Conclusion

My purpose here was to develop a theoretical underpinning which could analyse the nuance and complexity of LGBT inclusion in primary schools. I chose to use a fluid concept of power through discourse in this analysis as it gives weight to the power of heteronormative and other discourses without reifying an innate nature or suggesting homogeneity in their enactment. Discourses of heteronormativity may be powerful, but they are neither uniform nor all-encompassing. I co-opt the apparatus as an overarching concept to analyse the sheer diversity of mediums, spanning discursively available subject positions, policy, resources, discursive constructions, common assumptions, political statements, and the interactions between them, through which these power relations are (re)produced. The idea of power being realised in diverse elements is formative to the multiple levels of analysis in this research which spans policy, resources, and teachers' responses. Acknowledging discursive fluidity and a non-static definition of 'inclusion' means looking at how inclusion changes in different spaces or may be used differently in relation to certain practices. For example, as discussed in the following chapter, the children's literature portion of this research provides a stimulus to see how discourses of 'inclusion' shape themselves around a specific example of queer identities in a potential classroom setting, rather than abstract ideas of 'inclusion'.

Meanwhile, the fluid imaginings of identity offer an interesting and important view of both the identities pushed into the *other* in schools and the teachers participating in this study. Decisions about what inclusion means for certain identities rely upon discursively created subject positions, the archive of which and mechanisms maintaining such may form part of the apparatus of inclusion. When teachers make decisions, consciously or not, of what and who to include in their classrooms, they may be making these decisions as a subject of multiple power relations. Their discourses may be formed, in part, by the connotations of the subject in this capacity. Policy imperatives are potentially formative to the structure of this subject position, and it is this kind of influence that is a key question within this research.

Having laid out the theoretical basis of my research, the next chapter explores the methodological basis of, and methods used, in studying the apparatus of LGBT inclusion in primary schools.

8 Methodology & Methods

The literature review of this research found LGBT inclusion to be a fraught, controversial, shifting concept imbued with multiple, often contradictory, meanings. This is impactful for the queer community and beyond. Therefore, shining a light on the apparatus of this inclusion is essential and timely.

This thesis aims to plot the discursive and extra-discursive patterns of knowledge and power, or the apparatus, forming LGBT inclusion in English primary schools. In doing so, it aims to fill a general gap in the literature concerning the discourses of LGBT inclusion in primary schools and the layers of interpretation running between teachers and the policyscape in which they work. This work is particularly relevant in light of the recent Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) curriculum changes for primary schools in England given that previous research has not yet extensively examined these changes.

I therefore ask the research question: What is the apparatus of LGBT inclusion in English primary schools considering the 2019 Relationships and Sex Education curriculum changes?

To answer this question, I employed a multiple-methods research design within a post-structural, Foucauldian qualitative methodology, which included using policy analysis alongside questionnaires and interviews with primary school teachers as methods. During this chapter, I examine the rationale of this decision.

This chapter is divided into five sections. In the first section, Methodology & Research Design, I explain how the chosen multiple-methods methodological approach set within a Foucauldian ontological framing was consistent with my research aims. In the second section, Participants & Policy, I move to examine the objects of this research, including the choice of teachers as participants, and the scope of the policyscape studied. In the third section, Methods of Data Collection, I lay out the research methods used within this methodological and research design and offer a rationale for the appropriateness of the chosen methods both individually and as a whole. In the fourth section, Data Analysis, I detail my discursive approach to data analysis and the specific analytical approaches I took to policy analysis. In the last section, Methodological & Ethical Issues, I discuss the methodological and ethical issues anticipated and encountered in this project.

8.1 Methodology & Research Design

As detailed within the Literature Review chapter of this thesis, there has been a previous tendency in considerations of LGBT inclusion, particularly in governmental reports, to focus on anti-bullying interventions (Abreu et al., 2016; Department for Children Schools and Families, 2007; Department for Education and Skills, 2002; Goodboy & Martin, 2018; Government Equalities Office, 2018, 2019b; UK Government, 2011). In this kind of reporting there has been an associative tendency to take more of a quantitative methodological approach to detailing the state of LGBT inclusion. Whilst this kind of research offers partial insight into the experiential difference between students based on sexuality and gender, when used alone it is somewhat stripped from the contextual elements leading to this marginalisation and implicitly defines inclusion as the absence of explicit exclusion (Marston, 2015; Martino et al., 2022). By contrast, this thesis is situated within the more post-structural strand of research which, building upon the research question, aims to understand the discursive complexities and nuance within the state of LGBT inclusion (Atkinson, 2021; Carlile, 2020b; Hall, 2020; Llewellyn & Reynolds, 2021). This methodological approach does not aim to understand absolute truth, or to essentialise complexity to access a stable image of reality, but rather to see the patterns within this complexity, and to better understand the power relations constructing different visions and implementations of inclusion (Gavey, 2013).

Specifically, I employ a Foucauldian methodological approach, a framework which is used in research aiming to understand “how discourses pervasive across institutions, genres, and social groups are legitimized and legitimize social norms and political orders” (Alejandro & Zhao, 2023, p. 3). Consistent with the theoretical underpinnings outlined within the previous chapter, knowledge, in this epistemological framing, is both “constituted by, and ensure[s] the reproduction of, the social system, through forms of selection, exclusion and domination” (Young, 1981, p. 48). This approach is consistent with queer methodologies (Browne & Nash, 2010; Gunn & McAllister, 2013; Love, 2016), noting the constructed, unstable nature of knowledge concerning gender and sexuality. Likewise in line with both the queering impetus and my aims to seek understanding as a means of bettering inclusion, the Foucauldian methodological approach “emphasizes the political utility and critical capacity of Foucault’s notion of discourse as a powerful means of enabling forms of critique and resistance” (Hook, 2001, p. 2).

As part of this Foucauldian approach, I selected a multiple-methods research design (Blatchford, 2005; Brewer & Hunter, 2006). As the research question of this thesis concerns

the apparatus of LGBT inclusion in light of the new Relationships and Sex Education curriculum, I needed a research design which could attend to its heterogeneous formative elements. To briefly reiterate what was laid out more fully in the previous chapter, Foucault conceptualised the apparatus as a “thoroughly heterogeneous ensemble consisting of discourses, institutions, architectural forms, regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific-statements, philosophical, moral and philanthropic propositions- in short, the said as much as the unsaid” (Foucault, 1980, p. 194). A multiple-methods design is well suited to seeing both the diversity of the apparatus and “the nature of the connection that can exist between these heterogeneous elements” (Foucault, 1980, p. 194). Given its status as a design which allows discursive patterns to be elucidated through multiple sources (Collier & Elman, 2008; Ghaziani & Baldassarri, 2011; Graham, 1999; Preston-Sternberg, 2009; Roulston, 2019), this design was chosen so that I may see how, across methods, the *said* and the *unsaid*, as Foucault put it, form ways of thinking of the queer and its relation to primary schooling.

The blended approach here draws mainly upon qualitative data from policy analysis and teacher responses, but at the same time a much lesser amount of quantitative data is collected in the form of tallying responses to questions such as whether there was LGBT content in teachers’ schools, and whether there should be (See Section: Interview & Questionnaire Design). Collecting the quantitative yes/no responses to these questions at the same time as the qualitative reasoning given alongside them allowed for both a broad view of the amounts of LGBT content in schools etc, and a study of its type, the conditions of its access, and the discourses forming it.

Through examining both the policyscape itself and teachers’ interpretation and work inside it I was able to better grapple with the complexity of the discursive patterns and contradictions running through, and between, them by examining how teachers’ responses were, and were not, related to the discursive conditions set out within the policyscape and the discourses drawn upon within the policyscape (Bailey, 2013; Nowicka-Franczak, 2021). The following section gives greater detail on the choice of teachers, the scope of policyscape analysed, and the reasoning behind these decisions.

8.2 Participants & Policy

In line with the multiple-methods design of this research, I chose to study both multiple areas of policy, including the RSE curriculum, and a broad sample of teachers, with 363 participating in total. My decision-making here revolved around a trade-off between gaining a level of depth in my insights into schools and still maintaining a level of data manageability.

Previous research in the area of LGBT inclusion in UK primary schools has largely used either a small number of schools (Atkinson, 2021; Carlile, 2020b; Hall, 2020), a small sub-set of individual teachers (Johnson, 2020; Llewellyn & Reynolds, 2021), or individual policies, such as the 2019 RSE curriculum changes (Beauvallet, 2021; Sauntson, 2021) as its sample. Whilst on-the-ground research in a few schools may have offered a deeper insight into individual schools' practice (Hammersley, 2006), this option was unsuitable in terms of gaining access to schools during the lingering COVID-19 pandemic and for analysing a greater range of interactions between teachers' discourses and those in policy. In mind of the dearth of research into the 2019 RSE curriculum, I chose to conduct a wider analysis of policy and collect data from a larger amount of teachers, so that I might understand a wider spread of the practice, and discourses relating to, LGBT inclusion.

Through examining both the policyscape itself and teachers' interpretation of it I was able to better grapple with the complexity of the relations between the two, looking at how teachers' responses were, and were not, related to the discursive conditions set out within the policyscape (Bailey, 2013; Nowicka-Franczak, 2021). As was detailed further in the Theoretical Underpinnings chapter of this thesis, discursive limits of what is thinkable or appropriate may lead to a subject (re)constructing these very discursive parameters, rather than the discourse being an original construction of the subject (Foucault, 1978, 1997, 2020a, 2020b). Whilst such a notion has sometimes been criticised as viewing the individual as a conduit for discourse without agency, to examine subject positions is not to deny agency or deny potential intentionality to the individual when drawing upon discourses or making sense of their experience, but to show that the subject is always situated in history and culture (Fadyl et al., 2013). This not only served the discursive complexities of my research question but allowed me to study this in a way that did not locate the origin of heteronormativity solely with individual teachers. Instead, it acknowledged the historical situatedness of available discourses and the place of policy in (re)creating such.

In the following section, I further lay out the choice of, and rationale behind, the types of participants and the scope of policy examined in this thesis.

8.2.1 Policy

8.2.1.1 The Polycscape

To examine the *apparatus* of LGBT inclusion in primary schools whilst acknowledging its situatedness in and connectivity with the heterogeneous elements of the wider educational system, I chose to study not only the RSE curriculum in itself, but the *polycscape* in which it sits.

To give a little background on the concept of the polycscape, Carney suggested it as “a tool with which to explore the spread of policy ideas and pedagogical practices across different national school systems” (2009, p. 68), giving neoliberalism as a prime example of a phenomenon spanning a polycscape. However, in this thesis, I use the term as it has been later taken up as a way to conceptualise not only specific policies in a given area but also the allotted resources, non-state institutions, speech and guidance around policy, and the events related to LGBT inclusion that contribute to the meaning imbued in policy (Cumming-Potvin & Martino, 2018; Martino et al., 2019; Mettler, 2016). I use Bailey’s concept of “policy as a contingent formation of diverse discursive and extra discursive elements, and policy institutions, practices and micro-settings as constituted by and enmeshed within multiple relations of power” (2013, p. 807) given that this analysis conceptualises the polycscape within the apparatus (Bailey & Ball, 2016). This approach echoes previous research which has sought to examine discourse both running through policy and teacher narratives relating to LGBT inclusion and sexuality/gender in primary schools (Goldstein et al., 2007; Vilaça, 2017).

The notion of the polycscape encourages analysis of the heterogeneous elements of the apparatus by describing those elements of policy going beyond the texts themselves and how they “create circumstances in which the range of options available in deciding what to do are narrowed or changed” (Ball, 1993, p. 12). This, as will be discussed further in this chapter, suits the concept of policy used here, suggesting “policy ensembles, collections of related policies, exercise power through a production of 'truth' and 'knowledge', as discourses” (Ball, 1993, p. 14).

Whilst all of the polycscape applies to England, the use of the polycscape rather than the state gave more focus to policy in my enquiry. As Bartlett and Varvuz write, the “notion of polycscapes allows researchers to maintain a certain degree of attention on the state without

making it the sole or primary focus of analysis” (Bartlett & Varvus, 2016, p. 18). Opposed to a more generalised focus on the nation, the notion of policyscape specifically acknowledges that the policyscape of LGBT inclusion is not contained to current policies but is historically contingent. All the discursive patterns flowing through it and forming its enactment are interconnectedly layered with the effects of all that came before (Ball et al., 2012; Braun et al., 2010; Mettler, 2016).

Spanning the apparatus, I therefore used the notion of the policyscape to give a sense of policy directives in the RSE curriculum, whilst seeing them in their policy context, in the assemblage of other policy texts, guidance, and resources that imbue their meaning and guide their enactment.

8.2.1.2 Policy Scope

At the same time as conducting a broad, thorough policy analysis, in selecting which elements of the policyscape would be analysed I aimed to maintain a level of data that was both manageable and not too tangentially related to the field of LGBT inclusion. I therefore established four categories of policies I would include. The list below details the policies included in this analysis, but it should be noted that policies often overlapped multiple categories.

Historical RSE or LGBT Guidance

Certain outdated or historical policies were analysed to attend to the historical situatedness of policy issues and solutions being formed¹⁶.

- The Department for Children, Schools and Families anti-bullying guidance *Homophobic Bullying. Safe to Learn: Embedding anti-bullying work in schools* (Department for Children Schools and Families, 2007).
- Section 28 of the Local Government Act (UK Government, 1988).
- Section 403(1) of the Education Act 1996 (UK Government, 1996).
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006 (UK Government, 2006).

¹⁶ For example, my literature review shows a wealth of evidence suggesting that Section 28 continued to be deeply impactful, hence this was included within the policyscape.

- A 1987 circular from the Department of Education and Science describing Section 28 (Department for the Environment, 1987).
- The 2000 Sex and Relationship Education guidance (Department for Education and Employment, 2000).
- The Department for Education and Employment 2000 Sex and Relationship Education guidance (Department for Education and Employment, 2000).
- The Local Government Bill [HL]: the ‘Section 28’ debate. Bill 87 of 1999-2000 (Lords Hansard, 2000).

RSE Guidance & Internal References

This category included available guidance and requirements, whether that be directed to parents, teachers, or other stakeholders, issued as an additional tool to clarify questions around, or give advice for, either teaching in the RSE curriculum or teaching those subjects touched upon within the curriculum. It also potentially included any document from the Department for Education which is designated as setting out the conditions of the RSE curriculum, or any related curriculum, any appendices of these documents, and any documents intertextually referenced inside them.

- The Catholic Education Service’s *Model Policy for Relationships and Sex Education 2020* (Catholic Education Service, 2019).
- The National Curriculum in England primary curriculum (Department for Education, 2015a).
- The National Curriculum list of compulsory subjects (UK Government, 2023a)
- Sections 34 and 35 of the Children and Social Work Bill 2017 (Department for Education, 2017b).
- The *Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education, and Health Education in England Government consultation response* (Department for Education, 2019e).
- The Department for Education RSE consultation release (Department for Education, 2018c).

- The RSE core primary school curriculum for England (Department for Education, 2022a).
- The RSE Statutory guidance (Department for Education, 2019d).
- The *Teacher training: respectful relationships* PowerPoint provided by the Department for Education for teachers (Department for Education, 2020d).
- The *Teacher training: families* PowerPoint provided by the Department for Education for teachers (Department for Education, 2020c).
- Ofsted's *Research commentary: teaching about sex, sexual orientation and gender reassignment* (Ofsted, 2021b).
- Annex B of the 2020 RSE statutory guidance Stonewall Charity LGBT-inclusive resources (Department for Education, 2021).
- Stonewall's *Different Families, Same Love* pack and wider resources (Stonewall, 2019, 2021, 2022).
- The Religious Education curriculum guidance (UK Government, 2023a).
- The *National curriculum in England: science programmes of study* (Department for Education, 2015b).
- The *National curriculum in England: primary curriculum* (Department for Education, 2013a, 2015a).
- The Department for Education's *Parental engagement on relationships education* guidance (Department for Education, 2019b).
- The Department for Education's *Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education: Statutory guidance for governing bodies, proprietors, head teachers, principals, senior leadership teams, teachers* (Department for Education, 2019d).
- The Department for Education's *Policy Statement: Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education, and personal, Social, Health and Economic Education* (Department for Education, 2017b).
- The Department for Education's *Relationships education, relationships and sex education (RSE) and health education: FAQs* (Department for Education, 2020b).

- The Department for Education’s *Political Impartiality in Schools* guidance (Department for Education, 2022c).

LGBT Inclusion Policy Events

Events, including protests, scandals, reactions to policy, or policy interpretations, which may, or may not, have elicited a response from the government. Response from the government, which could have been in the form of guidance, for example, on how to avoid future protests, or clarification of policy conditions, was also included here.

- Teachers’ Unions response to the *Political Impartiality in Schools* guidance (Adams, 2022).
- Safe Schools Alliance’s response to the RSE guidance (Safe Schools Alliance, 2020).
- Transgender Trend’s response to the RSE guidance (Transgender Trend, 2020).
- Andrew Moffat, Deputy Headteacher at the centre of the Birmingham LGBT inclusion in primary schools protests, describing negotiations with parents (Bagwell, 2020).
- Suella Braverman’s Keynote Speech at the Policy Exchange Conservative think tank as transcribed on their website (Braverman, 2022a) and the government’s website (Braverman, 2022b).
- The Department for Education guidance *Primary school disruption over LGBT teaching/relationships education* (Department for Education, 2019a).
- The governmental response to a public petition titled *Remove LGBT content from the Relationships Education curriculum* (UK Government, 2023b, para. 1).
- The Department for Education guidance *Parental engagement on relationships education* (Department for Education, 2019b).
- The Department for Education *Promotional material. Relationships, sex and health education: guides for parents. Guides for parents of primary and secondary age pupils that schools can use to communicate with them about teaching relationships and health education* (Department for Education, 2019c).
- Michael Gove’s letter to Brendan Barber concerning the Equality Act 2010 (Gove, 2012).

- Oxfam statement on the *Political Impartiality in Schools* guidance (McLaverty, 2022).
- *The Asleep at the Wheel: An Examination of Gender and Safeguarding in Schools* Policy Exchange report (Moore, 2023; Policy Exchange, 2023).

LGBT Equalities Legislation

Equalities legislation and guidance which applies to schools and in some way refers to either gender or sexuality inclusion in schools was also included as it provides a wider legal framing to the analysis.

- The reform of the National Curriculum in England *Equalities impact assessment* (Department for Education, 2013b).
- *The Equality Act 2010 and schools* guidance issued concerning the Equality Act 2010 (Department for Education, 2018b).
- *The Equality Act 2010 (UK Government, 2010)*.
- Ofsted's guidance for *Inspecting teaching of the protected characteristics in schools* (Ofsted, 2021a).
- *The Marriage Same Sex Couples Act 2013: The Equality and Human Rights Implications for the Provision of School Education* guidance issued by the Equality and Human Rights Commission for schools (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2014).
- The Government Equalities Office *LGBT action plan: Improving the lives of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people* (Government Equalities Office, 2018).
- The Government Equalities Office *LGBT action plan: Improving the lives of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people follow up report* (Government Equalities Office, 2019b).

8.2.2 *Teacher Participants*

8.2.2.1 **Selection Criteria & Recruitment**

To focus on policy analysis alone would be to ignore the many teacher interpretations of inclusion that I cannot fathom. Primary school teachers and staff are key receivers and interpreters of policy meaning. Interviews and questionnaires with primary school teachers therefore complemented policy analysis by examining the patterns of discourse participants drew upon in a way that paid attention to the subtleties and contradiction of the subject level of interpretation. They gave vital insight into how inclusion policies are received, the importance allocated to them, the meaning ascribed to them, and their potential enactment, as well as insight into the multitude of other elements constructing how queer people in the context of primary schooling were perceived. This multiple-methods design was thus essential in allowing me to make clear the “curious contradiction (that) exists between policy and practice through following discursive threads and breaks between the two ” (Kurian, 2020, p. 1080).

Being a teacher or member of school staff¹⁷ in England was my only selection criteria as I did not wish to pre-classify participants too much based on their school type (faith, independent, single sex etc.). Instead, I contacted a large array of schools, regardless of primary school type. This was beneficial in that it allowed me to see how teachers described how their various school types shaped LGBT inclusion.

To recruit participants, I emailed the school main office or the head teacher’s email address, depending upon which email was detailed within the online freedom of information request database for primary school contact information in England (Department for Education, 2020a). These emails (See appendix: Recruitment Email) asked the recipient to circulate this email to their staff body. To enable potential participants to decide whether they wished to participate, the email briefly detailed the aims of this research before giving contact details to arrange an interview and providing a link to the questionnaire. Participants could decide to do either an interview, questionnaire, or both. Online interviews and questionnaires were carried out in the same stage of research, with participants choosing in which option they wished to participate. When describing the research aims, I attempted to emphasise that I was seeking

¹⁷ Some participants, for example, were Headteachers or other managerial/administrative roles etc who did not have teaching roles. I use the umbrella term ‘teachers’ for all school staff.

any and all opinions and to frame my research aims with a kind of ‘neutrality’ rather than as social justice research. This ‘neutral’ presentation of my research, alongside the option to anonymously complete the questionnaire aimed to somewhat offset self-selection biases. I was concerned that those teachers who were already enthusiastic and knowledgeable about LGBT inclusion would be proportionally dominant. However, it appears after examining the data that teachers with something of a spread of opinions participated.

8.2.2.2 Participant Details

As the data analysis process continued through data collection, I sought to keep interviewing participants and sending out questionnaires until the discursive themes of the data became more prominent. Previous research has found that there is a level of hesitancy around participating in research around sexuality, sex, or gender (Nelson, 2015; Thein, 2013), with research in the area sometimes struggling to find even a few school-based participants out of hundreds of requests (Neary, 2017; Wilder, 2019). Meanwhile, as the entirety of the research for this project was carried out during 2020 and 2021, amidst the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic, the teachers responding to this study were dealing with the increased workload that came with sporadically adapting to teaching online. Therefore, my method of emailing schools to garner interest for the interviews and questionnaires was combined with snowball sampling, as is common when attempting to access hard-to-research populations (Handcock & Gile, 2011; Salganik & Heckathorn, 2004; TenHouten, 2017).

Participants recorded self-descriptions in their own words, in response to the question “How would you describe yourself? For example, this could include age, gender, sexuality or anything else you would like to add”. This information was used to give my analysis a sense of how participants identified themselves and some context to their answers. This section was particularly useful in relation to analysing the unique experience of queer teachers. Teachers reported other information such as the amount of years they had been teaching, or their marital status, but this was not analysed in this data, and as such sexuality and gender are the only self-description labels which are counted in the table below.

Within the findings chapters of this thesis, each participant's quote is accompanied by their pseudonym, self-description, job description (if not referenced in their self-description), school type (if stated), and whether the quote was given in a questionnaire or interview.

Depending on whether they participated in an interview, a questionnaire, or both, teachers are split into three data sets: 'Interview & Questionnaire', 'Interview Only', and 'Questionnaire Only'. 363 teachers participated in total.

Table 1: Number of participants identifying with certain sexuality and gender identity labels divided by data source.

Identity	Data Source		
	<i>Interview & Questionnaire</i>	<i>Interview Only</i>	<i>Questionnaire Only</i>
<i>Lesbian</i>	4	2	8
<i>Gay</i>	3	3	12
<i>Bi</i>	1	1	18
<i>Pansexual</i>	0	0	2
<i>Transgender</i>	0	0	1
<i>Non-Binary</i>	0	0	1
<i>Polyamorous</i>	0	0	1
<i>Queer</i>	1	1	2
<i>Straight</i>	17	5	116
<i>Unspecified</i>	1	4	159
Total Responses	27	16	320

Having discussed the policies and population selected for analysis in this thesis, in the following section I turn to examine how I collected data from the teacher participants.

8.3 Methods of Data Collection

The methods of data collection used here were consistent with my research question, following an in-depth, discursive nature of inquiry through policy analysis, interviews, and mostly qualitative questionnaires (including opinions on children's literature with queer characters). As I have already described the section of policy documents, and later describe its analysis (See section: Policy as Discourse & Policy Archaeology Methodology), in this section I detail the nature and designing of the interviews and questionnaires. I then reflect upon my reasons for employing these methods, and their appropriateness in line with my theoretical background and research aims.

8.3.1 Interviews

Individual online semi-structured interviews provided one of the methods used here to clarify and tease out discourses surrounding queer identities and inclusive policies, as is common in studies into sexuality in schools (Abbott et al., 2015; Corteen, 2006; Mason, 2010). These interviews were conducted online using either Teams or Zoom, dependent on participant choice, and were audio recorded using both Audacity Audio software and a mobile audio recording app. There was no video recording.

The nature of the interviews helped to answer the research questions here in several ways. My interview strategy was informal and flexible, emphasising prompt questions, room for tangents, gentle guiding back to the topic, follow-up questions, and story-telling, rather than a strict question structure, in order to more fully examine the multiple discourses in participants' responses (McGrath et al., 2019). I had an order for the questions that I wanted to ask and kept this list on one side of my screen so that I could dip into the questions should a participant's answer offer a natural follow-up (Bryman, 2006, 2016; Gillham, 2000). The development of the interviews in line with the questionnaire is described in the section below. Most of the interviews lasted between half an hour to an hour, but there was the occasional interview which lasted longer. Prompts were considerably useful for helping participants to give more detail in their answers, particularly as this back and forth often led participants to spontaneously circle back or to add more examples (Jiménez & Orozco, 2021).

Whilst the interviews were conducted online out of necessity due to the coronavirus pandemic, the online style offered several benefits to this research. The research being online

offset the high cost associated with qualitative research (LeCompte & Schensul, 2010) whilst being simultaneously more convenient to arrange than an in-person interview or questionnaire, given there was no need for travel (Deggs et al., 2010; Janghorban et al., 2014). This lack of in-person meetings may also have heightened the sense of anonymity, which, as aforementioned, was sought in this study, though this is uncertain (Clark-Gordon et al., 2019; Moises Jr, 2020). Despite early critique, many researchers now find that online interviews allow a somewhat personable experience due to video sharing (de Villiers et al., 2022; Hooley et al., 2012). Whilst online research presents a potential barrier to participation through requiring access to a computer and a relatively good internet connection, this was not considered to be a significant risk in this study. Due to the requirements for teachers to teach online, it was reasonable to assume most teachers had access to a computer.

8.3.2 Questionnaires

Questionnaires, attached as a Google form link to each recruitment email, were the other method participants could choose as their form of research participation (See appendix: Questionnaire). As participants could go directly through the questionnaire link, I had no contact with those participants who filled out a questionnaire only and did not request a follow-up interview. Participants could leave any question blank apart from the consent form presented at the start of the questionnaire, and the question asking whether LGBT content should be present in primary schools. Without providing a pre-set yes or no answer to either of these required questions there was no option to submit the questionnaire.

Having the same basic question structure as the interviews, the questionnaires were also mostly open-ended, and participants were not limited in space to provide detail in the majority of their answers. Many participants expressed their views in only a few words, but some contributed significant narratives, with one, for example, writing over 1000 words in total (See appendix: Example Questionnaire Response). Questionnaires, though they offer little in the way of dialog or clarification, still allowed insight into the discourses surrounding LGBT inclusion. This insight was not necessarily dependant on the length of the response. For example, examining how positive descriptions of an ‘inclusive’ school could sit alongside opposition to inclusion of LGBT content, I was able to, in part, tease out the contradictions, the complexities, in definitions of ‘inclusion’ and in the discourses forming the (un)suitability of LGBT content.

Questionnaires (See Appendix: Questionnaire) were employed alongside the interview phase to increase the accessibility/recruitment of my study. Whilst some have pointed to questionnaires having a higher propensity for a more prominent researcher voice given the limited scope for clarifying participants' answers, they have also been cited as an effective way to access views, memories, and experiences when the nature of leading questions is carefully considered (Eckerdal & Hagström, 2017). For further discussion of the design of the questions used in the interviews and questionnaires, see the Interview & Questionnaire Design section below. Bearing in mind previous research findings that participants may feel awkward expressing their opinions on this subject (Nelson, 2015; Thein, 2013) questionnaires provide a more anonymous method of participation for those who do not wish to discuss their thoughts face-to-face (online) (Bartram, 2019; Oringderff, 2004). As researchers DePalma and Atkinson found in the research underpinning the *No Outsiders* project (See chapter: Literature Review), responses to their anonymous online forum gave them access to frank, sometimes rather heated, anti-LGBT discourses that were not as prominent within the participants who volunteered to participate in the later more in-depth discussions (Atkinson & DePalma, 2008a; DePalma & Atkinson, 2009a). As discussed in the findings of this thesis, this was also found to be the case here. Anonymity was likewise important as it provided a platform for those participants who did not wish to disclose their sexuality and/or gender face to face (Robertson et al., 2018). Questionnaires were therefore used in this research to broaden the scope of discourses to which I had access, potentially providing a platform for those who felt ill-inclined to participate in the interviews for any number of reasons.

Questionnaires were also used to broaden participation by being rather easily accessible. The online questionnaires, whilst as lengthy as the interviews in terms of set questions, could have been more easily filled in, given that there was no need to arrange a mutually convenient time to participate. This seemed to be an appropriate method as teachers are often an overburdened group and so may appreciate a quicker way to participate (Kim & Asbury, 2020; Walker et al., 2019; Worth & Faulkner-Ellis, 2021). The questionnaires proved rather more popular than the interviews suggesting that they were indeed preferred by some participants. Anecdotally, the questionnaire link itself may have hindered questionnaire participation for some. Participants may have, rather astutely, been suspicious of an unknown email link given that this is commonly associated with phishing scams. To offset this risk of suspicion I used my Durham University email address to give a level of legitimacy to my emails.

8.3.3 Interview & Questionnaire Design

The interviews and questionnaires contained the same set of questions, which were mainly open-ended questions that looked for “rich and detailed” data (Gallagher, 2009, p. 84). By giving open-ended questions throughout the methods, I aimed not to pre-limit the scope of the answers that participants might give, and instead to broaden the potential range of responses by leaving room for elaboration (Evans & Broido, 1999; Haddock et al., 1993). Closed yes/no questions offered an accessible overview of the data, which was then enriched and explored in relation to elaboration in response to the open-ended questions.

The questions within both the interviews and questionnaires started by deliberately bringing the anonymous nature of the reporting here to participants’ minds through pseudonyms and optional self-description. By asking participants at the start of the interviews and questionnaires to describe themselves, rather than specifically asking for sex, gender, age, or geographical information, and to give themselves a pseudonym at the very start of the questionnaire or interview, I aimed to stress the anonymity of the study. In line with the theoretical frame of this study, these methods did not seek an objective truth about the participants themselves but rather wished to gain a level of insight into how participants saw themselves, whilst also considering the need to limit the extent to which participants perceived a need to temper opinions for fear of backlash upon publication (Gudmundsdottir, 1996; Jackman et al., 2022; Loh, 2013; Randall & Phoenix, 2009; Tanggaard, 2009).

After both ensuring proper consent had been given, in the form of the emailed consent form for interviews, or the online consent form as part of the questionnaires (see appendices: Interview Consent Form and Consent & Anonymity Notice), and questioning around pseudonyms etc. had been completed, the questions around inclusion began. One of the most prominent methodological difficulties in this study was how to examine inclusion without imposing a definition of what inclusion means. A key theoretical underpinning of this study is that language is powerful and that the discourses we draw on are never completely *neutral*. I had to consider that by asking about a group, I was discursively constructing it. Aiming to research participants’ interpretations and perspectives meant searching for their voices, their labels, and their definitions within the answers. Of course, I do acknowledge that meaning from questionnaire and interview data will always be co-constructed, it is never simply already formed within the participant and given to the researcher unscratched (Cotterill & Letherby, 1993; Oakley, 2016). To bring participants’ voices to the fore I tried to write and structure the

questionnaire and interview questions in a way that limited my voice within the research, firstly through the nature of the questions, secondly through their general structure.

For this reason, the first questions were ‘grand tour’ open-ended questions, as is common within qualitative research, which asked very generally about *inclusion* without reference to *LGBT* inclusion (Miller & Crabtree, 1999, p. 99). I asked:

“What is the ethos of your school? How do you feel about this?”

“What does inclusion in a school context mean to you? Can you give any examples of things that your school does/ could do that are inclusive?”

This gradual narrowing within the interviews allowed me to become familiar with the phrasing and terms participants used, meaning I could somewhat mirror their labels in order not to impose my own. As suggested previously, I used these questions to gain a base definition of ‘inclusion’ against which I could compare later constructions of *LGBT* ‘inclusion’ in order to understand the complexities and potential contradictions within them.

After these general questions, I moved to more specifically ask about *LGBT* inclusion in their schools and their opinions on both its inclusion and who should make decisions around its inclusion. One key gap in the literature this thesis aimed to contribute to was the form of *LGBT* inclusion after the changes to the RSE curriculum (See chapter: Literature Review). Previous literature has indicated that the question of including *LGBT* content in primary schools is surrounded by the issue of parental and religious rights to influence what is taught (Callaghan, 2015; Carlile, 2020b; Cuthbert & Taylor, 2019; DePalma & Atkinson, 2010; Gray, 2010; Hermann-Wilmarth & Ryan, 2019; Hooker, 2018; Johnson, 2020; Meyer et al., 2019; Nash & Browne, 2020; Rudoe, 2017). Within this context, the small amount of research in this area points to variation in its inclusion across schools (Atkinson, 2021; Hall, 2020; Wilder, 2019). I, therefore, designed my questioning around gaining a broad picture of whether and where *LGBT* content was reported to be present by each teacher and how they felt about this:

“Is *LGBT* content ever referenced in your school day-to-day life or school policies? If so, how?”

“Do you think it would be appropriate for the government to make inclusion of *LGBT* content in primary school mandatory for the age group that you teach? Why?”

“Who do you think should decide whether topics such as *LGBT* content should be included in the curriculum?”

As one of my main aims in this research was to understand the discourses underpinning the presence or absence of LGBT content in light of the recent RSE changes, I followed up these questions with:

“Have you heard of any of the government's policies concerning LGBT content in schools? If so, what have you heard?”

I did not wish to assume that the RSE curriculum had a prominent, or any, influence, and as such left these curricular changes unsaid. The idea that policies are “continually up for negotiation and re-negotiation, and thus are characterized by ad hocery even with their appearance of stability” unmoored my assumptions of the clarity, the coherence of policy which informed my open-ended, intentionally vague questioning of what participants knew of current inclusion initiatives (Walton, 2010, p. 136). Policy was not assumed to be a prominent, or even always a present, sway on individual participants’ discourses in order that I did not limit my analysis to examine only discourses related to policies and ignore the wider stage of influences (Elmore, 1996).

The questions above were followed by one of the few closed questions, which asked:

“Do you think LGBT content should be brought up at any stage in primary school? (Y/N)”

The question in the questionnaire provided a ‘Yes’ or ‘No’ tick box which then directed teachers to the corresponding next page asking for the elements influencing these views. In the interviews, I modified my follow-up questioning to reflect asking what impacted their opinion that LGBT content should, or should not, be present in primary schools.

“Why do you think LGBT content should not be mentioned in primary schools?”

“What factors influence your opinions on LGBT content and primary schooling?”

(Or)

“Why do you think LGBT content should be mentioned in primary schools?”

“What factors influence your opinions on LGBT content and primary schooling?”

My review of the literature indicated that inclusion of LGBT content is seen as a particular point of contention for young children, who can be perceived as too ‘innocent’ for teaching about sexuality or gender to be appropriate (Bower-Phipps, 2020; DePalma, 2016; DePalma & Atkinson, 2009a; Ferfolja, 2010; Llewellyn, 2022a; Malins, 2016; Neary, 2017). I therefore asked at what age LGBT content was appropriate in primary schools for those who answered

that it should be included, and whether it was appropriate at any stage in schooling for those who answered that it should not:

“At what age do you think LGBT content should be mentioned?”

(Or)

“Do you think LGBT content should be brought up at any stage in schooling? (E.g. senior school, college)”

For those responses that stated yes, LGBT content should be included in primary schools, I asked where this should be the case:

“Where do you think LGBT content should be mentioned in the primary curriculum? (E.g. Subject, Relationships Education, Religious Education, etc.)”

The literature points towards LGBT content being included rather sporadically, dependant on the efforts of certain teachers and not often integrated throughout the school curriculum (Allan et al., 2008; DePalma, 2011; DePalma & Atkinson, 2009; DePalma & Jennett, 2010 (Atkinson, 2021). Asking *where* LGBT content should be included gave an important comparison to where LGBT content was said to be present in their school, therefore elucidating the actual inclusion of their school, teacher’s wishes for such, and any disconnects between the two.

The last part of the questionnaire looked at opinions on the suitability of four children’s picture books, three featuring openly queer characters, for use in their primary school classrooms. Before discussing this section, some clarifications on the language used in these questions are needed. The process of constructing the questions was a highly reflective one and a good deal of consideration was given to avoiding leading questions (Arksey & Knight, 1999; Bryman, 2006, 2016; Creswell & Poth, 2016). Firstly, when I asked about the inclusion of LGBT content, I asked whether it should be ‘mentioned’. This word has connotations of being rather briefly included in schools, and not integrated throughout. I chose this as an alternative to suggesting that LGBT content should be more thoroughly integrated, as a means not to suggest this expectation, though I acknowledge that this choice also carries a suggestion of what LGBT inclusion is.

Secondly, I used the label ‘LGBT content’ as, as referenced in the Theoretical Underpinnings chapter of this thesis, this is the term used in the RSE policy guidance. Whilst in the interviews I could mirror the language used by participants somewhat, in the

questionnaires I could not. I did not clarify the meaning of LGBT content and left the term intentionally vague. Whilst my analysis does focus on how discourses of inclusion change dependent on what kind of queer identity is in question, to ask specifically which identities should be included in the curriculum seemed to be rather leading and would have inserted my own de-homogenised concept of what LGBT means into the narrative (Browne, 2008; Fotopoulou, 2012). Instead, to see the contradictions and limits within inclusion for certain queer identities I used a wide range of questions to be able to better examine participants' examples, their silences around certain topics, and their responses to the children's literature (Patton, 2003; Schensul et al., 2012).

8.3.3.1 Children's Literature

The final section of the questionnaires showed excerpts containing key pages from four stories (See Appendix: Children's) followed by questions asking participants to give their overall opinions on the stories, to say how appropriate they believed they were for the age that they teach, and to describe their main thoughts. Excerpts were preferred to the full texts for two reasons; to avoid copyright infringement¹⁸, and to make the texts a manageable reading length.

These questions started with the following partially closed question, asking teachers to choose either 'Yes', 'No', or to give their own 'Other' response:

"Is this a book that you would want to have in your classroom?"

The following questions were open-ended:

"What do you think of this book? Is there anything in particular in this story that you would like to comment on?"

"What do you think the main message of this story is?"

"Do you think this book is appropriate for the group that you teach?"

"How do you think this book would be received by the school, the parents and the children where you work?"

This section ended by asking three overall questions about the stories. Each was open-ended:

¹⁸ This approach was taken after consulting with Durham University legal department to ensure that the use of these books was not a copyright infringement.

“After reading all of these stories, do you have any overall judgements or comments?”

“Of all the stories you read, which did you like the most or least? Why?”

“Is LGBT content in any of the books at your school or classroom?”

These stories were brought in as a kind of document elicitation technique, as prompts to further see discourses surrounding LGBT inclusion (Grant, 2018; Heisley & Levy, 1991; Porr et al., 2011). Document elicitation has been cited as a means to “build bridges across the chasms” which separate researcher theorising from practice in schools (Torre & Murphy, 2015, p. 2) and has been used in various capacities previously to understand teachers’ views of what is appropriate in the classroom (Ruto-Korir & Lubbe-De Beer, 2012; Stockall & Davis, 2011). This approach has been favoured as it acknowledges that the complexity of discourses that may be drawn upon by participants far exceeds what could be explicitly asked by the researcher (Hidalgo Standen, 2021).

Participants’ reading of the stories was their own, thus this section somewhat relied less upon the phrasing of my questions to elicit responses. However, I chose these books with explicit goals in mind. The books used are detailed below alongside the rationale for their use.

8.3.3.1.1 A Day in the Life of Marlon Bundo

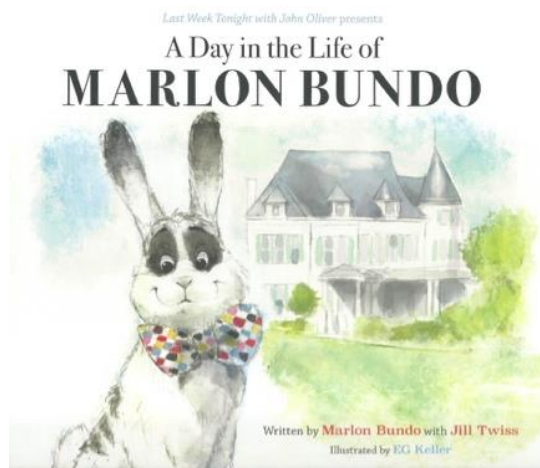


Figure 1: *A Day in the Life of Marlon Bundo* front cover.

Originally created as part of comedian John Oliver’s *Last Week Tonight* show, *A Day in the Life of Marlon Bundo* (Twiss & Keller, 2018) humorously derides former Vice President of the United States Mike Pence’s anti-queer views, parodying his own family’s book about their pet rabbit of the same name but making the eponymous bunny fall in love with another boy. After falling in love, the two rabbits tell all the creatures in the garden their happy news that they wish to marry. All are over-joyed, except the Stinkbug (a character resembling Mike Pence) who tells them that he is in charge and boy bunnies cannot marry each other. The animals decide they can vote to change this rule and kick the Stinkbug out of the garden before celebrating the wedding.



Figure 2: Sample pages from *A Day in the Life of Marlon Bundo*.

8.3.3.1.2 *The Paper Bag Princess*

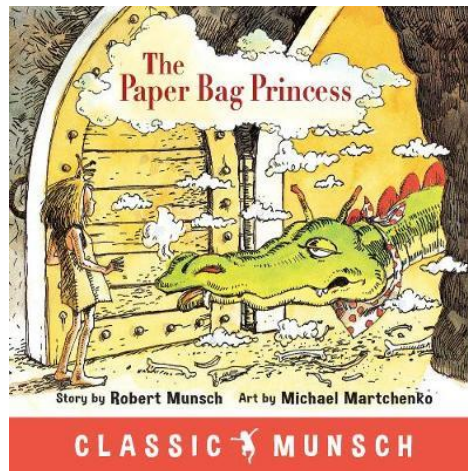


Figure 3: *The Paper Bag Princess* front cover.

The Paper Bag Princess (Munsch & Martchenko, 1980) tells the story of Princess Elizabeth who, after a dragon kidnaps the prince she intends to marry and burns off her dress, finds a paper bag to wear and sets off to rescue him. Elizabeth finds the dragon and tricks them into tiring themselves out by betting that they cannot, for example, fly around the world. Upon being rescued, the Prince tells Elizabeth that she should come back when she looks like a proper Princess. She calls him a “bum” and tells him she doesn’t want to marry him before skipping into the sunset.

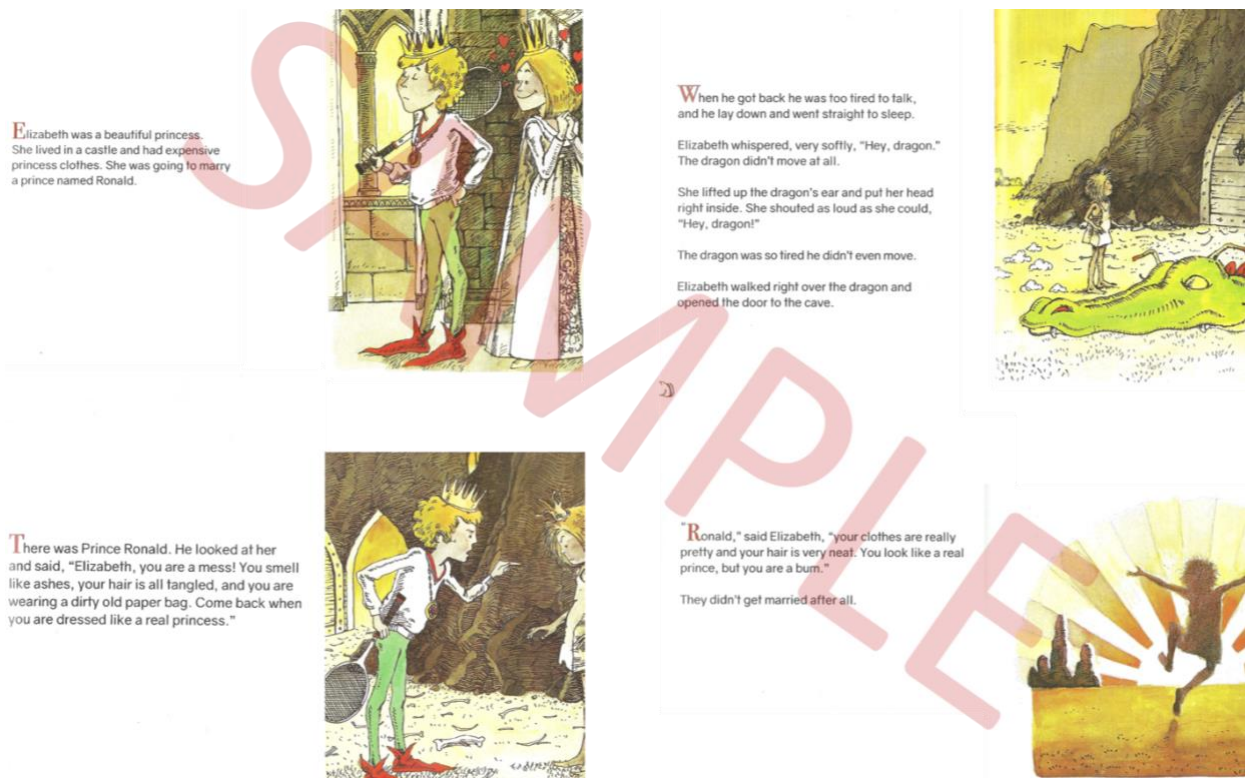


Figure 4: Sample pages from *The Paper Bag Princess*.

8.3.3.1.3 *When Aidan Became a Brother*

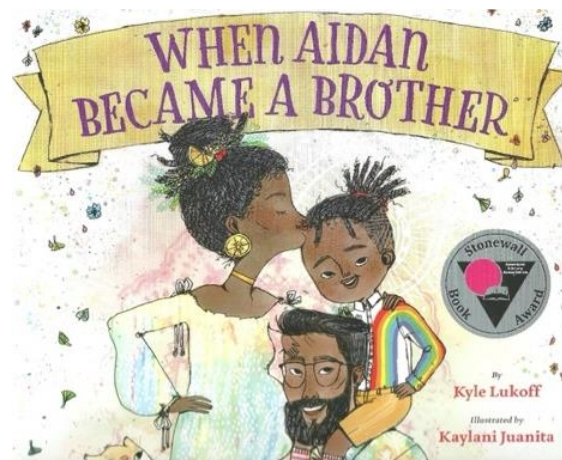


Figure 5: *When Aidan Became a Brother* front cover.

When Aidan Became a Brother (Lukoff & Juanita, 2019) tells the story of Aidan, a young boy who, after struggling with being assigned female at birth, expressed that he is a boy. His parents helped make the adjustments he wanted so he could feel more comfortable. Now that Aidan's mother is pregnant again, Aidan helps in painting the new baby's room gender-neutral colours and trying to decide on clothes but becomes nervous that the baby will still be

misunderstood as he was. His parents reassure him that the most important thing is that they all love and listen to the baby.



Figure 6: Sample pages from *When Aidan Became a Brother*.

8.3.3.1.4 Maiden & Princess

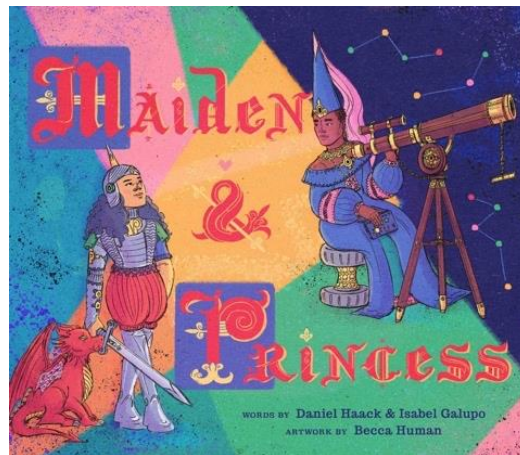


Figure 7: *Maiden & princess* front cover.

Maiden & Princess (Haack et al., 2019) is from a series of books including *Prince and Knight* and *Prince and Knight, Tale of the Shadow King* (Haack & Lewis, 2018, 2021) and, like others in the series, takes the traditional fairy-tale format. A maiden receives an invitation from the royal family to attend a ball so that the prince can find a bride. The maiden knows the prince from her experience in battle and she sees him as a brother. When at the ball, the maiden seeks escape from questions about whether she will dance with the prince. Outside she finds a beautiful woman and soon discovers she is the Princess. The two fall for one another and start dancing. Upon seeing this, the King and Queen show excitement at their daughter finding a connection with someone. The two women share a kiss and dance the night away before riding off on the maiden's pet dragon.



Figure 8: Sample pages from *Maiden & Princess*.

8.3.3.1.5 Rationale

I chose this set of books as a pragmatic trade-off between achieving a level of diversity in the themes that were found to be relevant in my literature review and keeping the amount participants had to read to a manageable length. I aimed for diversity in the identities represented, including racial, sexual, and gender identities, but I acknowledge that this list was limited. To name only a couple of limits, none of the characters are perceivably not able-bodied and there are no non-binary trans representations.

Whilst *A Day in the Life of Marlon Bundo* may be similar to, say, *And Tango Makes Three* (Richardson et al., 2007), I chose *Marlon Bundo* given that its political distance through the use of magical animals is contrasted with an explicitly political plot (and subtext) based around democracy. The book not only shows the acceptability of two males marrying but also takes a stance on the unacceptability of preventing such; the Stinkbug is certainly the antagonist of the

story. The story also shows multiple queer characters in the form of the (cat) vicar who brings her wife as a date.

Whilst I considered using *Introducing Teddy*, a story of a Teddy who tells her child friends she's now called Tilly, not Thomas, and chooses to present in a feminine manner (Walton & MacPherson, 2016) I opted for human representation of a transgender child given that my literature review showed children's autonomy over expressing and knowing their gender is a controversial issue. Whilst I could have used both, I considered this to be excessive reading. *When Aidan Became a Brother* also offers a look into how setting up gendered expectations (through clothes, behavioural expectations, toy types) can be confining and how adults can act to change their gendered expectations.

Maiden & Princess was selected as it offered both a presentation of queer women and of physical affection. The protagonists kiss and they are not a homonormative presentation of a family, as was cited to be common in the literature review section. Both *Maiden & Princess* and *A Day in the Life of Marlon Bundo* were also chosen given that they never label the characters' sexuality thus offering a chance to explore how silences around certain identities emerged. *Maiden & Princess*, particularly, stands in contrast to its sister book, *Prince & Knight* by giving no hint as to whether the Maiden *only* likes women; in *Prince & Knight* the prince "met many ladies... but it was soon clear that he was singing a different tune" (Haack & Lewis, 2018, pp. 5-6)

The Paper Bag Princess has no openly queer characters or relationships aside from its non-normative themes of female independence and eschewing the need for marriage to complete a story. The aim of using this book was to present a male/female romantic pair alongside those depicting openly queer relationships to investigate potential discourses of hyper-sexualisation for queer relationships.

Overall, I attempted to respect the complexity of the discourses I studied through this multiple-methods approach that allowed for better understanding and analytical engagement with my research question. In line with the rationale for a multiple-methods design, each method added its own distinct benefit, contributing to the robustness of the data through discursive complexity or diversity of participant access (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). Having elaborated upon the methods used in this research, in the following section I detail the analysis process of the data collected from them.

8.4 Data Analysis

This section opens with an exploration of how the interview, questionnaire, and policy data were analysed and the process of doing so. The section then moves on to describe the theoretical framework of analysis used, examining the Critical Discourse Analysis used across all data types and the specific kinds of analysis used only for the policyscape documents.

8.4.1 *Transcription & Process of Analysis*

To start with the interview data, in order to maintain ‘authenticity’, I transcribed every word of the interviews as it was spoken by the participants, with grammatical mistakes, vernacular idiosyncrasies, and pauses. I attempted to write contextual notes in my transcriptions (about important gestures or tone) to help give a sense of meaning to the analysis (Creswell et al., 2007; Creswell & Poth, 2016; Potter & Wetherell, 1995). Audio files of the interviews were transcribed within 24 hours of the interview, in order that I could properly remember such details. For procedural validity, I ensured it was clear within my notes what was my own addition to the data (for example, about the tone of voice) and what was literal transcription (Wolcott, 1990). Particularly, these notes were important in the case of sarcasm to understand that the sense of the words were not as written in the transcription.

Moving on to discuss the process of analysis across data collection methods, this was conducted as an ongoing process of reflecting upon emerging discursive patterns within the literature review, interviews, questionnaires, and policy analysis which then flowed into a more distinct analysis phase (Blair, 2015). This dedicated stage of data analysis post-data collection started with data immersion in which I read and reread the documents and noted down common themes before gradually building sub and over-arching themes (Parameswaran et al., 2020; Thompson Burdine et al., 2021). I then moved to data coding using Word and Excel to code the data through highlighting and table counts¹⁹. I returned to the transcripts frequently to pick up on discursive contradictions and shifting assumptions within responses. Throughout this process I continually reflected on how my own assumptions were constructing my analysis. This is further detailed in the Methodological & Ethical Issues section of this chapter.

¹⁹ I started the coding process using the qualitative data analysing software Nvivo. Due to the nature of the software, the discourse codes were not as easily read within the wider narrative of the participant. I therefore stopped using NVivo, as it was becoming more difficult to keep a sense of what each individual teacher was saying.

8.4.2 *Methods of Analysis*

8.4.2.1 **Critical Discourse Analysis**

As the purpose of this study was to illuminate the apparatus of LGBT inclusion, and as the apparatus is conceptualised as “a tangle, a multilinear ensemble... composed of lines, each having a different nature” (Deleuze, 1992, p. 159), I required an analytical approach which could tease these elements apart. For the interviews, questionnaires, and policy I partially drew upon Fairclough’s use of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) which treats discourse as a social practice with material but temporally and spatially dependant consequences for power relations and draws, in parts from Foucault’s concepts of discourse (Fairclough, 1993, 2001a, 2001b, 2003, 2013). In line with the social justice bent of this research, CDA pursues lines of power and marginalisation with the goal of social change (Bartlett & Varvus, 2016; Sauntson, 2013; Sauntson & Sundaram, 2016; Sundaram & Sauntson, 2016).

I was not wholly contained to this approach as mine was distinctly less linguistically focused and was framed within the idea of examining the apparatus and in a Queer Foucauldian theoretical framing. In this sense, analysing discursive threads involved examining explicit statements and understanding the silences surrounding them. I looked for discursive threads in the purely discursive and the material/discursive (that which has material only in its consequence like assumptions of the queer being hypersexual and that which, like the use of gendered bathrooms, is both material and discursively constructed). Particularly using the Queer imperative to trouble the *normal*, attention was paid to common-sense (hetero)normative assumptions around gender, sexuality and appropriateness which left certain visions of what can be included in primary schools in silence (Grzanka, 2020; Schieble, 2012). In line with CDA, meaning was not assumed to be fixed within the statements or objects of analysis. Instead, meaning must be understood in its historical and situational specificity, constructed by both the speaker (if there is a speaker, as is not the case with for, example, the place of RSE in the curriculum) and by my interpretation (Blommaert, 2005).

This historical construction of discourse gelled well with the Foucauldian sway of this thesis (Foucault, 1971) and was used alongside Fairclough’s concept of *intertextuality* (Fairclough, 2003). Intertextuality has many meanings. In a basic sense, it can be quotations from one text (or in this thesis text or speaker) being quoted or summarised by another, but it can likewise be “less obvious ways of incorporating elements of other texts.... (where) texts may also be incorporated without attribution” (Fairclough 2003, p.39-40). In this analysis this

concept was useful in two main ways. Firstly, it allowed for analysis of the way in which the discourses from the policyscape were (re)articulated and (re)interpreted in interviews and questionnaires, more fully connecting the elements of the apparatus and the discourses within the apparatus studied here. Secondly, policyscape intertextuality gave clues as to the power of policies persistence and evolution across the policyscape (Fairclough, 2003).

8.4.2.2 Policy as Discourse & Policy Archaeology Methodology

In terms of policy analysis, this thesis aimed to respond to Stephen Ball's call to pay "attention – in terms of the whos and wheres of policy – and develop a new toolbox of research techniques" (Ball, 2018a, p. 2), given that this call is closely aligned with examining the multiplicities of policy enmeshed within the apparatus of LGBT inclusion in English primary schools. In doing so, and in situating analysis firmly within the theoretical framework of this study, the analysis of the policyscape detailed earlier in this chapter was grounded within Stephen Ball's concept of policy as discourse (1993) and James Scheurich's Foucauldian Policy Archeology Methodology (1994). My use of these policy analysis tools builds upon and takes inspiration from the growing body of research that has used the theoretically rich concept of distributed policy ensembles within social justice education research to examine how they organise and constitute power relations in schools (Greer, 2022; Greer et al., 2023; Wilder, 2022; Winter & Mills, 2020). Policy analysis must not be thought of as separate to the interviews and questionnaires. The combined use of these methods shows the messiness of discursive patterns being enacted and reified, and in doing so allows me greater depth in answering my research question. It should again be stressed that my analysis of policy, whilst I use CDA alongside analytical methods specifically for policy, was conducted at the same time as the interview and questionnaire analysis in order that I might better understand discursive themes across sources.

Policy analyst Stephen Ball puts forward the concept of *policy as discourse* (Ball, 1993; Ball, 2012; Ball, 2018a; Ball et al., 2012; Ball & Olmedo, 2013; Braun et al., 2010) as a way of conceptualising policy that is explicitly linked to the Foucauldian multi-dimensional nature of power (Cremonesi et al., 2016; Foucault, 1975, 1980). Policy as discourse is not only seen as being implemented in a top-down fashion but is "set within a moving discursive frame which articulates and constrains the possibilities and probabilities of interpretation and enactment" (Ball, 1993, p. 15). In using this analytical frame, I aimed to give another layer to my analysis of the apparatus through looking at how policy forms norms around "who can speak, when, where, and with what authority", and how they canalised policy directives (Ball, 1993, p. 14).

Analysing policy within this lens allows for a view of how policies can form, and be based on, common-sense truths in discourses of LGBT inclusion. As Ball suggests, echoing Foucault's concept of the tacit nature of discourse (Foucault, 1972), in policy we "may only be able to conceive of the possibilities of response in and through the language, concepts and vocabulary which the discourse makes available to us" (Ball, 1993, pp. 14-15). From this standpoint, policy in this thesis was considered for the ways in which certain discursive creations, potentially under the guise of neutrality or common sense, are (re)produced, making certain constructions of inclusion easier, more accessible, or simply more obvious (Fairclough, 1993, 2001a, 2001b, 2013; Shore & Wright, 1999, 2003; Ward et al., 2016). Examining silences within policies played an important part of this, through examining the significance of where queer identities were, and were not, included.

As a result of this concept of policy, analysis here sought to examine the discursive disparities and contradictions between policy rhetoric and practice, but did not assume a unified, coherent policy message of inclusion from which interpretation may deviate (Diem et al., 2019). The idea of policy as discourse differentiates itself from a concept of policy in which logical actors create objective policies which are either translated correctly, as uniformly intended, or incorrectly, into practice (Baumgartner & Jones, 1991; Kay, 2009; Kay et al., 2009; Levinson et al., 2009; Parsons, 2002, 2004). Policy as discourse means seeing policy as yet another cultural production in itself, one which cannot be confined to the fixity of each text (Foucault, 1972). Ball's contention that "the more ideologically abstract any policy is, the more distant in conception from practice" was particularly useful here in forming the search for multiple, contradictory meanings of LGBT inclusion (1993, p. 13). Taking this more piecemeal, shifting view of policy allowed for greater analysis of the multiple meanings of inclusion not only in relation to the disconnect between policy and interpretation but also within the policyscape itself (Dryzek, 2002; Shore & Wright, 2003).

Within this overall conceptualisation of, and use of, policy as discourse, I likewise adopted Scheurich's Policy Archaeology Methodology (PAM) (1994). This theoretical tool advocates extending analysis beyond what policy says *about* policy issues to how it *forms* them (Gale, 2001; Walton, 2010). As the name suggests, Scheurich uses policy archaeology in the Foucauldian sense as a means of interpreting policies as "both categories of thought and ways of thinking" to see how policy implicitly or explicitly constructs certain individuals, groups or issues, as problematic and worthy of a legitimate policy response (Foucault, 1972; Scheurich, 1994, p. 302). Through this Foucauldian lens, PAM advocates examining not only

contemporary policy issues themselves, but the historical process of how these issues (in this case, inclusion) are made “manifest, nameable, and describable” (Foucault, 1972, p. 46). As Scheurich explains, policy “regularities are constitutive of dominant categories of thought and ways of thinking” (1994, p. 302). Though alternatives to the thinking set forth in policy do exist and may be apparent to some teachers, the salience allotted to certain ways of thinking, certain constructions of groups, through policy makes certain interpretations and enactments more accessible. With this in mind, my research committed to asking “How might the dominant narrative of the problem belie broader social complexities, controversies, inequities, and contexts?” within my analysis of how the problem of inclusion is constructed and what legitimate policy solutions are prominent (Walton, 2010, p. 136). Using the emphasis in PAM to examine the (re)construction of groups and policy issues was reflective of the Queer lens of this research. I aimed to unmoor the fixed nature of subject positions and concepts and instead seeing them as both constituted by, and constituting, their discursive consistencies in policy landscapes and teacher enactments (Butler, 1993; Fairclough, 2001b; St. Pierre, 2000)

Ball likewise subscribes to such a notion, summarising that policies “construct the problematic, the inevitable and the necessary”, but Scheurich’s analytical method was formative in more clearly conceptualising the way in which policy creates ‘issues’ and ‘solutions’ and focusing on the discursive nature of these formations (2021a, p. 10). PAM has been used previously in research examining the way in which the queer is constructed in schools, and gels well with the problematising queer frame of this thesis (Meyer & Keenan, 2018). Ball’s concept of policy as discourse and Scheurich’s PAM, draw heavily from Foucault’s work (Ball, 1993; Scheurich, 1994), structuring their ideas of power in policy around how it “induces, it seduces, it makes easier or more difficult” (Foucault, 1982b, p. 789). Each likewise works well with Queer Theory given the imperative to look for the silences, the assumptions, and the group categorisations within policy (Berlant & Warner, 1995; Britzman, 1995).

Policy Archaeology Methodology was therefore used as part of my wider concept of policy as discourse to elucidate how policies create a discourse of possibility for certain actions of inclusion, whilst leaving some unnamed and unthought, and encode selective representations of social groups which may give a false sense of group uniformity. In using this analytical framework, I was able to examine how the options for teacher responses are somewhat canalised by policy, and how the discourses (re)created by policy constrain the range of possible responses by making some more salient than others.

Having discussed the methods of data collection and process of analysis used in this thesis, the following section reflects on the methodological and ethical issues within these approaches and considers the ways in which they were addressed.

8.5 Methodological & Ethical Issues

Validity in this research is derived in part from extensive reflexivity on my role as a researcher and the social contexts in which participants took part. Reflexivity towards researcher positionality is a core characteristic for increasing the ethical and methodological robustness of queer research paradigms (Busher, 2019; Honeychurch, 1996; Simbürger, 2014). It refers to a researcher considering not only the subject positions, values, characteristics, and power relations of the participants but also their own (Thoresen & Öhlén, 2015). Underpinning this reflexivity was the rejection of uncomplicated neutral subject matter or single unambiguous ‘truths’ (Hammers & Brown, 2004; Holloway & Brown, 2016). After all, this research is not unmoored from goal or purpose. My values and goals of LGBT inclusion are formative to this study; its very reason for being nullifies neutrality. Taking this reflexive approach is not to insert those values into the research, but to acknowledge their existence and critically examine them (Creswell et al., 2007; Creswell & Poth, 2016; Denzin & Lincoln, 2008; Derksen & Field, 2022; Field & Derksen, 2021). Through actively acknowledging that the researcher always has a formative influence on the processes of knowing in the study (Dennis, 2018; Kuntz, 2016), reflexivity allowed me to examine this influence by casting a critical gaze towards my own position in the research in a process of “ongoing self-awareness” (Pillow, 2003, p. 178).

Concerning power relations within the interview, they were not conceptualised here to be straightforwardly more powerful on the side of the researcher (Kuntz, 2016; Vähäsantanen & Saarinen, 2013). I nevertheless attempted to offset the potential harmful effects of the interviewer/interviewee dynamic by constantly reflecting on the ways in which my questions in both the interviews and questionnaires could make participants uncomfortable. I was careful not to frame my position as evaluative (Pratt & Alderton, 2019) and stressed that I wished to learn from participants, setting myself up as a kind of ‘adult who lacks knowledge’ who wished for participants to better my understanding (Barley, 2011, 2013; Barley & Bath, 2014; Barley & Merchant, 2016). Whilst many teachers did relate personal experiences, some of which were

quite emotional, I ensured that I never asked a participant to share these and never pushed intrusive follow-up questions or asked for sensitive data.

8.5.1 *Being a Queer Researcher*

Reflecting on my subject positions, I drew from Kuntz's Foucauldian critique of the researcher's ethical and methodological stance in research and suggest that my position was not straightforwardly a 'researcher' position of power, but a complex shifting one in which I took on, and was cast in, multiple subject positions and power relations throughout the research process (Kuntz, 2015). I was aware that my position as a white, middle-class, academic, queer but straight passing²⁰ person conferred a complex effect on how I was seen, giving potential privilege, invisibility, and insight to my position depending on the moment (Adjepong, 2019; Bacio & Rinaldi, 2019; Baldo, 2014; Detamore, 2016; Sykes, 2014).

It is worth briefly exploring my decision to tell participants, in interviews, that I am part of the queer community only if they were also part of it, or were strong allies, as an intentional move to create show a degree of shared community. I did not wish for queer and allied participants to potentially feel vulnerable or objectified in sharing their identity as/support for a marginalised position and so shared this aspect of my own position. This decision was also a further acknowledgement that attempting absolute consistency in the subject positions I took up would be both impossible and misaligned with my theoretical basis. By extension, therefore, I also attempted to limit the extent that I was automatically seen as a member of the queer community by all participants. I framed my interest in the topic in my call for participants (See Appendix: Recruitment Email) by primarily referring to how it is a current topic for teachers to negotiate. Whilst researching, I also deactivated my social media accounts given that they show many prominent photos of me at Pride events etc, and as my name is distinctive, I did not wish to be searchable.

Some have suggested that to withhold the true intension in a study is to engage in an unethical practice. By this logic, as this research did not explicitly state that the results of this study intend to better the inclusion of queer people in schools, but instead asked for opinions on the subject, some participants may not have wished their narratives to be used for a goal

²⁰ By *straight-passing* I refer to the fact that in my life I am almost never assumed to be queer due to prevailing heteronormative assumptions and stereotypes. Straight-passing in my case is not an intentional act of, for example, self-preservation as it is sometimes employed, but an effect of heterosexuality being the default normative assumption for certain, typically more 'feminine' looks.

they deplore. Others, meanwhile, who see themselves as very ‘inclusive’ but draw on discourses marginalising to queer people, may not wish for these perspectives to be analysed as exclusionary. As Fine writes: “Even though this approach is justified in terms of its overall benefit and in light of the postmodern impulse that we will always have a political stance, it is based on a lie – a lack of kindly intentions, a hidden secret” (1993, p. 272).

Such a belief seems overly simplistic. This study gained standard consent from participants (See appendices: Interview Consent Form and Consent & Anonymity Notice), and I emphasised true reporting of participants’ words without moralistic character assessment. Hammersley offers a more nuanced take on the issue in which he separates accurate descriptions of participants’ narratives in context from participants agreeing with the analytic understanding of them which he writes is “likely to be different from, perhaps even in conflict with, how the people themselves see the world” (2006, p. 4). My logic underlying these decisions concerned my wish not to be disadvantaged in accessing a range of discourses concerning LGBT inclusion because some participants may not have wished to share with a queer person or a person with such research goals (Taylor, 2018). It also stemmed from my firm belief that LGBT inclusion does not disadvantage participants who dislike the concept, as it is not to act against their own best interests, but their wishes for another group, which cannot take precedence over that group’s interests. This was not a case of hiding my identity, but rather a decision not to relinquish the privilege that would be afforded to a non-queer person, and not to ironically fulfil the imperative to ‘come out’ given the theoretical basis of this study (Connell, 2015; McDonald, 2013).

8.5.2 Legitimising the Debate & Influence

I follow this critical theoretical thread to my reflexive approach to ‘intervention’ and the extent to which I presented my voice, knowledge, and values when speaking to participants (Dennis, 2018; Kuntz, 2016). I asked myself: To what extent was it ethical to attempt to intervene in interviews? Writing from a critical theoretical perspective, Dennis suggests that to ‘intervene’ with participants’ responses is not antithetical to the process of researching but an acknowledgement that the researcher is “always intervening” merely by bringing the topic to the forefront of participants’ attention (2018, p. 61). They write that to critically engage with the context of this kind of intervention is an ethical imperative, that the act of saying nothing is not always and necessarily a choice to be neutral or unimpactful, but sometimes a choice to legitimise through silent presence; “I am neither fully responsible for outcomes nor fully a bystander” (2018, p. 61).

Two issues best exemplify these considerations; the extent to which I was responsible for using my knowledge of policy to inform participants and how my own words and silences drew on potentially impactful discourses.

Firstly, the extent to which I was ethically obliged to use my knowledge of policy to inform participants was an ethically thought-provoking issue. In those interviews where participants asked me to clarify policies, I could straightforwardly answer and signpost my sources. The more contentious ethical issues were those situations in which a participant did not ask about policy but expressed as fact verifiably incorrect knowledge of policy.

To take one participant in particular as an example, in Jolie's interview she described her extensive work to create a queer-inclusive environment at her school, including a week-long Pride celebration with all subject inclusion, hundreds of pounds for new queer books, and a non-uniform day raising money for queer refugees. This had been a journey with significant, distressing setbacks, but had eventually been allowed by the school leadership and governors after a thoroughly researched presentation demonstrated the government mandate that "Pupils should receive teaching on LGBT content during their school years" (Department for Education, 2022a, para. 11) and that this inclusion be "fully integrated into their programmes of study for this area of the curriculum" (Department for Education, 2019d, p. 15). Jolie explained that this guidance meant that, in terms of LGBT representation in the curriculum "You have to. It's statutory." The guidance she used, as detailed within the Heteronormativity & Non-mandatory LGBT RSE chapter of this thesis, is only mandatory for the secondary curriculum. Primary schools are encouraged, but it is not statutory to include LGBT content (Department for Education, 2019e).

The ethical maxim of 'do no harm' does not perfectly and uncritically guide my action here. The mandatory policy backing she used, whilst not specifically for primary schools, gained considerable LGBT representation in her school. Correcting this mistake, pointing out that this was not mandatory for primary schools, risked Jolie having to backtrack to the governors and senior management and potentially lose her considerable gains for the queer community. After the brief consideration that conversational flow allowed, I opted to say that I read in the guidance that this was only for the secondary curriculum. Attempting to queer the position of the knowing but distant researcher in exchange for a genuine exchange of views, I introduced the idea that this mandate is not for primary schools without stressing a wrong answer, whilst still showing my support for the idea of mandatory inclusion. I chose to offer

my knowledge as Jolie could then do as she wished with it, acknowledging her autonomy as a professional.

Secondly, my interaction must be considered in light of participants sharing marginalising constructions of queer people. It was necessary to consider how I could legitimise LGBT inclusion as a debatably appropriate subject by researching this topic and exclusionary discourses by not challenging them.

Through asking for opinions on LGBT inclusion I was potentially constructing and maintaining the queer subject as a debateable presence in primary schools. Whilst I excluded any questioning which may have suggested that I thought LGBT content should not be in primary schools, in line with my theoretical framework, the very act of putting this subject up for questioning discursively positions the queer subject as debatable, and teachers as subjects with the power to legitimately decide whether or not they will object. There was a limited extent to which I could address this issue as the act of researching diverse opinions relied on gaining access to them and the overall benefit of examining these discourses goes some way to necessitating this questioning.

During the interviews I did not challenge participants, given that they had not consented to take part in a debate but rather to give their opinions. Instead, I used questioning to provide a space for some level of critical reflection, for example, through asking whether ideas that representing queer relationships is inappropriate because they're overly sexual means that heterosexual couples are also never represented. Similarly, several participants used incorrect pronouns for trans students. In these circumstances, I attempted to open space for reflection by using the child's preferred pronouns when asking follow-up questions. My interventions allowed me to queer normative assumptions subtly. In this respect, I attempted to gain access to participants' discourses without legitimising them and to extend the benefits of this study to the act of research, rather than containing it to publication.

In each of these interventions, I tried to "avoid swift catch-all solutions" and decontextualised ethical maxims in favour of critical ethical "hesitancy" in my actions (Kofoed & Staunæs, 2015, p. 26). Hesitancy in this respect eschews assuming either to intervene or to not is a binary in which one can unproblematically act. I rooted my critical ethical analysis of my subject positioning within the particular ethical situation. I acknowledge that this was not the only ethical way to act, but a considered, justifiable process of continually reviewing my actions.

8.6 Conclusion

This chapter has laid out the Foucauldian discursive approach used to comprehend the complexity of the apparatus of LGBT inclusion without predefining its boundaries or elements. This innovative, multi-methods research design that combines interview and questionnaire methods with in-depth policy analysis allowed for insight into the variability of both the extent to which and how policy could be formative to practice. Examining policy in the frame of the broad 'policyscape' illuminates the complexities and contradictions in the discourses formative to individual policy documents, and the ways in which conditions of its interpretation may be formative. The incorporation of children's literature into the questionnaires led to deeply insightful findings by grounding ideas of inclusion in concrete examples of potential practice, allowing for further analysis of the discrepancies between the perceived appropriateness of LGBT and heteronormative content.

As is demonstrated throughout the following findings chapters of this thesis, my use of a multiple-methods design within a Foucauldian discursive methodological framing was well suited to examining teachers' responses alongside the policyscape. This approach aided in untangling the non-linear, complex discursive patterns that flow between the two to understand how they form the apparatus of LGBT inclusion in primary schools.

9 Findings Part 1: Encouraged & Enabled

Primary schools are strongly encouraged and enabled to cover LGBT content when teaching about different types of families. Secondary schools should cover LGBT content in their RSE teaching.

(Department for Education, 2020b, para. 25)

In part 1 of my findings, I aim to understand how the RSE curriculum enables and encourages teachers to include LGBT content in the curriculum. I consider this issue in terms of LGBT content being optional and subject to parental consultation. I use a contrast to the explicit banning of LGBT content under Section 28 to understand the current picture of it being optional but encouraged.

This part is divided into two chapters. In the first chapter, I analyse policy from Section 28 to the recent changes to the RSE curriculum, problematising the heteronormativity drawn on in the separating out of LGBT content as an optional other, and the heteronormativity ignored in the lack of resources provided to make such inclusion practicable. I then compare this policy situation to that reported by teachers in schools, giving insight into *where* LGBT content predominantly was in schools, and starting to examine the elements forming this situation in terms of resource provision.

In the second chapter, I move to examine LGBT content as optional content on which parents must be consulted. I engage with the complex power relations in the decision-making process that consultation implies and, as in the previous section, examine this analysis in the context of teacher responses. I do this both in terms of how consultation informs the presence of LGBT content generally, and how this applies to queer teachers' discussions of their lives in schools.

20 years have passed since Section 28, the UK Government's legislation against any teaching which could be seen to "promote homosexuality" (UK Government, 1988, Section 2a), was repealed. Though research in those intervening years has suggested Section 28 lingers on in the continued resistance to LGBT inclusion in schools (Gray, 2010; Nixon & Givens, 2007), the presence of queer lives and the discussion of such have started to become relatively more visible in some primary schools in England (Johnson, 2022).

Indeed, the new 2019 RSE guidance for primary schools represents a seeming shift from the prohibitive Section 28, not only allowing for LGBT content in the curriculum, but stating it is “strongly encouraged and enabled” (Department for Education, 2020b, para. 25). LGBT content remains, however, non-mandatory in this curriculum, and schools must consult with parents on all such non-mandatory RSE content. No research has yet extensively examined these changes or examined the place of LGBT content in English primary schools in light of them. LGBT content may be “strongly encouraged and enabled” (Department for Education, 2020b, para. 25), but a small body of literature (See chapter: Literature Review) has previously pointed to a largely heteronormative culture in English primary schools, including an unevenness in the presence and place of LGBT content between schools (Atkinson, 2021; Wilder, 2019). Research has also suggested that this unevenness is formed in relation to schools reluctance to incur backlash from parents (DePalma, 2016; DePalma & Jennett, 2010), bringing into question how the requirements to consult parents will impact the inclusion of LGBT content in the curriculum, or elsewhere in the school.

I use Section 28 as a starting point for my analysis of the current RSE curriculum in order to understand “the history of the present” (Foucault, 1975, p. 31), to grapple with the question of how we can understand the shift from (primary) schools being previously prohibited, but now encouraged, to include LGBT content in their teaching. A queer imperative informs my line of inquiry here. To briefly reiterate, heteronormativity is the discursive dominance of social structures, relationship ties, and identities which conform to normative, cisgender, heterosexual, and other socially privileged concepts, that act to (re)create the assumption that such are the *norm* and by extension designate that which does not conform to these shifting standards as *other*. Given that my research question aims to understand the apparatus of LGBT inclusion in English primary schools, I aim to understand the shifting nature of heteronormativity within this apparatus and the mechanisms of power forming it.

I use the Foucauldian concept of power as “governance”, as that which can act not only through explicit prohibitions, such as Section 28, but through the distributed mechanism which makes certain actions more likely than others, or *encourages* them, as a basis for this analysis (See chapter: Theoretical Underpinnings section The Apparatus of Power) (Foucault, 1982b, p. 789). As Foucault described his concept of power:

It is a total structure of actions brought to bear upon possible actions; it incites, it induces, it seduces, it makes easier or more difficult; in the extreme it constrains or forbids absolutely; it is nevertheless always a way of acting upon an acting subject

(Foucault, 1982b, p. 789)

I ask, how does policy, and the educational system into which it is implemented, make decisions around LGBT content *easier or more difficult*? If Section 28 can be seen as that which *forbids*, then (how) does the RSE curriculum *encourage* or *induce* and *seduce*²¹ teachers to include LGBT content in primary schools? The concept of the *total structure* of power provides an analytical tool which aids here in conceptualising the multiplicity of elements forming the apparatus.

To examine this multiplicity in terms of policy, I employ two methods to understand how policy informs discourses of LGBT content, and teachers themselves, each of which draws on the above Foucauldian concept of power. Firstly, Scheurich's Policy Archaeology Methodology, which examines how policy discursively constructs certain issues, but not others, as worthy of a policy response (Scheurich, 1994). Secondly, Ball's concept of policy as discourse which advocates seeing policy as not only a written directive directly translated into practice but a discursive construct which "forms the objects about which it speaks" (Ball, 2021b, p. 387)²². In using this concept of policy as discourse, I attend to the way in which governance through policy leads to the "production of new kinds of 'willing' subjects" (Ball, 2009, p. 537). 'Subject' is used in the Foucauldian sense to refer to the "form of power which subjugates and makes subject to" (Foucault, 1982b, p. 781), the ways in which power makes teachers here "subject to" the parameters of policy, and at the same time "subject to" a construction of the self through a teacher subject position laid out in policy (Foucault, 1982b, p. 781). This is not to eclipse any possibilities of resistance, as is discussed throughout this part, but to suggest, as aforementioned, that certain ways of being are made *easier or more difficult*.

²¹ By seduce here I refer to the ways in which subjects are powerfully attracted to some ways of acting, and how those ways of acting seem more attractive.

²² This concept shows Ball's analytical ties to Foucault, who stated that discourses "systematically form the objects of which they speak" (Foucault, 1972, p. 54).

9.1 Heteronormativity & Non-mandatory LGBT RSE

Moving from the forbidden status of LGBT content in schools under Section 28, to its encouraged, but non-mandatory, status in the 2019 RSE curriculum, in chapter one of this findings part I ask: How has the nature of heteronormativity changed from one policy to the next and how did this interact with teachers implementing LGBT content in schools? Are schools now ‘encouraged and enabled’ to include LGBT content?

Using a Foucauldian concept of power as “governance”, I aim to understand how the power relations forming the apparatus of LGBT inclusion, and the heteronormativity within it, may act not only through explicit bans or allowances of LGBT content, but also through the wider system of that which makes including such in schools “easier or more difficult” (Foucault, 1982b, p. 789). Particularly in this section, the non-mandatory status of LGBT RSE, and the resources provided for its inclusion, are considered in light of how they make including LGBT content *easier or more difficult*.

9.1.1 From Banning to Encouraging

Section 28 seems a fitting starting point for this archaeology. Brought into law under the Conservative Thatcher Government, Section 28 was passed as part of the 1988 Local Government Act (UK Government, 1988). Considered within the literature to have been borne of anti-gay panic proliferating in the 1980s, particularly in educational debates, Section 28 codified heteronormativity in schools (Davis, 2021; Gillian, 2003; Nixon & Givens, 2007). It forbade schools²³ from “promot(ing) the teaching in any maintained school of the acceptability of homosexuality as a pretended family relationship” (UK Government, 1988, Section 2a). A 1987 circular from the Department of Education and Science describing Section 28 stated that:

²³ It was not the individual teacher who was potentially open to legal action but the Local Education Authority as a whole (House of Commons Library, 2000) There were no prosecutions made as a direct result of section 28 (House of Commons Library, 2000) and the act was considered by some to be legally dubious, given that the “Education Reform Act 1988 placed the management of schools in the hands of governing bodies and Headteachers and imposed a national curriculum for teaching” (House of Commons Library, 2000, p. 15; Uk Government, 1888)

There is no place in any school for teaching which advocates homosexual behaviour, which presents it as the norm, or which encourages homosexual experimentation

(Department for the Environment, 1987, para. 22)

After being in place for over a decade, the late nineties and early two-thousands saw the New Labour government attempt to repeal the bill. Despite a protracted campaign from religious and moral conservatives, Section 28 was repealed in England in 2003. When it stopped being the law not to promote LGBT identities as the norm, some worried that schools may have to and as such framed this prospect as an infringement on their rights not to do so (See chapter: Appropriateness in Teaching for an examination of *rights* and LGBT content) (Moran, 2001). The UK Government negotiated this repeal, in part, through two measures. Firstly, through setting out that schools would not have to now reverse the principles of Section 28 themselves; they would still be free to teach their perspectives on homosexuality, and to teach only heteronormative content. Secondly, through new Sex Education guidance which privileged marriage as the most stable, acceptable form of relationship (Vanderbeck & Johnson, 2015). Section 403(1) of Education Act 1996 already stated that RSE must “encourage those pupils to have due regard to moral considerations and the value of family life” (UK Government, 1996, p. 403) and the 2000 Sex and Relationship Education Guidance furthered this through stating that “pupils should be taught about the nature and importance of marriage for family life and bringing up children” (Department for Education and Employment, 2000, p. 4). Under “Sexual identity and sexual orientation” the 2000 Sex and Relationship Education Guidance reflected Section 28, suggesting that “There should be no direct promotion of sexual orientation” (Department for Education and Employment, 2000, pp. 12, 13), but did not explicitly reference any one sexuality.

In 2013, after same-sex marriage became legal, the question of whether schools would have to *promote* same-sex relationships was renewed²⁴. The Equality and Human Rights Commission issued guidance to assure schools that teaching, or *promoting*, same-sex marriage would not be required. The guidance, *The Marriage Same Sex Couples Act 2013: The Equality and Human Rights Implications for the Provision of School Education*, states:

²⁴ Debate here was also renewed in the implementation of the Equality Act 2010. See The Equality Act 2010: Discrimination in Curricular Delivery & Content section of the Appropriateness in Teaching chapter for discussion.

No school, or individual teacher, is under a duty to support, promote or endorse marriage of same-sex couples... Teaching about sex and relationships should not promote any sexual orientation

(Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2014, pp. 2, 3, 4)

The repeal of Section 28 shows the complexity of heteronormativity in the apparatus. Section 28 was rather explicitly heteronormative in its outright statement of what should be considered a norm, but its repeal was not necessarily a reversal of this. Heteronormativity imbues the polycscape post Section 28 not through any mandate not to discuss the queer, but through the contradiction in banning the promotion of sexual orientation at the same time as teaching the preference for heterosexual marriage. Whilst potentially referring to any sexuality, the thinly veiled insinuation of *promotion* within the 2000 RSE guidance echoes Section 28 and, as same-sex marriage was not legal in England until 2013²⁵, teaching the importance of marriage could only mean heterosexual marriage. Likewise, the guidance after the 2013 Same Sex Couples Act, that “teaching about sex and relationships should not promote any sexual orientation” is suggested within a document which suggests schools can teach their own religious views on marriage, even if this is contained to the sole acceptability of heterosexual marriage (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2014, p. 4).

It is significant to note that the repeal of Section 28 represents not a shift in the banning of LGBT content to it being necessarily within the curriculum, but to it being *potentially* included, subject to decisions from the school. In the new RSE curriculum, LGBT content remains so.

Though attitudes have significantly improved towards LGBT identities in the decades since Section 28 was in place²⁶, LGBT content, particularly in schools, is still controversial. In 2019 after multiple RSE-related protests, the government stated that the “majority of the objections relate to the teaching of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) content, particularly in primary schools” (Department for Education, 2019a, para. 3). This context set the stage for the recent changes to the RSE curriculum. After an amendment to Sections 34 and 35 of the Children and Social Work Bill 2017 made Relationships Education mandatory for

²⁵ The Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act came into effect in 2014 but was passed through parliament in 2013.

²⁶ The Government Equalities Office has reported a “steady increase in the proportion of people viewing same-sex relations as ‘not wrong at all’, with just 11% saying this in 1987, up to 39% in 2007, 47% in 2012, and 68% in 2017” (Government Equalities Office, 2019a)

primary schools²⁷ in England, and Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) mandatory for secondary schools²⁸ (Department for Education, 2017b), the government issued a consultation allowing members of the public to submit their views on what should be part of the new curriculum via an online questionnaire (Department for Education, 2018c). In the *Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education, and Health Education in England Government consultation response*, the Department for Education again detailed that the place of LGBT content in RSE was a particular point of contention: “LGBT is a specific issue which was raised in response to several questions in the consultation” (Department for Education, 2019e, p. 33). Opinions in this area are reported to have been split largely between those wishing for LGBT content to be included as a matter of equality, and those arguing that to do so would be inappropriate for children or may breach certain religious rights. The consultation laid out how the RSE curricular content would negotiate this polarity of opinion:

Schools should make decisions about what is appropriate to teach on this subject and when based on the age and development of their pupils and should involve their parent body in these decisions, informing them clearly and in a timely manner about what and how their pupils will be taught

(Department for Education, 2019e, pp. 8, 9)

In this policy move, the government thus devolved the decision of whether primary school RSE should feature LGBT content to the schools themselves. LGBT content as part of RSE was only made mandatory in the secondary, not primary, school curriculum. As part of the non-statutory curriculum, primary schools may decide whether to include LGBT content and must consult parents in their decision (Department for Education, 2019e). Both the attempt to accommodate multiple views of LGBT content, and the way in which it is framed as a decision for schools here characterise the contradiction and ambiguity running through the polycscape, illuminating a complex position of heteronormativity as part of the apparatus.

Naming LGBT content as an area of the curriculum about which schools may make decisions certainly constitutes a departure from the previous silence surrounding, or outright

²⁷ By *schools* the guidance refers to all maintained schools, academies and independent schools.

²⁸ Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, schools were given leeway in the introduction of the statutory RSE meaning became mandatory in 2020.

prohibition of, its teaching described earlier within the previous RSE guidance, or Section 28. Indeed, as aforementioned in the introduction, and title, of this chapter, the Department for Education’s FAQ document for the new RSE curriculum sets out that LGBT content is not only an option in the primary school curriculum, but a desirable one:

Primary schools are strongly encouraged and enabled to cover LGBT content when teaching about different types of families. Secondary schools should cover LGBT content in their RSE teaching

(Department for Education, 2020b, para. 25)

One could see this strong encouragement and enabling of LGBT content in primary schools as a kind of reversal of Section 28. A 180 degree turn from prohibiting LGBT content in schools, to encouraging it. However, as Foucault reminds us, power should not be conceived as a binary between what is and is not allowed: “...rather than assuming a generally acknowledged repression... we must begin with these positive mechanisms, insofar as they produce knowledge, multiply discourse, induce pleasure, and generate power...” (Foucault, 1978, p. 72). Viewing the 2019 RSE curriculum as a reversal of Section 28 would depend on why Section 28 was heteronormative: because it explicitly banned including LGBT content and stated it was *not* the norm, or because it allowed schools to do so? The repeal of Section 28 cemented the rights of schools *not* to include LGBT content, a right that has been repeatedly codified and persists within the new RSE guidance. Heteronormativity in the RSE curriculum may not be a mechanism of overt repression, but it nevertheless produces *knowledge*, in Foucault’s words, of the queer as other.

Here heteronormativity is paradoxically disrupted through this encouragement and at the same time reinforced through it being separated out as an optional *other* to the invisible heteronormative base of the curriculum onto which one may, or may not, decide to include LGBT content. Teaching about family, marriage, and puberty is presented as core content within the curriculum (Department for Education, 2022a), but cisgender heterosexuality is never named. It seems unclear²⁹ whether one can teach RSE without heterosexual cisgender

²⁹ I emailed Ofsted looking for clarity on this issue but received no response. I asked: “What would Ofsted’s hypothetical response be to a school that included no mention of cisgender and heterosexual people? If this hypothetical school were to only discuss same-sex marriage and other LGBT family structures, given that mentioning LGBT people is optional but mentioning heterosexual and cisgender people is not stated within the guidance, would they be considered to be teaching an unbalanced curriculum?” (See Appendix: Email to Ofsted). I also emailed the Department for Education with the same question

presentations, but one *can* teach without LGBT. It seems that, within the RSE statutory guidance, heteronormative relationship presentations are conspicuously over-present in their absence.

It is not the singling out of LGBT content in the RSE curriculum per se which constitutes this othering. After all, LGBT content could be singled out to specifically address past or present silences on the subject. It is, instead, that LGBT content is singled out as optional content in a curriculum which does not seem to deem it necessary to mention cisgender heterosexuality, seemingly to imply it will be taught as a norm. As RSE is the only place in the curriculum in which LGBT content is present, it is deeply significant that it is optional here, given that this signals that choosing not to include LGBT content in this area may translate into an entirely heteronormative curriculum.

Using Policy Methodology Archaeology, the policy issue here seems to be framed as the contentious, divided opinions on the non-mandatory nature of LGBT content. The solution, by extension, becomes the governance-like strategic devolution of policy decision-making alongside the vague appeasement of the conflicting views in framing the status of LGBT content (Foucault, 1982b; Scheurich, 1994). Ball’s Foucauldian concept of policy as discourse, of policy as “permeable and fluid, strategic and technical” applies to the strategic framing of non-mandatory LGBT content to appease various opinions, reflecting both the non-static nature of power here and of the heteronormativity running through it (Ball, 2021b, p. 388).

To further consider the nature of heteronormativity in the policyscape, in the following two sub-sections I consider how the inclusion of LGBT content in primary schools is made *easier* and/or *more difficult* in terms of both its interpretation and implementation. Firstly, examining policy interpretation, I analyse how the lack of clarity in certain policy documents around whether LGBT content is non-mandatory may make including it easier or more difficult. Secondly, I examine how the lack of resources provided for including LGBT content may make such more difficult.

9.1.1.1 Policy Interpretation: Clarity in Non-mandatory LGBT RSE

The extent to which this heteronormative separating out is impactful is dependent upon its interpretation in schools. Though it is true that LGBT content is non-mandatory in the primary

(See Appendix: Email to the Department for Education). In summary they replied that they were unsure, and that I should ask Ofsted (See Appendix: Reply from the Department for Education).

school curriculum, subtle differences can be seen in the extent to which the division in compulsory content between primary and secondary schools is emphasised in policy, across various policyscape documents. This is worth more closely examining, given the weight it may hold in policy interpretation and the extent to which it informs the power, the nature, of heteronormativity here.

The RSE guidance and surrounding policy has at times been rather clear³⁰ that LGBT content is not mandatory in the primary RSE curriculum. Perhaps the most stark clarification came after a petition to the UK Government was submitted to parliament entitled “Remove LGBT content from the Relationships Education curriculum” (UK Government, 2023b, para. 1). The government responded with a clear statement that: “Primary schools are not required to teach LGBT content but can choose to teach it in an age-appropriate way. The Department for Education has no plans to change its advice to schools on this subject” (UK Government, 2023b, para. 5). Albeit a direct statement from the UK Government, as a source this is obscure and not part of the RSE guidance directed at schools. It is thus limited in the clarity it can afford. Ofsted, meanwhile, have upheld that if primary schools do not teach about LGBT content within RSE this “will not have an impact” on their evaluation, provided they have consulted with parents, as it is only secondary schools in which LGBT relationships must form part of RSE (Ofsted, 2021a, para. 55). Ofsted guidance thus supports schools’ power to decide the appropriateness of having LGBT content in the curriculum, allowing this to be done without sanctions.

However, in the statutory guidance for the RSE curriculum, there is no distinction between what is mandatory for primary and secondary schools and only two³¹ paragraphs specifically address LGBT content (Department for Education, 2019d). The first reminds schools that they must treat all students with respect (Department for Education, 2019d, p. 15). The second states, in its entirety:

Schools should ensure that all of their teaching is sensitive and age-appropriate in approach and content. At the point at which schools consider it appropriate to teach their pupils about

³¹ LGBT families are also referenced as part of possible examples of family types, but this is not a section specifically looking at LGBT content.

LGBT, they should ensure that this content is fully integrated into their programmes of study for this area of the curriculum rather than delivered as a standalone unit or lesson. Schools are free to determine how they do this, and we expect all pupils to have been taught LGBT content at a timely point as part of this area of the curriculum

(Department for Education, 2019d, p. 15)

The statutory guidance for RSE references the necessity to *integrate* LGBT content. Presumably, this is suggested as a guard against the potential othering inherent in having a *standalone unit or lesson* separated out from the rest of the RSE curriculum, and yet schools may legitimately separate out LGBT content entirely. At the same time, though in other policies one sees that LGBT content is non-statutory for primary schools, in the statutory guidance there is no clear statement that LGBT content is *only* part of the mandatory secondary school curriculum. One could, reasonably, assume that such guidance is referring to schools being able to decide when, within their taught school years, LGBT content should be taught. That is to say, for primary schools, when from Early Years to Key Stage Two, such content should be integrated. As will be explored in the teacher responses section of this chapter, the absence of a clear statement on its non-mandatory status here may act to make including LGBT content *easier*, providing a policy backing that, whilst not necessarily accurate, makes LGBT content *seem* to be required in primary RSE.

9.1.1.2 Policy Implementation: A Lack of LGBT RSE Resources

The issue of how schools are *enabled and encouraged* to include LGBT content must also be considered in light of the practicability of doing so. Returning to Foucault's notion of power, for those teachers who are in favour of including LGBT content, are policy and curricular resources a factor here which makes doing such *easier or more difficult*?

When speaking of curricular resources, the current neoliberal climate of education must be considered. As aforementioned in the RSE & Resources section of the Literature Review chapter, over the past few decades, neoliberalism in education has positioned schools as both an aid to market growth and as that which should structurally imitate the markets (Geddes, 2007). In this model, state provision sets standards that schools must maintain, but largely pushes the manner of achieving such to schools in the name of allowing greater innovation through competition and greater choice for parents as consumers (Jessop, 2002). This has left, as suggested in Wilder's recent research in English primary schools, to a situation in which

schools, often lacking confidence and uncertain about sourcing their own RSE curricular resources, turn to private or third-sector curriculum packages to meet the requirements of the national curriculum (Wilder, 2019).

Though Wilder’s research was undertaken before the 2019 changes to the RSE curriculum, and indeed this issue exists in many parts of schooling (Ball, 2016; Ball, 2018a; Ball, 2021a; Exley & Ball, 2013), research undertaken by Ofsted also ponders the practicability of enactment, suggesting teachers lack curricular resources for including LGBT content (Ofsted, 2021b). Ofsted’s report pointed to “the lack of a detailed central curriculum”, “the grey areas (awareness that primary schools can opt not to teach LGBT issues if they do not deem this age-appropriate and after consultation with parents)”, and the “perceived contradictions in the information published by the DfE” within LGBT inclusion and RSE policy (Ofsted, 2021b, paras. 117-119). Indeed, two teacher training modules are provided by the Department for Education to support the new RSE requirements, but neither remedies Ofsted’s concerns. Neither *Teacher training: respectful relationships* (Department for Education, 2020d) nor *Teacher training: families* (Department for Education, 2020c) provide a detailed central curriculum, as Ofsted wrote, on how LGBT content can be taught, both suggesting that “primary schools are enabled and encouraged to cover LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) content if they consider it age-appropriate to do so” (Department for Education, 2020c, p. 11; 2020d, p. 12) with no content suggestions.

The only resources within the RSE curriculum referring to LGBT content are those externally provided resources referenced in the appendices. For example, cited in Annex B of the 2020 RSE statutory guidance is a section on suggested resources that schools may use in line with their chosen RSE content (Department for Education, 2021). This section signposts³² Stonewall Charity LGBT inclusive resources (Department for Education, 2019d) which, whilst comprehensive, requires a subscription for full access. The legitimacy of charity resources may also be lesser than those directly provided by the government. It is therefore unclear whether the anxiety around “the lack of a detailed central curriculum” suggested in Ofsted’s report would be remedied by such resources, in light of the potential for parental backlash

³² This section also signposts the Catholic Education Service model RSE curricular. This guidance is based around emphasising “the Church’s teaching on marriage and the importance of marriage and family life” with marriage being between one man and one woman, and as such does not only not provide LGBT inclusive resources (Catholic Education Service, 2019, p. 4).

found in both previous research and in this data (See section: LGBT Content in Primary Schools).

The lack of set LGBT content was set out by the Department for Education in a previous policy document reviewing the inclusive nature of the curriculum, the *Reform of the national curriculum in England: Equalities impact assessment* conducted in 2013, as a move to allow greater choice for schools. In a rather neoliberal positioning of schools as de-centralised free market agents, the report set out that, whilst some in their consultation wished for LGBT inclusive content in the curriculum, this proposal was rejected in order to “reduce the level of prescription” in the curriculum, and “give schools greater freedom” over their teaching (Department for Education, 2013b, p. 10).

The positioning of *freedom* here is reminiscent of the RSE guidance setting out that schools are *enabled and encouraged* to include LGBT content. Both such contentions are based in conceptualising the teacher as acting to choose the kind of content they teach but ignoring the potential constraints of finding and enacting these resources. As pointed to in the Ofsted report, and in the findings of this thesis, some teachers who support LGBT content when asked may find its inclusion is impeded by elements such as their time, budget, and knowledge in sourcing materials.

9.1.1.3 Policy Conclusions

That LGBT content is now said to be *encouraged* in primary schools certainly represents a shift from the openly homophobic rhetoric of Section 28, and from the previous RSE guidance explicitly privileging (heterosexual) marriage. However, the continued positioning of LGBT content as an optional *other* to the mandatory base of the RSE curriculum suggests a continuing, less explicit, mechanism of heteronormativity acting through a dispersed nature of power as “governance” (Foucault, 1982b, p. 789).

As the optional nature of LGBT content is not starkly and consistently repeated, the vague way this power is presented may potentially affect how this will be understood in schools, but it seems that a decision not to include LGBT content is certainly made *easier* by its optional nature. Meanwhile, the devolved nature of decision making around LGBT content extended to a lack of centrally provided curricular resources. The creation of teachers as subjects free from constraint in choosing their curriculum seems an element of the apparatus here, given that for those teachers who do wish to include LGBT content, the lack of curricular resources may point to such being made more *difficult*.

9.1.2 LGBT Content in Primary Schools

Moving now to examine how the conditions of the polycscape were translated, or reflected, in schools, teachers' responses suggest LGBT content was unevenly included. The reported presence of LGBT content, however, was not aligned with what teachers reported they thought should be present in schools.

I make this assessment based on responses to two questions (see the Interview & Questionnaire Design section of the Methodology & Methods chapter for a full list of the questionnaire and interview questions asked). In the questionnaire, and in each interview, participants were asked firstly if LGBT content is present in their day-to-day life or in school policies, and if so, where³³, and secondly, whether they thought LGBT content should be present in primary schools, and if so, where³⁴. I divided these answers by whether the teacher answered 'Yes' or 'No' to this question, and then sub-categorised them based on where LGBT content was, or where the teacher said it should be. The sub-categories I devised were as follows. For those answers stating 'No' they were: 'None' and 'Reactive'. For answers stating 'Yes', they were: 'Unclear', 'General Environment', 'RSE', 'RSE & General Environment', and 'Comprehensive'. A description of how I categorised the 'Yes' and 'No' categories, and their sub-categories, alongside examples³⁵ from the questionnaires and interviews, can be found below (see Appendix: List of Codes for a full list of the codes and sub-codes presented in this thesis).

'No'

No LGBT content was reportedly present in their school or policies.

'None'

No LGBT content was reportedly present in their school or policies, or the participant answered 'no' without further detail:

Arabeth: So are LGBT identities sort of referenced at all at school?

³³ A total of 349 participants answered this question, with 14 (questionnaire respondents) providing no answer.

³⁴ All 363 participants answered this question.

³⁵ I provide examples only of responses answering whether there is any LGBT content in their school, and if so where. As the two questions were categorised in the same manner, to present concurrent examples of if LGBT content should be in primary schools, and if so where, would provide no additional insight to the coding process.

Martin: No. No, no, not not at all

(Martin, Gay man, Teacher, Interview)

'Reactive'

LGBT content was only present implicitly through anti-bullying policies and/or through talk/questions from students:

Only when being LGBT is used in a derogatory way by pupils. Then appropriate guidance is given as to why it is inappropriate

(DC, M 54 and 'normal' and gay, Teacher, General Primary School, Questionnaire)

'Yes'

Some level of LGBT content was reportedly present in their school or policies. All of these sub-categories may also be alongside reported anti-bullying policies.

'Unclear'

LGBT content was present, but the participant did not specify how:

There is a nod to it - but more could definitely be done

(Polly, Headteacher, CofE School, Questionnaire)

'General Environment'

LGBT content was present within the school environment but not reported to be in the curriculum specially. This included assemblies, stories, or celebratory events:

Library display celebrating LGBT families, assemblies reflect LGBT awareness, school policies make clear bullying linked to sexuality will be treated seriously

(LG, 49 year old straight mum of one, Teacher, General Primary School, Questionnaire)

'RSE'

LGBT content was present in RSE lessons. For this code, either LGBT content was explicitly said to be contained to RSE or RSE was the only reported place:

it is mentioned in our Sex, Relationship and Emotion SRE policy

(Year 6 Teacher2, 48 Heterosexual Caucasian female, Teacher, CofE School, Questionnaire)

'RSE & General Environment'

LGBT content was present in both RSE and the general environment, as described above.

As a whole school, we have assemblies about people's rights and beliefs and the LGBT community has been included in these. As a class, we have PSHE lessons that focus on specific events or periods that people may go through. We talked about relationships during one lesson and included the importance of same-sex relationships too

(LF. 23, Female, Teacher, General Primary School, Questionnaire)

'Comprehensive'

LGBT content was present in multiple curriculum subjects which sometimes, but not necessarily, included LGBT content in the general environment.

anti-bullying policy directly references homophobic and transphobic bullying, PSHE policy refers to families being made up in different ways including same-sex, history topic on agnocide of Athens mentions transgender and gender identity

(Busy Head, Gay female, Headteacher, Faith School, Questionnaire)

Table 2: The number of responses stating whether LGBT content is present in their school, and if so, where, alongside number of responses stating whether they thought LGBT content should be present in primary schools, and if so, where.

LGBT Content Present		Data Source			LGBT Content Should be Present		Data Source		
		Interview & Questionnaire	Interview Only	Questionnaire Only			Interview & Questionnaire	Interview Only	Questionnaire Only
Yes	Unclear	0	1	18	Yes	Unclear	0	3	13
	General Environment	3	0	25		General Environment	1	2	12
	RSE	7	6	89		RSE	9	4	122
	RSE & General Environment	2	1	13		RSE & General Environment	0	1	7
	Comprehensive	0	2	9		Comprehensive	14	6	108
	Total	12	10	154		Total	24	16	262
No	None	4	5	66	No	None	3	0	56
	Reactive	11	1	86		Reactive	0	0	2
	Total	15	6	152		Total	3	0	58

Reflecting the RSE policy's allowance for schools to include LGBT content "if they consider it age-appropriate to do so" (Department for Education, 2020c, p. 11; 2020d, p. 12), examining Table 2 we see the mechanism of heteronormativity found in the policyscape reflected, with LGBT content being sporadically included across schools. Schools were nearly evenly split between whether LGBT content was, or was not, present. A total of 173 responses stated 'No' it is not present, whilst 176 stated 'Yes' it is. Wilder's research into three English primary schools that took place before changes to the RSE curriculum found that LGBT content varies across schools (Wilder, 2019). Here we see a consistent finding both after the RSE changes and on a larger scale. It should be noted that this data represents what teachers reported of their schools and therefore may be limited by the scope of their knowledge of the whole school. For example, it seems likely that some teachers may be unaware of other teachers' practice, and as such may under or overestimate the extent to which LGBT content is present in their schools.

In answer to whether and where LGBT content *should* be present in primary schools, the results were starkly different. Many more responses stated that it should be in schools, with a total of 302 saying it should, and only 61 stating that it should not. LGBT content in schools, therefore, was more sporadically included than most teachers thought should be the case. The possible reasons as to why this was the case are discussed throughout this chapter and thesis.

The existing literature examining LGBT content in primary schools suggests it is included in a very limited capacity compared to the heteronormative content that pervades the curriculum but goes largely unnoticed (Atkinson, 2021; Atkinson & DePalma, 2008b; DePalma, 2016; DePalma & Atkinson, 2010). Table 2 suggests that this still often remains the case. Even in those schools categorised as having some level of LGBT content, very few reported that this was present in multiple curricular subjects, or across the school; RSE was the most common category for 'Yes' answers of where LGBT content was. These findings are particularly significant given that the literature suggests RSE as a subject itself is often neglected (Formby et al., 2011; Sex Education Forum, 2018).

However, that LGBT content was present in these schools, and that in certain schools this visibility extends beyond one area of the curriculum, suggests the queer has gained a certain level of visibility. A small number of responses suggested that it was the RSE curriculum which has made LGBT content more accessible. 12 responses (2 from the interview only data source and 10 from the questionnaire only) stated that the new RSE curriculum had been formative to

the inclusion of LGBT content in their schools. The examples below are from the questionnaire only data set:

Due to the new relationships and sex curriculum, our school has consulted with the parents and laid out our plans to include LGBT relationships, issues etc in our school life. I consciously try to talk about LGBT topics and issues when it is appropriate where before I would have tried to avoid it

(Scott, gay, Teacher, Questionnaire)

Yes - RSE Guidance states that primaries should include content about LGBT relationships and teach about a range of different families

(Augusta, Female, Headteacher, Catholic School, Questionnaire)

The idea of the RSE guidance as an encouragement was clear here. Scott suggests a reversal in the extent to which they discuss LGBT content directly related to the RSE guidance, whilst Augusta positions the guidance as a kind of explanation succeeding her assertion that it is included. The RSE policy's naming of LGBT content as encouraged but ultimately optional may have legitimised the absolute heteronormativity in certain schools here, but in others, the very naming of LGBT content, even optional as it is, appears to have *induced* its inclusion.

9.1.2.1 LGBT Content & Interpretation

The data in Table 2 offers a broad picture of the unevenly othered but sporadically included position of LGBT content in primary schools. It is in the interview data that we more fully see the ways in which the non-uniformity in whether LGBT content was seen to be appropriate for primary schools interacted with the RSE policy differently depending on specific teachers' circumstances. Each teacher had their own judgements of appropriateness which interacted with others in their school. As they each interact with each other, discourses informing whether LGBT content should be in primary schools were enmeshed in the larger apparatus of power relations and thus were felt differently depending on its specific context. As this messiness in these interactions offers insight into the heterogeneous apparatus of power and knowledge structures in which they exist, in this sub-section I present two interview responses from teachers who both wished to include LGBT content in their schools but differed greatly in the way that they were able to navigate this situation.

The first, Jolie, a lesbian teacher and Equalities Manager, and the second, Bix, a bisexual teacher, were both deeply invested in including LGBT content in their schools. Each categorised as ‘*Comprehensive*’ for where they thought LGBT content should be in schools, both teachers explained the importance of including representation for young queer students across the curriculum. Upon the announcement of the new RSE curriculum, both teachers took the opportunity to attempt to include LGBT content in their schools where it had previously been lacking.

As Jolie explained, her school had originally rejected the ideas on the grounds of it being perceived as inappropriate:

Jolie: I was told no, because of essentially how the parents might receive it. So I really kicked off actually I I've never kicked off school in my life. I did... I had a meeting with my deputy head... She turned around and said to me, 'I'm going to be crude for a moment... I don't think they'd like the idea of two men having anal sex' and I was like 'this has got nothing to do with anal sex whatsoever and like bearing in mind I'm a lesbian' ... I'm like ... 'I don't know what you think about me, but you know that's fine'. I went to the governors about that was like, 'hey, this is indirect discrimination'

(Jolie, lesbian teacher and Equalities Manager, Teacher, Interview)

Bix recounted a similar experience, describing how, in a staff meeting discussing the new RSE curriculum, she attempted to introduce the idea of including LGBT content to her school's leadership. Much like Jolie, Bix's suggestion was met with a response hypersexualising LGBT content and a denial of its appropriateness:

I mentioned it, and [leadership position] just said 'let's not make things more complicated' and then he gave an example like 'oh if you go to Cambodia be careful because some of the prostitutes they are male but they look like females'

(Bix, bisexual, Teacher, Interview)

Whilst the two teachers' responses share similar beginnings, they diverge in the outcomes. For Bix, after her suggestion was initially rebuffed by leadership, she did not push the issue further. Therefore, whilst Bix was categorised as ‘*Comprehensive*’ for where LGBT content

should be present in schools, her school had no LGBT content. In explaining her decision not to take her suggestion further in the meeting, she explained that:

I feel like I can't talk. I have children and my partner is a man so they kind of assume I'm straight... I'm living inside a closet at work... I'm sad it's not addressed, but I don't know how to address it, I'm not making the planning. I just can't bring it up.

For Jolie, conversely, her school was coded as having 'Comprehensive' LGBT content. After being allowed to introduce it, she planned RSE for her own and other year groups, alongside Pride Week and LGBT History Month celebrations. The school's eventual agreement to this inclusion occurred after her complaint to the school governors, in which Jolie took it upon herself to create a presentation on the 'legal' basis of LGBT inclusion in schools. Although this duty to include LGBT content is, as earlier detailed, only for secondary schools, Jolie had interpreted the broad language of the *statutory guidance* as including primary schools within the mandatory LGBT inclusion. As she spoke here, she showed me her presentation on screen.

Jolie: So I gave a presentation to the governors as well... I said 'as educators where do we stand legally?' ... [gesturing to the presentation] 'So there is the new RSE policy which became statutory in 2019. So now this is statutory guidance.' I copied and pasted it. But it says here [pointing to presentation slide, this includes a screenshot of the RSE Statutory Guidance] 'must be delivered in our curriculum rather than standalone' So some of it is airy fairy but it is clear.

Arabeth: Is that specifically primary or is that?

Jolie: I don't know actually... I can't remember... But if you write down the name it is this document... [gestures to name of document on screen: Statutory guidance: Relationships and sex education (RSE) and health education] I think it is primary. I'm pretty sure it is... So basically, it says that LGBT+ inclusive education must form part of our curriculum and cannot be delivered as standalone lessons. So basically everyone, all schools have a requirement to make it a part their education essentially.

Heteronormativity, in the above responses, was an influential element of the apparatus which interacted differently within the power relations of each subject. The Foucauldian notion

of power as that which “incites, it induces, it seduces, it makes easier or more difficult” (Foucault, 1982b, p. 789) is once again useful for examining these relations. Both Jolie and Bix were confronted with a heteronormative discourse in being told that the subject was inappropriate with their colleagues linking LGBT content, but not heteronormative, to specific sex acts and prostitution. For each teacher, however, the heteronormative instrument of power naming LGBT content as inappropriate was differently perceived and acted upon.

For Bix, this reaction made LGBT inclusion much more *difficult*. Though she is not forbidden, not prevented, from pushing the issue, further action to attempt to introduce LGBT content in RSE, such as that Jolie took, seemed inaccessible to Bix. Drawing on both her non-managerial position, *I’m not making the plannings*, and her status as *living inside a closet at work*³⁶, Bix makes herself subject to the power of silence in the other teacher’s heteronormative discourse.

Jolie, by contrast, uses the school’s subjectification of the queer as inappropriate as a point of resistance to its heteronormativity. To use Foucault’s insight into discourse as both power and resistance:

We must make allowance for the complex and unstable process whereby discourse can be both an instrument and an effect of power, but also a hindrance, a stumbling-block, a point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy

(Foucault, 1978, p. 101)

Jolie uses the naming of LGBT content as inappropriate as “a point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy” (Foucault, 1978, p. 101) through linking the school’s judgement of inappropriateness to an implicit judgement of herself as a lesbian, *bearing in mind I’m a lesbian*, suggesting that to make such a judgement is to state that she is being hypersexualised, *I don’t know what you think about me*. Much as Johnson’s work in UK primary schools suggested explicit backlash against the queer can provide visible points around which resistance may form (Johnson, 2022), Jolie resists such a discourse, mobilising her

³⁶ It may be noted that Bix experiences a level of bi-erasure here; given that her partner is a man, she is assumed to be straight. For further analysis of bi-erasure and bi-invisibility within this thesis, see Findings Part 3: Different Types of Families.

position as an out lesbian to make her case for LGBT content partly on the basis of classing their judgement of inappropriateness as *discrimination*. The heteronormative discourse, and the extent of resistance, however, were uneven here, with its different effects depending on the power relations in these specific contexts, and whether they felt they could be open about their sexuality.

Likewise interesting is the way in which the RSE policy parameters allowing for schools to decide the appropriateness of LGBT content made the exclusion of such *easier*. For Bix, the school was seen to be responsible for deciding the content of the RSE curriculum, so she felt that she *just can't bring it up*. Jolie, however, was allowed to introduce LGBT content and celebrations to the whole school not only on the basis of this complaint, but because she, as Equalities Manager, conducted a presentation in which she mistakenly told the governors *it's statutory* for primary schools to do so. Heteronormativity initially makes Jolie's efforts more difficult and indeed represented a significant hurdle in the effort this negotiation took, but she in turn makes the decision that LGBT content is inappropriate harder for the school to make by invertedly misrepresenting the policy. Although this does seem to show that the RSE curriculum's power lies within its allowance for schools to decide whether to include LGBT content, after all, Jolie includes it after appearing to take away the school's prerogative to decide, this reading alone may be short-sighted. As alluded to in the policy section of this chapter, the policy document *Statutory guidance: Relationships and sex education (RSE) and health education* sets out that:

At the point at which schools consider it appropriate to teach their pupils about LGBT, they should ensure that this content is fully integrated into their programmes of study... Schools are free to determine how they do this, and we expect all pupils to have been taught LGBT content at a timely point as part of this area of the curriculum

(Department for Education, 2019d, p. 15).

This section of the document does not specifically clarify the different mandatory statuses in primary and secondary schools. Indeed, there is a lack of explicit clarification within this entire policy document. Jolie therefore interprets, as she stated, this guidance to mean *all schools have a requirement to make it a part their education* and that this inclusion *cannot be delivered as standalone lessons*. Other documents in the policyscape do specifically clarify the non-mandatory status of LGBT content for primary schools. However, if one read only the

Statutory guidance: Relationships and sex education (RSE) and health education, one could, as Jolie did, rather easily conclude that the call for all pupils to have been taught LGBT content at a timely point in RSE applied to primary schools. The importance of examining the policyscape both in terms of the pattern of discourses running throughout it and its individual elements is compounded here. The function of this policy in practice was thus not contained to what it allowed, suggesting attention must also be paid to the connotations of the policyscape and not only what is technically mandatory.

9.1.2.2 LGBT Content & Implementation

Whilst Jolie and Bix's responses point to the issues within the non-mandatory nature of LGBT content, in the following sub-section I move to discuss how lack of resources could influence its inclusion. Resources were cited as a key influence restricting the kind of LGBT content in schools, possibly offering insight into the gap between those teachers who had LGBT content in their school, and those who perceived that they should. Perhaps because there was no LGBT inclusive curriculum or resources to draw from, this lack was uniformly perceived to make including such *more difficult*. Though certain teachers sourced their own resources or other teachers in their school did, the process of doing so was not necessarily conducive to *encouraging* LGBT content on a wider scale.

Sufficiency of resources, of the ease of finding such, was not a question I set in either the questionnaires or interviews, but a significant proportion of teachers referenced this spontaneously. Whilst I refer to resources broadly here to encompass any means needed for LGBT content implementation, in Table 3 I use '*Curricular Resources*' to refer specifically to the physical resources needed to teach a subject, such as lesson plans and books. I then use '*Time*' to refer to the time to teach it, '*Leadership & Backing*' to refer to the support given by governmental policy or their school³⁷, '*Knowledge*' to refer to the knowledge of the subject, and '*Financial Support*' as the money available for resources if they are lacking.

³⁷ I have not separated school and governmental policy here as, whilst teachers sometimes distinguished clearly between them, most often referring to governmental policy, questionnaire answers sometimes referred to 'the policy' or 'policy' leaving some uncertainty as to which policy this referred.

Table 3: Number of participants who stated that they lacked certain resources and the type of resource they lacked.

Resource Lacking	Data Source		
	Interview & Questionnaire	Interview Only	Questionnaire Only
Curricular Resources ³⁸	22	12	70
Time	11	8	8
Leadership & Policy Backing ³⁹	23	15	82
Knowledge	6	7	14
Financial Support	10	4	4

As can be seen from the number of responses I coded as referencing lacking resources, implementing LGBT content was not seen as an easily practicable task. The greater proportion of the interview responses here potentially reflects the greater space this medium allowed for discussing constrains, and the population of this data source, most of whom were deeply interested in implementing LGBT content in their school. Both *‘Leadership & Policy Backing’* and *‘Curricular Resources’* were very frequently reported here. I discuss the role of policy as a backing, particularly in relation to parental challenges to schools’ inclusion, in the previous and following sections of this chapter, and therefore focus more heavily upon the role of curricular and other resources in the following extracts.

For some teachers, LGBT content was a subject with which they were unfamiliar and unsure of how to change this unfamiliarity. To give an example from the interview and

38 11 participants in this code also stated that they bought their own resources, for example, in the form of class books, using their own money.

39 15 participants in this code also stated a concern for advocating for or bringing in LGBT inclusion given that they may out them. This theme is further discussed within the Queer Teachers & Parental Consultation section of the Parental Consultation & Governance chapter.

questionnaire data source, I coded S as lacking ‘*Knowledge*’, ‘*Financial Support*’, and ‘*Curricular Resources*’. Supportive of LGBT content in schools personally but ill-acquainted with how such could be implemented, in the interview S repeatedly stressed that after receiving the questionnaire, which features books with LGBT characters, she felt a sense of shame for not having previously attempted to find similar resources:

I wouldn't want to offend somebody I... But I don't, I don't know what language to use and I don't know what is...

Until I'd seen [the questionnaire] books, I hadn't I hadn't even thought of it, and so that's shocking that that's shocking and upsetting for me that I'm so ignorant that I hadn't... You think... ‘Oh God, [I'm] not doing a good job!’

(S, female, Teacher, Interview)

Upon considering searching for resources, as we see below, S found that this lack of familiarity continued to be a hindrance:

Anything that makes things not so hard for people is is is good. It, yeah, it's it's use is useful and but then if you don't have access to those resources? I mean, I still wouldn't know and where. Where would I go? What do I type into Amazon? Gay promoting literature for children?

S’s lack of knowledge meant that she did not have the tools to research such resources. The mechanism of heteronormativity acts through the inaccessibility of LGBT content in S’s knowledge, but here we see that in her sense of personal failure, in *not doing a good job*, S somewhat locates the responsibility for finding such resources with herself. Drawing on, and recognising in herself, the subject position of teachers as free agents in creating their own curriculum, S positions herself as failing for not doing so. S’s attempt to make her curricula more inclusive further shows this, with her first response being to buy her own books. S’s desire to do so stemmed from her belief that the school could not purchase them, given that “there is no money in in schools”. Though the RSE policy does not require such, the delegated responsibility for decisions of including LGBT content, and the lack of accessible LGBT-inclusive curriculum from the Department for Education draws on a relation of power in which teachers, if they wish to include LGBT content, must navigate the barriers to do so themselves. Even with the knowledge basis for research, the current burden of work for teachers undermined the practicability of sourcing LGBT-inclusive resources. As one teacher coded for

'Time' described, finding LGBT-inclusive resources is a significant undertaking with an already over-burdened workload:

You are juggling plates. You are fighting flames. You want knife throwing at the same time it's, it is nonstop exhausting

(George, Teacher, Interview).

The data above suggests that the governmental RSE policy may state that schools are strongly encouraged and enabled to include LGBT content, but it stops short of providing sufficient resources to make this *easier* than not doing so, leaving Ofsted's aforementioned reported concerns corroborated and unresolved (Ofsted, 2021b).

9.1.3 Conclusion

At the close of this chapter, I return to the question I posed in its introduction: How has the nature of heteronormativity changed from Section 28 to the current RSE curriculum and how did this interact with teachers implementing LGBT content in schools? Are schools now 'encouraged and enabled' to include LGBT content?

In a departure from the blanket ban of Section 28, the encouragement of the RSE curriculum is now seen alongside a greater visibility of LGBT content, with this data showing around half of schools had some level of inclusion. However, the policyscape's containment of LGBT content to one area of this curriculum, and in this its separation from what is mandatory, showed a significant, persistent, but less explicit, heteronormativity (Foucault, 1982b, p. 789). Drawing on the concept of power as "governance", as that which acts upon the actions of subjects to make certain things *easier* or *more difficult* than others, the policyscape's lack of consideration for how the heteronormative environment affected schools' preparedness to include it constituted a significant element in the apparatus making LGBT content more difficult, if still possible (Foucault, 1982b, p. 789). Though many teachers wished to include more in their schools and some, like Jolie, did comprehensively include LGBT content, the latter was not without considerable effort and seemed somewhat supererogatory. As Ball contends, in the neoliberal apparatus of schooling, going beyond that which is aligned with the performative targets is possible, but "this is more often than not in spite of rather than because of policy" (Ball, 2018b, p. 234). Willing teachers were faced with researching lessons and finding resources, at the same time as navigating budget considerations, or others' discomfort and ideas of appropriateness.

9.2 Parental Consultation & Governance

In the second chapter of this findings part, I continue to examine the notion that schools are ‘encouraged and enabled’ to include LGBT content, but through the lens of parental consultation. As has been briefly referenced, in deciding whether or not to include LGBT content in the RSE curriculum, schools are told to “involve their parent body in these decisions” (Department for Education, 2019e, pp. 8, 9). Retaining the earlier used comparison with Section 28 to understand the shape of heteronormativity, in this chapter I examine how heteronormativity could be (re)created in the apparatus of LGBT inclusion through anticipated or experienced parental reaction.

I use the theoretical framework that surveillance from others, in this case in the form of parental reaction, can be effective in its potentiality and in actuality (Foucault, 1975). I draw on Foucault’s fluid concept of power as “governance”, as the way in which “conduct of individuals or of groups might be directed”, acting not through “violence” but through multi-faceted systems which “structure(s) the possible field of action of others” (Foucault, 1982b, p. 789). This concept aids in understanding how parental consultation can act as a kind of surveillance of teachers’ actions and how this may in turn shape them. I focus on the ways in which the guidance around parental consultation made teachers not only subject to a kind of surveillance, but informed a particular view of the teacher whose conduct was subject to parents as consumers (Ball, 2009; Foucault, 1982b). To reiterate what was discussed in the Literature Review of this thesis, neoliberal rhetoric of schools as a place of performativity, of “consumer choice” (Ward et al., 2016, p. 54), has become pervasive to such an extent that it constitutes a *common sense* (Ball & Olmedo, 2013; Moss, 2015).

I focus on the ways in which teachers are made subject to this discourse by policy, their schools, and they themselves. I use this internalised, pervasive notion of power to grapple with how requirements to consult parents in RSE extended well beyond this area of the curriculum. It is in this aspect that my focus turns to how the positioning of LGBT content as subject to consultation is particularly significant for queer teachers. If (as some schools in this data reported) consultation with parents led to the decision that no LGBT content should be taught, how does this relate to queer teachers talking about their lives?

9.2.1 Parental Consultation in the RSE Polycscape

Earlier in this findings part, I described the way in which by virtue of LGBT content being only present in the RSE curriculum, and in this being non-statutory, the only area of the primary school curriculum to name LGBT content is optional, leaving the potential for an entirely heteronormative curriculum. In a similar vein, LGBT content is again singled out as *other* by virtue of its place in non-statutory RSE given that this is the only part of the curriculum on which schools must consult parents.

Once again, it is the queer, but not the heteronormative, which is subject to consultation. Aside from RSE, the Department for Education has clarified that “Schools are not required to consult parents on any other aspect of their school’s curriculum” (Department for Education, 2019b, p. 3). Parents can withdraw their children from Religious Education (RE), but schools are not required to consult with parents as to its content (UK Government, 2023a). As previously discussed, the framing of LGBT content as a non-centralised issue, and the devolution of decision making for schools, has been framed in the polycscape within a mindfulness of the contentious nature of the topic. To return to the *Consultation Response* to the RSE curriculum, it was after detailing that LGBT content is a deeply divisive issue that the Department for Education set out that this would be a decision for schools to make in consultation with parents:

A large proportion disagreed with the position on teaching about LGBT in the guidance. There were many differing views, with some respondents wanting more content and others wanting no content... Clearly these two differing points of view cannot both be accommodated in this guidance... Schools should make decisions about what is appropriate to teach on this subject and when based on the age and development of their pupils and should involve their parent body in these decisions, informing them clearly and in a timely manner about what and how their pupils will be taught

(Department for Education, 2019e, p. 8 9)

The construction of the new RSE was built around a lengthy process of consultation which was carried forth into the consultation requirements within the RSE curriculum itself. The presentation of the conflicting views surrounding LGBT content sits directly alongside the devolution of decision making to schools and parents delineating a clear rationale for such a

policy move. This attempt to accommodate multiple views may be viewed in relation to the wider current neoliberal educational climate. Belying a paradoxically powerful mechanism of “governance” (Foucault, 1982b, p. 789) the Department for Education seems to have partially decentralised its operational influence in whether LGBT content should be present, yet at the same time powerfully centralised it in others (Geddes, 2007; Subramanian, 2018). Whilst schools can *legitimately* discriminate between which sexualities and genders are appropriate in the RSE curriculum, they cannot opt out of consulting parents. In this case, the polycscape denotes a *parentocracy* (Brown, 1990; Golden et al., 2021) in which the teacher or the school is made subject to a rhetoric of “consumer choice” (Ward et al., 2016, p. 4). The RSE curriculum thus positions LGBT content as a provision schools may have to tailor to consumer choice.

9.2.1.1 Consultation, Vetoes & Reflecting Backgrounds

Previous research theorising around the current parentocratic state of education suggests schools in general have become increasingly parent focused (Brown, 1990; Gravesen & Hølvig Mikkelsen, 2022; Kobakhidze & Šťastný, 2023; Madzanire & Mashava, 2012)⁴⁰. In this research it is a significant finding that the RSE curriculum seems unique in the extent to which parents are repeatedly and explicitly framed as a body that must be consulted in the formation of the curriculum. Multiple documents in the polycscape are either addressed to parents, or concern consulting with parents on the RSE curriculum. This relationship of power here is, however, complex. Though the polycscape is clear that parents must be consulted in the formation of the curriculum, the extent to which parental opinions should be formative is not.

To look deeper at the policy around parental consultation, the *Statutory guidance: Relationships and sex education (RSE) and health education* continually references the necessity to consult parents, despite parents not being set out as a target audience⁴¹. The word parent (or derivatives, e.g. parental) appears 59 times in the guidance⁴² which lays out that schools must “consult parents in developing and reviewing their policy” (Department for

⁴⁰ Though this is beyond the scope of this thesis, it should be noted that the position of socioeconomic status and class are strong themes in research on parentocracy in education.

⁴¹ “This statutory guidance applies to all schools, and is therefore aimed at: • governing bodies of maintained schools (including schools with a sixth form) and non-maintained special schools; • trustees or directors of academies and free schools; • proprietors of independent schools (including academies and free schools); • management committees of pupil referral units (PRUs); • teachers, other school staff and school nurses; • head teachers, principals and senior leadership teams; • Diocese and other faith representatives; and • for reference for relevant local authority staff” (Department for Education, 2019d, p. 6).

⁴² It may be of interest to note that LGBT, by contrast, appears 6 times.

Education, 2019d, p. 11) including telling parents “what will be taught and when ” (Department for Education, 2019d, p. 17) and “provid(ing) examples of the resources that they plan to use” (Department for Education, 2019d, p. 13). The references here to showing resources, to informing parents of the content, may suggest the process of consultation reflects the school making decisions on LGBT content, then giving an opportunity for parents to be *informed* of their decision. However, the statutory guidance likewise states parental consultation is intended to ensure “the policy meets the needs of pupils and parents and reflects the community they serve” suggesting a level of RSE content being shaped *to* parents’ views (Department for Education, 2019d, p. 11).

Multiple other documents in the policyscape address themselves to parents and/or lay out the parental right to be consulted on the content of the RSE curriculum, but in doing so each contains the same contradiction around where the power of decision making lies in this seemingly collaborative process. In the *Consultation Response* to the RSE curriculum proposals, consultation in the decision of LGBT content is framed as a matter of “informing” parents, and yet parents are simultaneously framed as a party constituting these decisions as schools are told they should “involve their parent body in these decisions” (Department for Education, 2019e, pp. 8, 9). The promotional material *Relationships, sex and health education: guides for parents* is a short two page document which again lays out the requirement for schools to both consult parents, but also suggests that schools reflect their community beliefs in RSE:

Your child’s school is required to consult with you when developing and renewing their policies on Relationships Education... You can express your opinion, and this will help your child’s school decide how and when to cover the content of the statutory guidance. It may also help them decide whether to teach additional non-statutory content. Schools are required to ensure their teaching reflects the age and religious background of their pupils

(Department for Education, 2019c, p. 2)

The *Relationships, sex and health education: guides for parents* document’s statement to parents that their opinion “will help (their) child’s school decide” (Department for Education, 2019c, p. 1) seems to offer a kind of lesser partnership relationship in the decision making process. However, this interpretation is again complicated by its express directive that schools are “required” to reflect their pupils’ backgrounds (Department for Education, 2019c, p. 2) and

that in the *Statutory guidance: Relationships and sex education (RSE) and health education* stating the same (Department for Education, 2019d, p. 11). The *Relationships education, relationships and sex education (RSE) and health education: FAQs document*, which is seemingly addressed directly to parents being laid out in a Q&A format structure in which the question comes from a parental subject, provides a further example of the role of parents in informing schools' decisions (Department for Education, 2020b). It states:

Q: Will my child's school have to engage with me before teaching these subjects?

A: Schools will be required to consult with parents when developing and reviewing their policies for Relationships Education and RSE, which will inform schools' decisions on when and how certain content is covered. Effective engagement gives the space and time for parents to input, ask questions, share concerns and for the school to decide the way forward. Schools will listen to parents' views, and then make a reasonable decision as to how they wish to proceed. When and how content is taught is ultimately a decision for the school, and consultation does not provide a parental veto on curriculum content.

(Department for Education, 2019c, p. 1)

It remains unclear here what kind of input parents can have, and how much their views should be taken into account, despite the lack of veto⁴³. Again, we see a positioning in which schools are the authority over the curriculum, they are *informing* parents, content is *ultimately a decision for the schools*, and at the same time parental views *inform* decisions on how content is covered, their child's background must be reflected.

Reflecting Foucault's power as governance, as the way "conduct of individuals or of groups might be directed" in a multi-faceted apparatus of that which "structure(s) the possible field of action of others" (Foucault, 1982b, p. 789), the sheer number of RSE documents here compounds the subjectification of the school, and by extension the teacher, as that which is, if vaguely accountable to, then certainly oriented towards, parents. At the same time, teachers are positioned as agents with the power to ultimately make decisions concerning the content of the

⁴³ The Parental engagement on relationships education leaflet from the Department for Education also clarifies that schools "ultimately make the final decisions and engagement does not amount to a parental veto" (Department for Education, 2019b, p. 2).

curriculum. However, even with schools having the final say, the relationship of power is deeply complicated by the extent to which teachers are, in Foucault's words, *induced* and *seduced* to shape the content of the curriculum to parents, in mind of the potential for backlash.

9.2.1.2 Backlash & Protest

The relevance of parents in the apparatus of inclusion for LGBT content does not extend only to the mandatory process of consultation in which parents may state their objections, but to the extent to which schools must consider the potential for parental backlash, and the toll this may take on their school, workload, and parental interactions. I explore this point through teachers' responses throughout this chapter, but first it is worth examining one previous example of parental and community protest given that this policy event both impacted and illuminates the policyscape. These protests took place in 2019 in Birmingham after Deputy Headteacher Andrew Moffatt introduced the No Outsiders charity programme at his school (See chapter: Literature Review section Backlash & Barriers). The No Outsiders charity organisation features LGBT content, such as same-sex couples in children's stories, as part of a more generalised teaching emphasis on inclusion (Nottingham, 2020). After months of negotiations and protracted protest outside the school by parents and community members alike, a modified, less *celebratory* version of Moffatt's work continued. As he said of the negotiations:

...there was a perception amongst many of the parents that we were forcing children to celebrate LGBT. We weren't doing that. There were no rainbow flags in the school... So I thought: 'OK, we'll drop the word (celebrate)'

(Bagwell, 2020, para. 26)

Having made national news, these protests, and those similar to them, elicited a response from the Department for Education (BBC, 2019). The Department for Education issued the document *Guidance: Primary school disruption over LGBT teaching/relationships education* to instruct schools in future similar situations (Department for Education, 2019a). The guidance gives suggestions around how protest can be prevented and dealt with, stating that schools should "have good practice examples of effective parental engagement" to prevent backlash and "offer to review school relationships education policies" should it occur (Department for Education, 2019a, para 30). This guidance also suggests schools may wish to:

...work to create local authority-wide approach to LGBT teaching/RSE that schools can adapt and adopt, giving them some confidence and reassurance that the approach they are taking is consistent with other schools and they will not be singled out

(Department for Education, 2019a)

The policy guidance above offers insight into the power relationship between schools and parents. The reference to creating a *local authority wide approach to LGBT teaching* as a protection from protest in a kind of safety in numbers, or to gain legitimacy for LGBT RSE through deference to external authority, is curiously acknowledged for the local level and yet not provided in the governmental policyscape. The way in which policy creates “subjectivities” (Ball, 2021b, p. 388) here is complex. Though, as aforementioned, policy rhetoric suggests schools have the final authority, this is complicated by the suggestion that a response to protests against LGBT inclusion is to *offer to review school relationships education policies*. In the case of the Birmingham protests this review led to a removal of the *celebration* of LGBT identities, suggesting a lack of backing for schools should protests arise.

9.2.1.3 Queer Teachers & Parental Consultation

Though the policyscape references the significant backlash schools may face to including LGBT content, and offers the guidance above, how this backlash may relate to queer teachers is not referenced within the RSE policyscape⁴⁴. The Department for Education, in the aforementioned document *Guidance: Primary school disruption over LGBT teaching/relationships education* states that engagement with parents “...helps develop a shared set of values between parents and schools on these subjects” and “works best when everyone involved enters into it with an open mind” (Department for Education, 2019b, p. 4). It is unclear, however, how such open-mindedness factors in when one is not only talking *about* a subject but *is* part of the subject.

⁴⁴ The closest reference I found in this analysis comes from somewhat outdated anti-bullying guidance for schools, Homophobic Bullying. Safe to Learn: Embedding anti-bullying work in schools. This guidance includes a section framed as a question from a gay teacher asking “I’m a gay teacher and pupils talk to me about my sexual orientation. What can I say and not say?” (Department for Children Schools and Families, 2007, p. 70). The guidance goes on to state that whilst “Pupils, especially gay pupils, can benefit from knowing positive lesbian and gay role models”, teachers should “seek advice and guidance from your head. The key is consistency between all staff regardless of sexual orientation” (Department for Children Schools and Families, 2007, p. 70). This document seems very unlikely to influence current teachers, but it does point to the wider issue that for queer teachers, talking about their lives can be something more of an issue.

Queer teachers are covered within employment discrimination sections of the Equality Act 2010 (UK Government, 2010) (See chapter: Appropriateness in Teaching section The Equality Act 2010: Discrimination in Curricular Delivery & Content), but how the optional nature of LGBT inclusion creates a discourse of precarious appropriateness for speaking of LGBT relationships more generally is still unacknowledged. The *LGBT Action Plan*, from the Government Equalities Office, states in a section on bullying in schools that, “We are also committed to ensuring that LGBT teachers and people working in education are free to be themselves at work” (Government Equalities Office, 2018, p. 11). The subsequent update to the *LGBT Action Plan* sets out that this will be achieved through regional funding to support teacher progression, but again does not address how consulting on LGBT content may impact LGBT teachers (Government Equalities Office, 2019b).

9.2.1.4 Policy Conclusions

Returning to the policy development from Section 28, though schools are no longer banned, they are now *encouraged and enabled* to include LGBT content⁴⁵ and it is said to be ultimately their decision, the toll taken by protests and the potential of unrest may loom large when planning the curriculum. Power here may act not through any detailed ban on content, nor necessarily on directives to reflect parents’ views but rather on the way in which the potential for backlash “structure(s) the possible field of action” of teachers, making certain kinds of inclusion seem less accessible, orienting teachers towards the less controversial (Foucault, 1982b, p. 789).

Likewise, the relations of power here exist not only through the subjectification of teachers to parents in the explicit way in which the RSE policy requirements make teachers’ curricular choices subject to parental consultation, but through the pre-existing relation in which teachers must consider the potential for protest. Policy may not subject teachers to the latter relation of power, but the idea that they are encouraged and enabled suggests a positioning of teachers divorced from the actualities of planning such content in light of this guidance offering tenuous authority for schools. Whilst school-based protests could occur in relation to nationwide mandatory inclusion of LGBT content in the primary RSE curriculum, this creates a kind of accountability to parents in which the object of potential displeasure can be specifically aimed at the school.

⁴⁵ In the case of the Birmingham protests this was ruled as legal in spite of parental objection (Vincent, 2022).

As is discussed at greater length in the following findings part (See findings part: Findings Part 2: Appropriateness), the requirements for parental consultation further cement LGBT relationships and identities as a kind of discrete curricular content that can be modified in relation to parental views on what their children should see, but not as necessary, essential parts of the RSE curriculum in which primary school children see themselves reflected.

9.2.2 Teachers' Responses & Parental Consultation

Reference to parents in relation to LGBT content in primary schools was common in this data, with teachers' perceptions of how parents would react, or have reacted, to LGBT content in their school varying widely. In the following sections, I first layout the overall spread of opinions concerning parental reaction to LGBT content, before more thoroughly examining how these reactions illuminate the relations of power forming them. I analyse the way teachers' perceptions of parents reflect the requirements of the policyscape and interact with various other circumstances of the school or of teachers themselves.

9.2.2.1 Anticipating Parental Reactions

Responses referencing perceptions of parental⁴⁶ reaction to LGBT content touched on this topic primarily in relation to the questionnaire children's literatures as this section asked teachers how they thought they would be received by the children, the school, and the parents where they work. References to parental reaction were, however, present throughout both the interviews and questionnaires.

Given that the questionnaire questions on reactions to the children's literatures were open-ended, I coded responses in the following broad categories:

'Supportive (Books)'

Acceptance, enjoyment, or other positive feelings would constitute almost all, or all, of the reactions.

⁴⁶ In each of the codes above parental reaction from the teacher themselves, if they referred to themselves as parents, was not counted, as this data aimed to examine perceptions of parents rather than personal opinions.

*'Neutral (Books)'*⁴⁷

There would be no reaction, or that the reaction would be unremarkable or 'fine'.

'Varied (Books)'

The reaction would be mixed or uneven but no proportions of how many would be supportive or unsupportive were given, or the proportions given were somewhat vague.

'Unsupportive (Books)'

Upset or offence would characterise almost all, or all, of the reactions.

I divided references by *'Pupils'*, *'School'*, *'Parents'*, and *'Unknown'*⁴⁸, depending on who was referenced as reacting in the stated way. I used the *'Unknown'* category for those responses which stated a type of reaction but did not specify who would have this reaction.

As references spanned multiple areas of the questionnaire and the interviews, I also coded overall references to parental reaction to LGBT content, regardless of data source, as either a *'Supportive (Overall)'* or *'Unsupportive (Overall)'*. A code of *'Supportive (Overall)'* was applied to any reference to parents potentially, or previously, appreciating or accepting inclusion of LGBT content, whilst the code *'Unsupportive (Overall)'* was applied to those which anticipated, referenced, or described having experienced, backlash, complaints, or other issues, from parents. I made these code criteria intentionally very broad to allow for an overall view of how parents' views were referred to, though throughout this chapter, and the next three (See chapters: Age-appropriateness, Appropriateness in Teaching, and Homonormativity) I more deeply explore the tensions between religion, ideas of appropriateness, and other elements informing views of LGBT content. These codes were applied to any reference to parental reaction, and as such *'Supportive (Books)'* and *'Unsupportive (Books)'* references coded in relation to the above children's literature questions in the questionnaire were also

⁴⁷ I used the code *'Neutral (Books)'* as a separate category from the *'Supportive (Books)'* code as answers I coded as *'Neutral (Books)'* were fairly short and vague, giving very limited opportunity to attach meaning. For example, the following questionnaire response was coded as *'Neutral'* in the *'Unknown'* category in relation to *A Day in the Life of Marlon Bundo*: "they'd be fine" (Zoe, 33, female, Lesbian, she/her pronouns, Teacher, Questionnaire).

⁴⁸ Neither *'Unknown'* *'Supportive (Books)'* nor *'Unknown'* *'Unsupportive (Books)'* coded items from the questionnaire story reaction section were coded in the *'Supportive (Overall)'* or *'Unsupportive (Overall)'* code as, whilst these responses may have been referencing parents, this was unclear.

counted in either ‘*Supportive (Overall)*’ and ‘*Unsupportive (Overall)*’, as were any ‘*Varied (Books)*’ references to parents which explicitly⁴⁹ referenced either a supportive and/or unsupportive reaction from parents.

Table 4: The number of responses coded as either making a ‘*Supportive (Overall)*’ or ‘*Unsupportive (Overall)*’ reference to potential or experienced parental reaction to LGBT content in their school.

Code	Data Source		
	Interview & Questionnaire	Interview Only	Questionnaire Only
Supportive (Overall)	8	0	39
Unsupportive (Overall)	20	15	166

⁴⁹ Those ‘*Varied (Books)*’ responses which stated that the reaction would be mixed but did not make explicit reference to a positive or negative response, were not added to the overall ‘*Supportive (Overall)*’ and ‘*Unsupportive (Overall)*’ codes. For example, “Children ok, parents a mixed opinion” (Bob3, 55yr old white female, married to a male, mum of 3, Teacher, Questionnaire), was not coded in the overall categories.

Table 5: The amount of responses coded for various types of reaction to each of the LGBT children’s literatures in the questionnaire divided by to whom this reference pertained.

	A Day in the Life of Marlon Bundo					When Aiden Became a Brother					Maiden & Princess				
	Pupils	School	Parents	Unknown	Total	Pupils	School	Parents	Unknown	Total	Pupils	School	Parents	Unknown	Total
Supportive (Books)	4	2	3	36	45	2	2	3	35	42	6	3	5	40	54
Neutral (Books)	29	18	1	37	85	45	38	0	27	110	32	31	2	43	108
Varied (Books)	5	6	63	58	132	4	9	90	37	140	5	8	77	55	145
Unsupportive (Books)	4	5	14	40	63	8	5	38	45	96	8	4	25	31	68

From Table 4 and Table 5 we see both that perceived parental reaction varied widely and that parental reaction was frequently referenced.

In relation to the questionnaire children's literature specifically, though a significant number of responses referred to parental reactions which would appreciate, or at least not make issue of, LGBT content⁵⁰, references to parents taking issue with it, whether that was perceived to be some parents, in those coded as '*Varied (Books)*', or all or almost all parents, as in those coded as '*Unsupportive (Books)*', formed the dominant number of references for all three of the books. I coded '*Unsupportive (Overall)*' more frequently than '*Supportive (Overall)*' in each one of the data sources. The book *When Aiden Became a Brother* was particularly likely to incur '*Unsupportive (Books)*' reactions from parents. This is consistent with the themes discussed in the later chapter Homonormativity which finds that trans content is distinctly and prevalently othered.

Parents, as opposed to the school or pupils, were not only consistently perceived as the group most likely to negatively react to LGBT content but were also the group whose reactions were most often described. '*Parents*' for each of the books was the largest category, besides from the '*Overall*' category. More responses only, or mostly, gave information on parents', rather than schools' or children's, perceived reaction.

Those stating a supportive reaction from parents described such in general terms or referred to the presence of same-sex families in their schools. To give an example of the former and later in the questionnaire:

Very positively overall, especially if it is introduced to children early - our parents are very supportive of the changes we have made to be more inclusive

(Y4 Teacher, female, Questionnaire)

Well received - we have same-sex partners on our staff and have recently had in our wider school community (parents)

(Janet, 55 female Headteacher – heterosexual, Questionnaire)

⁵⁰ As in those coded as '*Supportive (Books)*' and '*Neutral (Books)*'.

Unsupportive reactions, on the other hand, either referenced a generalised, non-descript backlash, or gave specific examples of potential protest, home-schooling, or complaints to the school. Although the more frequent references to unsupportive reactions from parents are significant in indicating how the mandate to consult with parents on LGBT content may be formative to its place in school, this more frequent citing of unsupportive reactions should not necessarily be considered to show their proportional dominance in the actual reactions from parents. Rather, the higher reporting of them may be a sign of their increased salience. Perceptions of parental reaction may be informed by the extent to which unsupportive reactions hold an outsized influence in how schools must interact with them. NN3's response to *A Day in the Life of Marlon Bundo* in the questionnaire was one example of this:

Some parents withdrawing their children to home-school. Potential protests. Some support; some very strong objection

(NN3, 50's Humanist (Of all faiths but not defined by one), Headteacher, Questionnaire)

NN3's response was coded as both '*Varied (Books)*' '*Parents*', and as both a '*Supportive (Overall)*' and an '*Unsupportive (Overall)*' reference. However, the unsupportive responses may be given a greater amount of consideration by the school than the supportive because of the amount of attention demanded by the potential of protests or pupils leaving for home-schooling. Likewise, within those responses to the questionnaire children's literature coded as '*Varied (Books)*' and '*Parents*', though all suggested the reaction would be mixed, responses tended to concentrate on the unsupportive reactions, with far fewer explicitly detailing a '*Supportive (Overall)*' reaction than an '*Unsupportive (Overall)*' reaction⁵¹. For example, the two answers below were both coded as '*Varied (Books)*' and '*Parents*':

Fairly positively, though some more religious⁵² parents may complain

(Y5PSHElead, 36 year old female, mother, Teacher, Questionnaire)

⁵¹ Of the 63 responses to *A Day in the Life of Marlon Bundo* coded as '*Varied (Books)*' and '*Parents*', 48 made specific '*Unsupportive*' reference to parental reaction, whilst 13 made a '*Supportive*' reference. Of the 93 responses to *When Aiden Became a Brother* coded as '*Varied (Books)*' and '*Parents*', 71 made an '*Unsupportive*' reference to parental reaction, whilst 18 made a '*Supportive*' reference. Of the 77 responses to *Maiden & Princess* coded as '*Varied (Books)*' and '*Parents*', 66 made an '*Unsupportive*' reference to parental reaction, whilst 11 made a '*Supportive*' reference.

⁵² See the Appropriateness in Teaching chapter for discussion of the way in which religion interacted with LGBT inclusion.

Some of our religious parents would possible not like it

(Alw, 30s white British female mother teacher, Questionnaire)

Each answer may have anticipated similar reactions from parents, with neither specifying how many parents would have each type of reaction. Though both responses were coded as making an '*Unsupportive (Overall)*' reference, only Y5PSHElead was coded as also making a '*Supportive (Overall)*' given that Alw's response did not clarify how the other parents would respond, if only *some* religious parents would *not like it*. Perceptions of parental reaction may thus be informed not only by the experienced proportions of each type of reaction, but by the extent to which teachers must consider them. That there were 3 responses which made a reference to a '*Supportive (Overall)*' reaction and 37 which referred to an '*Unsupportive (Overall)*' reaction outside of those coded from the children's literature section in the questionnaire potentially also reflects that as unsupportive reactions were more likely to be spontaneously reported, they occupied more space in considerations of LGBT content inclusion.

The increased availability of unsupportive reactions and backlash, and the extent to which parents' reactions were cited, as opposed to those from, for example, pupils, is highly significant in light of the policyscape requirements on reflecting the community and consulting with parents. In the remainder of this section, I examine two interview responses. I examine these two responses in particular not because they were different to the other responses, but because they both largely represent the common themes drawn upon by others and each interview response detailed a different amount of LGBT content in their school. I chose two interview responses, rather than questionnaires because the format allows for an explanation not only of parental reaction being referenced but of how this interacted with (the potential of) LGBT content being included in the school.

The first is from an interview I conducted with RefMentor, a male Headteacher who, whilst personally supportive of LGBT content in primary schools, had none in his school. RefMentor explained that this position was informed by the parents' views⁵³:

⁵³ RefMentor was coded as referencing an '*Unsupportive (Overall)*' reaction from parents.

We do have to be very careful in our teaching of the children in regard to LGBT as with the recent SRE discussions, a number of our parents spoke to us regarding discussing LGBT with their children... [So] we tell our parents that we will not specifically teach about LGBT to the children but if we are asked a question, then we will answer the child⁵⁴ and let the parent know so they can talk with their child further... It's gone through almost seamlessly because they know the school is working with the mosque... The government backed down so that LGBT doesn't have to be taught... Yeah so that helps as well, helps for the wrong reasons, but it helps

(RefMentor, Male Headteacher, Interview)

Parental opposition to LGBT content, however, was not contained to the *recent SRE discussions* as RefMentor suggests. He also stated that hearing about the protests in Birmingham, as described at the start of this chapter, had caused the school to clearly set out that there would be no LGBT content in the curriculum, or anywhere in the school environment:

So the Birmingham thing definitely caused us a problem, so we said 'no, that's not our intention, that's not what we're going to teach'. We wouldn't at the moment put up a display where there were two mums in the same family unit... Two mums talking together, absolutely, but if it was clear that they were the same family unit, no.

In RefMentor's response we see a vision of decision-making around LGBT content that elucidates two main contradictions in the polycscape between schools having the final say on the RSE curriculum, and the onus on schools to consult parents and avoid protest.

Firstly, parental consultation here extended well beyond the RSE curriculum. Returning to the way in which parental consultation on LGBT, but not heteronormative, content discursively creates the other against a silent norm, in RefMentor's response we see LGBT content being separated out not only from the taught RSE curriculum, but from any place in the school. Just as parental backlash was not contained to the RSE consultation, also occurring in response to the Birmingham protests, the ensuing prohibition on LGBT content extended to school displays. RefMentor explains that children asking questions will be reported back to

⁵⁴ RefMentor was categorised as 'None' for LGBT content in his school, and sub-categorised as 'Reactive' given this reactive inclusion in response to questioning from pupils. See the Heteronormativity & Non-mandatory LGBT RSE chapter for further details on this categorisation.

parents so that they might follow up on these questions, and whilst this may provide an opening for discussion in the home, it nonetheless extends the remit of parental involvement to any LGBT content in the school, in this instance potentially positioning the subject within a kind of taboo which requires parental intervention.

Secondly, as Foucault suggests, in all relations of power there must be a possibility of resistance, “where there is power, there is resistance” (Foucault, 1978, p. 95). Here RefMentor could have implemented LGBT content; the RSE policy guidance firmly suggests that parental objection is not a veto. The notion of power here lies not in RefMentor having no choice. Rather, it was exercised both through the choice to include LGBT content being made untenable, and through RefMentor making himself subject to parental wishes and self-policing accordingly; “(the subject) inscribes in himself the power relation in which he simultaneously plays both roles; he becomes the principle of his own subjection.” (Foucault, 1975, pp. 202-203). Although RefMentor personally suggested the importance of LGBT content in primary schools, in discussing the possibility of implementing such he is made subject to, and makes himself subject to, parental consultation, drawing less on his or the school’s power in describing this decision-making process, and more on that of the government and parents. It is unclear to what extent RefMentor’s opinions were reflected by the wider school staff, but his own support for LGBT content was never raised in the context of decision making around its inclusion. Despite being supportive of LGBT content himself, RefMentor suggests that the government allowing such not to be taught *helps... for the wrong reasons*, and that the policy has gone through *seamlessly*, framing the goal of this policy-making process as a lack of parental resistance.

Parental opinion seems to have been largely formative to the policymaking process of this school, manifesting in multiple ways, and being contained not only to what the school is currently doing, but what they could do. In discussions surrounding LGBT content in the new RSE curriculum, RefMentor was not pushing to include LGBT content, but felt the need to reassure parents that it was not the intention of the school to do so when parents *caused (a) problem* in reaction to the protests in Birmingham.

For other teachers, the salience of unsupportive reactions was not predicated on them being a majority position for parents, but rather the position of the school. One such response came from Charlie. In an interview, Charlie explained that his school had LGBT content both in RSE and LGBT-themed charity posters but that he felt his school’s inclusion was constrained in light of the school’s position as undersubscribed:

Schools have an agenda, people they try to please, and this school I'm in now is an undersubscribed school so the Headteacher will be very directed by the parents because they're terrified of losing children when there are so many schools in the area

(Charlie, male gay teacher, Interview)

Charlie went on to explain that, in his view because of this undersubscribed status, when a parent complained about the schools' LGBT themes charity posters, his Headteacher apologised to the parent:

He [the Headteacher] was very apologetic and I thought that was strange? One of our values is equity? So what does that say?

When he himself was confronted with a parental complaint, this time in reference to the same-sex families representation in RSE, Charlie defended the content:

I had a parent who, I don't think she realised I was gay, but along those lines of 'I don't want my child learning that it's ok for two men to be together because it's not'... So to [the parent who complained] I just said something like you know, 'in this country obviously people have a right to be'... I don't know something about the Equalities Act... That basically made it not personal. Just about, you know, it's legal in this country, people have rights. It it's hard not to get offended because it is personal obviously.

Although the sole descriptions of parental reaction here pertained to discontent, these instances in Charlie's response were more salient than frequently occurring. It was not, however, only the lesser extent of resistance that influenced the way in which it was negotiated, but both the position of the school itself, and how those in the school dealt with complaints. In line with the neoliberal subjectification of teachers as accountable to parents as consumers, Charlie describes a kind of parentocracy amplified by the under-subscribed position of the school (Brown, 1990; Golden et al., 2021). As such, Charlie suggests his Headteacher was directed towards delivering content acceptable to parents, though it is unclear here what happened in the rest of the interaction. Charlie, by contrast, negotiated his parental complaint not by apologising, or acknowledging any parental authority over the curriculum, but by deflecting criticism through his appeal to external *law* and the *Equalities Act*. A piece of legislation which excludes the curriculum from its definitions of inclusion in school (See chapter: Appropriateness in Teaching section The Equality Act 2010: Discrimination in

Curricular Delivery & Content), the Equality Act was mobilised here as a justification for such content. In a discursive depersonalisation, Charlie somewhat resists being made subject to the parent's authority, instead drawing on his own as a professional following governmental policy.

This picture of the school justifying their content to parents, informing their actions based on attracting or keeping pupils at the school, may suggest little power on the side of the school, with the influence of parents, and the authority of external policies, seeming to swamp that of the school. Whilst the need for schools to deflect or account for parental reaction was certainly significant, this response complicates an overly parent-heavy view of power in the school, with drawing on the authority of external policy acting as a kind of authority for the school, given that it is their knowledge of such which is being deployed to justify curricular decisions.

Overall, the idea that parents were watching the school, and that the school must be able to justify their actions as a result, was pervasive, but dependant in its effect upon both the extent of parental reaction, and upon other elements of the apparatus forming the school's context.

9.2.2.2 Queer Teachers as Subjects of Consultation

This data, as has been shown in Charlie's response and throughout this chapter, reflects previous literature in showing the uniquely personal commitment to inclusion some queer teachers bring to their schools (Lee, 2020b; Llewellyn, 2022a; Stones & Glazzard, 2020). However, accountability to parents concerning LGBT inclusion in the curriculum likewise constituted a particularly fraught issue for queer teachers. As a gay man, Charlie relates the parental complaint to his own identity; *it's hard not to get offended because it is personal*. In this remaining section, I analyse how the policyscape process in which teachers' choices on LGBT curricular content are made "subject to" parental consultation frames teachers as subjects uncoupled from this identity shaping curricular content to reflect community backgrounds regardless of the possibility that they may in some respects embody the subject matter under consultation (Foucault, 1982b, p. 781).

In analysing teachers' responses, I coded any reference by teachers to a difficulty advocating for LGBT content, talking about their own lives, or more generally any reference to a modification in behaviour related to their identities as queer teachers as '*Outing*⁵⁵ &

⁵⁵ *Outing* refers to the sexuality or gender identity of a person being disclosed without their knowledge or against their wishes, either invertedly or intentionally.

Issues'. This was not a question I specifically asked but was a topic that was brought up throughout the data sources.

Table 6: Amount of responses coded as '*Outing & Issues*'.

Code	Data Source		
	Interview & Questionnaire	Interview Only	Questionnaire Only
Outing & Issues	9	7	4

As only 60 teachers identified as queer⁵⁶, LGBT, or a similar non-heterosexual, non-cisgender identity, the proportion here is around one third of such teachers being coded for '*Outing & Issues*'. Such references by queer teachers were proportionally more common in those responses having participated in either the interview and questionnaire, or the interview only data sources, with every teacher in these sources being coded as such. This is not to say that all these teachers were not out at school, did not advocate for LGBT content, or did not have such content, but that other's reaction to their identities in this capacity was perceived to have been, or to potentially be, something of an issue. Whether this representation is a result of the kind of participants volunteering for interviews, or whether it reflects that the longer interview format gave the opportunity for this topic to be discussed is uncertain. What is perhaps clearer is the hesitation felt around advocating for LGBT content by queer teachers. Teachers' responses in this code tended to centre around both parental, and the schools', reaction should they come out, describing a view of surveillance concerning LGBT content that extended to talk of their personal lives. Surveillance here was, however, not uniformly felt, nor effective. The responses I coded as '*Outing & Issues*', as may be expected, often made references to unsupportive parental reactions, but this was not always the case. In the remainder of this section, I examine this diversity exemplified in two interviews, each conducted with a queer teacher coded as '*Outing & Issues*', each discussing how their identity differently affected their experience with implementing LGBT content in RSE and the wider school.

⁵⁶Whether each participant was queer was not a question that I asked, but some teachers referenced being queer in their self-description.

Super470, a lesbian teacher, is the first example. In the interview, Super470 explained that her school had no LGBT content and that, due to its non-mandatory status, this was unlikely to change:

there's nothing really stopping them from bypassing it like they they don't, not unless when it comes to Ofsted they come and say they have to have it

(Super470, lesbian, Teacher, Interview)

The lack of LGBT content, Super470 explained, was not due to the personal decision of the Headteacher, who she described as “personally supportive”. Instead, parental objection, or the perception of it, had been formative. Super470 positions parental objection as surmountable by an Ofsted mandate, suggesting, as others in this chapter have, a picture in which parents are the current party the school is made subject to regarding accountability, but only as long as there is no such order from the governmental level. Again, like others in this chapter (see RefMentor), the school’s decision not to include LGBT content was not contained to the RSE curriculum. In the extracts below, Super470 describes how parental reaction was formative to her ability to talk about her own life, both in and out of the classroom:

A parent asked me and said 'I'm not comfortable with this' ... They get confused sometimes they think it's about sex... So I was like oh 'OK', you know that's... [exasperated look, rolls eyes], I was half going to say something, but I didn't... 'cause I would have said, 'well, actually, you know, I live with a woman' ... And I mentioned it to the Head and she said 'Oh you didn't say anything, did you?... Don't you ever, don't ever say anything, if you say anything like that to the parents here, you're on your own... I will not back you up and they'll be out there now [gestures outside]' ... But I'm so glad that I I didn't but you know, I think if I had've done she might have opened her eyes a little bit... She, you know, respects me as a teacher of her children...

Super470 further described how she was unable to be out at this school, having long kept details of her family out of the classroom:

Yeah, I mean I want to put up a picture of my family in my classroom, 'cause other people do... So much hassle... Thinking about things and also just not being able to speak

Being based in and extending powerful discourses subjecting the queer to others' judgements, the consultation of the RSE curriculum on the presence of LGBT content is extended here to *any* LGBT content, including Super470's own relationships. The mechanism of power here is not only based in Super470's Headteacher warning her against any revelation, pre-dating this incident. Instead, it is rather dispersed and peremptory, with power acting as a "mode of action which does not act directly and immediately on others", but rather on the "way in which certain actions modify others" (Foucault, 1982b, pp. 788-789). The Headteacher here may have explicitly warned her as a result of the parent's reaction, but Super470 had not previously made reference to her family; she laments that she is unable to put a picture of her family in her classroom, as *other people do*, pointing to the long-standing silence of the queer in the school. Super470 is not only made subject to consultation in her Headteachers' refusal to support her coming out but makes herself subject through seeking guidance from the Headteacher. When Super470 chooses not to reveal her own identity to the parent, despite feeling comfortable enough to do so, she makes her identity, or family status, subject to a consultation. This is then carried forward and compounded by the Headteacher in her effectively deterring Super470, *don't, you should not*, by withdrawing the school's support, *you would be on your own*.

The indirect way in which parental reaction was formative here points to a mechanism of surveillance based not only in direct complaints from parents. In the Headteacher's warning *they'll be out there*, the figure of the parent is created as a looming threat, liable to protest at Super470's disclosure in a manner that was not proportional to the actual parent's single complaint. As Foucault states, "surveillance is permanent in its effects, even if it is discontinuous in its action" (Foucault, 1975, p. 201). No protest was needed here to inform action, with Super470 previously maintaining her own silence, and the Headteacher continuing it by drawing on the possibility of such parental reaction.

Acting in a "more or less open field of possibilities", without seeking the Head's permission Super470 could have simply told the parent that she lives with a woman, she could have previously brought a picture of her family into the classroom, but the "exercise of power consists in guiding the possibility of conduct", and in this case made doing such less do-able, more difficult (Foucault, 1982b, p. 789). Super470 considers shifting her position from one hiding the matter of her family to using it to change parental perceptions. Drawing on a different subject position, that of the respected teacher, *she... respects me as a teacher*, she attempts a resistance to the power relations informing her previous silence on her family. This

attempted shift to role model may not have been realised, showing the extent to which ingrained considerations of parental reaction can *guide the possibility of conduct*, but it nonetheless shows a kind of personal resistance against the nature of silence imposed on the queer.

Super470 had been teaching, at the time of our interview, for over 20 years. In discussing the change over these years, she referenced her experience working under Section 28 and, in this description, showed something of a parallel to her current situation.

The extract below is her description of working under Section 28:

It just wasn't discussed... I think staff knew [that I was gay]... personally they were OK with it, but it was something that you certainly wouldn't talk about in class, you know and you get the questions about your husband and things like that you just... say 'I haven't got a husband' and you would have to leave it at that.

Meanwhile, the following concerns an anecdote from her current class:

I was saying [to my class pupils] that I went for a run in the night... I said 'for the last mile you'll never guess who joined me on the run', I asked the class this, and they said... 'your husband?' I'm like 'I haven't got a husband'... but actually it was the cat... You know, and it would nice to say that, when it's with [my girlfriend], that I went with [my girlfriend]

The two extracts, describing classroom situations 20 years apart, show a troubling similarity. Echoing her description of her Headteacher as *personally supportive*, in the description of teaching under Section 28 Super470's colleagues are described as *personally... OK with it*. Likewise, in each description, the reference to questions about her *husband* seems coincidental but indicated the continued limits of what Super470 could share in the classroom. Super470's recent consideration of referencing her family to a parent, as aforementioned, certainly marks something of a shift. However, when considering the persistent lack of LGBT content that was in her classroom and her continual self-censorship, Section 28 seems to linger not in a governmental ban, but in a barrier sustained by the continued need to consider parental reaction.

Turning now to a second interview coded as '*Outing & Issues*', Hinde's school situation was vastly different from Super470's in some respects, such as the amount of LGBT content in the classrooms, the support from leadership for such, and the positive reception from parents, and yet similar in others, with a continued hesitancy from Hinde around being able to speak of

her own life. Hinde worked in a school that recently embarked on the No Outsiders charity programme, and as such had integrated LGBT content into the RSE curriculum, theme days, assemblies, available literature, and the wider school. In the extract below she describes these changes in relation to parents:

We had a new head join us January last year, and so this is our first academic year using the No Outsiders... When parents hear that, you know... 'You're going to be teaching my kid about LGBT and they're too young for all that sex'... Once they have seen materials themselves, they are typically really positive... I think you know we everybody heard about No Outsiders on the news and the protests in Birmingham and all that kind of thing so when you say 'OK, well, we're going for this', you brace yourself ready for the parents' reaction. Supportive leadership is key... It's not going to happen without that

(Hinde, White British, gay woman, 30-40, Teacher, Interview)

In the implementation of the No Outsiders charity programme, Hinde's school sent a letter to parents explaining the programme, and its basis in policy:

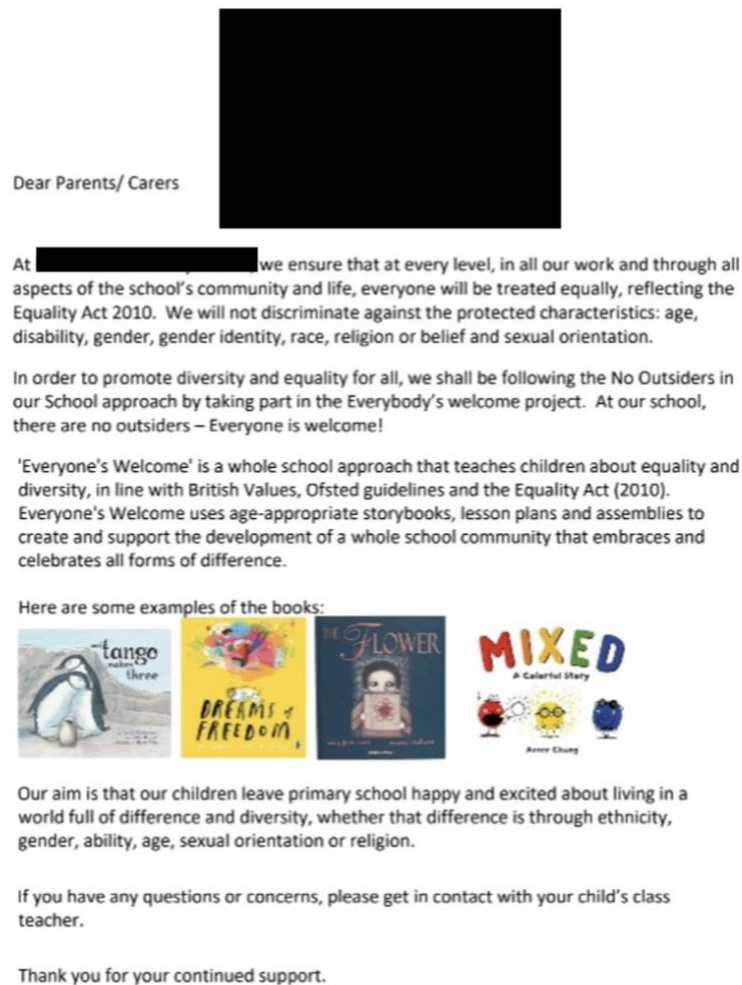


Figure 9: The letter Hinde's school sent to parents to inform them of their participation in the No Outsiders charity programme.

Hinde's response echoed Super470's in the initial hesitancy around introducing LGBT content. Each teacher, like others referenced in this chapter, refers to the idea that objection to LGBT content is based in a hypersexualisation of such (for further discussion of this phenomenon, see the Age-appropriateness chapter). They differ, by contrast, in how parental complaint is dealt with. In Hinde's response, we see that the school is still made subject to parental reaction, inclusion is made somewhat *more difficult* in that staff *brace (themselves) ready for the parents' reaction*, but such did not hinder their inclusion. Hinde's response also demonstrates the authority schools may have in informing LGBT inclusion through exemplifying a very different vision of consultation, a different negotiation of the parentocracy, to Super470's school. As compared to responses reflecting and anticipating parental opinion,

the letter from Hinde's school sent to all parents, alongside Hinde's description of the adoption of the No Outsiders charity programme coming from the new Headteacher, suggests the school is still oriented towards parents, but to the extent that they are rather more informing than consulting.

The school's letter seems to foster the legitimacy of bringing in such content though repeated reference to its alignment with governmental policy; *British Values, Ofsted guidelines, and the Equality Act (2010)*. The school's statement that they will *not discriminate* against any protected characteristic is positioned in line with the school's move to include representation of such in the curriculum, suggesting that here the Equality Act 2010, a piece of legislation which does not include exempting groups from the curriculum in its definition of discrimination, is again (see Charlie's response) positioned within a justification for curricular inclusion. Whilst drawing on the authority of external policy, this nonetheless represents a different vision of teachers being straightforwardly made subject to parental judgements. The school draws on their own authority as knowledgeable concerning policy, as an authority on the legal backing for such content, as part of its implementation. Hinde's response links this decision to the key role of leadership in including LGBT content in the school; she states it is *not going to happen without* supportive leadership.

Hinde later recounted how the school's recent inclusion of LGBT content related to her ability to talk about her own life at work:

Hinde: So [the child] said 'so you've got a husband?' and... I wanted to correct ... I should be able to answer in an age-appropriate way and just go... I've got a wife and it be that matter of fact and a non-issue... but I didn't feel confident to do it, and I dodged it... I've played it over and over and there's a bit of me that's kicking myself that I didn't... And and I think that's the next step for people to know that if they do come out in that way, where where the children have asked and it it's not a, you know, in detail thing, because they've just asked if I have a husband, and to know that you would be supported by your leadership team, you know if there was any come back from parents, it's knowing that they would have your back.

Arabeth: Would that be different now with the the new leadership?

Hinde: I would hope so. I'm I'm almost tempted to kind of raise it as a question like 'How would you react to this?'. You know, we're doing No Outsiders...

In suggesting it is the *next step for people* to be supported, and know they are supported by their leadership, Hinde's response shows a disconnect between this curricular content and her own identity in the school. Whilst Hinde's school was coded as having more 'Comprehensive' LGBT content (See chapter: Heteronormativity & Non-mandatory LGBT RSE), Hinde seemed uncertain about whether this support would extend to her talking about her own life. Such was demonstrated through the justification of referring to her wife being stressed, with Hinde's response repeating the minimal, unplanned nature of this disclosure and its origin in questions from the class, rather than her own planning; *it's not a, you know, in detail thing, because they've just asked*. Hinde may be *almost tempted to kind of raise it as a question* to the school to see their reaction to her coming out and seems optimistic in how she *hope(s)* they would react, but her uncertainty suggests that ultimately support for curricular inclusion has not extended to Hinde having the confidence to talk about her family without fear of *any come back from parents*.

Despite their differences of situation, a pattern runs through Hinde's, Super470's, and the other similarly coded responses. Not limited to consultation in the RSE curriculum, the idea of LGBT content being subject to parental opinions or backlash here was somewhat, but not entirely, formative to how *any* LGBT content, including the lives of queer teachers, was referenced in the school. The continuation of this surveillance came from both the queer being made subject to surveillance and queer teachers modifying their behaviour in the face of such: "he who is subjected to a field of visibility... reinscribes in himself the power relation in which he simultaneously plays both roles; he becomes the principle of his own subjection" (Foucault, 1975, pp. 202-203). The queer, whether in the curriculum, or queer teachers' lives, in this respect was disproportionately placed within a field of visibility, and a field of surveillance, oriented towards parents.

Despite responses detailing vastly different school attitudes towards and inclusion of LGBT content, a heteronormative delineation of the private and public sphere was present throughout. As previous research has suggested, heteronormative private life details seem to enter the more public discursive landscape of the school seamlessly (Connell, 2014, 2015; Cutler, 2022). Super470 states that other teachers have photos of their families, and both she and Hinde reference children assuming they have, or asking whether they have, husbands. The queer in these responses was unable to cross the boundary of private to public without being subject to varying degrees of consideration. Contributing to previous research findings that queer teachers, particularly in faith schools, are prevented from openness about their lives at

work if it is perceived not to align with religious doctrine, here the queer crossing into the public realm was framed in consideration of parental backlash (Fahie, 2017; Neary et al., 2018).

Coming out for each of the teachers coded as *'Outing & Issues'* was a significant consideration, and one entangled with LGBT content in the curriculum. The act of disclosing that one is queer has been a subject of heavy theorisation. Foucault discussed the limitations of the emancipatory process of self-declaration, or *coming out*, conceptualising such as an act of confession which, whilst stepping outside of a heteronormative sexuality or gender label, nonetheless invests in a dichotomising between the norm and other, maintaining the norm through the continuation of a category constructed through its opposition (Foucault, 1978; Halperin, 1998). Queer Theorists have continued this critique, acknowledging the political, historical, cultural, and personal use of identity labels in speaking the queer into existence in a highly heterosexualised society, but limiting the extent to which coming out is seen as essential or unproblematic (Ahmed, 2016; Blumenfeld & Breen, 2017; Nylund, 2007; Sedgwick, 2008). As Butler wrote, sexual identity labels are “instruments of regulatory regimes, whether as the normalizing categories of oppressive structures or as the rallying points for a liberatory contestation of that very oppression” (Butler, 2013, pp. 13-14). Previous research has pointed to the ways in which being out in schools can be construed by teachers as a kind of “liberatory confession” (Gray, 2010, p. 170), but this discourse was not prominently drawn upon by teachers in this research. What these teachers emphasised was not gaining a sense of liberation through self-declaration of an internal truth but losing the onus to heterosexualise or self-censor their interactions. A rather more prosaic slant to the act of coming out that still constitutes a resistance to the heteronormativity of the school is seen here.

Echoes of the shame found in previous research that studied queer teachers navigation of being out in heteronormative school environments were, nonetheless found in this data, with teachers wishing to take on a role model position at the same time as attempting self-protection (Llewellyn & Reynolds, 2021). Aligning with Butler’s contention that identity labels may act as liberatory contestation, in responses coded as *'Outing & Issues'* this blurring between the surveillance applied to the public LGBT content and the private lives of teachers resulted in a personal surveillance that took an emotional toll. Such responses positioned the potential backlash of parents as not only potentially but presently stressful. The perceivably prohibitive reaction of parents and the school were suggested as a personal burden, but so too was the censorship that came with attempting to avoid this backlash. Many teachers, as aforementioned in this section, described their regret that they could not be the representation they wished to

see. Hinde describes how she has been *kicking (her)self* for *years* for not mentioning her wife in conversation and Super470 expresses both wishing to use her respected position as a teacher to change a parents view of her own family, and more generally be *able to speak*.

9.2.3 Conclusion

This chapter has focused on the way in which the requirements for schools to consult parents on LGBT content was formative to its presence in schools. Though schools are positioned in policy as having the final say on the RSE curriculum, the relations of power here were not so straight-forward, with parental consultation acting as part of the apparatus as a mechanism of “governance” to orient schools’ decisions towards parents (Foucault, 1982b, p. 789). This mechanism ran through not only the explicit requirements to consult parents but also the way in which policy did not account for parental objection and the necessity for certain (under-subscribed) schools to consider such. Previous research has documented both the presence of backlash to LGBT content in primary schools (DePalma, 2016; DePalma & Jennett, 2010), and the hesitancy around its inclusion that this can cause (Horton, 2020; Rowan-Lancaster, 2022; Rudoie, 2017). The findings of this chapter suggest that the concern for parental reaction is only sporadically remedied by, and in some cases exacerbated by, the RSE curriculum.

Aligning with LGBT content being only referenced in the RSE curriculum, and subject to consultation in this respect, the scope of parental influence was able, in certain schools, to extend well past the bounds of this particular curricular area into the wider school and queer teachers’ ability to talk about their lives. In the History of Sexuality, Foucault considers the way in which increased visibility can also signify increased surveillance. He asks:

What does the appearance of all these peripheral sexualities signify? Is the fact that they could appear in broad daylight a sign that the code had become more lax? Or does the fact that they were given so much attention testify to a stricter regime and to its concern to bring them under close supervision?

(Foucault, 1978, p. 40)

As has been previously discussed, the naming of LGBT content in the RSE curriculum may certainly be a shift away from it being considered inappropriate, but the positioning of it as an area on which parents must be consulted seemed to (re)create a discourse in which the queer, wherever it is in the school, is subject to parental authority. Viewing this “subjectivity as a site of struggle and resistance” (Ball & Olmedo, 2013, pp. 85, 86), resistances were seen in this chapter, as teachers shaped the role of consultation and differently interpreted their

authority when reacting to parental complaints. Nonetheless, these resistances were in relation to a general orientation towards parents, the consideration for whom added a layer of difficulty in implementing LGBT content. Reflecting earlier discussed silences around the othering nature inherent in separating out LGBT content as optional, in positioning teachers as subjects accountable to parents but free to make decisions on curricular content we see a silence of how this relates to both the situation of the school and teachers' own identities.

Overall, the RSE policy's positioning of LGBT content as non-mandatory to include in the curriculum, but mandatorily subject to parental consultation, is thus embedded within a surveillance that does not equally apply to the heteronormative.

9.3 Encouraged & Enabled: Overall Conclusions

In conclusion, the idea that LGBT content is “strongly encouraged and enabled” in primary school RSE (Department for Education, 2020b, para. 25) seems optimistic, being possible, but not necessarily practicable. In contrast to the explicitly prohibitive nature of Section 28, the RSE curriculum certainly enabled and encouraged some to include LGBT content in their curriculum, or at least aligned with them doing so already. The framing of universality here belies that the mechanism of governance did not *uniformly* make LGBT content *easier*. Multiple elements of the apparatus, from a lack of resources to a need to consult parents, often made it more *difficult* for those who wished to include it. Despite sporadic cases of very thorough inclusion from teachers, heteronormativity largely pervaded through its relative ease. In the following findings part, I move to examine how this ease could likewise act through notions of ‘appropriateness’.

10 Findings Part 2: Appropriateness

Primary schools are enabled and encouraged to cover LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) content if they consider it age-appropriate to do so.

(Department for Education, 2020c, p. 11; 2020d, p. 12)

Having already discussed that the decision of whether to include LGBT content has been delegated to schools, in this second part of my findings I examine how this is framed in the RSE policyscape as a judgement of *appropriateness*. Appropriateness is a deeply intriguing concept that appears frequently throughout the apparatus of LGBT inclusion, carrying with it a host of questions surrounding what discourses imbue it with meaning. I aim to elucidate how this shifting signifier interacts with and informs discourses of the ‘child’ subject who this content is potentially appropriate for, and of the ‘queer’ in why it is or is not appropriate. In doing so, I aim to understand the power relations informing these judgements.

This part is divided into two chapters, each of which explores a different framing of appropriateness. In the first chapter, Age-appropriateness, I examine the notion of LGBT content being (in)appropriate on age-dependent lines. The RSE curriculum positions LGBT content as mandatory for the secondary school ‘child’ but optional for the primary. Primary schools may include LGBT content if they “consider it appropriate” to do so (Department for Education, 2019d, p. 15). In this chapter, the rights of the ‘child’ and the construction of the ‘queer’ are used to analyse how these could differently be mobilised to justify the inclusion, or exclusion, of LGBT content.

The second chapter, Appropriateness in Teaching, explores how appropriateness could be used in terms of appropriately balancing the rights of various groups in schools, such as the rights of queer students and those of groups wishing not to condone LGBT content in the curriculum. These frames are highly intertwined and each one figures to some degree in both chapters. For example, allowing judgements of age-appropriateness can be positioned as a means of managing the diversity of opinion on this subject, and discourses surrounding the age-appropriateness of LGBT content are informed by wider views of the appropriateness of the ‘queer’. This overlap is discussed throughout.

Overall, I aim to lay out how notions of appropriateness, the authority given to schools to make such judgements, and the subjects created in the process of doing so, act as relations of knowledge and power informing the apparatus of LGBT inclusion in primary schools. Throughout this part, I draw on Foucault's discursive concept of power to examine how discourses of appropriateness "systematically form the objects of which they speak" (Foucault, 1972, p. 54). I ask: How do these discourses inform the 'queer' in the object of this judgement (LGBT content)? What subjects are made in both the position of the decision maker (the school, teacher, or policy) and those for whom something is being decided (the 'child')?

10.1 Age-appropriateness

As aforementioned, in the RSE curriculum the decision of whether to include LGBT content is partially framed as a judgement of age-appropriateness. In the following chapter, I explore the discourses underpinning, and (re)created by, notions of age-appropriateness in both the RSE policyscape and in teachers' responses to examine how these discourses can (sometimes via contrast) form the 'child' and the 'queer'.

In asking how discourses form the notion of appropriateness, I draw on Foucault's notion of discourses being "secretly based on an 'already said'" (Foucault, 1972, p. 27). The silence of heteronormativity within the *already said*, within discourses of age-appropriateness, is key here. A key tenant of Queer Theory, rooted in Foucauldian analysis, is the way in which the power of heteronormativity is its *silence*, the way in which it pervades by "hiding in plain sight" (Grzanka, 2020, p. 5), acting as a norm that is "woven into the fabric of social life, pervasively and insidiously ordering everyday existence" (S. Jackson, 2006, p. 108). Using this insight, I analyse the ways in which the silence of heteronormativity, its relative lack of salience as the 'norm', allows it to go unproblematised in judgements of age-appropriateness compared to the queer 'other'.

Analysing how *subjects* are made (See the Theoretical Underpinnings chapter Subjects section for further analysis of Foucault's notion of subjectification) means asking how certain groups are constructed in judgements of appropriateness, what is seen to be *for* them, and *who* is making this decision. I once again use "subjectivity as a site of struggle and resistance" in this analysis (Ball & Olmedo, 2013, p. 85), examining the frictions between how the 'child'⁵⁷

⁵⁷ Analysing the fluid, but coalescing, discursive constructions of the *child* aided in queering what is *child-appropriate* and how this interacted differently with the appropriateness of LGBT content, but it is worth noting here that this fluid concept has not always been present within the study of childhood. Ideas of children as miniature adults were gradually replaced during the Enlightenment by childhood as a distinct period of being, separated from the adult subject by certain defining, oppositional characteristics (Robinson, 2013). Chief among these characteristics in terms of relevance for this chapter is *innocence*. Often attributed in part to Jean-Jacques Rousseau's 1762 *Emile* (Moran, 2001), the idea of the *innocent* child persists in popular discourse even whilst it wanes in queer studies of childhood, characterising sexuality as part of the oppositional *adult* realm (Dyer, 2019; Garlen, 2019; Kidd, 2011; Lesnik-Oberstein, 2010; Woodiwiss, 2014). Foucault wrote of this in his history of sexuality, describing how childhood sexuality was progressively problematised as a social ill to the extent that the denial of such was formative to the idea of the child itself. Referring to this desexualised subject position, Foucault wrote "this was not a plain and simple imposition of silence. Rather, it was a new regime of discourses" (Foucault, 1978, p. 27). As the sexually innocent child is still cited to have "a vigorous, if absurd life in our culture" (Kincaid, 1992, p. 173), it is essential to grapple with how this naturalised discursive construction is unequally applied along heteronormative lines.

is conceptualised, and how this informed whether the ‘queer’ was seen to be age-appropriate for these constructions.

10.1.1 Age-appropriateness in the Polycscape

Within the RSE polycscape, schools’ decision whether to include LGBT content is framed as a judgement of *appropriateness*. Two intertwined frames of appropriateness emerge in these judgements; schools can decide both the *age-appropriateness* of LGBT content for their pupils, and whether they deem LGBT content to be *appropriate to teach* in mind of their, and community, views on the subject. I say such are intertwined given that the *Relationships and Sex Education, and Health Education in England Government consultation response* draws on the notion of age-appropriateness but positions this judgement likewise as a matter of managing difference and reflecting community views.

The guidance, which sets out the split in opinions in the consultation on whether LGBT content should be included in schools, states that these different points of view “cannot both be accommodated in this guidance” (Department for Education, 2019e, p. 8) and that, as a result, schools themselves should “make decisions about what is appropriate to teach on this subject” and these decisions should be “based on the age and development of their pupils and should involve their parent body in these decisions” (Department for Education, 2019e, pp. 8, 9).

It is only primary schools who can decide to exempt LGBT content completely in these judgements, given that LGBT content is non-mandatory for primary, but not secondary, schools. For example, the RSE teacher training modules, *Teacher training: respectful relationships* (Department for Education, 2020b) and *Teacher training: families* (Department for Education, 2020a) each state:

Primary schools are enabled and encouraged to cover LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) content if they consider it age-appropriate to do so. Secondary schools should include LGBT content

(Department for Education, 2020c, p. 11; 2020d, p. 12)

The guidance positions LGBT content as a form of RSE which only becomes essential to teach, that is to say not subject to schools’ decisions of appropriateness, for older pupils. Here, we see the necessity of viewing the function of policy within the socio-politico context in which it sits. As controversy is particularly heightened in primary schools, where, as detailed in my

Literature Review, the bulk of protests to LGBT content have occurred (Morgan & Taylor, 2019; Sauntson, 2021; Vincent, 2022), the differentiation between LGBT content being mandatory for secondary, but not primary, schools may be a policy response to polarisation.

However, in mind of discourses forming “the objects of which they speak” (Foucault, 1972, p. 54), in differentiating the mandatory nature of LGBT content between primary and secondary schools, the policy may discursively construct a distinction between the primary and secondary school ‘child’ subject⁵⁸ in relation to the nature of the ‘queer’. Primary schools are *enabled and encouraged* (See Findings Part 1: Encouraged & Enabled) to include LGBT content, it is implied to be appropriate, but the explicit provisions allowing schools to legitimately designate LGBT content as a subject age-inappropriate for their pupils suggests this implied appropriateness is open to legitimate contradiction.

10.1.1.1 Policy Conclusions

The characteristically Foucauldian Policy Archaeology Methodology, a method which advocates examining how the *issue* to which policy must respond is made “manifest, nameable, and describable” (Foucault, 1972b, p. 41; Scheurich, 1994, p. 300) and how policy itself thus constitutes the *solution*, is insightful here. The *issue* here was not framed as how to equally represent the ‘queer’ and the heteronormative, or represent the queer ‘child’, but how to satisfy the divisions in opinion on LGBT content. This seems to manifest the policy *solution* which prioritises representing different opinions on the appropriateness of LGBT content, allowing primary schools the authority to exclude LGBT content.

‘Appropriateness’ is not used in the context of other curricular content in the National Curriculum overview (Department for Education, 2015a), but it does feature in other subject specific curricular, for example, in the Science curriculum (Department for Education, 2015b). It is beyond the scope of this thesis to examine all the uses of appropriateness in the curriculum as a comparison, but it remains significant here that appropriateness judgements are applied only to the queer, but not heteronormative, content of the RSE curriculum. As previously discussed, the base of the curriculum into which one can also include LGBT content *if* it is

⁵⁸ Sex Education itself is optional for primary schools and the RSE curriculum becomes more complex and more sexual as pupils age (Department for Education, 2019d). For example, the statutory guidance requires that secondary, but not primary school, pupils learn about the nature of sexual relationships, the impact of risky sexual behaviour, the transmission of sexually transmitted infections, and contraception (Department for Education, 2019d). When considering that the literature review of this thesis found that LGBT content has been conceptualised as an advanced form of sex education, and those responses discussed in this chapter which paint it as hypersexualised, it could be argued that assigning LGBT content the same optional status as sex education may be perceived as LGBT content being a more sexualised or complex form of RSE.

appropriate is implicitly heteronormative. From a queer perspective, heteronormative content goes unproblematised, silent in its unquestionable appropriateness (S. Jackson, 2006; Loutzenheiser, 2018; Rosenberg, 2008). This may lead us to assume that the position of the queer ‘child’ is not necessarily recognised in primary schools.

10.1.2 Teachers Responses & Age-Appropriateness

That the RSE curriculum distinguishes between the primary and secondary school ‘child’ in the mandatory nature of LGBT (but not heteronormative) content is made more significant in view of this same separation being made in a minority of teachers’ responses in this research to justify its exclusion from the curriculum. In this section, I examine how teachers viewed and spoke of the age-appropriateness of LGBT content.

Teachers’ views on what is appropriate in primary schools were underpinned by discourses constructing both the subject position of the ‘child’ and of the ‘queer’. In the following two sub-sections, I examine these various constructions. In the first section, The Child’s (Lack of) Sexuality, I examine how, concerning the ‘child’, views differed on whether this position was seen as potentially queer, capable of having any sexual/ gender identity, or able to understand queer content. In the second section, The Desexualised Child & The Hypersexualised Queer, I examine how, concerning the ‘queer’, views differed on whether LGBT content was seen to be more sexualised than the heteronormative and whether, as stated, this was compatible with the ‘child’.

10.1.2.1 The Child’s (Lack of) Sexuality

The age at which LGBT content *should* be present in primary schools was a question I asked in both the interviews and questionnaires. Organising answers into Key Stages, I categorised them as follows:

- ‘Any’: LGBT content should be present at any age in primary school.
- ‘KS1’: LGBT content should be present from Key Stage 1 (age 6 to 7)
- ‘KS2’: LGBT content should be present from Key Stage 2 (age 8 to 11)
- ‘UKS2’: LGBT content should be present from Upper Key Stage 2 (age 10 to 11)

- ‘Some, Unclear’: The teacher indicated there should be some sort of LGBT content in primary schools but did not specify an age, or their description of such an age was too vague⁵⁹.
- ‘None’: LGBT content should not be present at any age in primary school.

To address whether children were seen to be potentially LGBT themselves, this was not a question I asked in either the questionnaires or interviews, but teachers often referenced it spontaneously. Answers that suggested children are not, or could not be, LGBT or that they could not understand such content were coded as *‘Not LGBT (Child)’*. Those answers which referenced queer children or stated that children could be queer were coded as *‘LGBT (Child)’*. All other answers which did not reference children’s potential queerness were coded as *‘No Ref’*. Alongside the age at which LGBT content was seen to be appropriate, this data provides insight into the ‘child’ subject’s perceived compatibility to the queer. Examples of each of these codes can be seen later in this chapter section.

⁵⁹ For example, Emily Smith (24, Female, Heterosexual, Teacher, Questionnaire), stated ‘Whenever it is covered in PSHE curriculum or when it is appropriate and arises naturally in conversation.’ I was unsure here where it was implied to be appropriate, or where it was included in the PSHE curriculum as these are subjective periods.

Table 7: The number of teachers who referenced LGBT children, or stated that children could not be LGBT themselves, and the age at which they stated LGBT content should be included in primary schools.

Age At Which LGBT Content Should be Included (Primary)	Data Source												
	Interview & Questionnaire				Interview Only				Questionnaire Only				Total
	LGBT (Child)	No Ref	Not LGBT (Child)	Total	LGBT (Child)	No Ref	Not LGBT (Child)	Total	LGBT (Child)	No Ref	Not LGBT (Child)	Total	
Any	9	10	1	20	1	1	0	2	63	104	14	181	203
KS1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	2	2
KS2	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	4	16	1	21	22
UKS2	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	5	30	7	42	43
Some, Unclear	1	1	0	2	3	8	3	14	1	15	2	18	34
None	0	0	3	3	0	0	0	0	1	36	19	56	59
Total	10	13	4	27	4	9	3	16	75	202	43	320	363

As Table 7 demonstrates, over three quarters of teachers thought LGBT content should be present at some stage in primary school. It should be noted here that these figures reported what they thought *should* be the case. The number reporting LGBT content in their schools was much lower than those who wanted it, as was explored previously. Over half stated LGBT content should be included at any age, showing that this was by far the largest single age category. Responses coming from the interviews were more likely to state both that LGBT content was appropriate at any age, and that children could be LGBT. This was potentially reflective of the higher proportion of queer teachers who participated in the interviews, as these teachers predictably showed greater knowledge of and support for LGBT inclusion in primary schools. For most teachers, therefore, LGBT content (at least some kind of it) was age-appropriate in primary schools. The patterns in the kinds of LGBT content that were deemed (in)appropriate are explored within the next chapter (See chapter: Homonormativity), but here I will briefly note that of the 203 responses coded ‘Any’, 46 specified that this was only the case for certain kinds of LGBT content, most commonly presentations of same-sex parents.

Whilst those wanting some level of LGBT content in primary school greatly outweighed those wanting none, wanting a level of LGBT content did not necessarily equate to an unreserved judgement of appropriateness. Age was thus a factor in judgements of appropriateness; 65 out of the 304 responses that stated LGBT content should be in primary schools also specified that it should be for KS2, or Upper KS2. Mirroring the discourses present within the policyscape, this suggests that for this minority of teachers, LGBT content’s compatibility with the ‘child’ was age dependent showing a potentially heteronormative notion of appropriateness.

This is more thoroughly elucidated alongside explicit references to the potential queerness of children. The proportions stating LGBT content was appropriate at ‘Any’ age in primary school constituted the vast majority of responses that also made reference to LGBT children. Only one response, in the questionnaire data set, referenced that LGBT content should not be in schools and referenced queer children:

If I was working in a school with white middle class⁶⁰ children I would have no problem. In mixed communities with strong religious and cultural sensitivities the danger is of focusing

⁶⁰ It is beyond the scope of this thesis to discuss this matter more fully, but it may be noted that whiteness and being middle class is associated with tolerance, whilst Islam, implicitly non-whiteness, and religion is associated with ‘negative

negative attention on those who are perceived as different and making their experience incredibly difficult. This is not just an Islamic issue either: many parents have discussed why they feel uncomfortable with this at primary age, despite being quite sympathetic to kids with more fluid identities. My teenage son, who told us he was gay age 12 - it was no shock to us - tells us that he would have felt extremely uncomfortable in class had it been discussed

(Headteacher1995 (straight working-class male aged 60, with a gay son (of whom we are fully supportive as a family), Headteacher, Questionnaire)

Headteacher1995's response suggested the reasoning for this exclusion concerned a need to protect LGBT children from unsupportive community views, which may be intensified by representation in the curriculum, rather than the inappropriateness of LGBT content in general. Experiences teaching out-queer children, or a general acknowledgement that children can be queer, were often positioned as necessitating LGBT content in the classroom. The two questionnaire responses⁶¹ below are examples of this.

Because evidence highlights that most trans adults can identify as feeling out-of-place in terms of their gender from a very early age

(Sophie, 50 year old M2F trans, currently living in M mode, Teacher, Free school, Questionnaire)

It depends on the context and at what age it is expected to be taught. It is important pupils know and understand that people can make choices and we must respect those but at primary it needs light touch with personalised work should a child be querying their self-identity... Parents may never mention it leading a child to have feelings of shame but it doesn't need mentioning until pupils can understand in Y5/6 and should be based in each cohorts maturity

attention' towards LGBT content. This is reminiscent of UK research suggesting that islamophobia and racialised intolerance may be articulated through a discourse contrasting 'their' intolerance and 'our' values (Crawford, 2017, p. 199; Kitching, 2022).

⁶¹ I chose these two examples to show that references to queer children did not necessarily lead to LGBT content being seen as appropriate for all ages in primary school. I also wished to include Sophie particularly given that she was the only (known) trans identified teacher in this research, and it seemed appropriate to include her voice. I do not mean to suggest that she represents the views of the any one group, but that she brings a unique personal experience in relation to gender identity.

(Genevieve, 40s, female, heterosexual, wife, mother, person, Teacher, Questionnaire)

Consistent with her reference to children having a sense of queerness at a *very early age*, Sophie's response stated that LGBT content should be present at 'Any' age. However, as Genevieve's response and Table 7 suggest, reference to the 'child' being potentially queer could still be made alongside stratifications of appropriateness based in age. In Genevieve's response the 'child' is potentially LGBT, but whether LGBT content is needed is linked to an age-dependant maturity. As such it is reserved for certain mature cohorts of older primary aged children.

Most responses which suggested that children were not LGBT also stated that LGBT content should not be present at any age in primary school. The assumption of the heteronormative 'child' subject was not, however, uniformly drawn on in conjunction with the irrelevance of LGBT content in primary schools. In much the same way as the RSE curriculum guidance suggests that LGBT content in RSE should be related to learning about *different families* (See chapter: Homonormativity), there was a common assumption that children could learn about LGBT content to reflect such or to encourage respect for others, but not their present selves:

[LGBT content should be present at age] 7... Children need to understand that bullying is wrong. We might not think about it as primary school teachers but one day the children may grow up to meet LGBTQI+ people and they should know to be kind and respectful of others

(Alice, 30 year old straight female from London, Teacher, Questionnaire)

[LGBT content should be present at age] Any age...Because some children will come from LGBT families, or they will end up being LGBT themselves when they get older, and it will help them if they are

(Flower, 44, female, in a lesbian relationship, Headteacher, Questionnaire)

Given that they both seem to assume that presently primary school children are not queer, both responses above were coded as 'Not LGBT (Child)'. The examples above show two constructions of a desexualised 'child' subject. In the first, the child is heteronormative but may interact with the 'queer' *other*. In the second, the 'child' is desexualised but holds the potential for a queer futurity. As Table 7 demonstrates, however, those responses coded as 'Not

LGBT (Child)’ more commonly constructed the primary school ‘child’ heteronormatively to justify absencing LGBT content.

10.1.2.2 The Desexualised Child & The Hypersexualised Queer

In this section I look more in depth at those answers which constructed the ‘child’ and the ‘queer’ as separate in suggesting that LGBT content was inappropriate. These responses mobilised a desexualised ‘child’ subject to suggest any representation of sexuality⁶² was inappropriate, and that representation of LGBT content was thus irrelevant for their rights. As explored here, this desexualisation was often constructed along heteronormative lines; rhetoric around the ‘child’ lacking understanding of or identification with any sexuality or gender identity could still coincide with the assumption of their (understanding of) cisgender heterosexuality.

As suggested in Table 7, in certain responses LGBT content was made other to the primary school ‘child’ subject through being constructed as too old for them, appropriate only for their older (secondary) school selves or not at all. I coded⁶³ any response which suggested primary school children are too young for LGBT content as *‘Too Young (Primary)’*. Within those coded as such, LGBT content was often described as too *sexual*, or likely to *promote* being LGBT. I sub-coded references to this age inappropriateness based in LGBT content being too *sexual* as *‘LGBT Content is Sexualising’* and being likely to promote being LGBT as *‘LGBT Content is Promotion’*. Though some of those, in the interviews and questionnaire, coded as *‘Too Young (Primary)’* referenced this in response to the aforementioned question (see Table 7) on whether LGBT content was appropriate in primary schools, others referenced it spontaneously, in response to other questions.

‘Too Young (Primary)’

LGBT content is not appropriate for the primary school ‘child’ because it is not age-appropriate. The primary school ‘child’ is too young, and as such they may be unable to

⁶² Responses primarily referred to sexuality, but as discussed in the Theoretical Underpinnings chapter of this thesis, assumptions around heterosexuality often implicitly assume a coherence between gender and assigned sex alongside attraction to the *opposite* gender (Butler, 1990).

⁶³ These discourses were not only drawn upon but likewise reported in certain responses here; some teachers stated that *others*, whether that be other school workers or parents, perceived LGBT content to be sexualising or a kind of promotion, even if they did not themselves. 25 responses (9 in the Interview & Questionnaire, 8 in the Interview Only, and 8 in the Questionnaire Only data set) stated others perceive LGBT content to be sexualising, whilst 44 (13 in the Interview & Questionnaire, 8 in the Interview Only, and 23 in the Questionnaire Only data set) stated others receive it to be promotion.

understand LGBT content or be negatively affected by it in some way given that it is content for which they are not yet ready.

‘LGBT Content is Sexualising’

LGBT content is inappropriately sexual and as such is not age-appropriate for the ‘child’, who is not ready to learn this sexual knowledge.

‘LGBT Content is Promotion’

LGBT content is age inappropriate for the ‘child’ because they are impressionable, and seeing this content may encourage them to be LGBT, confuse their identity, or change them in some way.

Table 8: The total number of teachers coded as referring to the ‘child’ as *too young* for LGBT content, and the number of these codes sub-coded as referring to LGBT content as *sexualising* or *promotion*.

Code	Data Set			Total
	Interview & Questionnaire	Interview Only	Questionnaire Only	
‘Too Young (Primary)’	5	1	62	68
‘LGBT Content is Sexualising’	4	1	10	15
‘LGBT Content is Promotion’	3	0	36	39
‘No Reference’	22	15	258	295

The number of responses coded as *'Too Young (Primary)'*⁶⁴ overall was a minority⁶⁵. Representing around one fifth of the total responses, however, those coded as stating that the primary school 'child' is *too young* for LGBT content (and potentially that LGBT content is either sexualising or promotion) nonetheless offer insight into a discourse separating the 'child' from the 'queer'.

'Too Young (Primary)'

The questionnaire responses below are examples I coded as *'Not LGBT'* in relation to the child's potential queerness, *'None'* for the age in primary school in which LGBT content should be included (see Table 7), and *'Too Young (Primary)'* given that the reasoning for such was explicitly linked to the child's age:

No they are still thinking about unicorns and do not realise there is a [difference] in gender. Many wonder why they cannot sleep together in the same rooms on residential as they are all friends. They are not emotionally or intellectually developed enough at this age...[LGBT content should be present] Only when they are ready. Primary children are still trying to work out the concepts of relationships. LGBT is too complex for them to understand in the same way it is not wise to teach trigonometry in primary

(Real Teaching, Headteacher, General Primary School, Questionnaire)

I think on the whole the children are too young to have fully formed ideas about their own sexuality let alone other peoples. I think at this age it is something that should be discussed at home...[LGBT content should be present] At senior school as part of sex education

(Carol, Middle aged, female, Teaching Assistant, General Primary School, Questionnaire)

⁶⁴ Again, codes here were disproportionately represented in the questionnaire only data set, and least common in the interview only. As discussed in the previous section, this may reflect the larger amount of queer teachers who participated in the interviews, who were much more likely to be supportive of LGBT content. Reflecting previous No Outsiders research examining views on LGBT content in educational settings, the higher proportion in the questionnaires may also reflect the relative anonymity of the questionnaire format; responses stating a very strongly negative opinion of LGBT content, may not have been as inclined to discuss this at length with a researcher (Atkinson & DePalma, 2008a; DePalma & Atkinson, 2006). Whilst this potentially points to the importance of multiple data sources in this research, this remains unclear.

⁶⁵ As explored in the previous chapters, the majority of teachers thought LGBT content was appropriate in the classroom, and many wanted more LGBT content than reported having it.

Much as the RSE curriculum separated LGBT content out as something more necessary for children older than primary school age, the responses here separate out the primary school from the secondary school ‘child’, drawing on a non-queer concept of the former in stating the inappropriateness of LGBT content. As has been noted by previous researchers, the ‘child’ is desexualised in the assumption that their understanding of relationships is uncertain, but their emergent identity holds a heteronormative linear progression (DePalma & Atkinson, 2010; Llewellyn & Reynolds, 2021). As discussed in the literature review, cisgender heterosexual content is often so normalised that its representation is not often thought of in terms of *sexuality*, and as such is not in itself considered a relevant factor for discussion of age-appropriateness (Atkinson, 2021; Atkinson & DePalma, 2008b; DePalma & Atkinson, 2010). This research extends previous research through demonstrating this pattern in the policyscape and certain teachers’ responses.

Heteronormativity underpins both the separating of different sexes for residential trips and Real Teaching’s separation of the ‘child’ and the ‘queer’. He suggests that some children may be ready to understand *why* it has been deemed to be inappropriate for different sex children to share rooms, they may understand the heteronormative rules separating them here or they may not, but no primary aged children are said to be able to understand LGBT content, which is linked to knowledge beyond that of the primary school curriculum (trigonometry).

Likewise, Carol suggests the ‘child’ is ill-equipped to understand *other peoples’* sexuality, positioning their emerging sexuality on a heterosexual trajectory. It is more specifically the primary school ‘child’ who is *too young*, given that Carol’s narrative suggests LGBT content would be appropriate in *senior school as part of sex education*, again echoing the RSE curriculum’s separation between the necessity of LGBT content for secondary, but not primary, school pupils. In the suggestion that LGBT content should, at this age, be *discussed at home* instead of in school, Carol’s response seems to construct the home as a heteronormative space, one where the ‘child’ may be told about LGBT content, but it is not necessarily already there, either from one’s own self-knowledge or from familial representation. Cohering with the idea that the ‘child’ is not queer themselves, within this discourse it becomes the responsibility of the parent to give them knowledge of this *other* outside world, whilst being cosseted from the adult public sphere.

Heteronormative relationships are not referenced here. They are present only in the allusions to children working out relationships that are not LGBT first, or in assumptions that the child’s *own sexuality* is not LGBT, but that they may later understand this *other*. I did not

concurrently ask when or if cisgender heterosexual content should be present in primary schools, given that this kind of overt questioning around heteronormativity may have drawn attention to the potential discrepancies between the two answers. As this differentiation was a focus of this thesis, it was something I did not wish to highlight as this may have acted as a leading question. However, examining responses to the appropriateness of the various children's literatures (See appendix: Children's Literature) we see that some drew on the heteronormative, desexualised child to state the inappropriateness of LGBT content in contrast to the heteronormative. The below response from the questionnaire provides a comprehensive example of such. Referencing the RSE curriculum, Barry G's response⁶⁶ suggests they have judged LGBT content to be inappropriate for their class, given that children are both ignorant of same-sex relationships, and are too immature for this knowledge:

[Should LGBT content be present in primary schools?] No. Most of our children aren't that aware of LGBT until upper key stage 2... I think that most primary aged children are not emotionally or socially mature enough to deal with the concept of same-sex relationships

(Barry G, middle aged liberal thinker, Teacher, Faith School, Questionnaire)

Barry G positions LGBT content not only as something which *is* beyond the awareness of children, but as something which should remain so through stating that *no* it should not be present in primary schools. It is specifically queer relationships which are deemed to be beyond the understanding of the 'child' here. Barry G's response later distinguishes between *The Paper Bag Princess*, a story with a heterosexual presenting couple, and *Maiden & Princess*, a story featuring a queer relationship. Their response indicated that *The Paper Bag Princess* was a book that was appropriate for the age they teach, and a book they would want to have in their classroom. They wrote of the story:

It challenges 'fairy tale ending' stereotypes... [The message of the story is] Women can manage quite well without a man

⁶⁶ Barry G's response was also coded as 'None' for the age in primary school in which LGBT content should be included (see Table 7), and 'Too Young (Primary)'.

For *Maiden & Princess*, on the other hand, Barry G stated that this was not an appropriate book for the age they teach and not a book they would like in their classroom. Of the story they wrote:

It's forcing a subject onto the children that they may not be aware of.

Stating that *The Paper Bag Princess* is appropriate for their class and that they would want the book in their classroom, Barry G does not problematise the appropriateness of heterosexuality, despite implicitly referencing it in the nod to the stereotype reversing dynamics of the couple's relationship. Whilst showing *women can manage quite well without a man* is judged an appropriate theme, *Maiden & Princess* showing that a woman can be with another woman is deemed inappropriate and beyond the normal for *the majority of children (who) would find the story odd*. By framing teaching with LGBT content as *forcing a subject onto the children that they may not be aware of*, the 'queer' is made external to the 'child'. As discussed in the second chapter of this part (See chapter: Appropriateness in Teaching), the idea that showing LGBT content is *forcing a subject*, drew on a discourse constructing LGBT content as partial or biased, and the non-presentation of such as impartial or neutral. As the 'child' subject is created as ignorant of LGBT content and not LGBT themselves, they are liable to be affected by something which they *are not emotionally or socially mature enough to deal with*. In Barry G's response it is unclear exactly what these effects would be. However, in those coded as '*LGBT Content is Sexualising*' and/or '*LGBT Content is Promotion*'⁶⁷, teachers suggested that knowledge of LGBT content would harm the innocence, and/or by extension the assumed cisgender heterosexuality, of the 'child'.

'LGBT Content is Sexualising' & 'LGBT Content is Promotion'

In these responses, a discursive conflation emerged between talking about LGBT content and either talking about sex, in the former sub-code, or promoting it, in the latter⁶⁸. Those responses coded as such thus continued to position LGBT content as something separate from the 'child' subject, as previously discussed, but went further in explicitly constructing it as something from which they should be protected. Corroborating previous research, this

⁶⁷ As detailed earlier in this section, those responses I assigned to the sub-codes of '*LGBT Content is Sexualising*' and '*LGBT Content is Promotion*' were all likewise coded to the overall code '*Too Young (Primary)*'.

⁶⁸ 25 responses (9 in the interview and questionnaire, 8 in the interview only, and 8 in the questionnaire only data set) were additionally coded as stating that others, whether this be parents or school colleagues, perceive LGBT content to be sexualising, whilst 44 (13 in the interview and questionnaire, 8 in the interview only, and 23 in the questionnaire only data set) were similarly coded as stating that others perceive it to be promotion.

discourse of protection drew on a common sense truth that to be a child is to be sexually innocent to the extent that it seemed natural or at least a formative condition of childhood (Sandfort, 2013). Such a discourse of protection ran through responses from both sub-codes, manifesting as either protecting the child's sexual innocence from the sexualising LGBT content, or their identity from being changed by it.

The questionnaire responses below were coded as '*LGBT Content is Sexualising*'. Each answers whether LGBT content should be present at any stage in primary school:

All the sex stuff is for the parents to talk about, primary school isnt really a place for all that.

When theyre older they'll know

(James Dean, Normal guy, married with 3 kids, two dogs, Yr 6/5, used to be KS1, maths, Teacher, Questionnaire)

No. children up to the age of 11 should be children. Free to develop their own likes and dislikes,

find out who they are and not be made to take a label. I am me and I can choose to play with

boys or girls. Like boy or girl things. There is no need to talk about sexuality at primary schools.

Children are sexualised far to young in society already

(Experienced Teacher/manager, Teacher 53, parent, grandparent, Questionnaire)

Both responses link LGBT content to *sex*, with James Dean calling it *sex stuff* and Experienced Teacher/manager seeming to suggest that its presentation would contribute to children being additionally *sexualised*.

The idea of protection from this sexualisation was often articulated within the frame of a private/ public divide. As earlier seen in Carol's response, James Dean's response suggests parents may *talk about* LGBT content, but the idea that they already know they are queer or have queer parents etc. is unacknowledged. Many of those responses coded only for LGBT content as *sexualising* did not explicitly talk about promotion, but there was a subtext within suggesting LGBT content is too sexualising and the 'child' would be affected by this *sexual* knowledge. In stating that children *should be children*, Experienced Teacher/manager's response positions LGBT content as counter to the 'child' being such.

One example from the questionnaire of a response I coded as both '*LGBT Content is Promotion*' and '*LGBT Content is Sexualising*' came from Kitty. When asked whether LGBT content should be present in primary schools, Kitty wrote:

No, children in primary school are at a special time when they have not yet been exposed to all the sexualised stuff you see in the media nowadays. You hear a lot about teen pregnancy going up⁶⁹, how kids are getting 'older' 'younger' and I just think to myself this isn't right. So no, they do not need to learn about sex and how some people have lots of partners at this age, they'll find out eventually but that should be when they aren't as impressionable. What they don't know, can't hurt them

(Kitty, Married southern heterosexual woman, Teacher, Questionnaire)

In this extract Kitty sets out a clear binary between the characteristics of the 'child' and the 'queer'. The 'child' is positioned as desexualised in relation to the hypersexualised queer, invoking a discourse of protection for the former from the latter. Kitty's response stresses this concept of childhood innocence, calling it a *special time*. LGBT content, by contrast, is positioned as contrary to this innocence, as *sexualised* knowledge that is oppositional to the 'child'. The queer seems to be sexualised not only by the synonymising of arguments against childhood sexualisation and those against LGBT content, but likewise by the rather more explicit *So no, they do not need to learn about sex*, a statement that seems to directly address why LGBT content is being deemed inappropriate. Kitty's response accords with the oppositional constructions of the 'child' and the 'queer' discussed in the Literature Review chapter of this thesis, exemplifying the way in which LGBT content could be positioned as a corruption to the characteristics of the 'child' (Malins, 2016; Neary, 2017; Renold & McGeeney, 2017).

Through the linking of LGBT content to *sex*, it is made inappropriate, a subject from which, as found in previous research, children must be protected (Neary et al., 2016; Nixon & Givens, 2007). Kitty's response, as those above and similarly coded, sit within longstanding anxieties around the corruption of childhood (Garlen, 2019; McKee, 2010; Woodiwiss, 2014) via children's access to 'sexualised' content, particularly in the media (Buckingham, 2013;

⁶⁹ Teenage pregnancy rates have been decreasing in the past decade: In 2011 there were 30.9 per 1000 conceptions in those under the age of 18, compared to 13.2 per 1000 in 2021 (Office for National Statistics, 2023).

Garlen, 2019; L. Jackson, 2006; Osgood et al., 2019; Robinson, 2008, 2013). As Taylor suggests, the state of childhood as a romanticised time of innocence is a “bedrock assumption of contemporary Western thinking” and as such the rise of mass media has been accompanied by a rising concern for the way in which the sexualised nature of it could have a corrupting effect on children (Taylor, 2010, p. 48).

Corruption may seem rather a strong choice of wording. However, as is hinted at in Kitty’s reference to excluding LGBT content because what *they don’t know, can’t hurt them* she puts forward that LGBT content is inappropriate because the ‘child’ is open to influence, and that this influence is damaging. Kitty went on to write:

Let the children be young and carefree whilst they can. If later they do think they are gay that is fine. They can deal with that how they like later. But encouraging them to commit to a lifestyle early on in life that may cause pain and has been proven to lead to more suicide is not the way to go. Deal with it if it [happens] but don’t encourage

Responding to *When Aiden Became a Brother*, Kitty wrote:

Very political trying to push an idea onto children that their bodies are not what they naturally are but can change into boys/girls etc.

The repetition of allowing children to be *young and carefree whilst they can* as an argument against LGBT content in primary schools once again positions it in opposition to the ‘child’ being such. LGBT content is constructed as a prevention of children being what they *naturally are*, a kind of harm both in itself and in its effect on childhood. Kitty’s response, as is discussed further in the second chapter of this findings part, does not position her argument as homophobic. She states that being gay when they are older *is fine*. Yet concurrently, her response links being queer to detrimental life outcomes. As likewise explored in the second chapter of this part, Kitty’s suggestion that the presentation of a trans child is *political* exemplifies the way in which discourses underpinning the idea of promotion could infuse both the pushing of being LGBT and of one view of its acceptability.

Overall, the idea that one should let children, be children thus illuminates an element of the apparatus of LGBT inclusion which draws on a binary opposition between the ‘queer’ and the ‘child’ within a discourse of the former corrupting the latter; to introduce LGBT content to children would be to take away the essential characteristics of the child.

10.1.3 Conclusion

To conclude, the data in this chapter corresponds with previous research showing the way in which the ‘queer’ can be constructed as a kind of advanced sex education (Neary et al., 2016; Nixon & Givens, 2007), disproportionately sexual (Carlile, 2020b; DePalma & Atkinson, 2010; Gray, 2010; Johnson, 2020; Nash & Browne, 2020) and as such inappropriate for the simultaneously desexualised and heterosexual ‘child’ (Bragg et al., 2018; Llewellyn & Reynolds, 2021; Meyer et al., 2019). Again much as in previous research, the idea of the innocent child was non-universal (Llewellyn, 2022a), being present in a minority of responses. However, in certain responses the relevance of LGBT content was made along age dependant lines, suggesting future work in the inclusion of such should illuminate the presence of the queer ‘child’ in order to underline their rights to see themselves reflected.

This research has additionally explored how it was not only in teachers responses, but also in the 2019 RSE curriculum, that questions of age-appropriateness were disproportionately applied to the ‘queer’, with “questions of propriety and explicitness” being “burdened by the invisible normativity of heterosexual culture” (Berlant & Warner, 1995, p. 349). The RSE policyscape does suggest that LGBT content⁷⁰ is age inappropriate. However, singling it out as subject to decisions of appropriateness, and not as something which is described as an essential right of the primary school ‘child’, both allowed for, and somewhat aligned with, a sporadic exclusion of LGBT content based in a heteronormative/desexualised concept of the ‘child’.

The power here lies not in how LGBT content is forbidden, or even explicitly discouraged. Instead, it is in how decisions of age-appropriateness “systematically form the objects of which they speak” (Foucault, 1972, p. 54), forming knowledge of both the ‘child’ and the ‘queer’. Running through both the RSE curriculum and certain teachers’ responses was the silent creation of the ‘queer’ as disproportionately subject to judgements of age-appropriateness for the ‘child’. As David Halperin writes of the binary between the heteronormative and the queer: “the first of which is unmarked and unproblematized—it designates ‘the categories to which everyone is assumed to belong’ (unless someone is specifically marked as different)—whereas the second term is marked and problematized: it designates a category of persons whom something differentiates from normal, unmarked people” (Halperin, 1995, p. 44). As was

⁷⁰ In the following chapter, I examine how the appropriateness of LGBT content appears somewhat limited to the presentation of different families.

suggested in the previous findings part, whilst given a level of legitimacy by being named, the RSE policy produces knowledge about LGBT content through designating it as an optional other category of debateable age-appropriateness. It is made a *marked and problematised* other, outside of the *unmarked and unproblematised* norm of heteronormativity within the mandatory RSE content.

10.2 Appropriateness in Teaching

In the first chapter of this findings part, I examined how LGBT content could be included, or excluded, on the basis of it being age (in)appropriate for the primary school ‘child’. In the second chapter, I examine the inclusion or exclusion of LGBT content not as a matter of age-appropriateness, but as a matter of negotiating the rights claims of different groups who hold different views on its teaching in the curriculum. The key issue I aim to elucidate here is how positioning the inclusion of LGBT content as a matter of balancing groups’ rights draws on multiple framings of ‘inclusion’, multiple views of what is and isn’t appropriate to do or to teach if one is being ‘inclusive’, and who is being considered in these decisions.

To do this, this chapter is split into two main sections. In this first, I examine the polycscape, attending to how it constructs the rights of queer students not to be discriminated against, and of those who do not wish to condone LGBT relationships through their teachings. I analyse how this has long been articulated (in Section 28, the Equality Act 2010, and the RSE curriculum) through a discursive framing of inclusion which separates direct harassment against (queer) individuals, and indirect discrimination via unsupportive views of the queer being taught in the curriculum. Likewise in the frame of balancing groups’ rights, I examine how recently LGBT content in the curriculum has been articulated quite explicitly within a discourse of balancing groups’ views in the curriculum, through its inclusion in the *Political Impartiality* guidance for schools.

In the second section, I move to examine how teachers’ responses articulated various framings of inclusion. I focus on the divisions between whether ‘inclusion’ for queer students referred to putting in protections against direct discrimination and/or equal representation in the curriculum. For some teachers, including LGBT content in the curriculum was an essential measure in combatting the othering that facilitates direct discrimination. For others, protections against direct discrimination were likewise essential, but to include LGBT content in the curriculum would be either a violation of religious rights or of the school’s duties regarding political impartiality. Different notions of who was considered in inclusion and appropriateness decisions, and how these framings reflect the polycscape, are discussed throughout this section.

To analyse decisions of appropriateness and inclusion, I look to the discourses underpinning them, to how policies and teachers’ responses are based on certain silent, “never

said” assumptions (Foucault, 1972, p. 27). I focus on two constructions of LGBT content. Firstly, I examine how LGBT content is made (un)necessary in schools. Drawing on Scheurich’s Policy Archaeology Methodology which advocates taking notice of how policy creates certain issues, but not others, as legitimate and worthy of a policy solution, I examine how certain types of LGBT inclusion (anti-direct discrimination measures) are made necessary in schools, but others (curricular inclusion) less so, being non-mandatory and subject to judgements of appropriateness (Scheurich, 1994). There is a queer slant to this analysis; I examine how the discourses creating what kind of issue is worthy of a policy response may be created along heteronormative lines. Secondly, continuing to attend to the ways in which discourses of appropriateness form the “objects of which they speak” (Foucault, 1972, p. 54), I examine how putting LGBT, but not heteronormative, content in the curriculum into the frame of balancing groups’ rights or of maintaining school impartiality can in itself construct it as partial.

I analyse how the polycscape and teachers framed who was being considered in decisions of appropriateness and balancing rights, and how these rights were mobilised. Following Foucault’s notion of tracing power not by asking what power is, but by “what means it is exercised” (Foucault, 1982b, p. 786), I use the way the polycscape and teachers’ responses draw on what is necessary for certain groups, or what their ‘rights’⁷¹ are, as a means to analyse the power relations being exercised in this subjectivity. Ball’s discursive concept of policy as discourse, as creating subjects through setting out “what can be said, and thought, but also about who can speak, when, where and with what authority” (Ball, 1993, p. 14) is used to examine how these power relations are brought into being when decisions of appropriateness are made. I use the discourses informing how rights are (un)evenly afforded to examine how “discourses (are) used to support these power relations” between the queer and the heteronormative, how rights may extend to certain types of LGBT inclusion, but not others (Foucault, 1978, p. 97). Queer Theory again aided in this analysis, contributing an insistence on asking how these rights are formed along gendered and sexual hierarchies, addressing the needs of certain groups, but not others (Ingraham, 2002). I consider how “access (or not) to representations” (Plummer, 1995 cited in Plummer, 2005, p. 91) of certain sexual subjects acts

⁷¹ I use a broad notion of ‘rights’ here to refer to the extent to which a group is afforded certain protections (against, for example, bullying in the case of the child), given freedoms in what they must be able to teach and how (in terms of, for example, freedom to teach religious perspectives on LGBT content), and owed in the sense of that which schools have a duty to provide.

to confer or deny rights. In this context, I primarily consider how the (lack of) recognition of the queer ‘child’ subject is used to deny or support the rights for this subject to see queer representation in schools. Such an emphasis broadens my conceptualisation of rights from not only what individuals can do, but to how a lack of recognition of certain subjects can be impactful (Rasmussen et al., 2016).

10.2.1 Rights & Appropriateness in the Policyscape

In this section I examine Section 28, the Equality Act 2010, the RSE curriculum, and the recent Political Impartiality in Schools guidance, looking at how appropriateness in teaching has been conceptualised in terms of balancing groups’ rights and views. I particularly focus on the way in which direct discrimination against individual (queer) students has long been constructed as inappropriate in policy but excluding LGBT content in the curriculum has been constructed as an appropriate means of balancing rights of certain groups to teach in line with their views.

10.2.1.1 Section 28: Discrimination & Child Protection

I have previously examined how the 2003 repeal of Section 28, the legislation banning the “promotion” of homosexuality in schools, enshrined the optional nature of LGBT content in the curriculum (UK Government, 1988, Section 2a). In the context of this chapter, it is also insightful to note that, whilst Section 28 is now considered to be explicitly homophobic, within both the advent of Section 28, and its repeal, those in favour of Section 28 did not necessarily style themselves as such. Arguments revolving around the unacceptability of adults being homosexual in private⁷², or advocating to punish them in some way, were, to a certain extent, starting to lose their legitimacy (Neisen, 1990; Smith, 1994; Waites, 2000; Weston & Berridge, 2020). Instead, the discourse imbuing calls in favour of Section 28 within parliament had pivoted to drawing on a ‘child’ subject that needed protection from the ‘queer’, and on the need to defend religious rights. The Minister for Local Government Michael Howard in the run up to the implementation of Section 28 stated:

[Section 28] is concerned with the promotion by a local authority, or by persons assisted by it, of homosexuality, and the promotion of the teaching in schools that homosexuality is acceptable

⁷² Consensual sex between two males over the age of 21 in private was legalised in the Sexual Offences Act 1967. Privacy in this context referred to sex between the two individuals being in a place both inaccessible to the public, and any other party. Sex between more than two males was considered public, and as such remained illegal (UK Parliament, 1967).

as a pretended family relationship. Nothing in [Section 28] will put a homosexual at a disadvantage compared with any other person... We do not think that it is damaging

(House of Commons Library, 2000, p. 10)

Later, Baroness Young, a prominent Conservative politician, and previous head of the House of Lords, stated that her argument in favour of Section 28 was not homophobic as she fully supported anti-bullying measures. Rather, her support stemmed from a desire to protect children, given that “there is no moral equivalence between homosexual and heterosexual relationships” (Lords Hansard, 2000, para. 24). Anti-bullying discourses here are, and remain, not mutually exclusive to stating the inappropriateness of homosexuality being taught in schools, with the two beliefs relying on an intolerance of direct discrimination, but not necessarily LGBT content being othered⁷³ in the curriculum. Indeed, schools were still advised to prevent homophobic bullying⁷⁴ whilst Section 28 was in place and, when in the late nineties and early two-thousands saw the New Labour government attempt to repeal the bill, such attempts were originally defeated in the House of Lords, with 210 (versus 165) votes to keep Section 28 in place but add a clause which stated “that it should not prevent the Headteacher or governing body of a maintained school, or a teacher employed by a maintained school, from taking steps to prevent any form of bullying” (House of Commons Library, 2000, p. 4).

The ‘queer’ subject, though not considered to be a position appropriate for the ‘child’, is not constructed as discriminated against in this narrative. Teachings on, or based in, moral appraisals of a group are separated from that which is *damaging* to that group. Discrimination here is rather narrowly defined in terms of more overt bullying or harassment. Though policy no longer explicitly separates the ‘child’ and the ‘queer’ so directly and equalities legislation has significantly evolved since the repeal of Section 28, this distinction has remained through both the Equality Act and the recent RSE guidance, being framed as a means of balancing queer and religious rights.

⁷³ The concept of ‘othering’ here draws from the Queer theoretical framework of this thesis, in which concepts of the norm create an oppositional other. The Theoretical Underpinnings chapter discusses this further.

⁷⁴ The Department for Education and Skills 2002 *Bullying Don’t Suffer in Silence* anti-bullying resource suggested for schools to have “a definition of bullying, including racist, sexist and homophobic bullying” elaborating that “Pupils do not necessarily have to be lesbian, gay or bi-sexual to experience such bullying. Just being different can be enough” but it should be noted that whilst Section 28 was still in place at the time of publishing, the New Labour government were attempting to repeal the bill (Department for Education and Skills, 2002, p. 5 15).

10.2.1.2 The Equality Act 2010: Discrimination in Curricular Delivery & Content

The Equality Act 2010 set out that discrimination based on protected characteristics⁷⁵, including sexual orientation and gender reassignment, is prohibited. What constitutes *discrimination*, however, likewise gives insight into the framing of rights, and what is appropriate teaching regarding these rights, in the policyscape; direct discrimination is separated out from exclusion in the curriculum.

The *Equality Act 2010 and schools guidance* is clear in affording queer students the right not to be directly discriminated against⁷⁶. For example, “a school with a religious character would be acting unlawfully if it refused to admit a child because he or she was gay – or their parents were” (Department for Education, 2018b, p. 13). Likewise, Section 89 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 states that maintained schools must tackle direct discrimination in the form of anti-bullying policies (UK Government, 2006). However, the Equality Act 2010 also makes certain complex differentiations in what constitutes discrimination, banning direct harassment or denial of access (as above) towards individual queer students, but allowing schools to teach perspectives that may other the ‘queer’.

The Equality Act, as aforementioned in Section 28, distinguishes between direct discrimination within the delivery of the curriculum, and in the indirect discrimination based in its content. *The Equality Act 2010 and schools guidance* from the Department for Education set out that:

The content of the school curriculum has never been caught by discrimination law, and this Act now states explicitly that it is excluded. However the way in which a school provides education – the delivery of the curriculum – is explicitly included

(Department for Education, 2018b, p. 14)

Stating that it is “not the intention of the Equality Act to undermine” them, the *Equality Act 2010 and schools guidance* states faith perspectives on LGBT content are not considered to be discriminatory, as this comes under curricular content (Department for Education, 2018b,

⁷⁵ Age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation are the protected characteristics under the Equality Act (UK Government, 2010).

⁷⁶ It should be noted, however, that this could be contentious in relation to trans inclusion, for example relating to bathroom access.

p. 23). The guidance acknowledges schools as a site in which tensions between religious communities being able to teach their views of LGBT content and the potential effect this may have on queer students:

Some schools with a religious character have concerns that they may be prevented from teaching in line with their religious ethos. Teachers have expressed concerns that they may be subject to legal action if they do not voice positive views on same-sex relationships, whether or not this view accords with their faith. There are also concerns that schools with a religious character may teach and act in ways unacceptable to lesbian, gay and bisexual⁷⁷ pupils and parents when same-sex relationships are discussed because there are no express provisions to prevent this occurring

(Department for Education, 2018b, p. 23)

Referencing certain teachers' fear that they may be liable to discrimination charges if they *do not voice positive* opinions of LGBT content may seem to suggest that this guidance is guaranteeing the right *not to voice positive* content, but it also states that "it should not be unlawful for a teacher in any school to express personal views on sexual orientation" (Department for Education, 2018b, p. 23) explaining that one can also state *any* personal views⁷⁸, if "their beliefs are explained in an appropriate way" (Department for Education, 2018b, p. 23). In the context of teaching around sexuality, it is not the voicing of negative views on LGBT relationships per se that constitutes discrimination, but the manner of delivery:

⁷⁷ There is a notable gap in the reference to transgender pupils here. For further analysis of this gap in the polycscape and teachers' responses, see Findings Part 3: Different Types of Families.

⁷⁸ The guidance, *The Marriage Same Sex Couples Act 2013: The Equality and Human Rights Implications for the Provision of School Education*, also states: "No school, or individual teacher, is under a duty to support, promote or endorse marriage of same-sex couples...nothing in the Act affects the rights of schools with a religious character to continue to teach about marriage according to their religious doctrines or ethos. Any views expressed about marriage of same-sex couples, by governors, teachers, other school staff, parents and pupils, may reflect the religious ethos of the school" (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2014, p. 234).

If a school conveyed its belief in a way that involved haranguing, harassing or berating a particular pupil or group of pupils then this would be unacceptable in any circumstances and is likely to constitute unlawful discrimination

(Department for Education, 2018b, p. 23)

The *Equality Act 2010 and schools guidance* therefore acknowledges that there are concerns that schools with a religious character may teach and act in ways unacceptable to LGBT students in teachings on sexuality but addresses them only to the extent that they may be directly harassing, not marginalising or indirectly discriminating in the views they share. It is unclear how teaching that LGBT relationships are less preferable to the heteronormative does not constitute a kind of indirect discrimination as those with the protected characteristics of gender reassignment or sexual orientation seem likely to be negatively impacted by such teachings, whether in terms of feeling personally othered, or this teaching impacting the culture of their school.

Within the *Reform of the national curriculum in England Equalities impact assessment*, the Department for Education assessed “whether and how the proposed changes to the national curriculum may impact – positively or negatively – on ‘protected characteristics’ groups” referring to the requirements of the Equality Act (Department for Education, 2013b, p. 3). The absence of LGBT identities in the figures, topics, or other content referenced in the curriculum was not considered to constitute a negative impact on the protected characteristics of sexual orientation or gender reassignment (Department for Education, 2013b). This seems to be because the Equality Act 2010 does acknowledge indirect discrimination as unlawful behaviour, but states that it is defensible in certain circumstances:

Indirect discrimination occurs when a “provision, criterion or practice” is applied generally but has the effect of putting people with a particular characteristic at a disadvantage when compared to people without that characteristic... It is a defence against a claim of indirect discrimination if it can be shown to be “a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim”

(Department for Education, 2018b, p. 9)

In light of this distinction, it seems likely that the *disadvantage* for queer students that may occur due to a school separating out LGBT and heteronormative content in the curriculum would fall within the definition of a *legitimate aim*, given that the act enshrines the ability of

schools to teach their perspectives based on moral or religious grounds⁷⁹ (Department for Education, 2018b).

The policyscape distinction between discrimination based in *haranguing, harassing or berating a particular pupil or group of pupils* and indirect discrimination against a group to which those pupils may belong was exemplified in an event in 2011. In this event, faith schools across the Lancashire County Council district distributed literature entitled ‘Pure Manhood’⁸⁰ to their students detailing the so-called ‘disordered’ nature of homosexuality (Vanderbeck & Johnson, 2015). Assuming that this teaching violated the Equality Act 2010, then Trade Union Congress General Secretary Brendan Barber wrote to then Secretary of State for Education Michael Gove to clarify. As distributing *Pure Manhood* as part of teaching in schools was not “haranguing, harassing or berating” particular pupils, Gove clarified that it was not discrimination under the Equality Act, seeming to define the ability of schools to teach their faith perspectives as a legitimate aim (Gove, 2012, p. 1). As a policy interpretation from the Secretary of State for Education, rather than a constituent part of the legislation itself, this element may carry less weight in how it will inform teachers interpretations, being rather lower down in the hierarchy of policy. This event does, however, aid in corroborating the interpretation that in the policyscape it is not the sole teaching of heteronormativity, or in this case the direct teaching of homophobia, which is problematised but the presentation of it.

10.2.1.3 RSE:

As is permitted in the Equality Act 2010, the optional LGBT inclusion in the primary RSE curriculum is in line with what the statutory RSE guidance calls a “broad and balanced curriculum” (Department for Education, 2019d, p. 8). As was explored in the first chapter of this findings part, the delegation of the decision whether to include LGBT content is framed as a matter of managing difference in views on this highly controversial subject. However, at the same time, there is something of a contradiction in the way the RSE curriculum manages different groups’ rights. The RSE curriculum suggests that all pupils should feel that RSE is relevant to them, seeming to suggest the necessity of equal representation in the curriculum,

⁷⁹ The guidance does state, when explaining schools’ rights to teach in line with religious views, that “school teachers are in a very influential position”, seeming to nod towards the potential significance of hearing negative views of LGBT content from an authority figure, but this is nonetheless not classed as discriminatory (Department for Education, 2018b, p. 23).

⁸⁰ The book featured misinformation including that the life expectancy of homosexual men is half that of heterosexual men and that homosexuality is a sin that may stem from dysfunctional relationships (Evert, 2007).

and yet at the same time makes LGBT content non-mandatory in primary schools, enshrining the ability of schools to exclude such in their teaching. The RSE *consultation response* document, after detailing the divide in opinions on LGBT content, states:

Pupils growing up in families with LGBT members, or who are beginning to understand that they are or may be LGBT themselves, should feel that Relationships Education and RSE is relevant to them

(Department for Education, 2019e, p. 8)

The *LGBT Action Plan Progress Report*, a document examining the state of LGBT inclusion in the UK and the government's improvement works, similarly states of the RSE curriculum:

We have also completed our reforms of Relationships Education and Relationships and Sex Education, making them inclusive for all children whatever their developing sexual orientation or gender identity

(Government Equalities Office, 2019b, p. 2)

There is a kind of doublethink⁸¹ to this policy discourse, as has been noted in other primary school inclusion research (Welply, 2017, 2018). It is implied that LGBT content should be *relevant* to all students and that the policy mandating such is now *inclusive for all*. But these statements run directly contrary to the RSE policy to which they refer. 'Inclusion' here refers to a policy which separates out LGBT content as non-essential for primary schools. Implicitly, it is not the *primary* school 'child' that is being referenced in the above statements around the necessity to reflect students, or the inclusivity of the curriculum, but the *secondary*. The doublethink here may be read as an attempted appeal to the multiple views on LGBT content; pupils should be able to see themselves in what is taught, *and* schools may decide what is, and is not, appropriate to teach.

Religious background is also identified as an identity schools must reflect in RSE, potentially again signalling an attempt for this curriculum to manage difference in what should

⁸¹ Deriving from George Orwell's dystopian novel 1984, doublethink refers to the ability to or quality of holding two incompatible beliefs at once (Gillborn, 2008; Hardy & Lewis, 2017; Weber & Horner, 2010).

be taught. Reflecting religious backgrounds is, however, made a necessity⁸². The *Statutory guidance: Relationships and sex education (RSE) and health education* dedicates a section to the requirement to reflect the religious background of pupils; “the religious background of all pupils must be taken into account when planning teaching” given that schools “must ensure they comply with the relevant provisions of the Equality Act 2010, under which religion or belief are amongst the protected characteristics” (Department for Education, 2019d, p. 12). The *Relationships, sex and health education: guides for parents* also states that schools “are required to ensure their teaching reflects the age and religious background of their pupils” (Department for Education, 2019c, p. 2). There is no section within either text, or any policy in this analysis, detailing a requirement for sexual orientation and gender reassignment to be considered. When the LGBT Action Plan report, and the RSE consultation response refer to the need for RSE to be relevant to LGBT students, they state that this ‘should’ be the case. By contrast, requirements around reflecting religious background use the word ‘must’. The *Statutory Guidance* for RSE distinguishes between these two words, stating that ‘must’ denotes a legal requirement: “This document contains information on what schools should do and sets out the legal duties with which schools must comply when teaching Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education” (Department for Education, 2019d, p. 6).

The differential requirements here elucidate the discourses underpinning the notion of ‘inclusion’. As both the Equality Act, and the RSE curriculum, allow schools to make decisions on the appropriateness of teaching LGBT content, the frame of inclusion seems primarily to be the inclusion of multiple views on the ‘queer’ being included across schools, but not the rights of the queer ‘child’ to necessarily be taught an RSE curriculum in which their identity is shown to be equal to the heteronormative in any given school. It is true that in the Equality Act non-teaching of any identity from the curriculum is not deemed discriminatory; neither faith groups nor the queer community are given the right to see themselves in the curriculum of any school. However, there are certain issues with this framing concerning how it may other the queer and construct a false uniformity to faith perspectives.

Researchers have argued that there “is arguably no other area of public life in England where religious interests remain more firmly embedded than in the system of state-funded

⁸² It should also be noted that consulting parents is also made a requirement. For further discussion of this requirement, see the Parental Consultation & Governance chapter.

schools⁸³” (Vanderbeck & Johnson, 2015, p. 164). Indeed, in the most recent count, 36.8% of all primary schools in England were faith⁸⁴ schools (House of Commons Library, 2019, p. 26). Research suggests that traditionally faith doctrine has been interpreted as upholding heterosexual marriage as the most preferable relationship type, despite their diversity (Carlile, 2020b; Fahie, 2017; Taylor & Cuthbert, 2019; The Church of England, 2023). However, it is unclear how one can reflect religious background when faith perspectives on RSE are themselves non-uniform. The requirements to reflect religious background and the allowances for faith schools to teach in line with their faith perspectives may mean LGBT content is exempted from the curriculum.

I do not mean a problematic opposition between the religious and the queer. Quite the opposite, I suggest here that by dividing the religious from the queer in policy, by setting up religious rights in the frame of being able to teach perspectives on LGBT content, we fail to recognise that ensuring the curriculum “reflects the age and religious background of their pupils” (Department for Education, 2019c, p. 2) may not acknowledge the multiplicities of these groups or children’s identities. Children may be of a religious background *and* be queer, they may be of a religious background and hold different views on LGBT content to their school, but their rights in this respect are narrowly defined, the subject created two dimensional.

The RSE guidance is not only set out within a frame of managing difference in light of the considerations for the groups above. The RSE guidance *Plan your relationships, sex and health curriculum* states that schools should teach in a way that is *politically impartial*. The guidance signposts the *Political Impartiality* guidance after it states that school should “take particular care that the agency and any materials used are appropriate and in line with your school’s legal duties regarding political impartiality” (Department for Education, 2022a, para. 58).

⁸³ It is particularly Christianity, which is being referred to in this quote, given that Christian schools constitute the most common type of faith-based or faith-affiliated school in the UK (UK Government, 2022).

⁸⁴ The majority of these were Christian faith schools, with 36.4% of all primary schools in England being of a Christian character (House of Commons Library, 2019, p. 26).

10.2.1.4 Political Impartiality in Schools

With no predecessor⁸⁵ that I could find, the *Political Impartiality* guidance is a rather singular document. Legal duties to avoid politically partisan teaching were already set out for maintained schools in Section 406 and 407 of the Education Act 1996 (Department for Education, 2022c). The reclarification of these duties is set within the current culture of polarisation, and the document styles itself firmly as an aid to managing current difference in opinion. However, in doing so, the guidance is perhaps less informative in detailing what would or would not constitute a breach of its own guidelines than it is into enlightening the governmental culture in which it was produced, and informing the discursive landscape in which it can be interpreted.

Opening by detailing the polarisation of the “last few years”, the guidance states it has been “difficult for school leaders, teachers, and staff, (to) navigate how to handle and teach about these complex issues sensitively and appropriately” (Department for Education, 2022c, para. 8). The guidance then sets out what constitutes inappropriately one-sided teaching through repeatedly stating that schools may teach controversial topics, but that teaching should always include “a balanced presentation of opposing views” (Department for Education, 2022c, para. 41). As shown in the Equality Act and RSE guidance, balancing the presentation of opposing views, however, is not straight forward; some content, some views, are more subject to decisions around impartiality and appropriateness than others. Faith perspectives are exempt from impartiality requirements:

Schools designated with a religious character are free to teach according to the tenets of their faith. We do not consider principles or views in line with these tenets to be covered by statutory requirements on political impartiality

(Department for Education, 2022c)

Teaching around LGBT content, conversely, is identified as a potential area in which there may be issues around impartiality. Under the heading “Sensitive Political Issues” (Department

⁸⁵ By predecessor I refer to a policy document that has previously served a similar purpose ie. Previous political impartiality guidance.

for Education, 2022c, para. 107), the guidance gives an example of schools teaching the “decriminalisation⁸⁶ of homosexuality in the UK, including the Sexual Offences Act 1967” (Department for Education, 2022c, para. 116). The guidance compounds that ‘discrimination’ is unacceptable, stating that in teaching this subject schools would not be “required to present these discriminatory beliefs uncritically or as acceptable” and should “be clear with pupils on the dangers of present-day sexist⁸⁷ views and practices, including the facts and laws about discrimination” (Department for Education, 2022c, para. 117). The guidance goes on to state, however, that the requirements not to discriminate in teaching LGBT content should not allow for a lack of balance of opinion on this topic; “teachers should still be mindful to avoid promoting partisan political views or presenting contested theories as fact” because a “distinction should be drawn between the shared principle that discrimination and prejudice are wrong, and partisan political views that go beyond this or advocate political reform” (Department for Education, 2022c, para. 118). Despite the guidance suggesting it is a *shared principle*, the definition of discrimination, and what constitutes partiality, are left largely vague. That the sole example of teaching around sexuality which is *impartial* is the decriminalisation of homosexuality⁸⁸ provides a stark, direct example of this discrimination, and something of a low bar for what is considered politically partial.

By stating that it is “partisan political views that go beyond” the idea that discrimination is wrong “or advocate political reform” (Department for Education, 2022c, para. 118), the guidance somewhat synonymises the politically *impartial* with the current (Conservative) governmental position. The idea that the politically impartial is synonymised with the current political norm seems to fit with the other problematised issues in this guidance, including race and climate change. The *Political Impartiality* document, to take teaching on race as an example, suggests the same distinction between a generalised definition of discrimination in “the basic shared principle that racism is unacceptable” and “views which go beyond” such as

⁸⁶ The Sexual Offences Act 1967 permitted homosexual acts between two consenting adult males over the age of twenty-one and is not therefore considered full decriminalisation. The age of sexual consent for sex between two males remained at age 21 until the 1994 Criminal Justice and Public Order Act in England, then changed to age 16, in line with the age of consent for sex between males and females, after the 2000 Sexual Offences Amendment Act. Sexual acts between females was not formally criminalised in the same manner (UK Government, 1994; UK Parliament, 1967; Waites, 2003).

⁸⁷ The choice of language here referring to the dangers of present-day sexist views and practices is notable. In the context of teaching the Sexual Offences Act 1967 and the partial decriminalisation of homosexuality between men, it is unclear why sexist, rather than homophobic, was the chosen adjective.

⁸⁸ That homosexuality should be legal is not within the modern mainstream of political contention in the UK. As such this example gives us limited insight into what kind of teaching is partial.

those from the Black Lives Matter movement (Department for Education, 2022c, para. 119). Resultingly, the guidance has been criticised for positioning the governments' own strategy to climate education (Dunlop & Rushton, 2022), and teaching around race and Britishness as impartial (Henshall et al., 2023).

In relation to LGBT content, the directive not to present *contested theories as fact* is deeply unclear. No examples are given as to what these 'theories' are. We may wonder if this could be a reference to the "contested" nature of theories of gender currently in the UK political mainstream (See Homonormativity chapter Differentiating Identities section) (Department for Education, 2022c, para. 118). 'Contested theories' are only referred to in the context of LGBT content. As there is a lack of legal acknowledgement for trans and non-binary youth in the polycyscape, it is unclear whether stating the validity of these identities would be considered a breach of these impartiality duties (See Homonormativity chapter Differentiating Identities section).

This unequally political interpretation may be a particular hinderance to inclusion in primary schools, not only because, as aforementioned, the stage of balancing views here is most fraught but because the guidance constructs age-appropriateness as an issue in political impartiality. It suggests that as younger children "may not be able to understand the contested nature of more complex analyses" (Department for Education, 2022c, para. 95) schools may wish to stick to giving "factual information" on contested topics, and suggests in regards to pupils speaking about such, that the school "should not prohibit conversation about these issues, provided the political issues are age-appropriate" (Department for Education, 2022c, para. 180). The lack of guidance as to what exactly would constitute age-appropriate issues, or what *factual* information on these topics may look like, once again leaves the interpretation to teachers.

Though *Political Impartiality* guidance refers to its contents as "legal requirements" (Department for Education, 2022c, para. 1), this guidance does not put any direct constraints on teaching LGBT content, offering more ambiguous directives than specific content. This has been one of the main criticisms levelled at the guidance. To give only two examples, then joint General Secretary of the National Education Union Dr Mary Bousted stated that it "does not so much clarify existing guidance as add new layers of mystification and complexity to it" (Adams, 2022, para. 9), whilst Oxfam similarly criticised its potential to chill debate on social justice issues (McLaverly, 2022).

The guidance continues the policyscape discourse of LGBT content being disproportionately subject to judgements of appropriateness, here regarding political impartiality. As Foucault suggests, to understand how discourses form statements we must “tear away from them their virtual self-evidence” (Foucault, 1972, p. 28). In setting out the terms of impartiality in this guidance it is somewhat implied to be a self-evident concept. What is not referenced is that in signalling that LGBT content, but not, for example, heteronormative teachings on the nature of marriage, may be an issue regarding political impartiality in itself constructs the ‘queer’ as disproportionately potentially biased.

It is not the political characterisation that seems othering here. If politics is the play of power relations, the patterns of decision making, then any advocating for a group which has been marginalised, has been disempowered, will be political. Instead, is it the construction of LGBT content as political against the oppositional impartiality of ignoring such calls and of exempting LGBT content from the curriculum.

10.2.1.5 Policy Conclusion

Throughout the policyscape, the notion of appropriateness in teaching has been formed as an issue of managing differences in views of what content should be included in the curriculum, whilst at the same time ensuring that all individuals are included in the school (Scheurich, 1994). Such a framing, in setting out “what can be said, and thought, but also about who can speak, when, where and with what authority” (Ball, 1993, p. 14), creates a policy solution which enshrines the rights of the ‘child’ within a universal protection against direct discrimination; allowing direct harassment has long been outside of what is seen to be appropriate in the policyscape. However, also in this policy solution is the *authority* of the school to teach their perspectives on the ‘queer’ and to make decisions on its appropriateness.

The policyscape allows for, and constructs, multiple frames of ‘inclusion’ here. In a discourse of managing difference, the exemption of LGBT content can be framed not as an exclusion of queer students (though this was somewhat contradictory in the RSE curriculum), but as impartial, a matter of others’ rights not to teach such. Drawing on a relationship of power which is “at the same time its conditions and its results” (Foucault, 1982b, p. 792), the policyscape’s managing of difference is formed along tacit heteronormative lines and at the same time allows it to covertly continue (Rasmussen et al., 2016). The policyscape here not only allows for heteronormativity, which has been the well-documented case for decades (See chapter: Literature Review), but obscures its trace, putting forward policies which despite their

claims to inclusion continue to other the queer. The policyscape seems to draw on a concept of the ‘queer’ as disproportionately controversial, but it likewise makes it so, making the queer disproportionately subject to decisions around its appropriateness and partiality.

10.2.2 Rights & Appropriateness in Teacher Responses

In this section, I examine how different opinions regarding what is appropriate⁸⁹ in terms of navigating different groups’ rights, and schools’ duties regarding impartiality, meant that the notion of *inclusion* could be mobilised by teachers in this research to both necessitate, or exclude, LGBT content. As in the policyscape, tensions existed in what ‘inclusion’ meant. Such tensions were largely based in two distinctions. Firstly, whether inclusion referred to the right for pupils to be equally represented in the curriculum or the right of teachers and parents have certain views represented. Secondly, whether LGBT content was necessary for an inclusive curriculum, or oppositional to it, discriminating against those who, due to faith or other perspectives, cannot condone it.

Building on the policy analysis of the previous section, I analyse the discourses of what is (in)appropriate regarding inclusion here, concentrating on how the balancing of groups’ rights can act to “systematically form the objects of which they speak” (Foucault, 1972, p. 54) informing relations of power in the one making these decisions and the subjects of them. Using Queer Theory, I problematise how these separations in what constitutes appropriateness could be formed along heteronormative lines, both explicitly and through heteronormativity informing the *norm* (Ingraham, 2002).

To examine these complexities, I use two code comparisons in the data. Firstly, the number of teachers that referenced the importance of combatting direct discrimination, and if they stated that LGBT content was appropriate for primary schools. Secondly, the number of teachers coded as referencing including or excluding LGBT content in the context of managing rights, and whether this was related to faith. This comparison, as expanded upon in this section, gives insight into the separation found in the policyscape between inclusion in terms of preventing direct discrimination and inclusion in terms of curricular representation.

⁸⁹ Teachers did not often refer to ‘appropriateness’ as a term explicitly but did implicitly in explanations of what should and should not be taught, and why.

I examine these concepts in tandem given that they were greatly intertwined. In those responses which stated LGBT content was appropriate and should be in primary schools, direct discrimination was often used to necessitate curricular representation, in the logic that to exclude it would be to violate equality in schools and worsen such discrimination. Meanwhile, in those stating that including LGBT content violated groups' rights not to teach such or violated schools' impartiality duties by pushing one view of it, reference to direct discrimination was often used as an alternative, more appropriate form of universal inclusion.

As previously discussed (See chapter: Heteronormativity & Non-mandatory LGBT RSE), all teachers were asked the 'yes' or 'no' question as to whether LGBT content should be included in primary schooling⁹⁰, and an open-ended question of their reasoning for this. In Table 9 I compare the data from the closed-ended portion of this question to teachers' references to direct discrimination. I did not specifically ask teachers about countering direct discrimination, but, as the questionnaire and interview questions were generally asking about LGBT inclusion, many teachers referred to this in response to other questions. In coding references to countering direct discrimination, I included any reference to anti-bullying policies or to challenging bullying, slurs, or general exclusion. I coded all such as '*Reference (Direct Discrimination)*'. Whilst certain responses did not reference direct discrimination at any point and were coded as '*No Reference (Direct Discrimination)*', no response stated that direct discrimination should not be combatted or that it was acceptable. As such, this was not a code.

⁹⁰ I made this question intentionally vague, not specifying what LGBT content is or where it would be in the school, as not to unnecessarily shape teachers answers to where it should be in schools.

Table 9: Number of responses coded as referencing direct discrimination alongside whether such responses stated that LGBT content should, or should not, be present in primary schools.

Should LGBT Content be Present in Primary Schools?		Reference to Combatting Direct Discrimination	
		'Reference (Direct Discrimination)'	'No Reference (Direct Discrimination)'
Yes	Interview & Questionnaire	22	2
	Interview Only	8	8
	Questionnaire Only	184	78
No	Interview & Questionnaire	1	2
	Interview Only	0	0
	Questionnaire Only	38	20

Much as was the case in the polycscape, Table 9 shows that LGBT inclusion in the form of countering direct discrimination was very well-established; over two thirds of responses (253) were coded as referring to the need to counter direct discrimination. This data corroborates previous research suggesting discourses of countering direct discrimination in schools have long held “hegemonic status” (Ringrose & Renold, 2010, p. 590).

However, such references were not a reliable indicator of whether the response also stated that LGBT content should be in the curriculum; 39 responses that referenced countering direct discrimination *also* stated that LGBT content was not appropriate in primary schools. As has been discussed previously, it should be noted that this is a minority of responses.

Part of this separation was elucidated in the first chapter of this findings part which discussed how some saw LGBT content as age inappropriate for the primary school ‘child’. Another part concerned LGBT content being seen as inappropriate in pushing certain groups’ rights over others’ or more generally creating bias in schools.

I coded all references to the presence of LGBT content in schools as a matter of balancing rights or views as either *‘Uneven not to Include’* or *‘Uneven to Include’*. I coded any response not coded as one of the above as *‘No Reference’*. To understand how religious rights interacted with the discourses of balancing rights, I also coded reference to faith being used to support LGBT content in schools or argue against it as *‘Faith (Supportive)’* and *‘Faith (Unsupportive)’* respectively. I coded any response not coded as referencing faith as *‘No Reference’*. Though many responses were coded as referencing faith in response to the question *What factors influence your opinions on LGBT content and primary schooling?* (See Methodology & Methods chapter Interview & Questionnaire Design section), all of the above codes were applied to any reference to such, in answer to any question asked in the interviews or questionnaires. My criteria for these codes were as follows:

‘Uneven not to Include’

The response stated that LGBT content should be included in primary schools, as to not do so is unfairly disadvantaging to the queer community. This code was separate from those

simply stating that LGBT content should be included and required an emphasis on equality or balancing rights.

'Uneven to Include'

The response stated that LGBT content should not be included in primary schools, as to include such is either to push one view it's acceptability at the detriment of other views, or to infringe on others' rights not to teach or be taught such.

'Faith (Unsupportive)'

The response stated LGBT content should not be included in primary schools because it is either against their religious rights to have to teach or condone such, or the teaching of the acceptability of LGBT content is against their religious freedoms as it shows an imbalanced view in schools.

'Faith (Supportive)'

The response stated LGBT content should be included in schools and their faith is part of the reason for their support here.

Table 10: Responses coded for referencing faith alongside responses coded for referencing the presence of LGBT content as a matter of balancing rights or views in primary schools.

Reference to Faith		Managing LGBT Content Inclusion		
		<i>'Uneven not to Include'</i>	<i>'Uneven to Include'</i>	<i>'No Reference'</i>
'Faith (Unsupportive)'	Interview & Questionnaire	0	2	0
	Interview Only	0	0	0
	Questionnaire Only	0	16	4
'Faith (Supportive)'	Interview & Questionnaire	3	0	0
	Interview Only	0	0	0
	Questionnaire Only	1	0	18
'No Reference'	Interview & Questionnaire	9	2	11
	Interview Only	8	0	8
	Questionnaire Only	36	25	220

Perhaps because both codes were not applied in relation to specific questions, most responses (237 out of 363) made no reference to either concept. However, Table 10 offers insight into the separation shown in Table 9 between the appropriateness of tackling direct discrimination and curricular inclusion, through pointing to the different ways in which the latter could be seen as an aid to, or an infringement on, balancing groups' rights.

As has been noted in previous research, some did suggest a doctrinal incompatibility between representing, or even condoning, LGBT content and their faith (Neary, 2017; Neary et al., 2018), but this was non-uniform (Blum, 2010; Cuthbert & Taylor, 2019; Maher, 2012; Taylor & Peter, 2011; Taylor & Cuthbert, 2019). The same number (22 responses) referenced their faith as a reason forming their opinion that LGBT content *should* be present in primary schools as did not. However, faith remained a factor proportionally drawn on more frequently within those responses stating that it should not be included. The diversity in faith references here highlights a tension in the RSE curriculum's requirement for schools to ensure that their content reflects faith backgrounds. It is unclear what this reflection would entail, and how it may account for the complexities in beliefs.

Perhaps reflecting the proportionally higher amount of teachers who supported having LGBT content in primary schools, more teachers referenced that it would be unequal to exclude LGBT content from the curriculum (57) than to include it (45). Differences in these positions, and in whether countering direct discrimination was a more appropriate kind of inclusion, seemed to boil down to different discourses underpinning 'inclusion'. As examined in the sections below, inclusion as a matter of protecting against direct discrimination was universal. Divergences emerged in curricular inclusion and whether this referred to the right of the 'queer' to be represented, or the rights to teach in line with specific (potentially faith) perspectives on the queer.

10.2.2.1 'Uneven not to Include'

Those stating that it is uneven *not to* include LGBT content in the curriculum tended to draw on the rights of the queer community to be represented in the curriculum as a matter of equality. Responses here often referenced direct discrimination (*Reference (Direct Discrimination)*) in stating that LGBT content *should* be present in primary schools, positioning the former as reasoning for the latter. To give one typical example from the questionnaire:

*There is still a number of incidents of homophobic bullying and slurs that are used in school.
No one should be made to feel that they cannot be themselves. We live in a modern and diverse
society which must be reflected in the curriculum*

(Jane3, 35 year old, white female. Heterosexual, Teacher, Questionnaire)

In responses such as these, representation of LGBT content is positioned as a remedy for the currently unequal place of the ‘queer’ in schools. In stating that *No one should be made to feel that they cannot be themselves* in response to *why* LGBT content should be in primary schools, Jane3 seems to suggest that this representation is something which may redress the power imbalance in which some students are not able to do so. LGBT content here is thus made a necessary right for equal treatment. Jane3’s reference to reflecting the *diverse society* seems also to point to this interpretation, implying that to not include LGBT content would be to unequally reflect some in the curriculum over others. There was a similar discourse of inclusion in those coded as *‘Uneven not to Include’* and *‘Faith (Supportive)’* which tended to draw on the idea that their faith promoted a universality in *love*, or *care* and aligned this with an embracing of all in the curriculum. This can be seen in the following questionnaire responses stating why LGBT content should be present in primary schools:

*My opinions are [led] by my faith - Jesus taught us that 'Love is Love' and we should love our
[neighbour] regardless of status, gender, sexuality, race or age!*

(Sweetness and Light, Exhausted, Headteacher, CofE School, Questionnaire)

My son is gay and as a Christian I believe that we are all equally loved by God

(Mayflower, Female, Leadership, Faith School, Questionnaire)

Much as in those coded as using reference to countering direct discrimination as a reasoning for the inclusion of LGBT content, an unequal experience in the curriculum, or unequal representation, is positioned as unfairly partial against the ‘queer’⁹¹, lacking in showing that all are *equally loved*. The frame of inclusion here seems to be inclusion of all in the curriculum as a matter of equality.

⁹¹ It is unclear in the answers above whether they were referencing the rights of the queer ‘child’ or the wider queer community.

10.2.2.2 ‘Uneven to Include’

In the responses coded as ‘*Uneven to Include*’⁹², LGBT content was seen not as redressing a previous imbalance in schools but creating one. There was a similar emphasis on including all and many references to combatting direct discrimination. However, the discourse underpinning ‘inclusion’ here separated out countering direct discrimination from curricular inclusion. Whilst no response in this chapter suggested a school taught the kind of explicitly homophobic content that Micheal Gove upheld to be legitimate in certain schools’ teaching of *Pure Manhood* (Gove, 2012; Vanderbeck & Johnson, 2015), excluding LGBT content or teaching a preference for heterosexual marriage were common. These responses tended to revolve around the presentation of LGBT content as a condonation of it. By consequence, this was suggested to either unfairly reflect only one view of LGBT content, and as such not to be impartial, or as a breach of religious rights not to condone such. In the remainder of this section, I explore the former, then the latter.

10.2.2.2.1 *Partiality & Balance*

In the following sub-section, I discuss both Harry Brown’s questionnaire response, and Juliet’s interview and questionnaire response. Harry Brown’s response was chosen as a typical questionnaire response coded as ‘*Uneven to Include*’ without reference to faith. Juliet’s response, by contrast, was chosen given that it was rather unique. Juliet may have suggested LGBT content is breach of impartiality and as such was inappropriate, but her school was one of the relatively few (See chapter: Heteronormativity & Non-mandatory LGBT RSE) to include it comprehensively in multiple subjects, assemblies etc., providing an interesting example of contrast.

Harry Brown wrote very little in the earlier sections of the questionnaire, writing only “No, our children are too young” when asked if LGBT content would be appropriate to include in primary schools. In response to the children’s literatures, however, they gave more detail on this perception of inappropriateness.

After reading *Maiden & Princess*:

⁹² I give more space to those responses coded as ‘Uneven to Include’ given that these offer insight into how inclusion in the curriculum, and as an opposition to direct discrimination, can be separated out, and into the tensions surrounding LGBT content. In the previous findings part, Findings Part 1: Encouraged & Enabled, I explore at length the responses of teachers who wished to include LGBT content in the curriculum as a matter of equality.

This is a contrived piece of adult propaganda... Are we actually trying to encourage children to be gay now?

(Harry Brown, Educator, Teacher, Questionnaire)

Similarly, after reading *When Aiden Became a Brother*:

*This is a contrived piece of adult propaganda. I can't imagine any child choosing this contrived nonsense over quality literature like eg *The Gruffalo*. This is adults wanting to get their attitudes over to children.*

Then after finishing all the stories:

Leave children's literature as it is and adults need to stop trying to use kids books to foist their views onto them.

Echoing the *Political Impartiality in Schools* guidance, Harry Brown's response suggests the inappropriateness of adults *foist(ing) their views onto* pupils, seeming to position the school as having a duty regarding impartiality. However, whilst the guidance may problematise certain teachings on LGBT content as a potential issue for impartiality, in Harry Brown's response it is unclear whether this is the case, or whether it is the presentation of any LGBT content that constitutes a violation of impartiality. Harry Brown stated all the children's literatures containing queer content were inappropriately partial but stated that the one book which did not have queer presenting characters, *The Paper Bag Princess*, was appropriate. They wrote:

I know this story and have enjoyed it with many children of both sexes

Considering their response to *The Paper Bag Princess*, Harry Brown positions LGBT content, but not the heteronormative, as an inappropriately partial. The inappropriateness of LGBT content in this response seemed partially based in a separation between the 'child' and the 'queer', much as in other similarly coded responses, and those detailed in the previous chapter who exempted LGBT content on the basis that children could not be queer. This was shown within the inappropriateness of LGBT *propaganda* here being two-fold. Firstly, it compromises the promotion of *being* 'queer' to the 'child'. The question *are we actually trying to encourage children to be gay now* suggests that the *too young* 'child' is not being potentially reflected by the story, but potentially changed by it. Secondly, it is *adult's* attitudes being

pushed onto the ‘child’, suggesting a non-alignment of the two. Repeating three times that LGBT content is *contrived*, Harry Brown implies that such content is forcing a certain view, using this construction of bias to necessitate its absence in schools.

Harry Brown’s response seems to generally construct LGBT content as a kind of *propaganda*, giving little clue as to why this was seen as the case. Juliet, one of the few responses in the interview and questionnaire data set coded as ‘*Uneven to Include*’, explained at greater length why she perceived LGBT content in primary school to be creating an imbalance. Juliet described herself as a “bible-believing Christian”, stating that she did not see LGBT relationships or identities as in accordance with her faith perspective. Her school, however, was highly celebratory of LGBT content. Juliet had not been asked to teach this content, and as such the imbalance described in her response did not derive from a contradiction of her religious rights not to teach such (as in the following section). Rather, Juliet saw the general push towards LGBT content being celebrated as an exclusion of those who could not condone it. Throughout her interview and questionnaire, she described how, as she did not preach her own views on LGBT content, she did not think the school should either. In the interview extract below, Juliet describes a fellow teacher’s Pride month school assembly and poster making activity:

Lil Nas X⁹³ ... He had recently come out as saying that he was homosexually attracted or something like that. They they put the picture of him up... And so they said ‘and why do you think it was difficult for him to come out and say this?’ and the answer was that they were looking for was because he's a minority. You know, that's not really very neutral... [The class] made a poster saying something like it's ‘OK to be LGBTQ+’. I'm seeing this stuff and I'm just thinking what this is kind of feels a little bit like indoctrination, and it's difficult, because you know... I don't want people to be persecuted... I do feel quite strongly about and it it's not because I'm like homophobic or whatever, right? It's just because I'm concerned about... It's freedom and I'm I'm concerned about free, you know, issues like freedom of speech, democracy... I'm not seeing true tolerance necessarily, just this kind of, you know, what I see is indoctrinating

⁹³ Lil Nas X is a highly successful rapper and singer who came out as gay in 2019 (Yang, 2022).

(Juliet, 38 year-old female, Christian teacher, Interview)

Juliet's response thus positioned automatic acceptance in opposition to an impartial curriculum. Like similar others, her response elucidates a tension in both the Equality Act distinction between the unacceptability of direct discrimination towards individuals and indirect discrimination in the curriculum, and in the *Political Impartiality in Schools guidance* policy directive to distinguish "between the shared principle that discrimination and prejudice are wrong and partisan political views that go beyond this" (Department for Education, 2022c, para. 118). Illuminating the contradictions and complexities in concepts of 'inclusion', Juliet separates her theological view of the morality of certain sexual *acts* from a discrimination, or *persecution, against people*⁹⁴. Juliet sees inclusion in the curriculum, however, as a promotion of *partisan political views that go beyond this*, and as such distinguishes between countering direct discrimination and curricular inclusion. The *shared principle that discrimination is wrong* seems differently interpreted by the school, with discrimination here extending beyond more direct discrimination to any othering of being LGBT.

Whilst in some schools the celebration of LGBT identities is made an inappropriate *other*, suggesting a heteronormative norm, in Juliet's view it is her views which are *other* in the school. The discursive crux of Juliet's argument, and those similarly coded, seems to be that to be impartial, or *neutral* as Juliet states, is to encourage a debate on LGBT content, or to exempt it from the curriculum, rather than framing it positively. However, there is something of an issue in this concept of a *non-biased viewpoint*. As Atkinson wrote, "every absence constitutes a particular kind of presence" (Atkinson, 2002, p. 125). Encouraging a debate on LGBT content, or exempting it from the curriculum, is not an absence of a view on the queer, but a singling out of the queer, and not the heteronormative, as subject to debate or potentially inappropriate⁹⁵.

⁹⁴ We may also note this in the use of the phrase *homosexually attracted* rather than *gay*.

⁹⁵ It may be noted that this disproportionate problematisation of the queer in relation to what is appropriate, much as in Harry Brown's response, not only constructed promoting LGBT content as the pushing of one view onto the 'child', but potentially of confusing the 'child's' identity. Exemplifying the way in which discourses of managing differences in views can be mobilised to manage differences of opinions on age-appropriateness, Juliet seems to suggest that the school's content is a kind of promotion of being LGBT. Juliet not only singled out the 'queer' as inappropriately bias, but as age inappropriate due to the potential for confusion caused by this content. When speaking of the children's literatures in the interview, exempting *The Paper Bag Princess*, Juliet linked the books to both promotion, and sexualisation: "Yeah, apart from [The Paper Bag Princess], the other three I felt were very much like along the same lines of, and yeah, like kind of that end of the spectrum of promotion... I just wonder whether it's like oversexualization of... Let them be kids, you know, let them be children".

Shifting the discursive frame from the ability of all to have their views, or no views, represented on LGBT content to how this may be experienced by queer children, we start to see that for them this curriculum may not be an absence of teaching on their identity, but a teaching of it as *other*. Teaching that LGBT identities are valid and appropriate does not discriminate against those who do not have this identity, but it does, as Juliet suggests, contradict certain views. This tension can be more clearly seen in Juliet's response in relation to a non-binary pupil in her class. Reflecting Nash and Browne's research examining how the use of self-declared pronouns for trans children can be positioned as the forcing of a belief (Nash & Browne, 2021), Juliet explained that she felt uncomfortable with the school's expectation that all teachers would refer to them using 'they/them' pronouns:

OK so this girl like identifies as non-binary so we've gotta like we've, we've all gotta call her 'they' ... There's a kind of dialogue where it's kind of it's moving towards... You have to think.... that it's good and OK everybody to to like change their gender...

When I asked how Juliet navigates referring to the pupil in class, she stated that "she still has the same name, that we've been calling her... I just refer to her as that". Previous research into the experience of UK trans and non-binary youth has cited deadnaming and incorrect pronoun use as an issue (Bower-Brown et al., 2023). Here we see an example not of incorrect pronoun use to the child, but of a refusal to use any third-person pronouns. It is unclear how this would sound in class, and how it would be perceived by the pupils. The school's expectation that all teachers would refer to the non-binary child using 'they' pronouns further blurs the lines between views and practice, between personal views and the way they affect pupils.

10.2.2.2 Religious Rights

One response, from the interview & questionnaire data set, coded as seeing LGBT content in the curriculum or wider school as breaching religious rights, came from JC, a Headteacher at a Catholic faith school. The school's ethos, as JC described, emphasised being "accepting

of all people”. Within this ethos of acceptance, JC described at how his school navigated teaching in line with religious beliefs on sin in relationships, and the inclusion of LGBT people:

Clearly, within the sphere of LGBT, there may be circumstances when those identifying as LGBT would be acting in a way which, from a Catholic perspective, would be deemed sinful. This is not to say that as Catholics, we would judge or scorn such individuals, (as we acknowledge that every human being sins and that we are all on a journey to align ourselves with God's will). But it does mean that we don't condone such actions, as this would contradict our religious beliefs

(JC, Headteacher, Catholic School, Questionnaire)

JC explained at some length the kind of universalism underpinning his vision of inclusion. As seen in the response above, he carefully separates inclusion in terms of condoning actions, which in terms of LGBT *actions* cannot be condoned in the curriculum, and inclusion of LGBT *people*, who are accepted. In the interview, JC explained that whilst the school does teach that sex outside of heterosexual marriage is sinful, in doing so they do not explicitly reference that LGBT acts are, as this could be construed by pupils as a condemnation of LGBT people:

children just aren't old enough to you know, to be able to comprehend really why we accept everybody, even LBGT people whoever it is, but why we believe this about that lifestyle

Exempting LGBT content from the curriculum, in this respect, was not contrary to ‘inclusion’ in this discourse but part of it, limiting the potential for misunderstanding of this ethos and the extent to which children saw LGBT people themselves, rather than these actions, as sinful. In discussing this ethos, I noted a potential tension around how the universal ethos of inclusion could perhaps be unequally felt by the individual, by LGBT children, as only certain (married heterosexual) presentations were presented in the curriculum. In the interview, I clarified this with JC:

Well as Christians we have an obligation to spread the gospel and... therefore I have to do that, and in a way that's not a sledgehammer, because that isn't what He teaches, that you'll all go to Hell, but I have to do it, and we're sensitive in this society to the language that we use, people get offended very easily. Towards those children who feel that way, I hope they would think that everybody sins, you know.

In his answer, we see that universalism is not only formative to this vision of inclusion in a universal love for all but also in how LGBT actions are not singled out as uniquely sinful. JC seems to limit the extent to which LGBT acts are constructed as specifically othered by aligning them with the universalised, common nature of sin. He repeats *every human being sins* and *everybody sins*. Reflecting the Equality Act, whilst JC draws on his religious rights, in this case the moral teachings on relationships, he separates out the moral appraisal of LGBT actions from *harassing* pupils in the delivery of the curriculum, suggesting that these teachings are not a *sledgehammer* (Department for Education, 2018b, p. 23). Likewise, JC seems to attempt to limit the extent to which these teachings are perceived as othering through a separation between the content of this curriculum, and the presentation of it, suggesting that the school is *sensitive* to the language they use to avoid causing offence. Much like Juliet and similarly coded responses, JC's universalised vision of inclusion surrounded an equal treatment of all, but not a supportive view of LGBT content. In the questionnaire, in further answer to whether LGBT content should be included in the curriculum, JC wrote:

In a truly inclusive environment where the views of all are respected (if not always agreed with), the place of any government is not to mandate certain beliefs about human sexuality onto young children, potentially at the expense of the wishes of their parents, particularly when children aren't old enough to fully comprehend such issues.

In this extract, we see JC's response drawing on a vision of 'inclusion' with similar discursive underpinnings to Juliet's. The object of inclusion here is *beliefs about human sexuality*, and as such JC positions LGBT content, or the government mandating beliefs on its condonation, in opposition to the *views of all* being respected. In this frame of religious rights, but not of the 'child's' right to be represented, to be *truly inclusive* is to be inclusive of all views on human sexuality. The inclusiveness of not mandating *certain beliefs* is, however, contained to the governmental level here, as at the school level only one belief on human sexuality is taught.

Again, I noted a similar tension here as to how this universal inclusion may reflect an *inclusive environment* for different views across schools but not such within the individual school, as here certain religious views are represented, but not the queer, translating into a potentially unequal experience for queer students. JC was coded as referencing the need to counter direct discrimination, due to his references to the school tackling LGBT slurs. In the

explanation of this he gave further insight into the tension between particular experience and universal concepts of inclusion:

So if one child was insulting also by using that terminology [gay] we would we would reprimand the children anyway, so for just being insulting... And then we might tag on that that's not a nice... It's not a nice word to call somebody... We don't shy away but it's not appropriate to have it in our curriculum... But again, at primary level, I don't think children have... Terminology... They do say 'you're gay' but I don't think at this age they're mature enough to say 'oh I'm going to hone in on that person because of that issue' it's peripheral of why they don't like a child

These extracts raise the question of whether equal treatment in the formal ethos of the school can account for unequal othering in the informal culture. At the school level the idea of LGBT content as *other* is not explicitly taught and the school attempts to counter such othering in a universal ethos of inclusion. However, as was noted in the Literature Review of this thesis, research has noted that queer children do still feel othered by the implicit teachings that sex outside of heterosexual marriage is sinful⁹⁶ (Stonewall, 2017). Although JC may state that that being gay is *peripheral* to why a child is disliked, this may still suggest that the queer is *othered*, even implicitly. Decisions around whether LGBT content should be in school, whether children here can understand it within the catholic perspective or otherwise, thus address only the formal level of what is being taught; LGBT content was already in the school, but only as a kind of insult. JC's response, like others, shows the ways in which a construction of the 'child' as having limited understanding of the 'queer' can act to both minimise consideration for how the lack of LGBT content can be othering, and shift the frame of debate to representing views on the queer, but not queer children.

The word gay itself is treated as an insult not only by the children, but potentially by the adults addressing the situation. It is worth considering the frequency of LGBT identities being used as insults by students, and the way in which teachers respond to them, as the phenomenon gives insight into how tackling direct discrimination may only tackle the outward

⁹⁶ I refer here to Stonewall's 2017 School Report which quotes one faith school pupil stating "In religious education we learnt that the Bible was against anything other than heterosexuality. I was so scared... What we learnt in religious education about how we are viewed by our peers, teachers and parents made people terrified" (Stonewall, 2017, p. 24).

manifestations of discourses othering the ‘queer’. Responses referring to either students, or staff, treating the use of LGBT labels as insults were coded as either ‘*LGBT as Insults (Pupils)*’ if they stated that pupils used or perceived LGBT identities⁹⁷ as insults (for example, calling a peer ‘gay’ to insult them) and as ‘*LGBT as Insults (Staff)*’ if they likewise said that staff treated them as such in response. This data was not a specific question asked to participants, but it was referenced in each of the data sources.

Table 11: The number of responses referencing pupils using LGBT identities as insults and of staff members mirroring this use in response.

Code	Data Source			
	Interview & Questionnaire	Interview Only	Questionnaire Only	Total
‘LGBT as Insults (Pupil)’	9	6	27	42
‘LGBT as Insults (Staff)’	1	2	3	6

As may be expected in light of previous research, it was not uncommon for responses to refer to pupils using LGBT identities, particularly gay or lesbian, as insults (Gray, 2010; Horton & Carlile, 2022; Kurian, 2020) and there were instances of staff responding to this use as if the identity itself were an insult in itself (Atkinson & DePalma, 2009; Carlile, 2020b). The relatively small amount of the responses coded above may reflect that this was not a topic I asked about in either the questionnaires or interviews, but rather one which was spontaneously brought up by participants.

⁹⁷ Gay, Lesbian, and Trans, or derivative slurs, (for example, ‘lezbo’, or ‘tranny’) were referenced. No response stated that bisexual was used as a slur.

One teacher in the interview⁹⁸ data set coded as *'LGBT as Insults (Pupils)'* came from George. George had no LGBT content in his school, having only anti-bullying policies, but stated that such content should be included in primary schools. In answering why he believed LGBT content was necessary in primary schools, he described how pupils see the 'queer' as an insult:

[Pupil 1] was having a conversation with her friend and [Pupil 2] said that I was gay, and [Pupil 1] said to him, 'he's not gay, he's lovely!'

(George, 34, male, gay, Year two teacher, Interview)

Bridget, a teacher also in the interview data set, was likewise coded as *'LGBT as Insults (Pupils)'*, but also as *'LGBT as Insults (Staff)'*. Bridget's school had LGBT content in RSE in the form of same-sex family presentations. However, she suggested that the content should be more comprehensive. Like George, Bridget drew on the issue of pupils using gay as an insult in her reasoning of such. Explaining how the term is used in her school, she stated:

You know if someone gives someone a cuddle and they say 'that's gay' whatever and then a teaching assistant jumps in with 'you're not allowed to say that, that's dirty, no'

(Bridget, Bi, Teacher, Interview)

Whilst other staff members responded to the use of 'gay' as an insult, Bridget suggested her approach was to attempt to encourage empathy for how a gay student would perceive this:

'They're gonna feel rubbish well do you want them to be feeling rubbish and no?'. If they're old enough I might say, 'you know, even some teenagers every year try to hurt themselves because of this'. You can have a flow of every time anyone says anything about your race or sex or sexuality, a bit of you know, overzealous reporting, so you have to say 'there is a difference between just saying anything related to sexuality and insults'... 'No Pakistan is completely fine, calling someone a paki'⁹⁹ is not'...

⁹⁸ I chose two examples to illustrate this point, both from the interview data set, given that this data format lends itself to a greater amount of detail being given on the subject, a fact that was particularly insightful when a topic was not referenced particularly frequently.

⁹⁹ The term 'paki', a derivative of 'Pakistan', is used as a slur against those of south Asian heritage (Hess, 2021).

In both George's and Bridget's response we see a subjectification of the 'queer' based in an associative negativity formed by the concept of gay as an insult bleeding out into any discussion of sexuality. The pupil telling his classmate that George was gay could have been a statement of fact; George is gay. However, his classmate's defence of her teacher, *he's lovely*, suggests her discursive archive of what it was to be *gay* was limited to, or at least immediately associated with, the insulting (Foucault, 1972). Bridget's response details how both pupils and certain staff alike treated any discussion of sexuality, or indeed race/heritage, as illicit.

There is an issue here that is central to seeing countering direct discrimination, but exempting LGBT content from the curriculum, as appropriate inclusion. As has been put forwards by previous researchers, this discourse problematises individual instances of bullying, creating a bully-victim dichotomy blind to the power dynamic of institutional heteronormativity at play, allowing for complicity to be contained to the harasser rather than the culture in which they act (DePalma & Jennett, 2010; Formby, 2015; Pritchard, 2013; Ullman, 2018). Acts of bullying or slurs here are seen as an aberration, a deviation from the formal ethos, rather than a product of its heteronormative basis.

When some identities are already more othered than others in the informal culture of the school, a formal universal culture of acceptance may not lead to universal inclusion. As Hall's research in English primary schools pointed out, even with very comprehensive LGBT inclusion, peer cultures may remain heteronormative (Hall, 2020). Though both schools had anti-bullying policies, and Bridget's school did present LGBT content in RSE, it seems that, as in the responses discussed throughout this chapter, formal directives to counter direct discrimination are not mutually exclusive to an othering concept of the 'queer'. With limited views of the 'queer' in the formal school culture, informal peer cultures may form its dominant construction. As one pupil in Hall's research stated, "the word gay has been banned but people use it in the boys' toilets whenever you go in" (Hall, 2020, p. 36). Indeed, when LGBT content is exempted from the curriculum because it is seen as biased, against a group's rights, or in any way inappropriate, this may contribute to, or at least not counter, such informal cultures through sending a message of what the school officially sees as appropriate.

In Bridget's response we also see that it was not only the use of gay as an insult which constructs the 'queer' subject, by both students and staff, but also the reasoning given to show the inappropriateness of this use. Bridget's response seems to employ the potential self-harm of teens to underline the seriousness of homophobia for the 'queer' subject, but in doing so the response continues its limited characterisation. The 'queer' subject that students engage with

in Bridget's response was painted firstly as an insult (by students), secondly as something unclean (by the teaching assistant), and lastly as a wounded, but sympathetic, figure (by Bridget). As has been put forwards in emerging queer research, the emphasis on countering direct harm to queer students without showing the multiplicities and complexities of queer lives may construct a 'queer' subject in two dimensional terms, ignoring queer joy or other aspects of life in favour a more tragic narrative (Duran & Coloma, 2023; Iacovelli, 2022).

10.2.3 Conclusion

The relations of power running through judgements of appropriateness in teaching were diverse and inconsistent, acting through multiple discourses of 'inclusion'. Universal in these definitions, in both the policyscape and teachers' responses, was the inappropriateness of direct discrimination. As Ball and Bailey write, "certain modes of policy thinking and practice become naturalised and necessary" (Bailey & Ball, 2016, p. 125). This chapter corroborates previous research discussed in the Literature Review of this thesis suggesting anti-bullying rhetoric is deeply ingrained in schools (Horton, 2020; Rudoë, 2017).

However, much as has been the case through Section 28 to the Equality Act 2010, in a minority of teachers' responses near ubiquitous references to countering direct discrimination were not mutually exclusive to rhetoric othering the 'queer'. Though a minority, these responses seemed to draw on a commitment to tolerating or protecting the *other* which did not necessarily problematise its status as such. The regimes of truth which form the othered 'queer' could be obscured by an impartial façade of "homotolerance", allowing for an entirely heteronormative curriculum to sit within both certain definitions of *inclusion* and of *neutrality* (Røthing & Svendsen, 2010, p. 147).

10.3 Appropriateness: Overall Conclusions

Within the apparatus of LGBT inclusion discussed here, discourses of appropriateness have been frequently, diversely, and unevenly deployed. Judgements of appropriateness were often highly intertwined. Allowing judgements of age-appropriateness was positioned as a means of managing the diversity of opinion on this subject. Discourses surrounding the partiality of LGBT content were often informed by wider views of the ‘queer’ being age inappropriate for the ‘child’. At the close of this chapter, I return to the questions of how discourses of appropriateness “systematically form the objects of which they speak” (Foucault, 1972, p. 54) that I posed at the start: How do these discourses inform the ‘queer’ in the object of this judgement (LGBT content)? And what subjects are made in both the position of the decision maker (the school, teacher, or policy), and those for whom something is being decided (the ‘child’)?

In terms of the ‘queer’, teachers largely stated the appropriateness of LGBT content (with certain caveats as to the age at which it should be presented). However, in a minority of responses, this was not the case. Though recent policy has suggested it is appropriate to include LGBT content in primary schools, as this was positioned as a topic which schools may, or may not, deem appropriate, discourses concerning the inappropriateness of the ‘queer’ were likewise formative. As was the case in previous research, LGBT content was seen to be a kind of promotion of being queer (Malins, 2016; Neary, 2017; Renold & McGeeney, 2017) and a promotion of a certain view on the ‘queer’ to the ‘child’ in a minority of responses (Beauvallet, 2021; Sauntson & Borba, 2021; Vincent, 2022). Policy may no longer suggest that LGBT content is a kind of promotion, but the positioning of LGBT content within a frame of age-appropriateness and/or political partiality cohered with their positioning and allowed for this content to be exempted from the curriculum along these lines. The ‘queer’ is not only imbued with meaning when teachers make decisions about appropriateness, but likewise in the process of subjecting LGBT content to these decisions. The ‘queer’ is made debatably appropriate, whether in terms of age or impartiality, in a way that is not applied to the heteronormative. Heteronormativity is seemingly not a subject of appropriateness decisions, but it does inform them, acting as the implicit “unquestioned” silent norm when LGBT content is excluded (Ingraham, 2002, p. 76).

Putting LGBT content into decisions of appropriateness was likewise formative to the framing of the school as the authority on such, alongside a concurrent positioning of the primary school ‘child’ for whom LGBT content was not necessarily appropriate. Such a position seems to have prioritised the equal ability of schools to make these decisions, but not a universalism in how each ‘child’ subject will be affected. The policy solution that enshrines schools’ prerogatives to teach their perspectives, to make decisions on appropriateness, obscures that these decisions are not felt uniformly by pupils; for some this curriculum means their identity is represented, held up as preferable, for others, their identity could be left in silence, or implied to be inappropriate.

Overall, the question of LGBT content as a decision of appropriateness was key in understanding how arguments could frame themselves as both *inclusive* and in favour of *excluding* LGBT content. Inclusion for all was consistently emphasised but what this inclusion referred to was deeply divided. Much as in Nash and Bowne’s work into ‘heteroactivism’ (See chapter: Literature Review), arguments against LGBT content in schools were not framed as anti-queer (Browne & Nash, 2020). Indeed, building on research examining the 2019 protests against LGBT content in Birmingham which suggested that protestors framed their arguments not in terms of homophobia, but their religious and parental rights (Sauntson, 2021; Vincent, 2022), here we see that the conditions of the policyscape allowed for the inappropriateness of LGBT content to be framed within a discourse of pro-innocence, pro-religion, and pro-impartiality. In the following chapter, I examine the ways in which such stratifications in discourses of appropriateness could affect the type of LGBT content included in schools.

11 Findings Part 3: Different Types of Families

Primary schools are strongly encouraged, and enabled, when teaching about different types of family, to include families with same-sex parents.

(Department for Education, 2022a, para. 9)

11.1 Homonormativity

In the findings part one and two of this thesis, I have discussed the shifting, heterogeneous shape of heteronormativity running through the apparatus of LGBT inclusion. These discursive underpinnings were formative not only to the presence of LGBT content in primary schools, but to the type. Within the RSE curriculum primary schools are “strongly encouraged, and enabled” to include LGBT content but there is a caveat in this encouragement (Department for Education, 2022a, para. 9). Primary schools are told they are encouraged “when teaching about different types of family, to include families with same-sex parents” (Department for Education, 2022a, para. 9). Drawing on Foucault’s notion of examining the “nexus of regularities that govern” how certain statements emerge over others (Foucault, 1972, p. 53), in this chapter I aim to interrogate the apparatus which informs the dominance of same-sex familial presentations in LGBT inclusion in primary schools.

The Queer theoretical tool of *homonormativity* is vital throughout this chapter in grappling with the ways in which heteronormativity could be somewhat interrupted by a level of LGBT inclusion whilst still allowing this interruption to occur within certain normative limits (Duggan, 2012; Grzanka, 2020). I use this term to delineate how certain kinds of LGBT content, that which mimics heteronormative structures of monogamy and child-bearing, could be granted a certain level of legitimacy through adherence to these normative presentations (Browne et al., 2021; Duggan, 2002).

Whilst transgender identities were sometimes othered along similar lines as other identities not fitting into the homonormative frame, sexuality was sometimes distinguished from gender queerness. I use the term *cisnormativity* as a distinct, but intertwined, normative discourse which privileges coherence between assigned sex and gender performance (Butler, 1993; Horton, 2023; McBride & Neary, 2021). In this theoretical basis, my conceptualisation of how certain types of gender performance are privileged over others employs Butler’s notion of

heterosexual hegemony, particularly in conceptual contrast to the heterosexual matrix (Butler, 1993, 1994). To briefly reiterate what is discussed at further length within the Theoretical Underpinnings chapter Gender & Sexuality section of this thesis, the heterosexual matrix was put forwards by Butler to conceptualise the intelligibility of those identities in which gender and sex are not aligned, gender performance is not seen as congruent with one's gender identity, and sexual preference is anything other than the opposite gender (Butler, 1990). Heterosexual hegemony was a later, more malleable, theoretical concept put forwards by Butler which clarified that there is no set binary between the unintelligible and the intelligible; there are fluid normative boundaries complicating the lines of the heterosexual matrix, but ultimately placing cisgender heterosexuality with congruent gender performance as the hegemonic neutral (Atkinson & DePalma, 2009; Butler, 1993, 1994).

My analysis is also informed by Foucault's archaeology of "sex as a political issue" (Foucault, 1978, p. 145). Characteristically conceptualising power not as that which can only constrain, but as that which operates "more as a norm" (Foucault, 1978, p. 144), Foucault contended that current discourses of sexuality are not based solely in repression. Rather, they are based in the incitement of discourses aligning gender-normative, familial pairings with what ensures the continuation of certain social, economic, and political norms structuring the population¹⁰⁰ (Foucault, 1978). Foucault termed this a conflation between "the solidity of the family institution, and the safeguarding of society", drawing upon the long history of privileging institutionally sanctioned (married) sexual acts in the West (Foucault, 1978, p. 147). Building on this insight, my questioning extends past why families are commonly spoken of in relation to LGBT content in primary schools, to the broader question of why families are taught at all. I ask: what kind of normative discourses inform this teaching, and what does it in turn (re)create¹⁰¹? What does this mean for *who* is included in prevalent concepts of LGBT inclusion?

In asking along what discursive lines LGBT inclusion is formed, there is a danger of aligning the normative with the uniformly negative, with seeing any inclusion constructed along normative lines as homogenously marginalising. To see the nuance in inclusion, to avoid

¹⁰⁰ I do not at present have space to consider how the emphasis on families in the RSE curriculum ties into the economic hierarchization of social groups. Though they intertwine, in this chapter I contain my analysis to social hierarchies.

¹⁰¹ My use of (re)create here is aligned with Foucault's conceptualisation of discourse as "subject to repetition, transformation, and reactivation" and thus aims to emphasise the way in which discourses are both indicative of a pattern and fluid (Foucault, 1972, p. 31)

this trap, I borrow from two theoretical constructs. Firstly, Queer theorist Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's concept of *paranoid reading* which, as further discussed within the Theoretical Underpinnings chapter Resistance, Reparative Reading & the Paralysis of Paranoia section, cautions that the impetus within critical theory to uncover the hidden forces of marginalisation can lead to a kind of post-structuralist paranoia (Love, 2010; Sedgwick, 1997). Sedgwick writes that uncovering oppression must not be our only goal, we must not completely eschew every attempt at reparation or inclusion because, being imperfectly realised, it is read to propagate the oppression it seeks to dismantle (Hanson, 2011). Secondly, I use Foucault's concept of *dangerous* discourses. Foucault stated that:

My point is not that everything is bad, but that everything is dangerous, which is not exactly the same as bad. If everything is dangerous, then we always have something to do. So my position leads not to apathy but to a hyper- and pessimistic activism. I think that the ethico-political choice we have to make every day is to determine which is the main danger

(Foucault, 1982a, pp. 231-232)

My analysis certainly attempts a kind of *pessimistic activism* in its aims to understand where systems of inclusion can also exclude certain presentations of the queer. However, I likewise acknowledge that uncovering this oppression is not the end goal. Doing so may only leave us despondent and stuck. Rather than seeing that which draws on the normative as *bad*, I attempt a *reparative reading* in which I aim to see the community joy and hope at the same time as the marginalising systems of power (Sedgwick, 1997). The dual use of these concepts aids in understanding the *main danger* that may arise from the normative discourses separating out types of LGBT inclusion, whilst simultaneously understanding that this danger is not mutually exclusive to progress.

This chapter is divided into two main sections. In the first section, Families & the RSE Polycscape, I analyse how LGBT content in the primary school RSE polycscape was largely positioned as a matter of talking about different families, with limited, unclear acknowledgement of, and some direct directives against, teaching other kinds of LGBT presentations. In the second section, Homonormativity & Teachers' Responses, I examine how this dominance continued to be reflected in teachers' responses of what was present in their schools, with other kinds of queer presentations being very limited and often sporadically included. I look to how teachers' responses detailing the presence of familial versus other kinds

of representations gives insight into the elements of the apparatus forming this dominance. I focus on how, tying in with discourses of hypersexualisation, same-sex families were seen as the most appropriate, or least controversial, presentation. This section also examines how readily thought of different types of LGBT content were and how, given a paucity of knowledge around queer identities in general, same-sex parents were the most obvious kind of representation, and the one about which teachers felt most knowledgeable.

11.1.1 Families & the RSE Polycscape

In the first section of this chapter, I examine the kinds of identities referenced in relation to primary school LGBT content within the RSE polycscape. I begin first by analysing the ways in which same-sex families are presented in most references to this content as an appropriate means of such inclusion. I then move to examine how, conversely, other kinds of queer identities, and in particularly trans presentations, are not afforded this status.

11.1.1.1 An Emphasis on Families

As has been stated in previous chapters, mention of LGBT content is scarce within the RSE polycscape. However, where it does feature in relation to primary schools it is largely homonormative, being almost entirely contained to discussion of *different types of families* and *same-sex parents*. The Department for Education in their guidance *Plan your relationships, sex and health curriculum* state:

All pupils should receive teaching on lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) relationships during their school years. Secondary schools should include LGBT content in their teaching. Primary schools are strongly encouraged, and enabled, when teaching about different types of family, to include families with same-sex parents.

(Department for Education, 2022a, para. 9)

Although the section *strongly* encourages a level of LGBT content in primary schools, the guidance includes a clause seemingly containing or specifying this encouragement to same-sex parents. It does not specify that this is the only kind of content primary schools could teach, but nor does it encourage, or name, any other type. Same-sex families here are not given as an example of LGBT content but are the named content for primary schools. The polycscape shows frequent repetitions of the above emphasis on families. The Ofsted guidance *Inspecting teaching of the protected characteristics in schools* continues this familial framing, setting out that primary schools are not required to teach about sexual orientation and gender reassignment, but suggesting that this could be included as part of a discussion on family types:

Schools are not required to teach about all the protected characteristics in every year group... In secondary schools, this includes age-appropriate knowledge of the protected characteristics of sexual orientation and gender reassignment. There are a range of ways schools can choose to teach about these issues in an age-appropriate way. Primary schools could, for example,

teach pupils about the different types of family groups that exist within society. Secondary schools could, for example, teach pupils in more detail about sexuality and gender identity as well as the legal rights afforded to LGBT people

(Ofsted, 2021a, para. 18)

The Ofsted guidance seems to frame *different types of family groups* as one potential example amongst others, rather than as the only one, allowing for a broader reading of what inclusion is encouraged for primary schools than the above DfE guidance. This guidance from Ofsted certainly does not state that primary schools cannot go into *more detail about sexuality and gender identity as well as the legal rights afforded to LGBT people*. However, this suggestion is reserved for secondary schools, leaving an omission of non-familial gender identity and sexuality presentations in primary school teaching. This omission is made within the context of detailing what is *age-appropriate*, seeming to suggest a separation between the age-appropriateness of the examples given for each age group (for further discussion of the various notions of *appropriateness* used in the policyscape, see the Age-appropriateness chapter). One interpretation would be that topics such as the legal rights afforded to LGBT people may be a higher level of learning, but it begs the question of why familial presentations, but not other kinds of LGBT identities, are consistently constructed as *the* appropriate content for primary schools.

Likewise, the only two teacher training modules referencing LGBT content provided by the Department of Education for schools to support the new RSE requirements do not provide guidance on how to include LGBT content but do refer to teaching about the different types of family, implicitly linking LGBT content to such representations. These modules, entitled *Teacher training: respectful relationships* (Department for Education, 2020d) and *Teacher training: families* (Department for Education, 2020c) state:

[Pupils should] Know that others' families sometimes look different from their family, but that they should respect those differences and know that other children's families are also characterised by love and care

...

[Pupils should] Know the characteristics of healthy family life. Know that stable, caring relationships, which may be of different types, are at the heart of happy families, and are important for children's security as they grow up

(Department for Education, 2020c, pp. 27, 31).

These documents may be the only governmentally provided resources, but there is one other suggested resource referencing LGBT content. Annex B of the Relationships Education guidance for schools (Department for Education, 2021) suggests the Stonewall charity website as an external source of resources. Once on the linked webpage, one can click to download the *Different Families, Same Love* starter pack showing pictures of different family types, some of which seem to show same-sex couples (Stonewall, 2021), or go further into the Stonewall website to find lesson ideas and resources on LGBT inclusion beyond different family presentations (Stonewall, 2022). These resources detailing LGBT inclusion beyond same-sex families denote that such representations are accessible via channels within the polycscape. However, they are much less accessible than same-sex familial presentations, being neither present within the main bodies of the RSE guidance or the official teacher training PowerPoints. One cannot find them easily unless reading through the appendices, then clicking through external links. Both the legitimacy of those resources not provided by the Department for Education, and the relative lack of salience for those resources not related to families is significant here. Reflecting on this thesis' findings surrounding the impact of a lack of resources or know-how acting as a barrier to including LGBT content, that the governmentally provided resources focus almost exclusively on familial presentations may make others significantly less visible (See the LGBT Content & Implementation section of the Heteronormativity & Non-mandatory LGBT RSE chapter).

Previous research has noted homonormativity running through both the *Same Love, Different Families* programme (Hall, 2021) and through the then Minister for Women and Equalities Penny Mordaunt speech launching the UK Government's LGBT Action Plan (Lawrence & Taylor, 2020). This analysis finds homonormative discourses are formative to both Ofsted, RSE, and wider policy guidance, suggesting that such has not changed, but rather continues in light of the new RSE curriculum.

11.1.1.2 Differentiating Identities

In line with homonormativity allowing access for certain representations to be aligned with primary school LGBT content, certain identities seemed to be either absent, or problematised as potentially less appropriate, within the polycscape. It is true that bisexual, trans, queer, non-binary, etc. people could be same-sex parents, but presentations of such limit the queer to one kind of life and are unlikely to be automatically read as these identities. Although same-sex couples may be respectively read as gay or lesbian (Webb et al., 2017), presentations of same-sex parents as the sole representation of such leaves other visions of such identities underarticulated. Taking the *LGBT* initialism apart, there were no references to bisexuality, or how this is included in teaching that revolves around same-sex families within the RSE guidance, but there was reference to trans content.

The sole part of the RSE curriculum referencing trans teaching is within the Department for Education *Plan your relationships, sex and health curriculum* guidance under a section on *Ensuring content is appropriate*. However, here guidance is given on how not to teach gender identity, but not how to teach or affirm it:

We are aware that topics involving gender and biological sex can be complex and sensitive matters to navigate. You should not reinforce harmful stereotypes, for instance by suggesting that children might be a different gender based on their personality and interests or the clothes they prefer to wear. Resources used in teaching about this topic must always be age-appropriate and evidence based. Materials which suggest that non-conformity to gender stereotypes should be seen as synonymous with having a different gender identity should not be used and you should not work with external agencies or organisations that produce such material. While teachers should not suggest to a child that their non-compliance with gender stereotypes means that either their personality or their body is wrong and in need of changing, teachers should always seek to treat individual students with sympathy and support

(Department for Education, 2022a, para. 112)

The guidance here seems to revolve around a prohibition against *suggesting to a child* that they may be trans, or that they need to change in some respect, but there is a noticeable omission concerning whether trans children should be supported as such, or whether a separation between sex and gender should be taught. Instead, the reference to *support* is given alongside

a directive to give *sympathy*, suggesting the necessity of showing understanding for *individual students*, but not necessarily of treating them as their self-declared gender. Whilst the guidance suggests that teaching should be *age-appropriate and evidence based*, the content of what schools should teach is open to interpretation, revolving primarily around the potential for gender stereotyping. Noted anti-trans education groups, for example, celebrated the *Plan your relationships, sex and health curriculum* guidance, particularly the suggestion that schools should not teach children that “their body is wrong¹⁰²” (Department for Education, 2022a, para. 112), interpreting this as an interdiction against teaching children that some people have a different gender identity to their assigned sex¹⁰³.

Whilst much of the policyscape suggests a vision of LGBT inclusion in primary schools which leaves LGBT lives beyond the familial largely unspoken and therefore only implies age (in)appropriateness, the wider policyscape offers more context, mostly in relation to trans identities. In then Attorney General Suella Braverman’s speech at the Policy Exchange¹⁰⁴ entitled *Equalities and rights: Conflict and the need for clarity* she issued explicit guidance for schools concerning the age (in)appropriateness of certain identity labels. She stated:

In my view, a primary school where they are teaching Year 4 pupils, aged eight and nine, ‘key words’ such as transgender, pansexual, asexual, gender expression, intersex, gender fluid, gender dysphoria, questioning or queer, would be falling foul of government guidance

(Braverman, 2022b, para. 77)

It must be noted that this is a rather nebulous element of the policyscape. It seems unlikely that this speech will be read by as many teachers as more direct guidance for schools, given that it was guidance given as a keynote speech for the Policy Exchange, a conservative think

¹⁰² Intelligible as a dualist supposition of an authentic gendered interior separated from an oppositional exterior body, the phrase is often acknowledged by the trans community as a flawed, but at times useful, means of explaining trans lives for the way in which it does not problematise the process of gendering bodies, but does allow others to conceptualise the separation between the gendered body and internal identity (Capuzza & Spencer, 2017; Engdahl, 2014; Hagai & Zurbruggen, 2022; Lovelock, 2017).

¹⁰³ Transgender Trend are an anti-trans group who petition for schools and other organisations against children self-identifying their gender (Transgender Trend, 2018). They celebrated the guidance cited above stating “This is what we have been calling for. We are very glad to see this guidance issued by the @educationgovuk” (Transgender Trend, 2020). The Safe Schools Alliance, a group that campaigns against, amongst other things, trans people being able to access the bathroom for their gender, tweeted: “We welcome @educationgovuk releasing this new guidance. We are pleased to see that our concerns have been taken on board and are beginning to be addressed. #RSE #PSHE #edutwitter #SLTchat #pastoralchat #UKedchat #pastoralthings #teamenglish #LGBT” (Safe Schools Alliance, 2020).

¹⁰⁴ The Policy Exchange is a conservative think-tank formed by multiple members of the UK conservative government (Policy Exchange, 2022).

tank (Policy Exchange, 2022). Braverman's statement was also made after all interviews and questionnaires in this research had been completed meaning it could not have directly influenced the teachers in this study. However, her speech remains a valuable element of the policyscape. This speech as guidance is available on the UK Government website, and it was given as the Attorney General, the legal advisor to the government, making it a current element of the policyscape formative to understanding the apparatus of how LGBT inclusion is being interpreted in primary schools (Braverman, 2022b).

Evidently, the explicit guidance *not to* teach certain vocabulary to younger primary-aged children is something of a departure from the aforementioned guidance, but it likewise draws on a discursive separation of types of LGBT content. Again in terms of splitting the L, G, B, and T in LGBT, it is unclear why this guidance references pansexuality, but not bisexuality, as inappropriate for this age group. However, Braverman details at great length why she believes trans content is inappropriate. Braverman's speech states that whilst "Stereotypes of what it means to be a boy or girl can be challenged", to teach that "biological sex is quite distinct (from) gender" is "indoctrination" of a "contested" view based on "an assumption that regardless of biological sex, children must be assisted to decide their gender" (Braverman, 2022b, paras. 74-75).

The appropriateness of tackling gender stereotyping must be noted here, given the insight it offers into the ways in which certain transgressions of gendered and sex norms may be deemed more appropriate than others. Both Braverman's and the *Plan your relationships, sex and health curriculum* guidance suggest the importance of tackling gender stereotypes, and the appropriateness of doing so. Whilst this guidance problematises teaching an alignment between gender identity and certain stereotypes of enacting it, neither problematises the congruence between sex and gender in the same manner.

Braverman seems to conflate accepting that one can be trans, and that children can self-identify, with a disregard for biological sex. This creates a narrative in which trans inclusion is antithetical to acknowledging that sex characteristics are real, eschewing that accepting trans youth is not to disregard sex characteristics, it is only to state they do not dictate gender identity. By constructing teaching the separation of gender and sex as encouraging children to question their gender, or as denying sex characteristics, Braverman delegitimises the former via a false alignment with the later. She aligns theories suggesting gender and sex are separate with stating that *children must be assisted to decide their gender*, conflating believing children when they state their own gender and a forced assistance in, or promotion of, questioning gender identity.

Elements of the *Political Impartiality in Schools* guidance are significant here (Department for Education, 2022c). The guidance, as explored in the previous chapter, states that “teachers should still be mindful to avoid promoting partisan political views or presenting contested theories as fact” (Department for Education, 2022c, para. 118). The warning against *presenting contested theories as fact* is only made in reference to LGBT content, and in light of Braverman’s and others’ rhetoric, it seems likely that this prohibition could be read as a warning against teaching the separation between gender and sex. What constitutes *fact* here is contentious and should be read in mind of the wider governmental rhetoric which has recently increasingly positioned teaching the validity of trans identities, of the distinction between gender and sex, as a kind of inappropriate indoctrination. A sub-group of cross-party MPs have recently praised ‘Asleep at the Wheel: An Examination of Gender and Safeguarding in Schools’ (Moore, 2023), a report from the Policy Exchange think tank. The findings of the report suggest that “many are teaching gender identity beliefs within Relationships, Sex & Health Education (RSHE) as if they are facts” (Policy Exchange, 2023, para. 2.). The report release was accompanied by a statement from the former Secretary of State for Education Nadim Zahawi, who stated that:

This Policy Exchange report marks an important contribution to the growing body of evidence demonstrating that urgent attention needs to be paid to the ways children are being impacted by gender identity beliefs¹⁰⁵.

(Policy Exchange, 2023, para. 4.)

11.1.1.3 Policy Conclusions

The dominance of homonormative presentations in the LGBT content presented here demonstrates the complexity of the lines between the queer and heteronormative. Drawing on the notion of power acting through *norms*, the alignment of LGBT teaching to different families, and the wider purpose of teaching families, seems constructed through two strands of

¹⁰⁵ Zahawi went on to state that “Safeguarding principles are foundational to the functioning of a responsible society, and there is absolutely no reason why schools should ever compromise these principles. Children deserve to explore the ways they feel about themselves and the world in ways which do not harm them. Every issue concerning children should be viewed through a safeguarding lens, and there is no reason why gender distress should be any different.” (Policy Exchange, 2023, para. 4.).

normalisation, each of a different kind (Foucault, 1978, p. 144). In the first, representations of LGBT families are presented as a means to normalise such, to be inclusive of these families, to *expand the norm* and encourage pupils to see them as such. Within the Ofsted guidance on teaching different families as part of teaching the protected characteristics this conceptualisation is particularly prominent, but so too is it within the linking to the Stonewall LGBT inclusion charity resources. In the second, the teaching of LGBT content in the context of families can be seen as part of a wider means of emphasising families as a mechanism of *maintaining the norm*. This is seen both in the way in which the policyscape allows for LGBT content to be included along certain normative lines and the way in which the teaching of families in itself (re)creates certain norms.

The RSE teacher training documents certainly differ from the previous, more overtly heteronormative RSE policies discussed in previous chapters which upheld marriage¹⁰⁶ as best for raising children (See chapter: Heteronormativity & Non-mandatory LGBT RSE). However, with no reference to single, non-monogamous, non-childbearing ways of being, we see that families, that *stable, caring relationships*, remain an influential, privileged structure of “social hierarchization” (Foucault, 1978, p. 141). There may be an emphasis on changing the norm within the former emphasis on inclusion, but this is perhaps more of an expanding of it; LGBT content may be brought into this norm within certain homonormative conditions, to the extent to which it can align with this privileged structure. In doing so, the continuation of families as the normative social structure is reinforced.

Another norm seemingly (re)created here revolves around age-appropriateness which aligns certain types of LGBT content with primary schooling. As Ball suggests, echoing Foucault’s concept of how discourses “hide (their) own mechanisms” (Foucault, 1978, p. 86), in policy we “may only be able to conceive of the possibilities of response in and through the language, concepts and vocabulary which the discourse makes available to us” (Ball, 1993, pp. 14-15). Here, the power seems to lie in large, excepting Braverman and others’ guidance, not in any explicit order not to teach other types of content, but rather in the discursive dominance of familial presentations eclipsing other forms.

¹⁰⁶ Section 403(1) of Education Act 1996 stated that RSE must “encourage those pupils to have due regard to moral considerations and the value of family life” (UK Government, 1996, p. 403). The 2000 Sex and Relationship Education Guidance stated that “pupils should be taught about the nature and importance of marriage for family life and bringing up children” (Department for Education and Employment, 2000, p. 4).

This is seen in both the references to families as *age-appropriate* in the Ofsted guidance, and in the implication in the RSE guidance that for younger years LGBT content can be spoken of in this context. Two considerations seem noteworthy in this framing. Firstly, by presenting only familial LGBT content in line with primary schools, the kind of sexuality shown is contained not only to certain identities, but to adult, not child, presentations. One could frame the representation of adult same-sex families as a means to reflect queer children, but this would be contained to their future selves, or perhaps even just for the ‘child’s’ family, allowing for discourses separating the ‘queer’ from the ‘child’. Secondly, though the act of sex may be discussed in the science curriculum, or wider RSE (See chapter: Age-appropriateness) LGBT content is not aligned with this kind of teaching. Reference to LGBT content is contained to the *Relationships*, not the *Sex*, part of Relationships and Sex Education. In light of the earlier (See chapter: Age-appropriateness) discussion on the hypersexualisation of the queer, it seems that homonormativity here may be formed along similar lines.

As the following sections explore, the discursive dominance of ‘families’ within LGBT inclusion was likewise apparent in teachers’ responses.

11.1.2 Homonormativity & Teachers' Responses

I examine the kind of LGBT content reported to be present in primary schools in three sections. In the first, LGBT Inclusion (Same-sex Parents), I lay out a broad picture of the kinds of LGBT identities or presentations that teachers cited to be present in their schools and discuss the dominance of same-sex families in this content. Continuing with the task of tracing the “nexus of regularities that govern” how certain statements emerge over others (Foucault, 1972, p. 53), in the second section, Appropriateness & Accessibility, I examine how this dominance was formed by the perceived appropriateness, and relative ease of including, same-sex familial presentations. In the third section, Stratifying Appropriateness, I analyse how these *regularities* forming the norm of what is, and is not, appropriate or easily thought of exclude certain, namely bisexual and transgender, content.

11.1.2.1 LGBT Inclusion (Same-sex Parents)

I coded both the interviews and questionnaires in this research for the kind of LGBT content that teachers reported to be present in their schools. The data here was not collected in response to one specific question but represents any reference to a certain group identity or presentation that was said to be present in schools. Given that it was unclear in many of these instances whether references to certain presentations were planned within the curriculum or reactively brought up by one teacher, I could not categorise the data in this way. Each code thus indicates a response which referred to a representation of that identity in school¹⁰⁷, whether that be through an out teacher, a representation of historical or fictional figure, or more generalised discussion of this identity. For example, this could include discussing same-sex families for the code ‘*Families*’ or what the term transgender means for the code ‘*Transgender*’¹⁰⁸.

¹⁰⁷ 275 reported there was some kind of LGBT content represented in their school, 98 of which stated that this content was only reactively included, out of a possible 350. 14 participants, all of whom completed a questionnaire only, did not answer whether their school had any kind of LGBT content present. For more information on this split, refer to the Heteronormativity & Non-mandatory LGBT RSE chapter of this thesis.

¹⁰⁸ References to certain identities as a form of bullying were not included here. I separated out bisexuality here from the code of same-sex relationships in order to examine how non-monosexualities could be represented, when same-sex partners are often read as indicative of sole preference (Morgenroth et al., 2022; Pennasilico & Amodeo, 2019; Stewart, 2021). Likewise, whilst non-binary identities are often placed under the ‘trans’ umbrella given that they also indicate a departure from an assigned birth sex, I coded ‘*Non-binary*’ distinctly to allow the prevalence of each code to be examined.

Table 12: The count of different types of LGBT representations and teaching content reported to be present in schools by teachers.

LGBT Content Type	Interview & Questionnaire	Interview Only	Questionnaire Only	Total
Families	9	8	95	112
Same sex relationships, gay, or lesbian	3	3	18	24
Trans	2	1	8	11
Bi	2	2	1	5
Non-binary	0	0	3	3

It should be noted that Table 12 represents only what was reported by teachers; it was unclear whether the identities and representations reported by each teacher represented the extent of their inclusion or only one element of it. However, corroborating previous research on something of a larger scale, the data above shows that representations of ‘*Families*’ were overwhelmingly the most cited type of LGBT content (Allan et al., 2008; Atkinson, 2021; DePalma, 2016; DePalma & Atkinson, 2006, 2009a, 2009b). Both comparatively, and absolutely, there were very few references to other listed identities or presentations. References to this specific type outnumbered all other kinds of LGBT representation combined.

The below examples from the questionnaire exemplify the common theme in which LGBT inclusion was equated with LGBT families, and within this, often only same-sex parents.

the school is very up to date on inclusion. Lgbt families are mentioned in the PSHE lessons when different kinds of families are talked about. For my class, we looked through a poster showing different kinds of families, emphasising that families are made with love, not with just a mum and a dad, sometimes they can have two mums or two dads

(Molly, I'm a 26 year old teacher from the East Midlands, Teacher, Questionnaire)

[is there any LGBT content in your school?] no, RSE policy mentions that alternative families will be taught from September 2021

(NN20, Gay, Headteacher, Questionnaire)

LGBT families, in Molly's response, may be said to be represented, but the extent to which the diversity of this initialism is represented seems minimal; only same-sex parents are referenced. The reference in Molly's response to being *up to date* on LGBT inclusion seems consistent with the policyscape, being seemingly present only in RSE and contained to familial presentations. Indeed, NN20's response echoes the influence of the RSE policyscape's sole emphasis on teaching LGBT content in line with families, stating a direct implementation of this directive into practice.

Both Molly's, NN20's, and similar responses suggest that the dual threads of normalisation discussed in the policyscape run through certain teachers' responses. Whilst Molly's teaching around families that are *not just a mum and a dad* emphasises the commonality of love between families, the language describing the inclusion of LGBT families potentially teaches a norm, the mum and dad, as part of the attempt to trouble its universally; *sometimes they can have two mums or two dads*. This likewise seems to be the case in NN20's reference to *alternative families*, a turn of phrase which again implies a norm against which the *alternative* is constructed.

Responses coded for non-familial representations were often also coded for '*Families*'. OK Head's response in the questionnaire, was one example of such:

We have LGBT families represented in our environment from Stonewall posters to LGBT characters in books in every classroom. Our classes are named after Great Britons one of which is Alan Turing¹⁰⁹. We have a Families week every year where we celebrate all the different types of families in our school including LGBT. Our Policies including equality, bullying etc

¹⁰⁹ Alan Turing was a gay 20th century mathematician and computer scientist who was charged with gross indecency after police discovered his sexual relationship with a man (Hodges, 2014).

reference how we will ensure that we eliminate discrimination of LGBT identities as well ensure equality of opportunity

(OK Head, 40+ HetCisWoman, Headteacher, Questionnaire)

OK Head's response describes one of those responses in which LGBT familial content was integrated throughout the curriculum. This was not the case with other kinds of representation, with this seeming to be often referred to as sporadic or teacher-dependant. Mrs Marmalade's response coded for 'Trans', for example, suggests trans representation in novels was brought in by an individual teacher:

*... as a one-day-a-week PPA teacher, I haven't really personally experienced any LGBT identities being referenced. One of the Year 6 class teachers is really intent on promoting this though, and as such, has told me that she references LGBTQ identities quite often. She is currently reading *George*¹¹⁰ by Alex Gino, and has also read *them Rick*, by the same author*

(MrsMarmalade, 46 year old Christian, Teacher, Questionnaire)

Non-familial, particularly trans and non-binary, representations were often said to be brought in after a pupil in the school identified themselves as such, reflecting previous research suggesting its inclusion is often sporadic in schools (Carlile et al., 2021; Warin & Price, 2020; Wilder, 2019). To take an example from the questionnaire coded as 'Non-binary':

*This year one of our children identified as non-binary. We have taken steps to adjust the school policies to reflect this. For example, and due to class bubbles, we have non gendered toilets...We currently have *Being Me in Penguin Land*¹¹¹ and have started to bring in books about different family structures*

(Mr C, 41 year-old male teacher, Questionnaire)

¹¹⁰ *George*, or now *Melissa*, is a children's novel about a young transgender girl. The book was retitled to use the preferred name of the protagonist (Gino, 2022).

¹¹¹ *Being Me in Penguin Land* by Terry Reed is a children's story about a non-binary penguin (Reed, 2015).

Alongside *books about different family structures*, Mr C's school now has *Being Me in Penguin Land*, a book about a non-binary penguin, and other non-binary inclusive measures to reflect a child in the school. This inclusion seems to have relied upon the presence of a non-binary child, meaning inclusion beyond the homonormative seems somewhat contained to this identity category. For those codes that did not refer to families, famous figures and fictional characters were particularly prevalent means of representation. To take the code 'Bi' as an example, of the five references, two were representations of Frida Khalo¹¹² in a book, one was the representation of a bi volunteer from a local LGBT charity who offered to speak at the school, and the final two were references in work by queer teachers who were formative to bringing in LGBT content to their school. To give one questionnaire example:

[the LGBT books we have in school are] -Frida Khalo, Williams; Doll, Tango Makes Three and more

(GC20, British born Greek Cypriot, Teacher, Questionnaire)

The repeated reference to Frida Khalo may be due either to two responses coming from one school, and/or to the paucity of resources for primary-aged children representing bisexuality (Knopp-Schwyn & Fracentese, 2019; Leung & Adams-Whittaker, 2022). *Frida Kahlo for Girls and Boys*, by Nadia Fink, is the first¹¹³ and, at present only, picture book for children to represent bisexuality, and this is a rather brief reference to the artist loving both men and women whilst married to her husband¹¹⁴ (Fink, 2017; Knopp-Schwyn, 2020).

Thus far this section has described the general absence of LGBT inclusion beyond the homonormative in primary schools. Examining how teachers' responses framed the presence of these differentially represented identities offered insight into the heterogeneity of the power relations forming the dominance of familial presentations, as is explored in the following section.

¹¹² Frida Khalo was a twentieth century bi artist (Knopp-Schwyn & Fracentese, 2019).

¹¹³ Bisexuality in young adult literature is more common but still relatively rare and the reading age of such texts is aimed at the later end of primary schooling or older (Jiménez, 2015; Kneen, 2015; Tullos, 2020).

¹¹⁴ It is also notable here that this seems to be the first example of polyamory represented in a children's book.

11.1.2.2 Appropriateness & Accessibility

In this section I primarily examine the way in which the prevalence of same-sex family representations seemed formed by their perceived appropriateness. Discursively aligned with the discourses analysed in the Age-appropriateness chapter, presentations of different families or same-sex parents were positioned by some as a more basic, child-friendly, and age-appropriate vision of LGBT content¹¹⁵. Interrelated to this appropriateness, I examine how same-sex families were seen as a more visible form of LGBT content.

Willow and Jenny provide an example of a school in which LGBT content was contained to same-sex parents. I choose this interview as an example to show the ways in which the elements of the apparatus could interact within one context. Willow is a Deputy Head Teacher, and Jenny is the PSHE lead at the same school. Willow originally contacted me for the interview, during which Jenny joined for a short period of time to answer Willow's questions on the school's RSE policy. Having recently set up a committee with some local schools to address inclusion around ethnicity, Willow was very passionate about inclusion and wished to do more for LGBT inclusion. However, throughout the interview Willow's lack of knowledge on the subject, the inaccessibility of inclusive resources, and (others') concerns around appropriateness emerged as inhibiting elements.

In describing *When Aiden Became a Brother*, Willow stated of the book "I liked the understanding of it for myself, that he's just a different kind of boy, a good way of explaining it". Willow wished for a greater diversity of books, but, reflecting content analysis of children's literature (Epstein, 2013; Huskey, 2002; Lester, 2014; Lo, 2019), suggested that the only LGBT books the school had featured same-sex parents, and that she was unsure of how to access other resources:

Willow: In the national curriculum that sets out what you have to do in PSHE it's all very vague, so we adopt... I want to say... Jigsaw? So there is guidance in that, but actually, teachers

¹¹⁵ I did not specifically ask about what the most appropriate type of LGBT content was. However, within both the questionnaires and interviews I coded multiple responses stating that familial LGBT content was, or was seen as, a more appropriate kind of content, especially for younger children. I distinguished between whether the response suggested only LGBT content to be represented should be families, and whether the only LGBT content taught in their schools was specifically said to be families in my coding. I likewise made a distinction between whether responses stated that families were the only appropriate LGBT content for any age in primary, or only for the younger years. The table of this data can be seen in the List of Codes appendix.

do the bare minimum because they're scared of doing more... Honestly teachers have got a lot going on so I think it's that they think 'I don't have time to go and look up all that for myself'

(Willow, Deputy Head Teacher, Interview)

Whilst Willow had the motivation to implement further representation, she was neither directly responsible for the RSE curriculum nor felt she was knowledgeable enough about the subject to do more without the support she felt was lacking. Shortfalls in the guidance provided and homonormativity within the wider culture forming what kind of resources were available seem to be exacerbated by teachers' over-burdened workload, which left teachers ill-equipped with motivation alone. As Willow states, teachers *have got a lot going on*. To represent non-familial characters, one would need to be familiar with terminology, or, for example, be aware of a queer figure in history, and if one did not have this knowledge, would have to have the know-how and time to research this, before considerations of others' judgements of appropriateness, as alluded to in Willow's suggestion that teachers are *scared of doing more*. Willow's school adopts the national curriculum which she describes as *very vague* and pairs this with *Jigsaw* resources. The *Jigsaw* resource pack does include the option of a year six lesson including trans representation¹¹⁶ but includes limited reference to labelled sexualities aside from in reference to their use as slurs¹¹⁷. In mind of Willow and Jenny's school teaching only different families, such representations seem to have been omitted in part to considerations of what parents would find appropriate.

¹¹⁶ The *Jigsaw* resource guidance *How does Jigsaw approach gender identity?* states: "The issue of gender identity is rarely treated as an explicit focus in *Jigsaw* 3-11 as the programme does its best to create an inclusive ethos as described above. There are opportunities for transgender to be included in classroom discussions at the teacher's discretion, but there is only one lesson (for children aged 10-11 years) where this term is used explicitly. At no point does *Jigsaw* say there are only two genders but equally it doesn't suggest there are more; neither, in the primary programme does it refer to gender fluidity... There is one lesson in KS1 and one in KS2 where transgender identities could be said to be explicitly reflected, although the term 'transgender' is only explicitly introduced in the materials in one lesson in Year 6 (Age 10-11 materials)." (*Jigsaw*, 2023a, pp. 1, 2).

¹¹⁷ The *Jigsaw* resource guidance *What does Jigsaw teach about LGBT+ relationships?* States: "...there is minimal focus on sexual orientation and gender identity in the age 3 -11 programme; enough to enable children to understand the meaning of the words lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and heterosexual... *Jigsaw*'s ages 3-11 programme does not explicitly teach about heterosexual or LGBT+ relationships in adulthood either, other than to explain that any two adults can love each other and be attracted to each other... Children will have heard, or will come to hear, words such as 'gay', 'lesbian' or 'transgender'. Sometimes these words can be used as insults or derogatory terms. In this context, *Jigsaw* explains the meanings of these words age-appropriately and teaches that these are not to be used in derogatory ways as this could cause hurt or harm and are disrespectful" (*Jigsaw*, 2023b, pp. 1, 5, 6).

In the excerpt below, Willow clarifies with Jenny what kind of LGBT content their school already teaches, finding that it is only reference to same-sex families, and that this is reserved for older years. In reference seemingly to Jenny's own judgements, and to that of parents, familial presentations were constructed as a less controversial, more appropriate form of LGBT content.

Jenny: We just talk about difference and how different families are... So we wouldn't say anything out there [emphasised] LGBT but we might mention two mums or two dads. If they ask, we won't shy away from that at all, but it's more general about how stable, loving families, how families are based on respect

(Jenny, PSHE Lead, Interview)

Willow: So, it's implicit? It's just teaching about different families? We don't go into what what this means what that means? For LGBT?

Jenny: No. So we do talk about gay and lesbian I would say. The other ones don't come up as much. If they ask about it, we would tell them. It's not that we don't, it just tends to be the two that the children have heard of, have heard in the playground. And we hear that all the time and that is always challenged whenever they start using it. So they will have heard all that language, and we challenge that when it's used in an unkind or a negative way. But then in year five and six we install that it can be a positive, it can be a relationship in a positive way... So the policy is worked with all stakeholders, and we have some guidance from the government, and from that the school puts together a policy, which is then given to parents to look at, and, it's all appropriate anyway but they are allowed to look at it and ask questions... All of them are ok if they understand them, but we don't go into specific LGBT it's more if it comes up you can have an open and honest discussion about it.

Arabeth: So parents are more ok with that?

Jenny: Yeah because it's about different family units and now, parents are more like, I've got a step mum, so I had two mums and a dad... They're seeing different families all the time so this doesn't seem to cause any offence. It's just a different family unit, just another one.

Once again there seem to be two strands of normativity forming the teaching of families in the above dialogue: to normalise same-sex families as a means of inclusion, and to maintain the normative conditions of admittance. In Jenny's response, teaching around families is positioned as part of the first strand, as a means of inclusion, as a means of talking about *difference* and ensuring that same-sex relationships can be seen as a *positive*. It likewise runs along the second strand, as the conditions of this inclusion are formed in normative conditions concerning the extent that the LGBT content can fit into the school's discussions about *stable, loving families*. This emphasis not only reflects the wording of the mandatory RSE curricular content for teaching the importance of "*stable, caring relationships*" (Department for Education, 2020c, p. 31), but also the sole containment of LGBT inclusion to the discussion of such.

Much as within the polycscape, families were deemed to be an age-appropriate representation of LGBT content and as such were the only named example. But whilst much of the polycscape's silence around other identities is reflected in teaching, Jenny paints same-sex families as a kind of more appropriate content not only in the distinctions between which ages receive this teaching, but also in her framing of such in contrast to the *out there LGBT*. As Jenny's response suggests, despite the words gay and lesbian being used negatively within younger years, teaching is reserved for older years; it is only in *year five and six (that they) install that it can be a positive*. This introduction to the *positive* seems also contained to same-sex families; they *don't go into specific LGBT* but instead *might mention two mums or two dads*. It was unclear in Jenny's response why non-familial representations are *out there*, but it seems important here to acknowledge the place of parental reaction (See chapter: Parental Consultation & Governance). Elucidating the normative conditions of access, certain presentations that could be de-queered to mimic heteronormative structures were permitted when they were deemed less likely to cause offence to parents. Jenny's response repeats a comparison to heterosexual parenting structures in her framing of the perceived appropriateness of same-sex families. LGBT content here is *just a different family unit*, two mothers could be much the same as step-parenting.

The normativity forming this inclusion, however, is something of an analytical quagmire if one sees the conditions of its formation as exclusionary to its queering potential. Here, I return to Foucault's contention that it "is not that everything is bad, but that everything is dangerous" (Foucault, 1982a, p. 231) alongside Sedgwick's notion of reparative reading (Sedgwick, 1997). As found in a small body of previous research, through presenting LGBT

inclusion in its least controversial form some teachers in this thesis were able to introduce some level of LGBT inclusion (Carlile, 2020b; DePalma & Atkinson, 2009a). Much as in Willow and Jenny's school, many viewed *different families* as a less controversial representation in consideration of other's judgements of their appropriateness. As one Headteacher described this strategy in the questionnaire:

When I led parent workshops on how we include LGBT+ identities within our curriculum I was told that Nursery was too young to teach children about that stuff. I said we don't have gay lessons, just children in [school] with same-sex parents whose family have the right to be represented alongside all of the other varied families within our school

(OK Head, 40+ HetCisWoman, 15 years teaching, Questionnaire)¹¹⁸

Same-sex parents here are presented as appropriate to parents once again because they are a representation of a different kind of family; children could not be too young given that LGBT inclusion here was representing same-sex parents. It was not only considerations of (perceived) appropriateness but again the visibility of same-sex presentations that seems formative here. OK Head could see same-sex parents in her school and so could mobilise their presence as a reason for this content. However, the criticism of LGBT content in this extract appears to be deflected through a containment of the 'queer' to the 'adult'. It is not that the child is learning about the queer for their own representation, but rather for that of their parental structure. In this we see the need not to ignore the *dangerousness* of homonormativity.

11.1.2.3 Stratifying Appropriateness

As discussed in relation to the policyscape, part of the *dangerousness* of homonormativity seems to be the way in which it can *other*, and justify the exclusion of, non-familial queer presentations through a discourse of age-appropriateness. The way in which identities were divided along these lines differed between responses.

Adelle, a queer year four teacher, explained in an interview that her school's issuing of vocabulary lists for identity labels was felt to codify differentiations in the appropriateness of certain presentations:

¹¹⁸ OK Head only referenced LGBT inclusion in her school as representing same-sex parents throughout her questionnaire.

So I know that from an early age, reception so if you can talk about, Mum and Mum, Dad and Dad and then you kind of get up to my year group in year 4 where you can use the words lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual... So when the vocabulary list came out and I shared it with my wife... We said that is kind of suggesting that my child, who has always used the word lesbian he has always used the word gay, saying that I've taught him an inappropriate word or I've been inappropriate... So you kind of put people in a position where you feel like the child comes in reception and they come from same-sex parents and then they, they can't say gay because it's not on the vocabulary list... Teachers are... A bit worried about the about the backlash from the community from the parents. On the odd occasion that I have mentioned it in my lessons children have been so wary of saying words saying lesbian saying bisexual

(Adelle, queer female teacher, Teacher, Interview)

Vocabulary lists were felt in Adelle's response to make divisions in appropriateness explicit. Much as in Jenny's earlier response, two fathers, for example, can be more easily de-queered into a heteronormative frame, but the vocabulary 'gay' cannot, whilst identities such as bisexual or transgender cannot be as easily represented without accompanying terminology or explanation. With wariness from both children and staff, using labels like *bisexual* and *lesbian* carried a kind of taboo that was reflected in the sole use for older years. Then Attorney General Suella Braverman's guidance around which labels are inappropriate was issued around a year after these interviews and questionnaires, but it mirrors both their logic and method of differentiating LGBT identities (Braverman, 2022a, 2022b). Whilst Adelle's response suggests she did not personally make such a distinction in appropriateness¹¹⁹, she suggests that others did and links this to fear of parental perceptions of such content.

¹¹⁹ It may also be of interest to note the way in which, again, familial presentations are based in, and allow for, a containment of sexuality to the adult or older. Adelle also recounted her experience in which a fellow teacher assumed a girl in her class having a girlfriend was a safeguarding issue. She stated: "Some teachers are like... I think they think they're protecting them from being gay? I don't know what it is. It like suddenly becomes this issue. I had one colleague and she thought it was this big safeguarding issue because someone had said that she had, this girl said she had a girlfriend and she came to me and asked me 'what should I do about this?' [anxious tone]... I said 'If she had said, she said she had a boyfriend... You would not to focus on the fact that she said it was a boy'. The teacher in this response put forward the combination of the child and the queer as a safeguarding issue but was ultimately convinced not to continue with this course of action after Adelle argued a heteronormative hypothetical in which the pupil had a boyfriend. Whilst the school had presentations of same-sex families, and allowed for the discussions of identity labels, concern arose when sexuality was linked explicitly to the child through this pupil's relationship.

Offering insight into the ways in which certain identities were seen as less child-friendly than others, trans identities were much more likely to be labelled as inappropriate, but only one response in the questionnaire specifically said that bisexual representation was inappropriate as opposed to familial inclusion:

[Our school ethos is] British values, very inclusive, strong emphasis on success for all

...

[When answering whether there was any LGBT content in school] Well, the Lesbian and the gay are, but how can you include bisexuals and transsexuals when talking to children? We mention that there are different kinds of families, two mummies, two daddies but you cannot do that bisexuals and the transsexuals I think, they just wouldn't fit in with a child-centred environment. Nothing against them of course but they are so much more complicated I can't realistically see a teacher actually having a discussion that was so sexually explicit it talks about the ins and outs of bisexual preference it doesn't fit with the families. Then addressing the transsexuals would involve having a huge discussion about genitals, about operations, about the stuff that is just beyond them. This would be better left for older students when they understand more about science, more about sex, more about life! As I say very supportive of them all but some are easier to include than others.

...

[After reading through the four stories within the questionnaire] I think this proves my point about bisexuals and transgenders quite well. Would the princesses have then run off to kiss some princes? Do we need to show children that the princesses might break up and go off with someone else? How would a teacher teach that book about the boy/girl?

(Jimmy6767, Happy go lucky gent in his middle years!, Teacher, Questionnaire)

Drawing on a discourse of hypersexualisation that disproportionately affected certain types of LGBT content, Jimmy6767 nevertheless stresses early on that their school is *very inclusive*. Indeed, by including teaching that there are *different kinds of families, two mummies, two daddies*, their school does reflect the DfE guidance (Department for

Education, 2020c, 2022b). Reflecting the Ofsted guidance that when teaching about LGBT content primary schools could “teach pupils about the different types of family group” then “teach pupils in more detail about sexuality and gender identity” in secondary schools (Ofsted, 2021a), Jimmy links the inappropriateness of bi and trans presentations to the age of the child and the perceived inappropriately complex and sexual nature of these identities.

As discussed in the Literature Review section of this thesis, no research that I could find has specifically studied bisexuality in primary schooling, but there are certain examples of teachers suggesting it represents a more complicated identity to include (Atkinson & Moffat, 2009, cited in DePalma, 2016). In Jimmy6767’s response we gain quite explicit insight into the preference for same-sex family presentations. They base the logic for this homonormativity squarely within a discourse hypersexualising the bisexual identity, othering trans people, and limiting gay and lesbian lives to same-sex parenting because to do otherwise would be outside of what is appropriate in a *child-centred environment*. LGBT content in the form of same-sex families can be explained in terms of kinship, in terms of relation to one another in a single pair. One can state that they are married, are both parents, live together. To talk about bisexuality, or indeed as seen in Adelle’s response to use any identity label, is to talk about who a person is attracted to, or multiple partners, rather than to show a single pairing. This brings desire, or as Jimmy6767 states, *preference*, to the fore in a way that is not as easily desexualised as homonormative representations.

Jimmy6767 seemingly cannot imagine teaching bisexuality given that it cannot be represented in a single pair without explanation, and as such suggests it to be inappropriate. Jimmy6767 reflects previous research outside of the school setting linking bisexuality necessarily with promiscuity or infidelity (Dyar et al., 2021; Maliepaard, 2018; Pennasilico & Amodio, 2019; Stewart, 2021; Vaughn et al., 2017; Zivony & Saguy, 2018), seemingly suggesting that the Princess in *Maiden & Princess* could not be bisexual as she falls only for the maiden. Their response perhaps points to why bisexuality in children’s’ books for a long time remained an absolute absence. *Frida Kahlo for Girls and Boys*, by Nadia Fink, the first children’s book to reference bisexuality does so through Kahlo’s non-traditionally monogamous marriage: “Diego and Frida married, not once but twice; but they also loved other people, even when they were together... So, they had many friends and lovers, and Frida loved not only men but also women” (Fink, 2017, p. 14). In asking *Would the princesses have then run off to kiss some princes*, Jimmy6767 seems sceptical of the possibility of teaching LGBT content outside of the same-sex pair.

There is a similar lack of understanding for the possibilities of teaching without excluding transgender people, as they suggest that this would have to include a *huge discussion about genitals, about operations*. Whilst Jimmy6767 suggests that this is *stuff that is just beyond them*, referring to children, their response also suggests a lack of knowledge on their part of how one could teach non-familial content. Echoing Morgan's research in Aotearoa New Zealand that found teachers were more comfortable discussing same-sex parents than trans presentations, here we again see a divide in this content (Morgan, 2020). Jimmy6767's links to the need for advanced knowledge of *sex, science* to teach about bi and trans identities may be formed by a discursive othering, but they likewise suggest that limited knowledge around resources for teaching such may be available to counter these stereotypes.

Aligning with the general absence of discussions of bisexuality, Jimmy6767 was an outlier in representing the sole example of a participant explicitly justifying bisexuality being inappropriate. Trans content, by contrast, was much more often singled out from the LGBT initialism as inappropriate. As explored in the Age-appropriateness chapter, of the 39 teachers who stated that LGBT content was a kind of *'promotion'*, 10 of these only stated such in relation to trans content¹²⁰. Whilst in some responses trans content was positioned in a similar way to the discourses of promotion discussed in the Age-appropriateness chapter, others did so along specific lines of gender/sex but not necessarily sexuality, normativity. The responses specifically singling out trans content as promotion did so with greater emphasis on the legitimacy or supported nature of their views, with references to external sources such as governmental policy or research reporting on 'Rapid Onset Gender Dysphoria' (See Appendix: Rapid Onset Gender Dysphoria for more discussion of this topic). One such questionnaire response referring to governmental policy came from Ellie:

¹²⁰ MT's response in the questionnaire was one example of a response very explicitly differentiating between the homonormative and other content along the lines of what effect it will have on the child: "LGBT is included in a very simple way at our Primary school - in our PHSE programme about Families and how families can be different to one another but the commonality is love and care for one another. This is addressed with Y6 children as they are old enough to converse in a more mature and reasoned way...[In response to *When Aiden Became a Brother*] I hate it. I think that children are extremely vulnerable to ideas and that their development is hard enough as it is without starting to question their sexuality - the subject is far too difficult for children to grasp at this age and should be left alone" (MT, A WOMAN, Teacher, Questionnaire).

I have read the most recent guidelines and I am glad that they state that children should not be taught that it is possible to be “born in the wrong body”

...

[LGBT content is important] Because it is important that children know that families where children have two mothers or two fathers are normal and no less valid than other families.

[WABAB suggests] That people can be “born in the wrong body” and that people can change sex...This book sends a very disingenuous message to children. My biggest concern is that it tells girls that if they reject stereotypes about what it means to be “a girl” they must actually be a boy. It doesn’t reassure them that girls can have short hair and like things typically associated with masculinity and still be girls. It glosses over the fact that sex is innate and cannot be changed... I think it’s promoting a dangerous message that seeks to erase girls who are not stereotypically feminine or who may be lesbian

(Ellie, Lesbian mother, Teacher, Questionnaire)

Ellie’s response does not specifically name the guidance stating pupils should not be taught that they can be born in the wrong body, but her response closely mirrors the Department for Education *Plan your relationships, sex and health curriculum* guidance around including trans content, as this is the only one to refer to being *born in the wrong body*, as Ellie states (Department for Education, 2022a). The policyscape is mirrored likewise through her sole reference to same-sex families as appropriate and her links between trans content and perpetuating gender stereotyping¹²¹. Ellie’s response seems to assume that any transgender representation is a form of gender stereotyping. At first her objection to WABAB is based on a concern that Aidan’s rejection of being treated as a girl is a kind of stereotyping. This is then undercut by the suggestion that sex *cannot be changed* as a critique of the book. Seemingly criticising not only the supposition that gender is aligned with taste, Ellie criticises the idea that gender is not aligned with sex. The guidance, to which Ellie’s response seems to refer, does

¹²¹ An additional 20 responses stated that combatting gender stereotyping was the reason for the unsuitability of, and/or a suitable alternative to, trans content. 2 of these responses came from the from the interview & questionnaire set, 1 from interview only, and 17 from questionnaire only.

not explicitly state that transgender identities are inherently propagating gender stereotypes. However, this paragraph is the sole reference in this document to teaching *topics involving gender and biological sex* and it revolves largely around orders not to gender stereotype. Ellie seems to understand this guidance to mean that transgender content itself is a form of gender stereotyping, seeing representation of a trans child being unhappy in his assigned gender as such. In this, we see a further insight into how certain normative lines may be maintained in the transgression of others. The anti-gender stereotyping discourse may allow some movement within traditional expectations in the gendered binary, but an overall cisnormative system positioning children as by default cisgender is maintained; children may present non-stereotypically, as long as their identification still matches their assigned sex (Butler, 1990).

The guidance, which does not validate or encourage teaching a separation between gender and sex, is used here to legitimise its perceived inappropriateness. Those stating that LGBT RSE more generally was a kind of promotion may have pointed to the allowance to exclude LGBT content from primary schools as support, but none could point to guidance and suggest that it stated that primary schools should *not* teach LGBT content, as Ellie does here with the idea that pupils should not be *taught that it is possible to be “born in the wrong body”*.

One could see Ellie’s reading as a misinterpretation, but the lack of suggestion that trans youth should be acknowledged as their gender, or of guidance around teaching that gender should be taught as separate from assigned sex, allows for interpretations of what is prohibited, rather than encouraged, to be much more apparent; there is nothing to contradict Ellie’s reading. Meanwhile, much as Braverman’s guidance suggests that it is *indoctrination* to state that *biological sex is quite distinct (from) gender*, Ellie’s appeal to biological reality here obfuscates that an insistence on sexed characteristics *existing* are being deployed to argue that they signify an ensuing natural, stable gender (Braverman, 2022b, para. 75).

11.1.3 Conclusions of Homonormativity: Predictable, pernicious, practical, & progressive?

To conclude, it seems that the mechanisms of heteronormativity are neither static nor uniform. Gaining a certain level of legitimacy in some spaces through its closeness to the heteronormative structures of monogamy, marriage, and childbearing, homonormativity is a complex, not unambiguously marginalizing nor emancipatory element of the apparatus. Rather, I would argue in the sense intended by Foucault, that homonormativity is *dangerous* (Foucault, 1982a, p. 231).

Concerns for appropriateness or other's perceptions thereof was one element in the apparatus sustaining "power-knowledge relations" (Foucault, 1975, p. 27) which inform the dominance of homonormative inclusion in primary schools. To orient ourselves towards one view of LGBT lives, to ascribe this acronym with such singular meaning along the lines of appropriateness may provide a break in the heteronormative landscape, whilst still maintaining dangerous normative conditions of visibility that eclipse other identities. Reflecting the findings of the previous chapters, age was a significant factor not only in reserving LGBT content for older primary aged children, but also in the kind of content presented here. The concept of LGBT content being somewhat more 'adult' than the heteronormative was non-uniformly drawn upon, underpinning both an emphasis on adult (parental) representation being more appropriate than touching upon children's own identities, and the separation of certain LGBT presentations being more child-friendly.

Made manifest by this dominance of same-sex parents is the assumption that to represent such *is* LGBT inclusion, that to represent one is to represent all. Under the prevailing banner of inclusion, the assimilation of certain visions of queer lives are seen as inclusive, as can be seen within the responses of teachers here, but not often recognised as being conditional. In stating such I do not mean to necessarily suggest an intentionality. Drawing on Foucault's notion that "People know what they do; frequently they know why they do what they do; but what they don't know is what what they do does" (Foucault, 1982a, p. 187), though some responses very explicitly stated the inappropriateness of non-familial presentations, others simply assumed that same-sex parents were *the* kind of LGBT content appropriate for primary schools, seemingly without consideration as to how this may *other* certain identities. Though the result of both logics was the same, the sole presentation of homonormative content, it is important to note their separation for future research and practice in this area. Dually emphasising only familial presentations and failing to articulate the different LGBT identities allowed for a silence to surround any identity label or way of being queer that is not easily presented within the same-sex couple frame¹²². To take bisexuality as an example, "in a society based on (serial) monogamy, bisexuality cannot be performed, and thus cannot be validated" when we do not speak it into being (Callis, 2009, p. 229), leading to its well documented erasure (Maliepaard, 2015, 2018, 2020; Maliepaard & Baumgartner, 2021).

¹²² For a similar analysis concerning the dangerousness of homonormativity within children's literature, see (Taylor, 2012).

The danger of homonormativity lay too with the way in which it (re)constructed discourses informing what was available both in terms of resources and what seemed fitting for primary school LGBT inclusion. Whilst of course it was *permitted* by policy for teachers to pluralise LGBT representations beyond the familial frame to some extent¹²³, the sustained emphasis on family relationship presentations made certain visions of inclusion less visible and less resourced for teachers, who in turn detailed a lack of knowledge around the subject.

The lack of guidance around, and the discourses surrounding, trans content were particularly significant. Cisnormativity, alongside and as part of homonormativity, seems to be an impactful element of the apparatus, elucidating the complexity of the lines between the queer and the heteronormative. This data, and data in previous chapters, has showed trans content was being included in a limited amount of schools. However, when certain responses suggested the inappropriateness of trans content, they were underpinned by both the same discourses othering the LGBT content more generally and those that were trans specific. Whilst the policyscape largely left non-familial presentation in primary schools unspoken, for trans content the very limited guidance on the subject was deeply unclear, and potentially understood as delegitimising of trans youth.

It can be difficult to see past the paranoid reading when one considers the marginalising potential of inclusion that equates *LGBT* with *same-sex parents* as it ignores, or suggests the inappropriateness of, other queer lives. Nevertheless, this does not preclude the possibility of a reparative reading, of seeing such as not only *bad*, of homonormative inclusion being a useful way to enact some form of inclusion. “Paranoia keeps the scholar in a state of indecision, unable to act for fear of forgetting to know the horrors that await if vigilance is surrendered” (Love, 2010, p. 237). Homonormative presentations in school, whilst sometimes more palatable, are still themselves fraught with controversy. What is queer is temporally and spatially contingent. What is more acceptable in one space may remain deeply taboo in another. In this respect, homonormativity may still push the long-held boundaries of what is acceptable, weakening them, providing a crack in heteronormativity through which some will be able to see a previously unseen possibility for primary schools.

¹²³ This would depend both on the gravity given to the earlier discussed Suella Braverman’s reading of LGBT inclusion in primary schools, and on consultation with parents as discussed in the Parental Consultation & Governance chapter.

Homonormativity was therefore a significant, and complex, element of the apparatus, intermingling, formed by, and informing elements including the accessibility and perceived appropriateness of certain visions of LGBT inclusion.

12 Conclusion

What I'm trying to pick out with this term [apparatus] is, firstly, a thoroughly heterogeneous ensemble consisting of discourses, institutions, architectural forms, regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures... in short, the said as much as the unsaid. Such are the elements of the apparatus. The apparatus itself is the system of relations which can be established between these elements.

(Foucault, 1980, p. 194)

In the context of the highly polarised rhetoric surrounding LGBT inclusion in the past few years, I aimed in this thesis to elucidate the current state of LGBT inclusion in English primary schools. Returning to the research question central to this thesis, I asked: What is the apparatus of LGBT inclusion in English primary schools considering the 2019 Relationships and Sex Education curriculum changes? The emphasis on understanding the apparatus in light of the recent changes to the RSE curriculum was significant given that it now, for the first time, states that, in consultation with parents, “primary schools are enabled and encouraged to cover LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) content if they consider it age-appropriate to do so” (Department for Education, 2020c, p. 11; 2020d, p. 12) “when teaching about different types of families” but are not required to do so (Department for Education, 2020b, para. 25). After examining a wide scope of policy and teacher responses, this thesis posits that governmental devolution of decision-making around LGBT content to schools, in consultation with parents, has led to a situation in which its inclusion is certainly a possibility, but is not a consistently practicable reality.

Pulling together individual chapter findings to elucidate the over-arching patterns underpinning them, in the first section of this final chapter I further explore the key findings of this thesis, summarising how they contribute to knowledge. In the second section of this chapter, I move onto the future directions of research in this area, examining the way in which the methodology of this work contributed to its findings and may be of use in similar works, discussing the subject of possible future research, and building upon the practical policy and practice-based applications of this thesis.

12.1 Key Findings

Despite the increased acceptance of generalised 'LGBT inclusion' rhetoric in both policy and teacher narratives, this acceptance was not necessarily exclusive to rhetoric also detailing the inappropriateness of LGBT content in primary schools. That LGBT content is now said to be *encouraged* in primary schools must be seen as something of a shift from the previous RSE guidance in which it was absent, and which explicitly privileged heterosexual marriage, and from the openly homophobic rhetoric of Section 28.

The encouragement of the RSE curriculum is now seen alongside a level of visibility of LGBT content. Previous research had suggested that LGBT content in the curriculum was sporadic (Allan et al., 2008; DePalma, 2011; DePalma & Atkinson, 2009b; DePalma & Jennett, 2010; Sauntson & Simpson, 2011). In RSE particularly, the literature, mainly from secondary schools in the UK, has suggested LGBT content is limited (Blyth & Carson, 2007; Cumper et al., 2023; Epps et al., 2023; Stonewall, 2017; Wilder, 2019, 2022), and a limited amount of research has started to question how the non-mandatory status of LGBT content in primary schools will affect its inclusion (Beauvallet, 2021; Sauntson & Borba, 2021; Wilder, 2019). This thesis has demonstrated a continued unevenness in provision, showing around half of schools had some level of inclusion.

Alongside RSE policy encouragements toward LGBT inclusion, the queer continues to be designated as the 'other.' This designation is not necessarily despite policy but rather alongside and at times sharing its assumptions. Heteronormativity, in this context, seemed not to act solely through a mechanism of repression. Instead, it acted through a dispersed mechanism of power as “governance” (Foucault, 1982b, p. 789), which, through the apparatus of LGBT inclusion, made such “easier or more difficult” to include (Foucault, 1982b, p. 789).

For those who wished to include LGBT content, barriers such as a lack of resources or knowledge to do so, coupled with considerations of parental or school backlash, were impactful. For those who did not, allowances in policy for LGBT content to be exempted to age, religious, or political partiality considerations could serve to legitimise their concerns. The universal *encouragement* of LGBT inclusion seems to belie that the mechanism of governance did not always make LGBT content *easier*. Despite occasional instances of teachers successfully achieving comprehensive inclusion, attempting such was often more *difficult*.

12.1.1 *The Queer as Other*

One of the key findings of this thesis was the way in which, drawing on Foucault's notion of discourses forming "the objects of which they speak" (Foucault, 1972, p. 54), the queer was frequently positioned, even in policies and teachers' narratives emphasising 'inclusion', to be an optional *other*. To return to David Halperin's writings on the binary between the heteronormative and the queer: "the first of which is unmarked and unproblematized—it designates 'the categories to which everyone is assumed to belong' (unless someone is specifically marked as different)—whereas the second term is marked and problematized: it designates a category of persons whom something differentiates from normal, unmarked people" (Halperin, 1995, p. 44). Both teachers making decisions about whether LGBT content should be in schools, and the very process of it being subject to the realm of debate, therefore imbue the queer with meaning. Discourses were found here to form "the objects of which they speak" (Foucault, 1972, p. 54) in the apparatus of LGBT inclusion through a mechanism in which the queer was disproportionately linked to certain issues but heteronormative presentations were not, remaining unarticulated in policy but implicitly present.

The encouragement of LGBT content certainly gave it a level of legitimacy that was both capitalised upon by certain teachers already wishing to include it in their efforts, and seemingly formative to others' desire to do so. Nonetheless, by exempting LGBT content from being an equal part of the RSE curriculum, from its implicitly otherwise heteronormative base, (re)produced a knowledge of the queer. The RSE guidance positions the ability of schools to decide the age appropriateness of LGBT content, in consultation with parents, as a means of managing differences of opinions on this highly controversial, polarising issue. Much as previous literature has suggested in part that the inclusion of LGBT content in schools is often hindered by discourses of religious or parental rights (Nash & Browne, 2021; Sauntson, 2021; Vincent, 2022) and discourses of age inappropriateness due to a perceived hypersexual nature of the queer (DePalma & Atkinson, 2010; Llewellyn & Reynolds, 2021), this research likewise found deep divisions of opinion on this subject, and numerous references to parental and religious backlash, often along the lines of age inappropriateness. As such discourses have been well-established as prohibitive in the literature, it is not only their continuation which is of most note here, but rather the way in which the policy response to these discourses has somewhat been to legitimise them, to continue to separate out the queer as *other*. Devolving decision-making on this polarised topic to primary schools allows for LGBT content to be exempted along these lines.

The majority of teachers asserted the suitability of incorporating LGBT content, albeit with certain considerations regarding the age at which it should be introduced. However, consistent with similar research viewing the presentation of LGBT content as a promotion of it, a minority of responses suggested its inappropriateness (Malins, 2016; Neary, 2017; Renold & McGeeney, 2017; Sauntson, 2021; Vincent, 2022). Policy seldom explicitly stated LGBT content to be politically partial, age-inappropriate or against religious teachings. However, despite primary schools being given encouragement to incorporate LGBT content, the explicit provisions stipulating that schools may deem it age-inappropriate, politically partial, or as promoting sin, allowed certain teachers in these findings to legitimately contradict this implied appropriateness.

The (re)creation of the queer as otherly, as disproportionately put into various discourses of appropriateness, was central in the phenomenon of responses styling themselves as in favour of inclusion and not in favour of including LGBT content. Echoing Nash and Bowne's exploration of 'heteroactivism' (See the Literature Review chapter), objections to LGBT content in schools were not articulated as explicitly anti-queer (Browne & Nash, 2020). Likewise expanding on prior work examining the 2019 protests against LGBT content in Birmingham primary schools, which indicated that protestors articulated their objections not necessarily in terms of homophobia but of their religious and parental rights, in this thesis we see that the policyscape conditions permitted the framing of the unsuitability of LGBT content along such lines (Sauntson, 2021; Vincent, 2022).

Direct discrimination was universally decried. No teacher or policy stated that direct discrimination against an individual was acceptable, none advocated for harassing treatment, and an emphasis on universal inclusion was a common thread throughout many responses. The previous two decades have seen research increasingly engage with the issue of LGBT inclusion in schools. Research in this area has often pointed to a conceptualisation of 'inclusion' contained to tackling LGBT-directed bullying (Formby, 2015; Gray, 2010; Kurian, 2020; Mitchell et al., 2016; Warwick & Aggleton, 2014). This thesis corroborates this research whilst suggesting universal accounts of 'inclusion' which take evidence of direct discrimination as their sole opposition are short-sighted (See chapter: Appropriateness in Teaching). By problematising what 'inclusion' itself means, this thesis has been able to better contribute to the literature by grappling with how 'inclusion' is not a singular vision in policy that is, or is not, fulfilled by teachers. Rather, it is a concept which could include or exclude LGBT content, could suggest its inappropriateness, within certain limits concerning what is directly

discriminating. The apparatus forming the queer as *other* were thus obfuscated by the veneer of “homotolerance” which suggests no ill-will towards the other at the same time as maintaining it as such, articulating itself instead through discourses of *appropriateness*, *neutrality*, and crucially through *inclusion* (Røthing & Svendsen, 2010, p. 147).

Discourses of impartiality, and the duty of schools in this area, were found to be a key element in the apparatus forming what constituted ‘inclusive’ practice in schools (See chapter: *Appropriateness in Teaching*). Previous research has only briefly referenced the role of ‘impartiality’ discourses in schools (Clark & Blackburn, 2009; DePalma & Atkinson, 2010; Malins, 2016; Thein, 2013). Their importance in this data perhaps points to their increasing salience in the polarised rhetoric surrounding this topic as evidenced in the recently imparted *Political Impartiality in Schools* guidance (Department for Education, 2022c). The literature in this area points to the way in which appeals to ‘neutrality’ and ‘impartiality’ have been used by anti-LGBT parental groups to chill inclusion efforts (Browne & Nash, 2017, 2020; Nash & Browne, 2020). This thesis has outlined their use not only in resistance discourses but also within school policy and teachers’ responses.

LGBT content may be optional, but encouraged, for primary schools, but heterosexual cisgender content is never referenced. It may be necessary to consult parents on this non-mandatory LGBT content, to consider how it reflects community views or violates guidance on impartiality, but its heteronormative counterpart remains in silence. Indeed, relating to the responses from teachers, whilst LGBT presentations were sometimes seen as pushing a political agenda, as indoctrination, as sexualising, examples of straight presenting couples never were. The sole problematisation of the queer across various issues and data sources seem “burdened by the invisible normativity of heterosexual culture” (Berlant & Warner, 1995, p. 349). We may reflect after this thesis has discussed at such length the idea that primary schools are “strongly encouraged and enabled to cover LGBT content when teaching about different types of families” (Department for Education, 2020b, para. 25) “if they consider it age-appropriate to do so” (Department for Education, 2020c, p. 11; 2020d, p. 12), whether the same directive around ‘heterosexual cisgender content’ could even make sense, or if the strangeness of such would secure its unintelligibility. The heteronormative is not ‘content’ in the same manner, it is the neutral and the default. It is the “matter-of-courseness of (cisgender) heterosexuality (that) lies at the core of its cultural dominance” (Rosenberg, 2008, p. 10). Its presentations are not immediately defined by its presence. A heteronormative children’s story

is not named as such, it is simply a story, heteronormative RSE is not labelled, it is simply RSE, and by consequence, these representations are not problematised in the same manner.

12.1.2 Subjecting the Queer

The policy solution enshrining the queer as optional *content* in the RSE curriculum in response to polarised curriculum consultation was found to be highly significant, underlying a framing of LGBT inclusion which did not prioritise rebalancing heteronormativity in schools more broadly, or representing queer children equally in RSE, but rather allowing different opinions on its inclusion to be represented. Allowing for parental consultation on the inclusion of LGBT content in the RSE curriculum, and this being the sole area of the curriculum to reference such, encouraged a perception of parental authority over *any* LGBT content in the school. The influence of parents was, in certain schools, capable of extending well beyond the confines of this specific curriculum area to encompass the broader school environment.

By examining how teachers draw on these elements alongside policy, the data in this thesis contributes an examination of not only how teachers perceive their own, their schools' or parents' authority in making decisions around LGBT content in the face of these concerns, but how policy requirements interact with these elements. Previous research has pointed to the potential support to be gained for the inclusion of controversial RSE through the use of parental consultation or detailed the prohibitive potential of parental backlash (Allred et al., 2016; Wire, 2022). This thesis took a rather different approach to examining the notions of consultation and appropriateness by considering how policy's mobilisation of these concepts (re)creates power relations surrounding the queer in light of the new RSE parental consultation requirements (See chapters: Parental Consultation & Governance, Appropriateness in Teaching, and Homonormativity). Though the RSE curriculum did not explicitly state that any form of LGBT content required parental consultation, subjecting LGBT content in the RSE curriculum to it cohered with, and recreated, a discourse of parental authority on the subject.

Whilst resistances to the discourses of parental authority were seen in this thesis, the policy orientation towards parents, the impact of protests and the potential for unrest can cast a significant shadow. Power in this context may not manifest through explicit content bans or directives to align exactly with parents' perspectives. Instead, it operates in the way the potential for backlash shapes the practicable range of actions for teachers. Whilst policy stipulates that schools have the ultimate authority over the curriculum, parental consultation

functioned as a component of the apparatus, serving as a "governance" mechanism that directs schools' decisions toward parents (Foucault, 1982b, p. 789). Parental reaction was repeatedly referred to by teachers as a significant consideration. By constructing the teacher as subject in some respects to parental authority and by not giving an external authority explicitly mandating LGBT inclusion, certain forms of inclusion appear less attainable, steering some teachers towards the less contentious (Foucault, 1982b, p. 789).

In certain schools this extended to censoring the wider school environment and reporting pupil's talk of LGBT issues to their parents, and in others to queer teachers. An often under-researched and under-considered group who "exist at the margins of both schools and research" (Llewellyn & Reynolds, 2021, p. 13), this research has highlighted how queer teachers' experiences could be directly impacted not only by personal experience (Lee, 2019, 2020a), and consideration of others' reactions (Fahie, 2017; Francis & Reygan, 2016; Neary et al., 2018; Saxey, 2021; Taşkın et al., 2022). Expanding on this research, this thesis has contributed an insight into the way in which the current RSE guidance constrained the ease with which queer teachers could speak about their own lives in school through its positioning of LGBT content within the realm of parental consultation.

LGBT content being presented as material about which pupils may learn (subject to parental consultation), but not as a necessity to reflect all primary school pupils, was likewise deeply significant for its coherence with prevalent ideas of childhood innocence and heterosexuality. The data presented in this chapter aligns with prior research, demonstrating how the queer can be constructed as a form of advanced sex education (Neary et al., 2016; Nixon & Givens, 2007), often disproportionately associated with sexuality (Bragg et al., 2018; Carlile, 2020b; DePalma & Atkinson, 2010; Gray, 2010; Johnson, 2020; Llewellyn & Reynolds, 2021; Meyer et al., 2019; Nash & Browne, 2020). Consequently, it may be deemed inappropriate for the concurrently desexualised and heterosexual 'child'. Consistent with previous research, the notion of the innocent child was not universally accepted, being present in a minority of responses (Llewellyn, 2022a).

Once again in mind of discourses forming "the objects of which they speak" (Foucault, 1972, p. 54), the optional presentation of LGBT content to primary school, but not secondary school, pupils allowed its exemption along age-dependant lines, thus suggesting something of a separation between the 'child' and the 'queer' subject. This stance appears to prioritise the equal ability of schools and parents to make decisions around the appropriateness of LGBT content but lacks a universal acknowledgement of how each 'child' subject will be affected. For

some, this curriculum means their identity is represented and held up as preferable, while for others, their identity might be left in silence or implied to be inappropriate.

Once again, a key finding of this research is not only the persistence of such discourses of innocence and hypersexuality but rather the way the dissimilarity between the necessity of LGBT content for primary and secondary schools both allowed for the enactment of, and somewhat cohered with, those teacher narratives stating its age-inappropriateness. The discursive underpinnings of the difference between the secondary and primary school guidance in relation to LGBT content, the separation between the ‘child’ and the ‘queer’, was likewise seen within the emphasis on families in both policy and teacher responses. Previous research has noted a trend towards familial presentations in primary schools, suggesting such are seen to offer a vision of inclusion better aligned with ideas of childhood ‘innocence’ through containing LGBT content to de-sexualised, adult, familial pairings (Carlile, 2020b; DePalma, 2016). Other research has noted this trend within the policyscape, suggesting that the *Same Love, Different Families* resource pack linked to in the RSE guidance (Hall, 2021) and then Minister for Women and Equalities Penny Mordaunt’s speech launching the UK Government’s LGBT Action Plan (Lawrence & Taylor, 2020) show a homonormative vision of LGBT lives. This thesis extends such work by finding such a trend within a much larger scope of policy and teacher responses and by suggesting the pattern in which the separation between the ‘child’ and the ‘queer’ could be formative to limiting the amount of, or type of, LGBT content in schools.

Aligning with Foucault’s contention that discourses “hide (their) own mechanisms” (Foucault, 1978, p. 86), the power in relation to policy here seems to run in large part through an unacknowledged discursive dominance of homonormative, adult presentations, rather than through explicit guidance not to include other kinds. Concerns for backlash, the more generalised lack of LGBT inclusive resources, and the dominance of same-sex families within these, and the time constraints in teachers’ workloads seemed to direct the “conduct of individuals” (Foucault, 1982b, p. 789) towards such presentations. By focusing on a specific interpretation of LGBT lives and attributing a singular meaning to this acronym in the context of appropriateness, we may disrupt the heteronormative landscape but maintain the normative conditions of visibility that overshadow other identities.

12.2 Future Directions

In this section I firstly outline the way in which the methodological design of this thesis was useful and the methods or concepts that future research may wish to take up. Secondly, I explore potential directions for future research based on these findings in light of very recent policy developments. At the close of this section, I give certain recommendations for practice and policy.

12.2.1 *Methodological & Theoretical Directions*

One of the key methodological and theoretical contributions of this thesis is the use of its Foucauldian methodological approach as a means to account for the complexity of the *apparatus* of LGBT inclusion. As aforementioned, there has been a tendency within certain, particularly governmental, research in this area to predefine ‘inclusion’ as the absence of direct discrimination or bullying. By situating this thesis within a more post-structuralist tradition of research, I sought to comprehend the shape of the apparatus, whilst limiting the extent to which I pre-determined its boundaries or elements. This approach contributed significantly to this research, allowing me to mobilise notions of ‘LGBT inclusion’ and ‘LGBT content’ without denying the constructed, unstable nature of their meaning. As such, I was able to acknowledge that their meaning is not fixed but rather constantly and diversely (re)created. In doing so, this approach provided the basis for understanding ‘LGBT inclusion’ in a more nuanced, more contextualised manner.

The innovative, multi-methods research design I employed here likewise contributes in multiple ways. Through using interview and questionnaire methods with teachers alongside an in-depth policy analysis, this research has demonstrated the contradiction, complexity, and instability that characterises the interaction of policy and practice. Researching with teachers alone may have allowed focus on the uniqueness and similarities between these individual responses. However, combining this with policy analysis has allowed me to showcase the variability of both the extent to which and how policy could be formative to practice. Using policy analysis alone would have been to neglect such variation, to miss the intricacies of power relations within how inclusion discourses are formed and where power is apportioned in the apparatus. The way certain policy was drawn upon as an authority and the way teachers drew upon their own authority in using it were significant contributions that this multi-methods approach afforded. The use of policy analysis alongside teacher responses was significant in highlighting potential areas of ambiguity, or even contradiction, in LGBT inclusion-related

policy. To give only one example, a central finding of this thesis has been how policy that styles itself as ‘inclusive’ can be interpreted in ways which explicitly exclude LGBT content, whether that be due to concerns of parental reaction (See chapter: Parental Consultation & Governance), age-appropriateness (See chapter: Age-appropriateness) or impartiality and others’ rights (See chapter: Appropriateness in Teaching).

A similar benefit was gained from examining policy in the frame of the ‘policyscape’, as a wide-ranging, interconnected body of policy, rather than containing my analysis to the RSE curriculum. Analysing multiple documents aided in both the interpretation of the RSE curriculum itself and in understanding the wider scope of how LGBT inclusion is framed. Widening this scope to include both currently in place and repealed or replaced policy served to emphasise that discourse within policy is not formed in a vacuum, it is additive, changing, and historically contingent. This illuminated how ‘inclusion’, or the absence of ‘discrimination’, has been formed as a matter of avoiding direct discrimination, but not necessarily of curricular representation (See chapter: Appropriateness in Teaching). Perhaps most centrally, this approach allowed me to understand the changing shape of heteronormativity and how certain discourses become more covert through time. Using James Scheurich’s Foucauldian Policy Archaeology Methodology (Scheurich, 1994), which advocates seeing how policies individually, and successively, problematise certain ‘issues’ and discursively construct concurrent ‘responses’ to these issues fit with the queering imperative of this research, degrounding taken for granted notions of what inclusion is in policy and who this is for. Stephen Ball’s concept of policy as discourse (Ball, 1993) likewise aided in this imperative, encouraging discursive threads to be traced through policy texts, and through the power relations imbuing their possible enactments.

The format of the questionnaires and interviews themselves made significant contributions to the kind of data that I was able to collect. By combining closed and open-ended questions in both interview and questionnaire formats, this thesis was able to map out patterns in LGBT inclusion across a larger selection of participants than may have been manageable with interview methods alone whilst still retaining a focus upon the complexity within these patterns. Previous research in this area has tended to be on a much smaller scale (Cumper et al., 2023; Wilder, 2019) or has contained reporting to the efforts of certain highly motivated teachers aiming to better the LGBT inclusion in their schools (Allan et al., 2008; DePalma, 2011; DePalma & Atkinson, 2009; DePalma & Jennett, 2010). This thesis’ research sample was self-selecting, and it does not make a claim to be representative, but it was able to show a

diverse range of views through this wide scope of participants and patterns of discourse running through the data. This thesis was limited somewhat in its ability to go into depth in certain issues with individual participants, given the limited interaction we had. This may be a direction of further research, building upon the basis of these findings. As this thesis aimed to engage with the shape of LGBT inclusion in primary schools considering the relative paucity of research in this area, and since the changes to the RSE curriculum, the use of these wider-scope data collection methods was essential.

The incorporation of children's literature into the questionnaires in particular led to deeply insightful findings. Troubling homogenous views of LGBT content and attempting to understand how this umbrella term may not shelter all equally was an integral part of this thesis. During my research, I avoided asking about particular types of LGBT content to prevent drawing attention to any potential disparities and avoid leading questions. Showing queer representations in stories offered a multitude of talking points that I could not possibly have achieved with questioning alone, grounding ideas of inclusion in concrete examples of potential practice. This allowed me to see how abstract visions of inclusion obtained through more general questioning contrasted with real examples. The discourses that coalesced around each plot point, every character quirk, and every little bit of speech allowed me to further my analysis. My insights into the discrepancies between the perceived appropriateness of LGBT and heteronormative content were to a large extent formed through contrasts between teachers' responses concerning *The Paper Bag Princess* and the other stories. Similarly, the presentation of *When Aidan Became a Brother*, the only explicit presentation of a trans character in the stories, sometimes prompted very different views or appraisals of its appropriateness for primary schooling that may have been otherwise inaccessible. Due to concerns about overburdening the questionnaire, the presentations in the children's literature section were quite limited, and it was not my aim here to draw definite comparisons between views on the texts. Future research may wish to make use of this method, broadening the scope to better understand the boundaries of 'inclusion' regarding certain presentations. The questionnaire presentation of the children's literature allowed for very limited follow up to clarify responses, and further research may wish to build upon this technique in a more interactive format.

One of the final key theoretical contributions of this thesis was to emphasise the utility of using Queer theorist Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's concept of *paranoid reading* alongside Foucault's concept of *dangerous* discourses. To return to what has been discussed previously, Sedgwick's concept of *paranoid reading* warns of the theoretical impasse one can encounter

when the Queer, critical theoretical imperative to delve into the covert mechanisms of marginalisation leads to a kind of paranoia. In this paranoia, one attempts to avoid the surprise of hidden oppression by indefinitely assuming any proposal of an alternate future or way of acting would necessarily be complicit in it, without leaving “room to realize that the future may be different from the present” (Sedgwick, 1997, p. 24). Foucault described his concept of *dangerous* discourses, meanwhile, as such:

My point is not that everything is bad, but that everything is dangerous, which is not exactly the same as bad. If everything is dangerous, then we always have something to do. So my position leads not to apathy but to a hyper- and pessimistic activism. I think that the ethico-political choice we have to make every day is to determine which is the main danger

(Foucault, 1982a, pp. 231-232)

As described in Findings Part 3: Different Types of Families, the use of these concepts can be applied to discussions of homonormativity, but also to a wider kind of inclusion. Their use speaks against apathy or paranoid paralysis in the face of heteronormativity’s shapeshifting, attempting to see the *main danger* of it alongside the progress it potentially denotes.

12.2.2 Research Directions

Regarding future research, the persistent controversy over RSE led the Department for Education to announce a review of the curriculum to be completed by the end of 2023 (Department for Education, 2023c, 2023d). As of the publication of this thesis in early 2024, this review has not been released and as such its contents remain unknowable. What is clearer, perhaps, is that the rhetoric surrounding LGBT inclusion is becoming progressively more salient, polarised, and hostile¹²⁴. Future research in this area is also particularly necessary in

¹²⁴ To give only one example to highlight the sensationalised nature of the rhetoric around trans inclusion, a story concerning a phenomenon termed “Catgirl” attracted attention, with claims that children were identifying as animals or “furries” garnering serious, broad media coverage (Adams, 2023). Outlets such as the Telegraph and the Mail reported that a pupil had identified as a cat, and that a teacher had reprimanded students for not referring to them as such (Clarence-Smith, 2023; Pyman, 2021). Despite being false (no pupil identified as a cat, the story stemmed from pupils discussing a hypothetical in a TikTok video), the story occasioned comment from Downing Street and then Labour opposition Leader Sir Keir Starmer. The situation also sparked calls for a snap Ofsted inspection by then Minister for Women and Equalities Kemi Badenoch (Sky News, 2023).

light of the recent trans guidance published by the Department for Education (Department for Education, 2023a). The guidance emphasises that there is no general duty for schools and colleges to support a child's social transitioning (such as changing their name or pronouns), that no one (child or teacher) should be compelled to use preferred pronouns or punished for not doing so, and that single sex spaces must be segregated by assigned sex (Department for Education, 2023b). As the guidance press release states:

In exceptional cases where a request to social transition is agreed, children, teachers or staff at a school should not be required to adopt the use of preferred pronouns and there must be no sanction, verbal or otherwise. Where a teacher or child does not adopt the new pronouns, they should use the child's preferred name. Schools should ensure that bullying is never tolerated.

(Department for Education, 2023b, para. 24)

Cohering with the generalised orientation towards parents, but not necessarily queer children, within this discursive landscape, the title of this press release is rather significant; *Parent first approach at the core of new guidance on gender questioning children*. The guidance paints social transitioning as a significant, potentially harmful act for a child and the wider school, suggesting not only consultation with parents but a consideration for the school's wider context. Once again strongly echoing the findings of this thesis, such is not suggested as a potential detriment of trans children, but a protection for them and their peers. Though this thesis has attempted to give a thorough account of the apparatus of LGBT inclusion in primary schools, in this rapidly changing environment future research will be needed to understand both its shifting shape, and to provide more in-depth recommendations for addressing potential areas of marginalisation.

Future research may seek to investigate how impartiality discourses, or discourses more generally around balancing rights not to teach LGBT content, can interact with teachers' use of trans and non-binary pupils' preferred pronouns (See Appropriateness in Teaching chapter Partiality & Balance section). As this was not a particular line of questioning pursued in this research, but rather an issue that spontaneously arose in an interview dialogue, there is only limited insight into this area provided here. Once again, this is particularly important in light of the recent trans guidance, and research may benefit from direct insight into schools here. Another issue that arose not out of direct questioning concerns the difficulties in referencing bisexuality in primary schools, given the predominant emphasis on same-sex families and the need to show either multiple partners, or provide an explanation, in order to represent it. This

research would be particularly insightful given the very limited amount of research singling out the issues in representing, including, or teaching about bisexuality (Carlile, 2020b; Cullen & Sandy, 2009).

12.2.3 Policy & Practice Directions

Though throughout this thesis one can implicitly see the implications for practices to improve LGBT inclusion, in this section I detail these recommendations with more focus. Giving both policy and practice-based recommendations, and policy particularly, gets to the core of why this thesis *matters* and how it can be useful. Centrally, the contribution of this thesis is to demonstrate that the idea that LGBT content is ‘encouraged and enabled’ both ignores the constraints that discourses of, for example, appropriateness, parental rights, or impartiality, has on including LGBT content, and that designating the queer as an optional ‘other’ in itself (re)creates the subjectification of LGBT content to these discourses. After scrutinising how positive descriptions of an ‘inclusive’ school could coexist with opposition to the inclusion of LGBT content, this thesis crucially suggests that the contradictions and complexities, in policy and teacher definitions of ‘inclusion’ could still allow for discourses informing the (un)suitability of LGBT content.

Policy aiming to improve LGBT inclusion must consider the wide range of interpretations of this term and the potential constraints in its enactment. Despite the shift towards a more inclusive stance, the apparatus of the policyscape can make the inclusion of LGBT content challenging for willing teachers, underscoring the enduring influence of heteronormativity in educational policies and practices. It is worth considering that a lack of resources (See chapter: Heteronormativity & Non-mandatory LGBT RSE) the (perceived) need for parental approval (See chapter: Parental Consultation & Governance), knowledge around appropriateness (See chapters: Age-appropriateness and Appropriateness in Teaching), and the many other considerations that were impactful to practice. Relating to the matter of considering parental reaction, policy must also consider how framing the inclusion of LGBT content as a matter for parental consultation can impact queer teachers at work (See chapter: Parental Consultation & Governance).

Overarchingly, LGBT content cannot be separated out as an optional ‘other’ to the heteronormative base of the curriculum. As we know that LGBT people make up around 4% of the population (House of Commons Library, 2023), with those identifying as such increasing each year, particularly amongst younger people (Office for National Statistics, 2020), it is clear

that there are queer students in every school. LGBT identities are not intergenerational. Pupils' homes may not see LGBT lives in the home represented positively. Whether queer lives are shown to be equal in the curriculum cannot be a matter for parents to decide, cannot be subject to others' ideas of their appropriateness.

In stating this, I do not mean to diminish or scorn the incredible progress we have seen in LGBT inclusion policy in the past few decades. In comparison to the highly damaging, highly restrictive Section 28, this thesis has shown that many schools now do have some level of LGBT content, and even more teachers wanted to include it. The point I aim to make here is that whilst in comparison we may have moved far, no single child's lived experience can be characterised by the progress of this comparison. Though policy overall has changed, primary schools today are legitimately allowed to show the same level of LGBT content as during Section 28, as the complete absence that characterised my own school experience. To suggest that policy is LGBT inclusive whilst it allows for schools to absent it from the curriculum or teach its inappropriateness suggests a blindness to the effect such will have on the individual queer students in those schools (Abreu et al., 2022; Day et al., 2020; Day et al., 2019; Fields & Wotipka, 2022; Sadowski, 2017, 2020).

In terms of practice-based recommendations, the findings of this thesis concerning the ways in which teachers may make themselves subject to certain discourses or unintentionally (re)create them have implications for practice. The insights into subjectification here, referring in the Foucauldian sense to the "form of power which subjugates and makes subject to", how policy may call certain subject positions into being, and how teachers make themselves "subject to" certain power relations (Foucault, 1982b, p. 781), are significant for the possibilities of resistance. Contributing to Atkinson and DePalma's theorising around "consensual heteronormativity" (Atkinson & DePalma, 2009, p. 17), heteronormativity cannot be conceived as a defined set of rules, as a homogenous structure "out there" (Atkinson & DePalma, 2009, p. 27) and above us, acting uniformly or necessarily through conscious will. The changing, shifting, covert nature of heteronormativity does not preclude resistance but rather better informs the way in which improving LGBT inclusion should be considered.

Heteronormativity was not necessarily intentionally drawn upon, it ran through 'inclusive' policy and responses, propagating through assumptions and omissions, giving a possibility for resistance through disinvestment in this process. In this thesis, we have seen teachers both make themselves subject to discourses of appropriateness and utilise such discourses as a point of resistance (See chapters: Heteronormativity & Non-mandatory LGBT RSE and Parental

Consultation & Governance). As Foucault writes in *Madness and Civilisation* “People know what they do; frequently they know why they do what they do; but what they don't know is what what they do does” (Foucault, 1982a, p. 187). Such was seen not only in relation to whether LGBT content should, or could, be included, but to its type. While certain responses explicitly expressed the inappropriateness of non-familial presentations, others merely presumed that same-sex parents represented the type of LGBT content suitable for primary schools. This assumption appeared to lack consideration for how it might marginalise certain identities. Although both logics led to the same outcome, the exclusive presentation of homonormative content, it is crucial to distinguish between these perspectives when considering future practice.

12.3 Closing Words

At the close of this thesis, I am reminded of Michael Warner's words in *Fear of a Queer Planet*: “Even when coupled with a toleration of minority sexualities, heteronormativity can be overcome only by actively imagining a necessarily and desirably queer world” (Warner, 1993, p. xvi). Ultimately, the elements of the apparatus of LGBT inclusion are diverse and shifting, with barriers to such inclusion being impactful whether they are personally felt, feared, or unknowingly constrain what options seem available. The exclusion of the queer is no longer so obviously codified in law, but it persists under a prevailing policy of ‘inclusion’ which allows for LGBT content to be separated out as a non-necessary, optional *other*.

13 Appendices

13.1 Recruitment Email

Dear [school]

I hope this email finds you well.

I am a PhD student from Durham University conducting a government funded study into teachers' opinions on the curriculum, specifically, the inclusion of LGBT issues in the curriculum. Today I'm writing to inquire whether any teachers at [school] would be interested in participating in a short, **anonymous** interview and/or completing a survey as part of this research project.

As schooling objectives and inclusions are often implemented into schools by the government without teacher consultation, this study is seeking **any and all opinions** so that the government may better understand teachers' perspectives regarding LGBT issues and schooling.

To participate in this research teachers could either fill in questions online or could partake in a short interview on an online meeting platform.

Anyone interested in sharing their thoughts **anonymously** can do so online at <https://forms.gle/ov3GxvLJxWwYxpjF9> by entering the password *Primary123* or can contact me at Arabethan.Lecuyer@durham.ac.uk to set up an informal interview chat online.

Please feel free to email me at Arabethan.lecuyer@durham.ac.uk with any questions or comments about this research. I am more than happy to discuss any queries you may have.

With best wishes,

Arabeth Lecuyer

13.2 Interview Consent Form

Consent Form

Project title: Perceptions of LGBT Curriculum Policies and Children’s Literature in English and Canadian Schools¹²⁵

Researcher(s): Arabethan C. Lecuyer BSc MA

Department: School of Education, Durham University

Contact details: Arabethan.lecuyer@durham.ac.uk

Supervisor name: Dr. Claudia Ruitenber

Supervisor contact details: Claudia.ruitenber@ubc.ca

Supervisor name: Dr. Oakleigh Welply

Supervisor contact details: Oakleigh.welply@durham.ac.uk

This form is to confirm that you understand what the purposes of the project, what is involved and that you are happy to take part. Please initial each box to indicate your agreement:

I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet dated [dd/mm/yy] and the privacy notice for the above project.	
I have had sufficient time to consider the information and ask any questions I might have, and I am satisfied with the answers I have been given.	
I understand who will have access to personal data provided, how the data will be stored and what will happen to the data at the end of the project.	
I understand that the data collected in this project will be anonymised and will be used for purposes including but not limited to this thesis, academic journals, conferences and other outlets.	
I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason.	

¹²⁵ This project at one time planned to conduct research in with Canadian teachers. Due to the constraints of the pandemic, and the amount of data collected in England, this was unfeasible. As such, Canadian schools are referenced in the Consent Form but not the body of this thesis.

I understand that anonymised (i.e. not identifiable) versions of my data may be archived and shared with others for legitimate research purposes.	
I understand that if I disclose any special category data, for example relating to my sexuality, race, ethnicity, disability etc, this data will be anonymised along with any other data I give and likewise stored securely in processing.	
I understand that my words may be quoted in publications, reports, and other research outputs.	
I consent to being audio recorded / being video recorded, and understand how recordings will be used in research outputs.	
I agree that my real name <u>WILL NOT</u> be used in this research project, subsequent reports and other research outputs. I would like my data to be anonymised in publication.	
<u>I would like to request that my real name is used when quoted in this work and subsequent publications, reports and other research outputs.</u> I acknowledge that if I tick this box, I will have later opportunity to have my data anonymised before 01.01.2022.	
I agree to take part in the above project.	

<p>Participant's Signature _____ Date _____</p> <p>(NAME IN BLOCK LETTERS) _____</p>
--

13.3 Participant Information Sheet

Participant Information Sheet

Project title: Perceptions of LGBT Curriculum Policies and Children’s Literature in English and Canadian Schools

Researcher(s): Arabethan C. Lecuyer BSc MA

Department: School of Education, Durham University

Contact details: Telephone 07891587925, Email Arabethan.Lecuyer@durham.ac.uk

Supervisor name: Dr Oakleigh Welply

Supervisor contact details: Oakleigh.Welply@Durham.ac.uk

Supervisor name: Dr Claudia Ruitenberg

Supervisor contact details: Claudia.Ruitenberg@ubc.ca

You are invited to take part in a study that I am conducting as part of my PhD.

This study has received ethical approval from of Durham University and the University of British Columbia.

Before you decide whether to agree to take part it is important for you to understand the purpose of the research and what is involved as a participant. Please read the following information carefully. Please get in contact if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information.

The rights and responsibilities of anyone taking part in Durham University research are set out in our ‘Participants Charter’:

<https://www.dur.ac.uk/research.innovation/governance/ethics/considerations/people/charter/>

What is the purpose of the study?

The aim of this study is to...

- Understand how school teachers in England and British Columbia perceive the role of curricula mandating LGBT inclusion.
- Understand how governmental policies of LGBT inclusion are realised in schools in England and British Columbia.

Funding

This project is funded by both the United Kingdom Research and Innovation (UKRI) organisation and the Mitacs organisation in Canada. Both organisations are non-profit research institutions associated with the governments of the UK and Canada, respectively.

Timescale

This project is part of my PhD thesis and is planned to be completed by 2023.

Why have I been invited to take part?

Whilst the government may mandate certain subjects or topics to be included in the curriculum, it is teachers who have valuable insight into how policy is perceived and implemented in schools. I wish to learn from your experiences and opinions to show how government mandates do not necessarily mirror teachers' varied experiences.

Do I have to take part?

Your participation is completely voluntary, and you do not have to agree to take part. If you do agree to take part, you can withdraw at any time during the interviews, without giving a reason. If you wish to skip or come back to a question or section, you may do so at any stage.

If you wish to withdraw your data after the interview, you may do so until the 1st of January, 2022.

What will happen to me if I take part?

If you agree to take part in the study, you will take part in two interviews, the former taking place a few weeks from the latter. Each interview is planned to last around one hour, though if you wish it to be shorter or longer, this is up to you. We will work together to find a time and a date that is most convenient. Given the current COVID-19 social distancing restrictions, the interview will take place online through a platform such as Zoom, Teams, Skype or Facetime.

As part of the interview, you will be asked a number of questions regarding your opinions surrounding 'inclusion' education. You are not obliged to answer any question. You may stop the interview at any time. I must stress that this research wishes to learn from teachers about their experiences and opinions, there is no wrong answer.

Interviews will be recorded visually so that the data can be transcribed and collated. Storage of all data will be secure. When the data is transcribed it will be done so under the pseudonym you decide upon at the start of the interview process.

Are there any potential risks or benefits involved?

This study is not expected to have any risks above those of everyday life. The benefits extend to participating in a study which will contribute to the literature informing the current UK and Canadian educational climates.

Will my data be kept confidential?

All information obtained during the study will be kept confidential. If the data is published it will be entirely anonymous and will not be identifiable as yours. If you agree to participate in this study the first thing you will be asked to do is to choose a pseudonym that can be used in the published findings to render your responses anonymous.

For example, any data from the interviews that is used in my final report would use your pseudonym when reporting the data. The final report will contain no personal details of any of the participants involved.

Example:

Jo, a Headteacher from Heathwell Primary School in Spalding, Lincolnshire agrees to take part in this study. They are quoted in the final report saying they often lack time to prepare their lessons.

“I often feel that I lack time to prepare my lessons – there is always so much to do at the end of the year!” (Alex, Senior Management, Primary, England).

Instead of reporting these personal details, the report could show the information below using their direct quote, their chosen pseudonym ‘Alex’ and a vague description of their job status. Their real name, specific position in their school, school name and location would not appear in the study unless they specifically requested that this data be included.

What will happen to the results of the project?

No personal data will be shared, however anonymised (i.e. not identifiable) data may be used in publications, reports, presentations, web pages and other research outputs. At the end of the project, anonymised data may be archived and shared with others for legitimate research purposes.

All research data and records needed to validate the research findings will be stored for 10 years after the end of the project. 10 years is the standard under the University's data management policy.

Durham University is committed to sharing the results of its world-class research for public benefit. As part of this commitment the University has established an online repository for all Durham University Higher Degree theses which provides access to the full text of freely available theses. The study in which you are invited to participate will be written up as a thesis. On successful submission of the thesis, it will be deposited both in print and online in the University archives, to facilitate its use in future research. The thesis will be published open access.

Who do I contact if I have any questions or concerns about this study?

If you have any further questions or concerns about this study, please speak to the researcher or their supervisor. If you remain unhappy or wish to make a formal complaint, please submit a complaint via the University's [Complaints Process](#).

Thank you for reading this information and considering taking part in this study.

If you have any further questions, I would be happy to answer.

13.4 Questionnaire

13.4.1 Cover Page & Password

Primary Schools Opinion Survey

Research suggests that governmental policy mandates often do not consider the lived experiences and opinions of teachers. This is a government funded research project conducted with Durham University to find real teachers' opinions on inclusion of LGBT content within primary schools. Data will be recorded anonymously. Please contact arabethan@durham.ac.uk if you have any further questions.

Any and all opinions are welcomed! Please give as much detail as you want. The more detail, the better your opinion will be represented.

arabethan@gmail.com [Switch account](#)

Not shared

* Indicates required question

Please enter the password. *

Your answer

Next Clear form

Never submit passwords through Google Forms.

This content is neither created nor endorsed by Google. [Report Abuse](#) - [Terms of Service](#) - [Privacy Policy](#)

Google Forms

13.4.2 Consent & Anonymity Notice

Primary Schools Opinion Survey

arabethan@gmail.com [Switch account](#)

Not shared

* Indicates required question

Consent and Anonymity Notice

This section is to confirm that you are aware that your answers here are being collected anonymously. Your responses are not attached to a name or email address.

Please tick 'YES' in each box to indicate your agreement:

I have had sufficient time to consider participating and ask any questions I might have. *

YES

NO

I understand that the data collected in this project is anonymous and will be used * for purposes including but not limited to this thesis, academic journals, conferences and other outlets. I understand that this anonymous data may be published and shared with others for legitimate research purposes.

NO

I understand that the data collected in this project is anonymous and will be used * for purposes including but not limited to this thesis, academic journals, conferences and other outlets. I understand that this anonymous data may be archived and shared with others for legitimate research purposes.

YES
 NO

I understand that my participation in this survey is voluntary and that I am free to * withdraw at any time without giving a reason.

YES
 NO

I agree to take part in this project. *


YES
 NO

[Back](#) [Next](#) [Clear form](#)

Never submit passwords through Google Forms.
This content is neither created nor endorsed by Google. [Report Abuse](#) - [Terms of Service](#) - [Privacy Policy](#)

Google Forms

13.4.3 General Information



Primary Schools Opinion Survey

arabethan@gmail.com [Switch account](#)

Not shared

General Information

Feel free to leave any questions blank.

What pseudonym would you like to use for this study? This name will be used to identify your opinions and perspectives as all data published will be anonymous.

Your answer _____

How would you describe yourself?

- For example, this could include age, gender, sexuality or anything else you would like to add.

Your answer _____

How would you describe yourself?

- For example, this could include age, gender, sexuality or anything else you would like to add.

Your answer _____

How long have you been teaching?

Your answer _____

What kind of teaching do you do? (E.g. SEND, subject, age, etc.)

Your answer _____

What kind of school do you teach in? (E.g. faith school, inner city, etc.)

Your answer _____


Back Next Clear form

Never submit passwords through Google Forms.

This content is neither created nor endorsed by Google. [Report Abuse](#) - [Terms of Service](#) - [Privacy Policy](#)

Google Forms

13.4.4 Your Thoughts



Primary Schools Opinion Survey

arabethan@gmail.com [Switch account](#)

Not shared

* Indicates required question

Your Thoughts...

Feel free to leave any questions blank.

What is the ethos of your school? How do you feel about this?

Your answer _____

What does inclusion in a school context mean to you? Can you give any examples of things that your school does/ could do that are inclusive?

Your answer _____

Is LGBT content ever referenced in your school day-to-day life or school policies? If

Is LGBT content ever referenced in your school day-to-day life or school policies? If so, how?

Your answer

Do you think it would be appropriate for the government to make inclusion of LGBT content in primary school mandatory for the age group that you teach? Why?

Your answer

Who do you think should decide whether topics such as LGBT content should be included in the curriculum?

Your answer

Have you heard of any of the government's policies concerning LGBT content in schools? If so, what have you heard?

Your answer


Do you think LGBT content should be brought up at any stage in primary school? *

Yes

No

Back Next Clear form

13.4.5 'Yes' to LGBT Content



Primary Schools Opinion Survey

arabethan@gmail.com [Switch account](#)

Not shared

Your thoughts...

Feel free to leave any questions blank.

Why do you think LGBT content should be mentioned in primary schools?

Your answer

At what age do you think LGBT content should be mentioned?

Your answer

Where do you think LGBT content should be mentioned in the primary curriculum? (E.g. Subject, Relationships Education, Religious Education, etc.)

Your answer

Feel free to leave any questions blank.

Why do you think LGBT content should be mentioned in primary schools?

Your answer

At what age do you think LGBT content should be mentioned?

Your answer

Where do you think LGBT content should be mentioned in the primary curriculum?
(E.g. Subject, Relationships Education, Religious Education, etc.)

Your answer

What factors influence your opinions on LGBT content and primary schooling?
This could be, for example, personal morals, faith, government guidance, personal experiences, experiences as a teacher etc.

Your answer


Back Next Clear form

Never submit passwords through Google Forms.

This content is neither created nor endorsed by Google. [Report Abuse](#) - [Terms of Service](#) - [Privacy Policy](#)

Google Forms

13.4.6 'No' to LGBT Content



Primary Schools Opinion Survey

arabethan@gmail.com [Switch account](#)

Not shared

Your thoughts...

Why do you think LGBT content should not be mentioned in primary schools?

Your answer

Do you think LGBT content should be brought up at any stage in schooling (E.g. senior school, college)

Your answer

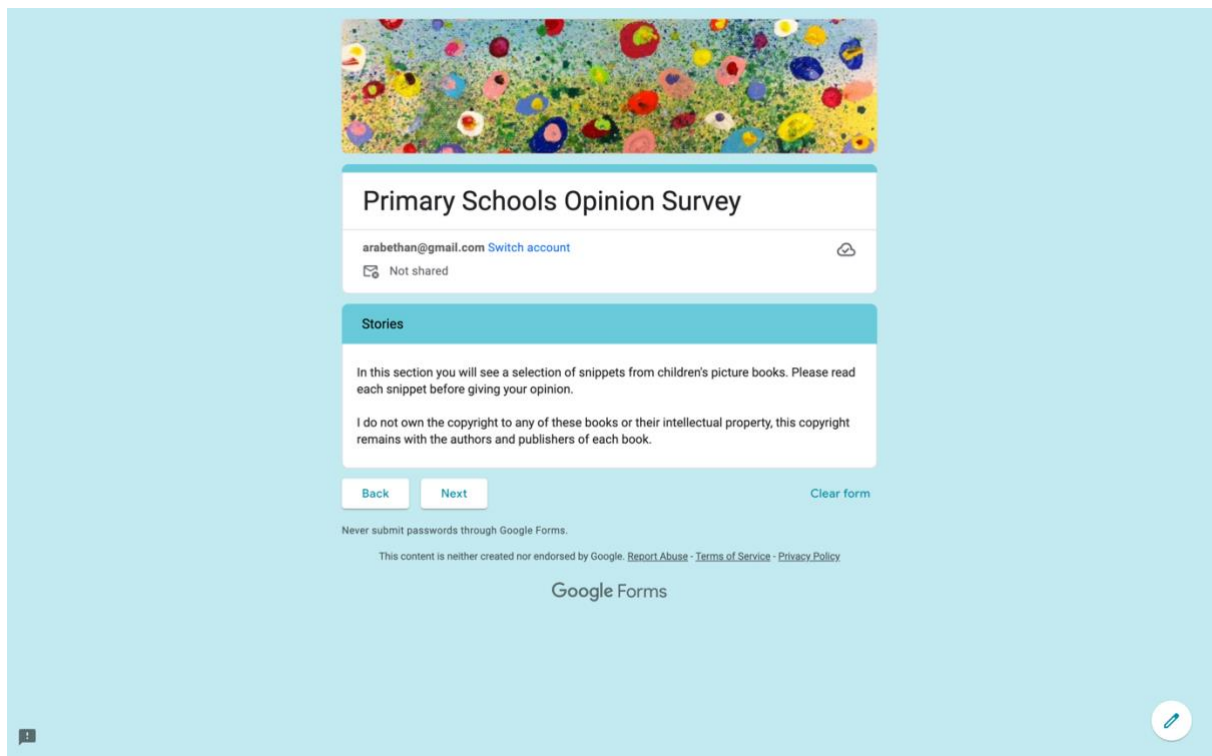
What factors influence your opinions on LGBT content and primary schooling?
This could be, for example, personal morals, faith, government guidance, personal experiences, experiences as a teacher etc.

Your answer

Back Next Clear form

Never submit passwords through Google Forms.

13.4.7 Children's Literature



The screenshot shows a Google Form titled "Primary Schools Opinion Survey". At the top, there is a colorful abstract painting of various colored circles. Below the title, the form is associated with the email "arabethan@gmail.com" and is marked as "Not shared". The form is currently on the "Stories" section, which contains introductory text and a disclaimer. Navigation buttons for "Back", "Next", and "Clear form" are visible at the bottom of the form area.

Primary Schools Opinion Survey

arabethan@gmail.com [Switch account](#)

Not shared

Stories

In this section you will see a selection of snippets from children's picture books. Please read each snippet before giving your opinion.

I do not own the copyright to any of these books or their intellectual property, this copyright remains with the authors and publishers of each book.

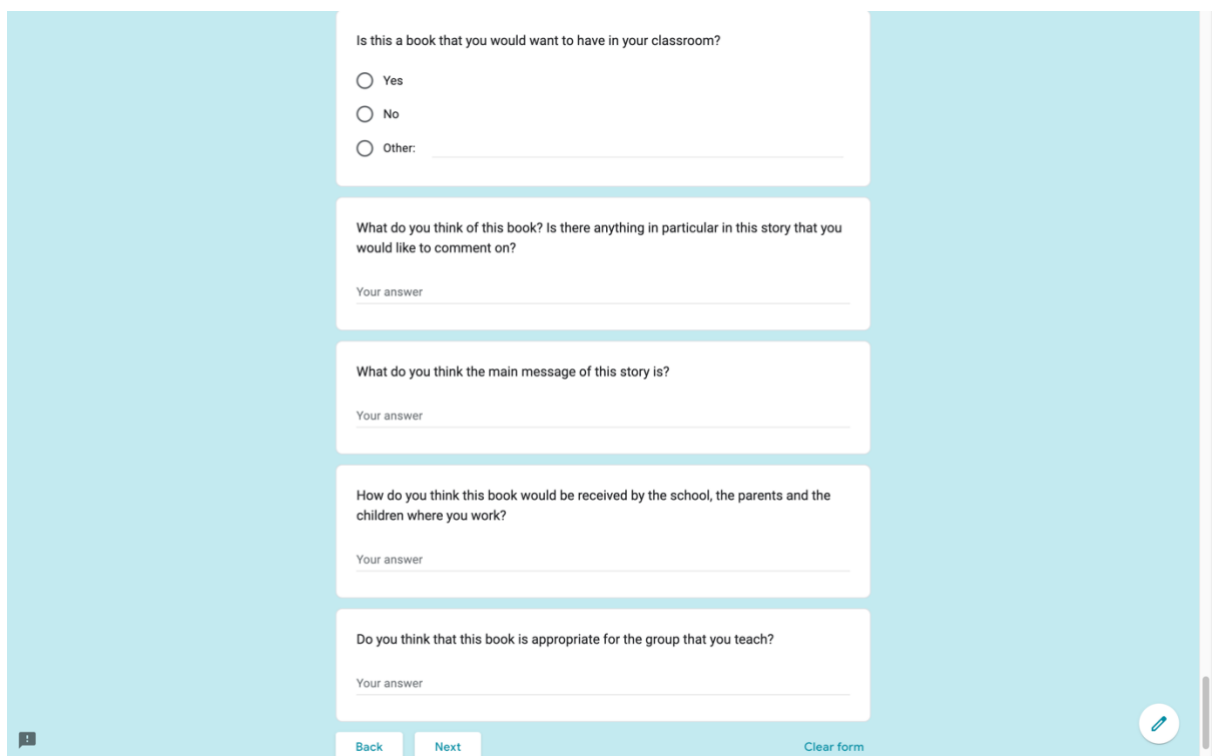
[Back](#) [Next](#) [Clear form](#)

Never submit passwords through Google Forms.

This content is neither created nor endorsed by Google. [Report Abuse](#) - [Terms of Service](#) - [Privacy Policy](#)

Google Forms

To view images of each of the books, see the Methodology & Methods chapter Children's Literature section.



The screenshot shows a Google Form with five questions. The first question is a multiple-choice question about whether the respondent would want the book in their classroom. The following four questions are open-ended text boxes asking for comments on the book, the main message, reception by school/parents/children, and appropriateness for the respondent's group. Navigation buttons for "Back", "Next", and "Clear form" are visible at the bottom.

Is this a book that you would want to have in your classroom?

Yes

No

Other: _____

What do you think of this book? Is there anything in particular in this story that you would like to comment on?

Your answer _____

What do you think the main message of this story is?

Your answer _____

How do you think this book would be received by the school, the parents and the children where you work?


Your answer _____

Do you think that this book is appropriate for the group that you teach?

Your answer _____

[Back](#) [Next](#) [Clear form](#)

13.4.7.1 Stories: Overall Opinions



Primary Schools Opinion Survey

arabethan@gmail.com [Switch account](#)

Not shared

Stories: Overall Opinions

After reading all of these stories, do you have any overall judgements or comments?

Your answer

Of all the stories you read, which did you like the most or least? Why?


Your answer

Is LGBT content in any of the books at your school or classroom?

Your answer

[Back](#) [Next](#) [Clear form](#)

13.4.7.2 End



Primary Schools Opinion Survey

arabethan@gmail.com [Switch account](#)

Not shared

End of Survey

Every opinions matters, so thank you for taking the time to register yours!

This research aims to find out how school teachers perceive LGBT inclusion measures in schools. Studies suggest that governmental policy mandates often do not consider the lived experiences and opinions of teachers. This project wishes to clarify how the recent addition of LGBT identities to the UK's Relationships and Sex Education and British Columbia's SOGI 123 policies are perceived and how the nature of 'inclusion' can mean different things to different people.

In writing up the study all data will be anonymised, and your individual data will not be available to anyone.

If you would like further information about this study or if you have further questions, please contact Arabethan.lecuyer@durham.ac.uk.

Lastly, I would like to thank the authors and publishers of the books used in this study, the full references for which can be found below:

Jill Twiss and EG Keller (2018). A Day in the Life of Marlon Bundo. Chronicle Books.
Kyle Lukoff and Kaylani Juanita (2019). When Aidan Became a Brother. Lee & Low Books Inc.
Daniel Haack, Isabel Galupo and Becca Human (2019). Maiden & Princess. Little Bee Books.
Robert Munsch and Michael Martchenko (1980). The Paper Bag Princess. Annick Press.

...of 2021...
Columbia's SOGI 123 policies are perceived and how the nature of 'inclusion' can mean different things to different people.

In writing up the study all data will be anonymised, and your individual data will not be available to anyone.

If you would like further information about this study or if you have further questions, please contact Arabethan.Lecuyer@durham.ac.uk.

Lastly, I would like to thank the authors and publishers of the books used in this study, the full references for which can be found below:

Jill Twiss and EG Keller (2018). A Day in the Life of Marlon Bundo. Chronicle Books.
Kyle Lukoff and Kaylani Juanita (2019). When Aidan Became a Brother. Lee & Low Books Inc.
Daniel Haack, Isabel Galupo and Becca Human (2019). Maiden & Princess. Little Bee Books.
Robert Munsch and Michael Martchenko (1980). The Paper Bag Princess. Annick Press.

If you would be happy to be contacted by email for potential follow up questions to your answers, please write your email address below. If not, please leave this section blank.

Your answer

[Back](#)

[Submit](#)

[Clear form](#)

Never submit passwords through Google Forms.

This content is neither created nor endorsed by Google. [Report Abuse](#) - [Terms of Service](#) - [Privacy Policy](#)

Google Forms



13.5 List of Codes

Code Topic	Codes
Whether LGBT content was reported to be present in the teacher's school.	Yes, No
The place of LGBT content reported to be present in the school.	None, Reactive, RSE, RSE & General Environment, General Environment, Comprehensive
The place of LGBT content teachers reported should be present in the schools.	None, Reactive, RSE, RSE & General Environment, General Environment, Comprehensive
Resources lacking relevant to LGBT inclusion.	Curricular Resources, Time, Leadership & Backing, Knowledge, Financial Support
Perceived reactions to the children's literature.	Supportive (Books), Neutral (Books), Varied (Books) Unsupportive (Books).
References to parental reaction.	Supportive (Overall), Unsupportive (Overall)
Age at which LGBT content should be present.	Any, KS1, KS2, UKS2, Some (Unclear), None

References to children (not) being LGBT.	LGBT (Child), Not LGBT (Child), No Ref
Age-appropriateness of LGBT content for pupils.	Too Young (Primary), LGBT Content is Promotion, LGBT Content is Sexualising, (Others perceive) LGBT Content is Promotion, (Others perceive) LGBT content is Sexualising
References to direct discrimination.	Ref, No Ref
References to balancing rights.	Uneven not to Include, Uneven to Include
References to faith.	Faith (Supportive), Faith (Unsupportive)
Responses referring to either students, or staff, treating the use of LGBT labels as insults.	LGBT as Insults (Pupils), LGBT as Insults (Staff)
The kind of LGBT identities said to be present in schools.	Families, Same sex relationships, gay, or lesbian, Trans, Bi, Non-binary
The appropriateness of families as LGBT content.	Only Families (Taught), Only Families (Should be Taught), Only Families (Younger Students), Only Families (All Primary Pupils)

13.6 Example Questionnaire Response

1886

Male, 29

Teacher

CofE

“What is the ethos of your school? How do you feel about this?”

Love, Live, Learn. Not taken particularly seriously.

“What does inclusion in a school context mean to you? Can you give any examples of things that your school does/ could do that are inclusive?”

All children challenged

“Is LGBT content ever referenced in your school day-to-day life or school policies? If so, how?”

No

“Do you think it would be appropriate for the government to make inclusion of LGBT content in primary school mandatory for the age group that you teach? Why?”

No way. There is simply no need to try and make this the norm when the amount of LGBT+ people are such a small percentage of global populations. Problems of abuse, homophobia, transphobia are symptoms of deeper issues that need to be resolved in our English society: lack of spirituality, community spirit, self improvement, kindness all contribute towards bad behaviour in whatever form - racism, child abuse, bullying etc. The stereotypical perception around a vast majority of the LGBT community is one of promiscuity, anarchy and social misbehaviour. Sexuality shouldn't be taught in schools. Period. How long did it take to introduce mandatory sexual education in school, and now LGBT content can come in with no fiction at all? It just seems strangely unopposed across the western world at the moment and I worry why.

LGBT policies are intertwined with so many other beliefs and ideologies that would inevitably be dragged into the primary school as well: critical gender theory, anti-colonialism, anti-racism, anti-white, anti-hierarchy, anti-religion and Marxist theory. Clearly none of

these are suitable for children, but teaching children about sexuality is "who you want to have sex with" is essentially what the motto "love is love is love is love means". Love is love is a dangerous precedent, and I hope it is not lost on someone whose main responsibility is the safeguarding of small children. We all know that some love is not reciprocated, as the 4th wave-feminist-LGBT allies would attest. Primary schools are not the capitalist, "cis" white male havens people spout them to be: they are kind, patient and inclusive places to be.

Children are taught in every single state school in the country (I would wager) that it is good to be kind, that families are different, and "if you have nothing nice to say, don't say anything." The argument that LGBT+ "content" is the only way to be more inclusive is simply untrue. We all have a responsibility to behave well in the world. This goes deeper than talking about LGBT issues in primary school to 4 years olds (who I am sure are not the ones being uncivil towards fellow citizens). Pandering to a tiny majority of angry, violent, disruptive individuals is not kind I assure you, and will inevitably lead to a position worse than we are in. Take the BLM vandalism and violence as a recent example.

Additionally, and perhaps most crucially, I see no way of including this "content" in a way that isn't propagandistic. We already teach that people are different, and it is in our behaviour that others define us. People in this country are still stigmatised against people with disabilities and we've been going on about this for 40 years.

Finally, this isn't me being nihilistic about it, "what's the point in teaching LGBT+ content, people will just be mean anyway", but rather the issues of bad behaviour seem to come from outside schools, from families and from certain communities. Early exposure may help, but there is no quantitative, qualitative or anecdotal evidence that it will, and what would this education be substituted for? Would it take the place of other PSHE topics that are deemed as important, or will we be adding on extra time in the school day? What if students fail the module: are they then unfit for society?

I am also wary of saying that I am of a largely (classical) conservative mindset, as the opinions of people who share similar opinions to me about the world we live in and the world we know can prosper, are often dismissed as 'bigotry', 'fascism', 'nazism', when all I am trying to suggest is that we do not surrender to what seems like at times an angry mob. My opinions are based squarely in my understanding of the history of the western world. I am interested simply in how people can work together to be successful, motivated and fulfilled. Forcing people to have the same opinions as others is just not going to cut it. I see it as a destabilising

force. We first need dialogue from leading members of LGBT institutions across political divides, before we send our school children to the front line of what is a war, designed from the top down to pull apart the societies of the world that - for the most part - work well. Where they don't work, I am afraid is not a problem for primary school teachers to solve.

This country is far from perfect, but I genuinely believe if everyone was to act like your average LGBT activist, the country will be much worse. These children will have enough of their own battles to face as they grow. I do not want them conscripted to another.

“Who do you think should decide whether topics such as LGBT content should be included in the curriculum?”

The DfE has to hold the power to do so, but in faith schools, should be down to faith leaders, governors and Headteachers.

“Have you heard of any of the government's policies concerning LGBT content in schools? If so, what have you heard?”

No

“Do you think LGBT content should be brought up at any stage in primary school? (Y/N)”

No

“Why do you think LGBT content should not be mentioned in primary schools?”

See previous comments. All in all, I see it as counter productive to a free exchange of dialogue and ideas.

“Do you think LGBT content should be brought up at any stage in schooling? (E.g. senior school, college)”

No

“What factors influence your opinions on LGBT content and primary schooling?”

A strive for empirical objectivity in all things. Things that have worked, and are working do not need changing. As a gay man, you cannot imagine the damage that the mainstream LGBT movement has had on me, and has contributed to way more homophobic abuse that I might receive previously. Ultimately, who cares what sexuality somebody is. What we should be concerned with is people's behaviour in the world. And I see nothing endearing about the

childish protests and teen age promiscuity that contributes towards nothing except dreadful mental and physical health.

A Day in the Life of Marlon Bundo

“Is this a book that you would want to have in your classroom?”

No

“What do you think of this book? Is there anything in particular in this story that you would like to comment on?”

This is even more propogandistic than the last! Not only is someone who wants to uphold their religious beliefs wrong, they are evil and subsequently punished.

“What do you think the main message of this story is?”

Revenge

“Do you think this book is appropriate for the group that you teach?”

Of course not

“How do you think this book would be received by the school, the parents and the children where you work?”

The same as before. Deliberately disrespectful to the personal beliefs of the members. But who knows. Some might like it.

When Aidan Became a Brother

“Is this a book that you would want to have in your classroom?”

No

“What do you think of this book? Is there anything in particular in this story that you would like to comment on?”

What a shift! I hope you see my point here about the propoganda. There is clearly no message in this story other than a trans message. No layers other than this. The fact that it was published in 2019 is not surprising.

“What do you think the main message of this story is?”

That you can disobey biology on a whim

“Do you think this book is appropriate for the group that you teach?”

No. You cannot choose your sex. Gender can and should be a completely different discussion.

“How do you think this book would be received by the school, the parents and the children where you work?”

Even from a literary perspective, poorly. This simply is not good story telling. It is war time propaganda in prose form.

Maiden & Princess

“Is this a book that you would want to have in your classroom?”

No

“What do you think of this book? Is there anything in particular in this story that you would like to comment on?”

Again, where are the layers of the literature. There is one theme again. Marriage is a religious institutions and it remains the right of religious leaders to decide who can marry. This looks to deliberately undermine age old establishments (that for all of their flaws) somehow remain, betraying their usefulness.

“What do you think the main message of this story is?”

Sexual awakening

“Do you think this book is appropriate for the group that you teach?”

Sexual awakening? To 7 year olds?

“How do you think this book would be received by the school, the parents and the children where you work?”

Not well again. It looks like a fairy tale, but it is a wolf in sheep's clothing. Why do we want children to know that same-sex relationships are normal? They are valid, but statistically unusual. Which in itself is enough to celebrate. This book at least tries to establish monogamous relationships, but only because it has stolen the format of fairy tale.

Paper Bag Princess

“Is this a book that you would want to have in your classroom?”

Yes

“What do you think of this book? Is there anything in particular in this story that you would like to comment on?”

It appears to be a book that challenges gender norms and fairy tale archetypes.

“What do you think the main message of this story is?”

Listen to you eyes and not your heart.

“Do you think this book is appropriate for the group that you teach?”

Yes

Overall Comments

“After reading all of these stories, do you have any overall judgements or comments?”

The difference between the books from the 2010s and the 1980 are stark. The difference in quality of literature (which is why we teach books, for their themes and insight) is so clear and obvious, these books seem chosen to deliberately antagonise.

“Of all the stories you read, which did you like the most or least? Why?”

I liked the last one [A Day in the Life of Marlon Bundo] the least for sure. I found it angry and resentful.

“Is LGBT content in any of the books at your school or classroom?”

No. This doesn't even seem like LGBT content. This seems anti-establishment. And as we all know, politics has no place in the classroom. Which is another fundamental argument against this LGBT movement in school, because it is innately political.

13.7 Email to Ofsted

From: LECUYER, ARABETHAN <arabethan.lecuyer@durham.ac.uk>

Date: Wednesday, 3 November 2021 at 13:32

To: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk <enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk>

Subject: RSE Curriculum Question

Dear Ofsted,

I hope this email finds you well. To introduce myself, I'm Arabeth Lecuyer, a PhD student at Durham University researching the RSE curriculum and other areas of LGBT inclusion in primary schools in England. I would greatly appreciate your assistance in clarifying how certain types of LGBT inclusion would be assessed by Ofsted.

The recent RSE guidance for schools sets out both that primary school children should learn about marriage, different types of families, and other types of relationships (Department for Education, 2019a, p. 20- 22) and that this *could* include LGBT content at the primary level, but that this is not mandatory (Department for Education, 2019a, p. 15). As suggested in the governmental FAQs on the new RSE curriculum:

“Q: Will my child be taught about LGBT relationships? A: Pupils should be taught about the society in which they are growing up. These subjects are designed to foster respect for others and for difference, and educate pupils about healthy relationships. Pupils should receive teaching on LGBT content during their school years. Teaching children about the society that we live in and the different types of loving, healthy relationships that exist can be done in a way that respects everyone. Primary schools are strongly encouraged and enabled to cover LGBT content when teaching about different types of families.” (Department for Education, 2019b)

Whilst there is no mention of cisgender heterosexuality in the curricular discussion of marriage, relationships, or types of families (Department for Education, 2019a, p. 20- 22) the optional nature of mentioning LGBT people in these contexts would generally be read as assuming schools will mention cisgender heterosexual people by default in their teaching and *could* also include LGBT people. I do not mean to state that the concepts of heterosexuality or being cisgender would be explicitly taught, but rather that schools who choose not to include LGBT content in their teaching would, for example, only mention

heterosexual presenting couples when couples are mentioned (eg. a Mother and Father looking after a child, a single Father and a Grandmother and Grandfather) and only mention people whose assigned sex at birth matches their gender (eg. only women bearing children).

My question is: What would Ofsted's hypothetical response be to a school that included no mention of cisgender and heterosexual people? If this hypothetical school were to only discuss same-sex marriage and other LGBT family structures, given that mentioning LGBT people is optional but mentioning heterosexual and cisgender people is not stated within the guidance, would they be considered to be teaching an unbalanced curriculum?

This is concurrently assuming that the hypothetical school in question had consulted with parents and the school board and had received broad support for this move as per the government's policy that schools must "consult parents on their relationships education policy" (Department for Education, 2019c).

As the "content of the school curriculum has never been caught by discrimination law, and (The Equalities Act) now states explicitly that it is excluded", provided that questions pertaining to cisgender heterosexuality were handled in sensitive, respectful manner and that this did not involve "haranguing, harassing or berating a particular pupil" as per the Equalities Act guidance for schools (Department for Education, 2018, p. 23), how would the non-inclusion of cisgender heterosexuality be handled by Ofsted?

Of course, Ofsted guidance suggests that best practice from primary schools often includes discussion of LGBT topics (Ofsted, 2021b). However, as Ofsted also states that "if a primary school does not teach about LGBT relationships, this will not have an impact on the leadership and management judgement as long as the school can satisfy inspectors that it has still fulfilled the requirements of the DfE's statutory guidance" (Ofsted, 2021a). I wondered whether schools would have the same option to opt out of teaching about/mentioning cisgender heterosexual relationships, if they could prove that their teaching was still in line with the statutory guidance for teaching about healthy, diverse relationships?

I would also be grateful of further clarification of Ofsted's guidance for faith schools. Ofsted guidance states that with regards to faith schools, "they may explain that same-sex relationships and gender reassignment are not permitted by a particular religion. However, if they do so, they must also explain the legal rights LGBT people have under UK law" (Ofsted, 2021a). I would like to clarify whether this means that anytime a primary school mentions a faith perspective on marriage that suggests cisgender heterosexuality is God's intention,

would they always have to then subsequently mention that this is not the only legal option as LGBT people have rights under UK law, even if this primary school has chosen not to talk about LGBT people in RSE? Or, does the requirement to explain the legal rights or LGBT people only extend to when schools are stating same-sex relationships and gender reassignment are not permitted in their religion, rather than that cisgender heterosexuality is preferred?

Thank you for your time in reading this. I truly appreciate it. Please feel free to contact me with any follow up questions, I would be more than happy to answer.

Warmest wishes,

Arabethan C. Lecuyer

Department for Education, (28 June 2018). The Equality Act 2010 and schools
Departmental advice for school leaders, school staff, governing bodies and local authorities

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/315587/Equality_Act_Advice_Final.pdf

Department for Education, (25 June 2019a). Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education Statutory guidance for governing bodies, proprietors, head teachers, principals, senior leadership teams, teachers. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1019542/Relationships_Education_Relationships_and_Sex_Education_RSE_and_Health_Education.pdf

Department for Education, (5 April 2019b). Relationships education, relationships and sex education (RSE) and health education: FAQs. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education-faqs>

Department for Education (10 October 2019c). Primary school disruption over LGBT teaching/relationships education. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/managing-issues-with-lgbt-teaching-advice-for-local-authorities/primary-school-disruption-over-lgbt-teachingrelationships-education>

Ofsted, (27 September, 2021a). Guidance: Inspecting teaching of the protected characteristics in schools. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/inspecting-teaching-of-the-protected-characteristics-in-schools/inspecting-teaching-of-the-protected-characteristics-in-schools>

Ofsted, (6 July 2021b). Research commentary: teaching about sex, sexual orientation and gender reassignment. <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/research-commentary-teaching-about-sex-sexual-orientation-and-gender-reassignment>

13.8 Email to the Department for Education

Dear the Department for Education,

I hope this email finds you well. To introduce myself, I'm Arabeth Lecuyer, a PhD student at Durham University researching the RSE curriculum and other areas of LGBT inclusion in primary schools in England. I would greatly appreciate your assistance in clarifying how certain types of LGBT inclusion would be assessed by Ofsted.

The recent RSE guidance for schools sets out both that primary school children should learn about marriage, different types of families, and other types of relationships (Department for Education, 2019, p. 20- 22) and that this could include LGBT content at the primary level, but that this is not mandatory (Department for Education, 2019, p. 15). As suggested in the governmental FAQs on the new RSE curriculum:

“Q: Will my child be taught about LGBT relationships? A: Pupils should be taught about the society in which they are growing up. These subjects are designed to foster respect for others and for difference, and educate pupils about healthy relationships. Pupils should receive teaching on LGBT content during their school years. Teaching children about the society that we live in and the different types of loving, healthy relationships that exist can be done in a way that respects everyone. Primary schools are strongly encouraged and enabled to cover LGBT content when teaching about different types of families.” (Department for Education, 2019)

Whilst there is no mention of cisgender heterosexuality in the curricular discussion of marriage, relationships, or types of families (Department for Education, 2019, p. 20- 22) the optional nature of mentioning LGBT people in these contexts would generally be read as assuming schools will mention cisgender heterosexual people by default in their teaching and could also include LGBT people. I do not mean to state that the concepts of heterosexuality or being cisgender would be explicitly taught, but rather that schools who choose not to include LGBT content in their teaching would, for example, only mention heterosexual presenting couples when couples are mentioned (eg. a Mother and Father looking after a child, a single Father and a Grandmother and Grandfather) and only mention people whose assigned sex at birth matches their gender (eg. only women bearing children).

My question is: What would Ofsted's hypothetical response be to a school that included no mention of cisgender and heterosexual people? If this hypothetical school were to only discuss same-sex marriage and other LGBT family structures, given that mentioning LGBT people is optional but mentioning heterosexual and cisgender people is not stated within the guidance, would they be considered to be teaching an unbalanced curriculum?

This is concurrently assuming that the hypothetical school in question had consulted with parents and the school board.

As the "content of the school curriculum has never been caught by discrimination law, and (The Equalities Act) now states explicitly that it is excluded", provided that questions pertaining to cisgender heterosexuality were handled in sensitive, respectful manner and that this did not involve "haranguing, harassing or berating a particular pupil" as per the Equalities Act guidance for schools (Department for Education, 2018, p. 23), how would the non-inclusion of cisgender heterosexuality be handled by Ofsted?

Of course, Ofsted guidance suggests that best practice from primary schools often includes discussion of LGBT topics (Ofsted, 2021). However, as Ofsted also states that "if a primary school does not teach about LGBT relationships, this will not have an impact on the leadership and management judgement as long as the school can satisfy inspectors that it has still fulfilled the requirements of the DfE's statutory guidance" (Ofsted, 2021). I wondered whether schools would have the same option to opt out of teaching about/mentioning cisgender heterosexual relationships, if they could prove that their teaching was still in line with the statutory guidance for teaching about healthy, diverse relationships?

Thank you for your time in reading this. I truly appreciate it. Please feel free to contact me with any follow up questions, I would be more than happy to answer.

Warmest wishes,

Arabethan C. Lecuyer

arabethan.lecuyer@durham.ac.uk

13.9 Reply from the Department for Education

Dear Miss Lecuyer

I am writing to thank you for your email of 6 June about teaching Relationships and Sex Education (RSE). I apologise for the delay in replying.

I should advise the department receives a great many requests to assist with student research projects and is not able to participate in them all.

While we are unable to advise you on hypothetical Ofsted inspections, you may find it useful to approach Ofsted itself for further guidance in this area: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

Beyond this all I can advise is that schools are required to consult with parents when developing and reviewing their policies for Relationships Education and RSE, which will inform schools' decisions on when and how certain content is covered. Effective engagement gives the space and time for parents to input, ask questions, share concerns and for the school to decide the way forward. Schools will listen to parents' views, and then make a reasonable decision as to how they wish to proceed.

When and how content is taught is ultimately a decision for the school, and consultation does not provide a parental veto on curriculum content.

A school's policies for these subjects must be published online, and must be available to any individual free of charge. Schools should also ensure that, when they engage parents, they provide examples of the resources they plan to use, for example the books they will use in lessons.

Thank you once again for taking the time to contact the department, and I wish you every success with your PhD.

Your correspondence has been allocated reference number 2022-0021563. If you need to respond to us, please visit <https://www.education.gov.uk/contactus> and quote your reference number.

As part of our commitment to improving the service we provide to our customers, we are interested in hearing your views and would welcome your comments via our website at: <https://form.education.gov.uk/service/TOCMTfeedback>

Yours sincerely

[Redacted]

Ministerial and Public Communications Division

Web: <https://www.education.gov.uk>

Twitter: <https://www.twitter.com/educationgovuk>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/educationgovuk>

13.10 Rapid Onset Gender Dysphoria

It is worth noting one teacher's reference in the findings of this thesis to Rapid Onset Gender Dysphoria though a mention of *Irreversible Damage by Abigail* given that it points to the influence of this kind of theory in the rhetoric around LGBT inclusion.

[After reading WABAB] I think that children should not be encouraged to consider themselves to have gender dysphoria at a time when their feelings and sense of identity are still fluid. This book is seeking to explain to children that they may be of the opposite sex but in a body that they are not comfortable with. Children are very open to influence and suggestion and I have recently read Irreversible Damage by Abigail Shrier. Please read it with an open mind. It will help your research. I found it highly disturbing.

(Peter, Teacher, CofE School, Questionnaire)

Irreversible Damage, subtitled “the transgender craze seducing our daughters”¹²⁶ (misgendering trans boys), is a book written by Abigail Shrier a proponent of Lisa Littman's pseudo-scientific but highly influential concept of *Rapid Onset Gender Dysphoria* (ROGD) which suggests that trans youth are a product of being transgender becoming a kind of trend or fad (Littman, 2019; Shrier, 2020). Rapid onset Gender Dysphoria was put forwards by Lisa Littman and suggests that many trans boys identify as such because of a kind of social contagion in which being transgender has come to be seen as trendy, or an answer to mental health issues. Littman's research is widely discredited, she was forced to publish corrections to her conclusions after her methods were deemed sub-par (Brandelli Costa, 2019; Littman, 2019). The editor of PloS (the original publishers of her paper) issued an apology to the trans community for the harm caused (Heber, 2019). In short, Littman sampled noted transphobic parental communities such as Transgender Trend, 4thWaveNow, and Youth Trans Critical Professionals, (Restar, 2020), and asked them about their children coming out as trans, concluding that such was due to social contagion as more trans boys were now coming out, when in the past trans girls had been a majority (Littman, 2017, 2018) Despite being recognised by no medical association, “proponents of ROGD theory believe that gender-affirmative care

¹²⁶ Abigail Shrier constantly misgenders trans boys in her book as ‘girls’.

is tantamount to abuse and that trans identities should instead be actively discouraged among these youth” (Ashley, 2020, p. 782).

Peter’s reference to *Irreversible Damage* in their reasoning not to support transgender education reflects Braverman’s extensive guidance not to allow children to socially transition without their parents’ permission, medical consultation, and consideration for other children. Social transitioning has been loudly decried by proponents of ROGD, including Littman and Shrier in *Irreversible Damage*, despite current evidence and medical associations supporting the mental health benefits of allowing trans youth to do so (Durwood et al., 2017; K, 2016; Lopez et al., 2017).

14 References

- Abbott, K., Ellis, S., & Abbott, R. (2015). “We don’t get into all that”: An analysis of how teachers uphold heteronormative sex and relationship education. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 62(12), 1638-1659.
- Abreu, R. L., Audette, L., Mitchell, Y. L., Simpson, I., Ward, J., Ackerman, L., Gonzalez, K. A., & Washington, K. (2022). LGBTQ student experiences in schools from 2009–2019: A systematic review of study characteristics and recommendations for prevention and intervention in school psychology journals. *Psychology in the Schools*, 59(1), 115-151.
- Abreu, R. L., Black, W. W., Mosley, D. V., & Fedewa, A. L. (2016). LGBTQ youth bullying experiences in schools: The role of school counselors within a system of oppression. *Journal of Creativity in Mental Health*, 11(3-4), 325-342.
- Adams, R. (2022, February 17). *Guidance on political impartiality in English classrooms ‘confusing’ say teachers’ unions.* The Guardian. <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2022/feb/17/guidance-on-political-impartiality-in-english-classrooms-confusing-say-teachers-unions>
- Adams, R. (2023, June 23). *‘Child identifying as cat’ controversy: from TikTok video to media frenzy.* The Guardian. <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2023/jun/23/child-identifying-as-cat-controversy-from-a-tiktok-video-to-media-frenzy>
- Ahmed, S. (2006). Orientations: Toward a queer phenomenology. *GLQ: A journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*, 12(4), 543-574.
- Ahmed, S. (2016). Interview with Judith Butler. *Sexualities*, 19(4), 482-492.
- Alejandro, A., & Zhao, L. (2023). Multi-Method Qualitative Text and Discourse Analysis: A Methodological Framework. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 0(0), 1-13.
- Allan, A., Atkinson, E., Brace, E., DePalma, R., & Hemingway, J. (2008). Speaking the unspeakable in forbidden places: Addressing lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender equality in the primary school. *Sex Education*, 8(3), 315-328.
- Allred, P., Fox, N., & Kulpa, R. (2016). Engaging parents with sex and relationship education: A UK primary school case study. *Health Education Journal*, 75(7), 855-868.
- Allen, K. (2014). Addressing the issue: Bullying and LGBTQ youth. *Journal of Youth Development*, 9(3), 1-8.
- Allen, L., Rasmussen, M. L., Quinlivan, K., Aspin, C., Sanjakdar, F., & Brömdal, A. (2014). Who's afraid of sex at school? The politics of researching culture, religion and sexuality at school. *International Journal of Research & Method in Education*, 37(1), 31-43.

- Ariès, P. (1962). *Centuries of Childhood: A social history of family life*. (R. Baldick, Trans.). A Vintage Giant.
- Arksey, H., & Knight, P. T. (1999). *Interviewing for social scientists: An introductory resource with examples*. Sage.
- Ashley, F. (2020). A critical commentary on ‘rapid-onset gender dysphoria’. *The Sociological Review*, 68(4), 779-799.
- Atkinson, C. (2021). ‘They don’t really talk about it ‘cos they don’t think it’s right’: heteronormativity and institutional silence in UK primary education. *Gender and Education*, 33(4), 451-467.
- Atkinson, E. (2002). Education for diversity in a multisexual society: negotiating the contradictions of contemporary discourse. *Sex Education: Sexuality, Society and Learning*, 2(2), 119-132.
- Atkinson, E., & DePalma, R. (2008a). Dangerous spaces: Constructing and contesting sexual identities in an online discussion forum. *Gender and Education*, 20(2), 183-194.
- Atkinson, E., & DePalma, R. (2008b). Imagining the homonormative: Performative subversion in education for social justice. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 29(1), 25-35.
- Atkinson, E., & DePalma, R. (2009). Un-believing the matrix: Queering consensual heteronormativity. *Gender and Education*, 21(1), 17-29.
- Atkinson, E., & Moffat, A. (2009). Bodies and minds: Essentialism, activism and strategic disruptions in the primary school and beyond. In R. DePalma & E. Atkinson (Eds.), *Interrogating heteronormativity in primary schools: The no outsiders project*. Stoke on Trent: Trentham Books (pp. 95-110). Trentham Books.
- Ayoub, P. M. (2019). Tensions in rights: navigating emerging contradictions in the LGBT rights revolution. In A. Brysk & M. Stohl (Eds.), *Contesting Human Rights* (pp. 43-58). Elgar.
- Bagwell, M. (2020, June 28). *How Protests Over Diversity Lessons In Birmingham Ended In A Win For LGBTQ+ People Everywhere*. Huffington Post. https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/andrew-moffat-interview-parkfield-school-no-outsiders-protests-one-year-on_uk_5ef5ecadc5b612083c4c57bf
- Bailey, P., & Ball, S. (2016). The coalition government and social policy. In H. Bochel & M. Powell (Eds.), *The coalition government, the general election and the policy ratchet in education: a reflection on the ‘ghosts’ of policy past, present and yet to come* (pp. 125-149). Bristol University Press.
- Bailey, P. L. (2013). The policy dispositif: historical formation and method. *Journal of Education Policy*, 28(6), 807-827.
- Ball, S. (1993). What is policy? Texts, trajectories and toolboxes. *The Australian Journal of Education Studies*, 13(2), 10-17.
- Ball, S. (2009). The governance turn! *The Journal of Education Policy*, 24(5), 537-538.
- Ball, S. (2012). *Performativity and fragmentation in ‘postmodern schooling’*. Routledge.
- Ball, S. (2015). What is policy? 21 years later: Reflections on the possibilities of policy research. *Discourse: Studies in the cultural politics of education*, 36(3), 306-313.

- Ball, S. (2016). Subjectivity as a site of struggle: refusing neoliberalism? *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 37(8), 1129-1146.
- Ball, S. (2018a). Global Education Policy: reform and profit. *Revista de Estudios Teóricos y Epistemológicos en Política Educativa*, 3, 1-15.
- Ball, S. (2018b). The tragedy of state education in England: Reluctance, compromise and muddle—a system in disarray. *Journal of the British Academy*, 6(1), 207-238.
- Ball, S. (2021a). *The education debate*. Policy Press.
- Ball, S. (2021b). Response: policy? Policy research? How absurd? *Critical studies in education*, 62(3), 387-393.
- Ball, S., Maguire, M., Braun, A., Perryman, J., & Hoskins, K. (2012). Assessment technologies in schools: 'Deliverology' and the 'play of dominations'. *Research Papers in Education*, 27(5), 513-533.
- Ball, S. J., & Olmedo, A. (2013). Care of the self, resistance and subjectivity under neoliberal governmentalities. *Critical studies in education*, 54(1), 85-96.
- Barley, R. (2011). Why familiarise? *Social Research Update*(62), 1-4.
- Barley, R. (2013). *An anthropological exploration of identity and social interaction in a multi-ethnic classroom*. Sheffield Hallam University.
- Barley, R., & Bath, C. (2014). The importance of familiarisation when doing research with young children. *Ethnography and education*, 9(2), 182-195.
- Barley, R., & Merchant, G. (2016). 'The naughty person': exploring dynamic aspects of identity and children's discourses before and during the Libyan Uprising. *Childhood*, 23(4), 477-491.
- Barozzi, S., & Ojeda, J. R. G. (2014). Discussing sexual identities with pre-service primary school English-language teachers from a Spanish context. *Perspectives in Education*, 32(3), 131-145.
- Bartlett, L., & Varvus, F. (2016). *Rethinking case study research: A comparative approach*. . Routledge
- Bartram, B. (2019). Using questionnaires. In M. Lambert (Ed.), *Practical Research Methods in Education* (pp. 1-11). Routledge.
- Baumgartner, F. R., & Jones, B. D. (1991). Agenda dynamics and policy subsystems. *The journal of Politics*, 53(4), 1044-1074.
- BBC. (2019, March 1). *Pupils kept home from Birmingham Parkfield LGBT row school*. BBC. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-birmingham-47421624>
- BBC. (2023, February 13). *Brianna Ghey: Boy and girl arrested over Warrington park killing*. BBC. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-manchester-64620539>
- Beauvallet, A. (2021). Relationships Education in English Primary Schools: Squaring the Circle of Equality in the Early 21st Century. *Observatoire de la société britannique*(26), 193-217.

- Beck, M. J. (2020). "It began with me": an exploration of exemplary school counselor and principal experiences with LGBT students. *Journal of LGBT Youth*, 17(4), 432-452.
- Berlant, L. (1997). The Queen of America Goes to Washington City: Notes on Diva Citizenship. In L. Berlant (Ed.), *The Queen of America Goes to Washington City* (pp. 221-246). Duke University Press.
- Berlant, L., & Warner, M. (1995). Guest column: What does queer theory teach us about X? *pmla*, 110(3), 343-349.
- Berlant, L., & Warner, M. (1998). Sex in public. *Critical inquiry*, 24(2), 547-566.
- Bird, N. (2022, February 6). *Doctor murder: Hundreds at Gary Jenkins Cardiff vigil*. BBC. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-60281563>
- Blackburn, M. V., & Clark, C. T. (2011). Becoming readers of literature with LGBT themes: In and out of classrooms. In S. Wolf, K. Coats, P. Enciso, & C. Jenkins (Eds.), *Handbook of research on children's and young adult literature* (pp. 148-163). Routledge.
- Blair, E. (2015). A reflexive exploration of two qualitative data coding techniques. *Journal of Methods and Measurement in the Social Sciences*, 6(1), 14-29.
- Blatchford, P. (2005). A Multi-method approach to the study of school class size differences. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 8(3), 195-205.
- Blommaert, J. (2005). Key topics in sociolinguistics. *Reino Unido: Cambridge*.
- Blum, L. (2010). Secularism, multiculturalism and same-sex marriage: A comment on Brenda Almond's 'Education for tolerance'. *Journal of Moral Education*, 39(2), 145-160.
- Blumell, L. E., Huemmer, J., & Sternadori, M. (2019). Protecting the ladies: Benevolent sexism, heteronormativity, and partisanship in online discussions of gender-neutral bathrooms. *Mass Communication and Society*, 22(3), 365-388.
- Blumenfeld, W. J., & Breen, M. S. (2017). *Butler matters: Judith Butler's impact on feminist and queer studies*. Routledge.
- Blyth, C., & Carson, I. (2007). Sexual uncertainties and disabled young men: Silencing difference within the classroom. *Pastoral Care in Education*, 25(3), 34-38.
- Borg, J. (2015). *The narrative of gay male teachers in contemporary catholic Malta University of Sheffield*].
- Bower-Brown, S., Zadeh, S., & Jadvá, V. (2023). Binary-trans, non-binary and gender-questioning adolescents' experiences in UK schools. *Journal of LGBT Youth*, 20(1), 74-92.
- Bower-Phipps, L. (2020). Responding to Heteronormativity: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Asexual Preservice Teachers' Dreams and Fears. *Current Issues in Education*, 21(1).
- Boyer, K., & Wood, I. (2023). Sexual health activism: the motivations of near-peer volunteer educators working to promote positive understandings of gender and sexuality in UK secondary schools. *Culture, Health & Sexuality*, 25(9), 1244-1258.

- Bragg, S., Renold, E., Ringrose, J., & Jackson, C. (2018). 'More than boy, girl, male, female': Exploring young people's views on gender diversity within and beyond school contexts. *Sex Education, 18*(4), 420-434.
- Brah, A. (2005). *Cartographies of diaspora: Contesting identities*. routledge.
- Brandelli Costa, A. (2019). Formal comment on: Parent reports of adolescents and young adults perceived to show signs of a rapid onset of gender dysphoria. *PLoS One, 14*(3), e0212578.
- Braun, A., Maguire, M., & Ball, S. (2010). Policy enactments in the UK secondary school: Examining policy, practice and school positioning. *Journal of Education Policy, 25*(4), 547-560.
- Braverman, S. (2022a, August 10). *Keynote Speech by Rt Hon Suella Braverman QC MP – Equalities and Rights: Conflict and the Need for Clarity*. <https://policyexchange.org.uk/pxevents/keynote-speech-by-rt-hon-suella-braverman-mp/>
- Braverman, S. (2022b, August 10). *Speech: Equalities and rights: Conflict and the need for clarity: Attorney General Suella Braverman spoke at Policy Exchange about equalities and human rights*. Policy Exchange. <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/equalities-and-rights-conflict-and-the-need-for-clarity>
- Brewer, J., & Hunter, A. (2006). *Foundations of multimethod research: Synthesizing styles*. Sage.
- Britzman, D. P. (1995). Is there a queer pedagogy? Or, stop reading straight. *Educational Theory, 45*(2), 151-165.
- Brown, P. (1990). The 'Third Wave': Education and the Ideology of Parentocracy." *British Journal of Sociology of Education, 11*(1), 65-86.
- Browne, K. (2008). Selling my queer soul or queering quantitative research? *Sociological Research Online, 13*(1), 200-214.
- Browne, K., Brown, G., & Nash, C. J. (2021). Geography and sexuality II: Homonormativity and heteroactivism. *Progress in Human Geography, 45*(5), 1320-1328.
- Browne, K., & Nash, C. (2017). Heteroactivism: Beyond anti-gay. *ACME: An International Journal for Critical Geographies, 16*(4), 643-652.
- Browne, K., & Nash, C. (2020). Heteroactivism. *lambda nordica, 25*(1), 72-80.
- Browne, K., & Nash, C. J. (2010). *Queer methods and methodologies: Intersecting queer theories and social science research*. Taylor & Francis.
- Browne, K., & Nash, C. J. (2023). From Hegemonic to Where? The Public Spatialities of Shifting Positionings for Those Who Are Opposed to/Concerned About Socio-Legal Changes in Sexual and Genders. *Tijdschrift voor economische en sociale geografie, 114*(4), 271-288.
- Bruhm, S., & Hurley, N. (2004). *Curiouser: On the queerness of children*. University of Minnesota Press.

- Bryman, A. (2006). Integrating quantitative and qualitative research: how is it done? *Qualitative research*, 6(1), 97-113.
- Bryman, A. (2016). *Social research methods*. Oxford university press.
- Buckingham, D. (2013). *Beyond technology: Children's learning in the age of digital culture*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Busher, H. (2019). Ethical research practice in educational institutions: Engaging with vulnerable participants. In H. Busher & A. Fox (Eds.), *Implementing Ethics in Educational Ethnography* (pp. 64-76). Routledge.
- Buston, K., & Hart, G. (2001). Heterosexism and homophobia in Scottish school sex education: Exploring the nature of the problem. *Journal of adolescence*, 24(1), 95-109.
- Butler, J. (1986). Sex and gender in Simone de Beauvoir's *Second Sex*. *Yale French Studies*(72), 35-49.
- Butler, J. (1990). *Gender trouble: Feminism and the subversion of identity*. Routledge.
- Butler, J. (1993). *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex*. Routledge.
- Butler, J. (1994). Interview by Peter Osborne and Lynne Segal, London, 1993. *Radical Philosophy*, 67, 32-39.
- Butler, J. (1997). Against Proper Objects. In E. Weed & N. Schor (Eds.), *Feminism meets queer theory* (Vol. 2). Indiana University Press.
- Butler, J. (2013). Imitation and Gender Insubordination. In D. Fuss (Ed.), *Inside/Out: Lesbian Theories, Gay Theories*. Routledge.
- Cahnmann-Taylor, M., Coda, J., & Jiang, L. (2022). Queer is as queer does: Queer L2 pedagogy in teacher education. *Tesol Quarterly*, 56(1), 130-153.
- Callaghan, T. D. (2015). Doctrinal Disciplining of Queer Educators in Canadian Catholic Schools. *Canadian Journal of Educational Administration and Policy*, 173, 9-27.
- Callis, A. S. (2009). Playing with Butler and Foucault: Bisexuality and queer theory. *Journal of Bisexuality*, 9(3-4), 213-233.
- Campos, D. (2017). Battling the bullying of LGBTQ students. *Social Education*, 81(5), 288-295.
- Capuzza, J. C., & Spencer, L. G. (2017). Regressing, progressing, or transgressing on the small screen? Transgender characters on US scripted television series. *Communication quarterly*, 65(2), 214-230.
- Caraves, J. (2018). Straddling the school-to-prison pipeline and gender non-conforming microaggressions as a Latina lesbian. *Journal of LGBT Youth*, 15(1), 52-69.
- Carlile, M. (2020a). The experiences of transgender and non-binary children and young people and their parents in healthcare settings in England, UK: Interviews with members of a family support group. *International Journal of Transgender Health*, 21(1), 16-32.
- Carlile, M. (2020b). Teacher experiences of LGBTQ-inclusive education in primary schools serving faith communities in England, UK. *Pedagogy, Culture & Society*, 28(4), 625-644.
- Carlile, M., Butteriss, E., & Sansfaçon, A. P. (2021). "It's like my kid came back overnight": Experiences of trans and non-binary young people and their families seeking, finding

- and engaging with clinical care in England. *International Journal of Transgender Health*, 22(4), 412-424.
- Carlile, M., & Paechter, C. (2018). *LGBTQI parented families and schools: Visibility, representation, and pride*. Routledge.
- Carney, S. (2009). Negotiating policy in an age of globalization: Exploring educational “policyscapes” in Denmark, Nepal, and China. *Comparative education review*, 53(1), 63-88.
- Carrera, M. V., DePalma, R., & Lameiras, M. (2012). Sex/gender identity: Moving beyond fixed and ‘natural’ categories. *Sexualities*, 15(8), 995-1016.
- Catholic Education Service. (2019). *A model policy for relationships and sex education 2020*. Catholic Education Service. <http://catholiceducation.org.uk/schools/relationship-sex-education>
- Cavanagh, S. L. (2008). Sex in the lesbian teacher's closet: The hybrid proliferation of queers in school. *Discourse: Studies in the cultural politics of education*, 29(3), 387-399.
- Chomsky, N., & Foucault, M. (2015). *The Chomsky-Foucault debate: on human nature*. The New Press.
- Clarence-Smith, L. (2023). *School that allowed child to identify as cat faces government investigation*. The Telegraph. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2023/06/20/rye-college-children-neo-pronouns-cats-moons-rishi-sunak/>
- Clark, C. T., & Blackburn, M. V. (2009). Reading LGBT-themed literature with young people: What's possible? *English Journal*, 98(4), 25-32.
- Clark-Gordon, C. V., Bowman, N. D., Goodboy, A. K., & Wright, A. (2019). Anonymity and online self-disclosure: A meta-analysis. *Communication Reports*, 32(2), 98-111.
- Clarke, G. (1996). Conforming and contesting with (a) difference: How lesbian students and teachers manage their identities. *International studies in sociology of education*, 6(2), 191-209.
- Cloughessy, K., & Waniganayake, M. (2019). Lesbian parents’ perceptions of children’s picture books featuring same-sex parented families. *Early Years*, 39(2), 118-131.
- Coda, J. (2023). Learning the rules and then disrupting them: LGBTQ Spanish language teachers’ resistance to heteronormativity. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 122, 1-10.
- Coletta, J. (2018). The missing B word: Compulsory binarization and bisexual representation in children’s literature. *Jeunesse: Young People, Texts, Cultures*, 10(1), 85-108.
- Coll, L., O’Sullivan, M., & Enright, E. (2018). ‘The Trouble with Normal’:(re) imagining sexuality education with young people. *Sex Education*, 18(2), 157-171.
- Collier, D., & Elman, C. (2008). Qualitative and multi-method research: Organizations, publication, and reflections on integration. *The Oxford Handbook of Political Methodology*, 779-795.
- Connell, C. (2014). *School's out: Gay and lesbian teachers in the classroom*. University of California Press.

- Connell, C. (2015). Pride and prejudice and professionalism. *Contexts*, 14(4), 32-37.
- Corteen, K. M. (2006). Schools' fulfilment of sex and relationship education documentation: three school-based case studies. *Sex Education*, 6(1), 77-99.
- Cotterill, P., & Letherby, G. (1993). Weaving stories: Personal auto/biographies in feminist research. *Sociology*, 27(1), 67-79.
- Crawford, C. E. (2017). Promoting 'fundamental British values' in schools: a critical race perspective. *Curriculum Perspectives*, 37, 197-204.
- Cremonesi, L., Irrera, O., Lorenzini, D., & Tazzioli, M. (2016). *Foucault and the Making of Subjects*. Rowman & Littlefield.
- Creswell, J. W., Hanson, W. E., Clark Plano, V. L., & Morales, A. (2007). Qualitative research designs: Selection and implementation. *The counseling psychologist*, 35(2), 236-264.
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2016). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. Sage.
- Cullen, F., & Sandy, L. (2009). Lesbian Cinderella and other stories: Telling tales and researching sexualities equalities in primary school. *Sex Education*, 9(2), 141-154.
- Cumming-Potvin, W., & Martino, W. (2018). The policyscape of transgender equality and gender diversity in the Western Australian education system: A case study. *Gender and Education*, 30(6), 715-735.
- Cumper, P., Adams, S., Onyejekwe, K., & O'Reilly, M. (2023). Teachers' perspectives on relationships and sex education lessons in England. *Sex Education*, 1-17.
- Cuthbert, K., & Taylor, Y. (2019). Queer liveability: Inclusive church-scenes. *Sexualities*, 22(5-6), 951-968.
- Cutler, B. (2022). 'Just wear their hate with pride': A phenomenological autoethnography of a gay beginning teacher in a rural school. *Sex Education*, 23(4), 1-16.
- Davies, A. W., Vipond, E., & King, A. (2019). Gender binary washrooms as a means of gender policing in schools: A Canadian perspective. *Gender and Education*, 31(7), 866-885.
- Davis, G. (2021). 'Gay Sex Kits' Lessons in the History of British Sex Education. *Third Text*, 35(1), 145-160.
- Day, J. K., Fish, J. N., Grossman, A. H., & Russell, S. T. (2020). Gay-straight alliances, inclusive policy, and school climate: LGBTQ youths' experiences of social support and bullying. *Journal of research on adolescence*, 30, 418-430.
- Day, J. K., Ioverno, S., & Russell, S. T. (2019). Safe and supportive schools for LGBT youth: Addressing educational inequities through inclusive policies and practices. *Journal of school psychology*, 74, 29-43.
- de Villiers, C., Farooq, M. B., & Molinari, M. (2022). Qualitative research interviews using online video technology—challenges and opportunities. *Meditari Accountancy Research*, 30(6), 1764-1782.
- Deggs, D., Grover, K., & Kacirek, K. (2010). Using message boards to conduct online focus groups. *The Qualitative Report*, 15(4), 1027-1036.

- Deleuze, G. (1992). What is a dispositif? In T. Armstrong (Ed.), *Michel Foucault: Philosopher* (pp. 159-168). Harvester Wheatsheaf.
- Dennis, B. (2018). Tales of working without/against a compass: Rethinking ethical dilemmas in educational ethnography. *The Wiley handbook of ethnography of education*, 51-70.
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2008). *Introduction: The discipline and practice of qualitative research. The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*. . Sage.
- DePalma, R. (2011). The no outsiders project: In search of queer primary pedagogies. *Transformations: The Journal of Inclusive Scholarship and Pedagogy*, 21(2), 47-58.
- DePalma, R. (2016). Gay penguins, sissy ducklings... and beyond? Exploring gender and sexuality diversity through children's literature. *Discourse: Studies in the cultural politics of education*, 37(6), 828-845.
- DePalma, R., & Atkinson, E. (2006). The sound of silence: Talking about sexual orientation and schooling. *Sex Education*, 6(4), 333-349.
- DePalma, R., & Atkinson, E. (2009a). 'No outsiders': Moving beyond a discourse of tolerance to challenge heteronormativity in primary schools. *British Educational Research Journal*, 35(6), 837-855.
- DePalma, R., & Atkinson, E. (2009b). "Permission to talk about it" narratives of sexual equality in the primary classroom. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 15(5), 876-892.
- DePalma, R., & Atkinson, E. (2010). The nature of institutional heteronormativity in primary schools and practice-based responses. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 26(8), 1669-1676.
- DePalma, R., & Jennett, M. (2010). Homophobia, transphobia and culture: Deconstructing heteronormativity in English primary schools. *Intercultural Education*, 21(1), 15-26.
- Department for Children Schools and Families. (2007). *Homophobic Bullying. Safe to Learn: Embedding anti-bullying work in schools*. DCSF Publications.
- Department for Education. (2013a). *The national curriculum in England: Key stages 1 and 2 framework document* Department for Education.
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/425601/PRIMARY_national_curriculum.pdf
- Department for Education. (2013b, July). *Reform of the national curriculum in England Equalities impact assessment*. Department for Education.
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/211061/Equalities_impact_assessment_-_FINAL_v3.pdf
- Department for Education. (2015a, May 6). *National curriculum in England: primary curriculum*. Department for Education.
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-curriculum-in-england-primary-curriculum>

Department for Education. (2015b, May 5). *National curriculum in England: science programmes of study*. Department for Education. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-curriculum-in-england-science-programmes-of-study/national-curriculum-in-england-science-programmes-of-study>

Department for Education. (2017a, December 17). *Education Secretary launches RSE call for evidence*. Department for Education. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/education-secretary-launches-rse-call-for-evidence>

Department for Education. (2017b, March 1). *Policy Statement: relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education, and personal, Social, Health and Economic Education*. Department for Education. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-rse-and-pshe>

Department for Education. (2018a, June 13). *Approaches to preventing and tackling bullying: Case studies*. Department for Education. [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/715359/Approaches to preventing and tackling bullying - case studies.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/715359/Approaches_to_preventing_and_tackling_bullying_-_case_studies.pdf)

Department for Education. (2018b, June 28). *The Equality Act 2010 and schools*. Department for Education. Retrieved 3 March 2024 from <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/equality-act-2010-advice-for-schools>

Department for Education. (2018c, July 19). *Relationships education, relationships and sex education, and health education in England Government consultation (including call for evidence response)*. Department for Education. https://consult.education.gov.uk/pshe/relationships-education-rse-health-education/supporting_documents/180718%20Consultation_call%20for%20evidence%20response_policy%20statement.pdf

Department for Education. (2019a, October 10). *Guidance: Primary school disruption over LGBT teaching/relationships education*. Department for Education. Retrieved 3 March 2024 from <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/managing-issues-with-lgbt-teaching-advice-for-local-authorities/primary-school-disruption-over-lgbt-teachingrelationships-education>

Department for Education. (2019b, October 10). *Parental engagement on relationships education*. Department for Education. Retrieved 3 March 2024 from https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/884450/Parental_engagement_on_relationships_education.pdf

Department for Education. (2019c, November 5). *Promotional material. Relationships, sex and health education: guides for parents. Guides for parents of primary and secondary age pupils that schools can use to communicate with them about teaching relationships and health education.* Department for Education. Retrieved 3 March 2024 from <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-sex-and-health-education-guides-for-schools>

Department for Education. (2019d, 25 June). *Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education: Statutory guidance for governing bodies, proprietors, head teachers, principals, senior leadership teams, teachers* Department for Education. Retrieved 3 March 2024 from [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1090195/Relationships Education RSE and Health Education.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1090195/Relationships_Education_RSE_and_Health_Education.pdf)

Department for Education. (2019e, February). *Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education, and Health Education in England. Government consultation response* Department for Education. Retrieved 3 March 2024 from [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/780768/Government Response to RSE Consultation.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/780768/Government_Response_to_RSE_Consultation.pdf)

Department for Education. (2020a). *Get Information about Schools.* Department for Education. <https://get-information-schools.service.gov.uk/>

Department for Education. (2020b, July 9). *Government response: Relationships education, relationships and sex education (RSE) and health education: FAQs.* Department for Education. Retrieved 3 March 2024 from <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education-faqs>

Department for Education. (2020c, December 1). *Guidance: Teacher training: families. Practical training materials for primary and secondary schools to use to train staff to teach about families*

. Department for Education. Retrieved 3 March 2024 from <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/teacher-training-families>

Department for Education. (2020d, September 24). *Guidance: Teacher training: respectful relationships* Department for Education. Retrieved 3 March 2024 from <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/teacher-training-respectful-relationships>

Department for Education. (2021). *Annex B: resources for Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education.* . Department for Education. Retrieved 13 September from

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education/annex-b-resources-for-relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education>

Department for Education. (2022a, February 17). *Guidance: Plan your relationships, sex and health curriculum. Information to help school leaders plan, develop and implement the new statutory curriculum.* Department for Education. Retrieved 3 March 2024 from <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/plan-your-relationships-sex-and-health-curriculum#dealing-with-sensitive-issues>

Department for Education. (2022b, February 17). *Guidance: Plan your relationships, sex and health curriculum. Information to help school leaders plan, develop and implement the new statutory curriculum.* <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/plan-your-relationships-sex-and-health-curriculum#dealing-with-sensitive-issues>

Department for Education. (2022c, February 17). *Guidance: Political impartiality in schools.* Department for Education. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/political-impartiality-in-schools/political-impartiality-in-schools#teaching-about-political-issues>

Department for Education. (2023a, December 19). *Gender Questioning Children. Non-statutory guidance for schools and colleges in England. Draft for consultation.* Department for Education. https://consult.education.gov.uk/equalities-political-impartiality-anti-bullying-team/gender-questioning-children-proposed-guidance/supporting_documents/Gender%20Questioning%20Children%20%20nonstatutory%20guidance.pdf

Department for Education. (2023b, 19 December). *Parent first approach at the core of new guidance on gender questioning children.* Department for Education. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/parent-first-approach-at-the-core-of-new-guidance-on-gender-questioning-children#:~:text=The%20draft%20guidance%20clarifies%20that,before%20any%20decision%20is%20taken>.

Department for Education. (2023c, March 31). *Review of relationships, sex and health education to protect children to conclude by end of year.* Department for Education. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/review-of-relationships-sex-and-health-education-to-protect-children-to-conclude-by-end-of-year>

Department for Education. (2023d, October 24). *Sex education: What is RSHE and can parents access curriculum materials?* Department for Education. <https://educationhub.blog.gov.uk/2023/10/24/rshe-relationships-health-sex-education-review-curriculum-to-protect-children/>

- Department for Education and Employment. (2000, July). *Sex and Relationship Education Guidance*. Department for Education and Employment. <http://www.educationengland.org.uk/documents/dfes/2000-sex-education.pdf>
- Department for Education and Skills. (2002). *Bullying Don't Suffer in Silence: An Anti-Bullying Pack for schools*. Department for Education and Skills. <https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/ukgwa/20030731074342/http://www.dfes.gov.uk:80/bullying/pack/02.pdf>
- Department for the Environment. (1987). Circular 11/87 (1987) Sex Education at School. In: Department for the Environment.
- Derksen, M., & Field, S. (2022). The tone debate: Knowledge, self, and social order. *Review of general psychology*, 26(2), 172-183.
- Diaz, E. M., Kosciw, J. G., & Greytak, E. A. (2010). School connectedness for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth: In-school victimization and institutional supports. *The Prevention Researcher*, 17(3), 15-18.
- Diem, S., Young, M. D., & Sampson, C. (2019). Where critical policy meets the politics of education: An introduction. *Educational Policy*, 33(1), 3-15.
- Dillabough, J.-A., & Arnot, M. (2001). Feminist sociology of education: dynamics, debates and directions. In J. Demaine (Ed.), *Sociology of education today* (pp. 30-48). Palgrave Macmillan.
- Dryzek, J. S. (2002). A post-positivist policy-analytic travelogue. *The Good Society*, 11(1), 32-36.
- Duffy, B., Fotinatos, N., Smith, A., & Burke, J. (2013). Puberty, health and sexual education in Australian regional primary schools: Year 5 and 6 teacher perceptions. *Sex Education*, 13(2), 186-203.
- Duffy, B., Hewlett, K., Murkin, G., Benson, R., Hesketh, R., Page, B., Skinner, G., & Gottfried, G. (2021). *Culture wars in the UK: how the public understand the debate*. Kings College London.
- Duggan, L. (2002). The new homonormativity: The sexual politics of neoliberalism. *Materializing democracy: Toward a revitalized cultural politics*, 10, 175-194.
- Duggan, L. (2012). *The twilight of equality?: Neoliberalism, cultural politics, and the attack on democracy*. Beacon Press.
- Dunlop, L., & Rushton, E. A. (2022). Putting climate change at the heart of education: Is England's strategy a placebo for policy? *British Educational Research Journal*, 48(6), 1083-1101.
- Dunne, P. (2019). Brexit: the likely impact on sexual orientation and gender identity rights in the United Kingdom. *Gender and Queer Perspectives on Brexit*, 273-302.
- Dunne, P. (2020). Transgender rights in Europe: EU and Council of Europe movements towards gender identity equality. In C. Ashford & A. Maine (Eds.), *Research handbook on gender, sexuality and the law* (pp. 134-147). Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Duong, K. (2012). What does queer theory teach us about intersectionality? *Politics & Gender*, 8(3), 370-386.

- Duran, A., & Coloma, R. S. (2023). Queer Joy as an Affective Incitement to Queer and Trans Studies in Education. In K. Strunk & S. Shelton (Eds.), *Bridging the Rainbow Gap* (pp. 109-124). Brill.
- Durwood, L., McLaughlin, K. A., & Olson, K. R. (2017). Mental health and self-worth in socially transitioned transgender youth. *Journal of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry, 56*(2), 116-123. e112.
- Dyar, C., Feinstein, B. A., & Anderson, R. E. (2021). An experimental investigation of victim blaming in sexual assault: The roles of victim sexual orientation, coercion type, and stereotypes about bisexual women. *Journal of interpersonal violence, 36*(21-22), 10793-10816.
- Dyer, H. (2019). *The queer aesthetics of childhood: Asymmetries of innocence and the cultural politics of child development*. Rutgers University Press.
- Dykes, F. O., & Delpont, J. L. (2018). Our voices count: The lived experiences of LGBTQ educators and its impact on teacher education preparation programs. *Teaching Education, 29*(2), 135-146.
- Earnshaw, V. A., Menino, D. D., Sava, L. M., Perrotti, J., Barnes, T. N., Humphrey, D., & Reisner, S. (2020). LGBTQ bullying: A qualitative investigation of student and school health professional perspectives. *Journal of LGBT Youth, 17*(3), 280-297.
- Eckerdal, J. R., & Hagström, C. (2017). Qualitative questionnaires as a method for information studies research. *The University of Borås, Sweden*
- Elia, J. (2010). Bisexuality and school culture: School as a prime site for bi-intervention. *Journal of Bisexuality, 10*(4), 452-471.
- Elia, J., & Eliason, M. (2010). Dangerous omissions: Abstinence-only-until-marriage school-based sexuality education and the betrayal of LGBTQ youth. *American Journal of Sexuality Education, 5*(1), 17-35.
- Elia, J., & Eliason, M. (2010). Discourses of exclusion: Sexuality education's silencing of sexual others. *Journal of LGBT Youth, 7*(1), 29-48.
- Elia, J., & Tokunaga, J. (2015). Sexuality education: implications for health, equity, and social justice in the United States. *Health Education, 115*(1), 105-120.
- Ellis, S. J., & Bentham, R. M. (2021). Inclusion of LGBTIQ perspectives in school-based sexuality education in Aotearoa/New Zealand: An exploratory study. *Sex Education, 21*(6), 708-722.
- Endo, H., Reece-Miller, P. C., & Santavicca, N. (2010). Surviving in the trenches: A narrative inquiry into queer teachers' experiences and identity. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 26*(4), 1023-1030.
- Engdahl, U. (2014). Wrong body. *Transgender Studies Quarterly, 1*(1-2), 267-269.
- Epps, B., Markowski, M., & Cleaver, K. (2023). A rapid review and narrative synthesis of the consequences of non-inclusive sex education in UK schools on lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning young people. *The Journal of School Nursing, 39*(1), 87-97.
- Epstein, B. (2013). *Are the Kids All Right?: Representations of LGBTQ Characters in Children's and Young Adult Literature*. Intellect Books.

- Epstein, B. (2014). "The Case of the Missing Bisexuals": Bisexuality in Books for Young Readers. *Journal of Bisexuality*, 14(1), 110-125.
- Equality and Human Rights Commission. (2014, March 24). *The Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013: The Equality and Human Rights Implications for the Provision of School Education*. Equality and Human Rights Commission. <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/publication-download/marriage-same-sex-couples-act-2013-provision-school-education>
- Estes, M. L. (2017). "If There's One Benefit, You're not Going to Get Pregnant": the Sexual Mis education of Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Individuals. *Sex Roles*, 77, 615-627.
- Evans, N. J., & Broido, E. M. (1999). Coming out in college residence halls: Negotiation, meaning making, challenges, supports. *Journal of College Student Development*, 40(6), 658-668.
- Evert, J. (2007). *Pure Manhood*. Catholic Answers
- Exley, S., & Ball, S. (2013). Neo-liberalism and English education. In *Neo-liberal Educational Reforms* (pp. 13-31). Routledge.
- Fadyl, J. K., Nicholls, D. A., & McPherson, K. M. (2013). Interrogating discourse: The application of Foucault's methodological discussion to specific inquiry. *Health*, 17(5), 478-494.
- Fahie, D. (2017). Faith of our fathers—lesbian, gay and bisexual teachers' attitudes towards the teaching of religion in Irish denominational primary schools. *Irish Educational Studies*, 36(1), 9-24.
- Fairclough, N. (1993). Critical discourse analysis and the marketization of public discourse: The universities. *Discourse & society*, 4(2), 133-168.
- Fairclough, N. (2001a). Critical discourse analysis as a method in social scientific research. *Methods of critical discourse analysis*, 5(11), 121-138.
- Fairclough, N. (2001b). *Language and power*. Pearson Education.
- Fairclough, N. (2003). *Analysing discourse: Textual analysis for social research*. Psychology Press.
- Fairclough, N. (2013). *Critical discourse analysis: The critical study of language*. Routledge.
- Farrelly, G., O'Higgins Norman, J., & O'Leary, M. (2017). Custodians of silences? School principal perspectives on the incidence and nature of homophobic bullying in primary schools in Ireland. *Irish Educational Studies*, 36(2), 151-167.
- Fedewa, A. L., & Ahn, S. (2011). The effects of bullying and peer victimization on sexual-minority and heterosexual youths: A quantitative meta-analysis of the literature. *Journal of GLBT Family Studies*, 7(4), 398-418.
- Ferfolja, T. (2009). State of the field review: Stories so far: An overview of the research on lesbian teachers. *Sexualities*, 12(3), 378-396.
- Ferfolja, T. (2010). Lesbian teachers, harassment and the workplace. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 26(3), 408-414.

- Few-Demo, A. L., Humble, A. M., Curran, M. A., & Lloyd, S. A. (2016). Queer theory, intersectionality, and LGBT-parent families: Transformative critical pedagogy in family theory. *Journal of Family Theory & Review*, 8(1), 74-94.
- Field, S. M., & Derksen, M. (2021). Experimenter as automaton; experimenter as human: exploring the position of the researcher in scientific research. *European Journal for Philosophy of Science*, 11(1), 11.
- Fields, X., & Wotipka, C. M. (2022). Effect of LGBT anti-discrimination laws on school climate and outcomes for lesbian, gay, and bisexual high school students. *Journal of LGBT Youth*, 19(3), 307-329.
- Filippakou, O. (2023). Higher education and the myth of neutrality: Rethinking the cultural politics of research in the age of instrumental rationality. *Review of Education, Pedagogy, and Cultural Studies*, 45(1), 77-89.
- Fine, G. A. (1993). Ten lies of ethnography: Moral dilemmas of field research. *Journal of contemporary ethnography*, 22(3), 267-294.
- Fink, N. (2017). *Frida Kahlo for Girls and Boys*. Books del Sur.
- Fisher, C. M. (2009). Queer youth experiences with abstinence-only-until-marriage sexuality education: "I can't get married so where does that leave me?". *Journal of LGBT Youth*, 6(1), 61-79.
- Flanders, C. E., LeBreton, M. E., Robinson, M., Bian, J., & Caravaca-Morera, J. A. (2017). Defining bisexuality: Young bisexual and pansexual people's voices. *Journal of Bisexuality*, 17(1), 39-57.
- Florian, L. (2019). On the necessary co-existence of special and inclusive education. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 23(7-8), 691-704.
- Formby, E. (2015). Limitations of focussing on homophobic, biphobic and transphobic 'bullying' to understand and address LGBT young people's experiences within and beyond school. *Sex Education*, 15(6), 626-640.
- Formby, E. (2017). *Exploring LGBT spaces and communities: Contrasting identities, belongings and wellbeing*. Routledge.
- Formby, E., Coldwell, M., Stiell, B., Demack, S., Stevens, A., Shipton, L., Wolstenholme, C., & Willis, B. (2011). *Personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education: a mapping study of the prevalent models of delivery and their effectiveness*. Sheffield Hallam University.
- Formby, E., & Donovan, C. (2020). Sex and relationships education for LGBT+ young people: Lessons from UK youth work. *Sexualities*, 23(7), 1155-1178.
- Fotopoulou, A. (2012). Intersectionality queer studies and hybridity: Methodological frameworks for social research. *Journal of International Women's Studies*, 13(2), 19-32.
- Foucault, M. (1971). Orders of discourse. *Social science information*, 10(2), 7-30.
- Foucault, M. (1972). *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. Routledge.
- Foucault, M. (1975). *Discipline and Punish*. Penguin Random House.
- Foucault, M. (1978). *The History of Sexuality Volume 1*. Random House.

- Foucault, M. (1980). *Power/knowledge: Selected interviews and other writings, 1972-1977*. Vintage.
- Foucault, M. (1982a). *Hubert Dreyfus & Paul Rabinow. Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*. University of Chicago Press.
- Foucault, M. (1982b). The Subject and Power. *Critical inquiry*, 8(4), 777-795.
- Foucault, M. (1997). *Ethics: subjectivity and truth: essential works of Michel Foucault 1954-1984*. Penguin UK.
- Foucault, M. (2020a). *The History of Sexuality: Volume 2. The Use of Pleasure*. . Penguin Random House.
- Foucault, M. (2020b). *The History of Sexuality: Volume 3. The Care of the Self*. Penguin Random House.
- Francis, D. A., & Reygan, F. (2016). 'Let's see if it won't go away by itself.'LGBT microaggressions among teachers in South Africa. *Education as Change*, 20(3), 180-201.
- Fuss, D. (2013). *Inside/out: Lesbian theories, gay theories*. Routledge.
- Gale, T. (2001). Critical policy sociology: Historiography, archaeology and genealogy as methods of policy analysis. *Journal of Education Policy*, 16(5), 379-393.
- Gallagher, M. (2009). Data Collection and Analysis. In E. Tisdall, J. Davis, & M. Gallagher (Eds.), *Researching with children and young people: Research design, methods and analysis* (pp. 65-127).
- Garland, D. (2014). What is a “history of the present”? On Foucault’s genealogies and their critical preconditions. *Punishment & society*, 16(4), 365-384.
- Garlen, J. C. (2019). Interrogating innocence: “Childhood” as exclusionary social practice. *Childhood*, 26(1), 54-67.
- Gavey, N. (2013). Feminist poststructuralism and discourse analysis. In M. Gergen & S. Davis (Eds.), *Toward a new psychology of gender* (pp. 49-64). Routledge.
- Geddes, M. (2007). Neoliberalism and Local Governance Cross-national Perspectives and Speculations. In J. Davies (Ed.), *Innovations in urban politics* (pp. 129-148). Routledge.
- Ghaziani, A., & Baldassarri, D. (2011). Cultural anchors and the organization of differences: A multi-method analysis of LGBT marches on Washington. *American Sociological Review*, 76(2), 179-206.
- Gillborn, D. (2008). Tony Blair and the politics of race in education: whiteness, doublethink and New Labour. *Oxford Review of Education*, 34(6), 713-725.
- Gillham, B. (2000). *Case study research methods*. Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Gillian, A. (2003, November 17). *Section 28 gone ... but not forgotten*. The Guardian. <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2003/nov/17/uk.gayrights>
- Gino, A. (2022). *Melissa*. Scholastic Press.
- Golden, D., Erdreich, L., Stefansen, K., & Smette, I. (2021). Class, education and parenting: cross-cultural perspectives. *42(4)*, 453-459.

- Goldman, R. (1996). Exploring norms around sexuality, race, and class in Queer theory. *Queer studies: A lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender anthology*, 169.
- Goldstein, T., Collins, A., & Halder, M. (2007). Anti-homophobia education in public schooling: A Canadian case study of policy implementation. *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Social Services*, 19(3-4), 47-66.
- Goodboy, A. K., & Martin, M. M. (2018). LGBT bullying in school: perspectives on prevention. *Communication Education*, 67(4), 513-520.
- Gove, M. (2012, January 26). *Letter to Brendan Barber*. <https://adam1cor.files.wordpress.com/2012/02/michael-gove-letter-260112.pdf>
- Government Equalities Office. (2018, July). *LGBT action plan: Improving the lives of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people*. Government Equalities Office. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/721367/GEO-LGBT-Action-Plan
- Government Equalities Office. (2019a). *Attitudes to equalities: the British Social Attitudes Survey 2017*. N. S. Research.
- Government Equalities Office. (2019b, July 4). *Policy Paper. LGBT Action Plan: Annual progress report 2018 to 2019*. Government Equalities Office. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/lgbt-action-plan-annual-progress-report-2018-to-2019/lgbt-action-plan-annual-progress-report-2018-to-2019>
- Gowen, L. K., & Wings-Yanez, N. (2014). Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and questioning youths' perspectives of inclusive school-based sexuality education. *The Journal of Sex Research*, 51(7), 788-800.
- Gower, A. L., Forster, M., Gloppen, K., Johnson, A. Z., Eisenberg, M. E., Connett, J. E., & Borowsky, I. W. (2018). School practices to foster LGBT-supportive climate: Associations with adolescent bullying involvement. *Prevention Science*, 19, 813-821.
- Grace, A. P., & Benson, F. J. (2000). Using autobiographical queer life narratives of teachers to connect personal, political and pedagogical spaces. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 4(2), 89-109.
- Graham, E. (1999). Breaking out: The opportunities and challenges of multi-method research in Population geography. *The Professional Geographer*, 51(1), 76-89.
- Grant, A. (2018). *Doing EXCELLENT social research with documents: Practical examples and guidance for qualitative researchers*. Routledge.
- Grant, R., & Nash, M. (2019). Educating queer sexual citizens? A feminist exploration of bisexual and queer young women's sex education in Tasmania, Australia. *Sex Education*, 19(3), 313-328.
- Gravesen, D. T., & Hølvig Mikkelsen, S. (2022). "It's not about the grades!" On shadow education in Denmark and how parents wish to help their children get ahead. *IJREE—International Journal for Research on Extended Education*, 9(2), 268-279.

- Gray, E. M. (2010). *'Miss, are you bisexual?': the (re) production of heteronormativity within schools and the negotiation of lesbian, gay and bisexual teachers' private and professional worlds* [Lancaster University].
- Gray, E. M. (2013). Coming out as a lesbian, gay or bisexual teacher: Negotiating private and professional worlds. *Sex Education, 13*(6), 702-714.
- Gray, E. M., Harris, A., & Jones, T. (2016). Australian LGBTQ teachers, exclusionary spaces and points of interruption. *Sexualities, 19*(3), 286-303.
- Gray, J., & Cooke, M. (2018). Intersectionality, language and queer lives. *Gender and Language, 12*(4), 401-415.
- Green, A. I. (2007). Queer theory and sociology: Locating the subject and the self in sexuality studies. *Sociological Theory, 25*(1), 26-45.
- Green, A. I. (2010). Remembering Foucault: Queer theory and disciplinary power. *Sexualities, 13*(3), 316-337.
- Greenland, K., & Nunney, R. (2008). The repeal of Section 28: it ain't over'til it's over. *Pastoral Care in Education, 26*(4), 243-251.
- Greer, K. (2022). Thinking about climate change education, policy and justice. *UCL*.
- Greer, K., King, H., & Glackin, M. (2023). The 'web of conditions' governing England's climate change education policy landscape. *Journal of Education Policy, 38*(1), 69-92.
- Greytak, E. A., Kosciw, J. G., & Boesen, M. J. (2013). Putting the "T" in "resource": The benefits of LGBT-related school resources for transgender youth. *Journal of LGBT Youth, 10*(1-2), 45-63.
- Grzanka, P. R. (2020). *Queer theory*. Sage.
- Gudmundsdottir, S. (1996). The teller, the tale, and the one being told: The narrative nature of the research interview. *Curriculum inquiry, 26*(3), 293-306.
- Gunn, V., & McAllister, C. (2013). Methods on the margins? Queer theory as method in higher education research. *International Perspectives on Higher Education Research, 9*, 155-174.
- Haack, D., Galupo, I., & Human, B. (2019). *Maiden & Princess*. Little Bee Books.
- Haack, D., & Lewis, S. (2018). *Prince & Knight*. Little Bee Books.
- Haack, D., & Lewis, S. (2021). *Prince & Knight: The Tale of the Shadow King* Little Bee Books
- Haddock, G., Zanna, M. P., & Esses, V. M. (1993). Assessing the structure of prejudicial attitudes: The case of attitudes toward homosexuals. *Journal of personality and social psychology, 65*(6), 1105.
- Hagai, E. B., & Zurbruggen, E. L. (2022). *Queer Theory and Psychology: Gender, Sexuality, and Transgender Identities*. Springer Nature.
- Hall, J. J. (2020). 'The Word Gay has been Banned but People use it in the Boys' Toilets whenever you go in': spatialising children's subjectivities in response to gender and sexualities education in English primary schools. *Social & Cultural Geography, 21*(2), 162-185.

- Hall, J. J. (2021). Permissible progress: Sexual (ities that) progress in and beyond English primary schools. *Environment and Planning C: Politics and Space*, 39(1), 53-73.
- Halperin, D. (1995). *Saint Foucault: Towards a gay hagiography*. . Oxford Press.
- Halperin, D. M. (1998). Forgetting Foucault: Acts, identities, and the history of sexuality. *Representations*, 63, 93-120.
- Halperin, D. M. (2002a). Homosexuality's closet. *Michigan Quarterly Review*, 41(1), 21-54.
- Halperin, D. M. (2002b). *How to do the history of homosexuality*. University of Chicago Press.
- Hammers, C., & Brown, A. D. (2004). Towards a feminist–queer alliance: a paradigmatic shift in the research process. *Social epistemology*, 18(1), 85-101.
- Hammersley, M. (2006). Ethnography: problems and prospects. *Ethnography and education*, 1(1), 3-14.
- Handcock, M. S., & Gile, K. (2011). Comment: On the concept of snowball sampling. *Sociological methodology*, 41(1), 367-371.
- Hanson, E. (2011). The future's eve: reparative reading after sedgwick. *South Atlantic Quarterly*, 110(1), 101-119.
- Hardy, I., & Lewis, S. (2017). The ‘doublethink’ of data: Educational performativity and the field of schooling practices. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 38(5), 671-685.
- Harris, R., Wilson-Daily, A. E., & Fuller, G. (2021). Exploring the secondary school experience of LGBT+ youth: an examination of school culture and school climate as understood by teachers and experienced by LGBT+ students. *Intercultural Education*, 32(4), 368-385.
- Harrison, W. C., & Hood-Williams, J. (2002). *Beyond sex and gender*. Sage.
- Haugaard, M. (2022). Foucault and Power: A Critique and Retheorization. *Critical Review*, 34(3), 1-31.
- Hawke, G. (2020). *Dangerous, vulnerable, authentic, normal, radical, powerful or none of the above?: how do LGBTQ primary school teachers in England negotiate their identities?* King's College London].
- Hawthorne, S. M. (2018). “Reparative Reading” as Queer Pedagogy. *Journal of feminist studies in religion*, 34(1), 155-160.
- Haywood, C., & Mac an Ghaill, M. (2012). ‘What's next for masculinity?’ Reflexive directions for theory and research on masculinity and education. *Gender and Education*, 24(6), 577-592.
- Heber, J. (2019, March 19). *Correcting the scientific record on gender incongruence – and an apology*. PLoS. <https://everyone.plos.org/2019/03/19/correcting-the-scientific-record-and-an-apology/>
- Hedberg, L., Venzo, P., & Young, H. (2022). Mums, dads and the kids: Representations of rainbow families in children’s picture books. *Journal of LGBT Youth*, 19(2), 198-216.

- Heisley, D. D., & Levy, S. J. (1991). Autodriving: A photoelicitation technique. *Journal of consumer Research*, 18(3), 257-272.
- Helmer, K. (2016). Reading queer counter-narratives in the high-school literature classroom: possibilities and challenges. *Discourse: Studies in the cultural politics of education*, 37(6), 902-916.
- Henderson, H. (2019). Silence, obligation and fear in the possible selves of UK LGBT-identified teachers. *Gender and Education*, 31(7), 849-865.
- Henshall, C., Prosser, H., & Sanjakdar, F. (2023). Empty Britain? Hegemony and ambiguity in British education policy. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 44(6), 1-22.
- Hermann-Wilmarth, J. M., & Ryan, C. L. (2019). Navigating parental resistance: Learning from responses of LGBTQ-inclusive elementary school teachers. *Theory into Practice*, 58(1), 89-98.
- Herriot, L., Burns, D. P., & Yeung, B. (2018). Contested spaces: Trans-inclusive school policies and parental sovereignty in Canada. *Gender and Education*, 30(6), 695-714.
- Hess, L. (2021). Slurs: Semantic and pragmatic theories of meaning. In P. Stalmaszczyk (Ed.), *The Cambridge handbook of the philosophy of language* (pp. 450-466).
- Hidalgo Standen, C. (2021). The use of photo elicitation for understanding the complexity of teaching: a methodological contribution. *International Journal of Research & Method in Education*, 44(5), 506-518.
- Hobaica, S., & Kwon, P. (2017). "This is how you hetero:" Sexual minorities in heteronormative sex education. *American Journal of Sexuality Education*, 12(4), 423-450.
- Hobaica, S., Schofield, K., & Kwon, P. (2019). "Here's your anatomy... good luck": transgender individuals in cisnormative sex education. *American Journal of Sexuality Education*, 14(3), 358-387.
- Hodges, A. (2014). *Alan Turing: the enigma*. Princeton University Press.
- Holloway, I., & Brown, L. (2016). *Essentials of a qualitative doctorate*. Routledge.
- Holloway, S. L., & Pimlott-Wilson, H. (2012). Neoliberalism, policy localisation and idealised subjects: A case study on educational restructuring in England. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 37(4), 639-654.
- Home Office. (2022, October 6). *Hate crime, England and Wales, 2021 to 2022*. Home Office. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/hate-crime-england-and-wales-2021-to-2022/hate-crime-england-and-wales-2021-to-2022>
- Honeychurch, K. G. (1996). Researching dissident subjectivities: Queering the grounds of theory and practice. *Harvard Educational Review*, 66(2), 339-356.
- Honeychurch, K. G. (2012). Carnal knowledge: Re-searching (through) the sexual body. In W. Pinar (Ed.), *Queer theory in education* (pp. 207-226). Routledge.
- Hook, D. (2001). Discourse, knowledge, materiality, history: Foucault and discourse analysis. *Theory & psychology*, 11(4), 521-547.

- Hooker, S. D. (2018). Lesbian and gay educators functioning in heteronormative schools. *International Journal of Educational Reform*, 27(1), 63-85.
- Hooley, T., Wellens, J., & Marriott, J. (2012). *What is online research?: Using the internet for social science research*. Bloomsbury Academic.
- Horton, C. (2020). Thriving or surviving? Raising our ambition for trans children in primary and secondary schools. *Frontiers in Sociology*, 5(67), 1-18.
- Horton, C. (2023). Institutional cisnormativity and educational injustice: Trans children's experiences in primary and early secondary education in the UK. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 93(1), 73-90.
- Horton, C., & Carlile, M. (2022). "We Just Think of Her as One of the Girls": Applying a Trans Inclusion Staged Model to the Experiences of Trans Children and Youth in UK Primary and Secondary Schools. *Teachers College Record*, 124(8), 168-191.
- House of Commons Library. (2000). *The Local Government Bill [HL]: the 'Section 28' debate. Bill 87 of 1999-2000*. House of Commons Library
- House of Commons Library. (2019, December 20). *Faith Schools in England: FAQs* House of Commons Library. <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/SN06972/SN06972.pdf>
- House of Commons Library. (2023, January 16). *2021 census: What do we know about the LGBT+ population?* House of Commons Library. <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/2021-census-what-do-we-know-about-the-lgbt-population/>
- Hulko, W., & Hovanes, J. (2018). Intersectionality in the lives of LGBTQ youth: Identifying as LGBTQ and finding community in small cities and rural towns. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 65(4), 427-455.
- Huskey, M. (2002). Queering the picture book. *The Lion and the Unicorn*, 26(1), 66-77.
- Iacovelli, J. (2022). The Importance of Queer Joy in the Classroom. *English Journal*, 111(5), 93-96.
- Ingraham, C. (2002). Heterosexuality: It's just not natural. In D. Richardson & S. Seidman (Eds.), *Handbook of lesbian and gay studies* (pp. 73-82).
- Jackman, P. C., Schweickle, M., Goddard, S., Vella, S., & Swann, C. (2022). The event-focused interview: what is it, why is it useful, and how is it used? *Qualitative research in sport, exercise and health*, 14(2), 167-180.
- Jackson, L. (2006). Childhood and youth. In *Palgrave advances in the modern history of sexuality* (pp. 231-255). Springer.
- Jackson, L. (2023). *Clapham stabbing: New images released of homophobic attack suspect*. BBC. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-66526328>
- Jackson, S. (1982). *Childhood and sexuality*. Wiley-Blackwell.
- Jackson, S. (2006). Interchanges: Gender, sexuality and heterosexuality: The complexity (and limits) of heteronormativity. *Feminist Theory*, 7(1), 105-121.

- James, A., & Jenks, C. (1996). Public perceptions of childhood criminality. *British Journal of Sociology*, 47(2), 315-331.
- James, A., Jenks, C., & Prout, A. (1998). *Theorizing childhood*.
- Janghorban, R., Roudsari, R. L., & Taghipour, A. (2014). Skype interviewing: The new generation of online synchronous interview in qualitative research. *International journal of qualitative studies on health and well-being*, 9(1), 24152.
- Janssen, D. (2008). Re-queering queer youth development: A post-developmental approach to childhood and pedagogy. *Journal of LGBT Youth*, 5(3), 74-95.
- Jarpe-Ratner, E. (2020). How can we make LGBTQ+-inclusive sex education programmes truly inclusive? A case study of Chicago Public Schools' policy and curriculum. *Sex Education*, 20(3), 283-299.
- Jessop, B. (2002). Liberalism, neoliberalism, and urban governance: A state-theoretical perspective. *Antipode*, 34(3), 452-472.
- Jigsaw. (2023a, October). *How does Jigsaw approach gender identity?* Jigsaw. <https://jigsawlivercstcmsuk.blob.core.windows.net/umbraco-media/ysxk1ddj/how-does-jigsaw-approach-gender-identity.pdf>
- Jigsaw. (2023b). *Including and valuing ALL children What does Jigsaw teach about LGBT+ relationships?* Jigsaw. https://www.midsomernortonschoolpartnership.com/uploads/pdf-files/605-LGBTQ_Parents_Leaflet_2021.pdf
- Jiménez, L. M. (2015). Representations in award-winning LGBTQ young adult literature from 2000–2013. *Journal of Lesbian Studies*, 19(4), 406-422.
- Jiménez, T. R., & Orozco, M. (2021). Prompts, not questions: Four techniques for crafting better interview protocols. *Qualitative Sociology*, 44, 507-528.
- Johnson, B. (2020). *Towards a Post-Heteronormative Habitus: Teachers' Perspectives on Embedding LGBT+ Inclusive Education in UK Primary Schools*. Lancaster University.
- Johnson, B. (2022). Creating and sustaining LGBTQ+ inclusive communities of practice in UK primary schools: an interpretative phenomenological analysis. *Journal of LGBT Youth*, 1-16.
- Johnson, P., & Falcetta, S. (2021). The Inclusion of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity in Relationships Education. *European Convention on Human Rights Law Review*, 3(1), 90-133.
- Jones, T., Smith, E., Ward, R., Dixon, J., Hillier, L., & Mitchell, A. (2016). School experiences of transgender and gender diverse students in Australia. *Sex Education*, 16(2), 156-171.
- Joseph, J. (2004a). *Language and identity: National, ethnic, religious*. Springer.
- Joseph, J. (2004b). Language and politics. In A. Davies & E. Elder (Eds.), *The handbook of applied linguistics* (pp. 347-366).

- K, O. (2016). Prepubescent transgender children: What we do and do not know. *Journal of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry*, 55(3), 155–156.
- Kay, A. (2009). Understanding policy change as a hermeneutic problem. *Journal of Comparative Policy Analysis*, 11(1), 47-63.
- Kay, A. C., Gaucher, D., Peach, J. M., Laurin, K., Friesen, J., Zanna, M. P., & Spencer, S. J. (2009). Inequality, discrimination, and the power of the status quo: Direct evidence for a motivation to see the way things are as the way they should be. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, 97(3), 421.
- Kelley, N., & Santos, R. D. (2022). *Attraction, Identity and Connection in Great Britain in 2022*. Stonewall.
- Kenway, J., Willis, S., Blackmore, J., & Rennie, L. (1994). Making ‘hope practical’ rather than ‘despair convincing’: feminist post-structuralism, gender reform and educational change. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 15(2), 187-210.
- Khan, A. (2021). In defence of an unalienated politic: A critical appraisal of the ‘No Outsiders’ protests. *Feminist Review*, 128(1), 132-147.
- Kidd, K. (2011). Queer Theory's Child and Children's Literature Studies. *pmla*, 126(1), 182-188.
- Kim, L. E., & Asbury, K. (2020). ‘Like a rug had been pulled from under you’: The impact of COVID-19 on teachers in England during the first six weeks of the UK lockdown. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 90(4), 1062-1083.
- Kincaid, J. R. (1992). *Child-loving: The erotic child and Victorian culture*. Routledge.
- Kitching, K. (2020). *Childhood, religion and school injustice*. Cork University Press.
- Kitching, K. (2022). Contemporary, racialised conflicts over LGBT-inclusive education: more strategic secularisms than secular/religious oppositions? *Educational Review*, 1-20.
- Kjaraan, J. I., & Lehtonen, J. (2018). Windows of opportunities: Nordic perspectives on sexual diversity in education. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 22(10), 1035-1047.
- Kneen, B. (2015). Neither very bi nor particularly sexual: The essence of the bisexual in young adult literature. *Children's Literature in Education*, 46, 359-377.
- Knoblauch, D. (2016). Building the Foundation of Acceptance Book by Book: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, And/or Transgender-Themed Books for Grades K–5 Multicultural Libraries. *Multicultural Perspectives*, 18(4), 209-213.
- Knopp-Schwyn, C. (2020). Frida Kahlo for Girls and Boys, the First Known Nonfiction Bisexual Picturebook. *Journal of Bisexuality*, 20(4), 514-517.
- Knopp-Schwyn, C., & Fracentese, M. (2019). Challenges and possibilities for bisexual picturebooks. *Journal of Bisexuality*, 19(3), 414-439.
- Kobakhidze, M. N., & Šťastný, V. (2023). Theoretical Perspectives on the Role of Parents in Shadow Education. *Studia paedagogica*, 28(2), 73-95.
- Kofoed, J., & Staunæs, D. (2015). Hesitancy as ethics. *Reconceptualizing educational research methodology*, 6(2), 24-39.

- Kosciw, J. G., Greytak, E. A., Bartkiewicz, M. J., Boesen, M. J., & Palmer, N. A. (2012). *The 2011 National School Climate Survey: The experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender youth in our nation's schools*. ERIC.
- Kosciw, J. G., Palmer, N. A., Kull, R. M., & Greytak, E. A. (2013). The effect of negative school climate on academic outcomes for LGBT youth and the role of in-school supports. *Journal of school violence*, 12(1), 45-63.
- Krischler, M., Powell, J. J., & Pit-Ten Cate, I. M. (2019). What is meant by inclusion? On the effects of different definitions on attitudes toward inclusive education. *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, 34(5), 632-648.
- Kull, R. M., Greytak, E. A., Kosciw, J. G., & Villenas, C. (2016). Effectiveness of school district antibullying policies in improving LGBT youths' school climate. *Psychology of sexual orientation and gender diversity*, 3(4), 407.
- Kuntz, A. M. (2016). *The responsible methodologist: Inquiry, truth-telling, and social justice*. Routledge.
- Kurian, N. (2020). Rights-protectors or rights-violators? Deconstructing teacher discrimination against LGBT students in England and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child as an advocacy tool. *The international journal of human rights*, 24(8), 1080-1102.
- Lapointe, A. A. (2016). Queering the social studies: Lessons to be learned from Canadian secondary school gay-straight alliances. *The Journal of Social Studies Research*, 40(3), 205-215.
- Lapointe, A. A. (2017). "It's not pans, it's people": Student and teacher perspectives on bisexuality and pansexuality. *Journal of Bisexuality*, 17(1), 88-107.
- Lawrence, M., & Taylor, Y. (2020). The UK government LGBT Action Plan: Discourses of progress, enduring stasis, and LGBTQI+ lives 'getting better'. *Critical social policy*, 40(4), 586-607.
- Le Monde. (2023, September 20,). *Schools torched in Belgium: New sex education program targeted by waves of misinformation*. Le Monde. https://www.lemonde.fr/les-decodeurs/article/2023/09/18/deferlante-de-desinformation-a-propos-du-programme-d-education-sexuelle-en-belgique_6189881_4355770.html
- LeCompte, M. D., & Schensul, J. J. (2010). *Designing and conducting ethnographic research*. Rowman Altamira.
- Lee, C. (2019). Fifteen years on: the legacy of section 28 for LGBT+ teachers in English schools. *Sex Education*, 19(6), 675-690.
- Lee, C. (2020a). *Courage in the Classroom: LGBT teachers share their stories*. Hachette UK.
- Lee, C. (2020b). Why LGBT teachers may make exceptional school leaders. *Frontiers in Sociology*, 5(50), 1-5.
- Lesnik-Oberstein, K. (2010). Childhood, queer theory, and feminism. *Feminist Theory*, 11(3), 309-321.
- Lester, J. Z. (2014). Homonormativity in children's literature: An intersectional analysis of queer-themed picture books. *Journal of LGBT Youth*, 11(3), 244-275.

- Leung, E., & Adams-Whittaker, J. (2022). Content Analysis of LGBTQ Picture Books for Elementary Education Through an Intersectional Lens. *Frontiers in Education*, 6, 769-769.
- Levinson, B. A., Sutton, M., & Winstead, T. (2009). Education policy as a practice of power: Theoretical tools, ethnographic methods, democratic options. *Educational Policy*, 23(6), 767-795.
- Lim, F. V., O'Halloran, K. L., & Podlasov, A. (2012). Spatial pedagogy: Mapping meanings in the use of classroom space. *Cambridge journal of education*, 42(2), 235-251.
- Lingel, J. (2009). Adjusting the borders: Bisexual passing and queer theory. *Journal of Bisexuality*, 9(3-4), 381-405.
- Littman, L. (2017). Rapid onset gender dysphoria in adolescents and young adults: A descriptive study. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 60(1), 1-44.
- Littman, L. (2018). Parent reports of adolescents and young adults perceived to show signs of a rapid onset of gender dysphoria. *PLoS One*, 13(8), 1-7.
- Littman, L. (2019). Correction: Parent reports of adolescents and young adults perceived to show signs of a rapid onset of gender dysphoria. *PLoS One*, 14(3), 1-7.
- Llewellyn, A. (2022a). Bursting the 'childhood bubble': reframing discourses of LGBTQ+ teachers and their students. *Sport, Education and Society*, 1-14.
- Llewellyn, A. (2022b). "A Space Where Queer Is Normalized": The Online World and Fanfictions as Heterotopias for WLW. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 69(13), 2348-2369.
- Llewellyn, A., & Reynolds, K. (2021). Within and between heteronormativity and diversity: narratives of LGB teachers and coming and being out in schools. *Sex Education*, 21(1), 13-26.
- Lo, R. S. (2019). Resisting gentle bias: A critical content analysis of family diversity in picturebooks. *Journal of Children's Literature*, 45(2), 16-30.
- Loftus, B. (1997). Speaking silence: The strategies and structures of queer autobiography. *College Literature*, 24(1), 28-44.
- Loh, J. (2013). Inquiry into issues of trustworthiness and quality in narrative studies: A perspective. *Qualitative Report*, 18(33), 1-16.
- Lopez, X., Marinkovic, M., Eimicke, T., Rosenthal, S. M., & Olshan, J. S. (2017). Statement on gender-affirmative approach to care from the pediatric endocrine society special interest group on transgender health. *Current opinion in pediatrics*, 29(4), 475-480.
- Lords Hansard. (2000, February 7). *Column 405*. UK Government. <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld199900/ldhansrd/vo000207/text/00207-06.htm>
- Loutzenheiser, L. W. (2018). 'Who are you calling a problem?': Addressing transphobia and homophobia through school policy. *Education Policy Analysis for a Complex World*, 56(1), 95-111.
- Love, H. (2010). Truth and consequences: On paranoid reading and reparative reading. *Criticism*, 52(2), 235-241.

- Love, H. (2016). Queer messes. *Women's Studies Quarterly*, 44(3/4), 345-349.
- Love, J. (2018). *Julien is a Mermaid*. Candlewick Press.
- Lovelock, M. (2017). Call me Caitlyn: making and making over the 'authentic' transgender body in Anglo-American popular culture. *Journal of Gender Studies*, 26(6), 675-687.
- Luecke, J. C. (2011). Working with transgender children and their classmates in pre-adolescence: Just be supportive. *Journal of LGBT Youth*, 8(2), 116-156.
- Lukoff, K., & Juanita, K. (2019). *When Aidan Became a Brother*. Lee & Low Books Incorporated.
- Madzanire, D., & Mashava, R. (2012). Dangerous schools and the rise of parentocracy. *Journal of Sociological Research*, 3(2), 414-427.
- Maher, M. J. (2012). Homophobic bullying in Catholic high schools: Five US studies in heterosexism, authority, masculinity, and religion. In Z. Gross, L. Davies, & A. Diab (Eds.), *Gender, religion and education in a chaotic postmodern world* (pp. 271-284). Springer.
- Maliapaard, E. (2015). Bisexual citizenship in the Netherlands: On homo-emancipation and bisexual representations in national emancipation policies. *Sexualities*, 18(4), 377-393.
- Maliapaard, E. (2018). Disclosing bisexuality or coming out? Two different realities for bisexual people in the Netherlands. *Journal of Bisexuality*, 18(2), 145-167.
- Maliapaard, E. (2020). Spaces with a bisexual appearance: re-conceptualizing bisexual space (s) through a study of bisexual practices in the Netherlands. *Social & Cultural Geography*, 21(1), 45-63.
- Maliapaard, E., & Baumgartner, R. (2021). *Bisexuality in Europe: Sexual citizenship, romantic relationships, and bi+ identities*. Taylor & Francis.
- Malins, P. (2016). How inclusive is "inclusive education" in the Ontario elementary classroom?: Teachers talk about addressing diverse gender and sexual identities. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 54, 128-138.
- Marston, K. (2015). Beyond bullying: The limitations of homophobic and transphobic bullying interventions for affirming lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans (LGBT) equality in education. *Pastoral Care in Education*, 33(3), 161-168.
- Martínez Herrero, M. I., & Charnley, H. (2021). Resisting neoliberalism in social work education: Learning, teaching, and performing human rights and social justice in England and Spain. *Social Work Education*, 40(1), 44-57.
- Martino, W. (1999). 'Cool boys', 'party animals', 'squids' and 'poofers': interrogating the dynamics and politics of adolescent masculinities in school. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 20(2), 239-263.
- Martino, W. (2000). Mucking around in class, giving crap, and acting cool: Adolescent boys enacting masculinities at school. *Canadian Journal of Education/Revue canadienne de l'éducation*, 25(2), 102-112.
- Martino, W., Airton, L., Kuhl, D., & Cumming-Potvin, W. (2019). Mapping transgender policyscapes: A policy analysis of transgender inclusivity in the education system in Ontario. *Journal of Education Policy*, 34(3), 302-330.

- Martino, W., & Cumming-Potvin, W. (2011). “They Didn’t Have Out There Gay Parents— They Just Looked Like Normal Regular Parents”: Investigating Teachers’ Approaches to Addressing Same-Sex Parenting and Non-normative Sexuality in the Elementary School Classroom. *Curriculum inquiry*, 41(4), 480-501.
- Martino, W., & Cumming-Potvin, W. (2016). Teaching about sexual minorities and “princess boys”: A queer and trans-infused approach to investigating LGBTQ-themed texts in the elementary school classroom. *Discourse: Studies in the cultural politics of education*, 37(6), 807-827.
- Martino, W., Kassen, J., & Omercajic, K. (2022). Supporting transgender students in schools: Beyond an individualist approach to trans inclusion in the education system. *Educational Review*, 74(4), 753-772.
- Maslowski, K., Reiss, M. J., Biswakarma, R., & Harper, J. (2023). Reproductive health education in the schools of the four UK nations: is it falling through the gap? *Human Fertility*, 1-13.
- Mason, S. (2010). Braving it out! An illuminative evaluation of the provision of sex and relationship education in two primary schools in England. *Sex Education*, 10(2), 157-169.
- McBride, R.-S., & Neary, A. (2021). Trans and gender diverse youth resisting cisnormativity in school. *Gender and Education*, 33(8), 1090-1107.
- McCormack, M. (2020). Advocacy research on homophobia in education: Claims-making, trauma construction and the politics of evidence. *Sociology*, 54(1), 89-106.
- McDonald, J. (2013). Coming out in the field: A queer reflexive account of shifting researcher identity. *Management Learning*, 44(2), 127-143.
- McGlashan, H., & Fitzpatrick, K. (2018). ‘I use any pronouns, and I’m questioning everything else’: transgender youth and the issue of gender pronouns. *Sex Education*, 18(3), 239-252.
- McGrath, C., Palmgren, P. J., & Liljedahl, M. (2019). Twelve tips for conducting qualitative research interviews. *Medical teacher*, 41(9), 1002-1006.
- McGuire, J. K., Okrey Anderson, S., & Michaels, C. (2022). “I don’t think you belong in here:” The impact of gender segregated bathrooms on the safety, health, and equality of transgender people. *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Social Services*, 34(1), 40-62.
- McIntyre, E. (2009). Teacher discourse on lesbian, gay and bisexual pupils in Scottish schools. *Educational Psychology in Practice*, 25(4), 301-314.
- McKee, A. (2010). Everything is child abuse. *Media International Australia*, 135(1), 131-140.
- McLaverty, J. (2022, July 19). *Are Schools Facing a Squeeze on Social Justice Activism and Debate?* . Oxfam. <https://views-voices.oxfam.org.uk/2022/07/are-schools-facing-a-squeeze-on-social-justice-activism-and-debate/>
- Medeiros, B. (2019). The ideological significance of “institutional neutrality” mandates in state-level campus speech legislation. *First Amendment Studies*, 53(1-2), 22-40.
- Messiou, K. (2017). Research in the field of inclusive education: time for a rethink? *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 21(2), 146-159.

- Mettler, S. (2016). The polycscape and the challenges of contemporary politics to policy maintenance. *Perspectives on Politics*, 14(2), 369-390.
- Meyer, A. (2007). The moral rhetoric of childhood. *Childhood*, 14(1), 85-104.
- Meyer, E. J. (2008). Gendered harassment in secondary schools: Understanding teachers' (non) interventions. *Gender and Education*, 20(6), 555-570.
- Meyer, E. J., & Keenan, H. (2018). Can policies help schools affirm gender diversity? A policy archaeology of transgender-inclusive policies in California schools. *Gender and Education*, 30(6), 736-753.
- Meyer, E. J., & Leonardi, B. (2018). Teachers' professional learning to affirm transgender, non-binary, and gender-creative youth: Experiences and recommendations from the field. *Sex Education*, 18(4), 449-463.
- Meyer, E. J., Quantz, M., Taylor, C., & Peter, T. (2019). Elementary teachers' experiences with LGBTQ-inclusive education: Addressing fears with knowledge to improve confidence and practices. *Theory into Practice*, 58(1), 6-17.
- Miller, W., & Crabtree, B. (1999). *Doing qualitative research*. Sage.
- Mills, S. (2003). Routledge Critical Thinkers: Michel Foucault. *London: Routledge*.
- Mitchell, M., Gray, M., & Beninger, K. (2014). *Tackling homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying among school-age children and young people*. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/367473/NatCen_Social_Research_-_HBT_bullying_-_analytical_report.pdf
- Mitchell, M., Kotecha, M., Davies, M., & Turley, C. (2016). Evaluation of an Antihomophobic, Biphobic and Transphobic Bullying Programme. *London: NatCen Social Research*.
- Moises Jr, C. (2020). Online data collection as adaptation in conducting quantitative and qualitative research during the COVID-19 pandemic. *European Journal of Education Studies*, 7(11), 78-87.
- Monro, S. (2015). *Bisexuality: Identities, politics, and theories*. Springer.
- Moore, L. (2023). *Asleep at the Wheel: An Examination of Gender and Safeguarding in Schools*. P. Exchange.
- Moran, J. (2001). Childhood sexuality and education: The case of Section 28. *Sexualities*, 4(1), 73-89.
- Morgan, E., & Taylor, Y. (2019). Dangerous education: the occupational hazards of teaching transgender. *Sociology*, 53(1), 19-35.
- Morgan, K. D. (2020). *Early childhood teachers' use of picturebooks to counter heteronormativity: children's working theories about gender diversity and LGBTIQ-parented families* University of Canterbury].
- Morgenroth, T., Kirby, T. A., Cuthbert, M. J., Evje, J., & Anderson, A. E. (2022). Bisexual erasure: Perceived attraction patterns of bisexual women and men. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 52(2), 249-259.

- Moss, P. (2015). There are alternatives! Contestation and hope in early childhood education. *Global Studies of Childhood*, 5(3), 226-238.
- Munsch, R., & Martchenko, M. (1980). *The Paper Bag Princess*. Annick Press.
- Murray, J. (2023, February 13). *Birmingham LGBT centre attacked with homophobic abuse*. The Guardian. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2023/feb/13/birmingham-lgbt-centre-attacked-with-homophobic-abuse>
- Musto, M. (2020). Is Covid Crushing Queer Culture? *The Gay & Lesbian Review Worldwide*, 27(5), 22-25.
- Myers, W., Turanovic, J. J., Lloyd, K. M., & Pratt, T. C. (2020). The victimization of LGBTQ students at school: A meta-analysis. *Journal of school violence*, 19(4), 421-432.
- Nash, C. J., & Browne, K. (2020). *Heteroactivism: Resisting lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans rights and equalities*. Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Nash, C. J., & Browne, K. (2021). Resisting the mainstreaming of LGBT equalities in Canadian and British Schools: Sex education and trans school friends. *Environment and Planning C: Politics and Space*, 39(1), 74-93.
- Neary, A. (2017). Lesbian, gay and bisexual teachers' ambivalent relations with parents and students while entering into a civil partnership. *Irish Educational Studies*, 36(1), 57-72.
- Neary, A. (2021a). Complicating constructions: Middle-class parents of transgender and gender-diverse children. *Journal of Family Studies*, 27(4), 506-522.
- Neary, A. (2021b). Trans children and the necessity to complicate gender in primary schools. *Gender and Education*, 33(8), 1073-1089.
- Neary, A., Gray, B., & O'Sullivan, M. (2018). Lesbian, gay and bisexual teachers' negotiations of civil partnership and schools: Ambivalent attachments to religion and secularism. *Discourse: Studies in the cultural politics of education*, 39(3), 434-447.
- Neary, A., Irwin-Gowran, S., & McEvoy, E. (2016). Exploring homophobia and transphobia in primary schools. *Limerick: University of Limerick, Irish Research Council and Gay and Lesbian Equality Network*.
- Neary, A., & Rasmussen, M. L. (2020). Marriage Equality Time: Entanglements of sexual progress and childhood innocence in Irish primary schools. *Sexualities*, 23(5-6), 898-916.
- Neisen, J. H. (1990). Heterosexism: Redefining homophobia for the 1990's. *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Psychotherapy*, 1(3), 21-35.
- Nelson, C. D. (2015). LGBT content: Why teachers fear it, why learners like it. *Language Issues: The ESOL Journal*, 26(1), 6-12.
- Newman, P. A., Fantus, S., Woodford, M. R., & Rwigema, M.-J. (2018). "Pray that God will change you": The religious social ecology of bias-based bullying targeting sexual and gender minority youth—A qualitative study of service providers and educators. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 33(5), 523-548.
- Nixon, D., & Givens, N. (2007). An epitaph to Section 28? Telling tales out of school about changes and challenges to discourses of sexuality. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 20(4), 449-471.

- No Outsiders. (2023). *What is No Outsiders?* . No Outsiders. <https://no-outsiders.com/about-us>
- Nowicka-Franczak, M. (2021). Post-Foucauldian Discourse and Dispositif Analysis in the Post-Socialist Field of Research: Methodological Remarks. *Qualitative Sociology Review*, 17(1), 72-95.
- Nylund, D. (2007). Reading Harry Potter: Popular culture, queer theory and the fashioning of youth identity. *Journal of systemic therapies*, 26(2), 13-24.
- Oakley, A. (2016). Interviewing women again: Power, time and the gift. *Sociology*, 50(1), 195-213.
- Office for National Statistics. (2020). *Sexual orientation, UK: 2020. Experimental Statistics on sexual orientation in the UK in 2020 by region, sex, age, marital or legal partnership status, ethnic group and socio-economic classification, using data from the Annual Population Survey (APS)*. Office for National Statistics. <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/sexuality/bulletins/sexualidentityuk/2020>
- Office for National Statistics. (2023, March 30). *Conceptions in England and Wales: 2021. Annual statistics on conceptions to residents of England and Wales, with numbers and rates by age group including women aged under 18 years*. Office for National Statistics. <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/conceptionandfertilityrates/bulletins/conceptionstatistics/2021#:~:text=Teenage%20conceptions,-In%201999%2C%20the&text=In%202021%2C%20the%20number%20of%20conceptions%20for%20women%20aged%20under,term%20trend%20of%20decreasing%20numbers>.
- Ofsted. (2021a, September 27). *Guidance: Inspecting teaching of the protected characteristics in schools*. Ofsted. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/inspecting-teaching-of-the-protected-characteristics-in-schools/inspecting-teaching-of-the-protected-characteristics-in-schools>
- Ofsted. (2021b, July 6). *Research commentary: teaching about sex, sexual orientation and gender reassignment*. Ofsted. https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/research-commentary-teaching-about-sex-sexual-orientation-and-gender-reassignment?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_source=fe450b12-d954-4012-b228-3e28ad1e267f&utm_content=immediately
- Olmos, S. (2023, June 27). *Protests against LGBTQ inclusivity in schools have turned violent in LA County*. NPR. <https://www.npr.org/2023/06/27/1184655873/protests-against-lgbtq-inclusivity-in-schools-have-turned-violent-in-la-county>

- Oringderff, J. (2004). "My way": Piloting an online focus group. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 3(3), 69-75.
- Osgood, J., Robinson, K. H., Díaz, C. J., Andersen, C. E., Pérez, M. S., Gunn, A. C., & Surtees, N. (2019). Revisiting diversity and difference in early childhood through children's news media. *20*(4), 319-323.
- Owen, G. (2020). *A queer history of adolescence: Developmental pasts, relational futures*. University of Georgia Press.
- Parameswaran, U. D., Ozawa-Kirk, J. L., & Latendresse, G. (2020). To live (code) or to not: A new method for coding in qualitative research. *Qualitative social work*, 19(4), 630-644.
- Parsons, W. (2002). From muddling through to muddling up-evidence based policy making and the modernisation of British Government. *Public policy and administration*, 17(3), 43-60.
- Parsons, W. (2004). Not just steering but weaving: Relevant knowledge and the craft of building policy capacity and coherence. *Australian journal of public administration*, 63(1), 43-57.
- Patil, V. (2018). The heterosexual matrix as imperial effect. *Sociological Theory*, 36(1), 1-26.
- Patton, M. Q. (2003). Qualitative evaluation checklist. *Evaluation checklists project*, 21, 1-13.
- Payne, E., & Smith, M. (2014). The big freak out: Educator fear in response to the presence of transgender elementary school students. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 61(3), 399-418.
- Pennasilico, A., & Amodeo, A. L. (2019). The invisibles: Biphobia, bisexual erasure and their impact on mental health. *The Invisibles: Biphobia, Bisexual Erasure and Their Impact on Mental Health*, 4(1), 22-28.
- Pérez-Testor, C., Behar, J., Davins, M., Sala, J. L. C., Castillo, J. A., Salamero, M., Alomar, E., & Segarra, S. (2010). Teachers' attitudes and beliefs about homosexuality. *The Spanish journal of psychology*, 13(1), 138-155.
- Perry, S. (2021, July 24). *Estate agent jailed for vicious Birmingham attack on gay men with glass bottle and metal pipe*. Pink News. <https://www.thepinknews.com/2023/07/24/birmingham-usman-murtza-attack-gay/>
- Perry, S. (2023, April 27). *Christian mum Izzy Montague, who sued son's primary school over Pride parade, loses case*. Pink News. Retrieved 3 March 2024 from <https://www.thepinknews.com/2023/04/27/izzy-montague-heavers-farm-lgbtq-legal/>
- Peter, T., Taylor, C., & Short, D. (2018). Religious belief and the queer classroom: Measuring the impact of religious affiliation on LGBTQ-inclusive education practices. *Canadian Journal of Educational Administration and Policy*, 185, 19-31.
- Phipps, C., & Blackall, C. J. (2021). 'I wasn't allowed to join the boys': The ideology of cultural cisgenderism in a UK school. *Pedagogy, Culture & Society*, 31(5), 1097-1114.

- Pillow, W. (2003). Confession, catharsis, or cure? Rethinking the uses of reflexivity as methodological power in qualitative research. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 16(2), 175-196.
- Piper, H., & Sikes, P. (2010). All teachers are vulnerable but especially gay teachers: using composite fictions to protect research participants in pupil—teacher sex-related research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 16(7), 566-574.
- Plummer, K. (2005). Intimate citizenship in an unjust world. In M. Romero & E. Margolis (Eds.), *The Blackwell companion to social inequalities* (pp. 75-99).
- Policy Exchange. (2022). *About Us*. Policy Exchange. <https://policyexchange.org.uk/about-us/>
- Policy Exchange. (2023, March 30). *Asleep at the Wheel*. Policy Exchange. <https://policyexchange.org.uk/publication/asleep-at-the-wheel/>
- Porr, C., Mayan, M., Graffigna, G., Wall, S., & Vieira, E. R. (2011). The evocative power of projective techniques for the elicitation of meaning. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 10(1), 30-41.
- Potter, J., & Wetherell, M. (1995). Natural order: Why social psychologists should study (a constructed version of) natural language, and why they have not done so. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, 14(1-2), 216-222.
- Pratt, N., & Alderton, J. (2019). Producing assessment truths: a Foucauldian analysis of teachers' reorganisation of levels in English primary schools. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 40(5), 581-597.
- Preston-Sternberg, M. M. (2009). *Multimethod analysis of social support and career self-efficacy among gay, lesbian and bisexual persons*. The University of Texas at San Antonio.
- Pritchard, E. D. (2013). For colored kids who committed suicide, our outrage isn't enough: Queer youth of color, bullying, and the discursive limits of identity and safety. *Harvard Educational Review*, 83(2), 320-345.
- Proudfoot, K. (2021). Panopticism, teacher surveillance and the 'unseen'. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 42(5-6), 812-827.
- Pullen Sansfaçon, A., Medico, D., Riggs, D., Carlile, M., & Suerich-Gulick, F. (2023). Growing up trans in Canada, Switzerland, England, and Australia: Access to and impacts of gender-affirming medical care. *Journal of LGBT Youth*, 20(1), 55-73.
- Pyman, T. (2021). *The rise of the 'furries': How schools are allowing kids to identify as cats, horses and dinosaurs - and teachers are 'failing to question them'*. The Mail Online. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-12213579/How-schools-allowing-kids-identify-cats-horses-dinosaurs.html>
- Qvortrup, A., & Qvortrup, L. (2018). Inclusion: Dimensions of inclusion in education. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 22(7), 803-817.
- Randall, W. L., & Phoenix, C. (2009). The problem with truth in qualitative interviews: reflections from a narrative perspective. *Qualitative research in sport and exercise*, 1(2), 125-140.

- Rasmussen, M. L., Cover, R., Aggleton, P., & Marshall, D. (2016). Sexuality, gender, citizenship and social justice: Education's queer relations. In A. Peterson, R. Hattam, M. Zembylas, & J. Arthur (Eds.), *The Palgrave international handbook of education for citizenship and social justice* (pp. 73-96).
- Reed, T. (2015). *Being Me in Penguin Land* Proud Trust & GIRES.
- Reiss, M. (2018). *Reproduction and sex education*. Routledge.
- Renold, E. (2005). *Girls, boys, and junior sexualities: Exploring children's gender and sexual relations in the primary school*. Psychology Press.
- Renold, E., & McGeeney, E. (2017). *Informing the future of the Sex and Relationships Education Curriculum in Wales*. Cardiff University.
- Restar, A. J. (2020). Methodological critique of Littman's (2018) parental-respondents accounts of "rapid-onset gender dysphoria". *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 49(1), 61-66.
- Rich, A. (1980). Compulsory heterosexuality and lesbian existence. *Signs: Journal of women in culture and society*, 5(4), 631-660.
- Richard, G. (2015). The pedagogical practices of Québec high school teachers relative to sexual diversity. *Journal of LGBT Youth*, 12(2), 113-143.
- Richardson, J., Parnell, P., & Cole, H. (2007). *And Tango Makes Three*. Simon & Schuster Children's UK.
- Ringrose, J., & Renold, E. (2010). Normative cruelties and gender deviants: The performative effects of bully discourses for girls and boys in school. *British Educational Research Journal*, 36(4), 573-596.
- Roberts, C., Shiman, L. J., Dowling, E. A., Tantay, L., Masdea, J., Pierre, J., Lomax, D., & Bedell, J. (2020). LGBTQ+ students of colour and their experiences and needs in sexual health education: 'You belong here just as everybody else'. *Sex Education*, 20(3), 267-282.
- Robertson, R. E., Tran, F. W., Lewark, L. N., & Epstein, R. (2018). Estimates of non-heterosexual prevalence: The roles of anonymity and privacy in survey methodology. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 47(4), 1069-1084.
- Robinson, K. H. (2005). 'Queering' gender: Heteronormativity in early childhood education. *Australasian Journal of Early Childhood*, 30(2), 19-28.
- Robinson, K. H. (2008). In the name of 'childhood innocence': A discursive exploration of the moral panic associated with childhood and sexuality. *Cultural Studies Review*, 14(2), 113-129.
- Robinson, K. H. (2012). 'Difficult citizenship': The precarious relationships between childhood, sexuality and access to knowledge. *Sexualities*, 15(3-4), 257-276.
- Robinson, K. H. (2013). *Innocence, knowledge and the construction of childhood: The contradictory nature of sexuality and censorship in children's contemporary lives*. Routledge.
- Robinson, K. H., Smith, E., & Davies, C. (2017). Responsibilities, tensions and ways forward: parents' perspectives on children's sexuality education. *Sex Education*, 17(3), 333-347.

- Rosenberg, T. (2008). Locally queer. A note on the feminist genealogy of queer theory. *Graduate journal of social science*, 5(2), 5-18.
- Røthing, Å., & Svendsen, S. H. B. (2010). Homotolerance and heterosexuality as Norwegian values. *Journal of LGBT Youth*, 7(2), 147-166.
- Roulston, K. (2019). Preparing researchers to conduct interdisciplinary, multi-method qualitative research. *The Qualitative Report*, 24(9), 2259-2292.
- Rowan-Lancaster, J. L. (2022). *Challenging fear: teaching LGBTUA+ relationship and sex education (RSE) from a trainee teacher and teacher educator perspective* [University of Birmingham].
- Rudoe, N. (2017). Lesbian and gay teachers and sex/uality education policy enactment in schools. *Discourse: Studies in the cultural politics of education*, 39(6), 926-940.
- Ruitenbergh, C. W. (2010). Queer politics in schools: A Rancièrian reading. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 42(5-6), 618-634.
- Russell, S. T., Bishop, M. D., Saba, V. C., James, I., & Ioverno, S. (2021). Promoting school safety for LGBTQ and all students. *Policy insights from the behavioral and brain sciences*, 8(2), 160-166.
- Russell, V. T. (2010). Queer teachers' ethical dilemmas regarding queer youth. *Teaching Education*, 21(2), 143-156.
- Ruto-Korir, R., & Lubbe-De Beer, C. (2012). The potential for using visual elicitation in understanding preschool teachers' beliefs of appropriate educational practices. *South African Journal of Education*, 32(4), 393-405.
- Ryan, C. L., & Hermann-Wilmarth, J. M. (2019). Putting Read-Alouds to Work for LGBTQ-Inclusive, Critically Literate Classrooms. *Language Arts*, 96(5), 312-317.
- Sadowski, M. (2017). More than a Safe Space: How Schools Can Enable LGBTQ Students to Thrive. *American Educator*, 40(4), 4.
- Sadowski, M. (2020). *Safe is not enough: Better schools for LGBTQ students*. Harvard Education Press.
- Safe Schools Alliance. (2020, 24 September). *We welcome @educationgovuk releasing this new guidance. We are pleased to see that our concerns have been taken on board and are beginning to be addressed. #RSE #PSHE #edutwitter #SLTchat #pastoralchat #UKedchat #pastoralthings #teamenglish #LGBT.* Twitter. <https://mobile.twitter.com/leakylike/status/1309171408744910850>
- Salganik, M. J., & Heckathorn, D. D. (2004). Sampling and estimation in hidden populations using respondent-driven sampling. *Sociological methodology*, 34(1), 193-240.
- Sandfort, T. (2013). *Childhood sexuality: Normal sexual behavior and development*. Routledge.
- Sauntson, H. (2013). Sexual diversity and illocutionary silencing in the English National Curriculum. *Sex Education*, 13(4), 395-408.
- Sauntson, H. (2018). *Language, sexuality and education*. Cambridge University Press.
- Sauntson, H. (2021). Conflicting discourses of 'democracy' and 'equality': a discourse analysis of the language of pro-and anti-LGBTQ+ inclusion in the Relationships and Sex

- Education guidance for schools in England. *Trabalhos em Linguística Aplicada*, 59, 1995-2016.
- Sauntson, H., & Borba, R. (2021). Silence and Sexuality in School Settings: A transnational perspective. In J. Stern & M. Walejko (Eds.), *The Bloomsbury Handbook of Solitude, Silence and Loneliness* (pp. 174-193). Bloomsbury.
- Sauntson, H., & Simpson, K. (2011). Investigating sexuality discourses in the UK secondary English curriculum. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 58(6-7), 953-973.
- Sauntson, H., & Sundaram, V. (2016). Discursive silences: Critically analysing the presence/absence of sexual diversity in the sex and relationships education guidance for England and Wales. In V. Sundaram & H. Sauntson (Eds.), *Global perspectives and key debates in sex and relationships education: Addressing issues of gender, sexuality, plurality and power* (pp. 100-114).
- Saxey, E. (2021). Sexuality and pedagogy in the accounts of lesbian, gay and bisexual teachers. *Pedagogy, Culture & Society*, 29(4), 593-610.
- Schensul, S. L., Schensul, J. J., & LeCompte, M. D. (2012). *Initiating ethnographic research: A mixed methods approach*. AltaMira Press.
- Scheurich, J. J. (1994). Policy archaeology: A new policy studies methodology. *Journal of Education Policy*, 9(4), 297-316.
- Schieble, M. (2012). A critical discourse analysis of teachers' views on LGBT literature. *Discourse: Studies in the cultural politics of education*, 33(2), 207-222.
- Sedgwick, E. K. (1997). Paranoid reading and reparative reading, or, You're so paranoid, you probably think this introduction is about you. In M. Barale, J. Goldberg, & M. Moon (Eds.), *Touching Feeling* (pp. 123-152). Duke University Press.
- Sedgwick, E. K. (2008). *Epistemology of the Closet*. University of California Press.
- Seidman, S. (1994). Queer-ing sociology, sociologizing queer theory: An introduction. *Sociological Theory*, 12(2), 166-177.
- Sen, A. (2022). Three evils of citizenship education in Turkey: Ethno-religious nationalism, statism and neoliberalism. *Critical studies in education*, 63(3), 307-322.
- Sex Education Forum. (2018). *Statutory RSE: Are teachers in England prepared?* . National Children's Bureau.
- Shore, C., & Wright, S. (1999). Audit culture and anthropology: Neo-liberalism in British higher education. *Journal of the royal anthropological institute*, 5(4), 557-575.
- Shore, C., & Wright, S. (2003). *Anthropology of policy: Perspectives on governance and power*. Routledge.
- Shrier, A. (2020). *Irreversible Damage: the transgender craze seducing our daughters*. Regnery Publishing.
- Simbürger, E. (2014). Reflexivity in qualitative social research: Bridging the gap between theory and practice with Alvin Gouldner's Reflexive Sociology. *Magis, Revista Internacional de Investigación en Educación*, 7(14), 55-68.
- Sinclair-Palm, J., & Gilbert, J. (2018). Naming new realities: Supporting trans youth in education. *Sex Education*, 18(4), 321-327.

- Singh, M. V. (2021). Resisting the neoliberal role model: Latino male mentors' perspectives on the intersectional politics of role modeling. *American Educational Research Journal*, 58(2), 283-314.
- Sky News. (2023). *Kemi Badenoch demands snap Ofsted inspection at school where pupil 'identified as a cat'*. Sky News. <https://news.sky.com/story/kemi-badenoch-demands-snap-ofsted-inspection-at-school-where-pupil-identified-as-a-cat-12908358#:~:text=News%20%7C%20Sky%20News-.Kemi%20Badenoch%20demands%20snap%20Ofsted%20inspection%20at%20school%20where%20pupil,pupil%20she%20was%20%22despicable%22>.
- Small, A. (2018). From conflict to consensus: Reconciling the right to freedom of religion and LGBT rights. *Alternative Law Journal*, 43(3), 221-224.
- Smith, A. M. (1994). *New right discourse on race and sexuality: Britain, 1968-1990*. Cambridge University Press.
- Snapp, S. D., Burdge, H., Licona, A. C., Moody, R. L., & Russell, S. T. (2015). Students' perspectives on LGBTQ-inclusive curriculum. *Equity & Excellence in Education*, 48(2), 249-265.
- Snapp, S. D., McGuire, J. K., Sinclair, K. O., Gabrion, K., & Russell, S. T. (2015). LGBTQ-inclusive curricula: Why supportive curricula matter. *Sex Education*, 15(6), 580-596.
- Sondag, K. A., Johnson, A. G., & Parrish, M. E. (2022). School sex education: Teachers' and young adults' perceptions of relevance for LGBT students. *Journal of LGBT Youth*, 19(3), 247-267.
- Spargo, T. (1999). *Foucault and queer theory*. Icon books Cambridge.
- Sprott, R. A., & Benoit Hadcock, B. (2018). Bisexuality, pansexuality, queer identity, and kink identity. *Sexual and Relationship Therapy*, 33(1-2), 214-232.
- St. Pierre, E. A. (2000). Poststructural feminism in education: An overview. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 13(5), 477-515.
- Stewart, H. (2021). We're Here, We're... Queer? On the Enduring Harms of Bisexual Erasure. *Dialogue: Canadian Philosophical Review/Revue canadienne de philosophie*, 60(3), 423-433.
- Stockall, N., & Davis, S. (2011). Uncovering pre-service teacher beliefs about young children: a photographic elicitation methodology. *Issues in Educational Research*, 21(2), 192-209.
- Stockton, K. B. (2009). *The queer child, or growing sideways in the twentieth century*. Duke University Press.
- Stones, S., & Glazzard, J. (2019). Using minority stress theory as a conceptual lens to frame the experiences of teachers who identify as LGBTQ+. *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research*, 18(7), 1-15.
- Stones, S., & Glazzard, J. (2020). Tales From the Chalkface: Using Narratives to Explore Agency, Resilience, and Identity of Gay Teachers. *Frontiers in Sociology*, 5(52), 1-15.

- Stonewall. (2016, July 26). *Key dates for lesbian, gay, bi and trans equality*. Stonewall. <https://www.stonewall.org.uk/key-dates-lesbian-gay-bi-and-trans-equality>
- Stonewall. (2017). *The experiences of lesbian, gay, bi and trans pupils in Britain's schools*. Stonewall. Retrieved 3 March 2024 from <https://www.stonewall.org.uk/school-report-2017>
- Stonewall. (2019, January). *Different Families, Same Love pack: Help your pupils celebrate different families with our range of stickers and cards*. Stonewall. <https://www.stonewall.org.uk/resources/different-families-same-love-pack>
- Stonewall. (2021). *Different Families, Same Love Pack*. Stonewall. <https://www.stonewall.org.uk/resources/different-families-same-love-pack>
- Stonewall. (2022, March). *Creating an LGBT-inclusive primary curriculum: Bring LGBT inclusion and celebrating difference alive in the primary school classroom with our inclusive curriculum guide*. Stonewall. <https://www.stonewall.org.uk/resources/creating-lgbt-inclusive-primary-curriculum>
- Stryker, S. (2014). Biopolitics. *Transgender Studies Quarterly*, 1(1-2), 38-42.
- Subramanian, V. K. (2018). From government to governance: Teach for India and new networks of reform in school education. *Contemporary Education Dialogue*, 15(1), 21-50.
- Sullivan, C. (1993). Oppression: The experiences of a lesbian teacher in an inner city comprehensive school in the United Kingdom. *Gender and Education*, 5(1), 93-101.
- Sumara, D., & Davis, B. (1999). Interrupting heteronormativity: Toward a queer curriculum theory. *Curriculum inquiry*, 29(2), 191-208.
- Sundaram, V., & Sauntson, H. (2016). Discursive silences: using critical linguistic and qualitative analysis to explore the continued absence of pleasure in sex and relationships education in England. *Sex Education*, 16(3), 240-254.
- Tanggaard, L. (2009). The research interview as a dialogical context for the production of social life and personal narratives. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 15(9), 1498-1515.
- Taşkın, P., Nayir, F., & Demirdiş, M. (2022). Is Privacy Enough to Exist? LGBT+ Teachers' Experiences in Turkey. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 70(11), 2666-2687.
- Taylor, A. (2010). Troubling childhood innocence: Reframing the debate over the media sexualisation of children. *Australasian Journal of Early Childhood*, 35(1), 48-57.
- Taylor, C., & Peter, T. (2011). "We are not aliens, we're people, and we have rights." Canadian human rights discourse and high school climate for LGBTQ students. *Canadian Review of Sociology/Revue canadienne de sociologie*, 48(3), 275-312.
- Taylor, C. G., Meyer, E. J., Peter, T., Ristock, J., Short, D., & Campbell, C. (2016). Gaps between beliefs, perceptions, and practices: The Every Teacher Project on LGBTQ-

- inclusive education in Canadian schools. *Journal of LGBT Youth*, 13(1-2), 112-140.
- Taylor, N. (2012). US children's picture books and the homonormative subject. *Journal of LGBT Youth*, 9(2), 136-152.
- Taylor, Y. (2018). Navigating the emotional landscapes of academia: Queer encounters. In Y. Taylor & K. Lahad (Eds.), *Feeling academic in the neoliberal university: Feminist flights, fights and failures* (pp. 61-85).
- Taylor, Y., & Cuthbert, K. (2019). Queer religious youth in faith and community schools. *Educational Review*, 71(3), 382-396.
- TenHouten, W. D. (2017). Site sampling and snowball sampling-Methodology for accessing hard-to-reach populations. *Bulletin of Sociological Methodology/Bulletin de Méthodologie Sociologique*, 134(1), 58-61.
- The Church of England. (2023). *Living in Love & Faith*. Church of England. <https://www.churchofengland.org/resources/living-love-and-faith>
- Thein, A. H. (2013). Language arts teachers' resistance to teaching LGBT literature and issues. *Language Arts*, 90(3), 169-180.
- Thompson Burdine, J., Thorne, S., & Sandhu, G. (2021). Interpretive description: a flexible qualitative methodology for medical education research. *Medical Education*, 55(3), 336-343.
- Thompson-Lee, C. (2017). *Heteronormativity in a rural school community: An autoethnography*. Springer.
- Thoresen, L., & Öhlén, J. (2015). Lived observations: Linking the researcher's personal experiences to knowledge development. *Qualitative Health Research*, 25(11), 1589-1598.
- Toft, A., & Franklin, A. (2020). Towards expansive and inclusive relationship and sex education: young disabled LGBT+ people's ideas for change. In A. Franklin & A. Toft (Eds.), (pp. 213-227). Routledge.
- Toledo, W., & Maher, B. (2021). On becoming an LGBTQ+-identifying teacher: A year-long study of two gay and lesbian preservice elementary teachers. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 68(10), 1609-1638.
- Torre, D., & Murphy, J. (2015). A different lens: Changing perspectives using photo-elicitation interviews. *Education policy analysis archives*, 23, 111-111.
- Transgender Trend. (2018, February 13). *School Resource Pack*. Transgender Trend. <https://www.transgendertrend.com/transgender-schools-guidance/>
- Transgender Trend. (2020, 24 September). *This is what we have been calling for. We are very glad to see this guidance issued by the*
 @educationgovuk. Twitter.
<https://twitter.com/Transgendertrd/status/1309134383278944259?s=20>

- Tropiano, S. (2014). 'A safe and supportive environment': LGBTQ youth and social media. In C. Pullen (Ed.), *Queer youth and media cultures* (pp. 46-62).
- Tullos, J. (2020). *(Re) Mapping Bisexuality Through Space and Place in Young Adult Literature*. Illinois State University.
- Twiss, J., & Keller, E. (2018). *A Day in the Life of Marlon Bundo*. Chronicle Books.
- Education Reform Act 1988, Chapter 40. , (1888).
- Local Government Act 1988, (1988).
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1988/9/section/28/enacted>
- Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994, (1994).
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1994/33/part/XI/enacted>
- Education Act 1996: Section 403, (1996).
[https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/56/section/403#:~:text=403%20Sex%20education%3A%20manner%20of%20provision.&text=\(b\)they%20are%20protected%20from,background%20of%20the%20pupils%20concerned](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/56/section/403#:~:text=403%20Sex%20education%3A%20manner%20of%20provision.&text=(b)they%20are%20protected%20from,background%20of%20the%20pupils%20concerned)
- UK Government. (2006). *Education and Inspections Act 2006*. UK Government.
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/40/contents>
- Equality Act 2010, (2010). <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/section/19>
- UK Government. (2011). *Working for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Equality: Moving Forward*. UK Government.
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/85482/lgbt-action-plan.pdf
- UK Government. (2023a). *The National Curriculum: Other compulsory subjects* UK Government.
<https://www.gov.uk/national-curriculum/other-compulsory-subjects#:~:text=and%20secondary%20schools.-,Religious%20education,academies%20can%20set%20their%20own>.
- UK Government. (2023b, January 30). *Petition: Remove LGBT content from the Relationships Education curriculum*. UK Government.
<https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/630932>
- Sexual Offences Act 1967, (1967). <https://www.parliament.uk/about/living-heritage/transformingsociety/private-lives/relationships/collections1/sexual-offences-act-1967/sexual-offences-act-1967/>

- Ullman, J. (2018). Breaking out of the (anti) bullying 'box': NYC educators discuss trans/gender diversity-inclusive policies and curriculum. *Sex Education, 18*(5), 495-510.
- Vähäsantanen, K., & Saarinen, J. (2013). The power dance in the research interview: manifesting power and powerlessness. *Qualitative research, 13*(5), 493-510.
- Vanderbeck, R. M., & Johnson, P. (2015). Homosexuality, religion and the contested legal framework governing sex education in England. *Journal of Social Welfare and Family Law, 37*(2), 161-179.
- Vaughn, A. A., Teeters, S. A., Sadler, M. S., & Cronan, S. B. (2017). Stereotypes, emotions, and behaviors toward lesbians, gay men, bisexual women, and bisexual men. *Journal of Homosexuality, 64*(13), 1890-1911.
- Vega, S., Crawford, H. G., & Van Pelt, J.-L. (2012). Safe schools for LGBTQI students: How do teachers view their role in promoting safe schools? *Equity & Excellence in Education, 45*(2), 250-260.
- Vilaça, T. (2017). A multiple case study based on action-oriented sexuality education: perspectives of the Portuguese teachers. *Health Education, 117*(1), 110-126.
- Vincent, C. (2022). The illiberalism of liberalism: schools and fundamental controversial values. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, 48*(9), 2073-2090.
- Wait, T., & Rodriguez, M. (2023, August 22). *Who are the people behind "Leave Our Kids Alone" and why do they want to limit LGBTQ education?* CBS News. <https://www.cbsnews.com/losangeles/news/who-are-the-people-behind-leave-our-kids-alone-and-why-do-they-want-to-limit-lgbtq-education/>
- Waites, M. (2000). Homosexuality and the new right: The legacy of the 1980s for new delineations of homophobia. *Sociological Research Online, 5*(1), 130-138.
- Waites, M. (2003). Equality at last? Homosexuality, heterosexuality and the age of consent in the United Kingdom. *Sociology, 37*(4), 637-655.
- Waites, M. (2005a). *The age of consent*. Springer.
- Waites, M. (2005b). The fixity of sexual identities in the public sphere: Biomedical knowledge, liberalism and the heterosexual/homosexual binary in late modernity. *Sexualities, 8*(5), 539-569.
- Walker, M., Worth, J., & Van den Brande, J. (2019). *Teacher Workload Survey 2019. Research Report*. ERIC.
- Walton, G. (2010). The problem trap: implications of Policy Archaeology Methodology for anti-bullying policies. *Journal of Education Policy, 25*(2), 135-150.
- Walton, J., & MacPherson, D. (2016). *Introducing Teddy*. Bloomsbury Publishing
- Ward, J., & Schneider, B. (2009). The reaches of heteronormativity: An introduction. *Gender & Society, 23*(4), 433-439.
- Ward, S., Bagley, C., Lumby, J., Hamilton, T., Woods, P., & Roberts, A. (2016). What is 'policy' and what is 'policy response'? An illustrative study of the implementation of the Leadership Standards for Social Justice in Scotland. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership, 44*(1), 43-56.

- Warin, J., & Price, D. (2020). Transgender awareness in early years education (EYE): 'we haven't got any of those here'. *Early Years*, 40(1), 140-154.
- Warner, M. (1993). *Fear of a queer planet: Queer politics and social theory* (Vol. 6). U of Minnesota Press.
- Warwick, I., & Aggleton, P. (2014). Bullying, 'cussing' and 'mucking about': Complexities in tackling homophobia in three secondary schools in south London, UK. *Sex Education*, 14(2), 159-173.
- Weaver, M. (2023, August 25). *Two men injured after another homophobic attack in south London*. The Guardian. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/aug/25/two-men-injured-another-homophobic-attack-south-london>
- Webb, S. N., Chonody, J. M., & Kavanagh, P. S. (2017). Attitudes toward same-sex parenting: An effect of gender. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 64(11), 1583-1595.
- Weber, J.-J., & Horner, K. (2010). Orwellian doublethink: Keywords in Luxembourgish and European language-in-education policy discourses. *Language Policy*, 9(3), 241-256.
- Weeks, J., Heaphy, B., & Donovan, C. (2001). *Same sex intimacies: Families of choice and other life experiments*. Psychology Press.
- Welply, O. (2017). 'My language... I don't know how to talk about it': children's views on language diversity in primary schools in France and England. *Language and Intercultural Communication*, 17(4), 437-454.
- Welply, O. (2018). 'I'm not being offensive but...': Intersecting discourses of discrimination towards Muslim children in school. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 21(3), 370-389.
- Wernick, L. J., Kulick, A., & Chin, M. (2017). Gender identity disparities in bathroom safety and wellbeing among high school students. *Journal of youth and adolescence*, 46(5), 917-930.
- Weston, J., & Berridge, V. (2020). AIDS Inside and Out: HIV/AIDS and Penal Policy in Ireland and England & Wales in the 1980s and 1990s. *Social History of Medicine*, 33(1), 247-267.
- Wieringa, S. E. (2020). Heteronormativity and passionate aesthetics. In Z. Davy, A. Cristina Santos, C. Bertonw, R. Thoreson, & S. E. Wieringa (Eds.), *The SAGE Handbook of Global Sexualities* (pp. 291-313).
- Wilder, R. (2019). *Policy Making about Relationships and Sex Education in English Primary Schools* University of Bristol].
- Wilder, R. (2022). Power, authority and expertise: policy making about relationships and sex education in English primary schools. *Journal of Education Policy*, 38(5), 782-802.
- Wilson, A. (1980). The infancy of the history of childhood: An appraisal of Philippe Ariès. *History and Theory*, 19(2), 132-153.
- Wilson, A. (2006). Queering Asia. *Intersections: Gender, history and culture in the Asian Context*, 14(3), 1-10.

- Winer, C., Carroll, M., Yang, Y., Linder, K., & Miles, B. (2022). "I Didn't Know Ace Was a Thing": Bisexuality and pansexuality as identity pathways in asexual identity formation. *Sexualities*, 0(0), 1-23.
- Winter, C., & Mills, C. (2020). The psy-security-curriculum ensemble: British values curriculum policy in English schools. *Journal of Education Policy*, 35(1), 46-67.
- Wire, T. (2022). "They don't need to know that." focus groups as a model for teacher-led research and curriculum consultation. *Practice*, 4(1), 42-55.
- Witcomb, G. L., Claes, L., Bouman, W. P., Nixon, E., Motmans, J., & Arcelus, J. (2019). Experiences and psychological wellbeing outcomes associated with bullying in treatment-seeking transgender and gender-diverse youth. *LGBT health*, 6(5), 216-226.
- Wodak, R. (2011). Critical linguistics and critical discourse analysis. *Discursive pragmatics*, 8, 50-70.
- Wolcott, H. F. (1990). On seeking-and rejecting-validity in qualitative research. In E. Eisner & A. Peshkin (Eds.), *Qualitative inquiry in education: The continuing debate* (Vol. 121, pp. 121-173). Teachers College Press.
- Woodiwiss, J. (2014). Beyond a single story: The importance of separating 'harm' from 'wrongfulness' and 'sexual innocence' from 'childhood' in contemporary narratives of childhood sexual abuse. *Sexualities*, 17(1-2), 139-158.
- Worth, J., & Faulkner-Ellis, H. (2021). Teacher Labour Market in England: Annual Report 2021. *National Foundation for Educational Research*.
- Yang, A. (2022, June 1). *Lil Nas X wants to 'open doors' for 'other queer people to simply exist'*. NBC News <https://www.nbcnews.com/nbc-out/nbc-out-proud/lil-nas-x-wants-open-doors-queer-people-simply-exist-rcna28802>
- Yang, M. (2023, April 19). *Florida board approves expansion of 'don't say gay' ban to all school grades*. The Guardian. <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2023/apr/19/florida-education-board-approves-expansion-dont-say-gay-bill>
- Yang, Y. (2023). Gender uncoupled: asexual people making sense of high school sex talk. *Sexualities*, 26(3), 372-387.
- Young, C. A. (2011). Creating a Controversial Picturebook: Discussions with the Creators of "And Tango Makes Three". *Journal of Children's Literature*, 37(2), 30-38.
- Young, R. (1981). *Untying the text: A post-structuralist reader*. Routledge & Kegan Paul London.
- Zaman, B. A., & Anderson-Nathe, B. (2021). Toward queer potentialities in child and youth care. *International Journal of Child, Youth and Family Studies*, 12(3), 104-128.
- Zanghellini, A. (2012). Are gay rights Islamophobic? A critique of some uses of the concept of homonationalism in activism and academia. *Social & Legal Studies*, 21(3), 357-374.
- Zivony, A., & Saguy, T. (2018). Stereotype deduction about bisexual women. *The Journal of Sex Research*, 55(4-5), 666-678.

