Promoting Acceptance of Diverse Appearances in Primary School-Aged Children

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Abstract

Appearance-based stereotyping and stigma emerges in early childhood and can exist by the age of 4 years. Those who have a diverse appearance (e.g., higher weight, visible difference) are at increased risk of experiencing stigmatisation, resulting in negative outcomes such as poorer psychological adjustment and quality of life. In order to understand children's acceptance of diverse appearances, Study 1 firstly investigated children's attitudes and behaviours towards appearance diversities. In total, 396 children aged 4-10 years responded to various attitudinal and behavioural measures. The findings revealed children are less accepting towards those of higher weight and with a visible difference compared to children without an appearance diversity. The results highlight the need for promoting acceptance of appearance diversity in primary schools.

Children's acceptance of those with a diverse appearance can be influenced by various social and ecological factors such as family, school, and the media. These factors can play a powerful role in the development of children's attitudes and beliefs. To further understand children's acceptance of diverse appearances, Study 2 assessed the impact of various social influencing factors (i.e., parents, the media, and familiarly). Additionally, as parents play a pivotal role in children's development, parent's own attitudes towards appearance diversities were assessed. Results found the media positively influenced children's attitudes towards those with a physical disability. No other factors impacted children's acceptance of appearance diversities. Parent's own attitudes highlighted they are less accepting of a child in a wheelchair, with a facial burn and of higher weight compared to a child wearing glasses. Specifically, mothers with higher appearance investment displayed less accepting attitudes towards appearance diversities.

Schools provide ideal settings to promote acceptance of diverse appearances in children, as they are able to target a large number of children and reach them at an age before attitudes are firmly entrenched. Therefore, Study 3a qualitatively explored teachers' experiences and perceptions of promoting appearance diversity by interviewing ten qualified primary school teachers. The findings revealed teachers often feel anxious about promoting acceptance of appearance diversity due to concerns, such as saying the wrong thing. The research outlines more support is needed for schools and teachers on this topic. Thus, a brief and free support guide was designed and developed for primary school educators in a bid to help promote

conversations regarding appearance diversity and increase support for teachers on how to discuss appearance diversity. Study 3b assessed acceptability of the support guide, including user feedback from a total of 30 primary school educators using a person-based approach. Information gathered was implemented and a final support guide was developed and made available online.

This body of work employed a mixed-methods approach in order to fully explore the topic. The studies within this PhD added new knowledge regarding children's attitudes towards diverse appearances and developed novel materials in a bid to increase understanding and promote acceptance of all diverse appearances in children.

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Research outputs

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CHAPTER 1: General Introduction

This introductory chapter outlines language used throughout the thesis, as well as the overall aims of the research and approach to the program of work conducted throughout this PhD. Finally, the thesis structure and chapter outlines will be presented.

1.1 Language

Appearance diversity

The term '*appearance diversity*' is used throughout the thesis, thus it is important to define how this term has been conceptualised within this body of work.

A number of characteristics make up one's appearance. Some are protected in the UK under the Equality Act 2010 (Equality & Human Rights Commission, 2010), including sex/gender, race, disability, religion/belief, age and sexual orientation. However, some are not protected, including weight, height, hair colour/style/texture, and some visible differences which may not fall under 'severe disability' (e.g., burn, eczema and amputation). The term 'visible difference' is identified as an altered appearance resulting from a wide range of congenital abnormalities, illnesses, injuries or surgical interventions (Rumsey & Harcourt, 2007). All diverse appearances can be visible (e.g., race, physical disability, and weight) or invisible (e.g., sexuality, learning difficulties, and invisible visible differences, such as a burn which is concealable). Importantly, these characteristics can intersect, whether they are protected or unprotected within UK law. Taken together, there are various intersectional levels at which appearances can be diverse. This thesis recognises all these appearance diversities, whether protected or unprotected and visible or invisible.

Diversity is outlined in the UK government's diversity and inclusion strategy as "*recognising the value of difference*" (Home Office, 2018, p. 4). Similarly, this PhD highlights recognising appearance diversity as understanding that everybody has different appearance characteristics, and no two people are the same. In this case, promoting acceptance of appearance diversity includes positive recognition of all appearances, despite their individual characteristics. However, within society there are various appearance 'norms' (e.g., white, able bodied, and lower weight) which set the standard whereby anybody who deviates from this norm are at a greater risk of appearance-based stigma (Puhl & Peterson, 2012). In order for all appearances to be accepted, it is important to focus on those appearances which

significantly deviate from societies norms. Therefore, within this body of work the term '*appearance diversity*,' taken together, denotes those whose appearance can be stigmatised as a result of differing in some way to societal standards or norms.

Stigma

Stigma and prejudice are both complex concepts related to how individuals experience, attribute, and interact with various groups. These terms stem from the early works of Goffman (1963) and Allport (1958). Goffman describes stigma as "*an attribute that links a person to an undesirable stereotype, leading other people to reduce the bearer from a whole and usual person to a tainted, discounted one"* (1963, p. 11). Allport conceptualised prejudice as, "*an aversive or hostile attitude toward a person who belongs to a group, simply because he belongs to that group, and is therefore presumed to have the objectionable qualities ascribed to the group"* (1958, p. 7). Further, prejudice has been described as *"essentially a kind of prejudgment,"* separating the term by its prefix and suffix (Newman, 1979). Both terms link to the negative attribution or attitudes towards a person or group of persons, which ultimately leads to that individual/group being discounted. Stuber, Meyer and Link (2008) highlight that the differences between stigma and prejudice are typically related to the group of interest. For example historically, within research, stigma refers to people with conditions such as a visible difference, higher weight, HIV/AIDS, and mental illness. In contrast, research regarding prejudice typically focuses on various broad groups which are seen more frequently, but nonetheless include minority groups which are subject to negative attributions (e.g., gender, race, age, and social status).

Most scholarly work considering prejudice relates to negative evaluations, beliefs or feelings directed towards ethnicity (Brown, 2011). Additionally, a review of eighteen key stigma and prejudice models by Phelan, Link and Dovidio (2008) concluded that, although the terms are similar, there are distinctions within both concepts regarding reasons why people stigmatise or are prejudicial. The review explains prejudice resides within the concerns of authority and domination, focusing mainly on the effect of those who are prejudiced. In contrast, stigma refers to the enforcement of social norms, whereby failure to comply with social norms (including appearance norms), leads to negative connotations from others about one's character or morality. Consideration of the literature around stigma and prejudice provides support that both terms would be appropriate within the scope of this PhD. However, the term stigma most closely reflects the social minority groups within this PhD (visible difference,

disability, and weight status). Further, although the PhD is assessing attitudes towards minority groups, and arguably including prejudicial attitudes, the main focus is how to promote appearances which deviate from the social norm, which exists within the stigma literature more than the literature regarding prejudice. Thus, this thesis will use the term '*stigma*' related to social groups that have an appearance which deviates from the 'social norm' and are therefore subject to negative stereotypes and attitudes.

Children

The terms *child/children* will also be used. This body of work focuses on primary school-aged children, who are typically aged four to 11 years within the UK primary school education system. Therefore, this thesis uses the term child/children to represent those who are of UK primary school age.

Parents

This body of work also uses the term *parent/parents.* However, it is acknowledged that in addition to biological parents, the term includes caregivers, legal guardians and anyone else who has a significant role in a child's development (e.g., grandparents).

1.2 Approach to the research

In 2017, the Centre for Appearance Research (CAR; UWE, Bristol) advertised a PhD Studentship with the title, 'Developing an intervention for primary school-aged children to increase acceptance of diversity of appearance.' The PhD was funded by the Vocational Training Charitable Trust (VTCT) Foundation (http://www.vtctfoundation.org.uk), who are focused on providing support for those living with a visible difference. Although the title did not narrow the focus to only visible differences, it is important to recognise that this body of work was made possible through a foundation which focuses on visible differences. Secondly, CAR is a world leading centre of excellence for research in appearance, visible difference, and body image. Therefore, the funding for this PhD and centre from which the knowledge was developed had an influence on this approach to the research.

The opportunity to promote acceptance of diverse appearances in children, whilst continuing to be a part of a unique, multidisciplinary research team was attractive to me. When this PhD was advertised, I was working at CAR as a research associate. The projects I worked on

included promoting body image acceptance in UK secondary schools (Atkinson, Parnell & Diedichs, 2019). I really enjoyed working with younger people and witnessed first-hand how important body image is to adolescents. This has been reflected in a recent UK Government report highlighting that young people want to learn about body image in school (The Women and Equalities Committee, 2020). However, I also noticed that by secondary school-age (11-18 years), young people had already internalised beliefs and attitudes regarding theirs and others appearances. Recent research supports this observation, by evidencing that low body esteem appears to be largely stable from age 11 (Lacroix, Atkinson, Garbett & Diedrichs, 2020). Therefore, it was clear research efforts and interventions needed to be targeted earlier than adolescence and my own observations supported this approach.

My journey into body image research and CAR began whilst I was at university. I studied undergraduate psychology at UWE and got the chance to take part in a body image intervention titled Succeed (Becker & Stice, 2011). At the time I was struggling with the relationship with my body, but taking part in the intervention made me quickly realise that sadly this was normal and I became familiar with the term 'normative discontent' (Rodin, Silberstein & Striegel-Moore, 1984). The ability to discuss something I had been unable to find words for at the time was extremely powerful and I felt a sense of comradery with the women who shared somewhat similar experiences. I developed a great appreciation for body image interventions and wanted to continue helping others in the same way. Subsequently, as an undergraduate I trained as a peer leader for the Succeed Body Image intervention and delivered the sessions to secondary school girls, which was evaluated and later published in a paper by Halliwell, Jarman, McNamara, Risdon and Jankowski (2015).The study found improvements in the teenage girl's body appreciation and reduced body dissatisfaction. My early interest in the area of body image started through taking part in a body image intervention and this sparked my drive to help others. Therefore, it was clear this PhD would not only develop new knowledge through research outputs and enquiries, but also develop intervention materials to help others the way I was helped initially. However, an important critique of intervention development in body image research and more broadly is the issue of 'reinventing the wheel,' by developing new interventions whilst there are still many available which need further evaluation (Rumsey & Harcourt, 2012). I agree with this and believe it is important to build upon and support intervention materials which have already been created as well as identifying where more support may be needed. Therefore this body of work aimed

to explore the literature and contribute knowledge which would help develop an intervention that bridges a gap in what is already available.

Whilst I had plenty of experience in body image research and interventions, in contrast, I had less knowledge and awareness from an educational perspective. During my undergraduate degree I volunteered as a learning support assistant in a secondary school. For the first time I experienced education from the perspective of educator rather than student. I also quickly learned the importance of the school context and how, despite being challenging at times, this was a place where students can develop and receive support. Further, schools are recognised as great environments to implement interventions for promoting acceptance (Yager, Diedrichs, Ricciardelli & Halliwell, 2013). Thus, when approaching how to promote acceptance of appearance diversity in children, my experience and the literature suggested the school was an ideal environment.

This program of PhD research provided the opportunity to fully explore ways to promote acceptance of diverse appearances in primary school children, with the potential to make a significant contribution in both psychology and education disciplines. My own experiences influenced the approach to this research to some degree; however, this body of work was developed via synthesis of the literature as well as designing and implementing research studies to develop novel evidenced-based intervention materials.

1.3 Overall aim

The principle aim of this PhD was to promote acceptance of diversity of appearance in primary school children. In order to fulfil this, the PhD aimed to provide an in-depth exploration of: (1) children's acceptance towards diverse appearances and (2) possible influencing factors and ways to promote acceptance of diverse appearances, before (3) developing materials which would help promote acceptance of diverse appearances in primary school-aged children.

In order to meet these aims and build a bigger picture for promoting acceptance of diverse appearances, this project of work included children, parents, and primary school teachers. The research firstly investigated children's attitudes towards diverse appearances and then the role of parents, the media, and familiarity with diverse appearances on these attitudes.

Finally, teacher's perceptions of how to promote acceptance of appearance diversity were assessed. After exploration of these factors to meet aims 1 and 2 of the PhD and gain a deeper understanding of *why* and *how* to promote acceptance of diverse appearance in children; it was apparent that one important step which bridged a gap in this area was to help support primary school teachers on the topic. Therefore, a support guide was developed in a bid to help promote acceptance of appearance diversity in primary school children – the acceptability of this guide was evaluated and modifications made prior to its public release.

1.4 Thesis structure and chapter outlines

The thesis begins with a literature review of what is known about the social, developmental and educational influences on children's acceptance of diverse appearances (Chapter 2). Following this, there is a discussion of the methodological underpinnings, design and epistemology, ethical considerations and challenges of conducting research in this area (Chapter 3). Chapter 4 presents research findings from Study 1, which evaluated children's attitudes and behaviours towards diverse appearances. Chapter 5 outlines Study 2, an exploration into the potential risk and protective factors of parents, the media, and familiarity on children's attitudes towards diverse appearances. Chapter 6 discusses Study 3a, which explored teachers' experiences and perceptions of promoting acceptance of diverse appearances in children. The findings from these studies resulted in the development of a prototype support guide for teachers and a feasibility study (Study 3b) was carried out with education professionals providing feedback on the guide (Chapter 7). The support guide was then amended according to results of the study. The thesis concludes with a discussion of the implications of the research findings in relation to the latest literature, recommendations for future research and a reflection on the research process (Chapter 8). The final section of the thesis provides the references and appendices.

CHAPTER 2: Literature Review

The previous chapter introduced the research aims and contextualised the work that follows. This chapter provides an overview of the social, developmental, and educational literature pertaining to the topic of acceptance of diverse appearances in children. A broad literature review was initially carried out at the beginning of this body of work (March 2018) and then further literature reviews specific to each study were conducted consecutively. The literature review presented below is a compilation of a series of reviews which were last updated in 2021. This review is strengthened by its broad consideration of the topic from various perspectives, however in some places the area of focus needed to be narrowed (e.g., research on weight stigma) to use as examples for appearance diversity and in order to draw specific conclusions. Without an understanding of the array of literature which discusses acceptance of diverse appearances and what interventions, or materials have already been produced, it would not be possible to create and interpret new knowledge in this field and increase acceptance of diverse appearance in children.

Literature in this area often contextualises the importance of recognising appearance diversity by outlining the increasing diversity of demographics in their respective countries (e.g., UK: Ainscow, Dyson, Hopwood, Thomson, 2016; USA and Canada: Perlman, Kankesan & Zhang, 2010). Specifically related to cultural diversity or multiculturalism, the term 'superdiversity' has been used to highlight increased globalisation within the UK and Europe (Blommaert, 2013; Vertovec, 2007; Welply, 2015). Some scholars have outlined that despite the increasing diversity of demographics within the UK, research and public services, such as education, are struggling to adjust to the changing diversity of their pupils (Ainscow et al., 2016; Perlman et al., 2010; Vertovec, 2007). However, arguably acceptance of appearance diversity should not be reactive due to demographic change but recognised even in the absence of diversity. In other words, awareness of black history should not be dependent upon inclusion of a black child or discussions of gender only after a child identifies differently to their assigned sex at birth. Critically recognising that even research on this topic feels the need to justify promotion of diversity acceptance, in light of changing or prevalent demographics, highlights just how far research in this area still has to go. Thus, this thesis will not begin by contextualising the need to promote acceptance of appearance diversity in children with statistics of appearance diversity demographics in the UK, as irrespective of

'who is in the room,' this body of work will argue there is an unequivocal need to celebrate and normalise *all* diverse appearances.

2.1 Appearance diversity and stigma

General appearance stigma

In general, society places great emphasis on an individual's physical appearance (Puhl & Peterson, 2012). The 'beauty is good' stereotype assumes that physical appearances deemed more 'attractive' in society are nicer, smarter and more capable (Smolak, 2012). In contrast, anyone who has a diverse appearance which deviates from society's standard of the appearance 'norm' (example of the norm being: able-bodied, white, lower weight, no visible difference) are often devalued and stigmatised due to their physical attributes (Puhl & Peterson, 2012; Rumsey & Harcourt, 2007). Certain appearance diversities have become so devalued that appearance-based stereotypes (i.e., a set of generalised beliefs regarding appearance) have developed towards those deviating from society's appearance norm (e.g., people of higher weight are lazy). In contrast, those who fit the appearance norms set by society are afforded a more favourable positive social bias and less stigma (Puhl & Peterson, 2012).

The seminal definition of stigmatisation presented by Goffman (1963), suggests stigma is defined as a physical or social attribute that seeks to devalue an individual's social identity and disqualify them from full acceptance within society. A salient appearance diversity, such as a visible burn, race or weight, are externally visible and therefore subject to an inescapable level of stigma (Harper, 1999). Concealable appearance diversities, such as some illnesses, a coverable burn scar (e.g., on the back) or affiliation with a racial/religious group, allow (to some degree) people to avoid repeated exposure to stigma. However, concealing one's identity can lead to depletion in cognitive, interpersonal, and physical deficits, which can be costly in the longer term (Critcher & Ferguson, 2014).

Further, appearance diversities can be viewed as controllable or incontrollable. An incontrollable appearance diversity is one that society views as an individual having little to no choice in possessing, for example, race and some illnesses/disabilities. Appearance diversities that are often viewed in society as controllable (e.g., higher weight), receive much harsher reactions and more extreme discrimination compared to appearances which are often

viewed as incontrollable (Puhl & Peterson, 2012). To date, the main theory to explain why appearance diversities viewed as controllable receive more stigma is attribution theory (Weiner, 1985). This theory suggests when an individual encounters a person with a diverse appearance, they search for a cause and subsequently form reactions and beliefs based on this information. While attribution theory can explain stigma towards a wide range of appearance diversities, one which has been strongly evidenced in the literature is attributions towards higher weight (Puhl & Peterson, 2012). Early evidence indicates that beliefs that those who are of higher weight lack willpower and have autonomy over their weight status strongly predict negative attitudes towards those that are higher weight (Crandall, 1994; Crandall et al., 2001; Crandall & Martinez, 1996). Further, a study with children aged 4-6 years old found a relationship between attributions of control over weight and stigmatisation of body size (Musher-Eizenman, Holub, Miller, Goldstein & Edwards-Leeper, 2004). Although attribution theory provides a useful theoretical underpinning for attitudes towards various appearance diversities, it is limited in its explanation regarding *why* certain appearance diversities are stigmatised in the first place (Carr & Friedman, 2005; Leeuwen, Hunt & Park, 2015). Understanding how and why certain appearance diversities are stigmatised is an important stepping stone for increasing acceptance of these appearances. A good place to start is to establish children's attitudes and beliefs towards various diverse appearances.

Children's appearance stigma

It has long been known that the 'beauty is good' stereotype emerges in children by about 3 years of age (Dion, Berscheid & Walster, 1972). Early evidence highlights by this age children prefer to play with other children that fit conventional appearance norms (Dion & Berscheid, 1974; for a review of the literature see Ramsey, 2008). However, more recent research found it is not the case that 'beauty is good' but rather, not fitting conventional appearance ideals is 'bad' (Griffin & Langlois, 2006). Although children are taught 'not to judge a book by its cover,' initial impressions and possible subsequent behaviours are often judged based on appearance.

Weight stigma

Throughout the appearance literature highlighting children's stigma towards various diverse appearances, one area which has had considerable focus and robust documentation is weight stigma. Weight stigma is the societal devaluation of a person because they are of higher weight (Pont, Puhl, Cook & Slusser, 2017). Weight stigma, or weightism, still remains a

socially acceptable form of prejudice, with the belief that this will motivate people to lose weight and higher weight in childhood is highly stigmatised (Pont et al., 2017). Influential early research conducted by Richardson, Goodman, Hastorf and Dornbusch (1961) compared children aged 10-11 years attitudes towards a range of diverse appearances (a child in a wheelchair, a child with a hand missing, a child of higher weight, a child on crutches, and a child with a visible facial difference). These authors found children of higher weight were the least preferred compared to those with other appearance diversities. When this study was replicated 50 years later with the same age group, the higher weight character was still least preferred but prevalence of weight stigmatisation in children had increased significantly (Latner & Stunkard, 2003). A similar study conducted with over 1,500 children aged 10-11 years, in Greece, found comparable results (Koroni, Garagouni-Areou, Roussi-Vergou, Zafiropoulou & Piperakis, 2009). The studies highlight the presence of weight stigma in young children, as well as demonstrate increases in weight stigma over the years. A recent systematic review of the literature on children's weight stigma found all 24 studies evidenced anti-higher weight attitudes in those aged below 11 years; evidence was inconclusive for gender differences (Di Pasquale & Celsi, 2017).

Additionally, research conducted in the 1960s suggests that by the ages of 6-10 years, both boys and girls make judgements and ascribe unfavourable adjectives, such as 'sloppy' and 'sneaky,' to those who are of higher weight (Staffieri, 1967). However, these attitudes and stereotypes did not evidence any influence on behaviour. Dohnt and Tiggemann (2008) found at age 5 children make behavioural judgements based on weight and are less likely to choose a higher weight child as a playmate compared to a 'normal' weight child. Overall, a review of the literature on children's weight stigma provides convincing evidence that children do stigmatise those of higher weight.

Impact of weight stigma

Children who are of higher weight are extremely vulnerable to receiving bullying and teasing (Griffiths, Wolke, Page & Horwood, 2005; Pont et al., 2017; Puhl, Himmelstein & Pearl, 2020; see meta-analysis by van Geel, Vedder & Tanilon, 2014). Experiences of weight stigma, weight-based bullying, and teasing have been evidenced to have profound effects on children. Children who experience weight stigma have a higher risk of engaging in disordered eating (Jendrzyca & Warschburger, 2016; Madowitz, Knatz, Maginot, Crow & Boutelle, 2012; Olvera, Dempsey, Gonzalez & Abrahamson, 2013), exercising less (Faith, Leone,

Ayers, Heo & Pietrobelli, 2002; Vartanian & Smyth, 2013), and experiencing increased psychosomatic symptoms (i.e., symptoms related to poorer mental health: Warkentin, Borghese & Janssen, 2017), and have poorer overall quality of life (Guardabassi, Mirisola & Tomasetto, 2018; Jensen, Cushing & Elledge, 2013). Often higher weight has been linked to poorer academic performance (He, Chen, Fan, Cai & Huang, 2019; Wu, Chen, Yang & Li, 2017) and effects such as deficits in working memory in children (Goldschmidt et al., 2018; Wu et al., 2017). However, a recent study explored the role of weight stigma on working memory of children of higher weight and found the presence of weight stigma influences outcomes on working memory tasks (Guardabassi & Tomasetto, 2020). Meaning, research concluding higher weight leads to a decrease in children's academic performance may be missing the important influence of weight stigma. The authors conclude that educational programs that reduce weight stigma and negative stereotypes regarding higher weight are important and should be prioritised in children (Guardabassi & Tomasetto, 2020). In summary, synthesis of the literature investigating the impact of weight stigma on children has evidenced numerous negative outcomes. Despite this, historically research has focused on the 'obesity epidemic' in a bid to reduce the weight of the population. Arguably this fails to recognise the influence of weight stigma and continues to perpetuate the negative outcomes evidenced (Tomiyama et al., 2018).

Visible difference/disability stigma

A wide range of congenital abnormalities, illnesses, injures, and surgical interventions can result in an appearance that deviates from society's 'norm' (Rumsey & Harcourt, 2007). When comparing children's attitudes towards a range of diverse appearances, a visible facial difference (e.g., following a burn injury or as a result of a craniofacial condition) has been found to be least preferred by children, after a child who is of higher weight (Richardson et al., 1961). Later replication of this study found preference towards a visible facial difference had increased compared to the other appearance diversities (Koroni et al., 2009; Latner & Stunkard, 2003). Nevertheless, individuals with a visible difference report stigmatising behaviours such as starring, comments, and unsolicited questions regarding their appearance or complete avoidance (for reviews see, Rumsey & Harcourt, 2004; Thompson & Kent, 2001). Further, children with visible facial differences are more likely to be bullied and discriminated against in academic contexts (Lovegrove & Rumsey, 2005; Richman, 1978). Masnari, Schiestl, Weibel, Wuttke and Landolt (2013) compared attitudes of children aged 8-17 years towards other children with and without a visible facial difference and found

participants attributed less favourable characteristics (e.g., less likable, less happy) towards those with a facial difference than those without. Various facial differences, such as burn scars, birthmark or cleft lip and/or palate, are seen to negatively impact peer acceptance and social perceptions (Masnari et al., 2013), and are stereotyped as lacking emotional stability, being unhappy, unintelligent, and unpopular (Jamrozik, Oraa, Sarwer & Chatterjee, 2019).

Visible differences affecting function (e.g., being in a wheelchair, an amputation) also receive fewer positive attitudes when compared to a 'normative' control child (Harrison, Rowlingson & Hill, 2016), and in some cases are more stigmatised than a visible aesthetic difference (e.g., a facial difference: Koroni et al., 2009; Latner & Stunkard, 2003). Early research suggests boys are less likely to accept functional differences, whereas girls are less likely to accept aesthetic differences (Harper, 1997). This is supported by both body conceptualisation theory (Franzoi, 1995), and objectification theory (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997), which similarly suggests at an early age girls' bodies are both portrayed and viewed as objects and are valued for their appearance, whereas boys' bodies are seen as empowering strength and function, with an emphasis on functionality. However, research regarding gender effects has been equivocal (Masnari et al., 2013).

As well as gender differences, some earlier research has shown an increase in negative attitudes with age, with children attributing more negative characteristics towards facial differences at age 11, than age 5 (Rumsey, Bull & Gahagan, 1986). Whilst contrasting research has found either a decrease in negative attitudes with age (Schneiderman & Harding, 1984), or no age effect (Tobiasen, 1987). These differences may be a result of the type of measures chosen. All three studies included explicit measures and participants rated images according to a series of adjectives, which could have been influenced by demand characteristics and result in the children responding in a socially desirable way. Nonetheless, synthesis of the literature suggests a trend towards children having stigmatising and discriminatory behaviours towards those with a visible difference, however a large number of these research studies were conducted before this millennium, so further recent research is needed in this area.

Impact of visible difference stigma

Although there is limited research that has focused on attitudes towards those with a visible difference, more research has explored the impact of stigma on those with a visible

difference. Whether an individual is born with or acquires a visible difference later on in life, a visible difference can have a profound effect on the individual. Whilst some young people appear relatively unaffected and adapt to demands placed upon them well (Rumsey & Harcourt, 2007), others report negative effects such as stress (De Young, Kenardy, Cobham & Kimble, 2012; Franzblau et al., 2015), lower body image, quality of life, and self-esteem (Kish & Lansdown, 2000; Rumsey & Harcourt, 2004). Importantly, numerous studies have found size or severity of the visible difference does not reliably predict an individual's own psychological distress (Bradbury, 2012; Tebble, Thomas & Price, 2004). For example, someone with a small scar on their hand may be more concerned and negativly impacted by their visible difference compared to someone with significant facial burns. A study by Brown, Moss, McGrouther and Bayat (2010) found participants own perceptions of how severe their visible difference was correlated with their psychological distress, which was not related to their actual visible difference severity (objectively assessed by a clinician). Thus, individual differences play an important role in the impact a visible difference may have on the person. Those with a visible difference resulting from a cleft lip and/or palate have received considerable attention within the research literature. A large study conducted by Hunt, Burden, Hepper, Stevenson and Johnston (2006) compared children with and without a cleft lip and/or palate, assessing their psychological functioning (e.g., anxiety, self-esteem, and depression). The findings showed children with a cleft lip and/or palate were more likely to be teased, and teasing was a predictor of psychological distress. A more recent systematic review found evidence that factors such as coping and adjustment strategies, self-confidence, acceptance of their appearance and being bullied influenced children's psychosocial functioning (Al-Namankany & Alhubaishi, 2018). The authors conclude that a cleft lip and/or palate can negatively impact the child and also the parents (particularly mothers). However, on a positive note, parental and social support was found to have a positive influence on the child. The evidence complied from the literature highlights that a key influence on the negative impact of having a visible difference is the response from others (e.g., teasing and bullying), and having a positive social environment can potentially buffer these effects. Thus, a key way to reduce any negative impacts on children with a diverse appearance is to target the attitudes and responses of others.

2.2 Developmental theories

A number of studies have demonstrated that children can develop negative attitudes towards others as young as 4 years old (see meta-analysis regarding race by Raabe & Beelmann, 2011). Evidence highlighting the early emergence of children's attitudes has led researchers to focus on developmental aspects, in order to help prevent or reduce stigma and discrimination (e.g., McGlothlin & Killen, 2006; Raabe & Beelmann, 2011). Many theories have been devised in order to further understand how attitudes develop in children. Most have been framed in terms of the development of prejudice and subsequently focus mainly on race and ethnicity (e.g., Aboud, 2008). Nevertheless, a number of these theories provide useful insight into how children's attitudes may develop and are therefore explored within this literature review.

Social identity theory

One of the most influential theories is social identity theory (SIT: Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Although SIT was not specifically designed to explain the development of stigma in young children, the application of this theory with children has been considered within the literature (Nesdale, 2004; Nesdale & Flesser, 2001). SIT includes three stages; social categorisation, social identification and social comparisons, whereby individuals create 'in-groups' (i.e., a group someone socially identifies with) and 'out-groups' (i.e., a group an individual does not identify with) (Hogg, 2020). SIT suggests negative attitudes develop following in-group favouritism (Aboud, 2003). However, in order for in-group favouritism to occur, children must be able to socially categorise information. Social categorisation is described as the ability to analyse the environment and to identify individual's positions within society, in comparison to their own group membership (Turner, Sachdev & Hogg, 1983). Evaluation of children's in-group attitudes from the ages of 3-9 years found that not only do children socially categorise information, but by 3 years of age they show in-group favouritism (Yee & Brown, 1992). However, others have found in-group favouritism does not appear until 5 years (Aboud, 2003). Recent evidence has shown children's in-group favouritism with regards to various appearance diversities such as, gender (Gasparini, Sette, Baumgartner, Martin & Fabes, 2015), race (Aboud, 2003), and body size - when the children are able to accurately identify their actual body size (see literature review by Di Pasquale & Celsi,

2017). All of which suggests that by an early age children are able to categorise and identify their own in-groups related to appearance characteristics. However, SIT has various limitations, including failure to account for the wider social environment (e.g., socio-economic status) and understanding how personal factors such as emotion and morality (Rutland, Killen & Abrams, 2010) may impact the development of these attitudes in children. Nevertheless, SIT is one of the early theories to account for appraisals towards others and had an important influence on future theories in this field, and contributes towards the notion that negative attitudes can develop early in children.

Social-cognitive developmental theory

Another theory which explains how children's attitudes develop is the social-cognitive developmental theory (SCDT). Strongly influenced by Piaget's cognitive developmental theory, the SCDT has been contextualised to explain children's prejudiced attitudes by Aboud (Aboud, 1993, 2008; Doyle & Aboud, 1995; Doyle, Beaudet & Aboud, 1988). SCDT takes a cognitive perspective and argues that children's attitudes are created through cognitive and socio-cognitive development, highlighting that children are predisposed to acquire and maintain social stereotypes (Aboud, 1993; Katz, 1976). This theory suggests children exhibit strong in-group favouritism and negative attitudes towards out-groups through egocentricity, which peaks at approximately 6-7 years. After which, it is argued that children begin to hold more negative attitudes towards their in-group and positive attitudes towards out-groups (Lam & Seaton, 2016; Nesdale & Flesser, 2001), suggesting a reduction of stigma towards those with diverse appearances.

A multinational meta-analysis by Raabe and Beelmann (2011) collated research over a 90-year period to describe a general trend in the development of racial stigma in children across ages. This large analysis included 128 research studies from more than eight countries. Findings indicated a trend across the studies, showing an increase in racial stigma between 2-7 years and then a decrease from 7-10 years (for explicit measures only, implicit measures had no decrease in racial stigma). The results from this meta-analysis support the notion that at a certain age (approximately 7 years), children begin to learn social 'rules' and respond desirably to these measures (Rutland et al., 2010). Thus, the research suggests stigma in children develops from explicit to implicit forms (Fazio & Olson, 2003), but does not disappear. These findings support the SCDT's description of negative attitudes developing until approximately 7 years, however this more recent research would argue children do not

have innate negative attitudes towards out-groups, but instead begin learning social cues and move towards implicit biases. However, the described meta-analysis only considered children's racial stigma (Raabe & Beelmann, 2011), this may not be applicable to all appearance diversities, as previous research would suggest children can have varying attitudes depending on the appearance diversity in question (Harrison et al., 2016; Koroni et al., 2009; Latner & Stunkard, 2003; Masnari et al., 2013; Richardson et al., 1961). Further, a more recent meta-analysis comparing interventions to improve racial and disability stigma in children found it was easier to increase positive attitudes towards disability compared to race (Beelmann & Heinemann, 2014). Thus, although this knowledge of attitudinal development provides useful insight into specific ages stigma is present, the results may not be generalisable across other appearance diversities.

Developmental intergroup theory

Individually all aforementioned theories help to explain how children categorise themselves and compare groups, potentially leading to negative attitudes and stigma towards 'out-groups.' However, these theories fail to include individual variation regarding one's social environment (e.g., why is there currently social stigma regarding weight but not handedness?; Bigler & Liben, 2007). A more recent theoretical model, the developmental intergroup theory (DIT: Bigler & Liben, 2006), considers these social factors. DIT is grounded in two already described, core contemporary theories, SIT (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and cognitive developmental theories such as the SCDT. DIT suggests stereotyping and negative attitudes can exist by the age of 4 years (Bigler & Liben, 2007). This theory has three core processes (evidenced via the three squares in Figure 1) and various factors which influence these processes (as shown in the ovals of the same Figure). These processes are said to contribute to the development of stereotyping and negative attitudes in children.

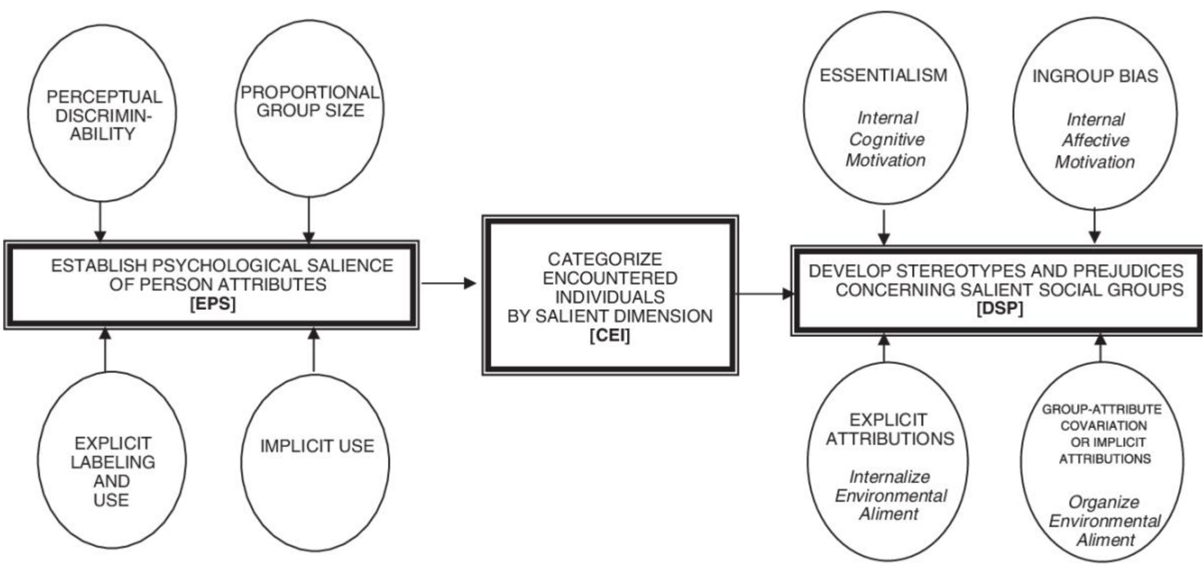

Figure 1. Developmental intergroup theory (Bigler & Liben, 2007)

The theory includes a number of aspects which overlap with various theories and approaches. For example, perceptual discriminability posits an individual's salient physical characteristics (e.g., weight, race, visible differences) often are the basis for stereotyping, overlapping with Goffman's theory of stigma (1963). The use of explicit labels (e.g., teacher lining pupils up by gender) are suggested to make certain characteristics (in this case gender) more psychologically salient and lead to categorisation based on this characteristic, aligning with the in-group and out-group bias evidenced in SIT (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Overall, the theory describes that both internal (cognitive) and external (social) processes lead children to attach meaning towards salient groups (Bigler & Liben, 2007). DIT argues that once categorisation related to a characteristic occurs (central square in Figure 1), stereotyping and prejudice will often follow. Although the theory comprehensively collates a range of important factors which can influence children's development of attitudes, compared to other contemporary theories, DIT lacks empirical evidence (Bigler & Liben, 2006). Nevertheless, DIT usefully acknowledges the role of the social environment in the development of children's stereotypes and attitudes, accounting for why children potentially develop stigma towards some appearances and not others, for example higher weight but not lower weight.

Social domain theory

Another theory worth noting is the social domain theory (Smetana, 2006, 2013). This theory explains children's attitudinal development by demonstrating ways children use social and moral reasoning when evaluating contexts of social exclusion (Smetana, 2006, 2013), and has become a dominant theory in the field of social development (Lourenço, 2014). This theory is

important when understanding the development of stigmatising attitudes in children, as those with appearance diversities can often be excluded or ignored from activities by other children (e.g., towards a child who is of higher weight: Harrison et al., 2016). Understanding the process and rationalisation of exclusion in children is therefore important when considering the development of children's attitudes. Within this theory, exclusion can be assessed as moral (wrong and unfair), conventional (legitimate for group functioning), and psychological (legitimate due to personal choice and evaluation) (Rutland et al., 2010). A series of studies have demonstrated that young children use moral reasoning (fairness) when rationalising exclusion in more straightforward situations related to group membership (e.g., boys can play with dolls too). However, when situations become more complex and nuanced (e.g., only one person can play with the doll), children begin justifying exclusion based on more stereotypical expectations (e.g., a girl should have the doll because they like them more; Crystal, Killen & Ruck, 2008; Killen, Pisacane, Lee-Kim & Ardila-Rey, 2001; Killen & Stangor, 2001; Theimer, Killen & Stangor, 2001). The theory suggests it is less about the stage a child is at developmentally and more about the context at which a judgment is being rationalised (Killen, 2007).

This theory can be critically applied to understand children's responses to forced choice attitudinal measures. Forced choice measures require participants to provide an answer, forcing them to make judgements regarding the response options (Allen, 2017). Forced choice questions have been used within research understanding children's attitudes towards various appearance diversities (alongside other measures) in order to potentially reduce the influence of social desirability (Harrison et al., 2016; Sigelman, Miller & Whitworth, 1986). However, arguably they can mislead researchers to conclude children's attitudes towards diverse appearances are more negative than they actually are (Harrison et al., 2016). The social domain theory helps to theoretically understand how children's responses may be viewed as more negative when asked to forcibly choose a preferred appearance. In contrast to Harrison et al. (2016) critique of forced choice measures, the social domain theory would suggest the forced choice questions are more representative of complex situations of exclusion, which makes stereotyping more salient in children and therefore reflects different moral reasoning. Thus, evaluation of the social domain theory in light of children's attitudinal literature would suggest multiple levels of attitudinal measurement are required (e.g., forced choice, open response), in order to fully contextualise children's moral reasoning and potential stigma towards diverse appearances.

Overall, a number of theories have attempted to map the development of children's attitudes. It is clear that attitudes develop early in children, however a large proportion of this literature focuses on prejudice related to race and ethnicity and literature linking the development of children's attitudes towards a range of appearance diversities is limited. Furthermore, although some theories acknowledge the role of social and contextual factors in the development of children's attitudes (e.g., DIT), there is a lack of detail regarding the specific role societal factors play in influencing children's attitudes. The developmental theories outline stages these attitudes may develop (the *when* and *how*), but more clarity is needed on *what* is potentially influencing children's attitudes. This is an important consideration for promoting acceptance of diverse appearances in children.

2.3 Theories of social influence

Given attitudes towards diverse appearances develop relatively early, it is important to assess various social and cultural factors which may impact on the development of negative attitudes. Knowledge of influencing factors which may increase the likelihood of children adopting negative attitudes can help inform approaches for interventions to increase the acceptance of diverse appearances in children. Although the presented theories describe the importance of specific influences such as parents and the media on children's attitudes, this section does not provide a literature review on these specific influences, as this is presented in the introduction of Study 2 (Chapter 5).

Bioecological theory

The bioecological theory of human development (Bronfenbrenner, 1995, 1999; Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994) was adapted from the earlier developed ecological theory (see Figure 2 for ecological model) (Ashiabi & O'Neal, 2015; Bronfenbrenner, 1977). Bronfenbrenner continuously updated the original ecological theory, and therefore it is important to establish what version of the theory is being considered (Rosa & Tudge, 2013). This thesis includes the more recent version of the theory (defined as the third and last phase) as this represents the most up to date review of the model (see Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2007). The main components of the bioecological theory were proximal processes and the Process-Person-Context-Time (PPCT) model (Bronfenbrenner, 1999; Bronfenbrenner &

Morris, 1998, 2007). Proximal processes refers to the interaction between the individual and their environment; in order for the interaction to be meaningful, it must occur over an extended period of time (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998). Proximal processes were explained as having positive effects on the person's development. However, this component has been questioned, as it does not necessarily add anything new to the already developed field of interaction (e.g., the contact hypothesis, described below in this section) and fails to explain if harmful interactions could be considered proximal processes (Merçon-Vargas, Lima, Rosa & Tudge, 2020). Proximal processes refers to the 'process' within the 'PPCT' model.

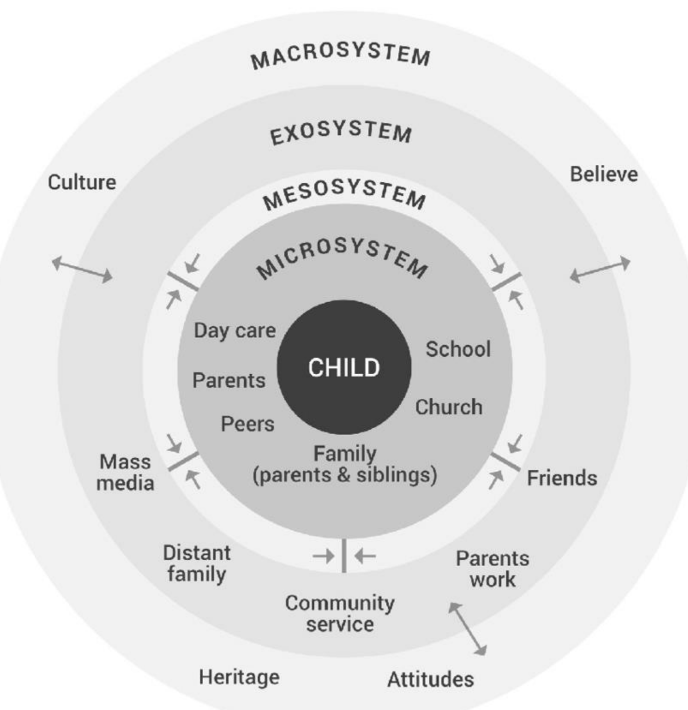

Figure 2. Adapted version of Bronfenbrenner's ecological model (Teigland, 2018)

The 'person' section of the PPCT model refers to an individual's personal characteristics such as someone's disposition, ability to engage in proximal processes and their physical appearance (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2007). Although the theory acknowledges physical appearance can impact how people interact with their environment, this is not a core component of the person section of the model. The proximal process does not describe how negative interactions (e.g., being bullied for having a visible difference) may impact a child's development. The third component of PPCT, 'context,' refers to the early ecological theory's systems, including the microsystem (immediate environment), mesosystem (connections),

exosystem (indirect environment), and macrosystem (social and cultural values), whereby interaction with these systems can impact on a child's development. A child's interaction with their microsystems (e.g., parents, peers, and school) are viewed as very important for fostering the child's development (as depicted in Figure 2). The role of the media is evaluated as part of the exosystem, meaning the child is affected by it but not involved in the experience. The most recent version of the model was published in 2007 (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2007) and arguably, the role of the media now forms part of the child's microsystem, given young people now engage in a range of media in a two-way process and it is very much a part of their home environment (Parnell, 2017; Tiggemann & Slater, 2014). The final component of PPCT is 'time' refers to all the contextual systems, representing a how a person's direct environment, society, and culture can develop and change (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2007).

Despite the most recent bioecological theory being the latest iteration (i.e., from 1993 onwards), research tends to only refer to Bronfenbrenner's earlier ecological theory (Tudge et al., 2016). Therefore, much of the research evidenced pertains to the ecological theory. A study by Geldenhuys and Wevers (2013), specifically considering the role of the ecological theory in promoting acceptance of diversity within primary schools in South Africa, found all systems impacted on the school's ability to promote acceptance, including unsupportive home environments (microsystem), no guidance for schools (exosystem), and ridged curriculum and assessment (macrosystem). The authors called for urgent interventions on all levels of the system to build acceptance towards diversity. Further, a review by Hong and Garbarino (2012) described how the ecological theory can examine the risk and protective factors for homophobic bullying in schools. The review argues bullying related to sexuality will hopefully decrease in the future as the promotion of diversity within schools increases. Despite the lack of research evaluating the specific role of the bioecological theory on promoting acceptance of appearance diversity, the literature highlights how earlier versions of the theory can explain children's development in relation to their environment and potentially bring about positive social change.

Intergroup contact theory

Previous social contact or knowing someone with a diverse appearance can potentially be an important protective factor influencing attitudes towards various appearances. The intergroup contact theory (also described as the contact hypothesis) is viewed as one of the most

effective strategies for reducing conflict between social groups (see meta-analyses by, Paluck, Green & Green, 2019; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). The intergroup contact theory describes how direct, positive, face-to-face interactions between members of different social groups can lead to a decrease in stigma and increase in positive attitudes between groups. In contrast to the 'proximal process' component in the bioecological theory, the contact hypothesis stipulates certain conditions in order for stigma to decrease, these are: equal status of groups, common goals, personalised acquaintance, and support from authorities and local norms (Allport, 1958). Positive contact can create a sense of dissonance, which is suggested to lead to attitudinal change. For example, a belief that people with facial differences are evil can be challenged after friendly contact with someone who has a facial difference. However, contact that is superficial or negative could potentially have the opposite effect and reinforce negative stereotypes and attitudes towards certain groups (Aberson, 2015; Allport, 1958). Intergroup contact theory would suggest a child's attitude or belief towards diverse appearances can be modified through contact which allows for true acquaintance and chances to change knowledge.

One of the most influential pieces of evidence to support the effectiveness of the contact hypothesis in reducing negative attitudes is a meta-analysis by Pettigrew and Tropp (2006). They reviewed 515 studies and found intergroup contact reduced stigma towards a range of appearance diversities such as race, disability, and sexuality (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). More recently, an updated meta-analysis also found evidence to support the claim that intergroup contact reduces negative attitudes (Paluck et al., 2019). The intergroup contact theory has been successfully applied to a number of contexts. For example, contact has promoted positive attitudes towards children with disabilities (see reviews and meta-analyses by, Armstrong, Morris, Abraham & Tarrant, 2017; Lindsay & Edwards, 2013; MacMillan, Tarrant, Abraham & Morris, 2014) and facial differences (Masnari et al., 2013). While this theory has been successfully used to explain certain appearance diversities such as disability and visible differences (appearances mostly deemed incontrollable, Section 2.1), it is less clear regarding the effect of increased contact on children's attitudes of appearance diversities that are viewed as controllable, such as higher weight (Puhl & Brownell, 2003). This is because contact with those who are of higher weight is common and therefore approaches to improve attitudes towards higher weight may be more complex. Additionally, a systematic review of research applying the intergroup contact theory to diversity in education found interventions combining contact and information on disability are associated with more

positive attitudes (Rademaker, de Boer, Kupers & Minnaert, 2020). However, less research has focused on ways this theoretical framework can be applied to interventions within the educational context to help promote acceptance of all diverse appearances.

2.4 Interventions for promoting acceptance of diverse appearances

Medical vs social models

A large number of interventions have been designed and implemented targeting those who have an appearance diversity. For example, interventions have been designed to help build social skills for those with a visible difference (e.g., Kapp-Simon, 1995), or weight loss interventions for those of higher weight (see meta-analysis by, Snethen, Broome & Cashin, 2006). However, as this literature review has described, it is the attitudes and reactions of others, and not the individual with an appearance diversity which can lead various negative effects. Interventions that focus on helping those with appearance diversities are important but fail to capture the wider societal picture. Within the literature the medical and social models of disability have been used to describe how society views and subsequently supports those with disabilities (Disability Nottinghamshire, 2021). While the models were designed for the context of disability, they can also be applied to appearance diversities more generally. The medical and social model are two opposing views and depict disability very differently (Manago, Davis & Goar, 2017). The medical model of disability focuses on the individual who is in some way 'different.' Disability, and thus appearance diversities, are viewed as deficits from the norm and are therefore in need of support to help them 'fit into' society. The challenge of employing a medical model is it perhaps overemphasises the affected persons appearance diversity, thereby highlighting others homogeneity (Rumsey & Harcourt, 2007).

In contrast, the social model resists the medicalised orientation of 'personal tragedy' and views disability as something which is caused by society itself. The social model shifts the focus from the individual with the appearance diversity as the focus for help, towards society as something that needs 'fixing.' From this perspective, appearance diversities are viewed as value-neutral appearances, made disabled or disadvantaged through society, which fails to accommodate all appearances. Thus, the social model fosters positive attitudes towards those with diverse appearances through inclusion and acceptance within society more generally. Although the social model removes the focus from the specific individual, it has been

critiqued for ignoring the role medical interventions play in helping individuals who have diverse appearances (Landsman, 2005, 2008). In reality, people draw on both models to challenge and frame the personal and social impact of disability (Manago et al., 2017). To date, most interventions that have focused on appearance diversities such as weight and visible difference have primarily adopted a medical perspective, focusing on providing the individual with skills to deal with the negative attitudes of others. Adopting a social model perspective and focusing on promoting acceptance towards diverse appearances more generally can provide a more helpful and less pathologizing approach. Thus, it is important to reduce emphasis away from the individual and focus more attention on changing social attitudes towards appearance diversity.

School-based appearance accepting interventions

Health psychology

Within health and appearance psychology schools have been identified as ideal places to deliver universal interventions to promote acceptance of appearance, as these can be embedded into education and allow for wider dissemination (Damiano, Yager, McLean & Paxton, 2018; Diedrichs & Halliwell, 2012; Yager et al., 2013). As well as this, schools also provide access to professionals (e.g., primary school teachers) who are experienced in working with young people (Yager & O'Dea, 2005). Within the body image literature, the majority of interventions have been targeted at secondary school aged children (Diedrichs & Halliwell, 2012) and take a medical model approach at improving children's body image acceptance towards their own appearance (e.g., *Happy Being Me*; Bird, Halliwell, Diedrichs & Harcourt, 2013; *The Succeed Body Image Programme*; Becker & Stice, 2011; Halliwell et al., 2015, and *Dove Confident Me*; Diedrichs et al., 2015). The interventions aimed at promoting general acceptance of all appearances in primary schools typically focus on older children (above 9 years) such as, Everybody's Different: The Appearance Game (Guest et al., 2021), Healthy School, Healthy Kids (McVey, Tweed & Blackmore, 2007), Very Important Kids (Haines, Neumark-Sztainer, Perry, Hannan & Levine, 2008) and the Eating Disorders Awareness and Prevention (EDAP) Puppet Program (Irving, 2000). These studies have yielded mixed results for intervention effectiveness. A noteworthy school-based intervention promoting acceptance of appearance diversity in younger age groups (5 to 9-year-old children) is Achieving Body Confidence for Young Children (ABC-4-YC: Damiano et al., 2018). A pilot study assessing the effectiveness of ABC-4-YC found preliminary support for the intervention to improve children's body image attitudes (Damiano et al., 2018). However,

this intervention evaluation was uncontrolled, and similar to other interventions studies within this literature, further assessment with a comparison control group is required. Furthermore, some of these interventions have aimed to train teachers to deliver the materials (e.g., *Healthy School, Healthy Kids*), others still rely on researchers or trained professionals to deliver the intervention (e.g., *Happy Being Me*). It is argued more interventions within this research area need to be delivered by teachers, as this is important for embedding interventions in existing school contexts and is cost-efficient (Diedrichs et al., 2015; Graeff-Martins et al., 2008). Synthesis of the body image literature regarding school-based interventions for appearance acceptance has highlighted how, in contrast to interventions which target older children and target improvement of children's own body image, those that include younger children and take a universal, social model approach are lacking. Thus, more interventions aiming to promote acceptance of appearances in young children are needed and those which have been designed require further evaluation.

Social psychology

Consideration beyond the body image literature regarding interventions promoting diversity within primary school education, includes more of a social psychology approach. In a meta-analysis evaluating the effectiveness of interventions to reduce appearance stigma (such as ethnicity, disability, and age), and improve intergroup attitudes in children, a total of 81 research papers were reviewed (Beelmann & Heinemann, 2014). The review found the strongest effects for interventions including direct contact experiences as well as programs promoting empathy and perspective taking (Beelmann & Heinemann, 2014). This is not surprising given the evidence outlined above that suggests intergroup contact is an extremely effective way of reducing stigma. Interventions developed following the contact hypothesis framework suggest stigma is reduced towards out-groups upon acquiring communication and cooperation skills, as they engage in respectful and meaningful interactions (Aboud & Levy, 2000). Nevertheless, it would be unethical to introduce individuals with diverse appearances purposefully in order to reduce stigma. As well as this, a systematic review conducted by (Aboud et al., 2012) evaluating the effects of reducing stigma towards ethnicity in children aged 8 years and less found mixed results, with interventions using the framework of the contact hypothesis yielding a 36% chance of positive attitudinal change. In the same review, interventions incorporating media and instruction were found to be more successful (47%), compared to contact interventions. Therefore, familiarisation without the presence of face-to-

face interaction (e.g., through the media), also known as para-social contact, may be a more acceptable option for promoting acceptance of diverse appearances.

Within social psychology several studies have aimed to promote acceptance of appearance diversity by focusing on reducing bullying. A meta-analysis by Jiménez-Barbero, Ruiz-Hernández, Llor-Zaragoza, Pérez-García and Llor-Esteban (2016) assessing the effectiveness of universal, school-based anti-bullying programmes for young people aged between 7-16 years found modest reductions in school-based bullying. Interventions targeting those younger than 10 years of age were found to be more effective at reducing bullying compared to those targeting older children (Earnshaw et al., 2018; Jiménez-Barbero et al., 2016). This supports the developmental literature that attitudes and subsequent behaviours (e.g., bullying) are present early and therefore early interventions are more beneficial. However, similar to evidence within the appearance and body image literature, very few interventions target children below 7 years. Furthermore, a more recent systematic review found anti-bullying interventions within schools mostly focus on sexuality (specifically Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer LGBTQ bullying) and disability (Earnshaw et al., 2018). Only one intervention focused on reducing bullying related to weight stigma. The authors recommend interventions that target multiple components (e.g., various appearance diversities) and/or multiple targets (e.g., children, teachers, and parents) using an intersectional approach, versus focusing on a specific appearance diversity (e.g., disability), are more beneficial for eliminating bullying (Earnshaw et al., 2018; Juvonen & Graham, 2014).

Education

In contrast to health and social psychology approaches, education focuses mainly on promoting diversity and inclusivity within the classroom and school context. The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organising (UNESCO) published a framework for action titled 'towards inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning for all' (UNESCO, 2016, p.1). The goal of the framework is to stop discrimination of all forms and encourage social cohesion. Equally, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF, 2017) outlines inclusion as important for building a more accepting society. However, when practically applied to the school context, these overarching concepts tend to lose some of their impact (Westwood, 2018). Instead, education often interprets inclusive education as promoting acceptance of those with a disability (e.g., Special Education Needs and Disabilities, SEND) (Westwood, 2018). This is an important area of focus, however as a

result, interventions within this area often conceptualise diversity and inclusivity as acceptance towards those with a disability within education (e.g., Galaterou & Antoniou, 2018), and rarely consider other forms of diversity.

Additionally, a large proportion of research within education focuses on the role of teachers in promoting acceptance of diversity. In an enquiry into pre-service (i.e., trainee teachers) teachers' beliefs about what diversity is, it was found teachers are not fully aware of what the term constitutes and this can affect their advocacy for diversity and ways in which they approach sociocultural differences within their classroom (Silverman, 2010). Research highlights that teachers who have positive attitudes and dispositions towards diversity are more likely to welcome and embrace diversity (Shuker & Cherrington, 2016). Therefore, it is often concluded teachers need more support in order to successfully promote acceptance of all diversities (Nutter et al., 2019). The body image literature emphasises the need for teachers to deliver body accepting interventions. Linking this with the education research, it is suggested that for interventions promoting acceptance of appearance diversities in children to be successful, teachers need to be supported in this topic area. Without such support, teachers will be less likely to embrace diversity within schools and incorporate interventions promoting acceptance of appearance diversity. This is important as synthesis of the literature from a range of disciplines clearly indicates schools are optimal places to promote acceptance of diverse appearances. More recent statutory guidance for Relationships Education, Relationships and Sexual Education (RSE) and Health Education (Department for Education, 2020) within the Personal, Health and Economic (PHE) curriculum, provides some opportunity to include the promotion of appearance diversity in schools in England. In a recently published policy paper, it is suggested *"schools should be alive to issues such as everyday sexism, misogyny, homophobia and gender stereotypes and take positive action to build a culture where these are not tolerated, and any occurrences are identified and tackled"* (Department for Education, 2020, p.14). However, currently there is no acknowledgment of promoting acceptance of diversity within the 'Relationship Education' section (specifically detailing what primary schools should cover). Thus, despite the relationships education section, within PHE, being a suitable place to include teaching on this topic, there is currently no statutory guidance on how to do this within the curriculum in England.

2.5 Limitations

Several limitations exist within these research areas. An important critique highlighted by the various interventions available is the lack of interdisciplinary research from multiple fields on this topic (Earnshaw et al., 2018). Intervention development is often siloed with health, social, and developmental psychology, education, public policy, and public health typically working separately to increase acceptance of appearance diversity. Additionally, these disciplines use varying terminology to conceptualise similar aims, but this typically leads research within disciplines to focus on some appearance diversities over others (e.g., weight stigma vs racial prejudice). Health psychology and the body image literature have mainly focused on a medical model approach in order to increase self-esteem of those with appearance diversities. Social psychology has often worked to decrease prejudice, with the goal to reduce intergroup relations and mainly focus on race/ethnicity (Aboud et al., 2012). Similarly, education literature mainly focuses on appearance diversities such as disability and subsequently mainly includes interventions to enhance educational opportunities for those with disabilities (Westwood, 2018). Therefore, interventions developed by social psychologists or education professionals often do not include discussions of weight stigma, whereas some body image acceptance interventions only focus on reducing weight stigma. Thus, interventions often do not include multiple components from a range of disciplines. Earnshaw et al. (2018) calls for collaborations between social psychology and education research to join forces as these have typically not been considered together but have many overlapping aims. The current literature review would support this call, but would also suggest health psychology and in particular the appearance and body image literature be included within these efforts, as these disciplines could all benefit each other in a bid to promote acceptance of appearance diversity. For these reasons this PhD was not limited by one disciplinary approach and the literature was synthesised according to a range of research areas.

Furthermore, more research needs to explore the topic of appearance diversity from a mixed-methods approach, as a complex subject such as children's stigma towards appearance diversity warrants support from both a quantitative and qualitative perspective (Earnshaw et al., 2018; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010). Alongside this, studies should take an intersectional approach, evaluating not just one specific appearance diversity but multiple, and from a range of targets such as children, parents, and teachers, as ecological evidence suggests these all

have a part to play in impacting children's acceptance towards appearance diversity (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2007).

Finally, despite developmental evidence highlighting that children's attitudes and stigma develop early (Bigler & Liben, 2007), interventions across all disciplines to promote acceptance of appearance diversity typically do not target children below the age of 7 years. Therefore, it is important that intervention materials are developed using a social model and for children of all ages within primary school (4-11 years).

2.6 Conclusion

Children can stigmatise others based on appearance characteristics and this negatively impacts those with an appearance which does not fit society's appearance 'norms.' Developmental and social theories describe that children's attitudes develop early and are influenced by various external factors such as family, schools, and society. Interventions are needed to tackle children's stigma and promote acceptance of diverse appearances; schools are ideal places to implement these interventions and a multidisciplinary approach is advantageous.

This literature review provided an overview of the research from broad perspectives. There are clear limitations and gaps within the literature, including a lack of current research describing how attitudes develop towards various appearance diversities and mixed-methods research exploring how to promote acceptance of appearance in schools. Through clarifying *how* and *why* stigma occurs, there can be clearer identification of *what* needs to be addressed in interventions to promote acceptance of appearance diversity in children.

CHAPTER 3: Methodology

This chapter introduces the methodology employed in this thesis. The methodology chosen and justification will be outlined for each study. This chapter also assesses the ethical considerations, challenges, and personal reflections of researching a sensitive topic. Detailed descriptions of the method and analyses used for each study can be found in their respective chapters.

3.1 Research overview

The principle research aim was to promote acceptance of diversity of appearance in primary school children. To achieve this, four studies were conducted which utilised a mixed methods approach. The first study predominantly utilised a quantitative approach, with qualitative open-ended questions included, in order to explore children's attitudes and behaviours towards diverse appearances more broadly. The second study similarly used mainly quantitative methodology and qualitative open-ended questions nested within this approach to understand the potential risk and protective factors for children's attitudes towards diverse appearances.

Studies 3a and 3b followed a person-based approach in which qualitative semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore teacher's perceptions and experiences, and then an intervention was designed, tested, amended and made openly available. The person-based approach to intervention development was developed recently by Yardley, Morrison, Bradbury and Muller (2015a). However, despite its recency, the approach has been successfully used for intervention development in a number of published papers (Bradbury et al., 2018; Bradbury et al., 2019; Heath, Williamson, Williams & Harcourt, 2019), and received over 500 citations (as of March 2021). The person-based approach is a method for systematically developing and optimising intervention materials to ensure they are acceptable, engaging, and feasible for their chosen audience (Yardley et al., 2015a; Yardley, Ainsworth, Arden-Close & Muller, 2015b). The approach highlights three main stages for intervention development and evaluation: 1) intervention planning, 2) intervention design/optimisation, and 3) intervention development and process evaluation of acceptability and feasibility (Morrison, Muller, Yardley & Bradbury, 2018; Yardley et al., 2015b). See Figure 3. These stages are flexible and do not need to be carried out in this order or

necessarily all undertaken to successfully develop and evaluate an intervention. The intervention planning and design stages were completed within Study 3a, whereby a literature review was conducted and qualitative research was carried out to elicit user views and relevant previous experiences (stage 1) and themes arising from this stage helped to identify key issues, needs, and changes (stage 2). Study 3b aimed to fulfil stage 3 of this approach and assess accessibility and feasibility by eliciting user reactions towards the prototype support guide designed for teachers and by iteratively modifying the guide to optimise acceptability and feasibility (Yardley et al., 2015b). As shown in Figure 3, at the final stage of this approach, inductive qualitative or mixed methods user feedback is encouraged and techniques such as think-aloud interviews and person-based changes table (described in detail in Chapter 7, Section 7.3) are recommended (Morrison et al., 2018; Yardley et al., 2015a; Yardley et al., 2015b). Employing this approach helps ensure the intervention materials are grounded in rigorous, in-depth understanding of the psychosocial context of those who the materials are targeted for. This is important as it helps ensure the support guide materials designed as part of this PhD are not only feasible but also relatable and user centred.

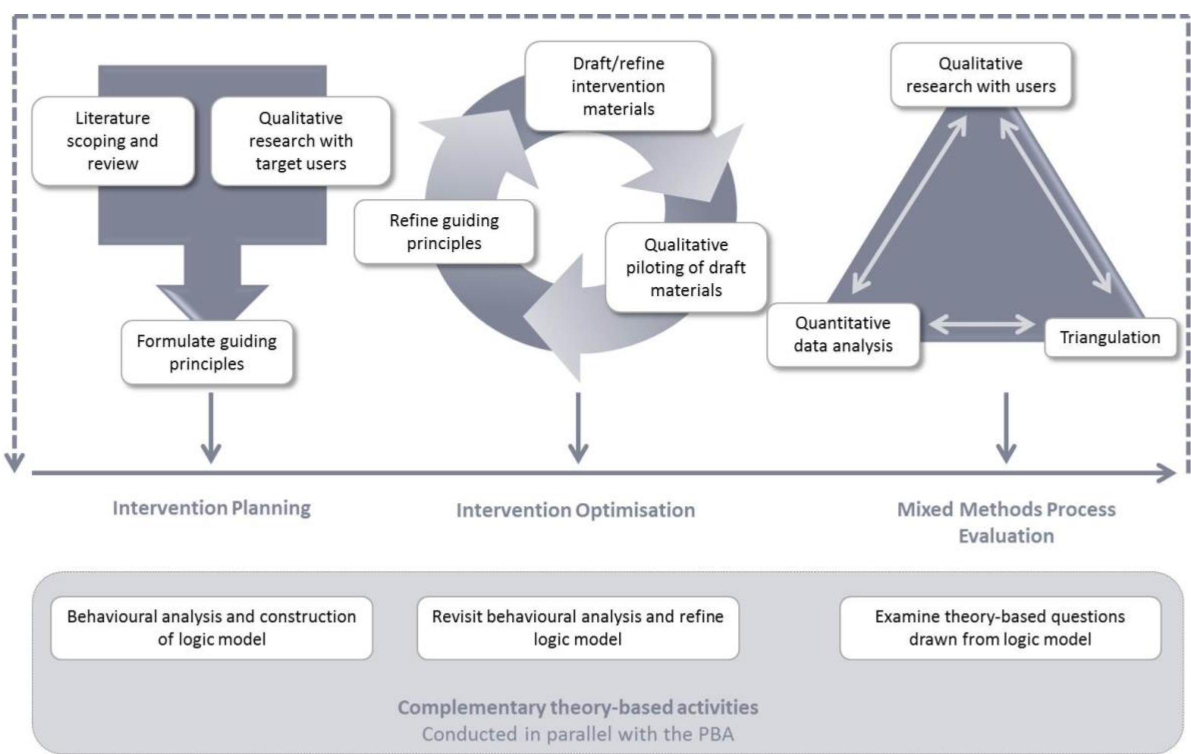

Figure 3. The person-based approach (Morrison et al., 2018)

The final study aimed to use a Participatory Action Research (PAR) method to develop and assess the feasibility of an intervention (as described in Impact of COVID-19, Chapter 8,

Section 8.3). The person-based approach is a useful alternative as it is an evidence-based intervention development method, but one which relies less on the resources and time from a selection of stakeholders (Yardley et al., 2015a). Although some would argue this approach is still in line with co-production and PAR methods (Oliver, Kothari & Mays, 2019), as it includes stakeholders in the research process, others suggest this reflects an overgeneralisation and confused conceptualisation of the term 'co-production' within the literature (Williams et al., 2020). Indeed, the authors of the person-based approach would also agree with the latter statement and highlight how this approach is not co-design with members of the target population (Yardley et al., 2015a). The argument over what constitutes co-production, in line with the increasing popularity of co-production research methods, still continues and research studies continue to label 'collaboration' as 'co-production' (Williams et al., 2020). Therefore, it is important to highlight the author's conceptualisation of the research methods chosen. Despite the original aim to use a co-production, PAR method, the final person-based approach chosen does not represent co-production. Co-production methods are an important step towards being more representative and reducing greater structural issues of exclusion within academia (Williams et al., 2020). This is why a PAR method was originally chosen for the intervention development and assessment before the impact of COVID-19. However, for the final studies in this thesis (Study 3a and 3b) to be interpreted as co-production, would not be in line with the final research approach utilised in these studies.

3.2 Design and epistemology

Mixed methods

As this PhD explored ways to promote acceptance of a range of diverse appearances from a number of appearance diversities and groups (children, parents, and teachers), overall a concurrent nested mixed-methods approach was adopted. It is recognised that researchers should be aware and acknowledge the chosen mixed methods design, given there are a range of approaches which are available (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). Within a concurrent nested design, the researcher has a predominant method (quantitative or qualitative) which guides the research design (Creswell, Plano Clark, Guttmann & Hanson, 2003). The embedded method can be used to address a different question from that addressed by the dominant method. The purpose is to end up with valid and well-established conclusions about a single phenomenon. Study 1 and 2 collected both qualitative and quantitative data

concurrently but gave priority to the quantitative findings and nested the qualitative findings to add richer data to the quantitative results. Studies 3a and 3b generally employed the same mixed-method approach, however priority was given to the qualitative methods and quantitative results were nested within the main qualitative findings. All studies analysed the data separately for these methodologies and integrated the findings at the interpretation stage.

This mixed methods design is advantageous as it builds a bigger picture resulting in well-validated and substantiated findings and is efficient when both types of data are collected at the same time, as is the case with the studies in this PhD. However, the concurrent nested mixed-methods approach involves having expertise in both quantitative and qualitative methods, which can be difficult and there is the chance the quantitative and qualitative results may not agree (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). There has been many discussions regarding why results may not align (e.g., same or different samples) and how to resolve mixed-method results which do not match (Diloreto & Gaines, 2016). Study 1 and 2 within this PhD include the same participants for both methods, therefore discrepancies cannot be explained by differences in the demographic sample. Study 3a and 3b, however, included different participant groups for the qualitative and quantitative data, so any discrepancies could be due to sample differences. As the studies have highlighted their priority methodologies, in the case of findings which do not align, the weighting of these will reflect which findings are considered more heavily. However, despite giving priority to one methodology, by utilising a concurrent nested design, weaknesses in one method can be overcome by the strengths of another (Castro, Kellison, Boyd & Kopak, 2010; Creswell et al., 2003; Hanson, Creswell, Clark, Petska & Creswell, 2005; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010). Mixed methods add value by including multiple perspectives over that which could be achieved using one single method (Elliott, Fisher & Rennie 1999). Thus, the concurrent mixed method approach was chosen for this body of work as it lends itself to the overall purpose of this PhD, which aims to fully explore and further new knowledge on the topic of promoting acceptance of diverse appearances in primary school-aged children.

Epistemology

This PhD employed a pragmatic approach. Pragmatism as a research paradigm is an approach which proposes researchers should use the philosophical and/or methodological approach which works best for the research problem (Kaushik & Walsh, 2019; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). Therefore, mixed-methods is supported and often associated with pragmatism

(Kaushik & Walsh, 2019; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2009), as it is primarily guided by the researcher's desire to produce socially useful knowledge (Feilzer, 2010). Pragmatism argues the methods selected in research should be those that best suit the research questions. Thus, this epistemological positioning is best suited for the overall approach to this body of work, as it aimed to provide socially useful knowledge by exploring and designing ways to promoting acceptance of diverse appearances. Therefore, the decision to select a concurrent nest design was pragmatic.

Further, pragmatism does not allude to its stance on concepts of reality, instead it highlights there may be single or multiple realities and that knowledge is based on experience (Kaushik & Walsh, 2019). Pragmatist philosophy argues that knowledge and reality are based on beliefs which are socially constructed (Morgan, 2014). For these reasons, the pragmatic epistemology was most suited to this body of work, which was ultimately focusing on social stigma, attitudes and ways to promote appearance diversity. Therefore, this PhD did not aim to find an ultimate 'truth' as is the case within positivism, but viewed appearance stigma as something which is real within the experiences of individuals and is constructed socially. Additionally, an important consideration of pragmatism is that it is part of the researcher's worldview and therefore can influence the approach of the researcher on their project (Kaushik & Walsh, 2019). Ultimately, it is the researcher who makes the decisions regarding which questions are important and which methodology is appropriate and pragmatism argues this is influenced by the beliefs and positioning of the researcher and their personal history (Morgan, 2007). As this body of work took a pragmatic approach, it acknowledges this as an influencing factor and therefore includes personal reflexivity of the lead researcher.

Reflectivity

As explained in Chapter 1, I approached this research with experience of working in body image research and having experienced my own difficulties with body image, being a participant in, and a peer leader, in a body image intervention. It is well known that personal experience can influence engagement with a research area (Finlay, 2002), especially with a sensitive topic such as body image and appearance. For this reason and due to the epistemological positioning of this PhD described above, it is good practice within research from this approach to acknowledge personal beliefs and ideas in an attempt to recognise their assumptions. Indeed, disclosure of an individual's position acts to increase transparency and

the potential impact of personal influence, biases, and values on the research agenda (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Elliott, Fischer & Rennie, 1999; Greenbank, 2003).

I approached this PhD believing interventions aimed at helping improve body image problems are important. I believed adolescence was too late and this topic needed to be addressed earlier. I originally envisioned this PhD would focus on helping children *with* diverse appearances to build body image confidence. However, after exploring the literature further, I realised that greater emphasis on a social model approach was required to improve general acceptance of those who have a diverse appearance. Due to working in body image research, I was naturally drawn towards the appearance diversities of visible difference and weight. My previous research experience had been largely quantitative and although I had been taught qualitative methods within my university undergraduate psychology degree by expert qualitative researchers such as Victoria Clarke (co-author of Successful Qualitative Research by Braun & Clarke, 2013) and Nikki Hayfield (Terry, Hayfield, Clarke & Braun, 2017), I was nervous about engaging in this methodology. In addition, most of my learnings into qualitative research were focused on thematic analysis, so naturally I was more drawn towards this form of qualitative analysis.

The term 'positionality' describes a person's world view and their position in relation to a specific research task (Savin-Baden & Major, 2012). A researcher's position is not simply ascribed to them but is a process of ongoing evaluation as individuals can be both 'insiders' and 'outsiders' at the same time (Deutsch, 1981). For example, I was an 'outsider' when conducting research with children, as I am an adult. However, I am female and therefore may be an 'insider' for girls. Further, for full transparency regarding my positionality, I am a white, cis-gendered, able-bodied, young adult, and not of higher weight. I am not a parent or teacher myself. I grew up in an all-female, working-class household, and was eligible for Pupil Premium (UK government funding for disadvantaged pupils) throughout all my school-life; I am the first in my family to ever go to university. While I acknowledge I cannot completely detach myself from these personal characteristics and their potential influence on this research, I employed critical reflection throughout this work and continually monitored my role and the impact of my views on the research process. Careful consideration of these issues helped me to ensure that the participant's responses were transformed into trustworthy, public, accountable knowledge, via transparent methodology. Further discussion of this process and my subsequent contribution to the literature is provided in Chapter 8.

3.3 Ethical considerations and challenges

Safeguarding

This PhD included research from a range of groups such as parents and teachers, however the main focus of the research and an important group were children, therefore it is important to consider potential safeguarding issues. In 1989, a United Nations convention had a large impact on researchers within the UK and internationally, recognising that children have the right to information and freedom to express an opinion (Cree, Kay & Tisdale, 2002). Since then, guidelines regarding issues such as child vulnerability, competency, relationships, distress, and consent (Shaw, Brady & Davey, 2011), have been implemented and updated in order to assure children are safe and protected within research. Children are considered as a vulnerable group who require protection from harm, placing responsibility on adults to protect a child's welfare. Understandably, accessing this vulnerable age group requires a number of steps and input from numerous gatekeepers. The term gatekeeper, in the context of research with children, typically refers to adults who can control or restrict researchers' ability to access vulnerable participants, such as ethics committees, educational staff or parents/caregivers (Coyne, 2009).

It is important any research involving children is reviewed and feedback provided. The Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (RCPCH, 2000) acknowledges in its guidelines that all proposals involving children should be reviewed by a research ethics committee which includes practical knowledge of children. In line with these guidelines, the current PhD gained ethical approval and incorporated feedback from the University's ethics committee, as well as feedback from a qualified teacher (third supervisor) and external guidelines, which are discussed below. The safeguarding guidelines also highlight that consent should be obtained from the parent or guardian, and assent from the school-aged children themselves (RCPCH, 2000). This two-step procedure was utilised in all studies within the PhD which involved children. Guidelines from the Medical Research Council (2004) add that a child's refusal to participate in a research study should be honoured and any discomfort with the study procedure must be accepted as refusal to participate. Following these guidelines, verbal refusal from the children or signs of discomfort (e.g., crying, fidgeting) would permit the child to stop the study immediately, without a reason provided. Additionally, safeguarding children requires all researchers undergo security screening (e.g., criminal records check) to ensure the safety of children in the research (Medical Research Council, 2004). Hence,

researchers involved in the studies involving children were required to have a fully cleared Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check.

Ethical guidelines

As well as receiving ethical approval from the University's ethics committee (specifics regarding each study's ethical considerations are detailed in their respective chapters), further external ethical guidelines were also consulted. Given this body of work considers both education and psychology disciplines, the UK's British Educational Research Association (BERA: https://www.bera.ac.uk) and the British Psychological Society (BPS: https://www.bps.org.uk) ethical standards underpinned this research. Interestingly, both ethical guidelines highlight how people should be treated with respect, regardless of their perceived or real social status, ethnic origin, gender, sexuality, age, and *"any other significant characteristic"* (BERA, 2018, p.6) or *"any other such group-based characteristics"* as reported in British Psychological Society (BPS, 2018, p.5) Code of Ethics and Conduct. Comparatively, BERA includes a more comprehensive piece on the topic compared to the BPS, however these definitions are useful for this body of work in a number of ways. Firstly, it is helpful to understand how these governing bodies conceptualise certain characteristics which are relevant to research ethics. Secondly, it is useful to know in a PhD aiming to promote acceptance of these diverse appearance characteristics, how these ethical guidelines view this topic more broadly.

BERA (2018, p.6) highlight *"individuals should be treated fairly, sensitively, and with dignity and freedom from prejudice,"* whilst the BPS (2018, p.6) state, *"respect for dignity recognises the inherent worth of all human beings."* Indeed, this body of work would agree with these ethical guidelines and the principle aim of this PhD matches these statements. However, the literature described in the introduction (Chapter 2) highlights individual's perceptions towards those with various appearance diversities are (even from a young age) not always free from stigma and inherent worth is sadly not always recognised. The later statement by (BPS, 2018, p.6), outlining *"sensitivity and attentiveness towards such structural issues are important aspects of researchers' responsibilities to participants at all stages of research, including reporting and publication,"* would reflect more the reality that biases and stigma can sometimes subconsciously seep into research. Therefore, it is an ethical duty for the researchers to reflect and acknowledge this to the best of their ability. Thus, although this research does not attest to being completely objective, it does comply with these

guidelines by bringing attention and awareness towards characteristics which may be treated unfairly and reflects on potential research biases. Arguably, the BPS should make this clearer in their guidelines and be more transparent regarding potential bias in psychology.

Another important factor which posed a potential ethical challenge, were payment/incentives. An interesting difference between research in psychology and education are the guidelines regarding incentives. The BPS Code of Human Research (2021, p.19), provides a lot more guidance on the topic of 'incentives, payment, incentives, and coercion,' compared to (BERA, 2018, p.19) description of 'incentives.' BERA (2018) discourages incentives and payment within research, but acknowledges that this may not necessarily be considered poor practice and may be more common in disciplines other than educational research. Contrastingly, the BPS (2021) outlines that while coercion is unacceptable, incentives are deemed as acceptable, so long as they are not so large that they run the risk of compromising the person's own freedom to participate, leading to coercion. Any incentives used should be proportionate to the level of participation and typically equal for all participants (BPS, 2021).

There have been ethical debates regarding the use of incentives in educational research (BERA, 2018), however within qualitative social research the practice of giving back in the form of a donation for participants' time is becoming increasingly common (Head, 2009). Some argue that providing payment or incentives for participants' time can be a way of beginning to equalise the uneven power relationships that can exist between researcher and participant (Goodman et al., 2004). Further, some have even argued (particularly from feminist research) that not paying participants is in fact unethical as they should be compensated for their time in the same way the researcher often is through salary (Goodman et al., 2004; Head, 2009). It is for a similar reason that PAR research has emphasised the need to pay stakeholders for their time and input, as part of the working 'with' and not 'on' power structure (described in Chapter 8, Section 8.3; Turnbull, Friesen & Ramirez, 1998). Despite this being an ongoing debate, this body of work considered the overall benefits of providing compensation for participants' time to outweigh the costs. The donations did not compromise participant anonymity and the time taken to take part (i.e., an hour interview online) was costed relative to a teaching salary. Therefore, all schools (Study 1 and 2) were compensated with a donation to the school for their overall involvement, and adult participants who gave up their time for an online interview (Study 3a and 3b) were compensated for their time.

3.4 Summary

An overview of the research process, study designs, epistemology, reflectivity, ethical considerations, and challenges in this body of work have been demonstrated and critically discussed throughout this chapter. Methods specific to each study including recruitment, ethics, and methodological issues will be discussed in more detail within the relevant study chapters. The following chapter will present the first study within this PhD. This study uses a mixed methods approach, whereby both quantitative and qualitative analyses were used in order to assess children's attitudes towards diverse appearance from a number of methodological perspectives, helping to build a broader picture.

CHAPTER 4: Study 1

Children's attitudes towards diverse appearances: At what age do negative attitudes towards diverse appearances develop, and does this vary according to type of difference?

This chapter presents Study 1, which aimed to assess children's overall attitudes and behaviours towards various diverse appearances. This chapter provides a brief introduction to the research, the study's method, results and a discussion of the findings. The results aimed to establish if children have varying attitudes and behaviours towards others with diverse appearances, and then consider at what age these are apparent. The study resulted in a peer reviewed published paper (Parnell, Williamson, Lewis & Slater, 2021), two conference presentations, two accepted conference abstracts (affected by COVID-19), and dissemination of findings in a podcast episode (Appearance Matters: the podcast! Episode 51: Back to School… Promoting acceptance in Primary Schools).

4.1 Introduction

Appearance-based stereotypes are a set of generalised beliefs regarding appearance. A diverse appearance refers to those who significantly deviate from society's 'standard' characteristics (e.g., able-bodied, lower weight, no visible difference). Research suggests children with a diverse appearance are at a greater risk of experiencing appearance-based stigma, such as teasing and bullying (e.g., of burn scars see, Lawrence, Rosenburg, Mason & Fauerbach, 2011), which can have a negative impact on children's self-esteem, academic attainment (Kish & Lansdown, 2000), body image (Rumsey & Harcourt, 2004), and overall quality of life (Masnari et al., 2013).

Investigating children's early impressions of diverse appearances is important for many reasons. Firstly, it could help individuals who have a diverse appearance with support and strategies to cope with stigma. Secondly, it may provide a deeper understanding of possible behaviours and subsequent interactions from those without an appearance diversity towards those with a diverse appearance. Lastly, understanding the extent of stigma and development

according to types of diverse appearances in children may help to inform interventions and educational programs that aim to reduce stigma.

Stereotyping and stigma related to appearance emerges in the early stages of child development and can exist by the age of 4 years (Bigler & Liben, 2007). Early research by Richardson et al. (1961) compared children's attitudes towards various appearance diversities (e.g., having an amputation, being higher weight, having a wheelchair or having a visible facial difference). The study by Richardson et al. (1961) comparing all these appearances found children with higher weight and those with a visible facial difference are some of the least preferred by children. However, later replication of this study by Latner and Stunkard (2003) found greater acceptance towards facial differences and a decrease in acceptance towards higher weight. This research highlights how attitudes towards diverse appearances can change over time and therefore dated research may not be an accurate reflection of children's current attitudes. Furthermore, as well as research in this area being dated (Richardson et al., 1961; Sigelman et al., 1986), studies often only compare a small number of appearance diverse groups, for example; weight bias (Cramer & Steinwert, 1998), weight and disability bias (Harrison et al., 2016), and stigma towards facial differences (Masnari et al., 2013). Notably, one recent study by Charsley, Collins and Hill (2018) compared young children's (aged 4-7 years) attitudes towards children who were a 'typical' weight, higher weight, opposite gender, and in a wheelchair. This study found children had less positive attitudes towards children who were opposite gender compared to children who were of higher weight. However, this research did not consider other visible differences, such as facial differences. Thus, how these results relate to other visible differences remains unclear. This is important, as facial differences have also been evidenced to evoke stigma in children (Masnari et al., 2012). To date no current literature has compared children's attitudes towards a wide variety of diverse appearances.

The risk of stigmatisation from others is an important concern of children with an appearance that significantly deviates from the 'norm.' Appearance is identified as an important component of stigma, with aesthetics (i.e., what the appearance looks like) and concealability (i.e., the extent to which a stigma is visible to others) outlined as key theoretical dimensions (Jones, 1984). Historically, research regarding appearance–based stigma has predominantly taken a medical model approach, focusing mainly on negative effects and reducing psychological distress for the individual (Rumsey & Harcourt, 2004). Although some

interventions aiming to tackle appearance stigma in young children have successfully utilised a social model (e.g., Damiano et al., 2018; Irving, 2000), there remains plenty of scope for more. Overall, research utilising a social model approach is limited and inconclusive. This is an important avenue for appearance-stigma research, as most interventions in this research area focus on changing one's appearance (e.g., weight loss programs), increasing psychosocial factors such as self-esteem and/or reducing appearance related distress for the individual. However, a systematic review by Norman and Moss (2015) evaluating the efficacy of psychosocial interventions for adults with visible differences resulting from a variety of appearance-altering conditions and injuries provided very limited support for these interventions. This is further supported in a systematic review published in the same year by Jenkinson, Williamson, Byron-Daniel and Moss (2015), who also found inconclusive findings to support psychosocial interventions, but this time for young people (aged less than 18 years) with visible differences. This may be because interventions utilising a targeted medical model approach are unlikely to change social environments and appearance-based stigma from others. It is likely that individual targeted interventions do not change the social environment of the person affected. For example, if a person with a diverse appearance is being stigmatised each day (e.g., bullied, left out of social situations), it is unlikely an intervention targeting that individual is going to challenge these social, external problems. Therefore, it is also important to develop social interventions that shift the focus away from the individuals with a diverse appearance and target all children by increasing acceptance of diverse appearances more generally (Rumsey & Harcourt, 2012). However, prior to intervention development, current research evaluating children's attitudes towards a range of diverse appearances need to be considered.

4.2 Aims

The current study had two main aims:

1) To quantitatively and qualitatively investigate whether attitudes and friendship behaviours differ towards various diverse appearances in children aged 4-10 years.
2) To determine whether attitudes and friendship behaviours develop differently across the school years, by gender, and according to the type of diverse appearance presented.

4.3 Method

4.3.1 Research ethics

An ethics application was submitted in May 2018 and received conditional approval in June 2018, with five minor comments (Appendix A.i). Each comment was carefully considered by the researcher. To address the first comment *'the consent/assent for years 3, 4, 5 (8yrs, 9yrs, 10yrs) feels formal and we feel needs revision. For instance, 'researchers' changed to 'one of the adults asking you questions.' So, we would ask that the researchers slightly revise the documentation so that it is more age appropriate. It might be helpful to ask a teacher to comment'* expert advice was sought from an experienced teacher (third supervisor) regarding suitable language and the consent letter amended accordingly. Additionally, the readability was calculated via an online tool (The Writer: https://www.thewriter.co.uk) and deemed age appropriate for the target age group. Regarding the second comment *'we would like the researchers to clarify whether parental consent will override a child's refusal to engage'* clarification was provided, emphasising that all children will be explicitly given the right to withdraw, which would override any parental consent. Clarification was also given for comments three and four. The fifth and final comment *'there needs to be focus given to how a stranger (the researcher) is going to be introduced to the child as a safe adult, will the researcher spend any time in the classroom getting to know the children first. I believe the teachers will be interested in this as well'* also resulted in expert input from a teacher's perspective. From this feedback, it was decided that the lead researcher would work with each school to decide the best way to manage introducing themselves to the children taking part in the study. It was concluded that this will be age dependant with the researcher arriving around 30 minutes earlier for the younger children (reception classes), where the teacher will do a general introduction and the researcher engaging with whatever task is happening at that time, in order to avoid the researcher having to arrive and suddenly separate the younger children. Upon addressing these comments, full ethical approval was granted on 18th June 2018 via the Faculty of Health and Applied Sciences Research Ethics Committee at the University of the West of England (see Appendix A.ii).

4.3.2 Materials

Appearance stimulus material consisted of five digitally designed, realistic character of children, all matched by various features (e.g., face shape, height, race, hair colour, and eyes). The character named Alex, with no appearance diversity, was the first character designed.

Alex was created in both male and female form and depicted a young, Caucasian, schoolchild. The other characters: Jesse (wearing glasses), Sam (higher weight), Ashley (with a facial burn), and Jamie (in a wheelchair) were created for both genders, by adding the diverse appearance feature(s) to the image of the originally designed character, Alex. Characters were designed to represent important appearance diverse groups previously outlined. The inclusion of the character without an appearance diversity acted as a control and the glasses wearing character depicted a physical feature that is not normally stigmatised within society (Sigelman et al., 1986), however it is of interest related to its deviance from the relative 'appearance norm.' The images went through a total of three iterations to implement any feedback provided by the researcher and fellow experts in the area of body image. Amendments included shortening of the girl's school skirt for enhanced realism, reduction in the neck size, and an increase in the upper torso size for the higher weight characters to make the body size proportionate. Additionally, all the characters' eyes were made equal size, as early research suggests males and females with larger eyes can be viewed as more physically attractive (Paunonen, Ewan, Earthy, Lefave & Goldberg, 1999). See Appendix A.iii for example character images.

All characters were created with a face profile and full body image. The characters were designed to represent school children of a similar age to the participants in the study. The images were printed with a plain white background on high quality, A4-size paper, and laminated for protection. All five characters had different gender-neutral names, which were also presented along with both the face and full body images.

4.3.3 Public Involvement

The characters and questionnaire underwent a number of revisions, including input from three families of children without a visible difference, one family of a child with a visible difference, two teachers, and experts in the field of appearance and body image. Feedback from these groups included aspects such as the questionnaire being too lengthy, difficulty viewing the character images in the questionnaire, and a request to add a disclaimer at the beginning about not knowing the characters. Feedback from these groups greatly improved the quality and impact of these materials, as has been evidenced in previous literature (Entwistle, Renfrew, Yearley, Forrester & Lamont, 1998).

4.3.4 Recruitment

Recruitment emails were sent to sixty-five schools in the South West of England. The study used opportunity sampling, as this is the most convenient approach for recruitment (Etikan, 2016). This approach is useful as schools can be hard to recruit and require support and permission from school staff at different levels of the school system (Bartlett et al., 2017). In total, six schools agreed to take part, seven could not take part for reasons such as engagement with other commitments and changing of staff, and fifty-two did not respond. This low response rate mirrors the response rate from schools who have been contacted previously for studies at the Centre for Appearance Research and perhaps reflects the large number of study recruitment emails schools in this area typically receive from numerous research projects. For the schools who agreed to take part, school characteristics were recorded via recent OFSTED reports. Half of the schools (n = 3) had similar characteristics, including: low pupil premium, below or average statement of special education needs, and overall rating of '*Good*' or above. In contrast, the other three schools had characteristics representing high pupil premium, average or above average statement of special education needs, and an overall rating of *'Requires Improvement.'* Pupil premium is UK government funding for disadvantaged pupils (Department of Education, 2019) and is therefore a good indication of general social economic status (SES) for students attending each school. Given the varying school characteristics, this indicates diverse SES within the sample of schools, and possibly reduces bias within the study sample, which is often a disadvantage of opportunity sampling (Etikan, 2016).

4.3.5 Opt in parental consent

For the 6 schools who agreed to take part, teachers were given a letter to hand to parents/caregivers, providing information about the study and asking the consent form be returned to their child's school indicating whether their child was permitted to take part in the study. Parents were required to opt their children *into* the study by returning the slip on the consent form. Failure to return the slip or returning the slip with opt out selected, resulted in the child being unable to participate in the study. Overall, 22% (n = 417) parental consent forms were returned opting their child into the study. However, the total number of parents opting their child/children into the study varied considerably according to school. The three schools with below average pupil premium, and therefore indicative of average higher SES, were more likely to return consent forms in general (n = 305, 73% of the parental opt in returns), in comparison to an average of (n = 112) 27% of the remaining opt in rates, from the

three schools with lower SES pupils. Meaning, although there is a balanced representation of schools with varying SES, there is still an overrepresentation of children from higher SES schools taking part in the study. An opt in approach has been found to result in lower participation rates and represent children with parents who are: older, married, university educated and of higher SES, compared to an opt-out approach (Berry et al., 2011). Further, differences in the opt in rates from parents can be linked to difficulties in researching 'hard-to-reach' groups, typically defined as newly arrived residents or those living in vulnerable social and/or economic situations (Shaghaghi, Bhopal & Sheikh, 2011), and those who do not access healthcare services (Rockliffe, Chorley, Marlow & Forster, 2018). These 'hard-to-reach' groups through factors such as, low SES or difficulty understanding English, may be less likely to opt their children into the study. Hence, although the schools may represent a diverse sample, the smaller number of pupils opted in within the lower SES schools likely results in an overrepresentation of children from higher SES backgrounds.

4.3.6 Procedure

The questionnaire was completed during a regular classroom period and in a separate room in order to reduce the likelihood of the children discussing the character images. Participants were informed by researchers (the PhD candidate and fellow research assistants) in age-appropriate language that their participation was voluntary, confidential, and they were free to withdraw at any time, without reason. Participants were required to provide willingness to participate through informed assent prior to accessing the questionnaires. Given early evidence indicates children as young as 30 months are able to recognise male and female sexes, as well as identify which gender category they are more similar to (Thompson, 1975), children of all ages in the participant sample were asked what gender they identified as. Children were only presented with characters matching their identified gender, as previous evidence suggests gender can influence children's attitudes (Charsley et al., 2018), thus reducing a potential confounding impact on the findings. Participants who did not want to take part or who did not receive parental consent continued with classroom activity as normal.

Children in classes reception to Year 2 worked through the questionnaire individually with a researcher reading each question to them, and older children in Year 3-Year 5 completed the questionnaire independently and silently, in groups of 3 or 4, with a researcher present to answer any questions. Children in classes' reception - Year 2 were asked if they understood

the terms '*attractive,*' '*confident,*' and *'lazy.'* If they did not, a standardised response for '*attractive*' was *'handsome'* for boys and *'pretty/beautiful'* for girls; for '*confident*' children were told "*if I went to a party and was not confident, I would not talk to anybody, if I was confident, I would talk to lots of people."* Additionally, '*lazy*' was described as *"not wanting to do anything like clean their room or help others*." The same description was given to children in Years 3 to 5, if they asked for clarification. All questionnaires were completed on an iPad. Participants were told that *"we know that you do not know what the characters are like as people, but we can think things about people before we get to know them. Please be honest and put the first thing you think about the characters."* These instructions are similar to those used in a previous study assessing attitudes towards appearances (Masnari et al., 2013). All children were then shown the five characters in a randomised order. After each character they were asked to respond to questions in a specific order, firstly they were asked open ended questions, then attitudinal and behavioural questions. Finally, after all the characters were viewed the forced choice questions were asked about all characters, see Section 4.3.9 below for further details regarding these measures. Questionnaires were completed within approximately 25-30 minutes, with variation according to reading ability and age. The questionnaire included filler questions, in order to check understanding of using the scale and to detract from the main focus of the study. Upon completion, children were thanked, received a sticker and given the opportunity to ask any questions. All processes were employed to reduce adverse reactions from the children, if a child showed signs of distress, the child's class teacher would be made aware and given a sheet with useful links for the child. No children showed signs of distress as a result of taking part in the study. Data were collected between July 2018 and April 2019.

4.3.7 Design

The study employed a 2 x 3 x 5 mixed-subjects design, with 2 and 3 levels of between subjects and 5 levels of within subjects independent variables. Between subjects variables: gender (male and female) and year group (reception – Year 1, Year 2 – 3, Years 4 – 5). Within subject's variables: appearance diversities (no diverse appearance, child with facial burn scars, child in a wheelchair, higher weight child, and glasses wearing child). The major dependant variables were attitudes towards appearances and friendship behaviours. General attitudes were also assessed qualitatively via open-ended questions.

4.3.8 Participants

In total 417 participants were opted into the study. Three participants did not give consent, due to preference of another activity already taking place (i.e., physical education). Six were absent during the period of data collection and a further twelve were removed due to reasons such as lack of understanding, no engagement or did not complete at least two characters in the questionnaire. Thus, the final, number of participants were 396 (212 female and 184 male). All were recruited from public primary schools in the South West of England. Ages ranged from 4 to 10 years (UK school years: reception to Year 5), with a mean age of 6.86 years (*SD* = 1.75). Researchers reported that the majority of participants were White (82.8%), with the remainder of participant's being described as Mixed (7.3%), other/missing (4.1%), Black (3%), and Asian (2.8%). Researchers also reported participants had an average body size of (*M* = 3.80*, SD* =.73) using the child 7-point figure rating scale (Collins, 1991). The researcher also attempted to record the presence of an appearance diversity (either related or unrelated to the appearances presented in the study). Of the participants, 16.4% were reported as having an appearance difference (both related and unrelated to the diverse appearances presented in the study), 81.8% did not have an appearance diversity and for 1.8% no response was recorded. Of the participants reported to have an appearance difference, 13.9% wore glasses, 0.3% had a visible burn, 1.3% had a visible difference not represented in the study (e.g., hearing aid, birthmark, and eczema) and 1.5% mentioned they have or had an appearance difference which was not visible to the researcher. However, concerns over the validity and quality of this data through difficulties of being able to validate the presence of many appearance diversities (e.g., a burn on the leg, which was covered, or the intermittent use of glasses), meant this data was not included further than acknowledgment in this section.

4.3.9 Measures

Qualitative measures

Open ended questions. For this task, participants were shown the five characters in a randomised order. Instructions for each character were adapted from instructions used by Sigelman et al. (1986), asking '*What do you think about* [character's name]*?*' Participants were then asked, '*Why do you think that about* [character's name]?' Failure to respond was recorded as '*do not know*.' For participants in reception – Year 2, verbal responses to the open-ended questions were recorded verbatim by the researcher typing the responses into the iPad. Children in Years 3-5 responded to the open-ended questions by typing their responses directly onto the iPad.

Quantitative measures

Attitudes toward appearances. Participants were instructed to evaluate each of the five characters regarding their first impressions of the images. Attitudes toward the characters were assessed using visual analogue scales (VAS) as this provided the same scale measure across all adjectives. VAS have been successfully used in the past to measure a wide variety of constructs, including attitudes towards body image (Cattarin, Thompson, Thomas & Williams, 2000; Heinberg & Thompson, 1995). Adjectives measured were adapted from a recent study by Masnari et al. (2013) who devised a three factor, principal component structure: (1) personal attributes, (2) social attributes, and (3) looks/intelligence. For these constructs, two adjective pairs were selected for each component, to total six items; Personal attributes: *(a) nice/mean, (b) happy/sad,* social attributes: *(c), unpopular/popular, (d) likeable/unlikeable,* looks/intelligence: *(e) good looking/ugly, and (f) good/bad at school.* To suit the VAS, adjectives were adapted so that there was only one positive adjective for each adjective pair (e.g., *nice/mean* to *nice)*, and the language amended (e.g., *likable* to *people like him/her*) using the British National Corpus (https://corpus.byu.edu/bnc/) to match the readability of the participant age group. Additionally, the terms '*confident*' and '*lazy*' were added, as literature suggests adjectives such as '*lazy*' and '*sloppy*' are judgements made by children towards those who are of higher weight (Dohnt & Tiggemann, 2008), and much of the research suggests a visible difference can lower one's self confidence e.g., individuals with a cleft lip and/or palate (Turner, Thomas, Dowell, Rumsey & Sandy, 1997). To reduce any possible adverse effect on the participants, it was decided to keep all adjectives positive, aside from *'lazy,'* as a single adjective juxtaposing lazy was deemed too difficult for the participants to understand. Additionally, the addition of an inverse adjective enabled the researcher to check if the children understood how to use the VAS. A series of practice questions, using the same scale design, also allowed the researcher to evaluate if the child comprehended the task. Together this resulted in the inclusion of eight items: (a) *nice*, (b) *happy*, (c) *confident*, (d) *lazy*, (e) *people like him/her*, (f) *popular,* (g) *attractive*, and (h) *clever*. For each adjective the scale ranged from 1 '*not at all*' to 100 '*a lot*.' The 8 adjectives were averaged (reverse scoring '*lazy*') to create a total attitudinal score, with higher scores indicating more favourable attitudes. The reliability of the adjective items for this scale was between the recommended values (Kline, 2005) $\alpha = .795$ and good $\alpha = .866$, separated by character and gender. Please see Table 1 for details.

Table 1. Attitudes towards appearance scale, Cronbach's α for each character.

Characters	Males	Females
No appearance diversity	.861	.861
Burn	.849	.866
Wheelchair	.815	.795
Glasses	.815	.833
Higher weight	.836	.871

Friendship behaviours. For each of the five characters participants were asked to imagine the character has recently joined their school. Then participants were asked their willingness to interact or befriend the character; responding either *no* (1), *maybe* (2), or *yes* (3) to four statements such as "*I would feel comfortable being around* [character's name]" and *"I would like* [character's name] *as a friend."* This scale and selected items were adapted for a younger age group from a previously published study by Masnari et al. (2013) which has evidenced prior internal consistency (α = .92) with 8-17 year old children. In the current study, Cronbach's α for this scale were between α = .696 and α = .849, separated by character and gender. Please see Table 2 for details.

Table 2. Friendship behaviours scale, Cronbach's α for each character.

Characters	Males	Females
No appearance diversity	.765	.771
Burn	.824	.795
Wheelchair	.772	.696
Glasses	.798	.795
Higher weight	.849	.762

Forced preference. In the forced preference task, children were presented with all five characters and asked to '*pick the 3 characters you would most like to invite to your birthday party.'* Finally, they were invited to choose, *'out of all the characters, which character would be your best friend?*' This was followed up with an open-ended question asking why they chose that character as their best friend. Forced choice preference has been used previously in research assessing attitudes towards appearances (Sigelman et al., 1986). A strength of using forced choice questions within attitudinal research, is that it can reduce social desirability

often found with open ended questions. However, the results of the force choice questions should not be interpreted alone, as this may overinflate the attitudes of the children, as described in Chapter 2. Instead, forced choice responses should be considered along with all other measures, as this builds a well-rounded picture of children's attitudes towards various appearances.

4.4 Analysis

4.4.1 Qualitative analysis

Content analysis selection

In order to analyse the children's responses from the open-ended questions, a content analysis was conducted. Content analysis is considered to be a flexible research method for analysing text data (Cavanagh, 1997). Therefore, this method of analysis was chosen as a systematic approach to developing inferences about texts (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Content analysis can be used for many purposes (Weber, 1990). Notably, it can evaluate data regarding the meaning an individual or group of people attributes towards a target or set of targets (Krippendorff, 2018), making it a suitable form of analysis for evaluating children's attitudes towards diverse appearances.

In general, there is no firm definition of a content analysis. However, a key feature reflected in the literature is that the words of the texts are classified into smaller categories, which can either be quantified, or reported with qualitative descriptions (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). Thus, content analysis can be either quantitative or qualitative in nature. The current study conducted content analysis aimed at quantifying the qualitative data through categorising the frequency of words used to describe the characters. Therefore, the qualitative data comprised a small component of the content analysis and the quantitative part formed the greater part of the analysis. This aspect of the procedure was guided by the steps outlined in a highly cited paper by Weber (1990). In total there are eight steps, which include: defining recording units, defining categories, testing coding on a sample of text, assessing accuracy or reliability, revising the coding rules, reviewing the testing steps until a consensus is agreed, coding all the data, assessing achieved reliability or accuracy. Regarding the definition of recording units, careful consideration was taken for how this would be defined. Weber (1990) outlines that units can be as specific as single words and as broad as overall themes. For the current study, each participant response was taken as a recording unit, meaning a recording unit

could be as simple as one single word or a number of sentences depending on how the participant responded. This recording unit was chosen because it is able to categorise each child's overall attitude towards the diverse appearances. If a child produced a mixed response (both positive and negative) then the response unit would overall be coded as '*mixed*.' Further, given the variation of the children's abilities across the ages, it is reasonable to treat each response, irrespective of the level of contribution, as a reflection of that child's attitudes, essentially giving equal weight towards all responses.

The definition of categories followed a deductive approach, as outlined by Elo and Kyngäs (2008). A deductive approach is useful for evaluating texts in the light of previous knowledge or theory, which is the case in this study, as categories were based upon previously defined categories created by Sigelman et al. (1986). A deductive approach is often used in cases where the researcher is aiming to retest existing data in a new context (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). The aim of deductive content analysis is to validate or extend a theoretical framework or theory, where research already exists, which corresponds with the aim of this study.

Coding categories

Based on pre-defined categories by Sigelman el al. (1986), two overarching categories were used to code children's attitudes towards the four diverse appearances.

1) Reference to diverse appearance. The first category indicates whether the participant referred to the diverse appearance either: (a) directly (e.g., "*is fat*," or "*has glasses*"), (b) indirectly, alluding to the character's overall difference but in a less accurate depiction (e.g., "*is taller/bigger*" for the higher weight character, "*can't see very well*" for the character with glasses); or (c) not at all/unrelated. Specific references for each diverse appearance were outlined within the coding book.

2) Reference to personality or character. The second category refers to whether the participant referenced personality traits or global assessments of character – these were coded as either positive (e.g., "*looks happy*," or "*I like them*"), mixed (e.g., "*doesn't have many friends, but happy*"), negative (e.g., "*I hate them*," or "*looks scary*"), and not provided/unrelated (e.g., "*don't know*," or "*got brown hair*").

Coding procedure

A codebook was created, outlining the details of the coding categories and providing example quotes from the data (Creswell, 2015). One coder (a postgraduate psychology student, with knowledge of body image research) met for a series of sessions with the first author, and in an iterative process coded 40 participant responses (results were not included in the final analysis), any updates and additions were added to the codebook. Next, the first author (Jade Parnell) and the official second coder (a postgraduate psychology student, with knowledge of body image research, but who had no involvement in the development of the coding booklet) independently rated the same 40 participants' responses. Cohen's κ was calculated to determine the level of agreement between the first author and second coder on these 40 responses. Results found very good agreement $\kappa = .841$, $p < .001$ for the first category, and good agreement $\kappa = .659$, $p < .001$ for the second category. As a good level of reliability was calculated, this resulted in a finalised version of the codebook (included in the final analysis).

The first author then coded the remaining 1,487 participant responses, for each character, and the second coder coded a random sample (10%, 149 responses), in order to establish inter-rater agreement and reliability. Using the random sample, Kappa Coefficients (Cohen, 1960), a measure of percentage of agreement but corrected for chance agreement, resulted in very good agreement $\kappa = .938$, $p < .001$ for the first category, and $\kappa = .825$, $p < .001$ for the second category. This indicates substantial agreement between raters (Viera & Garrett, 2005). Discrepancies were resolved via a third-party judge, however these were only resolved after reliability was calculated, following guidelines by Weber (1990).

Reporting the analysis

Results for the content analysis were reported in a frequency table outlining the number of children's responses which reflected each category. The presentation of these results follows the same presentation structure as Sigelman et al. (1986) and allows for a clear summary of the children's overall attitudes towards the appearance diverse groups. Again, similar to Sigelman et al's. (1986) study, frequency of responses were differentiated according to age groups, as well as the overall frequency of attitudes across the age groups. This is in order to meet the second aim of this study, to evaluate if children's attitudes differ according to their age group and diverse appearance.

4.4.2 Quantitative analysis

Calculating power

Given the study's design and multiple variables, a power calculation was conducted to establish the required number of participants. After performing a G*power calculation (Faul, Erdfelder, Lang & Buchner, 2007), it was concluded that a total sample size of 380 participants (approximately 126 per age group) would be required to detect a medium to small effect size, with at least 94% power.

Data were analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), version 23. Raw data were cleaned and screened, as for parametric tests to be run there are number of assumptions to be met, whereby the data must be normally distributed, and have continuous variables. Then a series of parametric and non-parametric tests were conducted to establish effects of the variables on the outcome measures.

4.5 Results

4.5.1 Qualitative results

For the first category (1) *whether the participant refers to the diverse appearance*, a combined percentage was calculated for those who referred to the characters diverse appearance either directly or indirectly (see Table 3). To assess if there were any significant differences in children's references towards the diverse appearances, across the school years, a series of chi-square tests of independence were conducted. The chi-squared analysis tested the difference between reference towards appearance and the school years (reception-Year 1, Year 2-3 and Year 4-5) on each appearance diversity. Analysis was conducted separate for each gender. In order to do this, a series of eight chi-squared tests of independence were conducted separately for each diverse appearance and gender (e.g., year groups, facial burn, and boys). Result revealed there was a significant difference between year group and girls referring to the higher weight characters appearance, $\chi2(2) = 7.63$, $p = .022$. The difference was small, Cramer's V = .194. A cell-by-cell comparison approach (Agresti & Franklin, 2013), using analysis of residuals, was included in order to interpret which year groups had a statistically significant difference regarding references towards the characters appearance. An adjusted residual greater than two standard errors provides evidence for the significant difference (Agresti & Franklin, 2013). Evaluation of the residuals shows that girls increase in reference toward higher weight was a significant contributor towards the difference between

school year and appearance reference (see Table 3). Additionally, there was a significant difference between year group, and both boys and girls referring to the character wearing glasses (boys: $\chi2(2) = 12.88$, $p = .002$, girls: $\chi2(2) = 22.52$, $p < .001$). The difference was small to medium respectively, boys Cramer's V = .267, and girls Cramer's V = .331. Analysis of residuals highlights both reception - Year 1 and Year 4 - 5 significantly deviate from independence and therefore it is the high appearance reference towards the glasses in reception - Year 1 and low reference towards the characters glasses in Year 4 – 5 which contributed to the significant difference. There were no further significant differences between children's references towards the diverse appearance across the school year groups.

Similarly, for the second category (2) *participant references personality traits or global assessments of character*, percentages of children who mentioned these aspects, whether positive, mixed, and negative were calculated, in contrast with children who did not mention any of these added aspects. The percentages are separated according to the school year groups, see Table 4. This indicates how much the children inferred additional information from the characters appearance. All references towards personality traits whether '*positive, negative, and mixed'* were grouped to help understand at what age frequency of *any* evaluations towards appearance become more salient and if they differ according to the type of appearance diversity presented. Interestingly, the results highlight a general trend regarding all the diverse appearances, with the children generally attributing more personality traits, as they get older. A series of chi-squared test of independence revealed there were significant differences across each socially stigmatising appearance and gender: facial burn (boys: $\chi2(2) = 20.75$, $p < .001$, girls: $\chi2(2) = 11.34$, $p = .003$), wheelchair (boys: $\chi2(2) = 25.11$, $p < .001$, girls: $\chi2(2) = 20.84$, $p <.001$), glasses (boys: $\chi2(2) = 23.17$, $p < .001$, girls: $\chi2(2) = 21.27$, $p <.001$), and higher weight (boys: $\chi2(2) = 15.65$, $p <.001$, girls: $\chi2(2) = 13.69$, $p = .001$) characters. Analysis of residuals showed all significant differences are due to a significant increase of references towards the characters personality or global assessment of character from reception – Year 1 to Year 4 - 5. This is indicated by adjusted residuals which are more than 2 or -2 (see Table 4). Thus, older children attributed more characteristics towards the characters compared to younger children. Additionally, a series of chi-squared tests were run to assess the differences in negative comments across the age groups, there were no statically significant differences ($p > .05$), for both genders, between negative assessment of the characters and school year.

Table 3. Percentage of participants referring either directly/indirectly to the characters appearance diversity.

Character	Reception – Year 1		Year 2 - 3		Year 4 -5		Total for sample (and % direct)[a]	Total for sample (and % direct)[a]
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
Burn	55% (-0.2)	45% (-1.8)	56% (-0.1)	57% (0.7)	58% (0.2)	59% (1.1)	Total 56% (8% direct)	Total 54% (6% direct)
Wheelchair	74% (2.0)	59% (0.4)	63% (-0.4)	57% (-0.1)	56% (-1.7)	56% (-0.3)	Total 64% (57% direct)	Total 57% (53% direct)
Glasses	61% (2.8)	71% (4.3)	51% (0.5)	48% (-0.3)	30% (-3.4)	31% (-4.0)	Total 47% (45% direct)	Total 50% (50% direct)
Higher weight	55% (0.3)	36% (-1.4)	59% (0.8)	36% (-1.4)	47% (-1.1)	56% (2.8)	Total 54% (39% direct)	Total 43% (25% direct)

[a]The first figure represents the combined percentage of participants who made either direct or indirect references to the characters diverse appearance. The figure in brackets represents the percentage of participants who only made direct references to the characters diverse appearance.

Note. Adjusted residuals appear in parentheses below observed frequencies.

Table 4. Percentage of participants in each school year providing a reference to the characters personality traits personality traits or global assessments of character towards the characters. Total % positive, mixed (and % negative).

Character	Reception – Year 1		Year 2 - 3		Year 4 -5	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
Burn	36% (7%)	44% (6%)	64% (23%)	56% (8%)	76% (27%)	73% (18%)
	(-4.4)	(-2.7)	(1.3)	(-0.5)	(3.3)	(3.1)
Wheelchair	35% (4%)	30% (4%)	53% (7%)	51% (2%)	81% (9%)	69% (7%)
	(-4.1)	(-4.1)	(-0.3)	(0.1)	(4.6)	(3.9)
Glasses	43% (6%)	50% (1%)	66% (9%)	78% (0%)	85% (2%)	84% (1%)
	(-4.4)	(-4.5)	(0.5)	(1.4)	(4.0)	(3.1)
Higher weight	37% (6%)	38% (8%)	56% (19%)	60% (14%)	73% (18%)	69% (11%)
	(-3.5)	(-3.5)	(0.4)	(0.7)	(3.4)	(2.8)

Note. Adjusted residuals appear in parentheses below observed frequencies.

4.5.2 Quantitative results

Attitudes toward appearances

Mean attitudinal ratings of the eight adjectives (nice, happy, confident, people like him/her, popular, attractive, clever, and the reverse score of lazy) were calculated for each character according to participant's school year and separated according to gender (see Table 5 for all school years combined and Table 6 split according to school year groups). Table 5 indicates a more positive attitudinal preference towards the characters with no appearance stigma, wearing glasses, and for girls more than boys, the character in a wheelchair. The character with a burn and of higher weight, on average, had less positive attitudes attributed towards them. Further statistical analyses were conducted to establish if these differences were significant.

Table 5. Mean positive attitudes towards the characters for all school years (*SD*)

Character	All ages	
	Male (n = 183)	Female (n = 211)
No appearance diversity	71.02 (21.77)	72.00 (21.94)
Burn	60.83 (23.89)	61.87 (24.21)
Wheelchair	67.22 (21.03)	71.17 (19.66)
Glasses	70.57 (20.55)	74.24 (19.72)
Higher weight	54.01 (23.93)	56.62 (24.30)

To test differences between the groups using parametric tests, a series of assumptions must be met. Therefore, prior to running any statistical analysis, assessment of normality and a check for outliers was conducted. The assumption of normality was not satisfied for all groups, as assessed by Shapiro-Wilk's test (p <.05). However, ANOVAs as a statistical test, are somewhat robust to violations of normality (Bastow Wilson, 2007). Meaning, although this assumption has been violated, the test can still provide valid results. Furthermore, transforming participant responses may lead to inappropriate contamination of the data, when the transformation does not fit the intended model (Bastow Wilson, 2007). In this case, given that ANOVAs are robust enough to contend with non-normally distributed data (Blanca, Alarcón, Bono & Bendayan, 2017), it is warranted the responses are not transformed, and kept to their original form. The data was also tested for outliers, as these can have a negative

impact on ANOVAs output. Results revealed four outliers in the data. Of these, one was removed from the dataset, as the participant's responses consistently indicated a lack of understanding across all questions. The three remaining outliers were kept in the dataset, as they only had an extreme outlier on one of the adjectives within the character attitudes, and all other responses indicated a strong understanding of the questions. Therefore, these outliers simply indicated an extreme attitude on one question, which does not warrant complete removal, and could simply reflect the child's attitudes towards the characters. Additionally, it has been argued data are more likely to be representative of the population as a whole if genuine outliers are not removed and do not present as a factor influencing variance in large datasets (Orr, Sackett & DuBois, 1991). Given the current data set was large and sufficiently powered, as well as the outliers not showing a consistent lack of understanding, these did not warrant removal.

Table 6. Attitudes towards the characters, split by gender and school year (*M, SD*)

Character	School year					
	Reception – Year 1		Year 2 - 3		Year 4 - 5	
	Male ($n = 71$)	Female ($n = 72$)	Male ($n = 56$)	Female ($n = 67$)	Male ($n = 57$)	Female ($n = 73$)
No appearance diversity	73.23 (23.31)	76.29 (21.35)	68.97 (23.16)	71.73 (22.68)	70.27 (18.10)	68.01 (21.35)
Burn	65.97 (27.66)	69.91 (23.79)	58.98 (22.22)	62.26 (26.12)	56.15 (19.02)	53.69 (20.09)
Wheelchair	73.70 (21.93)	78.17 (17.41)	65.38 (21.64)	72.74 (19.43)	60.92 (16.96)	62.85 (19.15)
Glasses	71.38 (24.57)	77.93 (21.66)	71.73 (18.00)	78.60 (16.22)	68.45 (17.38)	66.55 (18.53)
Higher weight	57.62 (26.33)	62.57 (26.63)	52.89 (24.45)	58.99 (22.49)	50.55 (19.62)	48.66 (21.54)

Main effect of attitudes towards diverse appearances (across all school years)

To understand the overall effects of school year and gender on the within-subjects variable of children's attitudes towards diverse appearances, a three-way, mixed ANOVA was conducted with a computed total of the eight attitudinal adjectives (nice, happy, confident, people like him/her, popular, attractive, clever, and a reverse score of lazy) as the outcome measure. Mauchly's test of sphericity indicated that the assumption of sphericity had been violated $\chi2(9) = 34.88$, $p < .001$. Thus, the Greenhouse-Geisser correction was interpreted, where adjustments have been made according to Greenhouse and Geisser (1959). Results showed a main effect of character $F(3.82, 1454.63) = 82.29$, $p = <.05$, partial $\eta2 = .178$.

To further evaluate which characters significantly differed across all year groups, two one-way repeated measures ANOVAs were conducted, one for boys and one for girls. For the girls, the assumption of sphericity was violated, as assessed by Mauchly's test of sphericity. Therefore, a Greenhouse-Geisser correction was applied ($\varepsilon = 0.899$). For the boy's data, the assumption of sphericity was met, $\chi2(9) = 15.64$, $p = .075$. The results showed a significant effect of attitudes towards the characters appearances for both boys $F(4, 712) = 38.48$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta2 = .178$, and girls $F(3.60, 744.51) = 44.94$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta2 = .178$. Post hoc analysis with a Bonferroni adjustment was calculated to establish which characters significantly differed in attitudes between the boys and girls. All character differences were the same for both boys and girls. Results revealed the character with a burn had significantly less positive attitudes compared to the characters with no appearance diversity (boys: $p < .001$, girls: $p < .001$), in a wheelchair (boys: $p = .001$, girls: $p < .001$), and wearing glasses (boys: $p < .001$, girls: $p < .001$). The higher weight character had significantly less positive attitudes compared to all other characters, including the character with a burn (boys: $p = .001$, girls: $p = .002$), the character with no diverse appearance (boys: $p < .001$, girls: $p < .001$), in a wheelchair (boys: $p < .001$, girls: $p < .001$), and wearing glasses (boys: $p < .001$, girls: $p < .001$). All other character comparisons were not significantly different ($p > .05$). The results confirm that both boys and girls from reception – Year 5 have significantly less positive attitudes toward the characters with a facial burn and of higher weight, compared to the characters with no diverse appearance, wearing gasses, and in a wheelchair. The higher weight character also had significantly less positive attitudes in comparison to the character with a burn, meaning the higher weight character had the least positive attitudes attributed overall, compared to all other characters.

Interaction effect of attitudes towards the diverse appearances (split by school year)

The three-way mixed ANOVA also revealed there was a statistically significant two-way interaction between character and school year, $F(7.64, 1454.63) = 2.41$, $p = .016$, partial $\eta 2 = .012$. However, the two-way interaction between character and gender, and three-way interaction between character, gender and school year were not statistically significant (both *p's* > .05). The results suggest children's attitudes towards the characters' appearances differed significantly, and this varies significantly according to the children's school year. However, gender did not significantly impact the children's attitudes towards the various appearances. Nevertheless, as the characters' genders were matched to each participant's gender (boys did not see the girl's characters and vice versa), future analysis of the children's attitudes towards the appearances continued to be analysed separately for gender.

To understand further how these attitudes differed within the varying school years, a series of one-way ANOVAs were calculated with the school year groups and characters as the independent variables and a computed total of the eight attitudinal adjectives as the outcome measure. As previously mentioned, separate calculations were made for males and females. Results from these parametric tests reveal all school years had a significant effect of attitudes towards the characters for both boys and girls. Therefore, the following results will report the ANOVA output and then the following post hoc tests for each school year group.

Reception – Year 1

The assumption of sphericity was violated for both boys and girls in reception – Year 1, therefore a Greenhouse-Geisser correction was applied (boys: $\varepsilon = .869$, girls: $\varepsilon = .873$). In the reception – Year 1 group, there were significant differences regarding attitudes towards the characters for boys ($F(3.47, 243.20) = 10.33$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta 2 = .129$) and girls ($F(3.49, 244.52) = 10.03$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta 2 = .125$). To establish which characters differed significantly in attitudes in reception – Year 1, post hoc analysis with a Bonferroni adjustment was calculated. Further analysis revealed that for both boys and girls only the higher weight character had significantly less positive attitudes compared to the characters with no appearance diversity (boys: $p < .001$, girls: $p = .003$), in a wheelchair (boys: $p < .001$, girls: $p < .001$), and wearing glasses (boys: $p < .001$, girls: $p < .001$). These results indicate that for both boys and girls fewer positive attitudes towards higher weight are already present in

reception – Year 1, whereas attitudes towards other appearances do not currently differ significantly.

Year 2 – 3

Regarding children in Year 2 – 3, the assumption of sphericity was also violated for boys in Year 2 – 3, where a corrected Greenhouse-Geisser value was applied (ε = .855), for girls in Year 2 – 3, this assumption was not violated $\chi 2(9) = 12.87$, $p = .169$. In the Year 2 – 3 group there were significant differences regarding attitudes towards the characters for boys ($F(3.19, 169.13) = 13.06$, $p <.001$, partial $\eta 2 =.198$) and girls ($F(4, 256) = 16.16$, $p <.001$, partial $\eta 2 =.202$). Post hoc analysis with Bonferroni adjustment showed both boys and girls have significantly less positive attitudes towards the higher weight character in comparison to the characters with no appearance diversity (boys: $p <.001$, girls: $p <.001$), in a wheelchair (boys: $p = .011$, girls: $p <.001$), and wearing glasses (boys: $p <.001$, girls: $p <.001$). Additionally, both boys and girls also had significantly less positive attitudes towards the character with a burn in comparison to the character with no appearance diversity, (boys: $p = .002$, girls: $p = .034$) and wearing glasses (boys: $p = .002$, girls: $p <.001$). Further, for girls the character with a burn also had significantly less positive attitudes compared to the character in a wheelchair ($p = .015$). Results reveal for both boys and girls less positive attitudes towards higher weight characters are consistently present in Years 2 – 3, and there are also less positive attitudes towards the character with a facial burn.

Year 4 – 5

The assumption of sphericity was violated for both boys and girls in Years 4 - 5, therefore a Greenhouse-Geisser correction was applied (boys: ε = .778, girls: ε = .761). In the Year 4 – 5 group, there were significant differences regarding attitudes towards the characters for boys ($F(3.11, 164.90) = 23.62$, $p <.001$, partial $\eta 2 =.308$) and girls ($F(3.05, 216.26) = 25.24$, $p <.001$, partial $\eta 2 =.262$). Post hoc analysis with Bonferroni adjustment found both boys and girls had less positive attitudes towards the higher weight character compared to the characters with no appearance diversity (boys: $p <.001$, girls: $p <.001$), in a wheelchair (boys: $p <.001$, girls: $p <.001$), and wearing glasses (boys: $p <.001$, girls: $p <.001$). As well as this, girls also had significantly less positive attitudes towards the higher weight character in comparison to the character with a burn ($p = .035$). For both boys and girls the character with a burn is also attributed less positive attitudes compared to the character with no appearance diversity, (boys: $p <.001$, girls: $p <.001$) and wearing glasses (boys: $p <.001$, girls: $p <.001$).

Additionally, for the girls the character with a burn had significantly less positive attitudes compared to the character in a wheelchair (p = .001). In contrast to the previous year groups, boys also have significantly less positive attitudes towards the character in wheelchair compared to the characters with no appearance diversity (p = .002) and wearing glasses (p = .039). These results show, adding to the previous year groups, both the higher weight character and character with a burn are attributed less positive attitudes compared to the other appearances. Except now, girls have less positive attitudes towards the higher weight character compared to the character with a burn, and the character with a burn is attributed less positive attitudes compared to the character in a wheelchair, suggesting attitudes towards the higher weight character and character with a facial burn have become worse for girls. Additionally, older boys hold less positive attitudes towards the character in a wheelchair.

Overall, results from the attitudinal measure show children from reception – Year 5 do have different attitudes towards various diverse appearances. This also varies according to school year, with less positive attitudes towards higher weight being present for both boys and girls already in reception – Year 1 and remaining up to Year 4 – 5. Less positive attitudes towards a visible difference, in the form of a facial burn, is evident in both boys and girls in Year 2 – 3 and remains up to Year 4 – 5. Additionally, for boys, less positive attitudes towards disability, specific to the use of a wheelchair, is present at Year 4 -5. The character with no diverse appearance and wearing glasses does not illicit less positive attitudes for both boys and girls in any of the school years from reception – Year 5. Results represent an overall trend in the development of attitudes towards appearance, with less positive attitudes towards higher weight developing early (aged 4-6 years) for both genders, less positive attitudes towards those with a visible difference developing at age 6-8 years, and finally less positive attitudes towards a disability developing for boys only aged 8-10 years.

Friendship behaviours

Participants responded to four statements regarding various positive friendship behaviours. Table 7 highlights, for boys and girls respectively, the percentage frequencies of responses regarding these statements.

Friendship behaviours for all school years

In order to determine if there were significant differences in children's friendship behaviours towards the various appearance diversities, a Friedman test was calculated with the characters

as the independent variable and a computed total of positive friendship behaviours from the four questions (‘*comfortable around’*, ‘*like as a friend’*, ‘*invite to my house’,* and *‘tell a secret’*) as the dependant variable. Calculations were conducted separately for boys and girls. Results found friendship behaviours significantly differed towards the various appearance diversities for both boys, $\chi^2(4) = 113.91$, $p < .001$, and girls $\chi^2(4) = 129.35$, $p < .001$. Post hoc analysis with a Bonferroni correction for multiple comparisons revealed both boys and girls were less likely to engage in positive friendship behaviours with the higher weight character, compared to the character with no appearance diversity (boys: $p <.001$, girls: $p <.001$), glasses wearing character (boys: $p <.001$, girls: $p <.001$), and character in a wheelchair (boys: $p <.001$, girls: $p <.001$). Girls were also significantly less likely to engage in positive friendship behaviours with the higher weight character compared to the character with a burn ($p = .003$), for boys this was approaching significance ($p = .055$). Similar to the higher weight character, both boys and girls were significantly less likely to engage in positive friendship behaviours towards the character with a burn compared to the character with no appearance diversity (boys: $p <.001$, girls: $p =.009$), glasses wearing character (boys: $p = .002$, girls: $p <.001$), and character in a wheelchair (boys: $p = .006$, girls: $p <.001$).

Table 7. Frequency responses (%) of friendship behaviours towards the characters, split by gender

Friendship behaviours:		No stigma		Burn		Wheelchair		Glasses		Higher weight	
		Male (n = 182)	Female (n = 210)	Male (n = 182)	Female (n = 210)	Male (n = 183)	Female (n = 210)	Male (n = 182)	Female (n = 210)	Male (n = 182)	Female (n = 211)
1. Comfortable around	Yes	63.2%	61.9%	40.1%	49.5%	54.1%	71.4%	58.8%	71.9%	35.2%	41.2%
	Maybe	23.1%	28.6%	33.5%	35.2%	29.0%	21.4%	25.8%	21.0%	30.2%	37.0%
	No	13.7%	9.5%	26.4%	15.2%	16.9%	7.1%	15.4%	7.1%	34.6%	21.8%
2. Like as a friend	Yes	65.4%	68.6%	48.9%	54.3%	59.0%	72.4%	65.9%	69.5%	34.6%	44.1%
	Maybe	24.2%	23.8%	30.8%	34.3%	29.0%	21.4%	18.7%	23.8%	35.7%	39.3%
	No	10.4%	7.6%	20.3%	11.4%	12.0%	6.2%	15.4%	6.7%	29.7%	16.6%
3. Invite to my house	Yes	50.0%	55.2%	31.9%	38.1%	41.0%	52.4%	40.1%	57.1%	23.6%	28.4%
	Maybe	31.3%	33.8%	38.5%	42.9%	40.4%	38.6%	36.8%	30.5%	37.4%	43.6%
	No	18.7%	11.0%	29.7%	19.0%	18.6%	9.0%	23.1%	12.4%	39.0%	28.0%
4. Tell a secret	Yes	32.0%	37.6%	25.3%	31.4%	35.5%	44.0%	28.6%	39.0%	18.1%	22.4%
	Maybe	33.7%	32.4%	29.7%	36.2%	29.0%	34.4%	28.6%	29.5%	27.5%	34.8%
	No	34.3%	30.0%	45.1%	32.4%	35.5%	21.5%	42.9%	31.4%	54.4%	42.9%
Total	Yes	52.7%	55.8%	36.6%	43.3%	47.4%	60.1%	48.4%	59.4%	27.9%	34.0%
	Maybe	28.0%	29.7%	33.0%	37.2%	31.8%	71.1%	27.4%	26.2%	32.7%	38.7%
	No	19.3%	14.5%	30.4%	19.5%	20.8%	11.0%	24.2%	14.4%	39.4%	27.3%

The results indicate children's friendship behaviours significantly differ according to the appearance diversity presented, with boys and girls being less likely to engage in positive friendship behaviours with individuals of higher weight and with a facial burn in comparison to people with no diverse appearance, who wear glasses and who are in a wheelchair.

Friendship Behaviours for separate school years

In order to understand further whether these friendship behaviours significantly vary across the school years, a further series of Friedman tests were used to calculate if there were any significant differences. Again, separate calculations were made for males and females.

Reception – Year 1

Results found friendship behaviours for children in reception – Year 1 differed significantly towards the various appearance diversities for both boys, $\chi^2(4) = 31.58$, $p < .001$, and girls $\chi^2(4) = 34.65$, $p < .001$. Post hoc tests with a Bonferroni correction for multiple comparisons showed both boys and girls were significantly less likely to engage in positive friendship behaviours with the higher weight character (boys: *Mdn* = 1.75, girls: *Mdn* = 2.00) compared to the characters with no appearance diversity (boys: *Mdn* = 2.50 girls: *Mdn* = 2.50) (boys: p <.001, girls: $p = .001$), wearing glasses (boys: *Mdn* = 2.00, girls: *Mdn* = 2.50) (boys: $p = .045$, girls: $p = .002$), and in a wheelchair (boys: *Mdn* = 2.25, girls: *Mdn* = 2.50) (boys: $p = .013$, girls: $p = .002$). Results suggest both boys and girls in reception – Year 1 are already less likely to engage in positive friendship behaviours towards children of higher weight.

Year 2 – 3

Again, there were significant differences for friendship behaviours towards the characters in Year 2 – 3 for both boys $\chi^2(4) = 49.24$, $p < .001$, and girls $\chi^2(4) = 49.11$, $p < .001$. Post hoc tests with a Bonferroni correction for multiple comparisons revealed the same as with reception – Year 1, both boys and girls were significantly less likely to engage in positive friendship behaviours with the higher weight character compared to the characters with no diverse appearance (boys: p <.001, girls: $p = .002$), wearing glasses (boys: p <.001, girls: p <.001), and in a wheelchair (boys: p <.001, girls: p <.001). Additionally both boys and girls were significantly less likely to engage in positive friendship behaviours towards the character with a burn, compared to the character wearing glasses (boys: $p = .032$, girls: $p = .025$), and for boys, also compared to the character with no appearance stigma ($p = .005$). Results reveal Year 2-3 children are consistently less likely to engage in positive friendship

behaviours towards the higher weight character and are also beginning to show less positive friendship behaviours towards the character with a burn.

Year 4 – 5

There were also significant differences regarding friendship behaviours towards the characters for both boys $\chi^2(4) = 38.63$, $p < .001$, and girls $\chi^2(4) = 51.08$, $p < .001$, in Year 4 - 5. Post hoc tests with a Bonferroni correction for multiple comparisons showed the children are less likely to engage in positive friendship behaviours towards the higher weight character compared to characters with no diverse appearance (boys: $p <.001$, girls: $p <.001$), wearing glasses (boys: $p = .001$, girls: $p <.001$), and in a wheelchair (boys: $p = .006$, girls: $p <.001$). Also, the boys of this age were less likely to engage in positive friendship behaviours towards the character with a burn compared to the characters with no diverse appearance ($p = .006$) and wearing glasses ($p =.021$). For girls, the character with a facial burn was significantly less likely to be shown positive friendship behaviours compared to the character in a wheelchair ($p = .007$). These findings highlight consistent, less positive friendship behaviours towards the higher weight character, as well as, again, some less positive friendship behaviours for the character with a facial burn, however this did vary slightly according to gender.

Overall, results from the measure of friendship behaviours reveals that as early as reception - Year 1, boys and girls are less likely to engage in positive friendship behaviours towards children of higher weight, compared to most other appearances. This is sustained until Year 4 – 5. Additionally, some less positive friendship behaviours towards those with a visible difference (facial burn) begin to emerge in Year 2 – 3 and remain fairly consistent into Year 4 - 5. All other characters' appearances (no diverse appearance, wearing glasses and in a wheelchair) did not elicit significantly less positive friendship behaviours. These findings regarding friendship behaviours compliment the children's attitudes towards the characters.

Forced preference

Birthday Party Invite

Table 8 presents the frequency of the top three characters children from all ages (reception - Year 5) would invite to their birthday party. Table 9 also presents the top three characters invited to a birthday party but split according to school year. Both tables clearly highlight how the higher weight character would be the least likely to be invited to a birthday party,

irrespective of school year. The character with a burn is also less likely to be invited to a birthday party, however for boys in reception - Year 1 the character with a burn is more frequently chosen compared to the character in a wheelchair. This suggests, similar to the previous findings, the higher weight character and character with a burn are least likely to be chosen when children are forced to choose between various diverse appearances. However, for the character with a burn, there are some slight differences with boys in reception – Year 1 being more likely to invite the character with a burn to their birthday party. Aside from boys in reception – Year 1, all other school years chose the three characters of: no appearance diversity, wearing glasses, and in a wheelchair more frequently to attend the birthday party.

Table 8. Percentage of characters chosen as top three to be invited to a birthday party by gender. [n (percentage who chose the character, rank order)].

Character	All ages	
	Male	Female
	n = 179	*n* = 205
No appearance diversity	152 (85%, 1)	166 (81%, 2/3)
Burn	86 (48%, 4)	86 (42%, 4)
Wheelchair	116 (65%, 3)	166 (81%, 2/3)
Glasses	125 (70%, 2)	167 (81%, 1)
Higher weight	45 (25%, 5)	34 (17%, 5)

Table 9. Percentage of characters chosen as top three to be invited to a birthday party by school year and gender. [*n* (percentage who chose the character, rank order)].

Character	School year					
	Reception – Year 1		Year 2 - 3		Year 4 -5	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
	n = 70	*n* = 70	*n* = 54	*n* = 64	*n* = 54	*n* = 72
No appearance diversity	59 (84%, 1)	64 (91%, 1)	50 (93%, 1)	52 (81%, 2)	43 (80%, 1)	50 (69%, 3)
Burn	45 (64%, 2/3)	27 (39%, 4)	19 (35%, 4)	30 (47%, 4)	22 (41%, 4)	29 (40%, 4)
Wheelchair	41 (59%, 4)	55 (79%, 2/3)	36 (67%, 3)	49 (77%, 3)	39 (72%, 2)	62 (86%, 1)
Glasses	45 (64%, 2/3)	55 (79%, 2/3)	45 (83%, 2)	58 (91%, 1)	35 (65%, 3)	54 (75%, 2)
Higher weight	22 (31%, 5)	10 (14%, 5)	7 (13%, 5)	5 (9%, 5)	16 (30%, 5)	19 (26%, 5)

Best Friend Ratings

Finally, participants were also asked to indicate which of the characters they would choose to be their best friend. Table 10 reveals frequencies for characters who were chosen as best friends by participants of all ages, and Table 11 further breaks down the frequencies according to school year and gender. The picture is very similar to the birthday party findings above, with the higher weight character and character with a burn being less likely to selected, with the slight exception of reception – Year 1 boys.

For the top three characters chosen as a best friend (no appearance diversity, wearing glasses, and in a wheelchair), a summary of reasons for choosing these characters were collated. The most frequently reported reasons for choosing the character with no appearance diversity for both boys and girls were because they were perceived as *'nice, kind, and friendly.'* Interestingly, some children reported it was because the character with no appearance diversity was '*normal*' and one participant (of 6 years) stated, *'because she doesn't have glasses and she doesn't have a burn and she's not fat and she's not in a wheelchair, she's perfect. And that's why she's my best friend.'* Additionally, similar reasons were stated for choosing the character wearing glasses with '*nice*' and '*kind*' frequently being reported, as well as '*smart/clever'* and '*like his/her glasses'* for both boys and girls. For just girls '*beautiful, pretty, and cute'* was also reported. For the character in a wheelchair *'kind/nice'* was again frequently reported, however another reason reported most frequently for boys and girls was to *'help them'* because they *'have no friends,' 'will be picked on/bullied,'* and *'felt sorry for them.'*

Although the children were less likely to choose the characters with a facial burn and higher weight as a best friend, the reasons for choosing these characters are also described. Regarding the character with a facial burn, boys most often reported it was because the character *'has a burn,'* however the girls most frequently reported choosing the character with a facial burn because they wanted to *'help them'* and *'need support.'* The higher weight character was the least likely to be chosen, however for the children who did choose the higher weight character, the top reasons reported were because they were *'nice,' 'looks like me,'* and '*fat/big body.*' Although, some comments still suggest negative behaviours, for example *'even though he's fat and I don't want him to come to my house I still want him to be my friend.'*

In order to test for differences between genders on the frequency of character selected as a best friend, a Chi-Squared test was calculated with all school years. Results revealed a significant difference between genders ($\chi2$ (4) = 14.16, p = .007) with boys choosing the character in a wheelchair significantly less frequently as a best friend (15.6%), compared to the girls (26.6%). There were no other gender differences.

Table 10. Percentage frequency of characters chosen as best friends by gender.

Character	All ages	
	Male	Female
No appearance diversity	35.8% (1)	25.6% (3)
Burn	15.1% (4)	9.7% (4)
Wheelchair	15.6% (3)	26.6% (2)
Glasses	27.4% (2)	34.8% (1)
Higher weight	6.1% (5)	3.4% (5)

Table 11. Percentage frequency of characters chosen as best friends by school year and gender.

	School year					
Character	Reception – Year 1		Year 2 - 3		Year 4 -5	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
No appearance diversity	25.4% (2)	31.0% (2)	42.6% (1)	20.3% (3)	42.6% (1)	25% (2/3)
Burn	14.0% (3)	8.5% (4)	9.3% (4)	3.1% (4/5)	3.7% (5)	16.7% (4)
Wheelchair	8.5% (5)	21.1% (3)	14.8% (3)	28.1% (2)	25.9% (2)	30.6% (1)
Glasses	28.2% (1)	35.2% (1)	31.5% (2)	45.3% (1)	22.2% (3)	25.0% (2/3)
Higher weight	9.9% (4)	4.2% (5)	1.9% (5)	3.1% (4/5)	5.6% (4)	2.8% (5)

To assess if the frequency of characters chosen as best friends significantly differed across the school years, a series of non-parametric tests were conducted. Group sizes were unequal; therefore, a Fisher's exact test was used to calculate group differences. According to Fisher's exact test, there were statistically significant differences between characters across school years for boys (p = .001), but no significant differences for girls (p = .082). In order to further interpret the boy's results, a series of post hoc tests were calculated. Post hoc analysis involved pairwise comparisons using multiple Fisher's exact tests (2 x 2) with a Bonferroni

correction. Statistical significance was adjusted to $p < .017$, to account for multiple comparisons. Further analysis revealed boys' choice of best friend significantly differed from reception – Year 1 to Years 2 - 3 ($p = .012$), and reception – Year 1 to Years 4 – 5 ($p < .001$). The proportion of boys choosing the character with no appearance diversity in Years 2 – 3 (42.6%) and Years 4 – 5 (42.6%), was far higher compared to those in reception – Year 1 (25.4%). In contrast, the character with a burn was proportionally less likely to be chosen as a best friend by boys in Year 2 – 3 (9.3%) and Year 4 – 5 (3.7%), compared to reception – Year 1 (28.2%). This also mirrors results from the attitudinal and friendship behaviour measures. There were no other differences in boy's best friend choices ($p > .017$).

These results suggest girls' forced choice of the characters as a best friend tends to remain stable across the school years with the higher weight character and character with a burn being on average the least likely to be chosen as a best friend. Girls were also more likely to choose the character in a wheelchair as their best friend compared to boys. For boys, when forced to choose a character as a best friend, preference remains stable for most characters across school years, except the character with no appearance diversity was more likely, and the character with a burn is less likely to be chosen as a best friend as the boys get older.

4.6 Discussion

Summary of chapter aims and results

The main aim of the present study was to investigate whether attitudes and friendship behaviours differ towards various diverse appearances in children aged 4-10 years. Furthermore, if this was the case, the second aim of the study was to determine whether attitudes and friendship behaviours occur differently across the school years, gender and according to the type of diverse appearance presented.

Overall, children's attitudes did vary according to the diverse appearance presented, with the character of higher weight and with a facial burn being evaluated less positively compared to the other characters by both boys and girls. Additionally, both boys and girls were less likely to engage in positive friendship behaviours towards the higher weight character and character with a facial burn compared to the other characters. In further support, when children were forced to choose which three characters they would invite to their birthday party, and which one would be their best friend, the character of higher weight was rated the least likely to be

chosen, with the facial burn rated second-to-last. The quantitative results indicate both boys and girls aged 4-10 years have less positive attitudes and friendship behaviours towards the characters representing higher weight and a facial burn.

Regarding the second aim, to determine whether attitudes and friendship behaviours develop differently across the school years, by gender, and according to the type of diverse appearance presented, results indicated attitudes and friendship behaviours did significantly differ across school years and according to the type of diverse appearance presented. However, attitudes towards the characters did not differ significantly across genders. The results highlight for both genders, weight stigma is apparent early (4-6 years) and continues throughout the school years, stigma towards facial burns develops at around age 6-8 years and maintains throughout the school years. Additionally, less positive attitudes towards physical disabilities, in the form of a wheelchair, develop in boys by 8-10 years. The results from the forced choice birthday party and best friend questions paints a similar picture, with the higher weight character consistently being chosen last or second-to-last for both these questions from aged 4-6 years onwards, and the character with a facial burn being chosen either last or second-to-last from aged 6-8 years onwards.

To add depth to these findings, the qualitative results from the open-ended questions revealed that overall the character with the facial burn elicited the least direct references towards appearance. This may be due to lack of knowledge of the appearance diversity or an unwillingness to mention the appearance difference. Furthermore, results found a general trend of children attributing more personality traits, whether positive, mixed or negative, as the age of the participant increases. According to Piaget's (1936) Theory of Child Development, children during the preoperational stage (2-7 years) develop centration. The term centration refers to children focusing on a single, perceptually striking feature of an object or person, and the exclusion of other less relevant striking features (Siegler, DeLoache & Eisenberg, 2011). This developmental stage helps explain why children of this age group could include direct mentioning of the various appearance differences, but not the added, more subtle, element of personality characteristics. As children develop beyond this initial stage towards the concrete operations stage (7-12 years), children are deemed able to solve many other problems that require multiple dimensions. Furthermore, on average, a six-year-old child knows approximately 10,000 words compared to an average ten-year-old child who knows roughly 40,000 words (Anglin, 1993). Arguably evidence from child development

literature suggests the lack of language pertaining to stigma at a young age does not mean stigma is not present, it could simply be that children do not have the linguistic ability to respond to open ended questions to a substantial degree compared to older children. The current study supports this notion, as although children aged 4-6 years attributed fewer personality characteristics towards the higher weight character via the open-ended questions, the attitudinal ratings evidenced weight stigma in this age group. Thus, research assessing open ended responses from young children should carefully consider the language development and ability of their participants.

Weight stigma

Consistent with previous literature, the current study's findings support the notion that weight stigma develops early. The current study found weight stigma was already present at the youngest age group (4-6 years), thus it is difficult to conclude from this study at what age this stigma develops. Weight stigma may in fact begin to develop before this age, as found in previous research where weight stigmatisation was present at age three (Cramer & Steinwert, 1998; Spiel, Paxton & Yager, 2012). This suggests intervention efforts regarding weight stigma should focus on ages *younger than* 4-6 years and should perhaps include sustained intervention throughout primary school years in order to reduce the likelihood of weight stigma developing in this age group. However, this is likely to be practically challenging given early intervention would require targeting children pre-school and assessment in this age group is complex and involves a number of ethical considerations (e.g., informed assent) (Einarsdóttir, 2007). The study also supports attitudinal research suggesting by the ages of 5-7 years both boys and girls make judgements and ascribe unfavourable adjectives to those of higher weight (Staffieri, 1967), supporting the notion children view higher weight children as 'lazy' (Dohnt & Tiggemann, 2008). This highlights how negative connotations towards weight are still present in early childhood today. A number of reasons can explain why weight stigma has not reduced over the years. For example, the belief weight-related comments will motivate people to lose weight (Pont et al., 2017), as well as the rise of stigmatising obesity health campaigns, which have been evidenced to perpetuate weight stigma (Puhl, Luedicke & Peterson, 2013). These messages and lack of legal legislation to protect individuals from weight stigma (Walls, Peeters, Proietto & McNeil, 2011), may indeed help to explain why weight stigma has increased significantly from the 1960's to the early 2000's (Latner & Stunkard, 2003), and why implicit attitudes towards body weight are unlikely to change in the future (Charlesworth & Banaji, 2019). This is an important

consideration for health, a systematic review by Puhl and Suh (2015) found people who experience weight related stigma are at increased risk of adverse health consequences such as increased food consumption, avoidance of physical activity, psychological distress and impaired weight loss outcomes. Other research highlights children subjected to weight stigma in physical activity settings report less liking and lower participation of sports (Faith et al., 2002) and poorer subsequent health-related quality of life for those of higher weight (Guardabassi et al., 2018; Jensen et al., 2013). Clearly, given the serious consequences of weight stigma on individuals of all ages, including children, it is critical effective approaches for the reduction of weight stigma are developed and tested.

Additionally, this study found children from 4 to 10 years displayed less positive friendship behaviours and were least likely to choose the higher weight character as a best friend. These findings are supported by previous research which found at age 5 children make behavioural judgements based on weight and are less likely to choose a higher weight child as a playmate compared to a ‘normal’ weight child (Dohnt & Tiggemann, 2008). Overall, in light of findings from the current and previous studies, evidence suggests that in comparison to other appearance diversities, not only do children hold negative attitudes towards people of higher weight at a young age, they are also less likely to befriend them. These findings add to the literature on child weight stigma (Madowitz et al., 2012; Pont et al., 2017; Puhl & Latner, 2007), but in a comparative manner in relation to other appearance diversities. Findings suggest that interventions should begin to tackle weight stigma at a very early age, as well as on a social and macro level, in order to target greater public and legal policies.

Visible difference stigma

Contradictory to research by Latner and Stunkard (2003), who found increased levels of acceptance towards facial differences in children from 1961-2001, the current study found decreased acceptance towards a facial difference, in the form of a facial burn, apparent at the ages of 6-8 years. Specifically, children viewed the character with a facial burn as less nice, happy, confident, likeable, popular, and attractive. Latner and Stunkard (2003) discuss that greater acceptance of the facial difference may be due to greater acceptance of diverse facial appearances, along with increased contact and education of those with a facial difference. Although this may be the case for some facial differences, this study contests this point related to all facial differences, as the study by Latner and Stunkard (2003) included a character with a cleft lip and/or palate as a representation of a facial difference. In contrast,

the current study included a character with a facial burn to represent a facial difference. Individuals with acquired facial difference report slightly more stigmatisation from others compared to individuals with congenital facial differences (Strauss et al., 2007). Given the study by Latner and Stunkard (2003) included a congenital facial difference (cleft lip and/or palate), this may explain why they found greater acceptance, compared to an acquired facial difference. Additionally, the scale/size of the facial difference can impact on research findings. Although research suggests the actual size or severity of the visible difference does not predict an individual's own attitudes towards their appearance (Bradbury, 2012; Tebble, Thomas & Price, 2004), the research regarding others attitudes indicates this may be an impacting factor. For example, research by Masnari et al. (2012) found children with a facial difference which covers more than approximately 25% of the face were at greater risk of stigmatisation. As the current study included a burn covering approximately 50% of the face, it is perhaps the size and degree of severity which resulted in the less positive attitudes towards the character with a facial burn. Future research should take careful consideration into the type and size of the facial difference presented as this could impact the attitudes and evaluations received by others.

Moreover, the current study's attitudinal findings are supported by research which has found general attitudes towards facial differences are negative (Rankin & Borah, 2003), and children attribute less favourable personality characteristics (e.g., less likeable, attractive or happy) towards those with a facial difference compared to those without (Masnari et al., 2013). Too add to this, the behavioural findings are also supported by early evidence that people with a visible difference report members of the public ignoring them and/or adverting their gaze (Bull & Rumsey, 1988), as well as startled reactions (Masnari et al., 2012). Further, research also reports overt behaviours such as name calling and harassment (Bogart, 2015; Roberts & Shute, 2011) as well as, expressions of pity and staring (Masnari et al., 2012) towards those with a visible difference. This is important as both overt and covert stigma have been evidenced to impact the psychosocial health of individuals with a visible difference (Cooke Macgregor, 1990). Therefore, it is important to understand and critically assess the current knowledge regarding young people's attitudes and subsequent behaviours towards those with a visible difference, as this is helpful when developing future intervention strategies.

Finally, the present study found both the character in a wheelchair and wearing glasses were viewed relatively positively by young children. These findings support research evidence suggesting children's attitudes towards a character in a wheelchair fairs relatively equal to the character without an appearance diversity (Harrison et al., 2016). However, Latner and Stunkard (2003) found a decrease in children's acceptance towards those in a wheelchair over a 40-year period. Potentially the recent increase in children's acceptance towards those in a wheelchair may be attributed to increased familiarity due to media representation and awareness (e.g., the Paralympic games, Brittain, 2017) and/or the integration of children with disabilities into mainstream school (Shaw, 2017). This warrants further exploration. Moreover, when forced to choose a best friend, boys were significantly less likely to choose the character in wheelchair than girls. This replicates previous findings showing that compared to girls, boys are less accepting of functional disabilities (Latner & Stunkard, 2003; Richardson et al., 1961; Sigelman et al., 1986) and show less playmate preferences towards those in a wheelchair (Nabors & Larson, 2002). Evidence highlights girls' bodies are both portrayed and viewed as objects and are valued for their appearance (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997), whereas boys' bodies are seen as a process, emphasising functionality, and empowering strength (Franzoi, 1995). These attributions might potentially account for the stigma towards functional abilities among boys. It is recommended that future interventions aiming to target young children's attitudes towards diverse appearances consider the influence of both gender and social norms.

4.7 Limitations and future directions

The strengths of this study include its large sample size, the large and young age range of participants, and the use of mixed methods of attitudinal analysis, considering open, closed, and forced-choice attitudinal and behavioural questions. As well as this, the current study used digitally designed images of the characters to represent various diverse appearances. Masnari et al. (2013) recommended using digitally designed images of the same character but with different conditions to reduce confounding characteristics which may impact on attitudes (e.g., facial expression). Therefore, the current study implemented this recommendation and reduced the likelihood of these as confounding factors. It is recommended that future studies follow a similar approach. Additionally, this study included a number of approaches to measure stigma in young children (attitudinal visual analogue scales, behavioural intentions, and forced preference). This allows for greater generalisation

of trends in the data (Sigelman et al., 1986), as well as understanding both the attitudinal and behavioural elements of children's stigma. This is an important measurement factor to be considered in future research when evaluating stigma in young children. Lastly, the sample is generally representative of the overall ethnicity of ethnic groups within the UK (86% White, 7.5% Asian, 3.3% Black ethnic groups, and 3.2% mixed and other ethnic groups; Office for National Statistics, 2018) and reflects the diversity of the primary schools recruited within a city in the South West of England.

However, the study includes various limitations which merit noting. Firstly, the digitally designed characters only included one type of visible facial difference (burn scars), and one type of physical disability (wheelchair). As discussed, other forms of facial differences have shown to impact attitudes. Additionally, all characters were White, for similar reasons as the visible difference, and disability characters, there was little scope to include all variations of race diversity within this study. This limits the generalisability of the findings to other diverse appearances and is recognised as a limitation of this study.

Secondly, the attitudinal measures were explicit, which does not tap into implicit attitudes and may lead to socially desirable responses from the participants (Gawronski & Hahn, 2019). Implicit attitudes assess evaluations which are made automatically, unintentionally, and without deliberative processing (Gawronski & De Houwer, 2014). Thus, this reduces social desirability when assessing attitudes towards others. However, implicit attitudinal measures have been critiqued for lack of accuracy of what they are measuring (Goodall, 2011), as well as a difficulty in synthesising the variety of implicit attitude tests (Karpinski, Steinman & Hilton, 2005). The most widely used measure for assessing implicit attitudes is the Implicit Association Test (IAT: Greenwald, McGhee & Schwartz, 1998). Originally this test was designed to assess adults. However, more recently the IAT has been modified and evaluated for use with children. Both the reduced and traditional length versions of the IAT have found to demonstrate internal consistency and test-retest reliability when assessing children's race attitudes, which is comparable to adults (Williams & Steele, 2016). Additionally, the IAT has also been used to assess the attitudes of children aged 3-7 years towards body sizes (Thomas, Smith & Ball, 2007). This study found children as young as 3 years responded faster to thin characters linked with positive adjectives and higher weight character linked with negative adjectives, compared to the reverse, indicating an implicit positive bias towards the thin characters and an implicit negative bias towards the higher

weight. This evidence supports the current study, and demonstrates how both implicit and explicit attitudes can predict stereotypical assumptions and attitudes (Echabe, 2013). Most importantly, it is advised researchers are thoughtful and considerate of any attitudinal measure, whether explicit or implicit, as outcomes can be dependent on the context, attitude domain, and individual differences of the participants (Karpinski et al., 2005). In the current study, careful consideration was given to the selection of attitudinal measures and given the scope of the study and ease for the participant age group, explicit measures were deemed most appropriate. Furthermore, it is advised as well as considering how to measure children's attitudes, careful consideration be taken into the experimental setting and greater cultural context which may impact children's perceptions of others (Pauker, Williams & Steele, 2016).

A further limitation of the study is that children's attitudes were assessed based on ratings of unfamiliar and two-dimensional, digitally designed characters. The characters were developed to look realistic, however the children were only being assessed on their first impressions of the characters. Nonetheless, first impressions are important, and have been evidenced to impact subsequent interactions (Bull & Rumsey, 1988). Research has also found first impressions of people, specifically with a craniofacial condition, are significantly impacted by how the individual presents themselves in social situations (Edwards, Topolski, Kapp-Simon, Aspinall & Patrick, 2011), something that was not explored in the current study. Rather, the findings from the current study aimed to highlight the initial impressions towards the diverse appearances prior to any interaction. Future research should seek to further understand the interaction process between individuals and others with a diverse appearance, as research has indicated the way individuals with craniofacial differences present themselves in social situations can significantly affect first impressions of others (Edwards et al., 2011).

As this study only evaluated factors relating to attitudes and behavioural intentions towards appearance diversities, future studies should examine if other possible predictors such as, familiarity, the media, family, peers, and various situation settings have an impact. However, it has been argued that exposure to diverse peers alone is not sufficient at promoting acceptance (e.g., race, McKeown, Williams & Pauker, 2017). Thus, it is important to understand what factors predict attitudes in young children.

The results of this study have important implications. The data calls attention to the need for psychosocial education programs, for young children, aimed at reducing negative attitudes towards various diverse appearances. Parents, educators, and health professionals (not just those who have specific experience of someone with a diverse appearance), should be provided with the tools to tackle appearance-related stereotypes and foster acceptance towards diverse appearances in young children. On a broader level, macro interventions and social campaigns targeting policy and societal conceptualisations of diverse appearances are required as a top-down approach. For example, the British charity Changing Faces (https://www.changingfaces.org.uk) launched in 2008 the 'Face Equality Campaign' aimed to raise public awareness and reduce stigma regarding facial differences. This campaign has been adopted for several contexts (e.g., schools, television, and posters). Successful campaigns such as this warrant evaluation of intervention effectiveness.

4.8 Conclusion

The present study adds to the dated literature by identifying that children's attitudes towards diverse appearances do significantly differ, and helps to pinpoint at what age each appearance diversity is viewed less positively. Results synthesise previous literature regarding weight, visible difference, and disability stigma research. Findings from this study are useful in understanding how and when it is best to implement interventions to promote acceptance of diverse appearances. It is suggested weight and visible difference stigma is targeted within the early years of primary education (reception - Years 2/3) and to both boys and girls. Early intervention aimed at primary school-aged children may help to reach children before their opinions about their own and other appearances are internalised further and thereby help to normalise the acceptance of diversity of all appearances. Further investigation into the risk and protective factors which may influence children's attitudes towards various diverse appearances will deepen understanding and influence intervention design.

CHAPTER 5: Study 2

Parents’ perceptions and the role of parental attitudes, media exposure and familiarity on children's attitudes towards diverse appearances

This chapter presents Study 2, which aimed to build on findings from Study 1 and assess factors which may influence children’s less positive attitudes towards various diverse appearances (as found in Study 1). Specifically, this study examined parental attitudes, children’s media exposure, and children’s familiarity with the various appearance diversities. Study 2 also aimed to understand further the specific role which parents may play, by evaluating their attitudes and stereotypes towards diverse appearances. The chapter provides a brief introduction, study method, results, and discussion of findings. The results will be split into two sections according to the two main aims of the study. The first section will examine how parents, along with the media and familiarity with a specific diverse appearance influences children’s attitudes. The second study will consider parents’ own attitudes and stereotypes towards diverse appearances.

5.1 Introduction

Study 1 highlighted that children’s attitudes regarding appearance can develop early and stigma regarding various appearances can be present as young as 4 years (Parnell et al., 2021). Given the very young age at which these attitudes are evident, it is important to investigate potential risk or protective factors which may impact children’s attitudes towards appearance. Parents have been described as key influencers in children’s attitudinal development (Rodgers, 2012) and therefore require particular focus when understanding their potential role in the development of children’s attitudes towards appearance diversities. Further, when understanding children’s attitudes towards those with diverse appearances, the role of the media (Harriger, 2012), and familiarity (which can also be described as intergroup contact; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006), have been established as potential influencers. Thus, this study aimed to examine the role of parents, the media, and familiarity on children’s attitudes towards appearance diversities. Given research suggests parents play a key role in the development of children’s attitudes, the study also aimed to further explore parents’ own attitudes towards children with diverse appearances.

Relevant theories

As described in Chapter 2, Section 2.3, various social and ecological theories support the belief that a child's development is influenced by external factors within their social environment. The 'context' component of the bioecological theory (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2007) explains how parents, the school, and peers (linking with contact/familiarity) form part of the child's microsystem, as these are a part of their immediate environment. Finally, intergroup contact theory (Allport, 1958) helps explain the specific importance of familiarity on children's attitudinal development. A number of theories have emphasised the importance of external factors on influencing children's development. Application of these theories to the area of appearance diversity highlights the need to understand the role of the child's external environment in the development of attitudes towards diverse appearances.

Role of parents

The role of family members, and in particular parents/caregivers, have been considered an important part in shaping the way individuals feel about attitudes towards their own and others' appearance (see Rodgers, 2012 for review). Parents have been evidenced to influence a number of attitudes and behaviours in their children such as; eating (Fisher, Sinton & Birch, 2009), physical activity (Brzęk et al., 2018; Trost et al., 2003), and racial stigma (Sinclair, Dunn & Lowery, 2005). Assessment of the literature regarding parents influence on their children's attitudes towards diverse appearances highlights that the majority of research focuses on weight stigma. The body image literature on weight bias reveals some association between mothers' weight bias and their children's attitudes towards weight (Davison & Birch, 2004; Holub, Tan & Patel, 2011; Ruffman, O'Brien, Taumoepeau, Latner & Hunter, 2016; Spiel et al., 2012). These findings were influenced by mothers' internalisation of the thin ideal (Spiel et al., 2012) and beliefs about controllability of weight (Holub et al., 2011). In comparison, there is less evidence of fathers influence, however some evidence shows fathers can influence attitudes regarding weight in their sons (Damiano et al., 2015; Spiel et al., 2016). However, neither study found evidence to support mothers influencing their son's attitudes towards weight. Further, a more recent study found parents' weight bias did not contribute towards their 4-7 year-old children's attitudes (Hutchison & Müller, 2020). Overall, synthesis of the literature regarding the influence of mothers' and fathers' attitudes on children's weight bias reveals mixed results. This study aims to build upon these mixed

results by understanding the role of parents' in their children's' attitudes towards diverse appearances.

Currently, only one study considered the role of parents' attitudes on their children's attitudes towards peers with disabilities (Hong, Kwon & Jeon, 2014). This study found no association between parents' and their children's attitudes towards disability. An earlier review discussed the importance of understanding parents' attitudes towards those with disability as this is vital in implementing inclusive education for those with disabilities (Boer, Pijl & Minnaert, 2010). When the review was published in 2010, the authors recognised no research has been conducted establishing the influence of parents' attitudes on their children's attitudes towards disability and stressed the importance of future research focusing on this. The current study is therefore one of the first studies to consider the role of parents' attitudes on their children's attitudes towards disability. Additionally, no studies have considered parents' influence on children's attitudes towards visible difference. In a scoping review of factors influencing negative attitudes towards those with a visible difference (Jewett et al., 2018), only one study included parents (Chan, McPherson & Whitehill, 2006). The study included parents of children with a cleft lip and/or palate and found parents had more positive attitudes towards a cleft lip and/or palate than employers and teachers who had no previous contact with a child with a visible difference (Chan et al., 2006). However, this study included parents of children with a visible difference and evidently, as this study highlights, contact with someone who has a visible difference is an important factor. Thus, it is important to understand parents' attitudes towards a visible difference when they do not have a child with a diverse appearance. Taken together, it is clear majority of research assessing parents' attitudes has focused on weight stigma. In comparison, research regarding disability and visible difference has yet to be developed. Therefore, this is the first study to assess parents' own attitudes towards a range of diverse appearances. Additionally, the current study aimed to evaluate the potential influence of parents' internalisation of appearance ideals (e.g., thinness) and investment in their own appearance (i.e., assessment of how important their appearance is to them; Cash, 2000; Jarry, Dignard & O'Driscoll, 2019) on their attitudes towards children with diverse appearance. As described above, mothers internalisation of appearance ideals has been evidenced to play a role in their children's attitudes towards higher weight (Spiel et al., 2012). Therefore, it was important to consider the role of these influencing factors on parents' own attitudes. To date, no research has considered the role of parents' internalisation and investment with their own appearance on their attitudes towards diverse appearances.

Provided parents' own attitudes and stereotypes may foster the development of these attitudes in their children, it is important to investigate parents' own perceptions towards diverse appearances and how they relate to their children's attitudes.

Impact of the media

The media is a powerful source of information which strongly influences societal appearance ideals, leading to reinforcement of beliefs and attitudes towards certain groups (Thompson & Heinberg, 1999). Research has often noted the impact various forms of media can have on attitudes towards individual's own body image (for meta-analyses see, Ferguson, 2013; Grabe, Ward & Hyde, 2008; Groesz, Levine & Murnen, 2002; Holland & Tiggemann, 2016; Want, 2009), as well as other aspects such as attitudes towards cosmetic surgery (Markey & Markey, 2010). However, it is important to understand how the media can influence children's attitudes towards others who have diverse appearances. Children and adolescents in the UK aged 3-15 years spend on average 13 hours watching television, almost 11 hours gaming, 14.4 hours on the phone, and 15.3 hours on the internet per week (Statista Research Department, 2019). It is likely these statistics have increased since 2020, during the global pandemic. Multiple content analyses have consistently revealed that the majority of children's media literature, such as television and movies, contain stereotypical appearance messaging (e.g., those with a visible difference are villainous), emphasising societies' appearance ideals (Harriger, 2012; Herbozo, Tantleff-Dunn, Geokee-Larose & Thompson, 2004; Himes & Thompson, 2007; Klein & Shiffman, 2006; Northup & Liebler, 2010; Robinson & Anderson, 2006; Simpson, Kwitowski, Boutte, Gow & Mazzeo, 2016). A review by Harriger (2012) highlights that generally children are particularly susceptible to media messages, as they can lack the ability to distinguish between reality and fantasy. Further, increased time engaging with the media can lead to lost opportunities for engaging in real life intergroup interactions which can promote more positive attitudes (Bulck, 2020). Research supports the notion that media stereotypes can impact children's attitudes, finding higher levels of television engagement in children is associated with increased weight stigma (Harrison, 2000; Latner, Rosewall & Simmonds, 2007). However, literature assessing the impact of the media on children's attitudes towards diverse appearances is limited (Latner et al., 2007) as the majority of research focuses on the link between children's media usage and satisfaction with their own appearance (e.g., Dohnt & Tiggemann, 2006). Given the increasing amount of time children spend consuming media, their overall susceptibility and the continued prominent portrayal of appearance-based stereotypes, it is important to assess

the potential risk the media in general plays on children's attitudes towards appearance diversities.

Impact of familiarity

Along with these potential influences, some studies have found familiarity or contact with someone who has a visible difference is linked to less negative attitudes in children (Cameron et al., 2007; Masnari et al., 2013). A systematic review by MacMillan et al. (2014) assessing the association between children's familiarity with people with a disability and their attitudes concluded more rigorous research is needed to examine children's familiarity with people with disabilities and their attitudes towards disability. Research into the role of contact and familiarity regarding disability has become increasingly important as inclusivity for those with disabilities into mainstream education is a key policy in a number of countries, including the UK (Gorter, 2009; Lindsay, 2007). Arguably, if children already have positive awareness through familiarity of a peer in school that has a disability, they will already be predisposed to engage with people who have a disability, compared to if they are meeting them for the first time as an adult (Rosenbaum, 2010). In contrast, the role of familiarity on children's attitudes towards someone who is of higher weight is rarely considered. This is likely because weight stigma is rife in society (Puhl & Heuer, 2010). Therefore, the current study aims to add to the pool of research regarding familiarity with a child who has a disability and build on this by also establishing if familiarity is a potential risk or protective factor regarding young children's attitudes towards other appearance diversities, such as weight and visible differences.

Overall, to date research regarding parents' perceptions and the risk/protective factors for children's attitudes towards diverse appearances is generally mixed and includes some gaps within the literature. As a review of the literature highlights, research regarding parents' attitudes towards children with a diverse appearance and its potential influence on their children's attitudes is fragmented and most of the research has focused on weight. Further, the role of the media and familiarity have been established as potential influencers on children's attitudes, however there are gaps in the literature regarding children's attitudes towards a range of diverse appearances. This study is the first to synthesise these gaps in the literature across a range of diverse appearances. Understanding the risk and protective factors are important when developing interventions to promote acceptance towards appearances in children (Puhl & Latner, 2007). Interventions that are not based on evidence can suffer from

lack of understanding regarding what is needed, who to target and when (Schofield & Butow, 2004). In line with the overall objective of the PhD to promote acceptance of diverse appearance in preadolescents, this study aimed to establish potential risk and protective factors on children's attitudes towards a range of diverse in order to establish potential important factors for intervention development.

5.2 Aims

The study had two broad aims, with the second aim having two sections:

1) To determine possible risk and protective factors (including parents' attitudes, familiarity, and the media) which may increase the likelihood of children's negative attitudes towards diverse appearances.
2) a) To explore parents' perceived stereotypes and attitudes towards characters of children with diverse appearances: facial burn, wheelchair user, glasses, and higher weight.

   b) To assess the role of parents' investment in appearance and internalisation of appearance ideals in influencing parents' attitudes towards various diverse appearances.

5.3 Method

5.3.1 Participants

Study 2 included the same children as study 1 (children aged 4-10 years), as well as their parents. Initially, signed consent forms were returned by 321 parents wishing to opt themselves into the parental questionnaire. Of these, 183 parents requested an online questionnaire (57%), 128 a paper questionnaire (40%), and 10 opted to receive the parental questionnaire in both formats (3%). However, a final total of 118 parents (37% of signed consent forms) competed the parental questionnaire and subsequently 131 of their children (some had more than one child taking part) were recruited and included in the study between July 2018 and May 2019. Of the 118 parents, 102 identified as mothers (86% of the total), 14 identified as fathers (12% of the total), 1 identified as '*male*,' '*other*' (1% of the total) and 1 participant (1% of the total) did not state their relationship with the child. No further demographic data was collected from the parents. The children's ages ranged from 4-10 years (M = 6.83 years, SD = 1.72). Researchers reported that majority of the children in the study

were White (89%), with the remainder of participant's being described as Mixed (6%), Asian (3%), other/missing (2%). Researchers also reported the children had an average body size of (M = 3.73, SD =.68) using the child 7-point figure rating scale (Collins, 1991).

5.3.2 Procedure and materials

The parents were recruited at the same time as the children in study 1, between July 2018 and April 2019. Therefore, this study was considered under the ethics application as the first study and included the same six primary schools in the South West of England. Parents of the children who took part in the first study were invited via a second slip on the child consent form. Consent was opt in and required the parents to complete and return the slip in order to take part in the study. Parents had the option to complete the questionnaire either online via Qualtrics or on paper. Questionnaires were sent to all parents who wished to participate and had a child participating in the study. Parents were invited to complete the questionnaire and asked to state their relationship with the child/children.

The parents' questionnaire assessed parental attitudes toward the same character stimuli as the children received (child characters depicting various appearance diversities). However, the character with no diverse appearance was omitted for the parental questionnaire, as findings from the first study indicated a similar assessment for children between the character with no diverse appearance and character wearing glasses. Thus, to reduce participant burden, only the characters with an appearance which deviated from the norm were included. The parents who completed the questionnaire online (66%) viewed the characters in a randomised order, the remaining 34% of parents who completed the questionnaire on paper viewed the characters in a fixed order (order: character with a facial burn, character in a wheelchair, character wearing glasses, and character of higher weight). The fixed ordering for the paper questionnaires was due to the printing structure and therefore the images could not be randomised. The limitations of this procedure are discussed in Section 5.7 of this Chapter. Please see Appendix B.i for the ordering of the images within the parental paper questionnaire.

5.3.3 Measures

Children's questionnaire

Attitudes toward appearances. The same measures using visual analogue scales (VASs) were used to assess children's attitudes toward appearances as in the first study. See Study 1 measures in Section 4.3.9 for details.

Familiarity with diverse appearance. In order to assess how familiar the children were with the diverse appearances presented, the diverse appearance in question was described to participants first e.g., '*Jamie is in a wheelchair*.' Then they were asked *'Do you know someone who looks like* [character's name]*?*' The answer format was, (1) *yes* or (0) *no* (Masnari et al., 2013). However, this study included a description of the appearance diversity prior to asking if the child knew someone who looked similar. This was to focus the children's attention on the appearance diversity and reduce the likelihood of them focusing on the 'wrong' element of the appearance e.g., knowing someone who wears a similar jumper/has the same style of hair. No further follow up questions were asked.

Media representation of diverse appearance. A purpose-built question was created to evaluate the role of the media on children's attitudes. After each character and along with the description of the diverse appearance with the familiarity question, participants were asked *'Have you seen someone on the TV, or on the internet who looks like* [character's name]*?'* As previous, participants answered either (1) *yes* or (0) *no.* No further follow up questions were asked.

Parents' questionnaire

Parental appearance stereotypes. For each child character open ended questions asked participants: "*In society people hold stereotypes (ideas/beliefs) about others. These may not reflect your opinions, but please list some typical stereotypes people may hold about individuals with a* [characters appearance diversity]." This was followed by a Likert scale ranging from (1) *not at all* to (10) *a lot* asking, "*How much do you agree with this stereotype you listed?"* Participants were asked to list 3 stereotypes for each character and could endorse more than one stereotype for each diverse appearance. This method has been used previously to establish the level of internalisation of weight stigma with both adult men and women (Puhl, Moss-Racusin & Schwartz, 2007). The measure was used to measure higher weight stigma, but also expanded to apply to a visible facial burn, wheelchair user and glasses.

Parental attitudes. To evaluate parents' attitudes towards diverse appearances they were asked similar attitudinal questions to the children, responding on a visual analogue scale from 1 '*strongly disagree*' to 100 '*strongly agree.'* The statements all began with '*people with* [diverse appearance] *are…*' followed by a series of adjectives; nice, sad, unconfident, likeable, unpopular, attractive, clever, unfortunate. The adjectives matched the children's attitudinal measure; however, some words were changed to represent the negative adjective (e.g., *'happy'* changed to *'sad'*) in order to reduce parent's response bias. Additionally, some adjectives ('*lazy'* and '*attractive'*) were matched with those used in the Obese Persons Trait Survey (OPTS; Puhl, Schwartz & Brownell 2005) to reflect areas of weight stigma stereotypes. The term *'unfortunate'* was included, as research suggests children with visible differences are more likely to receive expressions of pity (Masnari et al., 2012). This adjective was not used in the child's attitudinal measure due to lack of comprehension from younger children. All adjectives were averaged (reverse scoring of the negative adjectives, *'sad,' 'unconfident,' 'unpopular,'* and *'unfortunate'*) to create a total attitudinal score, with higher scores indicating more favourable attitudes. Cronbach's alphas for each character had an acceptable level of internal consistency (Please see Table 12).

Table 12. Parents attitudes towards appearance scale, Cronbach's α for each character.

Characters	
Facial burn	.786
Wheelchair	.726
Glasses	.794
Higher weight	.742

Parental appearance investment. The level of parents' investment with their own appearance was measured using the 12-item appearance orientation subscale of the Multidimensional Body-Self Relations Questionnaire (MBSRQ-AS; Cash, 2000). Participants rate on a scale of (1) definitely disagree to (5) definitely agree, statements such as '*Before going out in public, I always notice how I look.*' Higher scores indicate more importance and attention placed on looks and more engagement in grooming activities. Previous reports reveal this subscale has high internal consistency for both men (> .88) and women (> .85) at baseline and one month test-retest (Cash, 2000). The current study found

high internal consistency for all participants completing the appearance orientation subscale α = .896.

Parental internalisation of appearance ideals. Parents' internalisation of appearance ideals was assessed via the 9-item, internalisation-general subscale of the Sociocultural Attitudes Toward Appearance Questionnaire-3 (SATAQ-3; Thompson, Van Den Berg, Rochrig, Guarda & Heinberg, 2004). Statements such as, '*I would like my body to look like the people who are in movies'* are rated on a 5-point Likert scale from (1) definitely disagree to (5) definitely agree. Previous studies indicate this scale has high internal consistency (α > .92) (Thompson et al., 2004). The current study matched the high internal consistency found in previous studies α = .920.

5.4 Analysis

5.4.1 Qualitative analysis

Content analysis

In order to analyse parents' perceived stereotypes towards children with various appearances (Aim 1), a content analysis was conducted. Content analysis was selected as it can evaluate data regarding an individual or group of people's attributes towards a target or set of targets (Krippendorff, 2018), making it a suitable form of analysis for evaluating parents' stereotypes towards diverse appearances in children.

The content analysis was further developed following the steps outlined by (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). Firstly, two approaches must be considered; whether the method is used with qualitative or quantitative data and if analysis is inductive or deductive. As with Study 1, the current study conducted content analysis aimed at quantifying the qualitative data through categorising the frequency of stereotypes used to describe the characters. However, unlike Study 1, an inductive content analysis was used, as this approach is recommended when literature on the topic is fragmented (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). Therefore, as only weight-based stereotypes had been previously considered (Puhl et al., 2007), inductive analysis was deemed the most suitable approach to encompass all appearances in the study.

Once these approaches were considered, the analysis followed three main phases: preparation, organising and reporting (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). For the preparation phase, the

unit of analysis was carefully considered, as deciding what to analyse and in what detail is described as an important part of the analysis (Cavanagh, 1997). Each unit was selected as being a word or statement reflecting a general stereotype, each participant response was likely a single unit (e.g., sad), however if more than one stereotype was reflected in a statement (e.g., sad and lazy) this would be considered as two separate units. The researcher then immersed themselves in the data, through reading and collating participants responses, in order to establish a sense of what the data is describing (Morse & Field, 1995). The organisation step with an inductive approach includes open coding, creating categories and abstraction (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). The data was openly coded for the higher weight character initially, as literature on weight-based stereotypes is the most prominent (Puhl et al., 2007). Open coding was then conducted for the character with glasses, with a facial burn, and then the character in a wheelchair. For all characters, the data was cleaned and descriptor items, which did not relate to general character stereotypes, were removed (e.g., overweight for the higher weight character). The remaining units were then organised via an iterative process in order to categorise items into broader stereotypes related to each appearance type. After all codes were grouped into categories, the stereotypes for each character were then presented to a group of experts in appearance and body image. Feedback was provided and the data was adjusted accordingly. Ten percent of the responses were double coded, and intercoder reliability was assessed via a second coder (a postgraduate psychology student, with knowledge of body image research). The widely used method of rater agreement, weighted kappa with linear weights (Mielke, Berry & Johnston, 2009), was conducted to determine intercoder reliability. For each appearance type rater agreement was (glasses: $\kappa_w = 1.00$, $p < .001$, higher weight: $\kappa_w = .959$, $p < .001$, burn: $\kappa_w = .947$, $p < .001$, and wheelchair: $\kappa_w = .877$, $p < .001$) indicating excellent agreement in categorisation between the first and second coder.

5.5 Results

5.5.1 Exploration of children's data

Predictors of children's attitudes towards diverse appearances (Aim 1)

In order to link child and parent responses, the parent and child data were merged. This resulted in a total of 131 children and their respective parent data. In order to establish the extent to which the risk/protective factors of parents' attitudes, child's familiarity with the

appearance and the media's representation of appearance predicts children's attitudes towards each diverse appearance, a series of standardised regressions were conducted. In total, four regressions were computed with the same three predictors (parents' attitudes, child's familiarity with the appearance and the media's representation of appearance) predicting each diverse appearance (character with; a facial burn, in a wheelchair, wearing glasses, and of higher weight). Results are presented according to each appearance diversity.

Character with a facial burn

A multiple regression was run to predict children's attitudes towards a facial burn from parents' attitudes, child's familiarly with the appearance and child's perception of media representation of facial burns. There was independence of residuals, as assessed by a Durbin-Watson statistic of 1.98. It is suggested as a rule of thumb is that test statistic values in the range of 1.5 to 2.5 are relatively normal, with a value closer to 2 meaning that there is no autocorrelation detected in the sample. There was no evidence of multicollinearity, as assessed by tolerance values greater than 0.1 and no outliers. There were no studentized deleted residuals greater than ±3 standard deviations, no leverage values greater than 0.2, and values for Cook's distance above 1 (Cook & Weisberg, 1982). The assumption of normality was met, as assessed by a Q-Q Plot. The multiple regression model did not significantly predict children's attitudes towards a facial burn, $F(3,122) = .779$, $p = .508$, R^2 for the overall model was 1.9% with an adjusted R^2 of -0.5%. Regression coefficients and standard errors can be found in Table 13. Meaning, parents' attitudes, child's familiarly of the appearance difference and child's perception of media representation of facial burns did not predict children's attitudes towards a facial burn.

Character in a wheelchair

A multiple regression was run to predict children's attitudes towards a disability in the form of a wheelchair, from parents' attitudes, child's familiarly with the appearance and child's perception of media representation of people in wheelchairs. There was independence of residuals, as assessed by a Durbin-Watson statistic of 2.37. There was no evidence of multicollinearity, as assessed by tolerance values greater than 0.1 for all predictor variables. There was one studentized deleted residual greater than ±3 standard deviations, however the response was not removed as it did not look like a data entry issue, and did not pose any other threat, because there were no leverage values greater than 0.2, and values for Cook's distance above 1 for this data entry or any other data entries. The assumption of normality was met, as

assessed by a Q-Q Plot. The multiple regression model did significantly predict children's attitudes towards people in a wheelchair $F(3, 121) = 2.87$, $p = .039$, R^2 for the overall model was 6.6% with an adjusted R^2 of 4.3%. The media representation variable was the only predictor which significantly added to the prediction, $p = .005$. All other variables did not provide statistically significant predictions to the model ($p > .05$). Please see Table 13 for details. The results indicate children who reported seeing someone in a wheelchair in the media had more positive attitudes towards a character in a wheelchair.

Character wearing glasses

A multiple regression was run to predict children's attitudes towards people who wear glasses, from parents' attitudes, child's familiarly with the appearance and child's perception of media representation of people who wear glasses. There was independence of residuals, as assessed by a Durbin-Watson statistic of 2.04. There was no evidence of multicollinearity, as assessed by tolerance values greater than 0.1 for all predictor variables. There was one studentized residual and two studentized deleted residuals greater than ±3 standard deviations. These responses were not removed however, as none of the responses were deemed a data entry error, were only an outlier on this individual character and did not pose any other threat, because there were no leverage values greater than 0.2, and values for Cook's distance above 1 for this data entry or any other data entries. Although regressions can be sensitive to outliers, arguably researchers report greater use of visual examination of that data than numeric diagnostic techniques (Orr et al., 1991), in which case, removal of the outliers was not appropriate. The assumption of normality was met, as assessed by a Q-Q Plot. The multiple regression model did not significantly predict children's attitudes towards people wearing glasses, $F(3, 125) = 2.44$, $p = .068$, R^2 for the overall model was .06%, with an adjusted R^2 of .03%. Regression coefficients can be found in Table 13. Results highlight parents' attitudes, child's familiarity of higher weight, and child's perception of media representation of people wearing glasses did not predict children's attitudes towards a character wearing glasses.

Character of higher weight

A multiple regression was run to predict children's attitudes towards people of higher weight, from parents' attitudes, child's familiarly with the appearance and child's perception of media representation of people who are higher weight. There was independence of residuals, as assessed by a Durbin-Watson statistic of 2.01. There was no evidence of multicollinearity,

as assessed by tolerance values greater than 0.1 for all predictor variables. There were no studentized deleted residuals greater than ±3 standard deviations, no leverage values greater than 0.2, and values for Cook's distance above 1 (Cook & Weisberg, 1982). The assumption of normality was met, as assessed by a Q-Q Plot. The multiple regression model did not statistically significantly predict children's attitudes towards people of higher weight, $F(3, 126) = .755$, $p = .522$, R^2 for the overall model was 1.8%, with an adjusted R^2 of -0.6%. Regression coefficients can be found in Table 13. Meaning, parents' attitudes, child's familiarly of higher weight and child's perception of media representation of people of higher weight did not predict children's attitudes towards higher weight.

Table 13. Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis for each character

Variable	*t*	*p*	*β*	*F*	*df*	*p*	adj. R^2
Character with a burn							
Overall model				.779	3, 125	.508	-.005
Parental attitudes	1.26	.211	.113				
Familiarity	-.826	.410	-.075				
Media	.248	.805	.023				
Character in a wheelchair							
Overall model				2.87	3, 124	.039*	.043
Parental attitudes	.138	.891	.012				
Familiarity	-1.29	.200	-.116				
Media	2.83	.005**	.254				
Character wearing glasses							
Overall model				2.44	3, 125	.068	.033
Parental attitudes	-.211	.833	-.018				
Familiarity	1.87	.064	.169				
Media	1.38	.172	.125				
Character of higher weight							
Overall model				.755	3, 126	.522	-.006
Parental attitudes	-.124	.902	-.011				
Familiarity	.217	.829	.019				
Media	1.452	.149	.129				

*p <.05
**p < .01

Overall results found that a child’s perception of the appearance being represented in the media did significantly predict their attitudes towards people in a wheelchair, with representation in the media being positively related to children’s attitudes. No other potential risk/protective factors were found to predict children’ attitudes towards diverse appearances.

5.5.2 Exploration of parents' data

Parents' stereotypes and attitudes (Aim 2a)

Content analysis results

Results for the content analysis are reported in a frequency table outlining the number of parents' stereotypes which represented each category and parents' perceived endorsement, reflected numerically on a scale of 1 to 10 (from 1 equalling no endorsement, to 10 meaning they fully endorsed the stereotype). The presentation of these results follows a similar presentation structure as Puhl et al. (2007) and allows for a clear summary of parents' stereotypes and level of endorsement towards the diverse groups. See Table 14 for parents' stereotypes towards the higher weight and glasses wearing characters and Table 15 for the characters with a facial burn and in a wheelchair.

Variances in total frequency for each character were a result of parents listing fewer or more stereotypes for each appearance presented. Parents produced more stereotypes overall for the higher weight character (279 in total) and the least number of stereotypes for the character with a facial burn (207 in total), indicating that there may be more stereotypes or a greater awareness of stereotypes for higher weight than a facial burn. Additionally, the glasses wearing character had fewer stereotyping categories, suggesting potentially more consensus regarding appearance stereotypes for glasses wearers. Although the frequencies of each stereotype varied, it was considered that irrespective of the number of parents stating the stereotype, if one parent presented a unique stereotype and heavily endorsed it (e.g., 'should lose weight,' for higher weight character), that can have a profound effect singularly. If a stereotype was mentioned frequently, but endorsed very low (e.g., social difficulties, for glasses wearing character), this suggests although the stereotype is known, it is believed less, and therefore of potentially less concern. Hence, although frequency was taken into account, endorsement was also considered as a unique and valuable insight into parent's attitudes towards the child characters. Any stereotype with high endorsement and high frequency was of particular interest.

Irrespective of whether the stereotypes were positive or negative, the higher weight character had the most strongly endorsed stereotypes overall (total of all endorsed character stereotypes: M = 4.39), followed by the character with a facial burn (overall M = 3.73), character in a wheelchair (M = 3.42) and finally the character wearing glasses (M = 2.51).

This indicates generally stereotypes for higher weight are more often supported than the stereotypes for people who wear glasses, for example. The stereotypes with the highest endorsement and frequency were ‘unhealthy (poor exercise and diet)’ and ‘greedy/overeats’ for the higher weight character. For both the characters with a facial burn and in a wheelchair ‘a pity/unfortunate’ was heavily mentioned and endorsed, and then ‘social difficulties’ for the character with a facial burn and ‘emotional difficulties’ for the character in a wheelchair. Generally, the glasses wearing character had low endorsement, but ‘intelligent’ had the highest frequency and endorsement from parents.

Table 14. Parents' identified stereotypes and endorsement ratings for the glasses wearing and of higher weight characters.

Stereotype	Frequency /219 (%)	Average endorsement (scale from 1-10)
Glasses		
Intelligent	75 (34.2%)	3.44
Geek/nerd	55 (25.1%)	2.04
Social difficulties	28 (12.8%)	1.96
Studious/bookworm	17 (7.8%)	2.41
Not sporty	10 (4.6%)	2.60
Weak/wimpy	7 (3.2%)	2.43
Unattractive/not fashionable	7 (3.2%)	1.71
Less able/disadvantaged	3 (1.4%)	4.00
Unintelligent	3 (1.4%)	2.33
Attractive	3 (1.4%)	6.67
A pity/unfortunate	3 (1.4%)	3.67
For old people	2 (0.91%)	1.00
Miscellaneous		
Unhappy	1 (0.46%)	4.00
Poor	1 (0.46%)	1.00
Individual	1 (0.46%)	1.00
Modest	1 (0.46%)	3.00
Conceited	1 (0.46%)	1.00
Watch too much TV	1 (0.46%)	1.00

Stereotype	Frequency /279 (%)	Average endorsement (scale from 1-10)
Higher weight		
Lazy	66 (23.7%)	3.47
Unhealthy (poor exercise and diet)	63 (22.6%)	5.62
Greedy/overeats	46 (16.5%)	4.50
Unattractive	14 (5%)	3.00
Unintelligent	14 (5%)	2.50
Lack of willpower/self-discipline	13 (4.7%)	4.92
Parents fault	12 (4.3%)	6.08
Lower class/poor	11 (3.9%)	5.18
Social difficulties	8 (2.9%)	4.29
Lack of appearance investment	7 (2.5%)	2.14
Family history/diabetes	7 (2.5%)	6.29
Jolly/happy	5 (1.8%)	4.00
Emotional difficulties	5 (1.8%)	3.80
Less able/disadvantaged	4 (1.4%)	2.75
A pity	2 (0.70%)	5.50
Miscellaneous		
A bully	1 (0.40%)	1.00
Drain on healthcare	1 (0.40%)	6.00
Should lose weight	1 (0.40%)	8.00

Table 15. Parents' identified stereotypes and endorsement ratings for the facial burn and of wheelchair characters

Stereotype	Frequency /207 (%)	Average endorsement (scale from 1-10)
Facial burn		
Unattractive	38 (18.4%)	2.18
Social difficulties	32 (15.5%)	4.52
Undergone trauma/a victim	26 (12.6%)	3.68
A pity/unfortunate	24 (11.6%)	5.50
Disgusting/scary	16 (7.7%)	1.69
Emotional difficulties	16 (7.7%)	3.44
Different/not 'normal'	12 (5.8%)	3.58
Diseased & contagious	7 (3.4%)	1.14
Painful	7 (3.4%)	5.57
Bad person/their fault	6 (2.9%)	2.17
Unlovable	6 (2.9%)	2.33
Appearance concerns	6 (2.9%)	4.00
Less able/disadvantaged	2 (0.97%)	3.00
Unintelligent	2 (0.97%)	1.50
Mental illness	2 (0.97%)	2.50
Undergone operations	2 (0.97%)	8.00
Miscellaneous		
Worse for girls	1 (0.48%)	7.00
Pathetic	1 (0.48%)	8.00
Should cover up	1 (0.48%)	1.00

Stereotype	Frequency /217 (%)	Average endorsement (scale from 1-10)
Wheelchair		
Cannot do things	50 (23.0%)	2.70
Helpless/a burden on society and others	32 (14.7%)	3.41
A pity/unfortunate	22 (10.1%)	6.32
Emotional difficulties	18 (8.3%)	5.06
Unintelligent	17 (7.8%)	1.24
Social difficulties	15 (6.9%)	2.80
Learning difficulties/mental illness	11 (5.1%)	1.36
Personality flaws	9 (4.1%)	1.00
Ill/weak	8 (3.7%)	3.63
Cannot walk/immobile	7 (3.2%)	5.57
Different/not 'normal'	5 (2.3%)	2.00
Disabled	4 (1.8%)	7.00
Undergone trauma/a victim	4 (1.8%)	2.50
Strong will/does not want compassion	2 (0.92%)	7.00
Poor	2 (0.92%)	5.50
Non-sexual	2 (0.92%)	1.00
Inferior/pathetic	2 (0.92%)	4.50
Miscellaneous		
Sensible	1 (0.46%)	1.00
Irrelevant	1 (0.46%)	1.00
Birth defect	1 (0.46%)	7.00
Overweight	1 (0.46%)	3.00
Unlovable	1 (0.46%)	6.00
Contagious	1 (0.46%)	1.00
Unattractive	1 (0.46%)	1.00
Unfit	1 (0.46%)	3.00

Quantitative analysis results

Data were analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), version 25. Raw data were cleaned and screened as a number of assumptions need to be met, to run parametric tests; the data must be normally distributed, continuous level, and have homogeneity of variance.

Parent attitudes toward appearances

Mean attitudinal ratings were calculated for each adjective to evaluate parents' attitudes towards each character. Please see Table 16 for details. Initial examination of mean ratings for parents indicate more positive attitudes towards the character wearing glasses. The character with a burn, in a wheelchair, and of higher weight, on average, had less positive attitudes attributed towards them. Further parametric statistical analysis (ANOVA) were conducted to establish if these differences were significant.

Table 16. Parents positive attitudes towards the child characters appearances (*M, SD*)

Adjectives	Burn (n = 108)	Wheelchair (n = 106)	Glasses (n = 104)	Higher weight (n = 110)
Nice	57.96 (24.13)	57.75 (23.20)	59.12 (22.22)	58.80 (22.21)
Sad	45.74 (23.08)[b]	43.53 (23.49)[b]	29.25 (24.57)[a]	45.10 (21.91)[b]
Unconfident	51.10 (23.92)[b]	40.65 (21.74)[a]	37.07 (24.47)[a]	49.56 (24.00)[b]
Likeable	60.62 (25.48)	60.77 (25.47)	61.34 (25.55)	61.66 (25.16)
Unpopular	38.79 (24.02)[b]	36.05 (23.48)	32.21 (24.23)[a]	40.61 (22.02)[b]
Attractive	49.32 (23.75)[b]	52.40 (23.72)[b]	60.17 (22.58)[a]	47.19 (21.22)[b]
Clever	52.79 (20.87)	55.08 (19.86)	52.23 (22.97)	53.50 (18.42)
Unfortunate	61.12 (27.73)	57.72 (26.35)	34.44 (28.05)	42.89 (23.06)
Cronbach's alphas	.786	.726	.794	.742
Total parents' attitudes*	52.95 (15.57)	56.09 (13.95)	62.69 (16.25)	55.36 (13.87)

[a,b] Within a row, means without a common superscript differ ($p < 0.05$)
*Negative adjectives (sad, unconfident, unpopular, and unfortunate) reversed in total. Total parents' attitudes reflect reverse scoring of items.

Prior to running inferential statistical analyses, assessment of normality, and a check for outliers was conducted. The Shapiro-Wilk test is a highly recommended test for normality (Ghasemi & Zahediasl, 2012). After assessment for normality the Shapiro-Wilk test revealed

all variables were not normally distributed ($p < .05$). However, provided the sample size is large enough (over 30 or 40), the violation of normality should not cause major problems (Ghasemi & Zahediasl, 2012). Further, the parametric statistical test being conducted (ANOVA) is robust to violations of normality (Lix. Keselman & Keselman 1996). Therefore, the variables were not transformed. The data were also tested for outliers. Results revealed only one outlier in the parent's data, however this outlier was not removed from the dataset, as the participants' responses only produced an outlier on one item of a measure, and all other responses indicated a strong understanding of the questions. There has been much debate regarding whether to remove outliers or not (Osborne & Overbay, 2004). Outliers from data errors or misreporting clearly warrant removal, but it can be difficult to determine whether to remove or keep outliers which may be legitimate cases. Arguably in this case, the outlier simply indicated an extreme attitude on one question and is more representative of the population as a whole if the outlier is not removed (Orr et al., 1991).

To test for differences in parents' attitudes towards the four diverse appearances (facial burn, wheelchair, glasses, and higher weight), a repeated measures ANOVA was conducted with a computed total mean of the eight attitudinal adjectives (nice, sad, unconfident, likeable, unpopular, attractive, clever, and unfortunate) as the outcome measure. Mauchly's test of sphericity indicated that the assumption of sphericity had been violated $\chi 2(5) = 55.11$, $p < .001$. Thus, the Greenhouse-Geisser correction was interpreted, where adjustments have been made according to Greenhouse and Geisser (1959). Results revealed a main effect of character $F(2.28, 2481.82) = 29.74$, $p = < .05$. The results suggest parent's attitudes towards the characters appearances differ significantly. Post hoc analysis with Bonferroni adjustment showed that, compared to the character wearing glasses, parents had significantly less positive attitudes towards the characters with a facial burn ($p = .002$), in a wheelchair ($p < .001$), and the character with higher weight ($p < .001$). Additionally, the character with a facial burn elicited less positive attitudes compared to the character in a wheelchair ($p < .001$). Meaning that parents' had the most positive attitudes towards the character wearing glasses, less positive attitudes towards the higher weight and wheelchair characters, and the least positive attitudes towards the character with a facial burn.

In order to further evaluate the specific differences regarding the adjectives towards the four characters, a series of ANOVAs were conducted on the individual adjectives. Results found a significant difference for four of the adjectives: sad $F(2.73, 7358.87) = 21.09$, $p = < .001$,

attractive $F(3, 2890.92) = 14.76$, $p = < .001$, unpopular $F(3, 1700.49) = 6.59$, $p = < .001$, and unconfident $F(3, 5083.93) = 18.44$, $p = < .001$. Post hoc analysis with Bonferroni corrections revealed that the character wearing glasses was viewed as significantly less sad and more attractive compared to the character with a facial burn (sad: $p < .001$, attractive: $p < .001$), of higher weight (sad: $p < .001$, attractive: $p < .001$), and in a wheelchair (sad: $p < .001$, attractive: $p = .004$). Similarly, the character with glasses was also viewed as more popular compared to the character with a facial burn ($p = .014$) and the higher weight character ($p < .001$). Both the character with a facial burn and the character of higher weight were viewed as significantly less confident compared to the character in a wheelchair and the character wearing glasses (*ps* < .001). The adjectives nice, likeable, and clever did not significantly differ according to the type of diverse appearance presented ($p > .05$). The findings reveal that the higher weight and facial burn characters were viewed as more sad, unpopular, unconfident, and less attractive compared to the character wearing glasses. Further, the character in a wheelchair was also viewed as sadder and less attractive compared to the character wearing glasses.

Influence of parent's investment and internalisation of appearance ideals (Aim 2b)

In order to understand the role of parents' appearance investment and internalisation of appearance ideals on attitudes towards the diverse appearances, data was considered from 118 parents. Correlations were conducted between appearance investment and internalisation of appearance ideals and attitudes towards each of the characters.

As assessed by Shapiro-Wilk's test, variables for appearance investment were normally distributed ($p = .472$), however the variables for internalisation were not normally distributed ($p = .001$). Pearson correlation coefficient is typically used for normally distributed data. For non-normally distributed continuous data, a Spearman rank correlation can be used, as this does not require normally distributed data and is robust against outliers (Schober, Boer & Schwarte, 2018). Thus, for appearance investment, a Pearson's correlation was conducted and Spearman's rho, was conducted for internalisation. Results in Table 17.

Table 17. Correlations of parents' attitudes and appearance measures

	Burn	Wheelchair	Glasses	Higher weight
Appearance investment[a]	-.179	-.162	-.039	-.139
Internalisation[b]	-.143	-.149	-.147	-.163

[a] Pearson correlation
[b] Spearman's rho

Despite finding no significant relationship between parents' appearance investment and internalisation with their attitudes towards children with a diverse appearance, the parents' reported level of appearance investment and their attitudes towards a facial burn was approaching significance $r(112) = -.179$, $p = .059$. Given research has often considered the role of parents separately, the data was split according to their relationship with the child (mother, father). Shapiro-Wilk's test of normality shows the variables for appearance investment were normally distributed for both mothers and fathers ($p > .05$). The variables for internalisation were normally distributed for fathers ($p = .907$) but not for mothers ($p = .002$). Therefore, Pearson correlation was used for mother and father appearance investment, and father internalisations but Spearman's rho was used as a non-parametric assessment of mothers' internalisation. Results in Table 18.

Table 18. Correlations of mother and father's attitudes and appearance measures

	Burn	Wheelchair	Glasses	Higher weight
Appearance investment				
Mother[a]	-.225*	-.216*	-.077	-.182
Father[a]	-0.80	-.172	-.128	-.131
Internalisation				
Mother[b]	-.142	-.160	-.141	-.143
Father[a]	-.395	-.275	-.415	-.515

[a] Pearson correlation
[b] Spearman's rho
* $p < .05$

Exploration of both mother and father's appearance investment and internalisation reveals a statistically significant negative correlation between mothers' investment with appearance and attitudes towards a facial burn, $r(97) = -.225$, $p = .027$ and a wheelchair $r(96) = -.216$, $p =$

.035. Meaning, the more mothers were invested with their appearance, the less positive the attitudes towards a child character with a facial burn and in a wheelchair. To understand this relationship further, assessment of the particular adjectives for the character with a burn and in a wheelchair and their relationship with mothers' appearance investment was conducted. Each adjective was assessed for normality using only the mothers' data and all adjectives for the character with a burn and in a wheelchair were not normally distributed (Shapiro-Wilk's test: $p > .05$). Therefore a Spearman's rho was used for analyses. Results revealed a statistically significant negative correlation between mothers' appearance investment and the character with a facial burn being nice $r(97) = -.248$, $p = .014$, confident $r(97) = -.286$, $p = .005$, and attractive $r(96) = -.202$, $p = .048$. For the character in a wheelchair there was a statistically significant positive correlation between mothers' appearance investment and unfortunate $r(96) = .210$, $p = .010$. No other adjectives were significantly correlated (p > .05).

Thus, mothers who invested highly in their appearance viewed the character with a facial burn as less nice, confident, and attractive and the character in a wheelchair as more unfortunate. No significant relationship between mothers' appearance investment and the other characters were found. Additionally, there was no significant relationship between mothers' internalisation and attitudes towards the characters. For fathers, there were no significant correlations between their appearance investment nor internalisation on their attitudes towards the diverse appearances ($p > .05$). Thus, the results suggest mothers' appearance investment is related to their assessment of a child with a facial burn as being less nice, confident, and attractive, and a child with in a wheelchair as unfortunate. No other factors related to either mother or father's attitudes.

5.6 Discussion

Summary of chapter aims and results

The present study had two main aims. Firstly, to determine if the role of parental attitudes, as well as the media and familiarity with a diverse appearance are risk or protective factors for children's attitudes towards appearance. Secondly, to explore parents' own perceptions of children with various appearance diversities and to assess if parent's investment and internalisation of appearance ideals can potentially influence these perceptions. With respect to the first aim, the findings highlight children who reported viewing more people in wheelchairs in the media had more positive attitudes towards a child in a wheelchair. Parental

attitudes and familiarity with diverse appearances did not predict children's attitudes towards diverse appearances.

Results regarding the second aim suggest parents have some general consensus regarding stereotypes towards children with diverse appearances. Parents' endorsed stereotypes towards a child of higher weight the most, then a child with a facial burn, in a wheelchair, and wearing glasses. Assessment of parents' attitudes towards these child characters found less positive attitudes towards the wheelchair, facial burn, and higher weight characters. Specifically, children in a wheelchair, with a facial burn, and of higher weight were viewed as sadder and less attractive. The higher weight and facial burn characters were also considered as less popular and confident. Increased investment with appearance in mothers was associated with negative attitudes towards the child with a facial burn and in a wheelchair. Mothers who are highly invested in their appearance were more likely to view a child with a facial burn as less nice, confident, and attractive, and the child in a wheelchair as unfortunate.

Risk/protective factors regarding children's attitudes towards diverse appearances

The current study found children who reported viewing more people in a wheelchair in the media were *more* positive towards a child in a wheelchair. This finding supports previous experimental research which found positive portrayals of friendships between disabled and non-disabled children in storybooks resulted in positive attitudes towards those with disabilities (Cameron & Rutland, 2006). Additionally, it provides support for a content analysis which found physical disabilities in children's media were depicted as morally good, attractive and satisfied with life (Bond, 2013). However, generally characters with physical disabilities are rarely represented within the media (Bond, 2013) and arguably children's media may present an individual/tragedy model view of disability, whereby the focus is on the disability itself and the individual's experience of the impairment (Beckett, Ellison, Barrett & Shah, 2010). This type of representation runs the risk of perpetuating the assumptions that having a physical disability is a terrible thing and warrants sympathy, which links with the stereotypes parents presented for a child in a wheelchair. Nevertheless, increasing positive media representation of disability is potentially having a positive impact on children's attitudes towards disability. This is important as children who have positive attitudes towards disabilities are likely to carry those attitudes into adulthood (Dyson, 2005). This finding highlights that the nuances of how children's media portrays individuals with a

physical disability is an important consideration as children often use the media as an educational tool and are particularly susceptible to media messages (Harriger, 2012). However, a systematic review and meta-analysis of interventions to improve children's attitudes towards disability has currently found no evidence for media-based interventions (Armstrong et al., 2017). Although, on average these media-based interventions were a total of 45 minutes (see Armstrong et al., 2017; Holtz & Tessman, 2007; Pitre, Stewart, Adams, Bedard & Landry, 2007). Thus, potentially long term, repeated exposure to media images through increased representation and positive portrayals of disabilities, including mediums such as sport (e.g., the Paralympic games, Brittain, 2017) may have an overall positive effect on children's attitudes. Therefore, findings suggest interventions generally targeting positive representation of disabilities within children's media is a useful endeavour. Future research should continue to investigate representation of physical disabilities in children's media.

Despite finding parents' own attitudes towards children with diverse appearances do differ, parents' attitudes did not predict their children's attitudes towards the various appearances. This is contrary to literature suggesting parents can influence their children's attitudes and behaviours (Brzęk et al., 2018; Fisher et al., 2009; Haines et al., 2008; Sinclair et al., 2005; Spiel et al., 2016; Trost et al., 2003). A study by Davison and Birch (2004) similarly found no association between parents' and girls' attitudes towards higher weight but did highlight girls were more likely to endorse higher weight stereotypes when their parents reported using direct messages towards appearance (e.g., encouragement to lose weight). Additionally, factors such as mothers' restrictive eating behaviours (Hansson & Rasmussen, 2010) and parents' fear of fat (Holub et al., 2011) have been associated with young children's attitudes towards weight. Evidently, research has mainly focused on the influence of parents on children's weight-based attitudes and found the influence of parents on children's attitudes is complex. Given the current study only aimed to assess the direct relationship between parent's and children's attitudes towards diverse appearances, it is important future research considers the potential influencing factors on parent and children's attitudes, as well as how these relationships influence perceptions of visible differences.

Finally, although some research suggests familiarity with a diverse appearance can increase acceptance towards that appearance (Cameron et al., 2007; Masnari et al., 2013) in this study, familiarity did not predict children's attitudes. Familiarity with a diverse appearance may also be more complex than a direct relationship. This is supported by research which has found

simply attending the same class may have no effect or even a negative impact on young adolescent's attitudes towards disability (Schwab, 2017). Research suggests anticipated anxiety and empathy may partially mediate the influence of familiarity on children's attitudes towards people who have a disability (Armstrong et al., 2016). A review of the literature by Pettigrew and Tropp (2008) regarding the intergroup contact theory suggests that simply being in contact or familiar with someone of a diverse group does not necessarily reduce prejudice alone; with enhancing knowledge, reducing anxiety and increasing empathy being important factors influencing attitudes. They concluded these are important factors to consider, but still these mediators only explained around half of the relationship between familiarly and prejudice. Other influences such as perceived importance of contact (Dick et al., 2004) and threat (Wagner, Christ, Pettigrew, Stellmacher & Wolf, 2006), have also been found to influence this relationship. Consideration of the literature suggests that the current study's basic assessment of a child's familiarity with an individual of a diverse appearance may fail to capture the full picture of how familiarity can impact attitudes. Nonetheless, a recent systematic review provides useful insight, suggesting despite conflicting results regarding the role of familiarity on children's attitudes, interventions which include direct, extended and guided (imagined) contact, are effective at improving children's attitudes towards disability (Armstrong et al., 2017). Overall, this study's findings add to the literature regarding possible risk and protective factors towards children with diverse appearances, which has been highlighted as an important consideration in both children's visible difference (Lawrence et al., 2011) and weight stigma (Puhl & Latner, 2007) literature.

Parents' perceptions of diverse appearances

The stereotypes and less positive attitudes towards the higher weight character reported by parents in the current study supports previous findings evidencing adult women perceive higher weight individuals as lazy, overeaters, unintelligent, and unattractive (Puhl & Brownell, 2003; Puhl et al., 2007). Equally, these stereotypes match the adjectives associated with higher weight by young children (Cramer & Steinwert, 1998; Turnbull, Heaslip & McLeod, 2000; Staffieri, 1967). This confirmatory evidence is concerning as the omnipresent nature of negative stereotypes towards higher weight perpetuates weight stigma and is a driving force behind weight discrimination (Puhl & Brownell, 2001; Puhl & Heuer, 2010). These findings suggest parents be considered in future efforts to reduce weight stigma towards children. In addition to the aforementioned stereotypes, some novel stereotypes such as the parent's fault, lower class/poor, and family history/diabetes were reported and highly

endorsed by parents. Previous research highlights parents are often blamed for children's weight status (Holub et al., 2011). In general, society often attributes weight as controllable, with individuals of higher weight perceived as being more personally responsible for their weight (Crandall, 1994), and lacking will power (Puhl & Brownell, 2003). Although the current study found parents reported lack of willpower as a stereotype, they also stated and heavily supported stereotypes which assessed controllability of weight as external and out of the child's control. Differences in findings may be a result of the study asking parent's their perceptions of child characters, rather than assessing perceptions of adults. These findings are important additions to the literature assessing parent's perception of children of higher weight.

In contrast to the literature regarding weight stigma, research on stereotypes and attitudes towards individuals with physical disabilities and visible differences is sparse. Some studies have found people with disabilities are evaluated as shyer and more unsociable, as well as less emotionally adjusted (e.g., more anxious and depressed; Eagly, Ashmore, Makhijani & Longo, 1991; Stone & Wright, 2012). Similarly, the current study found parents also reported a child in a wheelchair to stereotypically have 'emotional' and 'social difficulties', as well as attributing the character to be sadder. Additionally, research suggests individuals with physical disabilities are often the subject of stereotypes which portray them as lacking in competence but high in warmth (Cuddy et al., 2009; Fiske, Cuddy, Glick & Xu, 2002). The current study's findings support this, with 'cannot do things' and 'helpless/a burden on society and others' being the top two most frequent reported stereotypes towards children in a wheelchair, although neither were highly endorsed. In contrast, 'strong will/does not want compassion' was less frequently mentioned (only two parents) but endorsed the highest. Another important stereotype was 'a pity/unfortunate' which was highly endorsed for both the child in a wheelchair and with a facial burn. Research also states pity and sympathy are common feelings directed towards those appearance-stereotypes which portray them with low competence and high warmth (Cuddy, Fiske & Glick, 2007; Fiske et al., 2002). These frameworks are important considerations when assessing parent's stereotypes and attitudes towards children with physical and visible differences, as efforts can then be implemented to reduce harmful stereotypes. For example, a study by Barg, Armstrong, Hetz and Latimer (2010) found adults' stigma towards children with a physical disability was reduced when the child was portrayed as active. The limited earlier research considering stereotypes towards visible differences have found individuals with facial differences to be perceived as less

sociable, confident, angry, and frightening (Bull & David, 1986; Rumsey et al., 1986; Stevenage & McKay, 1999). More recently, a study by Masnari et al. (2013) found children with a visible facial difference were rated as significantly less likeable, less attractive, less happy, and less popular compared to children without a facial burn. All research outlined supports the currents study's findings of parent's attitudes and attributions towards a child with a facial difference. Evidently the scarce research regarding stereotypes towards children with physical and visible difference provides a broad but similar picture regarding society's assumptions of these appearances. Furthermore, individuals with physical and visible differences are often devalued and discredited by people without a diverse appearance (Louvet, 2007), which can lead to negative impacts on their attitudes and feelings towards themselves (Taleporos & McCabe, 2002). In light of this, it is important future research focuses on ways to break down negative stereotypes towards children with diverse appearances.

This study also highlights mothers' increased investment with their own appearance was associated with negative attitudes towards a child with a facial burn and in a wheelchair. Appearance investment assesses how important one's own appearance is to the individual (Cash, 2000; Jarry et al., 2019). A possible explanation is the role of gender and objectification. Objectification theory explains how from an early age, women are socialised to view their bodies as objects designed for visual inspection and assessment (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). Further, the 'beauty is good' stereotype begins to emerge at about 3 years, leading to the increased focus of appearance and attractiveness for women (Smolak, 2012). Added to this is the potential permanency of a facial burn and being in a wheelchair on a child. The greater emphasis on mother's appearance may have induced increased expressions of pity, as highlighted within parent's reported stereotypes for both these appearances. In contrast a mother high in appearance investment may view wearing glasses or being of higher weight as less problematic through the belief that these may not be permanent. Potentially women in the study with greater appearance investment had stronger beliefs regarding the possible negative impact of living with a visible difference on children, which was not captured within the appearance investment measure included in the study. To date, no research has assessed the influence of adult's investment with appearance on attitudes towards visible and physical differences in children. Thus, this study is the first to highlight potential mechanisms behind adults' perceptions of children with diverse appearances.

5.7 Limitations and future directions

The strengths of this study include its considerable sample of both parents and their children, the use of digitally designed images of the characters to represent various diverse appearances, and the inclusion of mixed methods of analysis and considering parent and child's data from various approaches. The study is the first of its kind to evaluate parents' perceptions towards children representing a range of diverse appearances and brings together a plethora of literature regarding risk/protective factors affecting children's attitudes towards appearances. However, the study includes various limitations which merit noting.

The study collected data regarding parents' explicit attitudes towards children with diverse appearances. Evidence highlights parents' attitudes towards other adults of higher weight can be more negative than towards children of higher weight (Holub et al., 2011). Further, adults can demonstrate strong implicit weight bias even when there is no evidence of explicit weight stigma (Teachman, Gapinski, Brownell, Rawlins & Jeyaram, 2003). Thus, the parents in this study may have provided more socially desirable answers given the measures were both explicit and towards children. As described in the limitations in Chapter 4, Section 4.7, a combination of both explicit and implicit measures may be a useful future consideration when measuring attitudes.

Furthermore, parents' attitudes towards the character with diverse appearances may have been impacted by order effects. As discussed in Section 5.3.1, approximately 34% (40 out of 118) of parents completed the questionnaire on paper. The paper questionnaire presented characters in a fixed order (order: character with a facial burn, character in a wheelchair, character wearing glasses, and character of higher weight). Early studies suggest researchers should be wary of order effects and argue that presentation order can cause bias in participant's attitudinal responses (Carpenter & Blackwood, 1979; Ferber, 1952). Items at the beginning and end of the list are particularly susceptible to order effects, with greater endorsement occurring when the item was presented first rather than last (Belson, 1966). However, findings in the current study regarding parent's stereotypes suggest the penultimate (glasses) and last (higher weight) characters received the highest frequency of stereotypes listed and the higher weight character resulted in the highest endorsement rates. This is

potentially due to the small number of appearances presented and the higher proportion of parent's completing the questionnaire online, where characters were randomised.

Finally, the small sample of fathers in the study may have influenced the findings regarding the relationship between their level of appearance investment and internalisation attitudes towards the children with diverse appearances. Research which has examined gender differences have found that fathers can influence their children's attitudes (Damiano et al., 2015; Spiel et al., 2016). Often, research in psychology is limited by smaller samples of fathers in comparison to mothers (Johnson & Simpson, 2013). Therefore, research should explore further the role of fathers and the overall mechanisms which may impact parent's attitudes towards those with diverse appearances.

5.8 Conclusion

The present study synthesises previous literature regarding the role of parents, the media and familiarity in children's attitudes towards these appearances, as well as parents' evaluation of weight, visible difference, and disability stigma. For children, exposure to media portrayals of characters in a wheelchair emerged as a positive, protective predictor of children's attitudes towards a child in a wheelchair. However, no other factors influenced children's attitudes. Important findings reveal parents had less positive attitudes towards a child in a wheelchair, with a facial burn and of higher weight. Specifically, mothers with higher appearance investment displayed less positive attitudes towards the child with a facial burn and in a wheelchair. Results build on the suggestions from the Study 1 and are useful in understanding the important factors to target when considering interventions to promote acceptance towards diverse appearances in children.

CHAPTER 6: Study 3a

Exploring teachers' perceptions and experiences of promoting acceptance of diverse appearances in primary school children

After consideration of children's attitudes towards diverse appearances in study 1, and parents' attitudes and influences towards children's attitudes in study 2, study 3 adds to these findings by evaluating teachers' perceptions regarding how to promote acceptance towards diverse appearances in primary schools. The findings of this study were presented to members of the Centre for Appearance Research at a research centre seminar series. The study was also accepted for poster presentation at Appearance Matters 9 Online Conference. Finally, results were disseminated in a newsletter to various charities supporting those with visible differences.

6.1 Introduction

Promoting acceptance towards diverse appearances is important as children can have prejudice and stigmatise others based on their appearance as young as 4 years old (Bigler & Liben, 2007; Parnell et al., 2021). According to UNICEF (2021), more than 90 per cent of primary school-age children are enrolled in school worldwide and in 2020, there were 4.71 million children in state-funded primary schools in England (Office for National Statistics, 2021). Given the vast majority of young children begin their early learning in primary schools, primary school teachers play an important role in the early education of children (Pianta & Stuhlman, 2004; see meta-analysis by Roorda et al., 2011). It is therefore vital teachers are part of the process of fostering acceptance towards diverse appearances.

Teachers' perceptions

Synthesis of the literature reveals research regarding teachers' perceptions and attitudes towards appearance diversity is limited and fragmented (Magennis & Richardson, 2020). A series of studies and reviews have assessed teachers' perceptions towards various 'forms' of appearance diversity, including disabilities and special education needs (see review by de Boer et al., 2010), race, multiculturalism and cultural diversity (see systematic review of pre-

service teachers by Civitillo, Juang & Schachner, 2018; Magennis & Richardson, 2020), sexual diversity (Aguirre, Moliner & Francisco, 2020), and higher weight (Dian & Triventi, 2021; see systematic review for student, pre-service and in-service teachers by Nutter et al., 2019; Zavodny, 2013). All research concluded the need for training and support for teachers to build competence and knowledge on how to be inclusive towards the appearance diversity in question. Further, results from the reviews on disabilities and special education needs (de Boer, Pijl & Minnaert, 2011), and higher weight (Nutter et al., 2019) revealed teachers can have negative attitudes towards children who represent these appearance diversities. Although the review on disabilities and special education needs (de Boer et al., 2011) did not conclude any links between teachers attitudes and student academic outcomes, the literature on higher weight highlights how weight bias creates inequality. For example, evidence suggests teachers grade those who are of higher weight more harshly (Dian & Triventi, 2021), which negatively impacts their health and educational experiences (Nutter et al., 2019). To note, one more recent quantitative study conducted by Kaldi, Govaris and Filippatou (2018) in Greece, evaluated in-service teachers' views more generally regarding pupil diversity. This study found teachers viewed diversity as a challenge not a barrier and this was influenced by teacher's level of training and professional development. Similar to previous research, the study concluded that teachers need training and support on managing diversity in the classroom. Additionally, many studies have focused on trainee (pre-service) teachers' perceptions (Civitillo et al., 2018; Kumar & Hamer, 2013; Yager, Gray, Curry & McLean, 2020). Although including trainee teachers is a useful area of exploration, it is also important to explore qualified (in-service) teachers' perceptions, as this has been less explored and involves teachers all having a baseline level of pre-service training. Therefore, given the fragmented literature and potential implications, the current study aimed to further develop knowledge by exploring teachers' perspectives in how to promote all forms of appearance diversities in primary school settings.

School settings

Schools are recognised as ideal environments to implement interventions for promoting acceptance (Yager et al., 2013). They allow for education on a large scale, and the potential to implement developmentally appropriate resources. Hence, the United Nations has pledged to invest in schools and teachers in order to develop a world which embraces diversity (Ki-moon, 2013). The Equality Act (2010) legally protects certain characteristics (e.g., sex/gender, race, disability, religion/belief, and sexual orientation) in England and Wales.

Specific guidance for schools titled 'The Equality Act 2010 and schools' (Department for Education, 2014) highlights the importance of recognising equality and diversity, encouraging schools to engage in Positive Action, described as provisions to alleviate disadvantages experienced by those with protected characteristics. However, currently there are no specific guidelines on how schools can promote appearance diversity or build confidence in teachers to do this. In a review of published policies from the Department for Education on mental health and wellbeing in schools, it was concluded that schools would benefit from further awareness, advice and resources for support (Brown, 2018). Currently, policies include certain protected characteristics such as disability, race, and sex/gender, but do not include other appearance diversities which are not covered in the Equality Act (e.g., weight, hair colour, and some visible differences not covered under disability). As outlined in Study 1 (Chapter 4) of this thesis, less positive attitudes towards weight develop early (Bigler & Liben, 2007; Parnell et al., 2021). However, when considering appearance diversity within schools, there is little consideration of non-protected characteristics. As highlighted, schools are excellent settings for promoting acceptance of appearance diversity and policies have been developed to highlight the importance of this topic within education. However, the lack of guidance and resources make it unclear how to promote acceptance within schools. Therefore, it is important to understand teachers' current best practices to promote acceptance of diverse appearances in schools.

The current study qualitatively explored teachers' experiences and perceptions of promoting all forms of appearance diversities to primary school-aged children. To date no research has explored how and when to promote appearance diversity more broadly (including protected and non-protected characteristics) with primary school teachers. The underrepresentation of teachers' knowledge and experiences in the literature has hindered the development of evidence-based tools and resources for teachers to combat appearance diversity within school contexts. Therefore, teachers' views about promoting appearance diversity in primary schools and how this could be implemented, is an important area of exploration.

6.2 Aims

This study had two broad aims:

1) To explore teachers' experiences of teaching acceptance towards diverse appearances.
2) To examine teachers' perceptions of best practices to promote acceptance towards diverse appearances in primary school-aged children.

6.3 Method

6.3.1 Research ethics

This study obtained full ethical approval regarding the original plan for Study 3 (as described in Chapter 8, Section 8.3; UWE REC REF No: HAS.20.01.099). However, due to unforeseen circumstances resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, the original ethics application had to be amended to suit the current study design. Amendments to the original ethics application included online interviews with primary school teachers instead of face-to-face interviews which were going to be conducted on school premises. In addition, rather than recruiting primary schools and then inviting the teachers within the school to participate, the revised methodology involved online advertising to directly recruit teachers, and offering teachers a £10 Amazon voucher for taking part in the online interview, as opposed to an overall £200 donation to the school. Lastly, in response to teacher feedback, additional questions were added to the interview schedule (see Participatory Involvement section 6.3.2 below). The ethics amendment was approved under the same reference number.

6.3.2 Participatory Involvement

Prior to commencing online interviews, two primary school teachers were invited to review and provide feedback on the interview schedule. Both identified as female and were fully qualified primary school teachers. In general, the feedback was positive, but it was suggested a few extra questions be included, such as '*Have you already taught any topics related to promotion of accepting diverse appearances?*' and '*How well was it covered?'*. The teachers' feedback also included the suggestion of additional questions in the demographic form such as, 'N*umber of primary school(s) taught in (specifically primary schools)?*' and 'L*ocations of primary school(s) taught in (e.g., Bristol)?*'. These helped gain further detail of the teachers' background and teaching history for the study. Additionally, during the interviews, teachers were encouraged to provide feedback and after the first interview the language was amended slightly (the term '*intervention*' was edited to '*intervention/programme'* of study). This was

based on feedback stating, "*the word interventions for us would be if you were falling behind you would have an intervention so yeah it would almost have to be a program of study is what I think you would want to cover*." [Anna, pseudonym]

6.3.3 Recruitment

A written recruitment advertisement (Appendix C.i) along with accompanying imagery was designed and disseminated via the Centre for Appearance Research's social media channels (Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter). Utilising social media platforms to recruit participants has become increasing popular in recent years and allows for a reach of large audiences with limited study resources (Benedict, Hahn, Diefenbach & Ford, 2019; systematic review by Whitaker, Stevelink & Fear, 2017). However, recruitment via social media can arguably lead to biases in the sample recruitment, as algorithms from platforms such as Facebook can influence the target audience based on their interests (Arigo, Pagoto, Carter-Harris, Lillie & Nebeker, 2018). Thus, recruitment via social media was disseminated through several social media platforms to potentially reduce sampling bias. Additionally, to assess the number of people who engaged with the studies advertisement, data was collated from the Facebook post (as of 12th July 2020). The Facebook advertisement reached approximately 5,800 people, was shared 36 times, included 23 comments and 10 likes. The analytics highlight the Facebook post reached a large number of people and therefore, potentially a broader sample. Recruitment via social media was successful and over a six-week period, 14 individuals emailed expressing interest in taking part in the study. Four participants did not respond after the initial interest email.

6.3.4 Participants

For inclusion in the study, participants had to be over the age of 18, English speaking, and qualified primary school teachers, with experience of teaching primary school-aged children in England. Teachers were required to be qualified and have taught in England because feedback highlighted influences of the National Curriculum on teaching acceptance of appearance diversity. Given the National Curriculum can vary according to each country (e.g., the national curriculum in Wales varies from England), it was thought important to focus on experiences from one country so that feedback on specific parts of the national curriculum in England could be provided. Rationale for qualified, in-service teachers, as described in the introduction, was also due to a large number of studies including pre-service, trainee teachers. As well as this, including qualified teachers would ensure a good baseline

level of training and understanding regarding the national curriculum. Although primary school teachers were required to be qualified, there was no minimum or maximum teaching experience required and teachers did not need to be teaching primary years at the time of the interview. Participants were not asked to provide evidence that they met the inclusion/exclusion criteria (e.g., certificate of qualified teaching status). One person took part in the study as a teaching assistant and not a qualified primary school teacher. It was decided to include this participant's data in the analysis, given they had experience of working with primary school-aged children and potentially provided unique insight on the subject as they had direct experience assisting children with Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND), described as something which can impact a young person's ability to learn (GOV.UK, 2021a).

6.3.5 Procedure

Upon agreement, participants were invited to take part in an online interview via Microsoft Teams. Details outlining the study and its procedures were provided via a written information sheet prior to the online interview and explained verbally by the interviewer at the beginning of the interview to clarify participants were happy with the procedure and understood their right to withdraw. Informed consent was obtained in both written and verbal form from all participants prior to the interview commencing and participants were again given the opportunity to ask any questions. Interviews were semi-structured. An interview schedule was created and included questions on teachers' training/experience of teaching appearance diversity, teachers' perceptions of children's knowledge about appearance diversity and pragmatics and practicalities of possible intervention approaches (Appendix C.ii). Prior to commencing the interview the interviewer defined some important terms. The statement read "'*acceptance of appearance diversity' means appreciating everyone looks different and celebrating this. A 'visible difference' or 'altered appearance,' this is when one's appearance significantly deviates from what society deems normal e.g., a physical disability, facial burn, higher weight*." Interviews were recorded online via Microsoft Teams. All demographic questions were self-reported by interviewees prior to the interview. Further, teachers were given the option to participate with their camera on or off. Five teachers chose to have their camera on and five only had audio. Having flexibility regarding how participants can engage in qualitative interviews can improve participants access to research (Heath, Williamson, Williams & Harcourt, 2018). All teachers were participants from unique schools. After the

interview, participants were invited to ask any questions and received a £10 Amazon voucher as a thank you for their time and contribution.

6.4 Analysis

6.4.1 Demographic questions

Participants were asked to complete a series of open response demographic questions (see Appendix C.iii). Descriptive analysis of these questions (age, gender, ethnicity, years of qualified teaching experience, number of primary schools taught in, and locations of these schools) were performed.

6.4.2 Template Analysis

Interviews were transcribed 'intelligent verbatim,' a form of transcription which includes light editing of sentences, omitting aspects of speech such as stutters and repeated words. Data were analysed using template analysis, which is a form of thematic analysis (Brooks, McClucky, Turley & Kings, 2015). As recently argued by Braun and Clarke (2020), thematic analysis does not refer to one single method, there are many styles and ways of conducting thematic analysis, for which template analysis is a lesser-known form of thematically organising qualitative data (Brooks et al., 2015). Template analysis emerged within organisational research (King, 1998) and has increasingly been applied to areas within the social sciences (Symon & Cassell, 2012). As with all forms of thematic analysis (including template analysis), the principal focus is on identifying, organising and interpreting themes in qualitative data to convey key messages (King, Brooks & Tabari, 2018). Template analysis is a theoretically flexible method of analysis (King et al., 2018), maintaining the depth of data whilst highlighting areas of commonality between individuals. Therefore, this method of analysis was chosen as it allowed the study to focus on the broad themes of teachers' experiences which were relevant to the research questions.

As outlined by Brooks and King (2014) there are six main procedural steps of template analysis, which are flexible and should be adapted to suit the needs of each research project (See Table 19). The initial familiarisation and coding stages are very similar to all thematic methods of analysing qualitative data (Brooks & King, 2014). The next stages are unique to template analysis and include designing an initial template based on a sub-set of data and then applying this template to other data and modifying it if necessary. The template keeps

being modified until a 'final' template is defined and interpreted for write-up. The six steps of template analysis were adhered to as described by Brooks and King (2014). The first three interviews were coded and an initial template was developed. This template was then applied to the remaining seven interview transcripts and modified iteratively. The 'final' template was developed after all ten interviews were included. An example of initial coding and template are presented in Appendix C.iv and C.v respectively.

Table 19. Six main procedural steps of Template Analysis (Brooks & King, 2014)

Stage	Process	Description of process
1	Familiarisation	Read through raw data and familiarise yourself with the data to be analysed.
2	Preliminary coding	Highlight anything in the textual data which strikes you as relevant and potentially contributes towards the research question.
3	Develop initial template	Once codes and overarching themes have been identified an initial coding template can be defined. The template is organised in a way that meaningfully represents the relationship between the themes and codes.
4	Apply template	The initial template is then applied to further data. If existing themes do not represent the new data, modification of the template may be necessary. New themes can be added, and previous themes removed or amended depending on inclusion of new data.
5	Modify template	The iterative process of modifying the template and trying out successive versions can continue for as long as necessary to allow for rich and comprehensive interpretation of the data.
6	Define 'final' template	Once a 'final' version of the template has been defined, this is then applied to the full data set. This version can now be used as a basis for full interpretation of the dataset and a useful guide to writing-up the research findings.

Most published work using template analysis displays results in a linear 'list' format, hence the data was chosen to be displayed in this style. Methods using Braun and Clarke's reflexive

thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2020) typically have one or two levels of sub-themes for an overarching theme, however template analysis commonly uses four or more levels for a theme to capture the most detailed aspects of the data (Brooks et al., 2015). The use of multiple hierarchical coding structures is another reason template analysis was chosen, as it allows for more extensive analysis of themes within the data. Additionally, template analysis can include 'integrative themes,' these are themes which cut across all the data and therefore do not stand alone as a single theme (King, 2012). Template analysis typically permits parallel coding (the inclusion of more than one code across themes), therefore integrative themes are useful in highlighting themes which seem to pervade much of the data (King, 2012). The study presents a linear 'list' format, highlighting the overarching themes, followed by a number of subthemes and finally any integrative themes. All themes were supported with examples from across the transcripts. Participant's names have been anonymised and pseudonyms created for quotations. Data were organised for analysis via NVivo 12 (QSR Internationals Pty Ltd, 2018).

Epistemological positions and decisions

Template analysis, like various forms of thematic analysis, is flexible in terms of theory and epistemology, thus it can be applied across a range of theoretical and epistemological approaches (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Brooks et al., 2015). However, the varied epistemological positioning of template analysis can be problematic and lead to unclear or incorrect claims of positioning (Brooks et al., 2015). Therefore, it is suggested the positionality of the researcher and research are required to be made explicit within the research process and write up (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The aim of the research study was to gain a rich description across all participant responses and not a detailed account of one aspect. This is a particularly useful method when researching an under-represented area (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Linking with this, the data was analysed inductively, meaning there were no pre-existing theoretical interests which influenced how the data was interpreted. Themes identified in the data were latent, thus analysis was looking for surface level, explicit meanings of the data. Nevertheless, this does not mean that the themes are purely a description of the data, but rather an interpretation whereby patterns were theorised into different meanings (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Patton, 1990). Despite template analysis being a flexible method, it is suggested to be a form of thematic analysis that falls somewhere in the middle of the positivist and interpretative/constructivist paradigm (Braun & Clarke, 2019) as it follows structured input and design of a template but without the concern for measurement

and coding reliability. Following this, the current study measured trustworthiness of the data and quality assurance via a non-positivist approach, emphasising transparency and reflexivity from the researcher. However, the research followed the epistemological approach of pragmatism, which is the same approach this PhD has broadly taken (described in Chapter 3.2). An important underpinning of pragmatist epistemology is that knowledge is based on experience (Kaushik & Walsh, 2019), exploring teachers' experiences as a way of understanding knowledge is in line with this epistemological position.

Quality assurance of the analysis was established following the methods recommended by King (2012). As recommended, an audit trail was kept at each stage of the research process to record changes throughout the analysis. Additionally, the templates were subjected to independent scrutiny from the lead author (Jade Parnell) and supervisory team. Once all the data had been included into the template, the template and its themes were then presented to experts in the field of body image and appearance research for critical comparisons among researchers. Finally, the ten participants were sent a feedback report of the study and invited to comment on the findings. No participants provided comments.

Reflexivity

Disclosure of an individual's position in relation to the topic under investigation acts to increase transparency and the potential the impact of personal influence, biases, and values on the research agenda (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Elliott et al., 1999; Greenbank, 2003). Along with the reflexivity outlined in Chapter 3, Section 3.2, it is important to recognise how my role as a researcher could have impacted this study specifically. Firstly, I am a white British, young female who has some experience working with children within a research context, but I am not a qualified teacher. Thus, I matched most of the demographic characteristics of the participants, as most of these were young, white females, but could not relate to teachers' experiences teaching primary school children. I also bring to the research knowledge of the academic literature regarding children's attitudes towards appearances and an awareness of the appearance stigma literature.

6.5 Results

6.5.1 Demographics

All participants identified as female (*n* = 10) with a mean age of 38.30 years (*SD* = 10.87). Six participants identified as '*White British*,' two as '*White*' and two as '*British*.' The mean number of years teaching experience was 10.60 (*SD* = 9.82) and the average number of primary schools taught in was 3.40 (*SD* = 3.37). The majority of teachers had experience teaching in primary school in the South West of England (*n* = 7), however teachers also had experiences teaching in other regions of England such as the East Midlands (*n* = 2), West Midlands (*n* = 2), and Yorkshire and the Humber (*n* = 1). Locations are separated according to the nine geographical regions in England, as outlined by the Office for National Statistics.

6.5.2 Template Analysis results

Interviews lasted a mean of 48.90 minutes (range = 38 – 61 minutes). When the interviewer asked participants about their experiences of teaching diversity of appearance in the classroom, it became clear teachers had similarities in their lack of confidence and experience of teaching this topic. Further, it was evident teachers had similar ideas regarding best practice of how to promote acceptance of appearances in primary schools. Figure 4 shows the four main themes (along with second and third-level themes) and one integrative theme identified within the qualitative data. These themes were: (1) Change the narrative before children create one (2) Normalising all appearances (3) Pressure on schools to make a difference (4) Teachers' anxiety of the topic and (A) Conceptualising appearance diversity (integrative theme).

1. Change the narrative before children create one

1.1 Starting conversations early "the younger the better"
- 1.1.1 Younger = more accepting
- 1.1.2 Younger children are more mouldable

1.2 Secondary school is too late

1.3 Continue discussions throughout the years
- 1.3.1 Not just a one off
- 1.3.2 More detailed as they get older

1.4 Weight, the toughest story to rewrite
- 1.4.1 Children are unkindest towards higher weight
- 1.4.2 Weight is noticed early

2. Normalising all appearances

2.1 Increased exposure of other diverse appearances
- 2.1.1 Representative resources

2.2 Providing information
- 2.2.1 Sharing lived experiences

2.3 Address it subtly
- 2.3.1 Weaving the topic in
- 2.3.2 Avoid emphasising differences/not singling anyone out

2.4 Equitable inclusion of all appearances
- 2.4.1 Practical implications

2.5 Lack of pupils with diverse appearances (e.g., all white pupils)
- 2.5.1 Location of schools

Integrative theme:
A. Conceptualising appearance diversity

A.1 Confusion over 'types' of appearance diversities
- A.1.1 Recognised diverse groups vs other appearances (e.g., height & weight)
- A.1.2 Appearance vs behavioural differences

A.2 In light of recent events…
- A.2.1 Black Lives Matter
- A.2.2 COVID-19

3. Difficult for schools and teachers to make a difference

3.1 Schools can only do so much
- 3.1.1 Influences beyond school
- 3.1.2 Better school than nothing

3.2 Little time and space to fit it all in
- 3.2.1 PSHE less valued compared to other subjects

3.3 Down to the school and teacher to decide to teach it
- 3.3.1 Variances in what teachers teach
- 3.3.2 Resources and funding
- 3.3.3 Needs government input

3.4 Some don't agree or think it's important

3.5 Schools being used to communicate weight management
- 3.5.1 Measuring children

4. Teachers' anxiety of the topic

4.1. Saying the wrong thing
- 4.1.1 Correct use of language and terms (being politically correct)
- 4.1.2 Sending the wrong message
- 4.1.3 Responding to questions

4.2 Avoid teaching the topic

4.3 Don't know enough

4.4 Influence of teachers' backgrounds

4.5 Difficulties with parent(s)
- 4.5.1 Parent(s) wanting to protect their child
- 4.5.2 Getting consent

4.6 More support/training needed for teachers

Figure 4. Final version of template

Theme 1: Change the narrative before children create one

Teachers expressed many different experiences and perceptions of teaching appearance diversity. One theme emphasised by teachers was the need to "*start the ball rolling*" [Edna] early and continue to build on the discussions throughout the years. Children were viewed as more mouldable when they were young, and it was important to change the narrative before they create one – *"if we don't start early, they'll create their own narrative…"* [Edna]. Teachers highlighted a need to continue the discussion throughout the years and secondary school age was deemed too late to begin these conversations. Of all appearance diversities, weight was often mentioned as the most prominent form of appearance stigma, and children were reported as unkindest towards those of higher weight. Understanding these narratives and starting discussions early, before they become fully embedded, was seen as a useful way to foster acceptance of all diverse appearances.

1.1 Starting conversations early "the younger the better"

Teachers explained that the topic of appearance diversity should be included at a young age as this will help them to feel more comfortable with the topic.

"I'd probably say the younger the better to be honest. Like I was saying earlier that kind of age where they're very young and innocent and very accepting and then they go through that sort of point when they realise that actually people are different, and we can use that in a negative way or their opinions change and they hear things from society and families and things like that." [Caja]

"I just think it's really important at that early age to kind of start talking about it so that then they're more comfortable talking about it as they move up to the school because if you just started it in Year Six then, again, they're already that bit older and it's a subject they might not want to talk about or feel uncomfortable." [Caja]

"That's why I like teaching primary age is that you can hopefully get in there before it all kicks off and that I hope that you encourage the children to be independent." [Drew]

"We know so much more about mental health and that sort of thing now and I think right from the beginning just make it part and parcel of what we're teaching children, putting play-based activities in right from those early years and going from there." [Edna]

Teachers felt younger children were more accepting and open minded towards diverse appearances.

"With younger children I think that there's almost a more open and honest conversation because they will just ask questions without any sense of, oh that might hurt somebody's feelings or they will just kind of say like, oh, why does so and so's leg not work properly, you know that sort of thing that they'll be so open about that." [Edna]

"I think it's (appearance diversity) *crucial because these are the children of the future and the younger they are, the more open-minded they are and the more accepting they are. And, as they get older, they get more influenced by society and their peers."* [Beau]

Linking with the notion that young children are more accepting, teachers highlighted how young minds are also more mouldable and that early years is a good time to change the narrative around appearance diversity.

"I think you can mould their minds or open their minds at a younger age easier." [Beau]

"I just feel like they need to have that understanding already, when they're young, when it's easier to shape their thoughts and opinions and beliefs about the world. If we shape them when they're young to be accepting, then it's going to lead to better outcomes as they get older." [Gwen]

"If they were nipped in the bud early, they could definitely be changed, you know, the perceptions and things like that." [Jane]

"I mean, you know diet culture and shaming a person because of their size is standard in our society so it's so difficult to fight against that… but if you're at this age at least you can sort of start the ball rolling as if to say no it's OK." [Drew]

1.2 Secondary school is too late

Similar to teachers' ideas of starting the conversation early, a number participants specifically mentioned that secondary school is too late to be starting to educate about appearance diversity as by this point children have already developed a strong narrative around this issue. Teachers described secondary school as a place where appearance becomes even more important and the need to equip children before they transition.

"Secondary school is a bit too late I think because some of these children are going ... especially that first year you go to secondary school, you're going, you're the lowest of the lowest, you're nervous, you're making new friends, image matters, you know, have you got the right rucksack, have you got this, that and the other, and snap judgements are made and those snap judgements can last children through their career." [Beau]

"I feel at secondary they've already got a lot of preconceived ideas and they've kind of grown into those, I guess, opinions and ideas and it's quite hard to shake them, whereas primary school is where they're forming those." [Caja]

"I would say it would be really good to do something in primary schools because you'd hopefully then catch them, as it were, and help to educate them in diversity rather than that kind of just sort of happening and then them getting to secondary school and then maybe having not very helpful attitudes and opinions." [Caja]

"I explain that you know when I went to secondary school, I gave up on a lot of sports I did because I didn't think it was cool and obviously that had detrimental effects on my health and you hope that you can kind of put that influence in at primary school level as they transition up the secondary, so that when they're in, they can make the better choices, but it is so difficult." [Drew]

1.3 Continuing the discussions throughout the years

In relation to changing the narrative for children and achieving long-term impact, teachers emphasised avoiding a one-off, tokenistic lesson and instead embedding multiple discussions across primary and secondary school years.

"Keep building on it I think because I think … even I think about as an example, like if you get caught speeding and you go on the driver awareness course you do it once and for a couple of weeks afterwards you think about it for a bit and it's more prevalent in your head and then afterwards you kind of forget about it and go back to your old ways. I think from continuous things like plugging of it from an early age I think would be so beneficial." [Faye]

"I think it should just go on, like PSHE. We do it in PSHE, so they do it every year from primary school, right up until they're 16." [Hera]

"I think it needs to be … if it is a programme of study it needs to be something that is starting at the very beginning of school and it goes right the way throughout, and it's not just one lesson when it's coming up to the Paralympics or one lesson when it's coming up to Black History month, or one lesson when it's coming up to eating disorder awareness and things like that, or whatever awareness week it is." [Jane]

Additionally, teachers described tailoring the content of the discussions for children as they get older, and perhaps including more detailed discussions as the children develop.

"I think with the little ones it is all about what you present to them visually and then talk about. But, as they grow older, I think you have to have meatier discussions and you actually have to talk about and give them … especially with Key Stage 2, case studies of this is a child with this birth defect or this whatever and this is what they experience, now what do you think about it?" [Beau]

"I think it needs to be repeated because I think that like a one off piece of work, I worry it doesn't have as much impact as a kind of theme where you could build on it year on year on year, so you do some lessons at a kind of a certain developmental level, and then you might extend on it year on year on year, so that it kind of moves with children's development and challenges them as they develop, rather than like a one off piece of work." [Edna]

"Because even if you, obviously, simplified it in a way that … just to sort of plant the seed of people looking different, and then to keep that going and build on it every year, that by the end of the time of when they leave primary school, they should have a big bank of knowledge

and a big understanding of differences and a bit of empathy as well, I think, for how those people may feel and how they can treat them." [Faye]

1.4 Weight, the toughest story to rewrite

Several teachers highlighted how weight stigma is very problematic within schools and that higher weight needs a special focus when considering how to promote acceptance of all diverse appearances.

"Yeah, but I think that probably is the biggest thing that I've ever seen myself in school is that, in terms of stigma, is probably all around weight." [Faye]

"As much as you would want it to be, looking at disfigurements and things like that, the fact is, I think the biggest reason why people are mistreated or excluded for things that can be down to size, so I think you have to really focus on the size" [Drew]

"The weight thing I think, from my experience, is always the one that causes issues in terms of children upsetting others." [Jane]

Children were reported to be most unkind about weight, with those of higher weight often the target of harmful comments and appearance-based teasing.

"I've also had the opposite end of the spectrum with … there's been children in my class that I've had that have been very overweight and that's either just been from genetics, or I've also had children where it's been an underlying thyroid issue that is being sorted. And that's when I tend to find that children are the most unkind, I think, with weight." [Jane]

"I've got some…. so I've got two children in the class who are of a fairly significant higher weight than, like you say, what is considered to be normal and one of those is also the same boy that has very severe eczema and it's these two children that I have … the only times I've ever noticed the rest of the children in the class being unkind and I've heard the term, like 'fat' and 'fatty' being thrown around, things like that." [Faye]

"Often a dig but with … don't know if they're (10-12 year old children) *pretending to be helpful or whether they are trying to be helpful, but they will say things like 'You should lose*

weight' which, of course, makes the child go and want to cry and the parents, who might be trying to help the child lose weight, just feel fed up and 'Just stop picking on my child' and 'What are you going to do about it?'" [Isla]

Teachers explained how weight was noticed at a very early age and children would often comment on people's appearance regarding their weight very young.

"There does seem to be a sort of attitude towards when they see somebody of a higher weight 'Oh they're fat' and that's a bad thing. There are definitely … even from reception I think there are connotations to being fat as worse than not being fat." [Faye]

"Weight seems to be the real thing that they picked up on really, really early on, you're not supposed to be overweight and you're not supposed to look a certain way regarding that.'" [Edna]

"It's quite … they're not mentioning colour of people's skin or anything else, but they are … and they're in a wheelchair or they're deaf, that's kind of fine, but their physical appearance, as in weight wise, I think the children do have an issue with that. There's no question that even the dinks, the little'uns, think people overweight are inferior." [Beau]

"I think the amount of times I hear children calling somebody else fat or they see somebody on TV and they say 'Oh they're fat' or … things like that I think they are aware of and I think are aware of from a very young age." [Faye]

Theme 2: Normalising all appearances

In order to promote acceptance of diverse appearances, teachers expressed a need to normalise all forms of appearances. They suggested one way to do this could be by increasing children's exposure to diverse appearances which are often underrepresented. Subtly familiarising children with different appearances (e.g., by using an image of a child in a wheelchair when discussing a maths problem, and not emphasising appearance as the main focus) was suggested as a way of weaving the topic in, whilst taking care not to single anyone out. Additionally, sharing lived experiences and providing information was expressed as possible ways to normalise various appearances and increase empathy of others. Locations and types of schools can often influence the level of diversity of appearances in pupils (e.g.,

all white, no disability) in which case, it was acknowledged that just because an appearance is not represented in the classroom or school, does not mean it should not be represented within teaching and in fact this can often be more important.

2.1 Increasing exposure of other diverse appearances

One significant way teachers expressed normalising all appearances was by generally increasing exposure of diverse appearances that are often not represented and familiarising children with a range of appearances.

"I just think if children aren't naturally exposed to diverse appearances in their school, in their community, where they live, then later in life they may be less accepting or have less understanding or be more ignorant to differences." [Gwen]

"If they have more of an exposure when they're younger, they tend to, I would assume, think less of it and it wouldn't feel so different to them. So, I think the earlier we can expose children to these things and talk about it honestly and openly with them the better." [Faye]

"Definitely need lots of visuals so that children can have that experience of seeing children that look different to what they might perceive as normal to themselves. So, yes, a lot of visual images so that then could promote discussion and things." [Caja]

"I just think when you start off it just needs to be as simple as showing different people." [Jane]

Teachers frequently suggested a good way to increase exposure was to include resources (e.g., books and toys) which depicted characters from a range of backgrounds and appearances.

"Making sure that we then have books where there are children represented in that way." [Anna]

"I think probably out of all the home corners that I go and visit I hardly ever see a black baby in the home corner or an Asian baby or a baby from China or somewhere like that, you hardly ever see those babies in the home corner, but they should be there so then we have got

a question to ask ourselves why do we not represent those children enough in our resources." [Anna]

"It's the hidden messages though, isn't it really? It's what equipment you're giving them and what books you're giving them." [Beau]

"I think it comes right down to whatever the children … from jigsaws, where you're talking with the little ones, right to whatever they look at, their resources should reflect society as it is. So, they just see it as the norm. Then, as they start to get older, we do need to be educating them." [Beau]

"If you have different heights and sizes and hair colours and everything else, then there's more of an acceptance because it's less the fear of the unknown if they see videos and TV programmes and educational films which haven't just got the standard kids. They might be ethnically diverse, because that tends to be the case now because the effort's been made into that but there's not been enough effort of putting kids who've got different diversities into educational videos for every subject." [Isla]

"I think it's just about having those books available where the main character has a disability, or the main character might be a bit smaller than normal or bigger than normal and it's not necessarily addressed in the book." [Jane]

2.2 Providing information

Teachers discussed the usefulness of providing information and how educating children on diverse appearances may be helpful in normalising them.

"Just explain it and to explain how these things can happen […] we've got a friend of mine has a child with cleft palate, and as much all the operations of this have been incredible. She's now having a series of support plans in place because you know her child will still look slightly different and it's you know, that's an example of understanding and I didn't know anything about it really, and so I've Googled and learnt, and the chances are if you had an example of that in a school where you can explain how it happened and what that child's

been through, it could be really interesting, couldn't it? And you're educating. Education is the tool that can help, I think." [Drew]

"I suppose it will be educating them, like you were saying, you know, at the beginning when you ran through the different definitions of things with me, so getting them to understand sort of the key terms of things like that, like inclusion and differences in appearance and things." [Faye]

A key way of providing information was through sharing lived experiences. It was seen that being aware of other people's lives and backgrounds may help children understand and view more appearances as normal.

"I think they should be exposed to case studies to make them think 'Actually that's what it is like.'" [Beau]

"I would imagine if you had a famous person that had… I remember when I watched the Katie Piper, the film, something like that would be if there was something from a famous person, that could show like films can be very powerful I think and to see it from a person's perspective that has a facial disfigurement or disability." [Drew]

"Like these teachers at school teaching about Black Lives Matter, what do they know? Get some black and ethnic minorities in there. Same with this, get some people that have experienced disabilities or burns and things like this. Get them in. Let the kids see their experiences. That's what I think." [Hera]

2.3 Addressing it subtly

Although teachers expressed a need to normalise all appearances and increase exposure, they also highlighted the importance of doing this subtly and weaving the topic into education, to avoid emphasising people's differences and potentially singling anyone out.

"It needs to be addressed, subtly, it doesn't need to be like right we are going to do it." [Anna]

"Sometimes I feel like addressing the specific issue, or the specific problem, can almost draw more attention to it and make it stand out more." [Jane]

"Rather than addressing it specifically as 'this is an issue this is a matter of concern' it should be seeing more of a wide variety of faces and appearances in school from day one." [Isla]

"I just think children, they do … people don't give them enough credit, you can read a story about someone in a wheelchair and someone in the class could be in a wheelchair and you don't have to reference them at all, but those children are listening to that story and they're relating it to whoever in the back of the classroom." [Jane]

"I just think that from a very young age there's nothing wrong with presenting images of people that look completely different. And you don't necessarily have to go into the fact that 'This person's transgender and that's what this means, or this person is obese and that's what this means.' I think it's just so important that in the curriculum – and that could be in really kind of subtle ways, you know, a picture in a textbook, a picture that you choose to put on the Smart board when you're talking … you know, those little things when you're doing a lesson and then you type in clipart of a girl, or clipart of a boy and things like that? I think little opportunities like that to put in images of people that are sort of deviating from that sort of societal norm, so it almost becomes the norm to them." [Jane]

Teachers reflected on past and possible experiences of having children in the classroom with diverse appearances and the implications of inadvertently emphasising someone who looks different. Despite wanting to normalise the topic, there was a need to make sure "*that the child doesn't feel excluded."* [Caja].

"I think being able to teach the children about this without making it about anybody that they know or anybody specific that you can be like 'Oh, you know, like so and so' because I think that would be awful, to get them to physically see what the kind of things are that we're talking about and I think that would be really important." [Faye]

"There is one girl in my class who suffers really badly with asthma and she's on steroids and that's the reason for her higher weight and so you don't want to sort of … I'm worried about

teaching them to keep at a healthy weight, you exercise, and you eat well when she's doing that but still at a higher weight." [Caja]

2.4 Equitable inclusion of all appearances

Teachers described the need to include all pupils equitably within the classroom so they each get a good experience and similar opportunities. Within this, some teachers mentioned practical implications this may have for children with disabilities, making sure they get to partake in activities such as sports day the same as everyone else.

"I kind of feel like for a whole class setting there just needs to be that environment created of like everyone here is an equal, regardless of what you look like." [Jane]

"We had to make sure we had all of the races that that child could be included in as well, so it wasn't, that child wasn't left out in anyway." [Anna]

"It's equality and tolerance but it's about encouraging the children who are struggling, with whatever disability, to do their best. And we have managed to do it. So, when we've done some kind of race, they will all shout for these children with their little walking frames and that's what it should be – they should be encouraging them but not doing it for them. It's equality and tolerance. If we just had that across the board. I think we're getting it more and more with gender and race but not with disability." [Beau]

However, one teacher also mentioned how providing means for equitable inclusion can make some children stand out and lead to difficulties integrating within other children.

"We tried to make him feel as integrated into the classroom as much as possible, but it's something we just found impossible to do, you know, he had to sit in the front 'cause he needed to see the board and see where the teacher was. We couldn't sit him at the back, which then is difficult, but you know, you want him to be integrated, so it was one of those things are making him feel part of the class, but also facilitating his needs as a person, facilitating his eyesight and things like that, difficult." [Drew]

2.5 Lack of pupils with diverse appearances

A difficulty in normalising all appearances was lack of representation of pupils with diverse appearances within the school context. Teachers mentioned how a lack of a range of appearances in schools meant children were less exposed to diversity. The lack of diversity within the school was also explained as a reason why it was important to normalise a range of appearances. It is important to note that a number of teachers had experiences in schools in rural areas, in which the school's locations may impact the diversity of its pupils, and this was something they reflected on.

"Where we live, there's not really much diversity." [Gwen]

"I don't feel they're really exposed to much diversity to be honest, as a school or as a community I don't think there's a huge amount of diversity so it's quite limited." [Gwen]

"I think it really depends on the school and the cohort because, for example, at my school it's predominantly white Europeans so I think other schools where there's more diversity in appearance they might be more knowledgeable about it." [Caja]

"I think based on the children in my class and in this whole school, to be honest probably, a big focus for them would probably be on teaching them about ethnic minority groups because they don't see them. Imagine if we had … I was even talking to one of my friends about this the other day, she was saying when she was at school they had one person in their school who was black and the experience that they must have had at school must have been … I'd like to hope it was positive but I don't know if it was, and I think it would be the same if we had anybody come into our school who did look different in terms of an ethnicity. I think that would be a big thing for more rural communities." [Faye]

Teachers also told stories of times when pupils from diverse backgrounds, who were in the minority in a particular school, had difficulties integrating.

"There was a pair of kids and they left part way through 2019 and they went to [different area] because mum wanted to move. I think she had family there. They were, I think, well it doesn't matter where they were from originally because I don't think that affected anything.

They'd been to six schools and this was the first one the little boy, who was in Year Four, he said 'This is the first one we haven't been teased in. This is the first one we haven't been picked on. We love it here, me and my sister.' But they were very sad because they were going to move to (area). *One of the teachers said, 'they do stick out a bit so maybe mum doesn't want them to stick out a bit and be the only two black kids and maybe she has family or friends there.' But I don't know what the reason was, that was supposition."* [Isla]

Theme 3: Difficult for schools and teachers to make a difference

Teachers highlighted that although school is an important place to discuss the topic of appearance diversity, other influences beyond school (e.g., parents) were also significant in helping a child to accept of a range of appearances. School staff felt pressure to make a difference and yet also felt they could only do so much in the lives of children. However, it was also highlighted that it is better to have the topic targeted in schools than not. There is limited time and space in teacher's working day and the curriculum to fit everything in. Additionally, it is often the responsibility of the government firstly, then the school and finally the teacher to decide the level of which to include topics beyond the core subjects required. Thus, unless there is governmental input on what to include on the topic and free resources, topics such as appearance diversity will often fall to the wayside. Finally, even if this is the case, some teachers may disagree or not even think it's important to include at all.

3.1 Schools can only do so much

Teachers felt pressure to make a large impact on the lives of young children, but also expressed that they can only do so much, and were "*fighting a tide against the sea*" [Drew]. Acknowledgement of influences beyond school, and how school is only one aspect of a child's life were important considerations which teachers highlighted when discussing the difficulties schools face to make a difference.

"*You know we're always saying … it's always 'The schools need to do this.' So now we're supposed to teach them manners, we're supposed to teach them to go … I've got children who can't… I've got one child still wetting themselves and pooing themselves, so we're supposed to toilet train them, we're supposed to do this, this and this, which kind of are parental things… and it's kind of 'No, society needs to be doing'. We need to stop putting the pressure on the schools to do everything."* [Beau]

"*It's tricky to override family experiences because children have so many different worlds and you just don't know what they are all the time.*" [Jane]

"*You know, if you're trying to do a PSHE session and you're talking about race, for example, and how people have different colour skin and there's children in there that have had quite adverse family experiences or they've got someone in their family that is quite racist or they've heard comments, it's really difficult to reverse that, hearing something different at home. I don't really have an answer to how we would overcome that.*" [Jane]

Although there was pressure on schools and the staff to make a difference, teachers also highlighted how it was better than nothing at all and is at least fighting one tide in a large ocean.

"*I think, as a teacher, you try your hardest in school but you're only there for six hours so then they go home, and it's all forgotten. But it's better that they've got that at least than nothing at all.*" [Caja]

"I guess the key to that is just consistency in school and, like I was saying before, they're always hearing that message. So, actually, the negative message they might be hearing at home becomes abnormal then. They sort of start thinking 'Oh well, actually, this is the only person that says this because in school we're constantly told that's not the case.'" [Jane]

3.2 Little time and space to fit it all in

Other difficulties identified were lack of time in the teacher's working day, and space within the teaching curriculum to fit everything in. It was suggested Personal, Health, and Economic (PHE) education would be the best place to fit dedicated time/lessons to the topic of appearance diversity, however PSHE was often viewed as less valued compared to other more core subjects (e.g., English and Maths).

"*I think that one of the biggest barriers is that schools are just such busy places […], part of the reason I left teaching was because I just could not fit in everything I was being asked for in a week. It was impossible. The curriculum… and it's got worse, it's only got worse since then, just from working the schools. I know it's got worse and speaking to teachers, so you*

know teachers are going to ask, I'm sure when an earth would I do this? It will be the sort of thing that will take kind of bottom priority." [Edna]

"I think, the trouble is that there's so much to fit in that anything extra would probably not go down very well with schools." [Caja]

"*We do PSHE once a week in our school but it's just so much to fit in in the year with that session because that covers everything from family conflicts, yourself, your dreams, your goals, your fears, safeguarding it covers, you know, who to talk to in school, it covers sex education and it's just so much to cover in that one session that maybe we don't always do it as well*." [Jane]

"*I don't think my schools in any way different to anywhere else and I suspect we might have been a bit better, but we found that PSHE got pushed off the curriculum. It ended up always being scheduled on a Friday afternoon because we've got to fit the maths in, we've got to fit the English in, we've got so many topics, PE's compulsory, science is compulsory, RE you've got that hour. Let's have … because we had our big assembly on Friday afternoon, so let's put PSHE where it's … at a point where it … it doesn't really matter compared to everything else. It can drop off the timetable*." [Isla]

3.3 Down to the school and teacher to decide to teach it

Despite the lack of time and influence schools have, it is ultimately down to the school and individual school staff to decide (beyond set topics in the national curriculum) what is important to teach the children. This means staff need to 'buy into' the topic in the first instance and this can lead to variances in what teachers decide to teach. The difficulty is appearance diversity needs to be seen as a priority and "*not all schools will do it because it's so low down the priority."* [Beau]

"*I think I probably give more than is needed, without question, but from school to school it's quite diverse I think. No question, some schools are not putting as much time into it, if they're doing it at all. Sometimes it's just during assemblies, it can depend if you're in a Christian school, then more their PSHE can be around the Bible. I don't blame schools because we're all about results and driving for results and everything else."* [Beau]

"I've been quite surprised at how little schools think that that's anything to do with them as a whole." [Edna]

"The Head teachers get to pick and choose what they get to teach them so, ultimately, that makes a difference as to how much growing as a person they do get to do." [Hera]

Schools and staff may also decide not to include the topic if resources are expensive and there is no funding to support them.

"I do feel a lot of schools will say 'We haven't got the resources.' They're correct. There isn't the money to buy it." [Beau]

"I think with creative projects the problem's going to be that schools … I keep saying that haven't got resources, time or anything else, until the government allow schools to educate the whole child." [Beau]

Hence, some teachers suggested the need for the government to focus on topics such as appearance diversity and clearer guidance in a top-down approach. This will make it less difficult for schools to decide whether it is important to teach the topic.

"I think somewhere from government it needs to be more highlighted that you need to discuss this specific area and make sure you're raising this in your circle times or whatever you're doing those types of thing we need to be pushing that forward." [Anna]

"*We have a mental health problem and it comes from the government so driven by results, yet if you look in other countries who don't do the testing, don't do what we're doing, these children are coming out, they're academically doing well but they're also well-rounded. And we're not well-rounded."* [Beau]

3.4 Some don't agree or think it's important

Even if schools see value in the topic of appearance diversity, another difficulty is some individuals do not agree or think it is important. Although participants within the study saw value in the topic of appearance diversity, they recalled experiences with other school staff who had very strong opinions and comments regarding the topic, or not accepting other

appearances. This highlights difficulties of trying to introduce this topic of appearance diversity to all school staff.

"*How do we get teachers to really think this is valuable and worthy? Especially if it challenges some of their beliefs, yeah, that makes it even more difficult."* [Edna].

"*There was a teaching assistant, I didn't argue with her, I don't know if I should have done because I was only a student at the time […] she said to me once, there was a boy in the class and he had a mental health issue. I don't know if they had foetal alcohol syndrome, but they were very unusual looking. They had very thick glasses, they didn't speak quite right, they didn't learn anything very quickly. Really, you might call it grand delay, but they were in mainstream, and this kid had a little sister, who was really very asymmetric faced, squinty eyes, milk bottle bottom glasses, tiny, and she had this lovely, lovely name, let's say it was Ophelia – it wasn't – but this woman said 'Oh, you hear the name Ophelia and you think of beauty and then you see this THING …' and I thought 'How can you call a child a thing?' That's what you're up against with some people*." [Isla]

"*We did have a talk about gypsies and travellers at school and they were told what was acceptable language and what wasn't acceptable language and then I got back to the staff room – I don't think it was necessarily a teacher who said it – but somebody said 'Oh yeah, we had a talk. Yeah, we're not allowed to call pikeys pikeys anymore.' So, I thought 'Well, that didn't really go down very well did it?' The message was lost there and this is about not discriminating, not your personal thoughts, but not discriminating at school about kids of possibly different appearance, but certainly different backgrounds. So, you've got the don't care, talk to the hand issue."* [Isla]

"It could be a different person teasing every single day – it is a really tricky one to just deal with as an individual teacher. And you mention it in the staffroom, and they go 'Well, he IS overweight'. So, I don't know what you can actually do." [Isla]

3.5 Schools being used to communicate weight management

Another difficulty for schools is the complicated and often negative rhetoric around weight management. Some teachers discussed how lessons on 'healthy eating,' which are promoted via public health messaging, can send the wrong message to children about appearance.

"I've been just shocked about how this message is being drilled into pupils in schools about how being overweight is a really bad thing, and it really is, school is being used as a site to communicate this message and I think it's really irresponsible, you know… that being overweight is a bad thing, that weight is within children's control, say it doesn't even bring parents on board it's like sure, you choose what you eat and how much exercise you do it, that message is totally out there." [Edna]

"The problem I feel is that when you have people talking about healthy living and the healthy eating lessons can be a negative as well because it can reinforce behaviours that can cause eating disorders etc." [Drew]

"Primary schools in particular are being asked to really target the childhood obesity 'problem' I say that in inverted commas and there being located to sites at which you need to target that intervention, and then the healthy school's agenda was the start of it, but it hasn't really stopped, and it goes on, we've got national measurements going into schools and stuff, so, yeah there's going to need to be some thought I think about that." [Edna]

For a number of teachers, the UK governments National Child Measurement Programme (Public Health England, 2020) was particularly problematic when it came to promoting acceptance of all appearances, as weighing and measuring the children often sent the wrong message and lead to increased emphasis on weight in a negative way.

"I think with social media it's raised everyone's awareness and I think this Government weighing in Foundation Year Six has increased the problems because they did it because they wanted to identify children who were overweight." [Beau]

"All that happened is that parents refused permission for those children to be weighed. So, everyone else is lining up apart from the overweight children, which actually kind of points them out even more doesn't it? Because they're not with their class to be weighed. And, because they're being weighed then they know what's happening, they're being weighed, so they discuss it." [Beau]

"You know things like when they get weighed, I mean, some of the kids are like why am I getting weighed, I was like I just can't really explain why you're getting weighed, I can't explain the good things about it unfortunately. Just need to take you up there to the nurse. So, I kind of just want to say, well, you know, it's just a SATs, it's just like when we do, SATs is just another tick box exercise that's all is. That's kind of how I played it. Some kids get really freaked out about it, you know and just, I was sat there thinking this is not a good thing that we're doing right now…" [Drew]

Theme 4: Teacher's anxiety and fear of the topic

A key finding mentioned by all teachers, was that they are anxious about discussing the topic of appearance diversity. All teachers spoke about being generally concerned regarding how to approach the topic of appearance diversity. Teachers expressed worry over saying the wrong thing, and not using the correct language/terminology. This was particularly problematic when children would ask questions regarding others' appearance (whether this was positive/neutral or negative). Teachers expressed the desire to respond effectively to these situations and yet were worried they would send the wrong message to children if they did not answer 'correctly.' Concerns over saying the wrong thing and feeling a lack of knowledge or experience around discussing appearance diversity in the classroom was expressed as a reason why some teachers may choose to avoid the topic all together. Additionally, teachers own backgrounds, and possible difficulties with parents were considered as issues which may impede teaching the topic. Teachers highlighted the need for more support and training on the subject to make them feel more confident to promote acceptance of diverse appearances in the classroom.

4.1 Saying the wrong thing

One important factor feeding into teachers' anxiety about teaching appearance diversity was concern over saying the wrong thing.

"*I found that you had to tread even more carefully with everything you said and you just didn't want to say the wrong thing*." [Beau]

"*I think a lot of the time people are scared to approach topics of diversity because they're scared of saying the wrong thing or they're not sure whether they should be teaching it or not."* [Gwen]

"*There are times when you can say things that … 'I shouldn't have said that. I need to clarify that. Will I dig myself in a deeper hole if I try and clarify it?'*" [Isla]

When teaching a class about apartheid, one teacher explained the difficulties of choosing the right language, given that there was a small number of black pupils in the class.

"*I was so careful, and I think it was more from my own insecurities of the worry of causing offence to anybody or the way I was coming across to them was where my anxieties around talking about it came from*." [Faye]

Similarly, a teacher felt they had to choose their language very carefully when discussing health with a child of higher weight in the class.

"There have been schemes, which the school runs, Fit 4 Life, and the Healthy Living, which we do in science, but you have to teach the science very cautiously so that you're not upsetting anyone as well, talking about weight and health and parents' drinking and all the rest." [Isla]

Teachers expressed specific concerns over the correct terms and language to use and ensuring they are being "*politically correct*."

"*I think it's a big thing, I imagine, for everybody, especially nowadays when we're all striving to be very politically correct and fearing offending people, but I think knowing what language is appropriate, and what you can and can't say and sort of the best way to explain things to the children would be something*." [Faye]

"*There's so many different terms now. Transgender and certain things … I read a book 'What you can and can't say' because I wasn't sure and in the book it was like 'Don't be asking them if they're pre-op and post-op' and all this*." [Hera]

Sometimes teacher even stopped themselves during the interview to correct or evidence unsureness over their language used.

"I think possibly the children that maybe look different to everyday normal children, that's probably the wrong thing to say and probably totally politically incorrect." [Anna]

Teachers would describe times when children would ask questions related to appearance diversities and the difficulties of responding to those questions, feeling responsibility to answer them appropriately and not send the wrong message. One teacher reflected specifically on the impact of having a child in the class who has both a visible difference and learning disability.

"*There are occasions when the other children do ask questions about her and that is, I think, probably the time when I would have to choose my language very carefully and I would really think about what I was saying and making sure that it wasn't offensive in any way and it was child friendly, so the children could understand that she is, for want of a better term, 'different' … so sometimes she's allowed to do other things that some of the other children aren't allowed to do and they say 'Well why is she allowed to do that and I can't?' and I have to say 'Well, it's different because …' I think they do find that quite difficult sometimes."* [Faye]

"I'm also thinking about children I've worked with that have trackies (tracheostomy) *and yeah this kind of morbid curiosity about it and I've like had other children say to me, would I have to have one of those? And yeah, how do we, how do we answer these sorts of questions because you can't say well no, you'll never going to have to have them but without kind of instilling fear."* [Edna].

4.2 Avoid teaching the topic

Anxiety over discussing the topic of appearance diversity and concerns over saying the wrong thing were described as reasons as to why the topic may be avoided all together.

"*Especially when it's PSHE, if it's something you're like 'Oh this is a bit too awkward. I'm just going to avoid it' when that's really not helpful but you're worried about saying*

something wrong so you're like 'Oh, it's better if I just don't say anything at all.' But it would just be better to be educated properly on what to say and how to teach the children.'" [Caja]

"It's quite difficult so I think it's a mixture of wanting to tackle it but also, it's kind of easier to just avoid it because then you don't upset or offend." [Caja]

"*Don't want to touch on anything a little bit this, a little bit that, because I might get into trouble, I might say the wrong thing and I don't have the prerequisite knowledge."* [Isla]

"It's really hard because in some ways you're like we need to approach this because, particularly with the higher weight, but it's something that the children need to be aware of but, at the same time, I also want to avoid it because it's not … especially at that young age, they don't necessarily have the choices to make the changes." [Caja]

4.3 Don't know enough

Linking with the above quote, fears over not knowing enough or seeming naïve was an important consideration for why teachers may decide to avoid teaching or asking questions about the topic all together.

"*I think yeah it can only be more open and more welcome to discussions and it's okay for people to have anxieties and fears as well. I think people need to understand that if they're not quite sure that we need to give them that voice to be able to ask questions and that's probably where we don't get to ask enough questions about that because we don't want to upset that person, but we don't want to seem naïve that we don't know*" [Anna]

"*I thought it should be addressed but I didn't really go into it because I, personally, didn't really know how to do it."* [Gwen]

Even when teachers expressed a level of awareness of the topic, some would still describe not knowing enough or not having the language skillset.

"*Even though I've got an awareness, I don't know all the terms and things, you know what I mean?"* [Hera]

4.3 Influence of teachers' backgrounds

Participants also commented on how teachers' backgrounds and experiences impacted on the level of anxiety and perceived competency about teaching the topic.

"*There's always a worry isn't there, you know, when you're addressing more sensitive topics … particularly if you don't have experience of something yourself. I'm quite fortunate in that I haven't got a disability that impacts me profoundly, so when I'm talking about them I'm always conscious about what I'm saying and I think it would be useful to be able to have training to address it and things that you don't have experience of."* [Jane]

"*One guy said I'm a math teacher, I teach numbers, not emotions… it was so uncomfortable for him, so uncomfortable for him to be thinking about teaching this."* [Edna]

4.5 Difficulties with parents

Another possible concern for teachers when discussing appearance diversity was difficulties with parents. Teachers shared concerns about having to justify teaching the topic to parents and anticipated difficulties if the parents felt the need to 'protect their child' from these discussions, which may lead to lack of parental consent.

"*The one problem that I can envision already is parents not feeling it's appropriate for their child to be taught this and not wanting their child involved in these sessions because I think you'd have to get the parents' consent to teaching something like this […] I feel like potentially they might object. They might want their child to stay living in a world where there's no diversity and they don't realise that there's diversity in the world. So, yeah, possibly parents might object, especially if they're taught younger down in the year groups, they might think 'Oh my child doesn't need to know about this yet.*' [Gwen]

"They (parents) *hate it, they won't let us teach … they won't let us teach that. They'll go mad. 'My kid's not learning that. Why are you teaching our kids that?'"* [Hera]

"*You would probably have to get parental consent before to say that you were going to be discussing this, this and this and they have that sign in and sign out option which is a shame really because it is those children that signed out who really need it."* [Anna]

4.6 More support needed for teachers

To tackle the issue of teachers' anxieties regarding the topic of appearance diversity, teachers expressed a need for support and training to help them feel more confident with the problems detailed within this theme.

"*Yeah, so some really good training on like how to navigate it sensitively and so that the child doesn't feel excluded. It's those things like whether you just sort of speak about it so it's out in the open or whether it's just … speak about it at all? I don't know, I think it is really hard to navigate and I think training would be really beneficial*." [Caja]

"*I just feel like as a teacher we would need more training first. Well, personally, I would feel like I needed training so that I felt confident to deliver it first of all*." [Gwen]

"We haven't had any official training. I think it would have been helpful and I think in the future it will be helpful because there's always a worry isn't there, you know, when you're addressing more sensitive topics." [Jane]

Theme A (integrative theme): Conceptualising appearance diversity

Finally, an integrative theme which ran across all themes was teacher's confusion over the term 'appearance diversity.' Understandably it was difficult to define all 'types' of appearance diversity and recognising the differences between diversities which are often protected (e.g., race and gender) and those which are not (e.g., weight and height). Further, teachers questioned whether behavioural differences, which are a part of one's identity but go beyond the individual's appearance (e.g., autism), constituted a diverse appearance. Teachers often drew on what was topical for their choice of focus when thinking about appearance diversity. Therefore, it is important to be contextual depending on the 'type' of appearance diversity discussed (e.g., race or a cleft lip and/or palette) and the broader societal influences (e.g., Black History Month or LGBTQ+ Pride Month), as this may influence experiences and approach when promoting acceptance of diverse appearances.

A.1 Confusion over 'types' of appearance diversities

Even though teachers were provided with a definition at the beginning of the interview, there was still some confusion over what constituted a diverse appearance.

"I suppose, again, I'm thinking about your definition. I don't know if this … I assume this wouldn't come under the category but does difference in ethnicity count as a visible difference?" [Faye]

"Over the years there's been quite a few children that have come into this definition, like you were saying at the beginning, of deviating from those societal norms." [Jane]

Some teachers described how individuals with various appearances, which are not protected characteristics (e.g., hair colour, weight) according to the Equality Act (2010), are often bullied in contrast to other appearance characteristics which are protected (e.g., race).

"I've had … this is something … because I was married to a red haired guy and I'm still friends with all their family and most of them have got red hair and their children have got red hair and that, I think, is something … and I know from in the classroom, kids with red hair you're not allowed to tease about skin colour but you can tease about red hair colour, and these kids get a lot of … they're in tears sometimes because they've been tormented 'ginger minger' or whatever or 'ginger whinger' or … and I've seen that in lots of different classes. There's been something about everything else but it seems to be the one non-taboo area, if you want to tease somebody in your class and you've had a grumpy day and you want to make someone's life a misery, you can tease the red-haired kid. My husband – as was – many years ago, said as an adult he felt like shaving his head and, at school, he hated his hair, he just didn't want to go in sometimes because he was made a misery. He was extra tall as well, he was 6'6 and they used to call him Lurch, so he hated … absolutely hated school and that was purely … there was nothing wrong with his personality or his behaviour, but his appearance made his schooldays miserable." [Isla]

"You can't be arrested for a hate crime for calling somebody fat, but you can for using a kind of racial slur. So, it's just not taking this seriously, and as a result people suffer." [Edna]

"With a disability, like the boy in my class who had his leg amputated, it was very visible. He had his prosthetic leg, physiotherapists would come in. It was almost validated by adults because he had a one-to-one, and the same with the little boy I taught with cerebral palsy, it was always validated. There were adults there and it was obvious that there was something different about this person and the children wouldn't necessarily comment on that or treatment them different because it seemed to be validated. With sort of hidden disabilities, like a child who might be struggling with their weight because they're having tests for thyroid conditions and there is no real visible confirmation for the other children, like this is why this child is like this, they tend to be less accepting." [Jane]

Teachers also described how 'some behavioural differences might also be expressed through appearance and conceptualised them as important characteristics to include when considering appearance diversity.

"The only thing I haven't mentioned is Asperger's and things like that. It's not appearance, I know you're probably interested in appearance. Some do look a little bit different, might be just facial expressions. They don't react ... their faces don't react the same way to things as other kids. They do get teased and ... what was the other thing? ... they might wear different clothes, they might still appear a bit babyish. So, that could tie-in behaviour and appearance choices as well as unintentional appearance issues. They all acted a bit oddly, the real Asperger's ones and that's the other thing, they often speak with a funny voice and several of the Asperger's kids will speak with a foreign accent. So, accent and facial appearance can tie-in as well. So, it's not, obviously, as you'll know because it's your field! I'm not telling you anything here. But it ties in with so many other things doesn't it? Appearance isn't a stand-alone issue in some cases." [Isla]

"I think that appearance is so important to talk about but also it is those invisible illnesses as well and that the reason children might look different or act different that aren't really obvious, like a leg being chopped off." [Jane]

A.2 In light of recent events…

The interviews were conducted during the protests for Black Lives Matter in 2020, as well as during the global pandemic of COVID-19, and as such, teachers discussed appearance

diversity in light of recent events. Teachers would conceptualise appearance diversity and how the topic may be focused on based on the broader social and environmental context.

"In terms of addressing appearance and deviating from the norm, one thing that we have covered, I believe quite well, in our school and it's just because, obviously, the relevance at the moment in society, we're very focussed on differences in appearances to do with skin tone and skin colour and how to address that." [Jane]

"With Black Lives Matter we did an assembly in our pod because we can't have assembly kind of thing and we talked a little bit there about the diversity of skin colour and how we should all be equal." [Beau]

"I'm looking back at my own childhood now asking myself these questions as well, given the recent light of the BLM movement." [Hera]

"I'm a real advocate for making sure – particularly at the moment with the Black Lives Matter movement, I was really pushing, I guess, in school, sort of saying 'We need to have a conversation with everyone about this and we need to have this discussion.'" [Jane]

"If it's something that could be embedded into the PSHE, and especially at the moment, PSHE is a massive deal at the moment because, obviously, with what's happened with COVID and things it's going to have a much higher profile." [Caja]

6.6 Discussion

Summary of chapter aims and results

The aim of this study was to explore teachers' experiences and perceptions of promoting acceptance of diverse appearances in primary schools. Teachers described the need to change the narrative before children create one, and to normalise all appearances. Difficulties for schools and teachers to make a difference, and anxiety about the topic were described as important considerations when understanding promotion of appearance diversity in schools. Across all key themes, teachers conceptualised and reflected on various 'types' of appearance diversity in a number of ways.

As illustrated in Chapter 4, children can begin to judge others based on how they look from as early as 4 years old and these attitudes can develop towards other appearance diversities as children get older (Parnell et al., 2021). The Developmental Intergroup Theory (DIT: Bigler & Liben, 2007), as described in Chapter 2, supports the early development of prejudice in children and posits that young children are often perceived as being untainted by negative social biases. These findings mirror descriptions from teachers regarding when children may begin to develop attitudes towards appearances. As a result, teachers discussed the need to "start conversations early" as "younger children were more mouldable and accepting" and "secondary school is too late." Dimitriadi (2015) highlights early childhood as a key period for promoting diversity and how early intervention plays a fundamental role in helping children value diversity. Therefore, teachers have the opportunity to help children form positive concepts and attitudes towards their own and others' appearances (Dimitriadi, 2015). It is helpful to understand that teachers recognise the importance of beginning conversations early and that their experiences do reflect the literature that children develop attitudes towards diverse appearances at an early age.

Teachers also emphasised the need to continue discussions throughout the years, instead of simply one lesson on the topic. A systematic review by Yager et al. (2013) evaluating secondary school-based interventions to promote acceptance towards ones' own appearance, found all effective interventions were multiple sessions instead of a single session. This has led to criticism of 'one shot' interventions and the decision that 'longer is better' (Yager et al., 2013). Nevertheless, teachers' time and curriculum constraints were also mentioned in the current study, and may mean finding time to include multiple lessons or discussions is difficult to implement (Patel, Kieling, Maulik & Divan, 2013; Yager et al., 2013). The review by Yager et al. (2013) concluded that four-to-five-hour long sessions would be the most beneficial in changing attitudes and behaviours. However, these interventions were targeting secondary schools, which as described above, is potentially too late. The research in primary school-aged children on this topic is limited in comparison. A review of interventions to promote sexual health in primary school-aged children found talking to children about sexual health little and often can significantly help the sexual health of the children in the coming years of their life (Aboksari, Ganji, Mousavinasab, Rezaei & Khani, 2020). The authors describe how ignorance of this topic may adversely impact children's sexual health. Applying this to the topic of diversity, teachers in the current study agreed that discussions should

happen regularly and incrementally in order to build a strong foundation of acceptance towards all appearances.

Additionally, of all the narratives, weight (more specifically, higher weight), was deemed the hardest to rewrite. This is because weight stigma is so engrained in society (Puhl & Heuer, 2010). Teachers described how children were the unkindest towards weight. A national study examined the perspective of educators and found teachers viewed weight-based bullying as more problematic in the classroom compared to bullying based on gender, sexual orientation or disability (Bradshaw, Waasdorp, O'Brennan & Gulemetova, 2013). Further, Study 1 in this thesis supports these findings, highlighting weight stigma develops earliest in children. This is likely impacted by an absence of legislation protecting weight under the Equality Act (2010). Unfortunately, weight stigma expands beyond attitudes of children themselves, as teachers can also be sources of weight stigma (Pont et al., 2017), making it even harder to implement change. A systematic review by Nutter et al. (2019) outlines how weight bias is prevalent among not only students themselves, but also trainee and qualified teachers. Specifically, teachers have reported children of higher weight to be more burdensome to have in the classroom and less accepted by their peers (Wilson, Smith & Wildman, 2015). Further, teachers academically assess children of higher weight as worse than their actual test scores suggest (Zavodny, 2013), and can be more severely graded compared to their peers (Dian & Triventi, 2021). Despite education being an ideal place to promote acceptance of diverse appearances (Yager et al., 2013), evidently the level of internalisation of weight stigma in society will make changing attitudes towards higher weight the most difficult. Additionally, as teachers mentioned here, the use of schools to communicate weight management can perpetuate weight stigma within schools. The National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP) is a public health programme which weighs and measures children annually (NHS Digital, 2020). Despite teachers in this study highlighting negative experiences of children being weighed in schools, very little research has explored teachers’ perception of the NCMP. A large scale state-wide study conducted in California, including over six thousand children aged 10-14 years found weighing children in schools was ineffective at reducing weight (Madsen, 2011). Furthermore, weighing adolescents in schools has not been associated with any positive health outcomes (Gee, 2015). Levine, Connor, Feltbower, Robinson and Rudolf (2009) argue that adequate staff training is needed for those measuring children and best practice for dealing with issues and problems. Future research should explore ways to support teachers to reduce weight stigma in educational contexts.

Normalising all appearances was described by teachers as an effective way to help promote acceptance of diverse appearances. Providing representative resources is a useful way to increase exposure of various underrepresented appearances and addresses the topic subtly, which was also something teachers expressed was important. Representative resources can come in many forms such as books, puzzles, games, dolls, puppets, role play area materials, and dress up clothes (Griffin, 2008). Visual representations of many diverse appearances are important ways to help those who represent those appearances feel welcomed (Griffin, 2008), but also useful to represent appearances which children are not yet aware of. Research has shown that children's literature often lacks diversity (Leahy & Foley, 2018). When reviewing over 50 children's books which aimed to help children appreciate individual differences and disabilities, it was found books have the potential to help children build more awareness and acceptance of diversity and disability by challenging negative stereotypes (Gilmore & Howard, 2016). Despite resources having the potential to normalise diverse appearances, it is important teachers are knowledgeable on how to implement and use diverse resources in their classrooms (Leahy & Foley, 2018). A qualitative study by Lea (2015) evaluated teachers' experiences of using a book about SEND in a school in Israel. The study reported that although teachers expressed the importance of including resources that represent diverse appearances, time and curriculum constraints were problematic. Further, some teachers were not confident with using books that might elicit questions from students which they found difficult to answer or manage (Lea, 2015). These findings are supported by the findings of the current study. The literature suggests despite representative resources being useful in normalising all appearances, it is important to recognise teachers' needs in how to implement these strategies. Leahy and Foley (2018) outline the need for future research efforts to investigate teachers' knowledge in the field of resources representing diversity, but also beyond this, regarding professional development. This study adds to these findings and supports that teachers need suitable resources to help them implement ways of normalising appearances.

When teachers discussed promoting appearance diversity in primary schools, they reported how it is difficult for them and schools to make a difference. Teachers described how there are many influences beyond school. As outlined in Chapter 5, socio-cultural influences such as parents and the media are important influences when considering children's attitudes towards diverse appearances. The Bioecological Model (Bronfenbrenner, 1995; 1999) as

described in Chapter 2, highlights how multiple factors within a child's microsystem can influence their attitudes. This is something teachers reflected on when acknowledging how school was only one aspect in the lives of children. Despite multiple influences, schools and educators are valuable contributors towards helping children develop awareness and acceptance of diversity (Griffin, 2008). Although teachers felt they were only one piece of the puzzle; they also reflected the importance of their contribution by highlighting how interventions in schools are better than nothing.

Beyond this, teachers described difficulties with time and the curriculum. The lack of clear government guidance has led to inconsistencies in teachers deciding how and if to include appearance diversity at all. In a report on barriers for primary schools responding to diversity, it is highlighted that the current primary school system is fragmented (Ainscow et al., 2016), whereby support available for schools to develop appropriate tools for including diversity are patchy and underdeveloped. This is described as a reason why schools find their own way through this fragmented system. This unclear guidance reduces uniformity of teaching across schools (Ainscow et al., 2016). Although the National Curriculum for Primary Education (Department for Education, 2013) in England outlines the inclusion and equal opportunities for all protected characteristics listed in the Equality Act (2010), there is a lack of guidance on how this can be implemented. Further, the current curriculum and legislation does not report any mandatory teaching or training on appearance diversity and fails to include appearances that do not fall under the protected characteristics, but can be subjected to stigma (e.g., weight, height, and some visible differences such as eczema). Evidently, there is some description regarding the importance of being inclusive within education, however there are gaps in descriptions of diversity of appearance and how this can be promoted. Therefore, schools and teachers would benefit from further awareness, advice and resources for support (Brown, 2018). This will help teachers justify dedicating time to the topic and encourage consistency for schools promoting appearance diversity.

Although the teachers in the study highlighted the need to promote appearance diversity in schools, there was acknowledgement of how some teachers may not agree or think the topic is important. This is an important consideration as teachers' attitudes can impact the promotion of appearance diversity in schools (Perlman et al., 2010). In addition to the discussion of teachers' attitudes towards higher weight above, research has shown insults towards Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender people (LGBT+) are heard from teachers

in schools (Aguirre et al., 2020). Further, a study by Bhopal (2011) qualitatively examined teachers' attitudes towards gypsy, Roma and traveller children in schools in England and concluded that despite schools implementing inclusive measures for gypsy, Roma and traveller pupils, this did not encourage positive attitudes and there was 'othering' of this community by teachers. This maps onto the current studies example of one teacher using racist terminology within the school context towards the gypsy, Roma, and traveller community. In order to promote acceptance of diverse appearances in schools, it is imperative teachers model appropriate attitudes. Therefore, it is important to acknowledge the range of attitudes teachers may have and support teachers with resources and tools to not only promote acceptance of appearance in children but perhaps develop conversations with other teachers as well.

All teachers mentioned anxiety about discussing appearance diversity. Teachers were concerned about saying the wrong thing and the need to be 'politically correct.' These anxieties were influenced by teachers' backgrounds and feeling like they do not know enough. Despite it being an important issue for teachers when promoting appearance diversity, only a small number of studies in this area have highlighted teachers' concerns over language. De Boer et al (2011) found that teachers do not feel competent and confident in teaching pupils with various SEND. Further, the extent to which racism was discussed in primary schools by teachers was dependant on their personal and professional capabilities as well as awareness of racism (Priest et al., 2016). In a professional development handbook regarding diversity in working with children, it is acknowledged that some may feel tentative about approaching this topic as they may worry about receiving criticism or not getting it 'right' (Griffin, 2008). The guide also describes the importance of attention to language when working with children and the need to not only use appropriate language but understand the basis for why some language is not acceptable (Griffin, 2008). It is clear that concern over saying the wrong thing is something teachers experience when considering appearance diversity. Nevertheless, these concerns are not reflected in the literature and subsequently resources supporting teachers discussing diversity are underdeveloped. Currently, various charities and organisations have provided useful resources for teachers on discussing various appearance diversities with children, such as Changing Faces (www.changingfaces.org) for visible differences and Show Racism the Red Card (www.theredcard.org) for race and ethnicity. Further, school resources and schemes have been developed for promoting mental health and well-being, and equality (Brown, 2018). However, there is currently no resource

available to help teachers feel more confident about discussing a range of appearance diversities. A guide to support teachers in their language regarding appearance diversity would be a useful way to potentially bridge the gap for teachers to feel more confident in promoting appearance diversity in primary schools.

Similarly, teachers highlighted the need for more training and support. Several studies have recognised the need for teacher training and support to build competence and knowledge on how to be inclusive towards the appearance diversities (Aguirre, Moliner & Francisco, 2020; Civitillo et al., 2018; de Boer, et al., 2011; Dian & Triventi, 2021; Magennis & Richerdson, 2020; Nutter et al., 2019). A program requiring trainee teachers to engage in authentic recreational experiences with individuals with diverse abilities found it helped them build positive attitudes towards those with disabilities and value diversity more (Stamopoulos, 2006). The research suggests supporting teachers to build confidence in engaging with and discussing appearance diversity is a useful endeavour. However, given teachers expressed a lack of time and identified insufficient funding as barriers to promoting appearance diversity, this is an important consideration when considering the acceptability of resources to support teachers.

6.7 Limitations and future directions

This study recruited a sample of 10 primary school teachers who took part in an in-depth interview. According to Braun and Clarke (2019) this is deemed a small to medium sample size for approaches within thematic analysis. The generalisability of these findings should be assessed with caution as the current study is qualitative and the epistemological positioning means the study aimed to capture individuals' experiences, not find an ultimate truth or reality (Kaushik & Walsh, 2019). Overall, the research recognises that it attempts to capture potential shared beliefs and experiences from teachers, but that these can vary depending on the teachers own experiences and how they socially construct the world (Morgan, 2014). Nevertheless, for the same reason, it is important to acknowledge the social context of the research undertaken. The study was conducted with teachers with experience of teaching in England, as described in section 6.3.4. All teachers in the study described themselves as female. In a 2011 census of all schoolteachers in England, 75.8% identified as female (GOV.UK, 2021b). Therefore, this research does not fully represent the gender of all primary school teachers. Further, eight out of ten (80%) of participants described themselves as either

‘white British’ or ‘white’ in the study. In the same 2011 census (GOV.UK, 2021b), teachers who were either ‘white British’ or ‘white other’ made up a total of 84.1% of the workforce. Meaning ethnicity was more representative of the teaching population. However, provided two teachers in the study identified only as ‘British,’ it is difficult conclude how the ethnicity of this sample relates to the ethnicity of the teaching population within the UK.

Additionally, those who are more interested in the topic of appearance diversity may have been more likely to participate. As noted, all participants identified as female. The topic of body image and appearance may be more salient to females than males due to cultural pressure on women to look a certain way. This is an important consideration as genders other than female make up 15.9% of the school workforce and if they are less likely to discuss the topic of appearance diversity, then this may be a barrier to promoting this topic within schools. Although it may be difficult to get other groups who are less interested in the topic of appearance diversity, future research should aim to gain perspectives from other groups (e.g., males) who may be less inclined to discuss diversity in the first place.

Further, this research only aimed to focus on qualified primary school teachers’ experiences. Despite this one participant was a qualified teaching assistant for primary years. The participant provided valuable insight towards the topic. However, the remaining nine participants were qualified primary school teachers. Therefore, it does not capture the broader perspectives of all primary school staff and trainee teachers. Teaching assistants often work with those children who have SEND (Saddler, 2014), therefore it is important to also capture their experiences. Future research should consider the perspectives of teaching assistants on the topic of appearance diversity.

All teachers mentioned a lack of training and requested more support to help promote appearance diversity in schools. Alongside this, they mentioned how this topic was important to introduce at an early age. The considerations and strategies suggested can inform the development and mode of delivery of interventions to help support teachers and policy more broadly to promote appearance diversity in primary schools in England.

6.8 Conclusion

The present study explored teachers' perceptions and experiences of promoting appearance diversity in primary school-aged children. This was a novel perspective as most studies have focused on a single 'type' of appearance diversity, rather than all forms of appearance diversities. This study also focused on qualified teachers' perspectives, which have been underrepresented in this area. Teachers in the study discussed the need to start conversations early, before children start developing their own attitudes, and the need to normalise all appearances. Consideration of promoting appearance diversity also resulted in practical implications such as difficulties for schools to make a difference and teachers' anxiety discussing appearance diversity. All examples were contextualised and discussed regarding various forms of appearance diversities. Teachers are concerned with discussing the topic of diversity and lack of guidance and support has led to avoidance of the topic. Both teachers in this study and the literature suggests that resources and training are required to support teachers in feeling more confident promoting appearance diversity within primary schools.

CHAPTER 7: Study 3b

Development of a support guide for primary school educators to promote appearance diversity: A feasibility study

In direct response to the findings of Study 3a (Chapter 5), indicating that teachers feel anxious discussing the topic of appearance diversity and wanted more support, as well as the broader findings regarding the importance of promoting acceptance of appearance in preadolescents in Studies 1 and 2 (Chapters 3 and 4), a support guide was developed for teachers to help promote acceptance of diverse appearances in primary school children. This chapter describes the development of a prototype support guide for primary school educators, and the process of gathering feedback on the guide.

The current study uses the term 'primary school educators' which includes qualified, trainee teachers and teaching assistants, as unlike Study 3a, this study aimed to gather feedback from a range of educators which the guide could support. The study mainly focuses on primary school educators as a whole, however any specific reference to either qualified, trainee teachers or teaching assistants will be clarified by using these terms.

7.1 Introduction

Primary schools are ideal places to promote appearance diversity, as they can target a large number of children and provide age-appropriate resources (Yager et al., 2013). Primary school educators are therefore key gatekeepers for promoting acceptance towards diverse appearances in children. Despite this, study 3a revealed qualified teachers feel unequipped to discuss appearance diversity and this can lead to avoidance of the topic. Research concludes primary school educators need more support to build competence to promote appearance diversities within the school context (de Boer et al., 2011; Civitillo et al., 2018; Nutter et al., 2019). This study aimed to bridge this important gap by designing and receiving user feedback on a brief support guide to help primary school educators feel more confident promoting appearance diversity.

Support for primary school educators

Consideration of the sources of support for primary school educators to promote diversity paints a similar picture to that in Study 3a, whereby, there are teaching resources available for specific appearance diversities but nothing more broadly. For example, charities such as Changing Faces (www.changingfaces.org.uk) and Alopecia UK (www.alopecia.org.uk) provide helpful resources for teachers on various visible differences, and Show Racism the Red Card provides resources for discussing race (www.theredcard.org). Further, other not-for-profit organisations such as EqualiTeach (www.equaliteach.co.uk) and Learning for Justice (www.learningforjustice.org) provide resources on various diversities, however these mainly pertain to specific protected characteristics (e.g., race, gender, and disability). Despite the ever-growing evidence that primary school educators can have stigmatising weight-based attitudes (Nutter et al., 2019), there are currently no specific resources available to reduce weight stigma in these contexts.

Additionally, these resources often lack the research evidence to support their development and effectiveness for promoting acceptance of diversity within the classroom. Of the resources mentioned, only Show Racism the Red Card has been evidenced to effectively improve children's understanding of racism (Kingett, Abrams & Purewal, 2017). Some studies assessing the specific role of teachers in promoting acceptance of diversity in pre-schools have found teachers and schools who are more aware of diversity in general are more likely to set-up a diverse classroom environment (Perlman et al., 2010), and have more positive interactions, such as good communication with parents who are immigrants (Kurucz, Lehrl & Anders, 2020). Bowlin, Bell, Coleman and Cihack (2015) found providing pre-service teachers the opportunity to vicariously collaborate with those who have a disability can help teachers feel more confident educating those with a disability. Therefore, it has been concluded that teachers require continuous professional development regarding opportunities to embrace diversity (Perlman et al., 2010) and improve their lack of confidence on the topic (Savolainen, Engelbrecht, Nel & Malinen, 2012; Yada & Savolainen, 2017). However, it has been argued there is still much research needed in the area of promoting acceptance of diversity in an educational setting (Perlman et al., 2010). Overall, evaluation of what is currently available for primary school educators on the topic of appearance diversity highlights the need for a resource which broadly tackles the topic of appearance diversity and includes the often-omitted topic of weight stigma. Therefore, this study aimed to develop and

evaluate the feasibility of a brief tool, which is grounded in teachers' experiences, to support primary school educators more broadly on the topic of appearance diversity.

Implementing user-feedback

Due to the guide's aim to support primary school educators, it was deemed important to include feedback from potential users within the development of this resource. Previous studies from online health research have highlighted how eliciting and addressing the perspectives of the intended users is an important part of good intervention and resource development (Baker, Gustafson & Shah, 2014; Pagliari, 2007). Including the views of the intended audience helps, at the very minimum, to ensure intervention materials are engaging and usable. There would be little point in designing and providing primary school educators with a resource which was not deemed appropriate or was unlikely to be used. However, arguably, when user feedback is included, studies often lack clarity regarding the theoretical framework/approaches used to guide the research methodology (see review by Yen & Bakken, 2012). Hence, the current study aimed to ground the user feedback and optimise the support guide from a primary school educator's perspective within a broader person-based approach (Yardley et al., 2015a; see Chapter 3, Section 3.1 for a detailed description of this approach). Overall, the person-based approach is a method for grounding interventions in an in-depth understanding of the context of people who will use it to ensure the intervention is acceptable, engaging and feasible for their chosen audience (Yardley et al., 2015a; Yardley et al., 2015b). This study included key elements of the person-based approach, such as the concurrent think-aloud data collection method, and a person-based changes table (both described in the method section below). Employing this approach helps ensure that the support guide designed as part of this PhD is not only feasible but also educator-centred and relatable for future users. Having information which is relatable and experiential from others in a similar situation to the user has been found to be highly valued within interventions (Rozmovits & Ziebland, 2004). The content for the prototype support guide was created based on the experiences of teachers already described in Study 3a, the relevant literature, and the appearance psychology and education knowledge of the research team. The information was supported throughout with quotes from Study 3a. Specifically, the first page of the support guide included a series of quotes from teachers reflecting the importance of the topic of appearance diversity and teachers' challenges discussing this topic.

Overall, this study assessed the feasibility of a prototype support guide for primary school educators. The guide was developed in response to qualified teachers' expressions of anxiety regarding teaching the topic of appearance diversity, and the lack of support for school staff on this topic. Given the support guide was driven by teachers' experiences and illustrated using their quotes, it was hoped that the guide would reflect that both teachers and research professionals contributed towards the resource. Upon feedback, the prototype support guide will be developed further, and a final version will receive professional design input and be made freely accessible to all primary school teaching staff. The prototype support guide is presented in Appendix D.i.

7.2 Aims

Study aim:

1) To determine the acceptability of a support guide for educators of primary years to promote acceptance of diverse appearances in primary school-aged children using a series of feedback methods.

7.3 Method

7.3.1 Research ethics

In order to obtain ethical approval for this study, an ethics amendment was obtained for Study 3a. The amendment was approved from the Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Health and Applied Sciences at The University of the West of England (REC Ref. HAS.20.01.099; see Appendix D.ii for amendment form and approval). The major changes were to include trainee teachers and teaching assistants (as described in section 7.3.3 below) and the inclusion of an online questionnaire feedback, so as to not overburden participants at a difficult time due to COVID-19 and to include various feedback options. The new data protection and storage risks for these adjustments were considered and included within the ethics amendment form.

7.3.2 Participatory involvement

As highlighted above, using feedback and input from users is vital to ensure that any resource developed addresses aspects of teaching experiences which they deem significant. Therefore, participants were recruited to provide feedback on the prototype support guide. All

participants were involved in the teaching of primary school aged children in some way. They were either a qualified or trainee primary school teacher or a teaching assistant. One participant (qualified primary school teacher) opted to stay on the project after their initial interview in order to continue to input feedback into the development of the support guide.

7.3.3 Participants

Although study 3a included the experiences of qualified, in-service teachers, it was decided that the support guide should not be limited to only qualified primary school teachers. Evidence suggests teaching assistants' roles are becoming more pedagogical (Bovill, 2017) and teaching assistants often work with children who have various diverse appearances, so can provide unique insight and feedback (Groom & Rose, 2005). Additionally, trainee (pre-service) teachers have been shown to benefit from diversity training on disability whilst studying (Bowlin et al., 2015). Trainee teachers are at an important stage in the development of their teaching career and would also benefit from a support guide on the topic of appearance diversity. Therefore, this study aimed to collect feedback from a range of primary school teaching professionals. Furthermore, despite Study 3a only recruiting qualified primary school teachers who were currently teaching in England, the current study did not limit which country the primary school educator was currently teaching in. Although the resource was developed from research with teachers currently teaching in England, it was recognised that materials which broadly promote acceptance of diverse appearances could and should be applicable globally. Therefore, it was important to get feedback from primary school educators from a range of countries. For inclusion in the study, participants needed to be over 18 years of age, English speaking and either a qualified, trainee teachers, or teaching assistants for primary years (aged 4-11 years). Participants were not asked to provide evidence that they met the inclusion/exclusion criteria; it was left to them to judge their eligibility to participate in the research.

7.3.4 Recruitment

Similar to Study 3a, due to the ongoing pandemic (study recruitment occurred over February and March 2021), the study employed an online recruitment strategy. A written recruitment advertisement for both feedback options (Appendix D.iii for interview and online survey), along with accompanying imagery, was designed and disseminated via the Centre for Appearance Research's social media channels (Facebook and Instagram). Further, the study's third supervisor (Dr Fay Lewis) promoted the online survey to trainee teachers based at the

University of the West of England. The online survey was also distributed to various Facebook groups which include teaching staff (e.g., Primary Teachers, Year 3 & 4 Teachers UK, and Women in Academia Support Network Group #wiasn) and via newsletters for internal UWE staff and a participant pool newsletter for the Centre for Appearance Research. Participants who had previously taken part in Study 3a were also sent the link to the survey in the study's report. As described in Study 3a (section 6.3.3), online recruitment has various strengths (e.g., large reach Whitaker et al., 2017) and weaknesses (e.g., potential sample bias Arigo et al., 2018). However, due to the ongoing pandemic, this recruitment strategy was the most feasible way to access primary school educators without overburdening them. The study recognises that at the time of recruitment within the UK there was a national lockdown and school closures. This was an uncertain and busy time for all primary school staff, which was likely to have impacted the number of participants recruited in the study. Nevertheless, varied dissemination strategies and options for feedback (online interview and questionnaire format) successfully facilitated the recruitment of primary school educators into the study.

7.3.5 Design

Data was collected from qualified and trainee teachers, and teaching assistants for primary years, by both qualitative one-to-one interviews and quantitative online surveys in order to cross-validate different approaches to the data. As described in Chapter 3, using these mixed methods helps capture different dimensions for triangulation and suits the broader mixed methods approach within this PhD. A qualitative concurrent 'think aloud' interview method (Ericsson & Simon, 1984) was used in order to elicit rich feedback on the support guide. Alongside this, an online survey including an adapted version of the e-Health Questionnaire and NHS Friends and Family Test (FFT), was used in order to gain a broad overview via quantitative feedback. For both feedback methods, demographic data was collected. These will all be described below.

Demographic questions

Demographic questions collected information regarding participants' age, gender, and ethnicity. Additionally, all school staff were asked (if applicable) their years of qualified teaching/trainee teaching/teaching assisting experience, the number of primary schools taught in (including placements schools), the year groups taught, and the country/countries taught in. These were collated to outline the demographics of the sample.

Qualitative feedback

Concurrent think aloud method. The concurrent think-aloud (CTA) method is a qualitative form of data collection often called 'usability testing' (Yardley et al., 2015a), and is employed to understand users' cognitive processes in-the-moment whilst interacting with a stimulus for the first time (Ericsson & Simon, 1984). CTA is advocated as a suitable data collection method within a person-based approach (Yardley et al., 2015a). Think-aloud protocols are widely used in usability testing to provide detailed feedback on products such as websites, interfaces and information documents (Haak, Jong & Schellens, 2003). The basic aim of the think-aloud protocol is that participants are asked to constantly verbalise their thoughts whilst engaging in the task (Peute, de Keizer & Jaspers, 2015). Therefore, participants were asked to engage with the prototype support guide as they would normally and 'think-aloud' as they viewed it, identifying in-the-moment aspects that could be improved for other teachers and primary school staff. The CTA method was used because it allows participants to reason about their interactive decisions and thought processes whilst observing the prototype support guide for the first time. This can provide valuable insights into aspects such as learning, relevance and relatability whilst they are engaging in the task. Further, it was felt the support guide would benefit from the experience of teachers viewing it for the first time and understanding if there were any difficulties or points of confusion whilst navigating the prototype guide. The CTA method has been successfully used to optimise online health-based interventions (Bradbury et al., 2018; Heath et al., 2019; Yardley, Morrison, Andreou, Joseph & Little, 2010)

The specifics of how to undertake the CTA method has been contested in the literature. Some researchers have advised very general instructions to '*think aloud and say everything that passes through your head'* are important and that changing this format may impact the structure of the process (Ericsson & Simon, 1984). However, a study by Cotton and Gresty (2006), which was one of the first to consider the role of CTA within the education literature, found these instructions alone made it difficult for participants to articulate their thought processes. Therefore, the authors advocated for the inclusion of prompt questions for participants to focus their attention during the CTA task (Cotton & Gresty, 2006). This is particularly problematic for stimuli which has lots of text, as it can be difficult for people to read and verbalise their thoughts at the same time. Although the prototype support guide is brief, due to some of the large sections of text, it was felt it would be beneficial to include prompt questions to guide participants. Thus, participants were provided with the broad CTA

instructions to '*try to think-aloud—talk as much as you can about what is going through your head as you use the resource*,' and during moments of silence a number of standardised prompts were provided (see Appendix D.iv for interview instructions and questions). The prompt questions were also used to gain specific feedback from all participants about various factors related to the guide (e.g., language, imagery, and practicalities).

Open ended questions. At the end of the online survey, participants were invited to openly comment on what they felt was '*good*' about the guide and what they thought could '*be improved.*'

Quantitative feedback

e-Health Impact Questionnaire. The e-health Impact Questionnaire (eHIQ) (Kelly, Jenkinson & Ziebland, 2013) is a self-report measure originally designed to assess the effects of online websites containing health information (Kelly, Ziebland & Jenkinson, 2015). The questionnaire has two parts, the eHIQ-Part 1 and e-HIQ-Part 2. The current study did not include the first part, as the eHIQ-Part 1 includes 11 items measuring general attitudes towards using websites on the internet to access information. Given the prototype support guide may not be accessed solely online, this was not deemed an appropriate scale for this study. The eHIQ-Part 2 has a total of 26 items and consists of three subscales asking for participants views on a health-related website under examination. The three subscales include 1) confidence and identification – confidence to discuss health with others and the ability to identify with the content, 2) information and presentation – trust and suitability of the content 3) understanding and motivation – learning about relevant information and the desire to take action after engaging in the content. As this study was assessing participants' views on a support guide to help teachers on the topic of appearance diversity, rather than participants' views regarding a health-related website, the questions were adapted to reflect this. Specifically, 'website' was changed to 'guide,' and 'my health' to 'my teaching of the topic.' For example, the original item '*The website encourages me to take actions that could be beneficial to my health*' was changed to '*The guide encourages me to take actions that could be beneficial to my own teaching of this topic.'* Previous studies have successfully adapted the e-HIQ questionnaire to reflect online support in areas such as smoking cessation (Powell et al., 2016) and peer support for parents of children with a burn (Heath et al., 2019). Participants rated on a scale from (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree. A previous study by Kelly et al. (2015) evidenced the e-HIQ-Part 2 has high internal consistency with

adults in the UK (subscale 1 $\alpha = .92$, 2 $\alpha = .89$ and 3 $\alpha = .90$). The current study also found high internal consistency overall $\alpha = .97$, with the Cronbach's α following a similar pattern for each subscale (1 $\alpha = .94$, 2 $\alpha = .87$ and 3 $\alpha = .95$).

NHS Friends and Family Test. The Friends and Family Test (FFT) is used within the NHS to give service-users an opportunity to submit feedback. The FFT was launched and introduced to the National Health Service (NHS) in 2013 and was intended to identify areas for improvement in order to drive change and opportunities for improvements in quality of patient care in England (NHS, 2020). The FFT is a high-profile tool which has been promoted as a performance indicator (Department of Health and Social Care, 2013). The test uses a simple question which asks how likely the user is to recommend the service to friends and family. The responses range from (1) extremely unlikely to (5) extremely likely. This widely used scale was adapted to reflect the teachers as users in the study and included the support guide as the 'service' which was being rated, '*How likely are you to recommend this support guide to fellow teachers if they needed support?*'

7.3.6 Procedure

Study information was disseminated via various recruitment channels, as described in the recruitment section above. For the online feedback survey, participants were provided with a link to a Qualtrics survey from the recruitment advertisement. Any interested participants were presented with the study's information, statement of privacy notice and consent (Appendix D.v) upon clicking the survey link. After online consent and eligibility was provided, participants completed demographic questions related to their teaching role (either qualified, trainee teacher, or teaching assistant). The guide was made available online via a clickable link within the survey, which opened a new tab and was presented in a pdf format. Participants were not given a specific timeframe to look over the guide but were asked to '*have a read through'* and instructed to *'make sure they come back to the questionnaire as you will then be asked a few questions regarding your thoughts on the guide.'* The online survey asked the quantitative feedback questions and then some final open-ended responses (see Appendix D.vi for online survey questions).

For participants who took part in the feedback interview, interest was expressed by emailing the lead researcher. When participants emailed expressing an interest, study information and consent were sent, and an online interview time was arranged via a Microsoft Teams link. All

participants were required to provide consent prior to the online interview. Thirty minutes before the interview was scheduled to take place, participants were sent an email with the support guide attached and specific instructions not to look at the support guide until the online interview. At the beginning of the interview, the aim of the study was reiterated, and instructions were given to open the attached support guide. Teachers then engaged in the CTA task. Once participants had completed the task, they were invited to ask any questions. Participants who engaged in the online interview were sent a £10 Amazon voucher for their time. All participants included in both the online survey and interview feedback options were thanked and provided with the lead researcher's details in case they would like to withdraw or provide further comment.

7.4 Analysis

The quantitative data was analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), version 26. General descriptive statistics for qualified, trainee teachers, and teaching assistant were generated for both the e-HIQ and FFT. The quantitative data is presented first as it provides a broad overview of the feedback before the more detailed qualitative data.

A combined inductive and deductive content analysis was conducted on the qualitative data. Given that content analysis is a flexible method, which allows for evaluation of people's attributes towards a target or set of targets (Krippendorff, 2018), it was seen as a useful way to assess participants' descriptive feedback on the support guide. The content analysis followed the previously described established guidelines (see section 4.4.1). Initially a codebook was developed which reflected the information sought regarding the support guide, but also allowed the development of new categories based on participants' responses. Then the data was coded into either the pre-existing or new categories and the codebook was updated into a final version. All data was considered at a manifest level, whereby the obvious and visible components of the test were described and there was no further interpretation beyond this surface level (Kleinheksel, Rockich-Winston, Tawfik & Wyatt, 2020). These categories and supporting evidence are highlighted in the qualitative results section below. Then, following the person-based approach, and similar to previous studies that have systematically implemented feedback into various intervention materials (Bradbury et al., 2018; Health et al., 2019; Yardley et al., 2010) the data was displayed in a person-based changes table (Appendix D.vii). A person-based table evidences, based on the feedback

received, where modifications could be made to the support guide. This process increases the transparency of the decisions made and helps evaluate whether a change should or should not be made. This has been described as an efficient process and allows the coding framework to group areas for improvement in the guide (Bradbury et al., 2018; Heath et al., 2019).

7.5 Results

Participant demographic information and teaching experience is presented in Table 20. Six participants participated in the interviews and 24 different participants responded to the online survey. Therefore, details were separated according to these types of feedback options and an overall total.

Table 20. Participant's demographics and teaching experience. Mean (SD) and frequencies.

		Interviews (n = 6)	Survey (n = 24)	Total (n = 30)
Gender	Female	5	21	26
	Male	1	3	4
Age	Mean (*SD*)	24.17 (2.93)	29.13 (7.79)	28.13 (7.32)
Ethnicity	White British	6	9	15
	White	-	8	8
	British	-	3	3
	Black British	-	1	1
	Other (specified)	-	3 (1 Greek, 1 Australian, 1 not specified)	3
Teaching status	Teaching assistant	1	3	4
	Trainee teachers	-	11	11
	Qualified teachers	5	10	15
Years of teaching experience	Mean (*SD*)	2.17 (1.60)	3.35 (4.00)	3.12 (3.72)
Number of (primary) schools taught	Mean (*SD*)	3.00 (3.16)	3.09 (2.30)	3.14 (2.45)
Primary year groups experienced teaching	Reception	2	6	8
	Year 1	1	12	13
	Year 2	1	14	15
	Year 3	4	12	16
	Year 4	5	10	15
	Year 5	2	13	15
	Year 6	0	8	8
Countries experienced teaching in	England	6	21	27
	Wales	-	3	3
	Greece	-	1	1
	Australia	-	1	1
	Kuwait	-	1	1
	South Africa	1	-	1

7.5.1 Quantitative results

Data from the online survey (n = 24) were cleaned and screened. The data were not normally distributed for either the eHIQ or FFT measures, as assessed via Shapiro-Wilk test (eHIQ: p = .021 and FFT: $p < .001$). However, this is to be expected with small sample sizes

(Krithikadatta, 2014). Descriptive statistics suitable for non-normally distributed data with a small sample size were displayed for the eHIQ and FFT; these were separated for qualified, trainee teachers, and teaching assistants (see Table 21).

After viewing the support guide, the results from the eHIQ show that on average for all teachers the guide was scored reasonably high. Across all subscales, trainee teachers rated the support guide the highest, followed by qualified teachers and finally teaching assistants. Similarly, both qualified and trainee teachers were more likely to recommend the support guide and teaching assistants were ‘neither likely nor unlikely’ to recommend the support guide to others.

Table 21. Teacher’s median, (interquartile range) scores on the eHIQ and FFT.

		Qualified (n = 10)	Trainee (n = 11)	Assistant (n = 3)	All teachers (n = 24)
eHIQ	Confidence and identification	3.89 (.64)	4.00 (1.14)	2.89 (.00)	3.94 (.53)
	Information and presentation	4.13 (1.38)	4.25 (1.06)	3.75 (2.28)	4.25 (1.00)
	Understanding and motivation	4.00 (.59)	4.13 (1.13)	3.87 (2.58)	4.00 (.72)
FFT		4.00 (1.00)	4.00 (1.00)	3.00 (.00)	4.00 (1.00)

Scores on each subscale ranged from 1-5; higher scores indicate a more positive response.

7.5.2 Qualitative results

The qualitative data was produced by the CTA interviews and the open-ended questions on the survey. These responses were analysed using content analysis at a manifest level. Some of the qualitative data pertained to the presentation and overall look (imagery and layout) of the guide (e.g., “*more diversity in the images*”). However, other thoughts related to the content and application of the guide were discussed by the participants and overall, this formed seven topic areas: 1) relatability (26% of comments), 2) usefulness (21%), 3) novelty (17%), 4) language and comprehension (17%), 5) usability (12%), 6) suggested improvements (6%), and 7) future steps (4%). These categories are outlined and discussed below. Anonymised quotes are used for illustrative purposes.

1) Relatability

The topic most discussed and reflected on by participants was the relatability of the guide, with 26% of teachers discussing how the guide reflects their own experiences of teaching and their general agreement with the guide. Often primary school educators would consider parts of the guide and reflect on how that matched a previous experience. All participants interviewed were able to relate to the guide in some way and found the information acceptable.

"I'd have to say, as a teacher that is something that we worry about a lot. It is really difficult to think through everything you're saying all the time, because you're saying it to a big group of children, and when you say something, you have to think how this is going to affect each of them individually. It is definitely quite tricky to make sure you don't say the wrong thing sometimes." [Kate, female]

"I've had a lot of recent conversations where I've been stuck on what to say or not even stuck on what to say but stuck on how to start, how do I explain what this is and be relevant to their age as well." [Mila, female]

"I think most of us maybe probably wouldn't think about it in such depth to start with and then sort of those questions that you go through, I can relate to some of those myself as well, actually. So, I think on the whole, I think every teacher has probably done some of the dos and don'ts as well and had some of the questions. I feel like everyone would be able to relate to this in some sort of way. They've either said one of the things themselves, or maybe in that table (page 4) *they've said one of the things on the left side* (what not to say) *rather than one thing on the right side* (alternative suggestions). *So, it's just things kids come out with, I feel like every teacher will have sort of done something that's in this guide before without maybe realising what it was."* [Noor, male]

"I think personally you are really worried about saying the right thing and we've just had a staff meeting about the new sex and relationships education, and it was about a three-hour staff meeting about which vocabulary can we use at what age and we all sort of said, we feel better now that we've got a guide of saying this is what we can say and this is what we can't

say and sort of having that back up, almost for if parents complain, you're sort of already thought about it." [Lina, female]

"Where it's talking about like 'say the wrong thing' and obviously the language and stuff, it is true, what is the right language to say? When the language is changing so much. If you think about someone of a different skin colour like how do you explain that anymore without being insulting? Some of the kids will say like... even if they're speaking about themselves, well, I've got brown skin and so-and-so's got white skin and you even have to question like is that technically right like or do we have to teach them certain vocabulary, so it doesn't seem like they're insulting anyone, so it is knowing what's right and exactly what to teach them." [Mila, female]

"I feel like I had a few, oh yeah, moments, like oh yeah, like I have seen that, or I have done that, or I know someone that's done that, sort of thing." [Noor, male]

"I definitely agree with the fears and anxiety regarding the topic. It's like you don't want to get it wrong either." [Olga, female]

"Explores prejudice you hear in daily life." [online, female]

Evidently, concerns over what to say were very salient for the teachers, this was reflected in some of their comments during the interview.

"This is so true. Language evolves, and it just baffles me. I'm like, "Well, what can I and can't I say. It's even when I'm speaking to you, I'm like, "what is the right/correct way to say things?"" [Olga, female]

"Yeah, not singling out anyone, within a past experience when I was doing my teacher training, we had a white class with one child who was half-caste. Are you allowed to say half-caste?" [Peri, female]

An interesting and positive finding was that often parts of the guide would invite reflection from participants, particularly where they agreed with its content and considered past experiences where the information was relevant to them.

"It's like yesterday, I had to teach LGBT to year 2 children because it's LGBT history month and I was just given a PowerPoint, I was not asked or told how to explain it, I didn't know whether to explain what LGBT meant because actually they're six and seven-year-olds so do I need to feed them those words that can be used in not a very nice way? And it was just being really careful about what you say and how you say it. It's been the same with teaching Black Lives Matter, you know, or just anything, when they ask a question and it's do I know the answer to that and how appropriate is what I want to say if I'm explaining it to them." [Mila, female]

"It's like I remember back in October I did a whole piece of work on Black Lives Matter and there's a display in my classroom on it. And I remember having a bit of debate with my teaching assistant, can we have a black background on a Black History Month display, and I remember that causing like a bit of a, oh I'm not sure actually, but I suppose it shouldn't do really, should it?" [Noor, male]

"I remember growing up, I didn't learn much about disability. I didn't learn anything about disabilities, and I didn't have any children in my class or in my year group that had a visible disability that I knew about growing up, and when I started working in a school, there was a little boy, and he had Down's syndrome, and I almost didn't know what to do at first. I was almost, taken aback, a bit, well, I was treating him differently in way, because I didn't want to get anything wrong, but I've worked with children with all disabilities now, and obviously you treat them all the same, but I think I wasn't educated growing up. So, it was almost like I had a panic thinking, "Oh my gosh, I don't want to get it wrong with this person, with the disability that they have. I don't want to offend them or upset them or do something wrong."" [Olga, female]

2) Usefulness

Usefulness was the second biggest category, with 21% of primary school educators commenting on how useful and helpful the guide is. Participants described a guide like this being not only helpful for them, but also useful for other primary school educators within education. They particularly found the terminology table, responding to questions and do's and don'ts helpful.

"I think it's good to have a guide, because if it crops up and you haven't thought about beforehand…" [Lina, female]

"I feel like I've learnt a lot from it, and it will become handy for teachers to have and access and even just have a bit of training on it, it might open schools up to saying yeah, we don't do enough on this and what we can do going forward." [Mila, female]

"It's everything that you could need, that I could think of that you could need." [Olga, female]

"I think it's a really sort of important guide to have." [Lina, female]

"I think it's been helpful. It would have been helpful, and I think in the future it would be helpful, because there's always the worry when addressing sensitive subjects, because I think sometimes you think, "What am I actually allowed to say?"" [Peri, female]

"It's informative, offers tips and advice, useful links." [online, female]

"Handy for primary school teachers, covering a variety of visual diversity markers." [online, female]

As well as this, participants also described how the guide would be useful for new school staff.

"Very helpful for people going into teaching and suddenly faced with a class of a million different children, it's just very overwhelming." [Kate, female]

A number of people who gave feedback highlighted the particular usefulness for responding to children's questions. This was helpful feedback as 'responding to questions' was an important concern highlighted by teachers in Study 3a.

"If you've got an awkward question and you're not quite sure how to deal with it, I think that can be quite handy, actually." [Kate, female]

"If you've never been in the classroom before, and a child comes up to you and says something, like... you're not quite going to know what to say, whereas if you've got them points, you can think, "Oh, but I've learned this. I've learned that I have to do this, I have to do that, I have to think about things." I think it's quite good." [Peri, female]

"I think the child question and answer section was useful and is the type of questions you hear in school." [online, female]

3) Novelty

It was recognised by primary school teaching staff that they feel that there is nothing currently available to support them on the topic of appearance diversity with a "*massive gap in education for this*" [Olga, female]. Participants reported they had not seen a guide which talks about this topic more broadly before, and reflected on how little the subject of appearance diversity is included in teaching more generally. Some described wishing they had something like this before they started on their teaching journey. Participants subsequently commented on the value of a support guide like this and supported the rational for a resource to help teachers on the topic of appearance diversity. Seventeen percent of the comments pertained to the guide's novelty.

"*I really wish I'd read something like this when I started."* [Kate, female]

"*I've not seen anything like it."* [Lina, female]

[Interviewer] *Have you ever seen, or do you know of any other support guide like this that kind of targets this?* [Participant],*"No, nothing. So, yeah, that's why I definitely feel like there should be something that supports the teachers and children, I think."* [Kate, female]

"*Like the support guide says, you're never really taught any of this stuff so how do you talk about someone with a different appearance and if a child was to say one of these words, you'd know how to advise them*." [Mila, female]

"*It's not something that you're trained to think about, so it's almost like you have to learn when you come across it."* [Olga, female]

"*To be fair, I'd never thought of this until I've read it."* [Noor, male]

"The conversations aren't had enough, and it is something that you don't learn unless you choose to learn about it, or you know go forward with it so it would be something interesting." [Mila, female].

"I almost wish I had this before, because I think I learned the hard way a little bit and I was saying stuff and I didn't upset them (children with a diverse appearance)*, but I thought after, "oh God, you shouldn't have said that" and they were fine, but still it wasn't right necessarily the way that I approached it, and it's almost that I had to get it wrong to then get it right? Due to lack of training, so actually if there is the option of having something that you can look at, then that's just so helpful."* [Olga, female]

"*It covered topics not usually covered when looking at diversity - e.g., scarring*" [Online, female]

4) Language and comprehension

Comments pertaining to the language used in the guide and how clear the guide was to understand made up 17% of participant responses. Given the guide was largely based on the results from Study 3a, where participants were concerned with 'saying the wrong thing,' there was subsequently a heavy focus on language. Therefore, teachers commented on use of their own language, and the appropriateness of the language support provided.

"I think the main thing for me is the language. I think I'd personally feel a lot more comfortable having these discussions if I'm sort of clear in my head of this is how I should respond, and this is the language that I should use. I think that's the thing, I'd feel more comfortable having the discussions." [Lina, female]

"It's very clear and easy to understand." [Mila, female]

"I don't want to say dumbs it down. but sort of like makes it into not government language, into human language." [Noor, male]

"I think it all makes sense, and it's all really clear, and it's broken down in a way that is easy to read, but one thing… so obviously being a teacher, I do quite a lot of reading on different subjects, and some of it is just a load of waffle, and it's painful and then you just switch off. Whereas that's direct, to the point, it's got the examples there to support you. It's very clear and concise." [Olga, female]

"Like the use of different language." [online, female]

"Clear and detailed information. I can see that word choices had been thought about clearly. You were sensitive around choice of language - great!" [online, female]

Some primary school educators mentioned not having come across the term 'appearance diversity' before and praised the guide for its clear definition.

"I like how it's got an overview of what it actually is as well, because I'll be honest, I wasn't entirely sure what was meant by appearance diversity, so it's nice that you've got the brief overview." [Lina, female]

"I think that definition's (appearance diversity) *quite handy as well, because I wasn't actually sure what it was at the start, because I think at first when I first read the title on that first page, I was like, oh, don't really know anything about this. But thinking about it now actually when it talks about sort of the burns, the eczema, the learning difficulties, I have kids in my class who have those. So, they will be classed as that, wouldn't they?"* [Noor, male]

Participants also expressed some confusion over the clarity of the quotes used in the guide and were unsure if these were from teachers.

"So, the first quote, I'm not sure I fully understand it, really. Is it somebody saying that? Is it an opinion?" [Kate, female]

"I don't think it's as clear as you go through it if it's based on experience, if I'm honest. just clarifying that it was actually quotes. Is it?" [Lina, female]

There was also some discussion on the title and how it could be improved to make it more appealing to teachers.

"I think the title sort of says it as it is. It tells you what it's about. I don't know if maybe... I'm just thinking, at the school I work in, sort of the average age of a teacher there is like late 20s. We're all like quite a young staff group there. I don't know if maybe the sort of the support guide for school staff, some of them might it sounds a little bit like it's going to be wordy and very official." [Noor, male]

Finally, some teachers provided useful feedback on the specific language used within the guide.

"The language around gender, specifically where it said, "born male and is now female". Working with others in the LGBTQ community the most inclusive language to use here to my understanding is "assigned male/female at birth." [Online, female]

"The only thing I'd say is with the wording of the "Why is Freddie fat?" part, this word is linked with lots of negative stereotypes. It would depend what age the child is that's asking, and whether they'd know what a stereotype is, and then whether you'd get into a different conversation, and you'd completely avoid the point. it just depends what age it is though, if you're talking to, like maybe with even a Year 3/4... Might not even know what a stereotype is and I know quite a lot of adults don't know what stereotypes are as well, to be fair." [Peri, female]

5) *Usability*

Primary school educators also discussed the usability of the guide. This category reflected how they would like to use and access a guide like this going forward and constituted 12% of the comments. Participants discussed many ways to use the guide, including online, in a training module, printed out in staff rooms, for In Service Training (InSeT) days and

meetings to begin conversations, as a "*whole school approach*" [Noor, male] and used to actually teach the topic to children.

"I think, like, if we did something like this as a school for, like, an inset day, and actually spent some time being open as teachers and discussing things together, and actually spending some time properly, like, going into this, I think it could change people's mindset a little bit and know maybe how they should broach things. I think it's definitely something that would be really helpful to, like… I'm just thinking from, like, me reading this, I think it could be helpful if my whole staff did this rather than just me… So that we kind of have a bit of an idea that we've gone through a guide together, this is how we deal with these kinds of questions so that we all deal with it in the same way, because you don't want, like, one adult being different to different adults, I guess. We all want to respond in a similar way." [Kate, female]

"I think if we had that up on our board and we were discussing things like that, I think it would be a good way to start a conversation." [Kate, female]

"I know at our school we sort of have like the SharePoint on the computers so I think you can save files to that so like a lot of our SEN stuff that multiple teachers or support staff might use, we sort of save it to the shared drive and then everybody has access to that. So, I can just sort of imagine a folder in our shared drive sort of saying, "guidance," and then you can open that up and then everybody can sort of access that on their own computers." [Lina, female]

"When we learn things like this, we often take it into planning meetings so if we were to see something that we thought was useful we'd take it into our year-group planning meeting. And we do have staff meetings every week as well so it would be something that I think people would be interested in giving forward to SLT, senior leadership team, and saying like this is not addressed enough in school, can we have something a bit further on this, and sharing it with them and even then if they took it forward and just put it in the staff room or they might address it on like a meeting, I think that would be very helpful for everyone and then everyone's kind of opened up." [Mila, female]

"I'm just thinking about school environment. In the staffroom we have sort of like a safeguarding and inclusion board on the right as you walk in. I feel like if this was sort of like printed and binded and in a folder on that wall, a copy in there for people to see or on sort of like the policy section of the website maybe for a school. We have like a staff shared drive thing, which has got everything on it, so on there. And making teachers aware of it and maybe sharing it at like a staff meeting or a briefing or something would be quite handy to get the word out there a little bit." [Noor, male]

"This is something that I would take to my head to discuss, because she's relatively new, and she straight away was, like "this school is just not culturally diverse," and she was straight away off the bat, "we need to change that," so I think this would be something that she'd be really interested in." [Olga, female]

"I'd actually think that would be quite helpful within, like, a teacher training part." [Peri, female]

Study 3a highlighted that because the topic is not a statutory requirement in schools and 'it is down to the schools to teach it,' this leads to wide variation in the way the topic is addressed, as well as potential avoidance of the topic. Thus, it is extremely helpful to hear that the support guide was likely to be used in many ways. It is particularly useful to know that primary school educators would use the guide as a tool to start conversations on the topic, as this is something that the guide is targeting.

6) Suggested improvements

Aside from the helpful improvements already mentioned, participants also described various ways the guide could be improved further. These contributed towards 6% of the comments. A number of the comments related to the addition of further information, including case studies, more terminology, how it effects students and resources.

"Case studies might be helpful, where you've got example questions. I don't know how you would get this, but if you had specific case studies of a scenario, but I guess you could make them up, couldn't you, where you have, like a child asking something inappropriate in class or a specific thing that is happening in class like a child becoming transgender overnight and

you've got to handle that. Yeah, the best way of, like, dealing with that and. That would be a very nice guide to have, actually, because quite often we have to make that up." [Kate, female]

"More information on how it can effect students." [online, female]

"More alternative versions to what to say." [online, female]

"Information on what to do if the correct language is not used by other adults." [online, female]

"Maybe a few resources. I think they're sort of what I look for the most... I've got this information, now what can I look at in more detail? So maybe some more resources." [Lina, female]

It is important to note, that whilst one participant asked for more resources, a large proportion of teachers commented "*there's enough resources*" [Mila, female] and "*I think there's probably just enough there to sort of like guide onto more*." [Noor, male].

Another participant suggested including more appearance diversities and a broader range of terminologies.

"I think there are some issues that have been missed (e.g., religious markers that can be part of someone's appearance, like head turbans, headscarves, bindis etc.). Similar with some key terminology that people might come across for ethnicity for example, like BAME, BME etc." [online, female]

Although, the majority felt the guide was "*the right length*" [Mila, female], one participant discussed how it could potentially be shortened.

"Yeah, I think it's about right (length of guide). *Possibly slightly too long, I felt. Like so I don't know which page it is, but the discussing diversity, I feel like that's sort of repeated a bit at the end. Yeah. I don't know if it's because there's more just sort of words on a page, but it is sort of quite similar to the end because it doesn't say about not singling out, but just*

not avoiding the topic. Then the languages to avoid, that sort of copied on the next page. I don't know. I just feel like that's a bit of an extra page and then the rest, I can see the value of all the rest. That's probably just the one that I'm not sure about." [Lina, female]

There were also two comments regarding concerns over the appearance focused lens within the guide and language on this. Interestingly, these comments came from two people who identified as male. Although this study only included a small number of males in total (n = 4), it is an important consideration that perhaps the identified gender of the teaching staff may influence how the guide is received and potentially used going forward.

"Answering the questions without an appearance focused lens. For instance, "Where is Leo from? (Leo is black)" the question doesn't mention skin colour so why is the teacher bringing skin colour into it. I have had kids ask me where I'm from and there's no malice there, I'm from North Wales. I think all the example answers to the questions force appearance diversity into the conversation." [online, male]

"The 'responses to questions' are vastly unnatural and also introduce as many problems as they try to solve." [online, male]

Consideration of all these suggested improvements, as well as the overall presentation suggestions, led to various adjustments being made within the guide. These were all presented in the person-based changes table (Appendix D.vii).

7) Future steps

Finally, some participants mentioned how a guide like this could be taken further and possible future steps. The comments equated to the smallest total of 4%. Majority of primary school educators highlighted the need to educate and support parents as well and even suggested having a similar guide for parents more generally.

"I think it would be really important for parents to have something similar, because I think parents are the biggest influence on children, and a lot of the children's views you just hear, like, their parents speaking. When they're speaking, you're like, "Oh, God, that has not come

from you. That's come from a grownup saying that," and it's hard then to train them out of that." [Olga, female]

"I think quite a lot of it is that the parents' views as well is expressed onto the children, and obviously we have to try and teach them an acceptable way, but if their parents are teaching them one way, and we're trying to teach them another way." [Peri, female]

Another participant discussed using the guide to create lessons for children about the topic of appearance diversity.

"The kind of next step would be, like as teachers, it would be if we were to sit down and discuss all of this, the next step that we would probably do is try and think about how we could plan some lessons for the kids, because I think it's great to have a guide for adults and how we handle it, but I think, for us, we probably now need to think right, how could we address this so that we're all delivering something fairly similar in the school but how could we actually address it with the children a bit more openly because we're bringing it up rather than they've asked a question." [Kate, female]

Future steps for the guide highlight the overall need and support for something like this and suggests that perhaps parents and specific lessons promoting appearance diversity for the children would be a helpful addition in the future.

7.5.3 Person-based changes table

As described in Section 7.4, after qualitative and quantitative analyses of the data, a person-based changes table was created to evidence where modifications could be made to the support guide (Bradbury et al., 2018; Heath et al., 2019). The feedback presented above, along with other comments related to the imagery and presentation were all added to a person-based changes table (see Appendix D.vii). This was presented chronologically according to the pages of the support guide, as this clearly evidences the location of where the change occurred. The table then included constructive and positive comments that were considered, with an outcome and reason described in the 'proposed changes' and 'reasons for change' sections respectively. Not all comments resulted in a change and if no change occurred, this was outlined within the table. There were a number of changes made to all

pages, such as making it clear the quotes were from teachers (to add more relatedness), additions or changes to the terminology (to strengthen the language), and including more diverse images throughout the guide. The final guide was developed and can be seen in Appendix.D.viii.

7.6 Discussion

Summary of chapter aims and results

The aim of this study was to assess the feasibility of a prototype guide supporting primary school educators to promote acceptance of appearance diversity. Participants' feedback revealed an overall positive response, with most being 'likely' to recommend the guide to fellow teaching professionals. Qualified and trainee teachers were more positive towards the guide than teaching assistants. Discussions of the support guide's relatability, usability, novelty, usefulness, language, suggested improvements, and future steps were considered. All feedback was used to improve the support guide following a person-based approach.

The person-based approach was selected as, in line with the aims of the study, it helps to ensure the intervention is acceptable, engaging and feasible for its chosen audience (Yardley et al., 2015a; Yardley et al., 2015b). This method helped this body of work create an evidence-based support guide, whereby researchers contributed their knowledge of appearance psychology and education professionals contributed their expert feedback from a teaching perspective.

Primary school education professionals felt the support guide was novel and that there was a need for a resource like this which broadly tackles the topic of appearance diversity. As discussed in Study 3a, despite the UK government highlighting the importance of teachers promoting diversity, there is little support for how they can do this. Subsequently, research has concluded more support and training is needed for teachers regarding various appearance diversities (de Boer et al., 2011; Civitillo et al., 2018; Nutter et al., 2019). When teachers are provided with opportunities to receive support regarding various appearance diversities, this can lead to more confidence and positive actions towards promoting appearance diversity in the classroom (Bowlin et al., 2015; Kurucz et al., 2020; Perlman et al., 2010). Thus, it is clear that a support guide like this can only benefit primary school educators, as it bridges a gap in

which support is needed and could potentially lead to less avoidance of promoting appearance diversity in children. However, despite this study evidencing that this guide addresses a gap, there is as yet no evidence that it would lead to positive changes in primary school educator's promotion of appearance diversity. An important next step would be to evaluate whether a guide like this does bring about positive changes in the classroom, or wider school context, in the promotion of appearance diversity.

Another important contribution is the addressing of language within this guide. From qualified teachers' experiences expressed in Study 3a, language and concern over 'saying the wrong thing' were important factors contributing towards anxiety of the topic. A study assessing pre-service teachers' perspectives on what diversity is, found they often hold a limited view as to what constitutes diversity, and this can impact their sense of advocacy, responsibility and efficacy on the topic (Silverman, 2010). Interestingly, primary school educators in the current study often commented on not knowing what appearance diversity was and were pleased with the clarification of this definition. This also links with Study 3a, whereby teachers conceptualised appearance diversity in various ways. This research supports an important recommendation regarding implications for practice made by Silverman (2010) that it is important to focus attention on the terminology regarding diversity in order for teachers to gain appreciation and a sense of responsibility to bring about change in this area. Further, primary school educators praised the language in the guide for being easy to comprehend and not using complex terminology. In an assessment of the overall readability of the support guide, the prototype had a Flesch reading ease score of 52.9, meaning a reading age of 14-15 years. This is slightly above the average readability of patient health information leaflets within the UK National Health System (NHS), which was founds to have a mean Felsch score of 60 (12-13 years) (Williamson & Martin, 2010). However, these materials are for primary school teaching staff and not the general public more broadly. Further, despite this raised readability score, the feedback on the overall clarity of the language from participants suggest that the material is easy to read, digest, and understand.

Participants mostly commented on the usefulness and relatability of the guide. Primary school teaching staff praised how helpful the guide was and often reflected on their own difficulties regarding the topic of appearance diversity. This is important as research suggests information which is relatable to the user is highly valued within interventions (Rozmovits & Ziebland, 2004; Yardley et al., 2015b). Similarly, a recent study by Abacioglu, Volman and

Fischer (2020) conducted in the Netherlands concluded that perspective taking (putting oneself in others' shoes) was a key factor in teachers being more culturally diverse in their teaching and suggests including perspective taking experience in professional development programmes would benefit all students irrespective of their appearance diversities. In particular, the 'responding to questions' section within the support guide was received very positively and resulted in primary school educators reflecting on their own previous experiences with questions. This is a helpful example of perspective taking from the position of a teacher who is successfully responding to questions regarding appearance diversity. This section also emphasises the importance of inviting and not avoiding inquisitive questions from children, which is useful as research highlights if teachers ignore the diversity within their classrooms, then this can in turn lead them to make incorrect pedagogical decisions which may not include all diversities (Banks & Banks, 2019; Gay, 2018). However, research has also highlighted that for teachers to successfully promote diversity in the classroom, they must first have positive perceptions of diversity and consider it important for their students' development (Karatas, 2020). Although this guide highlights the importance of including appearance diversity in primary school education and indeed aims to start these conversations within schools, it is important to recognise that primary school educators who do not deem it important in the first place may be less likely to engage with the guide at all. The guide aimed to reduce barriers to engagement by making the guide free and brief, in response to teacher's lack of time and funding for resources identified in Study 3a. Within the Centre for Appearance Research framework for appearance-related interventions (Rumsey & Harcourt, 2012), the current support guide for teachers would be a level 1, targeted campaign. Within the model (Figure 5), the number of people requiring the intervention reduces as the intensity of the intervention increases. It ranges from level 0 (general population and societal campaigns) to level 5 (complex, specialist-led counselling/therapy for individuals/families). The framework is not sequential and allows for people to begin at any level. Considering this model within the context of this body of work, it is important that primary school educators' needs are adequately addressed via mechanisms that are accessible and appropriate to them. Participants mentioned sharing information and materials at meetings and during InSeT days, so the support guide would be an accessible material for them to use within these contexts and reach primary school educators who do not deem the topic important. Overall, the support guide provides targeted, level 1, support, which bridges important gaps in helping to promote acceptance of appearance diversity in a way which is useful and relatable for primary school educators. However, in order to potentially reach even more primary school

educators, as well as those who do not see this topic as important, a general population campaign (Level 0), such as advocating for clearer governmental guidance on how to promote acceptance of appearance diversity in primary schools, would be a useful next step. This may also help reduce the fragmented teaching of the topic and the difficulties schools find in deciding how and if to include the topic of appearance diversity (described in Chapter 3a; Ainscow et al., 2016). It would be advantageous for the resource to be used in materials to support a more general population campaign. Overall, future research should continue to promote appearance diversity across numerous intervention levels (Parnell et al., 2021).

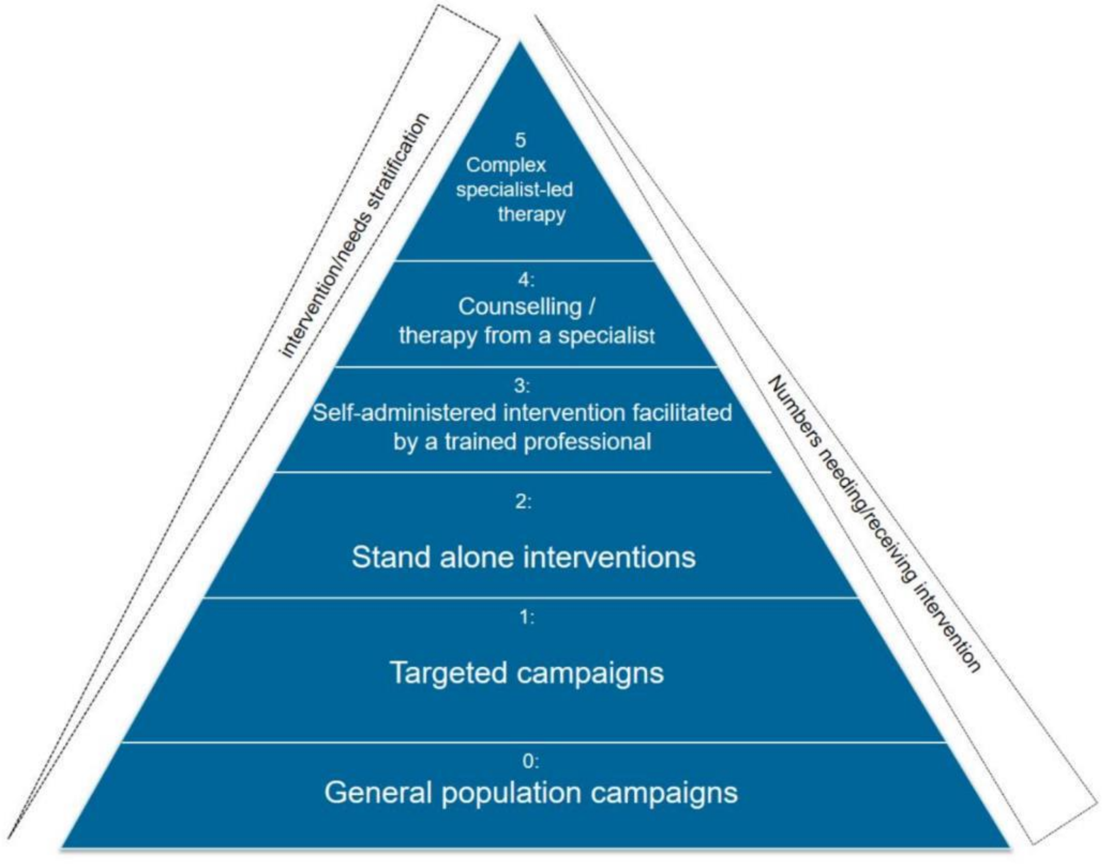

Figure 5. The CAR Framework of Interventions (Rumsey & Harcourt, 2012)

Despite all participants generally agreeing the support guide is feasible and acceptable, the trainee and qualified primary school teachers seemingly found it more acceptable than teaching assistants. As described, it is important to consider the role of teaching assistants with the promotion of appearance diversity in children, as teaching assistants are being given more responsibilities (Bovill, 2017), and often support pupils with SEND (Groom & Rose, 2005). Although this study aimed to recruit a range of primary school educators only four teaching assistants (one interview and three online survey) provided feedback. Therefore, due

to the low response rate from teaching assistants, it is difficult to deduce the exact reason teaching assistants responded slightly less positively. Previous research has found age can impact on teacher's attitudes towards inclusive education, with younger teachers having more positive attitudes towards inclusion compared to older teachers (Forlin, Loreman, Sharma & Earle, 2009; Monsen, Ewing & Kwoka, 2014). The research suggests teachers who are older may feel their professional competency and integrity are threatened by the introduction of this topic (Forlin et al., 2009). For these reasons, it was concluded applied practice and materials may require a slightly different approach to support older teachers to adopt inclusivity in their classrooms, so they feel less threatened by this topic (Forlin et al., 2009; Monsen et al., 2014). Although age cannot be deduced as the reason for differences in acceptance of the support guide within this study, this does highlight the importance of including teaching assistants and those from a range of ages in feedback of teaching resources. Similarly, Bovill (2017) recommends a cultural shift which recognises that teaching assistants are able to offer valuable input. The current study further adds that it cannot be assumed teaching assistants will receive a teaching resource in the same way as qualified and trainee teachers. Therefore, this study recommends that feedback be considered from a range of primary school education professionals, including teaching assistants, when evaluating educational resources.

Primary school educators also provided helpful suggestions for improvements to the support guide. Participants suggested improving the layout and diversifying the images used, as well as adding more content such as responses to questions and terminology. In response to this, the prototype support guide not only underwent changes to its content, but also had design and illustrator input. In a study developing a web-based intervention for preventing depression, user-feedback found the overall design of the intervention and its 'look' was an important feedback area (Kelders, Pots, Oskam, Bohlmeijer & van Gemert-Pijnen, 2013). Further, the feedback provided helped decide that the resource be created in a pdf document with clickable links. Research highlights that an eye-catching resource with clickable links can be explored more easily and immediately (Leong, 2007). Thus, the suggested improvements not only helped to further develop the content but also the overall look and design of the support guide. A final version of the guide, titled 'Support guide for school staff: promoting acceptance of appearance diversity' was developed, based on all the feedback provided. The support guide is currently hosted on the teaching resources section of

Face Equality International's website (titled, 'Appearance Diversity for Teachers' tps://faceequalityinternational.org/resources/) and can be found in Appendix D.vii.

7.7 Limitations and future directions

All participants were self-selecting and potentially motivated to address perceived deficits in support for primary school teaching professionals in this area. As discussed in Study 3a, this topic is potentially more salient to females, provided there is cultural pressure for females to look a certain way. Therefore, it was recommended future research should aim to gain perspectives from other groups who may be less likely to discuss appearance and therefore appearance diversity (e.g., males). This study took on this recommendation and received feedback from four males (one interview and three online survey responses). Overall, feedback from males made up a total of 13.3% responses, closer to the 15.9% of male teachers within the UK (GOV.UK, 2021b). Interestingly, this study found that via online feedback the male educators were rather critical of the support guide. In a study assessing gender differences and expectations of pre-service primary school teachers education training, it was found that male pre-service teachers prefer subjects such as history and geography, which are more concrete, compared to training on pedagogy and educational science (Geerdink, Bergen & Dekkers, 2011). This has been supported by literature suggesting female teachers have slightly more positive attitudes towards inclusive education compared to male teachers (Ahsan, Sharma & Deppeler, 2012; Goddard & Evans, 2018). A qualitative study by Gentili et al. (2019) highlighted that men found talking about the relationship with their own bodies challenging as it went against masculine stereotypes. Therefore, it could be that the abstract and potentially more feminine conceptualisation of appearance diversity makes it a less preferred topic in male teachers.

Similarly, the average years' experience of teaching was relatively low for all primary school educators (approximately 2-3 years). As outlined in this study's results, it may be the guide is more suitable for those new to or beginning teaching. It could be that primary school educators who were newer to teaching were more interested in the topic compared to those who had been teaching longer. This also matches the findings in Study 3a that teachers' backgrounds including gender and experience were potential influencers in teachers' anxiety of the topic. However, this study is limited in that it did not aim to examine the role of various demographic factors which may have influenced primary school educator's attitudes

and therefore cannot provide definitive answers regarding the impact of age, teaching experience and gender on these attitudes. Research is needed to address the possible influences of teachers' prior experiences and beliefs on how they approach the topic of diversity (Causey, Thomas & Armento, 2000). The current study would agree and additionally recommend future research considers potential barriers (e.g., the role of male teachers' beliefs and length of time teaching) in promoting acceptance of appearance diversity in educational contexts.

Another limitation is the lack of anonymity when interviewees were completing the CTA task. The presence of the researcher in this task may lead to social desirability. It is possible that participation in this task could mean that they did not feel comfortable sharing any negative comments towards the support guide. However, the CTA method has been advocated over other methods such as the retrospective think-aloud task (which requires participants to provide feedback on a stimuli after a period of reflection) as it does leave less time for users to buffer thought processes (Alshammari, Alhadreti & Mayhew, 2015; Donker & Markopoulos, 2002). Nevertheless, there is a possibility that participants may have overemphasised the positive aspects of the support guide. Thus, as recommended by Cotton and Gresty (2005), the CTA method was used in conjunction with more traditional data collections methods, in this case an online survey, which allowed for more anonymity. Both the interview and online survey responses were positive, and these findings are strengthened by the mixed method approach for providing feedback in this study. As with the overall approach to the PhD, this study recommends future research in the development of resources and materials uses a mixed methods approach.

As well as the future directions highlighted throughout this discussion, participants often commented on the need for a support guide like this to give to parents. This links with the finding in Study 3a, that teachers are concerned about the topic in case of difficulties with parents. Further, findings from Study 2 would also support that specifically mothers who are highly invested in their appearance might benefit from information on how to accept diverse appearances. As outlined in Study 2, there is little research into the attitudes of parents who do not have a diverse appearance themselves or a child with an appearance diversity. A recent systematic review found interventions to reduce anxiety for parents of children with an appearance diversity were effective (Costa, Thornton, Guest, Meyrick & Williamson, 2021). Despite this review being specifically targeted towards parents of children with appearance

diversities, it is promising that interventions for parents on this topic can be effective. There is evidently a gap in supporting parents more generally on the topic of promoting appearance diversity and this has been highlighted in primary school educators suggestion for a resource like this for parents. Therefore, it would be advantageous for future research to consider ways to support parents in promoting appearance diversity more broadly.

7.8 Conclusion

The present study assessed the feasibility of a support guide for primary school educators promoting acceptance of appearance diversity. This resource, by broadly tackling all appearance diversities, is the first of its kind and bridges an important gap by providing much needed support on the topic of appearance diversity more broadly. Primary school educators considered the guide to be acceptable, and agreed that the guide was a novel, useful, and relatable tool. Further, user-feedback led to important changes being made to the guide, making it more appropriate in both content and overall design for the target audience. As a result of this study, a final version of the support guide was developed and made freely accessible to primary school educators. It was felt this support guide would be a valuable addition to educators and help contribute towards the promotion of appearance diversity in children.

CHAPTER 8: General Discussion and Final Reflections

The final chapter of this thesis reflects on the work conducted, discussing both the process and methods used, the application of these findings, their strengths and weaknesses, and the findings in relation to extant literature.

8.1 Summary of the research process

Initially, this PhD had a broad scope of investigating ways to promote acceptance of appearance diversity in children. At the beginning of the PhD, it seemed logical to support children who have a diverse appearance. However, as the research developed it became clear that the attitudes and beliefs of others without a diverse appearance (e.g., children, parents, and teachers) all played an essential role in acceptance of diverse appearances. In order for acceptance of diverse appearance to be successfully promoted to children, it is important research recognises these attitudes begin young and that schools are ideal places to help increase acceptance. However, few resources of support were available for teachers in a bid to help them recognise and promote diverse appearances within the school context.

From previously working as a research associate on school-based projects, it was important for me to strive towards an outcome that could be applied and help improve support for promoting acceptance of diverse appearances within education, and add to important teacher resources which have already been developed for specific appearance diversities by existing charities and organisations (e.g., About Face: https://www.aboutface.ca; Changing Faces https://www.changingfaces.org.uk; and Show Racism the Red Card; https://www.theredcard.org). Since this PhD began, the charity Face Equality International has collated resources on their website related to visible differences, which includes teacher resources (https://faceequalityinternational.org/resources/). This is also where the teacher support guide designed in Studies 3a and 3b was released in May 2021 and is currently being hosted. The support guide has received great support (permission was given to share these quotes, they have been anonymised, but relevant details have been included for context). *"It's really great. Genuinely, at some of the right or wrong answers I teared up a little bit. I would have loved answers like these in my classroom and it makes me warm to know future generations do and will have answers like these in theirs."* [Young Muslim woman, who grew up in Ireland]. *That is looking amazing! It is worded so well and builds nicely into each*

point. The examples of how to respond to questions are great and the 'what not to say' and alternatives are just perfect for teachers! The guide is very clear, easy to read and access and straight to the point. This guide would be perfect for teachers to have readily available to skim and scan frequently to build their own confidence when talking about appearance diversity!" [Young woman, qualified primary school teacher currently teaching in England].

Identifying that there was a gap in what policy and intervention delivery expected of schools and teachers, and what was actually available for schools and teachers on the topic provided an important area for research and development. Embarking on this body of work meant I could conduct my own leading enquiry in order to create new knowledge in this area by gaining further understanding of children's acceptance towards appearance diversities and provide much needed support for teachers on this topic.

The teacher resource designed from this PhD, could have a significant impact on supporting primary school educators on the subject. Reflecting on the process of achieving the resource and new knowledge in this area, it is useful to consider the evolution of the research and resource development within this PhD over the three stages presented in Figure 6. Firstly, literature from various disciplines including social, developmental, and health psychology and education was synthesised. These disciplines considered appearance diversities differently and each had their own strengths and weaknesses, but importantly they tend to work within silos and appearance diversity is often not considered with a transdisciplinary approach. Evaluation of the broader literature revealed more research was needed approaching acceptance of appearance diversity more broadly and utilising a social model approach. Therefore, Studies 1 and 2 were designed to add to the knowledge regarding understanding children's acceptance of appearance diversities. The next step was to develop a universal (delivered to all pupils) school-based intervention for all primary school children in order to promote acceptance of all diverse appearances, however this could not go ahead due to COVID-19 (outlined in detail in Section 8.3 below). Nonetheless, given schools were the target for the intervention, teachers were interviewed to further understand how to promote acceptance in children. These findings and evidence within the literature highlighted a gap in support for teachers more broadly on promoting appearance diversity. Thus, a support guide for primary school educators was designed and tested, leading to the full development and release of the support guide for teachers.

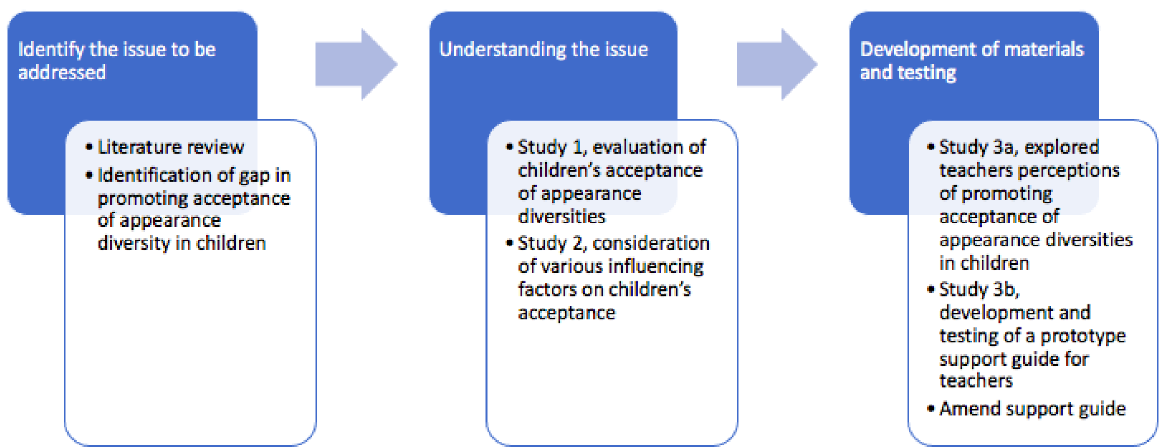

Figure 6. Three stages of research

In order to develop suitable intervention materials to combat the lack of acceptance of diverse appearances in children, the person-based approach model was used (previously described in Section 3.1). The person-based approach fosters an in-depth examination of how the user will engage with the materials (Band et al., 2017; Yardley et al., 2015a). There are a number of models which can be used when developing and evaluating intervention materials. In a recent systematic method overview, a number of methods for developing and evaluating interventions to improve health were considered and compared (O'Cathain et al., 2019). The research found eight categories of approaches to intervention development. The person-based approach was categorised as target population-based, where the approach is based on getting feedback from the individual who will use the materials. In contrast, the category of partnership included co-production and co-design, including active involvement in the stages of the production an evaluation process (Voorberg, Bekkers & Tummers, 2015). Partnership was the original approach for Study 3, which intended on using a Participatory Action Research approach. However, this approach was not possible due to the global pandemic (outlined in detail in Section 8.3 below). Other approaches such as intervention mapping can help develop interventions, however this requires the use of theory and evidence to produce an effective intervention (Bartholomew Eldredge, 2016) and the research on this topic required more exploration before an intervention could be designed. The person-based approach encourages exploration through qualitative methods in order to understand what the users would like to see in an intervention (Yardley et al., 2015a). Therefore, this was a useful method when attempting to understand the best methods for promoting acceptance of appearance diversity in children.

8.2 Reflection on research methods

A mixed-methods, pragmatic approach was employed for the studies in this body of work, as this was the most optimal method of exploring each research question and building a bigger picture (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Powell, Mihalas, Onwuegbuzie, Suldo & Daley, 2008). A number of reasons have been rationalised for conducting mixed methods research. In a review of mixed methods studies, 16 reasons for conducting mixed methods studies were found (Bryman, 2006), these were synthesised into eight categories in a paper overviewing mixed methods research by Doyle, Brady and Byrne (2009). These categories include aspects such as, triangulation, answering different research questions, illustration of data and hypothesis testing, all of which are strengths of mixed methods research (Doyle et al., 2009). These strengths were reflected within the studies in this PhD. For example, the research findings were triangulated, allowing for greater validity by collaborating quantitative and qualitative data. Additionally, Studies 1 and 2 had a number of research questions, with the concurrent nested approach allowing the qualitative data to add richness to the numbers, also described as 'putting meat on the bones' of quantitative data (Bryman, 2006). Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) highlight that the mixed method approach allows for questions to be answered which would not be able to be considered by quantitative or qualitative methods alone. Another positive, as an early career researcher, is it allows for exploration of a range of research methodologies, which can be an advantageous provided funding for research projects are increasingly showing interest in mixed methods research (Giddings, 2006). However, there is a great deal of debate regarding the continuity and stability of mixed methods research.

It is important to understand the strengths and weaknesses of quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods research, acknowledging the variances in each approach (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie & Turner, 2007). Quantitative methodology has been viewed as the 'gold standard' in science and is deemed the first of three methodological waves, characterised as the traditional science period (Doyle et al., 2009; Powell et al., 2008). This approach of traditional science subscribes to a positivist paradigm, emphasising that there is an ultimate truth which can be found via testing of hypotheses (Powell et al., 2008). Although quantitative techniques have been frequently used, they can also limit the level of nuance and detail provided from exploration with qualitative methodologies. Ignoring the qualitative

view that reality is created by the individuals participating in the research (constructivism) and discovered through the researcher's interpretation of these findings (Creswell & Creswell, 2018), means the researcher is likely preventing gaining a deeper understanding of these nuanced social and cultural contexts related to a research question. The influence of sociocultural factors were important when exploring acceptance of diverse appearances and therefore, should also be considered.

In contrast, qualitative methodology was developed in the second methodological wave, as the traditional science method began to be criticised (Powell et al., 2008). The qualitative approach was viewed as juxtaposing quantitative research, embracing the inseparable subjectivity from research. Thus, quantitative and qualitative methods coexisted, but as competing research paradigms (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). This is also continued by the assumption that the two research paradigms are not compatible due to their opposing epistemological and ontological stances (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Therefore, the third wave, defined as the current synthesis stage, where researchers began to advocate for the mixing of methodological approach (Powell et al., 2008), was met with criticism from a number of methodological positions. The incompatibility of quantitative and qualitative methods based on the history of these methodologies is a continued critique of mixed methods research (Doyle et al., 2009). Nevertheless, mixed methods have been said to move the field beyond quantitative verses qualitative and begin recognising and utilising the usefulness of both methodologies (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Evaluation of the strengths and weakness of these methodologies are the reasons this PhD employed a mixed methods approach and subsequently reflects the relative strengths and weaknesses of this body of work.

The mixed methods approach is also well suited with the philosophy of pragmatism, advocating researchers are free to determine what works best to answer the research questions (Doyle et al., 2009). This PhD was guided by this epistemological position and evaluated the research questions by how well they served the desired interest of promoting acceptance of appearance diversity. Pragmatism is useful for answering 'real world' questions and is not restricted by positivist and constructivist principles (Feilzer, 2010). However, this approach has been critiqued in the earlier literature for its degree of flexibility, by not having a definitive technique for conducting mixed methods research (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Another argument for the limitation of pragmatism is the emphasis on the research question and viewing it as more important compared to the method or paradigm

which underlies it (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). However, this body of work considered various strengths and weaknesses related to the methodology, including the paradigm which it situates itself within. Despite the potential weaknesses of pragmatism, there are many strengths including transferability to include the wider implications of the research (Shannon-Baker, 2016). Importantly, this PhD followed a philosophical paradigm which best suited the research aims. Each study utilised a various mixed method approaches under a pragmatist paradigm, which was viewed as a way of combining approaches to evaluate the questions posed in order to answer 'real world' questions related to children's acceptance of diverse appearances.

As well as utilising a mixed methods approach, this PhD also used various methods of recruitment sampling throughout. Studies 1 and 2 recruited schools from various locations in the South West of England and Studies 3a and 3b included primary school teachers and staff via online recruitment. All methods used opportunity sampling techniques, as this is the most convenient approach for recruitment (Etikan, 2016). This is especially important when recruiting schools and in light of COVID-19. However, as reflected in Study 1, Chapter 4, despite at first glance having primary schools that represent a diverse range of characteristics, there was a lack of recruitment of children from the schools representing lower socio-economic characteristics. Furthermore, Studies 3a and 3b had an overrepresentation of certain groups (e.g., white, young, and female). This methodological limitation of lack of diverse populations is one which proceeds beyond this body of work, psychology and education, as it is a limitation of research more generally. A call-to-action paper evidenced developmental psychology journals had a skewness towards WEIRD (Western, Educated, Industrialised, Rich, and Democratic) populations (see paper by, Nielsen, Haun, Kärtnerd & Legaree, 2017). Additionally, analysis of previous published articles in 2003-2007 from established psychology journals found 96% of participants were from Western industrialised countries and only 5% of the world population represented (Arnett, 2008). More recently, replication of this analysis from the same journals found a slight increase, with 11% of the world population being represented (Thalmayer, Toscanelli & Arnett, 2021). Although the representation is increasing, there is still a lack of diversity within psychology research. Despite the over-representation of these groups being a well-known problem, there is arguably a dependence on opportunity sampling and minimal evidence that the discipline is making a meaningful effort to include more diverse populations (Nielsen et al., 2017). Although opportunity sampling cannot always be avoided, it is important research takes steps

to diversify its population sample and when this sampling technique is unavoidable, that the limitations of this method and lack of representation of other populations are acknowledged (Nielsen et al., 2017). All studies, within the limitation section of their respective chapters, recognised how the sample reflected the general population. It is important future research also acknowledge and actively seek to combat the oversampling of those from WEIRD populations.

Finally, it is important to reflect on what I have learnt throughout this process and its potential impact on my future practice. Being able to work with different groups such as children, parents and teachers was very rewarding and it gave me the opportunity to consider various approaches to the research (e.g., language, ethics) for each group. Furthermore, before I started the PhD, I had not first authored a paper published in a peer reviewed journal. During the PhD, I published my first peer reviewed paper and learnt a lot from the experience. I discovered publishing can be a bit of a minefield. There can be a lot of anxiety and emotion around publishing (Sullivan, 2012), so it was useful to be supervised throughout this process and in future I will have a better idea regarding what to expect. Lastly, developing the PhD from a transdisciplinary approach has provided a good understanding of research pertaining to a number of perspectives. Going forward, the knowledge and application of these perspectives will help me to strengthen my future practice and critically reflect on my practice from a range of standpoints. Section 8.3 below details further reflection regarding the impact COVID-19 had on my research.

8.3 Impact of COVID-19

During this program of research, COVID-19 impacted the world globally. This PhD was transitioning between Study 2 and Study 3 (the final study of the PhD). Prior to the initial official lockdown within the UK (23rd March 2020), the final study within the program had been designed (see Appendix E.i for proposal) and ethics was pending approval (see Appendix E.ii for original ethics approval letter, received end of April 2020). The final study included a Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach, as described in the proposal and aimed to include a primary school (including teaching staff and children) in an iterative process for the final stage. The ethics for this originally proposed study received approval on 20th April 2020. However, as with many research projects in 2020, in light of emergent issues with COVID-19, this study was adjusted to suit global circumstances, given it was no longer

suitable to recruit primary schools into a research project. As described in Chapter 6, Section 6.3 an ethics amendment was submitted and approved on 29th June 2020. The adjustments included stopping of all face-to-face and online-only data collection and the removal of children within the study (due to difficulties ethically interviewing children at home without the presence of their parents). Although the final study could not include PAR, adaptions allowed for a person-based approach, which included in depth interviews with primary school teachers (originally step 1 of Study 3) and important feedback on a teachers support guide (as outlined in Chapter 7). Despite the obvious challenges posed by COVID-19, the program of research continued and was able to produce new knowledge and understanding in the area of appearance diversity and suitable next steps for intervention development.

Upon reflection, like many, due to COVID-19 there was an important period of loss and uncertainty. Adapting to the needs of the project whilst being concerned for many globally took an undeniable toll and is important to acknowledge. Due to the pandemic, there was a move towards accessing materials online and remote learning (Fontenelle-Tereshchuk, 2021). Thus, the support resource in Study 3b was designed to be online. This may have not been the case and could have been made into a printable booklet if the global pandemic had not occurred. Additionally, the research from this study had received funding via the University of the West of England Postgraduate Research (PGR) funding council to attend the International Congress of Psychology (ICP) conference in Prague during June 2020, this would have been a good opportunity to share research knowledge and potentially build upon this program of study. Nevertheless, this PhD was able to adjust to recent events and continued to conduct research in this area to help promote acceptance of appearance in primary schools.

8.4 Broader discussion of research findings

As discussed in Section 2.2 of the literature review, developmental theories such as social identity theory (SIT: Tajfel & Turner, 1979), social-cognitive developmental theory (SCDT), and developmental intergroup theory (DIT; Bigler & Liben, 2007), suggest children develop attitudes and stigma early. Study 1 supports these theories identification of early attitudinal development. However, in contrast the SCDT, which suggest negative attitudes develop in children until 7 years of age and then begin to decrease, the findings from Study 1 showed children continued to explicitly be less accepting towards appearance diversities even after

the age of 7. This is similar to previous earlier findings which have compared a range of appearance diversities (e.g., Sigelman et al., 1986). It could be that studies showing children a range of appearance diversities leads to more comparisons and therefore potential for less explicit acceptance towards certain characteristics. Future research assessing children's acceptance towards a range of appearance diversities should keep this in mind. As described in the literature review (Chapter 2) the SIT and SCDT do not account for the nuances in children's attitudes (e.g., why children are less accepting towards higher weight versus people wearing glasses). This body of work supports that these theories do not account for nuances as the theories were unable to explain why in Study 1 boys aged 9-10 years were less positive towards a character in a wheelchair. The DIT accounts for these variances by considering the influence of social factors on children's development (Bigler & Liben, 2007). The theory described how explicit and implicit cues can lead to stigma towards some characteristics over others. For example, the public health campaigns regarding obesity and its negative connotations can help explain how children develop weight stigma early via this model. Consideration of the theories for children's attitudinal development in light of this body of work indicates all are useful, however the DIT provides the most comprehensive understanding and explains why in Study 1 children developed attitudes towards various appearance diversities differently across the ages.

Study 2 considered the social influencing factors which may impact on a child's attitudes towards appearance diversities and Study 3a explored teachers' perceptions of promoting acceptance of diverse appearance in children. The context component of the bioecological theory (described in Section 2.3) explains how microsystems (e.g., parents, peers, teachers, and school) play an important role in children's development. Although this body of work could not fully support this theory, there was evidence to suggest the media can influence children's attitudes. The media is deemed a part of the exosystem, however arguably, with the development of social media and its consistent use within the home environment (Parnell, 2017; Tiggemann & Slater, 2014), it could be argued as forming part of the child's microsystem. Findings from Study 2 would agree that the media plays an important role in children's attitudinal development towards disability acceptance. Thus, the context component of the bioecological theory should adapt to acknowledge the ever-growing influence on the media in children's development of attitudes.

8.5 Areas for future research

Along with the future recommendations outlined in each study chapter, there are a number of research areas for future focus. Reviews of the broader literature on interventions promoting children's acceptance of diverse appearance highlighted current materials and resources often do not target children below Key Stage two (7 years) age. This is extremely important as synthesis of the literature across a range of disciplines, as well as research within this body of work, emphasises children's attitudes towards appearance diversities develop early (e.g., Bigler & Liben, 2007; Dion, 1973; Parnell et al., 2021). Thus, clearly there is a mismatch in the research regarding children's acceptance and what is available to promote acceptance in children. The lack of interventions aimed at young children may be due to the paradox that children should not be introduced this topic as it could promote stigma and segregation. This problem has plagued the promotion of sexual education in children for years (Robinson, Smith & Davies, 2017). The tension mostly comes from social and parental anxiety that sexuality is irrelevant and developmentally inappropriate for children (Davies & Robinson, 2010). For these reasons children's sexual education and the age this begins can be severally compromised. Similarly, the argument ensues that conversations about race should not be had until a certain age, as they may make differences more salient. Copenhaver-Johnson (2006) highlights how her young daughter was unwilling to discuss the topic of lack of ethnic minority representation in their school's books because the school was not *"an okay place to bring up such issues"* (p.12). Despite evidence highlighting children do develop racial stereotypes as early as 3 years of age (e.g., Katz & Kofkin, 1997), there are still challenges with education being reluctant to discuss race and ethnicity more generally and especially early years (Farago, Sanders & Gaias, 2015). Beyond specifically sexual health and race, this research evidences a clear need for the promotion of appearance diversities more generally which targets children *below* the Key Stage two age. This is supported by a meta-analysis, which synthesised research aimed at reducing bullying in children and found interventions targeting younger children were more effective than older children (Jiménez-Barbero et al., 2016). Nevertheless, this review only considered children from age 7. Fundamentally, there is a need for future research and education to begin acknowledging the importance of promoting acceptance of all diverse appearances in young children. Utilising the growing evidence from across disciplines that children's attitudes and stigma towards appearance diversity develops early, can help to build a strong case for the need to design and evaluate

interventions to promote acceptance of diverse appearances in children below Key Stage two age.

However, future research should proceed with caution as it is challenging to develop resources and interventions for very young children and also difficult to measure children's attitudes accurately in order to assess the efficacy of materials and interventions. Barriers such as language and comprehension need important consideration when developing measures (Dockrell & Marshall, 2015). In order to measure children's attitudes, researchers have devised many varying creative techniques, such as interviews including dolls to assess pre-school children's acceptance of disabilities (Diamond et al., 1997) and other data collection methods such as observations and teacher/parent questionnaires (for a review of measurements of children's attitudes towards disabilities see Yu, Ostrosky & Fowler, 2012). However, there is a general lack of consistency and validation of measures in this area (Vignes, Coley, Grandjean, Godeau & Arnaud, 2008). The large variances in early children's development (Dockrell & Marshall, 2015) and differing research objectives can make it difficult for researchers to implement a general measure assessing children's attitudes. Nonetheless, it is important researchers carefully select and design measures which help assess their research aims and continue to provide support for previously validated measures in this research area.

The interventions currently designed for older children lack controlled evaluation and replication. Further assessment with a comparison control group is required and more research is needed to further understand the effectiveness of current interventions aimed at promoting acceptance of diverse appearances in children over 7 years. Additionally, when promoting acceptance of appearance in children, it is advised research should consider appearance diversities more broadly. There is a considerable lack of literature to reduce stigma towards those who have an appearance diversity generally. Promoting acceptance of all appearances which deviate from societies appearance 'norms' will reduce the likelihood of one appearance diversity becoming salient in various contexts and could lead to general acceptance of appearance in children.

Furthermore, as outlined in the opening chapter of this thesis (Section 1.1), appearance diversities (invisible/visible and protected/unprotected) can intersect (e.g., gender and race). Previous research has often focused on a single appearance diversity and considered the

stigma related to that singular characteristic. However, arguably this approach ignores all the intersectional characteristics of an individual's identity. In a review of the empirical evidence regarding various appearance diversities, Ghavami, Katsiaficas and Rogers (2016) conclude research which focuses on a single appearance diversity provides an incomplete picture which can hinder intervention programs aiming to promote acceptance of appearance diversity in children. Additionally, research considering the intersectional influence of appearance diversities and health conditions which are typically stigmatised (HIV, leprosy, schizophrenia, and diabetes), found characteristics such as sexuality, socioeconomic status, and age influenced experiences (Rai et al., 2020). Within this body of work it is acknowledged that the participants would have had intersectional appearance diversities such as (but not limited to) weight/shape, sexuality, race, and hair colour/texture, which may have influenced their attitudes and experiences. Additionally, as acknowledged in the limitation section (8.2), it is important to recognise that, despite efforts to maximise participant diversity, the participants within this PhD remained predominantly White and potentially middle-class. Intersectionality has been acknowledged as an important consideration for fostering inclusive education practices (Bešić, 2020). Future research is needed to adopt a more intersectional approach to fully capture lived experiences and the various intersectional levels which can influence acceptance of appearance diversities.

Finally, as discussed throughout this thesis, a major strength of this research is that it evaluated research across a range of disciplines. As previously outlined, there is a lack of transdisciplinary approaches to this research, meaning disciplines such as social psychology and education work within their relative silos (Earnshaw et al., 2018). Synthesising literature across these disciplines highlighted how their aims are similar and there are some overlapping gaps which could be addressed with partnership. Authors have recognised the need to support and encourage interdisciplinary research in reducing stigma (e.g., weight bias, Alberga et al., 2016). This body of work would also agree that in order to improve research regarding the complex issue of acceptance of appearance diversity in children, research needs to work to build knowledge from a range of interdisciplinary perspectives.

8.6 Final reflection

The original aims of the PhD were to: (1) understand children's acceptance towards diverse appearances and (2) understand possible influencing factors and ways to promote acceptance of diverse appearances, before (3) developing materials which would help promote

acceptance of diverse appearances in primary school-aged children. Understanding children's acceptance of diverse appearance is important because stigma can have a negative impact on those who have a diverse appearance such as poorer quality of life and psychosocial adjustment (Masnari et al., 2013; Rumsey & Harcourt, 2004). Study 1 and 2 added to the literature on children's stigma towards diverse appearances by establishing weight and visible difference stigma begin developing early (Parnell et al., 2021), and the media can play a positive role on children's attitudes towards children with a physical disability. The research also added new knowledge that despite parents' attitudes not influencing their children, parents themselves hold less accepting attitudes towards children with appearance diversities and mothers with high appearance investment in their appearance are particularly less accepting.

After understanding children's acceptance towards diverse appearance and the possible influencing factors, possible ways to promote acceptance of diverse appearances in teachers were explored. Study 3a found teachers think this topic is important but are anxious about promoting acceptance of diverse appearances, as they are concerned about getting things wrong. Evidently, there is a lack of support for teachers to build competence to promote appearance diversities within the school context (e.g., Nutter et al., 2019). Thus, a support guide was developed for teachers on the broader topic of 'promoting acceptance of appearance diversity,' feedback was provided to optimise the guide in Study 3b.

The support guide for primary school educators is now available to people all over the world and has received positive support since its development. It is hoped that the positive findings regarding the acceptability of the support guide, as well as the active involvement of a range of primary school educators in the development of the guide, means those who work with primary school aged children will feel confident that it can be of benefit.

Developing a support guide to promote acceptance of diverse appearance in children has been incredibly rewarding. The guide offers information on what appearance diversity is, the language to use, and links to helpful resources. In addition to describing teachers' experiences of promoting acceptance of diverse appearance in children, this thesis has added new knowledge to the literature regarding children's development of appearance-based stigma towards appearance diversity and presented the process of the development of this new resource.

This thesis has provided a broad but critical overview of current knowledge regarding children's acceptance of diverse appearances from a range of disciplinary perspectives. Utilising both quantitative and qualitative methods, original research and new knowledge was created and interpreted from the perspective of children, parents, and teachers. This program of work has demonstrated the ability to conceptualise, design, and implement a number of research studies in order to generate new knowledge at the forefront of developments in understanding acceptance of diverse appearances in children, which resulted in a peer-reviewed publication and conference presentations for professional audiences, as well as lay communication for those who can help promote acceptance of diverse appearances in children.

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Appendices

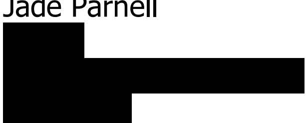
A. Study 1

A.i Conditional ethical approval letter

UWE REC REF No: HAS.18.05.158

30th May 2018

Jade Parnell



Dear Jade,

Application title: Promoting acceptance of diversity of appearance in primary school-aged children

Your ethics application was considered by the Faculty Research Ethics Committee. It was not given ethical approval at this stage, and you are invited to revise and resubmit your application as soon as possible. Please inform your supervisor of this outcome.

In your revision you should address the following issues:

1. The consent/assent for years 3, 4, 5 (8yrs, 9yrs, 10yrs) feels formal and we feel needs revision. For instance 'researchers' changed to 'one of the adults asking you questions'. So we would ask that the researchers slightly revise the documentation so that it is more age appropriate. It might be helpful to ask a teacher to comment.

2. We would like the researchers to clarify whether parental consent will override a child's refusal to engage.

3. The questionnaire for the boys is not complete, and the one for girls is missing.

4. The application form does not state where the field work will be undertaken, in the classroom, a side room or whether the researcher will be alone with the child

at any point. So the committee would like clarification on this issue.

5. There needs to be focus given to how a stranger (the researcher) is going to be introduced to the child as a safe adult, will the researcher spend any time in the classroom getting to know the children first. I believe the teachers will be interested in this as well.

Please make sure to highlight your changes in response to the review, so that reviewers can easily see the actions that have been taken and efficiently re-review.

We look forward to receiving your revised application, which will be considered as quickly as possible.

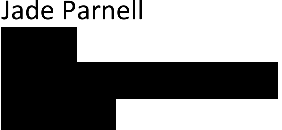
Yours sincerely

A.ii Final ethical approval letter

UWE REC REF No: HAS.18.05.158

22nd June 2018

Jade Parnell



Dear Jade,

Application title: Promoting acceptance of diversity of appearance in primary school-aged children

Thank you for resubmitting your ethics application, this was considered by the Committee and based on the information provided was given ethical approval to proceed.

You must notify the committee in advance if you wish to make any significant amendments to the original application using the amendment form at http://www1.uwe.ac.uk/research/researchethics/applyingforapproval.aspx.

Please note that any information sheets and consent forms should have the UWE logo. Further guidance is available on the web: https://intranet.uwe.ac.uk/tasks-guides/Guide/writing-and-creating-documents-in-the-uwe-bristol-brand

The following standards conditions also apply to all research given ethical approval by a UWE Research Ethics Committee:

1. You must notify the relevant UWE Research Ethics Committee in advance if you wish to make significant amendments to the original application: these include any changes to the study protocol which have an ethical dimension. Please note that any changes approved by an external research ethics committee must also be communicated to the relevant UWE committee.
2. You must notify the University Research Ethics Committee if you terminate your research before completion;
3. You must notify the University Research Ethics Committee if there are any serious events or developments in the research that have an ethical dimension.

The Faculty and University Research Ethics Committees (FRECs and UREC) are here to advise researchers on the ethical conduct of research projects and to approve projects that meet UWE's ethical standards. Please note that we are unable to give advice in relation to legal issues, including health and safety, privacy or data protection (including GDPR) compliance. Whilst we will use our best endeavours to identify and notify you of any obvious legal issues that arise in an application, the lead researcher remains responsible for ensuring that the project complies with UWE's policies, and with relevant legislation. If you need help with legal issues please contact [redacted] (for Health and Safety advice), [redacted] (for data protection, GDPR and privacy advice).

Please note: The UREC is required to monitor and audit the ethical conduct of research involving human participants, data and tissue conducted by academic staff, students and researchers. Your project may be selected for audit from the research projects submitted to and approved by the UREC and its committees.

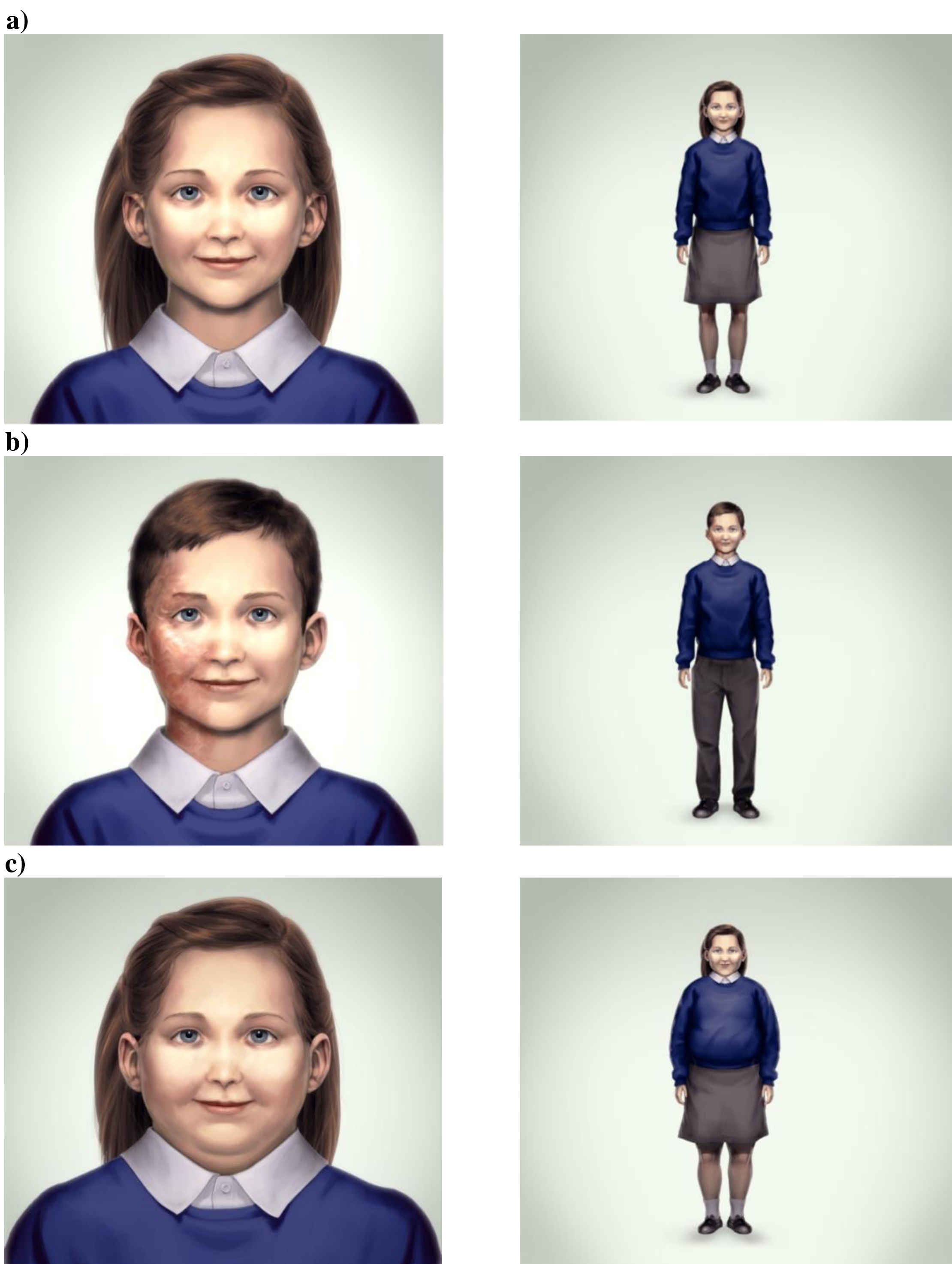
Please remember to populate the HAS Research Governance Record with your ethics outcome via the following link: https://teams.uwe.ac.uk/sites/HASgovernance.

We wish you well with your research.

Yours sincerely

A.iii Example character images

a) Female with no appearance diversity, b) male with a facial burn, c) female of higher weight



B. Study 2

B.i Parental paper questionnaire

P

Parent's questionnaire

(Questionnaire for parents to complete)

Your participation code

Before you start the questionnaire, we would like you to complete the code below to keep answers private. The code is the same as your child's so that we can match up your responses.

Please follow these instructions:

1. First two letters of your child's first name ☐

2. Age of your child (if 6, put 06) ☐

3. Gender of your child, either Girl (G), boy (B) or other (O) ☐

4. Childs school year (R, 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5) ☐

5. Last two letters of your child's surname ☐

Please tick what gender you are:

☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ other (please specify) ________________________________

Please tick what relation you are to the child:

☐ Mother ☐ Father ☐ other (please specify) ________________________________

On the next few pages, you will be shown images of children with various appearances, please read the questions carefully and answer honestly.

In society people hold stereotypes (ideas/beliefs) about others. These may not reflect your opinions, but please list some typical stereotypes people may hold about individuals with a facial burn.

____

How much do you agree with this stereotype you listed?

Not at all									A lot
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

____

How much do you agree with this stereotype you listed?

Not at all									A lot
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

____

How much do you agree with this stereotype you listed?

Not at all									A lot
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Please draw a mark on the line to show how much you think each statement best describes someone with a facial burn.
Do not think about it too much. Use the first answer that comes into your head.

Strongly disagree — strongly agree
People with facial burns are nice |————————————————|

Strongly disagree — strongly agree
People with facial burns are sad |————————————————|

Strongly disagree — strongly agree
People with facial burns are unconfident |————————————————|

Strongly disagree — strongly agree
People with facial burns are likeable |————————————————|

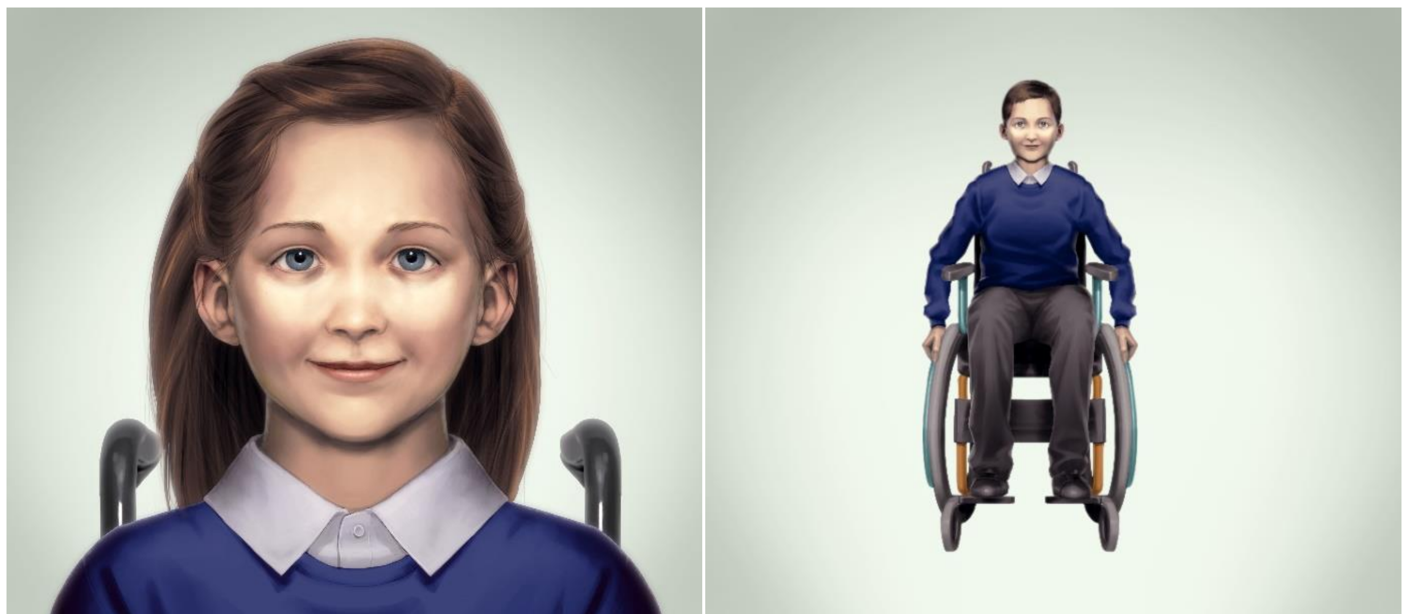
Strongly disagree — strongly agree
People with facial burns are unpopular |————————————————|

Strongly disagree — strongly agree
People with facial burns are attractive |————————————————|

Strongly disagree — strongly agree
People with facial burns are clever |————————————————|

Strongly disagree — strongly agree
People with facial burns are unfortunate |————————————————|

In society people hold stereotypes (ideas/beliefs) about others. These may not reflect your opinions, but please list some typical stereotypes people may hold about individuals who are in a wheelchair.



____

How much do you agree with this stereotype you listed?

Not at all A lot

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

____

How much do you agree with this stereotype you listed?

Not at all A lot

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

____

How much do you agree with this stereotype you listed?

Not at all A lot

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Please draw a mark on the line to show how much you think each statement best describes someone who's in a wheelchair.
Do not think about it too much. Use the first answer that comes into your head.

	Strongly disagree	strongly agree
People in wheelchairs are nice		
People in wheelchairs are sad		
People in wheelchairs are unconfident		
People in wheelchairs are likeable		
People in wheelchairs are unpopular		
People in wheelchairs are attractive		
People in wheelchairs are clever		
People in wheelchairs are unfortunate		

In society people hold stereotypes (ideas/beliefs) about others. These may not reflect your opinions, but please list some typical stereotypes people may hold about individuals who wear glasses.

____

How much do you agree with this stereotype you listed?

Not at all A lot

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

____

How much do you agree with this stereotype you listed?

Not at all A lot

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

____

How much do you agree with this stereotype you listed?

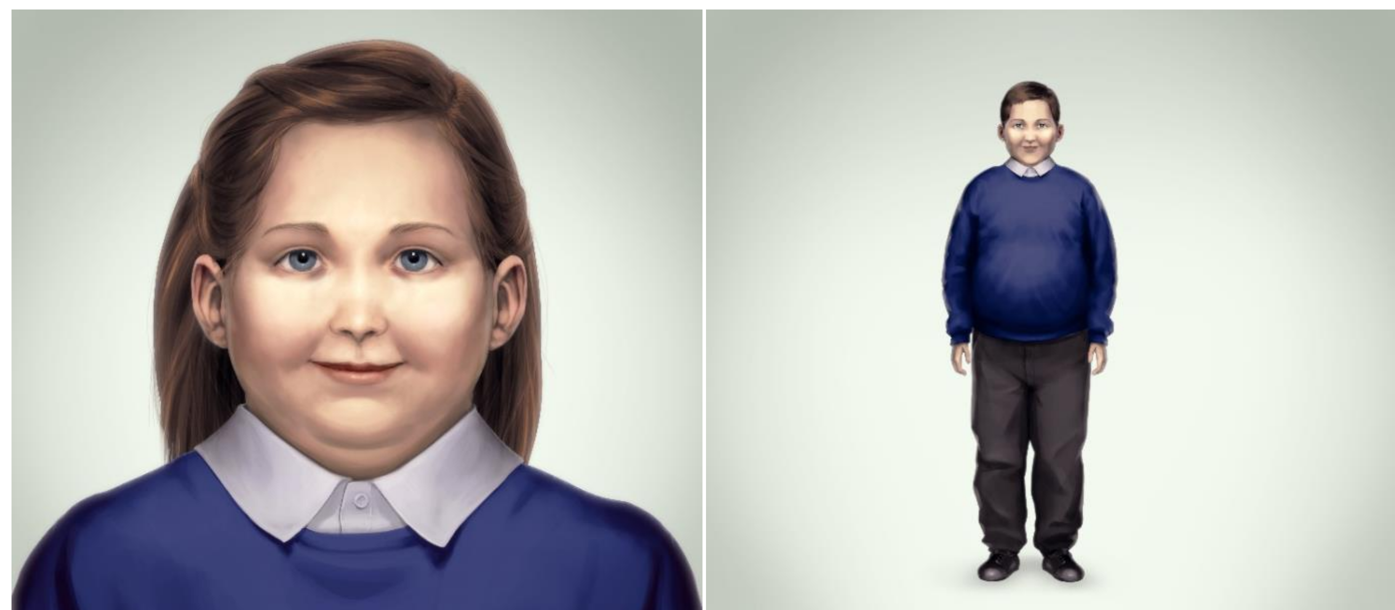
Not at all A lot

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Please draw a mark on the line to show how much you think each statement best describes someone who wears glasses.
Do not think about it too much. Use the first answer that comes into your head.

Statement	Strongly disagree	strongly agree
People who wear glasses are nice	├	┤
People who wear glasses are sad	├	┤
People who wear glasses are unconfident	├	┤
People who wear glasses are likeable	├	┤
People who wear glasses are unpopular	├	┤
People who wear glasses are attractive	├	┤
People who wear glasses are clever	├	┤
People who wear glasses are unfortunate	├	┤

In society people hold stereotypes (ideas/beliefs) about others. These may not reflect your opinions, but please list some typical stereotypes people may hold about individuals who are overweight.



____

How much do you agree with this stereotype you listed?

Not at all A lot

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

____

How much do you agree with this stereotype you listed?

Not at all A lot

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

____

How much do you agree with this stereotype you listed?

Not at all A lot

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Please draw a mark on the line to show how much you think each statement best describes someone who is overweight.
Do not think about it too much. Use the first answer that comes into your head.

	Strongly disagree	strongly agree
People who wear are overweight are nice		
People who are overweight are sad		
People who are overweight are unconfident		
People who are overweight are likeable		
People who are overweight are unpopular		
People who are overweight are attractive		
People who are overweight are clever		
People who are overweight are unfortunate		

Do you have a close friend or family member who…? (Tick all appropriate)

☐ Wears glasses ☐ Has a facial burn ☐ Is in a wheelchair ☐ Is overweight

Thank you for completing the questionnaire.

C. Study 3a

C.i Recruitment advertisement

Are you a qualified primary school teacher currently based in England? If so, we are looking to recruit participants for a research project exploring how to promote acceptance of diverse appearances in primary school children. The study will include an online interview lasting approximately one hour and you will receive a £10 Amazon voucher for your time.

If you are interested in participating in the study or have further questions, please contact Jade Parnell via her email

C.ii Teacher interview schedule

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR TEACHERS

Procedure

1. Make sure people are happy and able to talk online (e.g., internet is working, safe space to talk).
2. Introduce self (name, project) and explain the following:
    - Define: ‘A*cceptance of appearance diversity’* means appreciating everyone looks different and celebrating this. A ‘v*isible difference’* or ‘*altered appearance,’* this is when one’s appearance significantly deviates from what society deems normal e.g., a physical disability, facial burn, higher weight.
    - Aim: The aim of the interview is to hear in a bit more detail their thoughts about their experience of appearance diversity within schools and how this could be successfully promoted within schools.
    - Process: Ideally this will be a discussion, so they should feel free to respond as much as possible – either agreeing, disagreeing, or adding to something someone else. Make sure they are happy to respond to questions.
    - Confidentiality: The session will be audio recorded in order to access information at a later date, however no-one will be identified. Pseudonyms will be used in any reports or publications.
    - Voluntary: They can choose how much they want to say, and do not have to answer anything they do not wish to and can withdraw at any point without reason.
3. Ensure participants are happy to continue and facilitate discussion using prompts below.
4. When time is up, thank teachers for their support in conducting this research.

Questions/areas to explore:

1. Teacher’s knowledge and experience about appearance diversity

- Have you already taught any topics related to promotion of accepting diverse appearances? If so, what/when? How well was it covered?
  Prompts: - How did you find it? How useful was it for the children?

- Have you received any prior training or have any prior knowledge in this area? If so, what and when did you receive this?
  - How useful did you think this was as a teacher?

- Have you had any experiences of teaching someone with a visible difference?
  - If yes, how did you find it?
  - Did you feel you altered your language or approach to appearance in a different way?
  - Did you feel a stronger need to discuss the topic, or to avoid it?
  - As a teacher did you find there were any another challenges related to this?
  - Did you observed other children behaving towards them?

2. Children’s knowledge about appearance diversity

- How much do you think primary school children already know about appearance diversity (if anything at all)?
  Prompts: - Have you heard them using appearance-based language e.g., fat, thin, ugly etc. and if so, in what way?

- Have you observed any appearance-related teasing? And if so, in what way?

- Do the children understand we all have different appearances?
  - Have you observed them discussing their similarities and differences regarding their appearance?
  - If so, at what age do you think children begin to acknowledge they look different from others?
  - Do you think children's awareness of others appearance has an impact on their behaviours (whether positive or negative)?

3. Intervention pragmatics & practicalities

- Do you think (a program of study) an intervention to promote acceptance of diverse appearances at this age is necessary and why?
  Prompts: - What impact do you think learning about this topic will have for children? Teachers? School as a whole?
- What could be a good format/style for the intervention (program of study)?
  - What resources do you feel would be useful?
  - How long do you feel the intervention (program of study) should be?
  - Do you think one session would be useful/feasible or multiple?
  - Who do you think should deliver the intervention (teachers/researchers or other children?)

- At what age do you think the intervention should be targeted?

- What content do you think should be included in an intervention aimed to promote appearance diversity? What would be the key learning objectives?
  - Any useful messages?
  - Aspects related to information about visible differences, parents and/or the media?
  - Any which should NOT be included?

- Can you think of any challenges or issues there may be with this kind of intervention? And if so, could you please explain?

- Are there any other aspects you feel should be considered? Anything else you would like to add?

C.iii Teachers demographic form

Age: ______________________

Gender: Female Male Other (please specify): ____________________

Ethnicity: ___________________________

Qualified teacher experience	Response
Years of Qualified Teaching Experience:	
Number of schools taught in (specifically Primary Schools):	
Locations of the Primary School(s) taught in (e.g., Bristol):	

Have you ever taught a child with an "altered appearance"? This refers to any appearance that deviates from the norm (e.g., disability, higher weight etc.).

Please circle: Yes No

If yes, please describe the altered appearance(s) and your overall experience.

____

____

____

____

____

____

Do you had any previous experience teaching appearance-related topics before?

Please Circle: Yes No

If yes, please explain your previous experience:

____

____

____

C.iv Example initial coding

Extract from transcript	Initial code(s)
So, under the national curriculum we had personal and social and emotional areas to teach, so there was a specific bit about talking about changes and ethnicity and diversity, so we always had a little element, but I never feel that there has been enough guidance, there's not enough prompts in the national curriculum of resources that you can look to.	Current national curriculum Lack of guidance Issues with national curriculum
It was just those adaptions that we needed so we needed to make sure that all the staff were safe and secure in their knowledge of what would happen how we would care for this child in their day to day just going out the ins and out and you know all those precautions for the fire exits and all of those things that needed to be covered first of all and then we started thinking about in the classroom our adaptions for in the classroom to make sure they felt as comfortable as they could be so we needed to make sure that was all in place.	Practical implications Knowledgeable teacher Being inclusive
I think it started to make me feel more aware of displaying things and making sure you have got books where you see children who have other disabilities within books and topics, and those types of things and pictures you display around your classroom and your classroom environment, making sure that you've got those which you might not necessarily have referred to beforehand. So, it's more like making sure, that we then have books where there are children represented in that way.	Representation of different appearances
I think as they get older, they become more stereotypical because they're like oh you've got pink on or, I think there is a lot more of that. But it depends also from that family background, so the parents which are really boisterous dads and you know they'll say, right I don't see anything wrong with you know, with playfighting or whatever, because that what we do at home, but then we're like, that's not acceptable in school, and because you're that role models that's the role model that's coming through from school so they think it's acceptable so I think it all depends on their upbringing and if they've got older brothers or sisters who might even be older that might be putting their influences onto younger children, so all of that whole background but as they move through the year groups they definitely become more aware of children who might be overweight or their parents don't care for them in the same way so their hair is not kept regularly trimmed or they don't have a shower as often as possible, those types of things so I think as they move forward they do become very conscious of it.	Older = more awareness of appearance difference Parents as role models Sibling/family influence Older = more awareness of appearance difference
I think yeah it can only be more open and more welcome to discussions and it's okay for people to have anxieties and	Talk about it more

fears as well I think people need to understand that if they're not quite sure that we need to give them that voice to be able to ask questions and that's probably where we don't get to ask enough questions about that because one we don't want to upset that person but we don't want to seem naïve that we don't know so actually having open forums where we can have proper discussion following on from a teaching point of view would be really beneficial.	Not wanting to say the wrong thing Being naïve – not knowing enough Support for teachers to express fears

C.v Initial template

Initial template

(Version 1 - 26th November 2020)

1. Starting conversations early

1.1 Why?

- 1.1.1 Younger = more influenced
- 1.1.2 Secondary school is too late
- 1.1.3 Children notice difference early
- 1.1.4 Older children less accepting than younger children

1.2 How?

- 1.2.1 Subtly
- 1.2.2 Stepped approach, not just a one off
- 1.2.3 Increase exposure to diverse appearance
- 1.2.4 Increase empathy

2. Schools can only do so much

2.1 Beyond school

- 2.1.2 Impact of family, friends and the media

2.2 Difficult to fit it all in

2.3 Better the school than nothing

3. Being a 'good' skilled teacher

3.1 Teachers anxiety

3.2 Fear of saying the wrong thing

- 3.2.1 Responding to questions

3.3 Avoidance of teaching it because worried

3.4 Being naïve – not knowing enough

4. Definition of 'appearance' diversity

4.1 Does it include race?

Uncategorised:

Weight stigma

- Higher weight most stigmatised

D. Study 3b

D.i Study 3b Prototype support guide

Support guide for school staff promoting acceptance of appearance diversity

From speaking with teachers, it is clear there are concerns regarding discussing the topic of appearance diversity. This brief guide aims to support school staff to feel more equipped to discuss the topic and successfully promote appearance diversity within school.

This guide has been developed with qualified primary school teachers. All information in italics are direct quotations from teachers.

"It would just be better to be educated properly on what to say and how to teach the children."

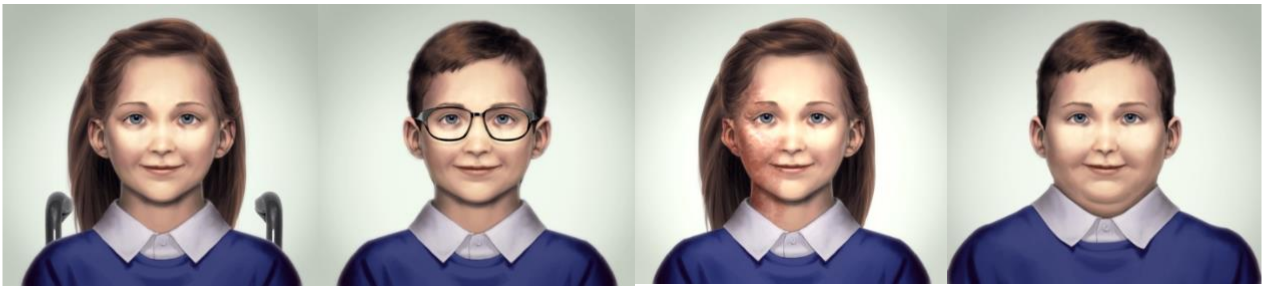
"We haven't had any official training. I think it would have been helpful and I think in the future it will be helpful because there's always a worry isn't there, you know, when you're addressing more sensitive topics … particularly if you don't have experience of something yourself."

"I think it's a big thing, I imagine, for everybody, especially nowadays when we're all striving to be very politically correct and fearing offending people, but I think knowing what language is appropriate and what you can and can't say… the best way to explain things to the children, almost give you like a do's and don'ts would be really helpful."

"I think more training is required for teachers. We've just been shoved in and told to do it and we do it the best we can but I'd rather do it with more training so we can give them a better understanding."

"It's such an important topic area, I think, for the children to be involved in and engaged in."

"I think it should be part and parcel of education, full stop."



What is appearance diversity?

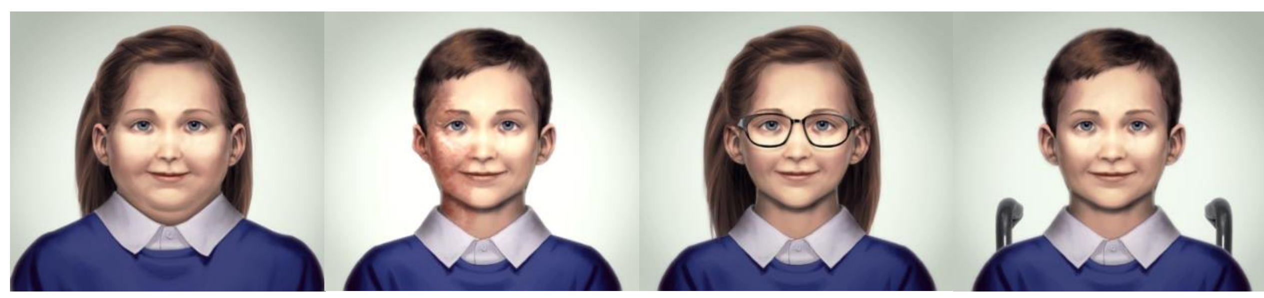
Everybody has different appearance characteristics, and no two people are the same. Promoting appearance diversity includes positive recognition and acceptance of **all** appearances, despite their individual characteristics. A number of characteristics make up one's appearance. Some are protected under The Equality Act (2010) including sex/gender, race, disability, religion/belief and sexual orientation. However, some are not, including weight, height, hair colour and changes to appearance as a result of injuries or medical conditions (e.g., burn, eczema and amputation). Appearance diversity can also include behavioural or social characteristics which may indirectly impact how someone appears to others (e.g., learning difficulties and socio-economic status).

Why consider appearance diversity in teaching?

Children as young as 4 years can have negative attitudes towards others because of how they look (Parnell, Williamson, Lewis & Slater, 2021). Young children's worlds are small, and therefore it is important to acknowledge and include all types of diverse appearances within teaching in order to tackle this issue at an early age. A UK government report tailoring The Equality Act for schools (2014), requires schools to engage in Positive Action to alleviate disadvantages experienced by those with protected characteristics. Although not all variations in appearance are protected, fostering a general acceptance of all appearances throughout teaching is a useful way to provide Positive Action and generally support children's wellbeing.

Aim of this guide

Although teachers are increasingly aware of the need to discuss and acknowledge diversity, they also express fears and anxiety regarding the topic. However, teaching staff often find there's *"no time"* and *"there isn't the money"* for resources. Therefore, this guide is brief and free for teaching staff to access easily. It identifies teachers' common concerns regarding this issue and suggests ways to overcome them, with an overarching aim for teachers to feel comfortable to tackle this topic in celebration and acceptance of appearance diversity.



When discussing appearance diversity teachers often worry about "*saying the wrong thing".* Understandably people want to avoid causing offence or sending the wrong message. Therefore, this section will acknowledge the difficulties teachers experience and help teachers feel more equipped with their language.

Remember:

- Words and phrases can go in or out of common usage, leaving people unsure about what is acceptable. This means that we all need to be aware of the potential to unwittingly cause offence and to be prepared to acknowledge when we get things wrong.
- This is only a guide and use your own discretion regarding each context.

Not singling anyone out

Teachers also expressed the need for "*some really good training on how to navigate it sensitively, so the child don't feel excluded"* and the importance of "*being able to teach the children about this without making it about anybody that they know or anybody specific".* This can be tricky for teachers if, for example, you have a majority white class and only one black child when engaging in activities for Black History Month. However, this should not mean the topic should be ignored. In instances like this, keep the topic broad and don't single out the child who is black. The same applies for other appearance diversities. Another way to address appearance diversity subtly is to weave it into the lessons, see the 'Do's and Don'ts' for further details.

Terms/language to avoid

Remember: context, legal guidelines and individual preference can also impact what language to use. Language evolves so this is not a set-in-stone list for all time. Broad groups of appearance characteristics which teachers discussed as important are outlined, although there are many ways people vary in terms of appearance.

Warning - There are some terms included that are considered offensive but have been included in this list for clarity and to explain why they should not be used.

	What not to say	Alternative
Characteristics		
Race	Terminology around ***race*** is complex. Race is drawn up on the basis of physical markers (e.g., skin colour) and like gender, is a socially constructed term. When discussing ***ethnicity*** this includes a mixture of markers e.g., physical: 'black,' religious: 'Jewish' cultural: 'Irish traveller' and geographical: 'Asian' to differentiate between groups. See Show Racism the Red Card for further details and a more comprehensive list of what not to say. ***Non-white*** – this term centres race around 'white,' it alludes to othering of other races that are not white. ***Coloured*** – historically used to segregate black people as a form of othering anybody who was not white. **Gypo or Pikey –** both offensive terms to describe someone from the gypsy or traveller community. The term 'pikey' derives from the word 'turnpike' a device used to collect tolls and meaning 'to go away from, to go on.'	It is better to refer to the persons identified race/ethnicity (e.g., ***black, Asian***) or ***People of Colour*** and ***minority ethnic backgrounds and groups.*** The term ***Gypsy, Roma*** or ***Traveller*** may be used, but proceed with caution as there are many Gypsy and Traveller groups.
Gender/Sex	Assuming ***gender*** has to be the same as ***biological sex – gender*** is a social construct that includes roles, toys, clothes etc. and although gender often aligns with someone's ***biological sex***, gender is not fixed and can be chosen and defined by the individual themselves.	Use peoples preferred pronouns. If unsure of an individual's identified gender and preferred pronouns, ***use their name or they/them/theirs.***
Disability	***The disabled/handicapped*** – describing people ***as*** their disability can be dehumanising and label them as their difference. ***Suffering with/victim of*** – these descriptors assume pity and negativity.	***Has a disability/has a condition*** – these firstly emphasises the people and then condition. The term '***disabled people'*** is also viewed as an acceptable term by the British Council of Disabled People's organisation.
Visible differences	***Scarred/Burned etc. –*** avoid labelling an individual by their visible difference (e.g., *the burnt boy*), this can be demeaning and label the individual as their difference ***Victim/tragic/unfortunate –*** there are a number of connotations around visible differences alluding to pity/negativity. Avoid language of pity when describing visible differences (e.g., *awfully burned, has a baddie on their face*). Descriptions of visible differences should not include these adjectives.	***Visible difference*** is the preferred use for the community who have an appearance altered either at birth or via an accident or surgery. The terms ***disfigurement*** is used in legal settings but is also valid. ***Has a cleft/birthmark etc.*** – Keep language non-judgmental and avoid adding adjectives of pity/negativity.
Weight	***Fat*** – although some activists advocate the term, it has a number of negative connotations and therefore is best to be avoided in an educational context. ***Unhealthy*** – avoid linking higher weight to individual unhealthy behaviours, these stereotypes are highly engrained in society and often lead to direct blame towards the individual. Weight is impacted by multiple factors which go beyond the individual themselves so labelling someone of higher weight as unhealthy is unhelpfully not including the bigger picture.	Of ***higher weight*** – this term is associated with fewer stereotypes; however, weight is currently very stigmatised within society and there are still a number of highly endorsed stereotypes. Ultimately weight does not singularly equal health, so avoid discussing weight with a child (whether lower or higher weight) and when discussing health consider ***all*** aspects, not just weight (e.g., mental health, sleep etc.).

Responding to questions

"When other children ask questions, I have to choose my language very carefully"

Children are naturally inquisitive and ask questions/make comments. When responding:

1. Consider if the person in question is in earshot and respectfully respond to these questions and not shy away from them.
2. Use matter-of-fact language when appropriate (e.g., 'Maia has a cleft lip' or 'Tiago is black') in the same way you would do age: 'Kahn was born in 2003 and is 12 years old'.
3. Chastising children for asking genuine questions or comments is unhelpful and can lead to further stigma and judgement towards certain appearances.
4. Don't judge someone beyond the facts (e.g., do **not** say: 'Emer has a bad burn, it must be awful for her').
5. Emphasise kindness and acceptance.

Example questions:

Why do they have that mark of their face? (related to a birthmark)

✔ They have a birthmark on their face. Birthmarks are something people are born with and can be any size, colour or place on the body. They don't change who they are as people.

✖ We shouldn't be asking questions about that. They have a baddie on their face, and it must be difficult for them.

Where is Leo from? (Leo is black)

✔ Leo is black. You cannot tell where someone is from based on their skin colour, so just like any of us, Leo could have been born here or anywhere in the world. We cannot assume this information until we actually get to know someone.

✖ Leo is a non-white person. I don't know where he's from, why don't you ask him.

Why is Freddie fat?

✔ We should not be using the word fat to describe someone; this word is linked with lots of negative stereotypes and can really hurt someone's feelings. Bodies come in all different shapes and sizes, it's important to remember that all bodies are good bodies and that we should not be assuming anything about a person because of their weight.

✖ Perhaps he has a condition, or his family don't feed him healthy foods.

Why does that person only have 3 fingers? (condition is unknown)

✔ I'm actually not sure. There are some conditions which people are born with which leads to a visible difference on the hands and there are some cases where people may lose or have a finger(s) removed in their lifetime. Because we do not know the persons story, we cannot say for sure, but it is important to not be shy about these things and make sure we take time to learn.

✖ We shouldn't be pointing out things like that, they must find it terrible so it's important to not draw attention to it.

Georgie wants to be a girl now (George was born a male but is identifying as a female).

✔ Yes, Georgie is a girl. Most of us are born either male or female, but gender isn't fixed and can be whatever we identify it as, so we should all respect Georgie and use the pronouns she would like, which are she/her and hers when talking to her.

✖ It's very confusing isn't it? He was George one day and now he's Georgie.

Do’s & Don’ts

Do respond to all appearance-based bullying the same

As not all diverse appearance characteristics fall under the Equality Act, your school may not have the same procedures in place to tackle appearance-based bullying regarding weight in the same way it does with race, for example. Nonetheless all bullying based on appearance can be harmful for children’s body image. A**ll** appearance-based bullying needs to be taken seriously with the same procedures followed, irrespective of the reason for the bullying.

How? Ensure your school has a no tolerance towards all appearance-based bullying.

Don’t speak negatively about your own and others’ bodies

It is important that you model to children how to be kind and non-judgmental towards your own and others’ bodies. Do not berate your own body in front of children e.g., “*I might stand up, because I’ve got a bit of a spare tyre, and I might point out at me ‘I’ve got a bit of a spare tyre here.”* This can be difficult if you struggle with your own body image but speaking kindly towards your body can have a positive impact on you and is actively role modelling good body image for the children.

How? Be aware of your own body image and beliefs, making sure to reflect on your own feelings and how these may impact the children.

Do weave in diverse appearances through representation

Consider subtly representing other appearances in the images you use whilst teaching – “*It doesn’t necessarily have to be a stand-alone topic to be discussed it could be woven through different elements of the curriculum. Sometimes I feel like addressing the specific issue, or the specific problem, can almost draw more attention to it and make it stand out more.”* A good place to start could be *as simple as showing different people.* Representing different appearances in books and videos can help increase exposure. This is important if you have a range of diverse appearances in your class, but also extremely important if you do not: “*If children aren’t naturally exposed to diverse appearances in their school, in their community, where they live, then later in life they may be less accepting or have less understanding or be more ignorant to differences.”*

How? Actively look for resources which represent a range of different appearances. See the resources section in this guide for a head start.

Don’t avoid the topic of diversity

It is apparent teachers feel similarly that this topic is tricky and are unsure how to navigate it. Teachers are “*worried about saying something wrong”* but also “*don’t want to seem naïve that we don’t know enough.”* This can lead to a mixture of “*wanting to tackle it but also, it’s kind of easier to just avoid it because then you don’t upset or offend.”* Avoiding acknowledging or discussing diversity can lead to further taboo and stigma towards certain appearances. Therefore, it is important school staff have honest and open conversations about how they would like to include diversity of appearances. These conversations need to be held in a safe space and allow school staff a chance to express fears and ideas for this topic.

How? Set up a support group with other staff to have these discussions.

Helpful resources

Charities/organisations resources:

Disabilities/Visible differences

Changing Faces: https://www.changingfaces.org.uk

Race

Show Racism the Red Card: https://www.theredcard.org

Body Image

Book: Body Image in the Primary School by Nicky Hutchinson and Chris Calland.

General

EqualiTeach: https://equaliteach.co.uk

Reject Racism	A collection of recommended anti-racism resources and tools. https://equaliteach.co.uk/for-schools/classroom-resources/reject-racism/
Free to Be	Celebrating LGBT+ Equality and tackling homophobia, biphobia and transphobia https://equaliteach.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/FREE-TO-BE-rev5.pdf
Outside the Box	A whole-school approach to promoting gender equality and tackling sexism and sexual harassment in schools. https://equaliteach.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/OUTSIDE-THE-BOX-FINAL.pdf
Universal Values	A teacher's resource for responding holistically to the requirement to promote Fundamental British Values. https://equaliteach.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/Universal-Values-Update-2020.pdf
Faith in Us	Educating young people on Islamophobia. https://equaliteach.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/FAITH-IN-US.pdf
All Inclusive	Tackling Disability-Related Bullying in Primary Schools. https://equaliteach.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/ALL-INCLUSIVE.pdf
Reflecting Diversity in the Classroom	A bank of recommended books for teaching about issues of equality and diversity. Early years included. https://equaliteach.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Reflecting-Diversity-in-the-Classroom.pdf

Sources of reference

GOV.UK (2013) Equality Act 2010: guidance. *Government Equalities Office and Equality and Human Rights Commission.* https://www.gov.uk/guidance/equality-act-2010-guidance

Department for Education (2014) The Equality Act 2010 and schools. *GOV.UK.* https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/315587/Equality_Act_Advice_Final.pdf

Parnell, J. Williamson, H. Lewis, F & Slater, A. (2021) Children's attitudes and friendship behaviours towards socially stigmatised appearances: Do attitudes vary according to type of difference? *Stigma and Health.*

Show Racism the Red Card (2013) Anti-Racism Education Pack. http://www.theredcard.org/resources-and-activities/

The project was developed at the Centre for Appearance Research, based at the University of the West of England. The research was funded by the Vocational Training Charity Trust Foundation.

To get in touch please email: Jade.Parnell@uwe.ac.uk

D.ii Study 3b Ethics amendment form (with approval)

Amendment to Existing Research Ethics Approval

Please complete this form if you wish to make an alteration or amendment to a study that has already been scrutinised and approved by the Faculty Research Ethics Committee and forward it electronically to the Officer of FREC [redacted]

UWE research ethics reference number:	**HAS.20.01.099**
Title of project:	Promoting acceptance of socially stigmatised appearances in primary school children
Date of original approval:	30th April 2020 (ethics amendment approved 9th July 2020)
Researcher:	Jade Parnell
Supervisor (if applicable)	[redacted]

1. Proposed amendment: Please outline the proposed amendment to the existing approved proposal.

The existing approved ethics amendment (after adaptions due to COVID) included interviewing qualified primary school teachers online, in order to explore their experiences and perspectives of teaching appearance diversity to pre-adolescent children (step 1 in below diagram). These interviews resulted in the important theme of '*teachers' anxiety and fear of discussing appearance diversity.'* Incorporating teachers own comments from these interviews, a brief support guide was developed for teachers (**attachment 1**, step 2 in diagram). Therefore, building on the previous stages, we would now like to invite a further set of qualified and trainee teachers to provide feedback on the guide (highlighted in step 3, feedback 1 & 2 of the diagram).

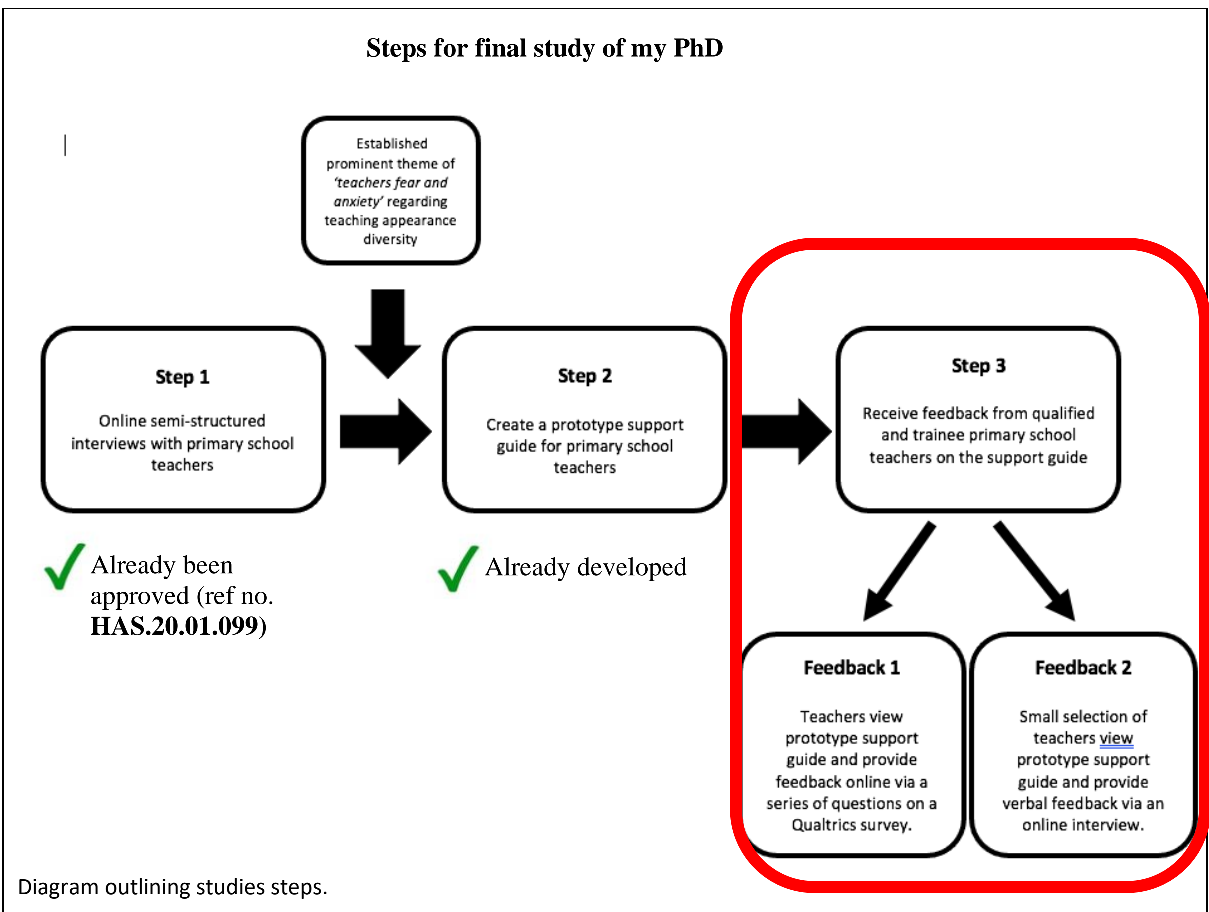


Diagram outlining studies steps.

The proposed amendment is seeking approval for step 3 (outlined in red above) to the existing ethics proposal:

1. The previous ethics approval (HAS.20.01.099) included qualified primary school teachers in England. This amendment will be including the same participant recruitment group as before, and also invite teaching assistants and trainee teachers.
2. The existing ethics approval includes online interviews with teachers (step 1). Online interviews with teachers in 'step 3' – 'feedback 2' will continue to implement the same data collection and storage methods outlined in the original amendment. However, the interview questions have been updated to reflect the feedback needed. **Please see attachment 2** for updated interview guide.
3. Qualified/trainee teachers will be invited to complete an online survey as outlined in 'feedback 1' of the diagram. **Please see attachment 3** for an outline of the survey and survey questions.
4. Updated recruitment advertisements have been developed to reflect the next step of the study (**see attachment 4** for feedback 1 group and feedback 2 group advertisements). Two variations of the recruitment advertisements were created in order to detail the separate requirements for each group. Further, teachers who will participate in online interviews will be contributing more time for detailed feedback and therefore will be given a £10 Amazon voucher. Vouchers were also given to teachers who participated in online interviews in step 1 of the study. The

recruitment advertainments will include the same online recruitment strategy as implemented in the previous ethics amendment.

2. Reason for amendment. Please state the reason for the proposed amendment.

1. Given current circumstances with COVID and not to overburden primary school teachers at this difficult time, it was suggested (by the third supervisor and senior lecturer for primary education at UWE) that trainee teachers and teaching assistants also be invited to complete an online survey to provide feedback.
2. Initially the study wanted to include a Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach, which emphasises working repeatedly in an iterative process alongside working groups. Therefore, originally a school would have been recruited to continuously feedback and take part in the project. Due to Covid-19 this was no longer appropriate. The current amendment follows a similar PAR approach; whereby teachers have been invited to provide helpful feedback, in an iterative process, on the support guide in order to mirror this original approach.
3. Rationale for the online feedback survey stems from a combination of 1 and 2 in this section. The online feedback survey will be less time consuming and an easier way for qualified/trainee teachers and teaching assistants to provide feedback on the support guide and also reduce burden (reducing survey questions) on teachers engaging in the online interviews.
4. Continued closure of primary schools means recruitment of teachers will need to be online, as unable to contact schools directly.

3. Ethical issues. Please outline any ethical issues that arise from the amendment that have not already addressed in the original ethical approval. Please also state how these will be addressed.

1. Qualified primary school teachers were previously recruited for step 1 and approved in the original ethics proposal. The additional recruitment of trainee primary school teachers and teaching assistants does not pose any additional ethical considerations which were not already covered in the original application. All participants will be over 18 years and self-selecting. As with the previous steps, participants will receive appropriate information, consent, data protection forms and right to withdraw. **Forms for feedback group 1 can be found in attachment 3** and **attachment 5 for feedback 2 group** (only slight changes to participant involvement and procedural sections).
2. The updated interview schedule includes general feedback questions and as addressed in the original approved ethics proposal, does not include any sensitive or personal detail. Thus, there are no additional risks to participants beyond that considered in the original approval. Participants will be provided with a clear outline of the studies information, as previously outlined. All groups will view and be given the opportunity to feedback on the support guide (**see attachment 1**). The support guide has been developed based on responses from primary school teachers themselves. Therefore, it is important to consider ethical issues pertaining to the inclusion of previous participants data. Information provided in the support guide does include quotes from teachers in step 1, however teachers

have given their consent for this data to be used for research purposes and no participants from step 1 will be identifiable.

3. The online survey questions include the same ethical issues addressed above in no.2 of this section. However, data collected via the online survey poses new data collection and storage risks. As outlined in the original approved ethics application, the data will be stored in a restricted folder on UWE OneDrive. The data will also be collected via UWE's Qualtrics on a private and protected account. It is unlikely data will need to be transferred between co-researchers; however, if this is the case, all co-researchers are UWE staff. Thus, anonymised data will be shared via a secure UWE OneDrive file.
4. Very few ethical issues arise from including online recruitment, however it is important to keep recruitment advertisements short and clear, so as to not waste participants time if they are not eligible for the study. Recruitment advertisements will be sent out via the Centre for Appearance Research social media channels and in a snowballing method via email.

To be completed by supervisor/ Lead researcher:

Signature:	[redacted]
Date:	*29.01.2021*

To be completed by Research Ethics Chair:

Send out for review:	☐ *Yes* *X No*
Comments:	*All new issues have been addressed so the amendment can be approved.*
Outcome:	*X Approve* ☐ *Approve subject to conditions* ☐ *Refer to Research Ethics Committee*
Date approved:	*10th February 2021*
Signature:	[redacted]

Guidance on notifying UREC/FREC of an amendment.
Your study was approved based on the information provided at the time of application. If the study design changes significantly, for example a new population is to be recruited, a different method of recruitment is planned, new or different methods of data collection are planned then you need to inform the REC and explain what the ethical implications might be. Significant changes in participant information sheets, consent forms should be notified to the REC for review with an explanation of the need for changes. Any other significant changes to the protocol with ethical implications should be submitted as substantial amendments to the original application. If you are unsure about whether or not notification of an amendment is necessary please consult your departmental ethics lead or Chair of FREC.

D.iii Study 3b recruitment advertisement for online and interview feedback

D.iv Study 3b Teachers interview guide – Concurrent Think-Aloud (CTA) method

5. Make sure everyone's happy and able to talk online (e.g., internet is working, safe space to talk).
6. Introduce self (name, project) and explain the following:
    - Define: 'A*cceptance of appearance diversity'* means appreciating everyone looks different and celebrating this. A 'v*isible difference'* or '*altered appearance,'* this is when one's appearance significantly deviates from what society deems 'normal' e.g., a physical disability, facial burn, higher weight.
    - Aim: The aim of the interview is to hear teachers' thoughts on the support guide and to gain feedback on what's good/needs improving.
    - Process: Will send the support guide and gain active feedback on the guide as teachers see and interact with it for the first time. Make sure they are happy to respond to questions. **Try to think-aloud—talk as much as you can about what is going through your head as you use the resource**
    - Confidentiality: The session will be audio recorded in order to access information at a later date, however no-one will be identified. Pseudonyms will be used in any reports or publications.
    - Voluntary: They can choose how much they want to say, and do not have to answer anything they do not wish to and can withdraw at any point.
7. Ensure all participants are happy to continue, they can access the guide and facilitate discussion using prompts below.
8. When time is up, thank teachers for their support in conducting this research.

Questions for feedback on the support guide:

1. **Initial thoughts & what's already available**
    - What are your initial thoughts of the guide?
    - What would be a good title for this guide?
    - What do you think of the way the support guide looks?
        - What are your thoughts on the images used? Are there any other images you would like to see?
    - Have you previously seen or know of a support guide like this? If yes, what?
    - What do you think the aims of the guide are?
    - Does the information make sense?
    - Does the information presented reflect teachers' experiences?
    - How do you feel about the length of the support guide?
    - Would you add any more resources which you have found helpful on this topic?
2. **Language**
    - Do you think the language is easy to understand throughout the guide?
    - What do you think about the language/tone used? How does the language make you feel?
    - Is there any way you think the language can be improved?
3. **Practicalities**
    - How do you think it would be best for teachers to access this guide?
    - Is there anything that would help make the guide more accessible to primary school teachers?
4. **Final thoughts**
    - Would you like to add/change anything?
    - Have you learnt anything from it? If so, what?
    - Final thoughts?

D.v Study 3b Participant information, privacy notice and consent form

Centre for Appearance Research

Developing a support guide for teachers to promote acceptance of diverse appearances in primary school children

You are invited to take part in research conducted by the Centre for Appearance Research at the University of the West of England, Bristol. Before you decide whether to take part, it is important for you to understand why the project is being conducted and what it will involve. Please read the following information carefully and if you have any queries or would like more information please speak to or contact Jade Parnell (lead researcher), Centre for Appearance Research at the University of the West of England, Bristol

What is the research that is being carried out?

As you may be aware, there is considerable public concern about levels of body image related negative effects amongst young people and increasingly, children. To add to this, the way children think and react towards people with various diverse appearances (e.g., disability, facial burns and higher weight etc.) can greatly affect the life experiences of individuals with these appearances. Yet, teachers have highlighted the difficulties and anxiety they feel with tackling the sensitive issue of appearance diversity in schools.

To help address this issue, a support guide for teachers tackling the topic of appearance diversity has been developed. The support guide contains information based on what primary school teachers have told us about their experiences of discussing the topic of appearance diversity with children. We would like some teachers to look at the new support guide and provide your feedback on it. We will use this feedback to make important changes to the support guide before it is made widely available.

Why have I been invited to take part?

The support guide has been developed for primary school teaching staff. Therefore, we are interested in gaining your expert feedback on the guide in order to make important changes. The purpose of the interview and questions will be to gain a deeper understanding of what teachers think of the guide and how it can be improved.

Do I have to take part?
You do not have to take part in this research. It is up to you to decide whether or not you want to be involved. If you do decide to take part, you will be given a copy of this information sheet to keep and will be asked to sign a consent form. If you do decide to take part, you are able to withdraw from the research without giving a reason from one month from the date you signed the consent form. If you want to withdraw from the study within this period, please write to Jade Parnell (contact details provided above).

If you wish to withdraw after the interview, please provide your unique participation code (pseudonym). If you would like to withdraw during the online interview, you can leave or stop participating without needing to provide a reason.

Will I be identifiable, will my responses be shown to anyone who will see them?
The interview audio recordings will be transcribed (typed-up) by me and any information that could identify you or others will be changed or removed. You will be asked to choose a unique participation code, which will be used in the transcript and in any write-up of the research. Any information about you will be linked to your unique participation code and not your real name. Only my Director of Studies (line manager) and I will have access to the original audio recordings and only the research team will have access to the anonymised transcripts. Others will only see selected anonymised extracts. The research team are employees of the University of the West of England who are members of or affiliated to the Centre for Appearance Research.

Direct quotations taken from your interview may be used in presentations and publications related to the research. When presenting your quotations and talking about the research in general, we will use your unique participation code, not your real name, and, may include your demographic details such as your gender, age, and years of experience teaching.

The only instance when your responses may be shared is if you disclose information that raises safeguarding concerns (e.g., suggests yours or another person's safety is at risk). In this instance, I will follow UWE safeguarding policy and pass on my concerns to my line manager (Director of Studies). If I do feel the need to share any information you will be made aware of this first.

What will taking part involve?
If you agree to take part you will be asked to take part in an online interview, either with video or just audio (whichever is most suitable for you). This will be conducted by me (Jade Parnell). During the interview you will view the teachers support guide and be asked to provide verbal feedback. The interview will take approximately 1 hour. Feedback will be audio recorded.

Prior to audio recording, you will decide a suitable unique participation code, which will be stated at the beginning of the recording. Any names stated will be removed upon transcription, and your recording confidentially disposed. Your data will be anonymised at this point and will be analysed with interview data from other anonymised participants. The data you provide will be stored securely by the University of the West of England on its secure servers and shall be kept for a maximum period of 5 years from the completion of data collection for the project.

What are the benefits of taking part?
By sharing your expertise, you will be contributing to a guide which will further support teachers in discussing the topic of appearance diversity. Using the data from this research, we will implement important changes to the guide and ensure it is useful for school teaching staff. Your participation will help to do this.

What are the possible risks of taking part?
We do not foresee or anticipate any significant risk to you in taking part in this study. If, however, you feel uncomfortable at any time you can ask the interview to stop. If you need any support during or after the interview, then the researchers will be able to put you in touch with suitable support agencies. The research team are experienced in conducting interview and are sensitive to the subject area.

How will my data be used?
Your data will be used as part of my PhD research. The transcript will be anonymised; any information that can identify you, people's names, places etc., will be removed). Once anonymised, the data will be analysed for my research, and anonymised extracts from the data may be quoted in my thesis and in any publications and conference presentations arising from my research. The information you provide will only be used for research purposes and to help further develop intervention resources like the support guide.

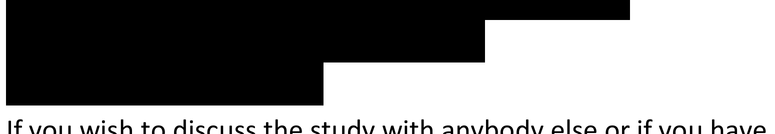
Who has ethically approved this research?
The project has been reviewed and approved by the University of the West of England University Research Ethics Committee. Any comments, questions or complaints about the ethical conduct of this study can be addressed to the Research Ethics Committee at the University of the West of England at:

If you have any questions about this research please contact:

Jade Parnell

PhD Candidate

Centre for Appearance Research



If you wish to discuss the study with anybody else or if you have complaints connected with the project, please contact Dr Amy Slater, my supervisor and Associate Professor at the Centre for Appearance Research.

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this study.

You will be given a copy of this Participant Information Sheet and your signed Consent Form to keep

Privacy notice

Purpose of the Privacy Notice
This privacy notice explains how the University of the West of England, Bristol (UWE) collects, manages and uses your personal data before, during and after you participate in the project titled '*developing an intervention to promote acceptance of diverse appearances in primary school children*.' 'Personal data' means any information relating to an identified or identifiable natural person (the data subject). An 'identifiable natural person' is one who can be identified, directly or indirectly, including by reference to an identifier such as a name, an identification number, location data, an online identifier, or to one or more factors specific to the physical, physiological, genetic, mental, economic, cultural or social identity of that natural person.

This privacy notice adheres to the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) principle of transparency. This means it gives information about:

- How and why your data will be used for the research;
- What your rights are under GDPR; and
- How to contact UWE Bristol and the project lead in relation to questions, concerns or exercising your rights regarding the use of your personal data.

This Privacy Notice should be read in conjunction with the Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form provided to you before you agree to take part in the research.

Why are we processing your personal data?
UWE Bristol undertakes research under its public function to provide research for the benefit of society. As a data controller we are committed to protecting the privacy and security of your personal data in accordance with the (EU) 2016/679 the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), the Data Protection Act 2018 (or any successor legislation) and any other legislation directly relating to privacy laws that apply (together "the Data Protection Legislation"). General information on Data Protection law is available from the Information Commissioner's Office

How do we use your personal data?

We use your personal data for research with appropriate safeguards in place on the lawful bases of fulfilling tasks in the public interest, and for archiving purposes in the public interest, for scientific or historical research purposes. We will always tell you about the information we wish to collect from you and how we will use it.
We will not use your personal data for automated decision making about you or for profiling purposes.

Our research is governed by robust policies and procedures and, where human participants are involved, is subject to ethical approval from either UWE Bristol's Faculty or University Research Ethics Committees. This research has been approved by the ethics committee at the University of the West of England, ethics application number: HAS.20.01.099. The research team adhere to the

Ethical guidelines of the British Educational Research Association (and/or the principles of the Declaration of Helsinki, 2013) and the principles of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

For more information about UWE Bristol's research ethics approval process please see our Research Ethics webpages at: www1.uwe.ac.uk/research/researchethics

What data do we collect?
The data we collect will vary from project to project. Researchers will only collect data that is essential for their project. The specific categories of personal data processed are described in the Participant Information Sheet provided to you with this Privacy Notice.

Who do we share your data with?
We will only share your personal data in accordance with the attached Participant Information Sheet and your Consent.

How do we keep your data secure?
We take a robust approach to protecting your information with secure electronic and physical storage areas for research data with controlled access. If you are participating in a particularly sensitive project UWE Bristol puts into place additional layers of security. UWE Bristol has Cyber Essentials information security certification.

Alongside these technical measures there are comprehensive and effective policies and processes in place to ensure that users and administrators of information are aware of their obligations and responsibilities for the data they have access to. By default, people are only granted access to the information they require to perform their duties. Mandatory data protection and information security training is provided to staff and expert advice available if needed.

How long do we keep your data for?
Your personal data will only be retained for as long as is necessary to fulfil the cited purpose of the research. The length of time we keep your personal data will depend on several factors including the significance of the data, funder requirements, and the nature of the study. Specific details are provided in the attached Participant Information Sheet. Anonymised data that falls outside the scope of data protection legislation as it contains no identifying or identifiable information may be stored in UWE Bristol's research data archive or another carefully selected appropriate data archive.

Your Rights and how to exercise them
Under the Data Protection legislation you have the following **qualified** rights:

(1) The right to access your personal data held by or on behalf of the University;
(2) The right to rectification if the information is inaccurate or incomplete;
(3) The right to restrict processing and/or erasure of your personal data;
(4) The right to data portability;
(5) The right to object to processing;
(6) The right to object to automated decision making and profiling;
(7) The right to complain to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO).

Please note, however, that some of these rights do not apply when the data is being used for research purposes if appropriate safeguards have been put in place.

We will always respond to concerns or queries you may have. If you wish to exercise your rights or have any other general data protection queries, please contact UWE Bristol's Data Protection Officer

If you have any complaints or queries relating to the research in which you are taking part please contact either the research project lead, whose details are in the attached Participant Information Sheet, UWE Bristol's Research Ethics Committees or UWE Bristol's research governance manager

Participant consent form

This consent form will have been given to you with the Participant Information Sheet. Please ensure that you have read and understood the information contained in the Participant Information Sheet and asked any questions before you sign this form. If you have any questions please contact a member of the research team, whose details are set out on the Participant Information Sheet
If you are happy to take part in an interview, please sign and date the form. You will be given a copy to keep for your records.

- I have read and understood the information in the Participant Information Sheet which I have been given to read before asked to sign this form;
- I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the study;
- I have had my questions answered satisfactorily by the research team;
- I understand that taking part will involve me being interviewed, which will be audio recorded;
- I understand that I can choose not to answer questions and my participation is voluntary;
- I agree that anonymised quotes may be used in the final Report of this study;
- I agree to the University of the West England processing my data as described in the privacy notice within the information sheet;
- I understand that I can withdraw at any time without providing a reason, during the interview and up to <u>one month</u> after the interview;
- I agree to take part in the research

Name (Printed)…………………………………………………………………………….

Signature……………………………………………………. Date…………………….

D.vi Study 3b Online survey questions

Thinking about the support guide you have just looked at, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
1. The guide has a positive outlook.					
2. The guide encourages me to take actions that could be beneficial to my own teaching of this topic.					
3. The information in the guide left me feeling confused.					
4. The guide includes useful tips on how to make positive changes to my teaching of this topic.					
5. The guide provides a wide range of information.					
6. The language in the guide made it easy to understand.					
7. I feel more inclined take care of my teaching of this topic after viewing the guide.					
8. I have learnt something new from the guide.					
9. I can easily understand the information in the guide.					
10. The guide prepares me for what I might experience.					
11. The people who have contributed to the guide understand what is important to me.					
12. I trust the information in the guide.					
13. I would consult the guide again in future.					
14. I feel I have a sense of solidarity with other people who might be using the guide.					
15. I feel like I could identify with other people who might be using the guide.					

16. On the whole, I find the guide reassuring.					
17. I value the advice given in the guide.					
18. The guide gives me confidence that I am able to manage my own teaching on this topic.					
19. I feel I have a lot in common with other people who might be using the guide.					
20. The guide gives me the confidence to explain my concerns to others.					
21. The guide helps me to have a better understanding of teaching this topic.					
22. The guide encourages me to play a more active role in teaching this topic.					
23. The guide makes me more confident to discuss my teaching of this topic with the people around me.					
24. Photographs and other images were used appropriately in the guide.					
25. I found the images in the guide distressing.					
26. The guide is easy to use.					

	Extremely unlikely	Unlikely	Neither likely nor unlikely	Likely	Extremely likely
How likely are you to recommend this support guide to fellow teachers if they needed support?					

In thinking about ways in which the guide could be improved, it would be helpful to know why you have chosen this answer.

What was good about the guide?

____

____

____

____
____

What would have made the guide better?

____
____
____
____
____

D.vii Study 3b Person-based changes table

Page	Constructive comments	Positive comments (related)	Proposed changes	Reasons for change
1 (quotes)	So, the first quote, I'm not sure I fully understand it, really. Is it somebody saying that is it? Is it an opinion? [Kate] Just clarifying that it was actually quotes. Is it...? You could tell because it was like in the speech bubbles and the speech marks and things, but that it was actually from teachers is quite a good to know. [Lina]	I definitely agree with some of the things that have been said, particularly the one in, like, a bold paragraph (quote 3) where it says about, you know, things being politically correct and the fear of offending people. [Kate] I think that middle quote on that first page (quote 3) the bit about being politically correct, I think that's quite important. I'm thinking more here as like a teacher in a staffroom talking with other teachers rather than with children, the sort of things that you're saying in a staffroom and things like that some staff say, really. [Noor] Yeah, that third point (quote no.3) is a big thing, like, especially nowadays [Olga] I like the fact that it says, "Discuss the topic," and like, because obviously it's an important topic to discuss, diversity. yeah, I agree with that part when, like, in the quote marks, like, because we haven't had any official training (quote no. 2) I guess it's very different in the sense that first, in terms of what we're looking at there's obviously the speech marks at the front which is quite nice to start off with, what people think, it's not all the same layout so it breaks it up a little bit. [Mila]	- Make quotes more evident through design and by adding 'teacher' at the end - Put quote no.3 first - Add in another quote related to being politically correct	- Make it even clearer the quotes are from teachers themselves - This quote resonated most with teachers - Quotes related to political correctness for teachers themselves really resonated
	I think the title sort of says it as it is. It tells you what it's about. I'm just thinking, at the	I think that's a good title. I mean it states how it's a support guide and obviously it's about	- A colon added in the title	- The title is clear and shortening it would mean it

	school I work in, sort of the average age of a teacher there is like late 20s. We're all like quite a young staff group there. I don't know if maybe the sort of the support guide for school staff, some of them might think... I don't know if it maybe sounds a little bit like it's going to be wordy and very official. Whereas I don't feel like that is too wordy or official, really. I think it comes across as quite official with the sort of like the title of support guide. Maybe something like a whistle-stop tour of, or an introduction to, or something like that maybe. see that sort of thing or something else, another policy or something. Whereas it's something help. [Noor] I don't really like the way the title's worded. Because it's, like, promoting acceptance of appearance. I understand it but I think it could have been worded slightly better. I'd probably just put support guidance appearance diversity, rather than acceptance, because, I don't know, the way that it's worded, I'd say it comes across that quite a lot of people don't accept it [Peri]	appearance diversity and who it's for, the audience is in there, and obviously, the point of it is to promote the acceptance so I think it's a good title. [Mila]	"Support Guide for School Staff: Promoting Acceptance of Appearance Diversity"	loses its detail. The colon separates it out a little bit.
2 **Intro to appearance diversity**	The one thing I don't agree with is appearance diversity, children as young as four can have negative attitudes towards others because of how they look. I wouldn't say they have negative attitudes. I would say they might comment on it because they have no... what's it called? You know when you stop yourself? [Peri]	I like how it's got an overview of what it (appearance diversity) actually is as well. Because I'll be honest, I wasn't entirely sure what was meant by appearance diversity, so it's nice that you've got the brief overview. [Lina] I think that definition's quite handy as well, because I wasn't actually sure what it was at the start because I think at first when I first read the title on that first page, I was like, oh, don't really	- The sentence about the age of children's attitudes was changed to add 'research shows'	- More evident this is not an opinion but based on the evidence

		know anything about this. But thinking about it now actually when it talks about sort of the burns, the eczema, the learning difficulties, I have kids in my class who have those. So, they will be classed as that, wouldn't they? [Noor] So I've just read the what is appearance diversity and there's a bit saying appearance diversity can also include behavioural or social characteristics which may indirectly impact how someone appears to others, which is quite nice to read in a sense that I have a girl in my class and she can be so lovely to see and is... has lots of friends but she has behavioural issues and as soon as she goes down that kind of route no one likes her and the kids don't want to be near her, the kids are terrified of her but when she's feeling okay everyone loves her Wants to be her friend, so it does impact how people see her. [Mila] That's interesting. Like, appearance diversity includes behavioural and social characteristics, which I wouldn't have linked that to that, really. I wouldn't have thought about that area linking to this, but it, like, completely makes sense. [Olga]		
		I like as well how it sort of says that it's brief and it's free, because I know sort of as a teacher, they're the two things that are most important to me. I don't have the time to sort of read something really lengthy. And you can see some really good resources, but you're often having to sort of pay out of your own pocket and it sounds awful, but you can't always do that. [Lina] I've just got to the bottom of page two and it says about how teachers say they've got no time, which	- Make it extra clear that these are quotes from teachers	- As this statement resonates with teachers so much, it's important to help it stand out more.

		is just so true for everything, it's so hard to even get the normal topics and subjects into the timetable these days and it's so squashed that it is true, even if you want to teach something, something that's on the curriculum and that you have to do, there is no time. [Mila] I agree with that bit as well, teachers often find there's no time, or there isn't the money for resources. [Noor] That's definitely true. Teachers have often found there's no time or there isn't the money, so quite a lot of... because the curriculum is jam-packed, it is quite hard to, like, find places to put stuff into the curriculum and funding is normally, you've only got a limited amount of funding. [Peri]		
3 Discussing diversity	I was just wondering; you know at the top of sort of the discussing diversity and then that responding to questions pages? The quote under that title, is that from a teacher? [Noor]	I think it's a really sort of good topic to cover. I think personally you are really worried sort of about saying the right thing. [Lina}	- As before, adding 'teacher' and incorporating it in the design	- Making it extra clear it's a teacher who said it
	Like so I don't know which page it is, but there… discussing diversity, I feel like that's sort of repeated a bit at the end. then the languages to avoid, that sort of copied on the next page. I don't know. I just feel like that's a bit of an extra page. And then the rest, I can see the value of all the rest. That's probably just the one that I'm not sure about. [Lina]	I think it's a really sort of good topic to cover. I think personally you are really worried sort of about saying the right thing. [Lina] I think it's good as well that it has like the warning about that some terms are considered offensive, but you've had to include them to sort of discuss why or why not you might use them. That's something good, because it is... it is hard because it is sort of taboo, and it is a bit difficult if you don't want to sort of say certain things and... yeah, I think it's better than you've not sort of had... I can't think of the phrase, sort of skirted round it [Lina]	- This page was not removed	- Although it may not be as useful as other sections, it clearly resonated with lots of teachers and does not repeat with the do's and don'ts page.

		And it's interesting, what I said earlier does link to the bit where it says if there's only one black child and the rest are white, like I said, if the school doesn't have many EAL children it's not necessarily going to be addressed as well as it could be because the interest isn't as huge. [Mila] I like that third page with sort of like tips on it. So, like remember context, legal guidelines, things that sort of like just a quick snappy page that's like, oh don't forget this, don't forget that. [Noor] That's so true as well, like, singling people out, you wouldn't want to, like, unintentionally single someone out, for example if you're talking about, I don't know, somebody from an Asian background, and there was one child in your class who has an Asian background. You wouldn't want it to feel like you're singling them out. [Olga]		
4 Terminology table	A lot of this, I think, that I'm reading through, I think would be quite obvious. You know, things that we should or shouldn't say based on kind of registers and school, actually. Like, we just have… particularly, with race and stuff, we have the correct terms that we know that we have to refer to. [Kate] I wouldn't say there's anything particularly different on there. I'd say it would be more of a consolidation. [Lina]	Yeah. I think… I think that would be really helpful just to have that alternatives section. Like, if… if I'm thinking about when I first started as a teacher, a lot of the… a lot of the… yeah, the vocabulary could be really helpful [Kate] I like the alternative side as well. I like that table. I think it's really clear as sort of this is the word, this is what not to say, this is what you could say instead. I like that. [Lina] I like that and I do really like the grid as well obviously with what not to say rather than just here's what to say because it's correcting what not to say too. [Mila]	- Disclaimer added on page 3 saying "The following page includes a **terminology table**. People have varying degrees of experiences and this table aims to get everyone on the same page with appropriate language and terms to use."	- Accounts for the varying degrees of knowledge and also makes teachers feel more comfortable engaging on the table in the first place

		That table's really handy as well. Like what not to say, what to say instead. Like some of the things in that even what to say instead I would never have thought of. Different in what way, sort of thing. [Noor] I think that's good. Characteristics of where... because quite a lot of people are, like... obviously, quite a lot of people don't actually know what to say, and what actually you're allowed to say [Peri]		
	It's shocking that you include offensive medicalised othering lines such as this: 'The terms disfigurement is used in legal settings but is also valid.' Are you seriously recommending that school staff refer to kids as 'disfigured'? [online]		- The sentence was changed to "The terms *disfigurement* is mainly used in legal settings. See Changing Faces for more details."	- Despite this information deriving from Changing Faces, there was some difficulties with the description of the term 'disfigurement,' and this was clarified.
	Missing some key terminology that people might come across for ethnicity for example, like BAME, BME etc. [Online] More clarity on alternatives for race, and more discussion of that topic, for instance my sister-in-law was born in the UK and has lived here her whole life but identifies as Asian because her parents are from Sri Lanka, but for instance my parents are from England, but I don't identify as English. My brother-in-law also identifies as Asian, though he was born and raised in Canada, his parents are Chinese. So maybe include some guidance on better terms than Asian? In addition to this I oppose the term People/person of colour, though I identify as White, I'm vaguely aware that my hand doesn't disappear into the background		- The BAME and BME terminology was added, as well as mixed heritage/ethnicity. - Another point was added to page 3 – "Identified characteristics are personal to people. Therefore, it is important to respect, listen and value how people identify themselves above and beyond more general terms." - 'South Asian' was also added to the possible references.	- Ensuring key terminology is not missed. - Adding specific alternatives to race is impossible to keep succinct within this guide. Evidently ethnicity/race is personal to people, and therefore a general statement would help this discussion. - Asian is a very broad descriptor, and this adds to

	when I hold it in front of a white wall. Everyone is a colour and even if that wasn't the case if "non-white" alludes to othering of other races, doesn't People of colour allude to the othering of the "white race". [online]		- No changes to 'People of Colour.'	the guidance on these groups. - Although this individual opposes this term, it is still used (within the US mainly) as an appropriate alternative.
5 Responding to questions	The only thing I'd say is with the wording of the "Why is Freddie fat?" part, this word is linked with lots of negative stereotypes? It would depend what age the child is that's asking, and whether they'd know what a stereotype is, and then whether you'd get into a different conversation, and you'd completely avoid the point. it just depends what age it is though, if you're talking to, like maybe with even a Year 3/4... Might not even know what a stereotype is and I know quite a lot of adults don't know what stereotypes are as well, to be fair. [Peri] Again, with pronouns: on the "George wanted to be a girl now", it would just depend on the child level and everything. I mean, I know you do pronouns in Year 2, I think it is? But it depends if the children retain the information. Most mainstream children would, but it'd be more special needs children that wouldn't understand what a pronoun was. I think you could just say, "We should all respect George, and we will use 'she' rather than 'he' now"? [Peri] Answering the questions without an appearance focused lens. For instance,	I like the questions as well, and the possible answers. [Lina] That could be helpful as well, actually. It's… it's definitely a difficult… some of these… some of these questions could easily be really tricky to answer and to have, like, a go to be able to just read through an example of, like, how you might respond. [Kate] That questions section's quite useful as well, because that... that is things that kids will come out with. Kids will ask that, and then it's like thinking about the right way to respond to those questions. [Noor] The first one definitely is how you'd explain it. It's... yeah, you couldn't imagine anyone saying the second one (the wrong version to say). [Peri] I think they are relevant, yeah (responding to questions, page 5) and sort of like even if the answers weren't used exactly, it's sort of the wording of them would help to form an answer that's suitable for a child, sort of thing. [Noor]	- The word stereotype was removed. - The word 'pro-noun' was removed and changed to "say she/her instead of he/him now when talking about Georgie."	- The word is not suitable for young children and makes it easier for school staff to explain to the teachers. - Again, for understanding from the children.

	"Where is Leo from? (Leo is black)" the question doesn't mention skin colour so why is the teacher bringing skin colour into it. I have had kids ask me where I'm from and there's no malice there, I'm from North Wales. I think all the example answers to the questions force appearance diversity into the conversation. [Online] The 'responses to questions' are vastly unnatural and also introduce as many problems as they try to solve. [Online] The language around gender, specifically where it said, "born male and is now female". Working with others in the LGBTQ community the most inclusive language to use here to my understanding is "assigned male/female at birth." [Online]		- This question was amended to: "Why is Leo a different colour to me?" and possible responses amended. - No specific changes made. - Born a male was changed to 'assigned male at birth' and 'Most of us are born either male or female' was changed to 'Most of us when we are born are either male or female.'	- This question was similar to something a teacher mentioned a child has asked and doesn't lead to assumptions. - This is in minority to the positive comments which highlighted that these responses were what teachers would say, or at least use as a baseline. Again, it is already outlined that ignoring or chastising genuine questions is unhelpful. - This was a really helpful comment from someone who has worked with people in the LGBTQ community and best reflects the language of this community.
	Alternative versions to what to say. [online] I think there are some issues that have been missed (e.g., religious markers that can be part of someone's appearance, like head turbans, headscarves, bindis etc.). [online]		- Add in another example question related to a religious marker (page 5).	- This adds in another question and alternative and also touches upon the religious marker that someone provided feedback on.

6 Do's and Don'ts	More examples of how to include appearance diversity. I have asked these questions to colleagues too: 'how can I include appearance diversity in the classroom without singling a child out' the advice I received was to imbed representativeness within the classroom. For example, the book corner, having a range of diverse books that represent the different types of appearance diversity. Perhaps to gather more examples of different ways to imbed this within teaching, through lessons, exercises or displays would be really helpful. [online]	I like the bit where it says it doesn't necessarily have to be a standalone topic, it could be through different elements of the curriculum because when you're in your primary school teaching training it's massive on linking the curriculum together and teaching things through other subjects, and even when you're reading a book now like it's introducing those books that are all about different people. [Mila] That's true. If children aren't naturally exposed to diverse appearances in their school or in their community, then later in life, they'd be... they may be less accepting or have less understanding or be more ignorant. Because I would say I had less understanding growing up. [Orla]	- Changed the 'how' for weaving in representation on page 6 to: "Include books, toys and displays which represent more diverse appearances. When using images, videos and resources in class actively look for ones which represent a range of different appearances."	- Gives even more examples of how to weave the topic into teaching.
7 Resources	Maybe a few more? resources. I think they're sort of what I look to the most of... I've got this information, now what can I look at in more detail? So maybe some more resources. [Lina]	I think that's alright (number of resources) I think because at the beginning there's obviously a... a definite one for like each one that you can clearly see and then there's the one's in the chat that kind of go towards everything. So, you've got LGBT, you've got anti-racism, yeah, I think that's a nice amount, there's lots of different ones. And I guess when you start looking at one thing as well it could end up taking you into something else and you... you learn things and probably find more resources from those websites too. [Mila] I like how on that page sort of like that table of links, there's a description as to what it is as well rather than just the links. That's handy. I think there's probably just enough there to sort of like guide onto more. I'm guessing if you click on one of those and wanted to find out more, you'd be able to then go on and get more. It's sort of like a	- No more recourses were added but a sentence saying "A good starting point for primary school staff…"	- Majority of people felt there was the right amount, the extra sentence clarifies this is not an extensive list.

		good basis to start. Yeah, I'd say there's just enough there. [Noor] I think that there's probably a right... there's a right amount on there, because if people... like, not everybody likes to do the same thing, so obviously... and people teach differently, so what might be helpful for one person might not be helpful for the other person. [Peri]		
ALL Other - general	I think having a guide is really, really helpful, but you've got to know your class really, really well. [Kate] Could have used quotes/suggestions from classroom professionals [online] Better research, and better consultation with different groups. Have you properly looked at the resources from e.g., Changing Faces? Microtia UK? Toy Like Me? [Online] Case studies might be helpful. Maybe, like, more… more where you've got the examples questions. I don't know how you would get this, but I guess if you had… and I		- A statement saying, "you know your class/students best!" was added to "This is only a guide and use your own discretion regarding each context." - Clarification of quotes. - Links to different groups were made clearer. -Specific case studies were not added but another possible question was.	- It wasn't mentioned beforehand, so it's important that teacher's awareness of their own class was added to the context. - These have been clarified. - There are links to changing faces for visible difference language and further resources, but other links to Microtia UK and charities related to specific conditions are too specific for this guide. - In order to keep the guide as brief as possible another question was added, which is touching upon the teachers concerns.

	guess this comes from specific schools, but if you had specific case studies of, like, a scenario, but you… I guess you could make them up, couldn't you, where you have, like, a child either asking something inappropriate in class or a specific thing that is happening in class like a child becoming transgender overnight and you've got to handle that. Yeah, the best way of, like, dealing with that and, like, how to that would be a very nice guide to have, actually, because quite often we have to make that up. I think that's… I think that's the one thing that I would say that I tend to get really, like, ugh, about, is if they ask me in front of everybody, because then it's definitely more difficult to handle. Like I said, if I've got specific children that I know if I was to respond to that question, then I would have parents that wouldn't be happy with me to respond to it in the way that I know I probably should. So, it's probably like, I think the way that I would probably deal with certain questions coming up in class, just from, like, open discussion, is that I would usually tell that child that I would go through that question with them after class. [Kate] An approach to bullying regarding diversity. How to discuss these topics with the pupil who is classed as 'diverse.' [online]		- The word 'approach' was added after 'no tolerance.' - Added onto page 3 – "If you hear other school staff	- Because specific approaches towards bullying can vary depending on the school, this was still kept broad for this guide.

	Information on what to do if the correct language is not used by other adults. [online] More information on how it can affect students. [online]		using terms in the 'what not to say' section, you can use this guide as a tool to help them understand appropriate alternatives." - Added "This is important as appearance based-stigma can negatively impact children's overall self-esteem and quality of life."	- This can help teachers feel more equipped to talk to other teachers about it. - Highlights how stigma can affect children.

D.viii Final support guide (publicly available)

Support guide for school staff promoting acceptance of appearance diversity

From speaking with teachers, it is clear there are concerns regarding discussing the topic of appearance diversity. This brief guide aims to support school staff to feel more equipped to discuss the topic and successfully promote appearance diversity within school.

This guide has been developed with qualified primary school teachers.
All information in italics are direct quotations from teachers.

"I think it's a big thing, I imagine, for everybody, especially nowadays when we're all striving to be very politically correct and fearing offending people, but I think knowing what language is appropriate and what you can and can't say... the best way to explain things to the children, almost give you like a do's and don'ts would be really helpful."
- Teacher

"We haven't had any official training. I think it would have been helpful and I think in the future it will be helpful because there's always a worry isn't there, you know, when you're addressing more sensitive topics ... particularly if you don't have experience of something yourself."
- Teacher

"It's such an important topic area, I think, for the children to be involved in and engaged in."
- Teacher

"It would just be better to be educated properly on what to say and how to teach the children."
- Teacher

"I think the main thing for me is the language. I think I'd personally feel a lot more comfortable having these discussions if I'm clear in my head of this is how I should respond, and this is the language that I should use."
- Teacher

"I think it should be part and parcel of education, full stop."
- Teacher

What is appearance diversity?

Everybody has different appearance characteristics, and no two people are the same. Promoting appearance diversity includes positive recognition and acceptance of all appearances, despite their individual characteristics. A number of characteristics make up one's appearance. Some are protected in the UK under The Equality Act (2010), including sex/gender, race, disability, religion/belief and sexual orientation. However, some are not, including weight, height, hair colour and changes to appearance as a result of injuries or medical conditions (e.g., burn, eczema and amputation). Appearance diversity can also include behavioural or social characteristics which may indirectly impact how someone appears to others (e.g., learning difficulties and socio-economic status).

Why consider appearance diversity in teaching?

Research shows children as young as 4 years can have negative attitudes towards others because of how they look (Parnell, Williamson, Lewis & Slater, 2021). This is important as appearance based-stigma can negatively impact children's overall self-esteem and quality of life. Young children's worlds are small, and therefore it is important to acknowledge and include all types of diverse appearances within teaching in order to tackle this issue at an early age. A UK government report tailoring The Equality Act for schools (2014), requires schools to engage in Positive Action to alleviate disadvantages experienced by those with protected characteristics. Although not all variations in appearance are protected, fostering a general acceptance of all appearances throughout teaching is a useful way to provide Positive Action and generally support children's wellbeing.

Aim of this guide

Although teachers are increasingly aware of the need to discuss and acknowledge diversity, they also express fears and anxiety regarding the topic.

However, teaching staff often find there's *"no time"*

& *"there isn't the money"* for resources

Therefore, this guide is brief, and free for teaching staff to access easily. It identifies teachers' common concerns regarding this issue and suggests ways to overcome them, with an overarching aim for teachers to feel comfortable to tackle this topic in celebration and acceptance of appearance diversity.

Discussing Diversity

"You had to tread even more carefully with everything you said, and you just didn't want to say the wrong thing" **– Teacher**

When discussing appearance diversity teachers often worry about "*saying the wrong thing*". Understandably people want to avoid causing offence or sending the wrong message. Therefore, this section will acknowledge the difficulties teachers experience and help teachers feel more equipped with their language.

Remember:

- Words and phrases can go in or out of common usage, leaving people unsure about what is acceptable. This means that we all need to be aware of the potential to unwittingly cause offence and to be prepared to acknowledge when we get things wrong.
- Identified characteristics are personal to people. Therefore, it is important to respect, listen and value how people identify themselves above and beyond more general terms.
- This is only a guide and use your own discretion regarding each context – you know your class/students best!

Not singling anyone out

Teachers also expressed the need for "*some really good training on how to navigate it sensitively, so the child doesn't feel excluded*" and the importance of "*being able to teach the children about this without making it about anybody that they know or anybody specific*". This can be tricky for teachers if, for example, you have a majority white class and only one black child when engaging in activities for Black History Month. However, this should not mean the topic should be ignored. In instances like this, keep the topic broad and don't single out the child who is black. The same applies for other appearance diversities. Another way to address appearance diversity subtly is to weave it into the lessons, see the 'Do's and Don'ts' below for further details.

Terms/language to avoid

Remember: context, legal guidelines and individual preference can also impact what language to use. Language evolves so this is not a set-in-stone list for all time. Broad groups of appearance characteristics which teachers discussed as important are outlined, although there are many ways people vary in terms of appearance.

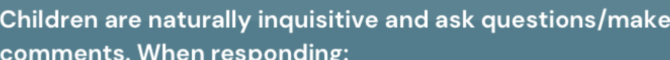
The following page includes a terminology table. People have varying degrees of experiences and this table aims to get everyone on the same page with appropriate language and terms to use. If you hear another member of school staff using terms in the 'what not to say' section, you can use this guide as a tool to help them understand appropriate alternatives.

Warning - There are some terms included that are considered offensive but have been included in this list for clarity and to explain why they should not be used.

Characteristics	What not to say	Alternative
Race	Terminology around ***race*** is complex. Race is drawn up on the basis of physical markers (e.g., skin colour) and like gender, is a socially constructed term. When discussing ***ethnicity*** this includes a mixture of markers e.g., physical: 'black,' religious: 'Jewish' cultural: 'Irish traveller' and geographical: 'Asian' to differentiate between groups. See Show Racism the Red Card for further details and a more comprehensive list of what not to say. ***Non-white*** – this term centres race around 'white,' it alludes to othering of other races that are not white. ***Coloured*** – historically used to segregate black people as a form of othering anybody who was not white. ***Half-caste*** – widley disliked term. ***Gypo or Pikey*** – both offensive terms to describe someone from the gypsy or traveller community. The term 'pikey' derives from the word 'turnpike' a device used to collect tolls and meaning 'to go away from, to go on.'	It is better to refer to the person's identified race/ethnicity (e.g., ***Black, Asian, South Asian***). ***Ethnic minorities*** is the preferred collective term for all ethnic groups, except white British (UK Government). Other common umbrella terms used (but not supported by the UK government) are, ***Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME), Black and Minority Ethnic (BME)*** or ***People of Colour.*** People with ***Mixed heritage/ethnicity*** and ***dual heritage*** is often preferred. The term ***Gypsy, Roma*** or ***Traveller*** may be used, but proceed with caution as there are many Gypsy and Traveller groups.
Gender/Sex	Assuming ***gender*** has to be the same as ***biological sex – gender*** is a social construct that includes roles, toys, clothes etc. and although gender often aligns with someone's ***biological sex,*** gender is not fixed and can be chosen and defined by the individual themselves.	Use people's preferred pronouns. If unsure of an individual's identified gender and preferred pronouns, ***use their name or they/them/their.***
Disability	***The disabled/handicapped*** – describing people as their disability can be dehumanising and label them as their difference. ***Suffering with/victim of*** – these descriptors assume pity and negativity.	***Has a disability/has a condition*** – these firstly emphasises the people and then condition. The term ***'disabled people'*** is also viewed as an acceptable term by the British Council of Disabled People's organisation.
Visible Differences	***Scarred/Burned etc.*** – avoid labelling an individual by their visible difference (e.g., the burnt boy), this can be demeaning and label the individual as their difference ***Victim/tragic/unfortunate*** – there are a number of connotations around visible differences alluding to pity/negativity. Avoid language of pity when describing visible differences (e.g., awfully burned, has a baddie on their face). Descriptions of visible differences should not include these adjectives.	***Visible difference*** is the preferred use for the community who have an altered appearance either at birth or via an accident or surgery. ***Facial difference*** is the preferred term for those who have a visible difference on or around their face. ***Has a cleft/birthmark etc.*** – Keep language non-judgmental and avoid adding adjectives of pity/negativity. The term ***disfigurement*** is mainly used in legal settings and 'severe disfigurement' is a protected term under the Equality Act 2010. See Changing Faces for more details.
Weight	***Fat–*** although some activists advocate the term, it has a number of negative connotations and therefore is best to be avoided in an educational context. ***Unhealthy*** – avoid linking higher weight to individual unhealthy behaviours, these stereotypes are highly engrained in society and often lead to direct blame towards the individual. Weight is impacted by multiple factors which go beyond the individual themselves so labelling someone of higher weight as unhealthy is unhelpfully not including the bigger picture.	Of ***higher weight*** – this term is associated with fewer stereotypes; however, weight is currently very stigmatised within society and there are still a number of highly endorsed stereotypes. Ultimately weight does not singularly equal health, so avoid discussing weight with a child (whether lower or higher weight) and when discussing health consider ***all*** aspects, not just weight (e.g., mental health, sleep etc.).

Responding to questions

"When other children ask questions, I have to choose my language very carefully" **– Teacher**



Children are naturally inquisitive and ask questions/make comments. When responding:

1. Consider if the person in question is in earshot and respectfully respond to these questions and not shy away from them.
2. Use matter-of-fact language when appropriate (e.g., 'Maia has a cleft lip' or 'Tiago is black') in the same way you would do age: 'Kahn was born in 2009 and is 12 years old'.
3. Chastising children for asking genuine questions or comments is unhelpful and can lead to further stigma and judgement towards certain appearances.
4. Don't judge someone beyond the facts (e.g., do **not** say: 'Emer has a bad burn, it must be awful for her').
5. Emphasise kindness and acceptance.

Examples:

Why does Jamie have that mark on their face? (related to a birthmark)

Jamie has a birthmark on their face. Birthmarks are something people are born with and can be any size, colour or place on the body. It doesn't change who Jamie is as a person.

We shouldn't be asking questions about that. Jamie has a baddie on their face, and it must be difficult for them.

Why is Leo a different colour to me? (Leo is Black)

Leo is black. People are born with different appearances like hair colour, eye colour and also skin colour. These are important parts of our identities (how we see ourselves) but so are other things like our personalities and how we treat others.

Leo is a non-white person. We shouldn't be mentioning people's skin colour as it's irrelevant.

Why does Ms Rahman have her hair covered? (Ms Rahman is a Muslim woman)

Ms Rahman wears a headscarf because she is a Muslim woman and hair coverings are a part of her religious faith.

Why don't you go and ask her?

Why is Freddie fat?

We should not be using the word fat to describe someone; this word has been used a lot in a negative way to hurt other people's feelings. Bodies come in all different shapes and sizes, it's important to remember that all bodies are good bodies and that we should not be assuming anything about a person because of their weight.

Perhaps he has a condition, or his family don't feed him healthy foods.

Why does that person only have 3 fingers? (condition is unknown)

I'm actually not sure. There are some conditions which people are born with which leads to a visible difference on the hands and there are some cases where people may lose or have a finger(s) removed in their lifetime. Because we do not know the person's story, we cannot say for sure, but it is important to not be shy about these things and make sure we take time to learn.

We shouldn't be pointing out things like that, they must find it terrible, so it's important to not draw attention to it.

Georgie wants to be a girl now (George was assigned male at birth but is identifying as a female).

Yes, Georgie is a girl. Most of us when we are born are either male or female, but gender isn't fixed and can be whatever we identify it as, so we should all respect Georgie and say she/her instead of he/him now when talking about Georgie

It's very confusing isn't it? He was George one day and now he's Georgie.

Do's and Don'ts

Do respond to all appearance-based bullying the same

As not all diverse appearance characteristics fall under the Equality Act, your school may not have the same procedures in place to tackle appearance-based bullying regarding weight in the same way it does with race, for example. Nonetheless all bullying based on appearance can be harmful for children's body image. All appearance-based bullying needs to be taken seriously with the same procedures followed, irrespective of the reason for the bullying.

How? Ensure your school has a no tolerance approach towards all appearance-based bullying.

Don't speak negatively about your own and others' bodies

It is important that you model to children how to be kind and non-judgmental towards your own and others' bodies. Do not berate your own body in front of children e.g., *"I might stand up, because I've got a bit of a spare tyre, and I might point out at me 'I've got a bit of a spare tyre here."* This can be difficult if you struggle with your own body image but speaking kindly towards your body can have a positive impact on you and is actively role modelling good body image for the children.

How? Be aware of your own body image and beliefs, making sure to reflect on your own feelings and how these may impact the children.

Do weave in diverse appearances through representation

Consider subtly representing other appearances in the images you use whilst teaching – *"It doesn't necessarily have to be a stand-alone topic to be discussed it could be woven through different elements of the curriculum. Sometimes I feel like addressing the specific issue, or the specific problem, can almost draw more attention to it and make it stand out more."* A good place to start could be as simple as showing different people. Representing different appearances in books and videos can help increase exposure. This is important if you have a range of diverse appearances in your class, but also extremely important if you do not: *"If children aren't naturally exposed to diverse appearances in their school, in their community, where they live, then later in life they may be less accepting or have less understanding or be more ignorant to differences."*

How? Include books, toys and displays which represent more diverse appearances. When using images, videos and resources in class actively look for ones which represent a range of different appearances. See the resources section in this guide for a head start.

Don't avoid the topic of diversity

It is apparent teachers feel similarly that this topic is tricky and are unsure how to navigate it. Teachers are *"worried about saying something wrong"* but also *"don't want to seem naïve that we don't know enough."* This can lead to a mixture of *"wanting to tackle it but also, it's kind of easier to just avoid it because then you don't upset or offend."* Avoiding acknowledging or discussing diversity can lead to further taboo and stigma towards certain appearances. Therefore, it is important school staff have honest and open conversations about how they would like to include diversity of appearances. These conversations need to be held in a safe space and allow school staff a chance to express fears and ideas for this topic.

How? Set up a support group with other staff to have these discussions. Use this guide as a starting tool.

Helpful Resources

A good starting point for primary school staff...

Charities/Organisation Resources:

Disabilities/Visible and facial differences
Changing Faces: https://www.changingfaces.org.uk
Race
Show Racism the Red Card: https://www.theredcard.org
Body Image
Book: Body Image in the Primary School by Nicky Hutchinson and Chris Calland.
General
EqualiTeach: https://equaliteach.co.uk

EqualiTeach Topic	Description
Reject Racism	A collection of recommended anti-racism resources and tools. https://equaliteach.co.uk/for-schools/classroom-resources/reject-racism/
Free to Be	Celebrating LGBT+ Equality and tackling homophobia, biphobia and transphobia https://equaliteach.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/FREE-TO-BE-rev5.pdf
Universal Values	A teacher's resource for responding holistically to the requirement to promote Fundamental British Values. https://equaliteach.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/Universal-Values-Update-2020.pdf
Faith in Us	Educating young people on Islamophobia. https://equaliteach.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/FAITH-IN-US.pdf
All Inclusive	Tackling Disability-Related Bullying in Primary Schools. https://equaliteach.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/ALL-INCLUSIVE.pdf
Reflecting Diversity in the Classroom	A bank of recommended books for teaching about issues of equality and diversity. Early years included. https://equaliteach.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Reflecting-Diversity-in-the-Classroom.pdf

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Department for Education. (2014). The Equality Act 2010 and schools. *GOV.UK https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/315587/Equality_Act_Advice_Final.pdf*

Parnell, J. Williamson, H. Lewis, F & Slater, A. (2021) Children's attitudes and friendship behaviours towards socially stigmatised appearances: Do attitudes vary according to type of difference? *Stigma and Health.*

Show Racism the Red Card (2013) Anti-Racism Education Pack. http://www.theredcard.org/resources-and-activities/

The project was developed at the Centre for Appearance Research, based at the University of the West of England. The research was funded by the Vocational Training Charitable Trust Foundation.
To get in touch please email: Jade.Parnell@uwe.ac.uk
Design by Zoë Haime (zoehaime.com) and illustrations by Tom Waterhouse (2dforever).

E. Covid-19

E.i Research proposal of original Study 3

Title: Developing an intervention to promote acceptance of diverse appearances in children using a participatory action approach.

Abstract: A participatory action approach with young children and teachers will be employed to design and explore the components of a school-based intervention aimed at promoting acceptance of diverse appearances in young children aged 4-6 years. A series of focus groups and workshops with an advisory group of teachers and children will inform core elements of a school-based intervention designed to target weight, visible difference and disability stigma in both boys and girls. This will add to the currently limited literature regarding school-based interventions promoting acceptance of diverse appearances in primary school-aged children.

Research background/context: Findings from both previous studies within the PhD suggest weight stigma develops very early, and stigma towards a visible difference can be present at around 6 years of age. Development of stigma towards these appearances does not differ according to gender. Additionally, the media was highlighted as a potential protective factor predicting children's positive attitudes towards individuals in a wheelchair. Thus, the evidence collated suggests interventions should be targeting early stages of child development, co-educationally, and perhaps considering the media's impact on children's stigma.

The previous studies helped understand at what age to target and potential risk factors regarding children's stigma towards various appearances – the *when,* and *what* of children's appearance stigma. However, these findings do not tell us *how* to promote acceptance towards these appearances or provide details regarding intervention design. Majority of interventions aim to improve the skills and self-esteem of individuals with a diverse appearance, following a medical model. However, a systematic review of previous psychosocial interventions for children/young people who have a visible difference provide inconclusive evidence (Jenkinson, Williamson, Byron-Daniel & Moss, 2015).

Additionally, there are only a small number of interventions aimed at targeting appearance stigma at a group-based level, following a social model. This is important, as arguably adjustment for individuals with a diverse appearance could be eased if society were better educated about issues and consequences of having a diverse appearance (Rumsey & Harcourt, 2004). School-based interventions aimed at targeting appearance stigma in primary school-aged children are few (Damiano, Yager, McLean & Paxton, 2018; Dohnt & Tiggemann, 2008; Haines et al., 2006; Irving, 2000) and frequently target older children and/or require further evaluation in order to provide conclusive evidence for their effectiveness. Of the school-based interventions listed above, only one (Damiano et al., 2018) evidences the inclusion of stakeholders (in this case, teachers) within the form of a needs assessment prior to and feedback after intervention development. The needs assessment provided valuable insight, highlighting teachers need for resources regarding body image and body diversity, media images and promoting body acceptance. Additionally,

teachers provided relatively positive feedback towards the intervention, which was used to modify the intervention. However, this study and other subsequent studies listed did not employ a participatory action research (PAR) approach to intervention design. PAR can come in lots of formations and varying levels, however the premise underpinning all formulations of PAR is that research and action must be conducted 'with' people and not 'on' or 'for' people (Reason & Bradbury, 2008). PAR approaches promote non-hierarchical relationships that include and acknowledge the expertise of the relevant stakeholders (e.g., teacher, children and parents) as well as the research team (Power Blom-Hoffman, Clarke et al., 2004). It has been suggested, even in the previous millennia, that researcher move away from their ivory towers and into more reasonable and sustainable real-world contexts (Hoagwood & Tickett, 1999). However, often inclusion of stakeholders can be tokenistic and viewed as a confirmatory way of checking feasibility after an intervention has been designed by researchers, as evidence by the current literature described above. It is critical stakeholders and relevant users find interventions acceptable as this can affect implementation, effectiveness and subsequent motivation (Nastasi et al., 2000). In support of this, when a participatory action approach has been implemented, psychosocial interventions are viewed as highly acceptable and valued highly by relevant stakeholders (e.g., YP Face IT: Williamson, Griffiths & Harcourt, 2015). Thus, efforts to design interventions with stakeholders is a worthwhile pursuit, especially in areas where current knowledge is limited. Given only a handful of school-based interventions promoting acceptance of appearances in children have been designed, all of which lack extensive evidence and most of those evidencing no inclusion of stakeholder involvement, it would be valuable to take a step back, and include stakeholders in a PAR model, in order to fully understand what would benefit users (teachers and children).

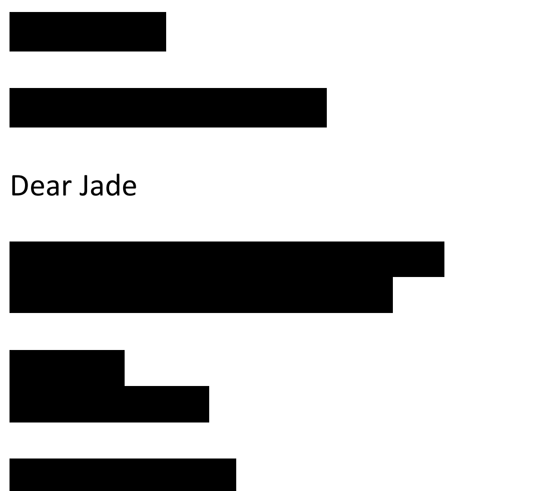
Research questions:

- To explore and understand what teachers and children would like included in an intervention promoting acceptance towards weight, visible difference and disability stigma.
- To construct a series of workshops with older children (age 8-11 years) to design an intervention to promote acceptance of weight, visible difference and disability stigma in younger children (aged 4-6 years).

Research methods: Focus groups with teachers and children, and face-to-face workshops with children will be conducted. Initial focus groups will scope out important questions and aims for both teachers and children. Workshops will be run with children aged between 8-11 years (key stage 2: years 4, 5 & 6), using information provided from the focus groups, asking children to collaboratively create ideas for an intervention to promote acceptance towards weight, visible difference and disability to younger children aged 4-6 years.

E.ii Original ethics approval

UWE REC REF No: HAS.20.01.099 30th April 2020



Dear Jade

Application title: Developing an intervention to promote acceptance of socially stigmatised appearances in children using a participatory action approach

Thank you for responding to the conditions raised in my letter to you of 11th March 2020. I can now confirm full ethics approval for your project, but please note the proviso below.

In light of the current situation regarding COVID-19, we can only authorise an immediate start for activities involving human participant research that do not involve face to face contact, or activities that do not breach either national laws or University policies. In these uncertain times, law and policy may change swiftly and frequently.

We are, however, continuing to scrutinise and grant ethical approval for activities that cannot take place at present, to ensure that once the situation changes and activities can go ahead, the research is not unnecessarily delayed.

What this means for your application:

1. If your application DOES NOT involve activities affected by the current crisis (e.g. online surveys or telephone interviews etc.) then you may start your research as soon as you receive this formal notification of your ethical approval;
2. If your application DOES involve activities affected by the current crisis then you must not start your research until you are lawfully and safely able to do so, and when it does not breach the University's policies. This will affect the dates you have supplied on your application form in relation to start and finish. When you have a new dates, please can you write to us in order that we can add this information to your file?

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If you are a doctoral student and this will affect your research timetable, please speak to your Director of Studies and the Graduate School for advice on how time delays will be supported by the University.

The following standard conditions apply to all research given ethical approval by a UWE Research Ethics Committee:

1. You must notify the relevant UWE Research Ethics Committee in advance if you wish to make significant amendments to the original application: these include any changes to the study protocol which have an ethical dimension. Please note that any changes approved by an external research ethics committee must also be communicated to the relevant UWE committee.
2. You must notify the Research Ethics Sub-Committee (formerly UREC) if you terminate your research before completion.
3. You must notify the Research Ethics Sub-Committee if there are any serious events or developments in the research that have an ethical dimension.

Please note: The RESC is required to monitor and audit the ethical conduct of research involving human participants, data and tissue conducted by academic staff, students and researchers. Your project may be selected for audit from the research projects submitted to and approved by the RESC and its committees.

We wish you well with your research. Yours sincerely

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