

¹Pupils at risk of school exclusion: exploring constructions of professional care in the classroom

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**Working Paper for [IPSE Seminar Series Transformations in the Education Workforces Seminar 2, *The Blurring of the Boundary between Education and Care*](#): 4th October 2011, London Metropolitan University.
Please do not cite without permission.**

Over the last decade or more interpretations of student care in the context of educational institutions have undergone significant change. Pedagogic models have traditionally reproduced a Cartesian split between scholarly rationality associated with educational achievement and emotionality as a disruptive force. Schools are primarily charged with educating the mind and sharpening reason, while emotions, as non cognitive processes are viewed as disrupting the mind, preventing it from functioning objectively and rationally. This split resulted in what Kathleen Lynch and colleagues describe as a history of 'carelessness' in the classroom. Powerful critiques of this dualism from feminists and liberal educationalists have highlighted the impact of emotion and social relationships on learning, but we're going to argue these concerns have primarily been addressed through a regulatory focus on pupil wellbeing.

In this paper, we will attempt to document the ways in which care in the classroom has come to embody this very particular meaning, prioritising psychological development, professional competence and risk at the expense of more relationally embedded responses. More specifically we explore how a discourse of professional care has come to frame and structure teacher pupil, and also teacher parent interactions in schools.

Drawing on data from an ethnographic study of pupils at risk of school exclusion we're going to outline how a contemporary preoccupation with notions of personal development and emotional learning shape formal policy and practice in inner city London comprehensives. We highlight the way this apparently progressive and inclusive agenda generates a highly regulatory framework, ordering the ways in which teachers and pupils are expected to experience and express care and emotions. We demonstrate how therapeutic discourses prioritising emotion management and the raising of self esteem position young people at risk of school exclusion as psychologically troubled and in need of formal, professionalised caring interventions. More spontaneous expressions of care and caring between teachers and students are now more likely to be constructed in terms of 'risk'. We're going to outline

¹ This paper draws on material to be published in a forthcoming book 'Critical Approaches to Care: Understanding Caring Relations, Identities and Cultures' (Routledge Relationships and Resources Book Series).

how these institutional meanings operate on a day to day basis and how they are interpreted, appropriated and often subverted by teachers and other school staff.

To begin with it's important to consider the broader policy context here. Current approaches to care in the classroom have developed in response to a series of formative policy changes initiated by the New Labour Government at the turn of the century. The Every Child Matters (ECM) framework was introduced as a Green Paper in 2003 and was quickly enshrined in the Children Act 2004, implementing what is generally recognised to be one of the most significant policy changes of the post war era. Revolving around the themes of risk and rescue, ECM prompted a radical reorganisation of children's services, encompassing almost every Government department and front line professional. Ostensibly ECM was developed in response to the tragic abuse and murder of 8 year old Victoria Climbié and the subsequent review highlighting service failures. A key feature of the legislation was the introduction of new structures forcing agencies and professionals to share information and work together to protect children from abuse and neglect. However at the core of ECM is a broader moral and political concern with wellbeing and the rearing of children as a key mediator of disadvantage and other social problems. This is reflected in a widening out of more traditional understandings of risk to encompass a range of poor outcomes for children including underachievement, school exclusion and poor mental health.

The ECM framework also represents a fundamental plank in the emergence of what Nigel Parton (2006) has termed the 'preventative state', with initiatives increasingly directed towards predicting and heading off social problems before they have even manifested. This predominantly operates through the identification of 'at risk' groups within the wider population who are then subject to targeted interventions. Under this legislation schools have been given a prominent role in recognising 'at risk' children and implementing the ECMs mantra of 'early intervention and effective protection'. More specifically the remit of schools has expanded beyond that of educating to encompass child and family welfare, imposed through a legal duty to recognise and safeguard 'vulnerable' children on their register. As a consequence teachers are now expected to work with a range of professionals to monitor children's development and intervene where necessary. While social and economic disadvantage is articulated in terms of risk, ECM centres instead on 'protective' interpersonal factors such as strong parent child relations, parental involvement with education, availability of appropriate role models and self esteem.

But characteristic references to inclusion and wellbeing mask a more regulatory and reactionary ethos operating through a technicalisation of risk in relation to social and emotional relationships. Children and young people are positioned within this approach as potentially at risk, from their families and incompetent parenting and but also from professionals and other adults. Guidelines, policies and sanctions operate within schools to ensure a duty of care is properly discharged and that pupils are appropriately protected. For example, teachers attend formal training in safeguarding children, are

expected to exercise their responsibilities in collaboration with social workers, the police and other agencies, and are subject to criminal record checks and other vetting procedures.

Reflecting this preoccupation with risk, vulnerability and child development is the new significance accorded to emotions and social relationships in the classroom. In particular, fears have coalesced around the mental health of pupils who are viewed as lacking the 'soft skills' needed to interact and cooperate as good citizens. New social pressures and sub-standard parenting are depicted as having led to an epidemic of disconnected and emotionally stunted young people facing high risk futures.

Inspired by the work of US psychologist Daniel Goleman, claims are made that greater emotional intelligence will improve pupils' conduct, attainment and wellbeing. Concerns about a perceived deterioration in classroom discipline have been a key factor driving this effort to address the impact of emotionality on learning. Anxieties have centred the mental health of particular young people who are viewed as dangerous, disruptive and uncontrollable. According to Goleman, aggression, violence, impulsivity and school disengagement result from an inability to recognise and address emotions. New social pressures and poor parenting have led to an 'emotional malaise' requiring urgent action. These assertions have underpinned a range of school programmes and initiatives designed to teach and nurture emotional literacy, most notably the nationwide schools initiative, SEAL (Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning). So while once viewed as inappropriate in an educational context emotionality has become a curriculum subject in its own right.

Couched in characteristically emotive, 'feel good' language, policy literature promotes SEAL in a style that deflects argument and disarms criticism. For example, in a guidance document for secondary schools it states that:

Social and emotional skills are a key component of an emotionally healthy, inclusive school culture that helps all pupils succeed and which values and celebrates diversity. The key skill of self-awareness helps all members of a school community to recognise and face their own prejudices and intolerances. This is the first step to tackling them. Empathy is central to developing a concern for, and understanding of, others, both recognising our common humanity, and acknowledging and celebrating social, cultural and individual difference.

The translation of SEAL goals into rhetoric about inclusion, common humanity and celebration of diversity, presents a wholly positive picture of an unquestionable social good. As Carol Craig, has noted this 'childhood and apple pie' vision is difficult to critique without seeming to position yourself against children's wellbeing.

A broad alignment of SEAL initiatives with social inclusion, an anti-bullying stance and a commitment to enhancing child mental health appeals to many professionals and parents offering an apparently progressive approach to enduring social problems. But, close analysis reveals an altogether more

conventional, traditionalist agenda. Conceptually convoluted, often fuzzy ideas frame a common theme of recognising feelings in order to better manage them. In terms of SEAL, this key objective overrides the characteristic liberal reformist language for an emphasis on control and regulation. Some proponents even recommend rote learning of appropriate emotions for young children.

The basic remit of social and personal control is very evident in the close association of SEAL with school behaviour management programmes. Goleman's dire warnings of the violent, dysfunctional consequences of 'emotional malaise' resonate with public and political anxieties about 'anti-social behaviour' and 'feral youth'. In line with this new therapeutic model the language used to define troublesome pupils has shifted. Once described in terms of disruption or disaffection, young people with challenging behaviour (particularly boys) are now commonly diagnosed with conditions such as 'conduct disorder' 'emotional and social difficulties' or even 'oppositional defiance disorder'. In line with this shift, understandings of pupil care have come to embrace a new expectation of professional standards.

As some have suggested in relation to nursing, the very concept of 'professional caring' could actually be viewed as a contraction in terms. If you prioritise instrumental competence above expressive relationally, an essential quality of caring as an organic, situated process may be undermined. A similar troubled dynamic can be identified in the context of education, with understandings of caring as integral to good teaching in tension with measures designed to monitor and regulate proficiency. Educational reforms during the 1980s and 90s introduced a new ideal of 'the competent employee', undermining identities structured around the notion of vocation. The introduction of a national curriculum, testing and inspection regimes, and the standards agenda worked to reconfigure and circumscribe teaching practice placing new emphasis on management and accountability. Thereby leaving less and less room for spontaneous expressive caring in the classroom. In line with the introduction of Every Child Matters and SEAL caring within schools has been increasingly transformed into a performance indicator in its own right. Care and concern have been formalised as professional responsibilities of educators to be monitored and regulated accordingly, with personal qualities of kindness and sensitivity overlaid by more manageable routines of 'due care'.

For example, the General Teaching Council for England (GTCE) introduced the 'Code of Conduct and Practice for Registered Teachers' in 2009, with the first listed principle emphasising the requirement to 'put the well-being, development and progress of children and young people first'. The document specifies how this care and concern should be enacted with teachers expected to:

- use their professional expertise and judgement to do their best for the children and young people in their care
- take all reasonable steps to ensure the safety and well-being of children and young people under their supervision
- follow their school's child protection policies and procedures

- establish and maintain appropriate professional boundaries in their relationships with children and young people
- demonstrate self-awareness and take responsibility for accessing help and support in order to ensure that their own practice does not have a negative impact on learning or progress or put children and young people at risk of harm
- use appropriate channels to raise concerns about the practice of other teachers or professionals if this has a negative impact on learning or progress or risks harming children and young people.

Significantly this sets out a vision of professional care in which the themes of proficiency, personal distance, risk evaluation and fitness to practice are stressed in contrast to emotional commitment, compassion and respect for the different experiences and identities of pupils.

It's within this context that we conducted our ESRC funded study of pupils at risk of school exclusion. This was an ethnographic participatory study focusing on 12 to 15 year old pupils attending dedicated onsite units designed to address persistent and serious conduct issues. We've termed them Behaviour Support Units (BSUs) for ease of reference. Our fieldwork took place over the course of two years in three mainstream secondary schools, two of them co-educational and one single sex girls' school. Each BSU operated as a separate onsite unit within the schools designed to contain difficult pupils and remove them from mainstream classrooms. Somewhat ironically they were administered as part of school inclusion policies.

A total of 73 pupils participated in the study, 24 young women and 49 young men. Pupils came from a range of ethnic backgrounds including white, Black African and Black Caribbean, Turkish, Eastern European, South East Asian and mixed heritage. A majority of the sample were from black and minority ethnic communities, reflecting the general make up of the BSUs. Almost all of the students lived in areas characterised by high levels of deprivation. Family incomes were generally low and housing was often extremely poor. Another important social context framing our research relates to the serious problem of teenage knife crime that areas surrounding all three schools were experiencing. Through the course of our fieldwork three teenagers known to our research participants were fatally stabbed while several of the participants themselves were hospitalised with knife wounds.

Activities in the BSUs centred largely on the SEAL agenda pursued through circle time, anger management sessions, mentoring and project work. This focus on communication, emotional literacy and self regulation reflected a broader construction of challenging pupils as developmentally delayed and lacking in personal and social skills. School staff tended to draw on therapeutically orientated explanations of difficult behaviour attributing it to the psychological effects of damaging home lives, adolescent turmoil, poor parenting or undiagnosed disorders (such as ADHD or Autistic Spectrum Disorders). In this context teachers were expected to demonstrate the professional nature of their role in addressing the troubled lives of their pupils. But, as our research suggests this discourse of professional care and the

medicalised approach to behaviour it underpins can conceal a considerably more ambivalent and complex reality.

The school staff participating in our research drew heavily on principles of professional caring in making sense of their everyday practice, but as our analysis demonstrates, these could be articulated to achieve very different ends. For some, regulations governing responsibilities of care provided them with an objective framework to guide and limit troubling interactions with pupils. The ability to manage turbulent relationships and discharge duties of care with dispassionate skill was highly valued by some teachers, particularly in the context of large classrooms and multiple social deprivations. To be able to formally address concerns about behaviour and welfare while minimising personal anxiety and involvement could promote a sense of efficacy alongside a positive identity as a caring professional. This was often achieved through recourse to psychologised discourses emphasising developmental difficulties, with teachers positioning themselves as addressing and alleviating such problems. 'Troubled' and 'troublesome' were readily conflated through a focus on bad behaviour as a manifestation of emotional disorder or deficit, ensuring the wider social and structural context framing conduct remained unexplored. In fact most school staff carefully policed pedagogic boundaries to ensure the more disturbing aspect of pupils' lives were kept out of classroom discussions and interventions.

Despite the professed emphasis on sharing emotions as a therapeutic, remedial initiative, SEAL based activities were structured by unspoken boundaries which limited the feelings and thoughts pupils were permitted to voice. Only certain forms of emotional expression were sanctioned in classroom interventions and these were monitored carefully by the teacher. For example, Kate Blackman, a BSU manager who organised various circle time groups described how she often had to remove pupils who were too forthcoming.

In a workshop you might realise, very quickly, that, "This is not the appropriate support for you. ... and that's happened before, where, you know, some girl is talking so inappropriately about stuff, that "This is not the right place for you to be talking about, you know, sharing your, your home life here".

As the GTCE's Code of Conduct and Practice demonstrates, new caring responsibilities accorded to teachers have been accompanied by new regulations and guidance stressing the importance of boundaries and professional conduct. Some school staff placed this concept at the centre of their practice, adopting a strong identity around competent professionalism, particularly, in the context of relationships with troubled and troublesome pupils. For example, Susan James, a teaching assistant, emphasised the importance of her knowledge, proficiency and ability to maintain professional boundaries.

I always believe the way you start off is the way you must continue, and keep a professional ... er ...keep professional boundaries.

Investment in a professional approach to caring could reflect a strikingly technical approach to notions of childrearing, with parents often depicted by school staff as sub optimal in their practices. For example, a classroom mentor described her preference for dealing with foster carers above parents because of their professional training and greater competence. Parents could be viewed as either caring too much about their children, to the extent that it clouded their judgement and precluded rational behaviour, or caring too little, or at least failing to demonstrate the caring actions deemed appropriate by the schools. Teachers were particularly likely to invoke the spectre of incompetent or disinterested parents to make sense of disruptive behaviour in the first place. Even where teachers recognised the efforts and good intentions of parents a BSU referral tended to be viewed as evidence of parental failure to adequately care for a child. Interviews with school staff highlighted the extent to which understandings of caring, inclusive teaching practice are currently built around psychologised assessments of parental competence and personal wellbeing - as the following quote from Jocelyn Reed, a BSU manager demonstrates.

You've got students who come with a range of public background issues relating to home, so therefore you have students who are 'non-attendants', students who don't like school at all and students who have various home situations which causes them NOT wanting to come into school. Whether because they feel they are going to be intimidated by other students? And those that can't really make friends with ... they can't socialise. Then you've got the students that come in but they've got behavioural issues, which probably is linked to the way the home is run or there's no order or they just speak to their parents anyhow, and so they think they can come into school and conduct themselves in that way. So you have quite a wide range of students coming in.

Strong adherence to ideals of boundaried dispassion and notions professional good practice could allow school staff to manage risk, experience a sense of competence and reduce personal feelings of emotional distress and anxiety, but most also demonstrated a more connected expression of care in their everyday encounters with pupils. Highlighting the extent to which discourses of professional care can obscure ethical dilemmas facing school staff in the classroom, some mainstream teachers described a passionate dedication to the wellbeing and educational development of academically promising students, while adopting a more clinical detachment in discharging a duty of care towards those less able and more challenging in their behaviour. For example, Mr Phillips, a year head, discussed his passionate enthusiasm to ensuring those in his class learnt for their own sakes.

I know most of the kids in my Year really, really well because I MADE myself get to know them well. Every time I get a free period I go in their class and I walk around ... I go round the playground ... I talk to 'em ... I have my dinner in the canteen and some of them sit down and talk ... so I know what's going on in my Year. I know what the problems are

and I know who has got what going on cos they talk to you and they also know that if they've got a problem they come and knock on the door and I'll speak to them. On top of that, they know that if they kick off and I get the Incident Report I will find' em and I'll come down like a ton of bricks on them. I'll be fair but if they take the piss they'll be dealt with most severely because if they are taking the piss out of me or their teacher then they're NOT learning and I don't give a damn about anything else apart from THEM learning, THEM coming out of here, THEM going to college, doing well and having a beautiful life and if I have to kick their backsides a hundred times before they leave school to do that then I'll do that!

However, he was considerably less concerned about those he regarded as lacking in potential as the following quote from him demonstrates.

I was told that when I first started teaching 'Accept the fact that 5-10% of the kids you will NEVER get through to and they WILL fail' I did my training next to one of the biggest housing estates in the country and really rough .. 'You know, some of the boys are really frustrating me' and he [Headteacher] said 'you've GOT to accept it, 5-10% you will NOT get through to and there are systems in place for them but don't kick yer own ass about it, it's just the way the system works!' It's really hard to deal with that though because you start off all idealistic and I am still a bit idealistic but I know there are certain kids I can't get near and I don't get pissed off with it anymore and just work with the ones that I can.

In the high pressured environs of a secondary school classroom a teacher's time and attention is limited, with competing demands. The effort required to engage troublesome and or needy students could be viewed as disadvantaging those more willing and able. Dealing with challenging behaviour in the classroom was often viewed as a distraction which compromised teachers' ability to practice care and commitment. By drawing on a formal discourse of professional care teachers were sometimes able to frame exclusion of troublesome pupils from mainstream lessons as a caring act in itself designed to better meet particular 'difficult' children's needs.

As we've noted, a particularly significant feature of professionalised understandings of care is the individualisation and personalisation of problems in the classroom. As the SEAL guidance to secondary schools makes clear, teachers are to focus on the emotional antecedents of disruptive conduct rather than the behaviour in question. While this is presented as a progressive, understanding approach that avoids punitive rule enforcement, it can work in practice to infantilise and disempower young people. Emotional responses like anger, outrage or hurt become detached from the circumstances that provoked them and viewed as symptoms of a deeper problem. This allows little space for pupils' own accounts of false accusations, misunderstandings or unreasonable teacher behaviour. With their actions stripped of meaning or intent in this way challenging pupils are denied agency while institutions are denied an opportunity to critically examine their own

practices and procedures. It might be argued that this encourages a complacent and socially irresponsible approach, particularly given the disproportionate numbers of ethnic minority and/ or poor students excluded from school each year.

What's more an individualised concept of 'due care' could lead to a defensive approach to demonstrating concern and equal opportunities. For example, one school excluded particularly high numbers of African Caribbean students, but their anxieties and attentions were directed primarily at the level of school statistics rather than the practices that produced them. In discussing these worrying numbers the head dismissed them as a temporary 'spike' and consciously sought to 'knock back' potential allegations of racism.

Because when I had a meeting with the inclusion/exclusion person at the borough a couple of years ago, he was sort of praising me for my statistics.... I don't really do a quota for, you know, ethnic groups and so forth. However, obviously I've got a duty of care to look out for, because of institutional racialism, for example, or whatever it might be, so I make sure I do look after the issues, but looking at the issues last year, it looks like there's 80 black Caribbean students in the year group, of which I think about 17 or 18 at some point were excluded. So we obviously analyse it carefully, and we're keeping an eye on it, and this year we're noticing that they were down ... And you also refer back as well to other data, like attainment, because Black Caribbean/BlackAfrican are all achieving significantly above expected in the school, whereas the white working-class are achieving significantly below expected in the school, so, you know, that would kind of knock back any issues of racism.

Mr Wickes was dismissive of the possibility that racism could exist within the school (a position he strongly backed up by his 'multicultural' team of staff members). He claimed to have investigated numerous allegations finding them all to be in his words 'rubbish'. And he continued to insist that decisions to exclude were made in the face of what he termed 'persistent unmanageable behaviour', regardless of ethnicity.

In relation to staff working in the BSUs expressions of care towards attendees more often went beyond the bounded accounts associated with professionalism and due care. Teachers, mentors and teaching assistants could develop strong relationships with pupils at risk of school exclusion, sometimes placing them in conflict with mainstream staff. BSU workers commonly assumed the role of advocates for accused students, negotiating with Headteachers, appealing against decisions to permanently exclude and constructing pathways back into mainstream education. As the following quote demonstrates, Dave Stirling, a teacher and BSU manager made strident efforts to challenge decisions that might see particular students marginalised.

Why is the Headteacher going 'Der ... der' and giving the name of this kid?" And you think to yourself, "Well, all right, it's because he is about

a foot taller than everybody else out there, he is a young black man, he is quite defensive in the way that he responds to authority”, and those are the reasons why, I think, that it’s ... you’ve got locked into this situation where he is always the one who is being called, yet there are people around him behaving badly and all this sort of thing.... and at no point was I making excuses for this kid’s behaviour, and neither was his father. However, the idea is, how can you enter a dialogue with the boy, you know, unless you’re straight with him, and say, “Look, I think I understand what you’re saying. I understand that there is this situation. Yes, racism exists. Yes, there are racist practices going on in school. Our job really is to unpick those in your favour. This is your entitlement, your education”.... it’s empowerment, it’s advocacy, it’s actually standing up for some of these people.

In drawing attention to institutional shortcomings and prejudices rather than personal pathology, Dave articulated an emotionally involved expression of caring rooted in relationally, reflexivity and respect for the individual feelings of the pupils concerned. Yet he also sought to appropriate the language of professional caring as an objective framework to validate his arguments with the mainstream school. He discussed initiatives such as Every Child Matters and SEAL as part of a more general ‘inclusion agenda’, and described how he would quote policy literature in school negotiations to secure better outcomes for pupils at risk of exclusion.

I suppose like everything else, I want to see it actually articulated in reality. And actually, I then began to understand that I could actually be part of that articulation in reality, support it politically. So the arguments about whether this kid should be excluded or not excluded, suddenly became non-arguments. There is no argument. He should be included in education.... but an interest in all that, and then a legitimisation of that really, through this Inclusion initiative, certainly gives me some kind of actual status in terms of what I’m trying to ... what I feel like is the right thing to do (Dave Stirling)

Other BSU staff members were actively sceptical of professional caring discourses and felt they were too constraining in work with children and young people. For example, Glen Taylor, a BSU mentor expressed some resentment towards the boundaries he was expected to maintain in his relations with pupils. Glen often drew on his own personal experiences as a young black man who had experienced marginalisation from education. He commonly employed slang or spoke in Jamaican patois and used humour and physicality to relate to students. Glen was aware that his methods were at odds with the expectations of the school, but he built strong and productive relationships with BSU attendees and their parents. He felt he should have the leeway to pursue this more expressive form of care.

To tell you the truth a mentor has individual work because you are working with different minds... but the senior people are saying, ‘this is the way we want it, this is the way to be supportive’. But if that way is

not getting through, you can bring a horse to water but you can't make him drink, so therefore, it could be the actual thing that you're trying to get them to do that is messing them up.....they say I'm not allowed to cuddle students because I'd be giving off the wrong message...or the things that they've gone through, you know, it could be damaging. You know girls having crushes and if they've got insecurities, turning that crush into a rumour and into something else. So really it's covering yourself and them...So, I can understand why but it just becomes out of this world.

Institutional sanctions against physical contact with children and young people to express care particularly where a pupil is distressed and in need of comfort, reinforces the emotionally detached ideal through which professional care is expected to be administered. But as research by Heather Piper and Ian Stronach highlights 'no touch' policies in educational establishments are more often born out of a concern to protect staff rather than children and can be enforced to the detriment of children and young people's emotional wellbeing. They stress the importance of the child's perspective in judging physical contact, rather than being informed by over inflated, adult led "assumptions of horror, harm, and abuse". As we discovered physical contact between staff and pupils in the BSUs was much more common than in the mainstream setting. Emotions ran high and it was often necessary to guide a pupil away from volatile situations by gently placing an arm round their shoulders (or to break up a fight).

Glen had great success in connecting with deeply marginalised pupils, but his unorthodox practices were viewed as suspect by some of his colleagues, particularly the BSU teaching assistant Susan James. Susan's strong adherence to notions of professionalism and boundaried discharge of due care led her to repeatedly question the appropriateness and safety of Glen's relationships.

I think it's a very, very clear line. You are not friends. Friends support each other to the degree where you have access to that person. We have a very closed shop. You're in here between here and here, and this is a work environment for you to benefit yourself, and we are here for that purpose. I think it gets distorted, and I think the distortion then becomes a problem to the student, because the stability is not there. Because when it comes, when push comes to shove, the student stands on their own, where a friend would be able to defend you right to the end ... you know, so we're not friends. We don't have a friendship as a friendship, you know, and I think we should make that clear, and just using the same language as the student, you know, I think you've got to be a positive role model, you've got to be somebody who's moving on. "I understand where you're coming from, the street, and the street talk", you know, leave that outside, let them come into school, into the Behaviour Support Unit, this is a safe environment, leave that where it is, you know.

Susan's highly instrumental account of the role of school staff to provide a formal, stable and safe environment for pupils contrasted sharply with Glen's more expressive emphasis on providing love as a family member might. While Susan emphasised the 'closed shop' of work hours, Glen admitted worrying about particular young people when he was outside of school and even unofficially 'fostered' a former pupil. Susan found the uncontained nature of Glen's involvement so concerning that she eventually left the BSU to work elsewhere.

To conclude, we have examined how meanings and experiences of care in the classroom have shifted to embrace new understandings of professional practice. A bounded, instrumental exercise of care demonstrating competence and neutrality is expected to be prioritised above more relationally embedded concerns towards particular pupils and their wellbeing. We have also shown how such discourses of professional care in the classroom foreground issues of risk, ostensibly in terms of child wellbeing, but perhaps more meaningfully in relation to the career security of the practising staff member. In an effort to predict and foreclose potential threats to pupil welfare risks become magnified in line with professional responsibilities to prioritise safety. Under the new managerialist agenda governing schools the notion of care becomes reduced to performativity through the monitoring and regulation of pupil staff relationships, particularly in relation to risk.

As our analysis demonstrates conceptualisations of care in the classroom are complex and mutable reflecting the different interests and standpoints of staff members. Despite exhortations to the contrary, attention to the wellbeing of pupils is unevenly distributed ensuring some receive committed support and protection while others are subject to an arms' length exercise of professional duties and responsibilities. That these differences often map on to broader experiences of inclusion and exclusion suggests greater attention should be paid to teacher pupil relationships in order to better understand the production and reproduction of inequality.