What are practitioners' understanding and perceptions of extrinsic motivation, how is it used with children in the foundation stage and what are its perceived effects on their learning and well-being?

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Declaration of original authorship

I confirm that this is my own work and the use of all material from other sources has

been properly and fully acknowledged.

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Abstract

The focus of this thesis is to explore what are early years practitioners' understanding and perceptions of extrinsic motivation, how it is used with children and what are the perceived effects on their learning and well-being? Very little research exists that investigates practitioners' understanding in relation to this area, as well as their perceptions and viewpoints, both professionally and personally. This study seeks to explore this area further and to gain an insight into practitioners' thoughts about the effects of extrinsic motivation on children's learning and well-being. Specifically, the study focuses on exploring the techniques that practitioners use to motivate children, if any; to understand why practitioners use the techniques they do, exploring their perception of the advantages and disadvantages; to identify what training practitioners receive to support their understanding in relation to motivating children. The research uses a mixed methods approach and an interpretive paradigm to understand practitioners' views in depth, through conducting an online questionnaire survey (Appendix C) and interviews (Appendix D) within practitioners' schools. The focus is on investigating the rewards systems, policies, training and practitioners' thoughts on the advantages and disadvantages of using these techniques. The sample included a selection of 33 foundation stage leaders, teachers, higher level teaching assistants and teaching assistants. The study's methods were shown to be effective in collating data to address the research questions.

The findings from the study were mixed. Some practitioners were in favour of using extrinsic motivational methods in the classroom, with 30 of the 33 citing that it supported self-regulation and motivated the children in their learning. However, other practitioners, 9 of the 33 thought that the rewards used in the foundation stage to

motivate children extrinsically were meaningless, inconsistent and had no overall longevity. The study provides interesting insight into practitioners' views of extrinsic motivation and has enabled the research to shed some light on and inform the literature in this area. Some recommendations for practice and ideas for future research are also offered at the end of the thesis.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Professional journey

Attending a lecture as part of an MA in early years' education with care, the discussion moved into a conversation around the awarding of stickers and certificates to children for something they had achieved or because they had conformed to the nursery or school rules. During the session, the lecturer went on to discuss how this method is not useful in motivating children intrinsically and that the giving of such tangible rewards can be detrimental to children's learning. Numerous students within the group began discussing this rewarding method, remarking how astonishing it was that people still used such methods. This provoked a very emotive, internalised reaction, with a flood of queries and questions. Why had the other students reacted so controversially over this? What was wrong with this method? Early years staff and teachers were merely wanting to celebrate the children's achievements and show empathy with the challenges that some children have in conforming socially, therefore the action was well meaning.

Working as a nursery deputy in an early years setting for over 20 years has provided a vast amount of pedagogical experience. Reflecting upon this, it has been interesting to see how practice has changed with the development of new knowledge and how professional theory has changed and developed. Theory now places a higher value on children's experiences in their early years of life and emphasises how crucial it is that practitioners have a conscientious approach to this. The early years setting has had to adapt and adopt new policies and practices over time due to changes in legislation and also in light of best practice and new research around extrinsic motivation and the links to the effects upon children's intrinsic motivation (Sharp, 2002; Dweck, 2000; 2008; Kohn, 1999; Gray, 2013; Engel, 2015). Research clearly

illustrates that their time and efforts when engaging in activities can decrease and areas around ability to accept failure, taking a risk or resilience can be affected.

Alongside changes in professional knowledge and practice, changes in Government at both local and national level have been seen to have some controversial and, at times, unfavourable effects on the early years sector. For example, Ofsted appear to have raised the bar in their expectations in children's learning and progress, with early years settings needing to demonstrate the learning progress that the children have made with much more intensity with an occasionally burdensome load of evidence needing to be submitted to the inspector(s) in accordance with the Education Inspection Framework: DFE (2021). There is indeed a requirement for young children to receive good learning and experiential opportunities with an expectation that the consequences of these provided activities will be measured in some way, as requested by DFE (2021). However, in only a few short years, these quantifiable assessments placed upon children in the early years of their life – Early Years Outcomes – were once titled Desirable Learning Outcomes (1996-2000) which would infer a reduced pressure on the young children having to achieve them.

This study has emerged from a long-standing personal and professional research journey. In the beginning, a naïve and emotive response to a fellow student's clarification about what she presumed was now common pedagogical practice in early years and school settings incited a deep interest and curiosity which has remained to the present day.

1.2 Introduction to the research

Imagine that child so motivated to learn that they go to school each day
with a passion to continue to learn for life, no matter what challenges

> *they may face. A child with a desire to fully engage in all they do. A child*
> *with a great sense of well-being* (Street, 2015, p.1).

The basis of this study is a deep-rooted underlying professional and personal interest in how practitioners motivate young children. This research is concerned with the thoughts and beliefs of practitioners in the foundation stage of education, around extrinsic motivation and its impact upon the learning and well-being of the children within this stage.

The use of stickers, merit badges, certificates and other rewards has been commonplace in educational settings for a long time. There is some evidence to suggest that extrinsic motivation can help achieve desired outcomes for school (league table positions, Ofsted results and expected levels of attainment. Cameron and Price (1994) and Akin-Little and Little (2004) report that the giving of extrinsic rewards is effectual in raising academic outcomes for children. However, the impact on children's well-being, mental health and pressure experienced by schools in delivering education built on such goal-driven and merit-based systems has also been shown to be detrimental not just to children but to practitioners too. A UCL (2019) research paper on the 2019 pilot of the recently introduced baseline assessment saw practitioners reporting that they felt that the children's emotional well-being would be affected as early as the foundation stage, due to the test being carried out a mere 42 days after the children had embarked on their school journey. Hollinsey (2018) and Street (2018) echo through their own research how this pressure on schools can be detrimental, and comment how this can impact on children's self-efficacy, reduce resilience and result in decreasing their desire to learn.

There are several reasons to focus on extrinsic motivation for this thesis. Primarily there is little or no recent evidence that involves staff in the foundation stage

of schools who have the responsibility for awarding the rewards. Therefore, what practitioners think about the methods used to incentivise the children, whether they are useful and if they achieve their intended outcome, is not known. What the practitioners' thoughts, feelings and opinions are more generally, around the rewards systems in place and why practitioners do what they do, is not known.

> *Unfortunately, carrots turn out to be no more effective than sticks at helping children to become caring, responsible people or lifelong, self-directed learners (Kohn, 1994, p.1).*

Kohn strongly implies that motivating a child through using some sort of incentive is no more useful than employing methods perceived as adverse. However, in looking at research regarding rewards and incentives in society, using some form of tangible incentives to influence and stimulate an outcome in some way has been the case for a long time – indeed rewards and punishments are seen by psychologists and sociologists alike as the basis to explain how people learn.

Despite there being an abundance of evidence that would suggest that incentivising children can be detrimental to children's well-being, self-efficacy, autonomy and holistic learning (Lepper, Greene and Nisbett, 1973; Deci, 1975; Kohn, 1988; and Donaldson, 1978), it is still widely practiced and endorsed by practitioners in schools. In addition to this, research suggests that motivating children in this way – so that they will reach an outcome or conform in some way, and at such a young age – is detrimental to their mental health and well-being (Sharp, 2002; Dweck, 2000; 2008; Kohn, 1999; Gray, 2013 and Engel, 2015).

It can be seen from the dates of the above references that some of the research is not contemporary. It also shows that evidence regarding the potential adverse effects of extrinsic motivation has been clear for a considerable amount of time. Complicating the

picture is that the use of rewards is openly validated by Ofsted (1993, p.12), for example.

> *Merit systems and competitions, letters to parents and specific privileges for example in the use of school facilities… to praise individuals and groups when it is merited, and to devise systems of rewards which reflect that philosophy, create a climate in which pupils' self-esteem is nurtured and misbehaviour becomes a markedly less attractive way of obtaining attention.*

This section of the Ofsted publication, under the heading of 'Rewards and Sanctions', draws particularly upon behaviour and children conforming to the rules and expectations placed upon them by a school and its' policies. Considering this information produced by Ofsted, which is available publicly, schools may adopt some of this advocated advice and as a result, reward children for an abundance of reasons. As the overarching governing body for schools, Ofsted may inadvertently promote this guidance for schools, perhaps assuming this may assist in the grading decision of the school. Moreover, a school and its personnel may be put under pressure to retain these and continue with their policies, which also includes competing in league tables and the overall reputations of a setting. Using learning and behaviour reward systems with the aim of a more favourable status could therefore be considered as more than its simple pedagogic use, it may therefore also underpin reasons why behaviour and how it is managed matters in schools.

Presently, rewarding, and motivating children in an external way appears to have increased extensively from practitioners in schools. This approach sees using various methods and reward systems to motivate children with a tangible prize or point for such reasons as turning up to school or displaying good manners (Paton, 2009). Changes to assessments in schools, league tables and the lowering of the entrance to

school age are factors that contribute to this. Children are being presented with a curriculum which was previously intended for older children, for example the revisions to the new EYFS (DFE, 2018) now asks that children achieve goals around literacy that were previously intended for key stage one children. These factors potentially place a lot of pressure on schools' heads and practitioners as there are high expectations and stakes, not only upon the schools themselves, but also the teaching staff and other personnel to achieve. It is widely known that there is pressure in schools from these league tables and other forms of measurement of attainment, including SATs results which take place in the middle and higher end of primary school, but also happen with very young children in the foundation stage. The Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP) is a statutory assessment tool used to gauge children's development under seven areas of learning and is broken down into 17 Early Learning Goals – this is a key assessment too. In addition to this, there are three more areas made up of the child's 'characteristics of effective learning' where a brief description of the child's learning style is given. The main method used to assess children is through a teacher, or another practitioner, conducting an observation. The children are then given judgements as to whether they have reached the anticipated level of development, which is recorded as *expected*, whether they are surpassing the expected level known as exceeding, or if they have not yet reached the intended level appropriate to their age and stage of development, which is described as *emerging*.

Although teachers and early years practitioners are trained in observing children and in their development, evaluations of observations are based on the interpretation of the individual. There are supporting documents to assist with making these judgements, however this material again is open to the practitioner's interpretation and way of thinking. The Standards and Testing Agency (2016, p.9) describes how the main

purpose of the early years foundation stage (EYFS) is "to provide a reliable, valid and accurate assessment of individual children at the end of the EYFS". The results of the children's assessments at the end of the child's first year of school are submitted to the Department for Education (DFE) and are used to look at where the child is nationally within their development as well as to compare results from the previous year's scores. The results are not used to form any sort of publicised league tables, however local authority data is available and so schools can be looked at regionally.

This study is concerned with the views and perceptions of practitioners on using methods of extrinsic motivation in the foundation stage and the potential effects that these can have on children's learning – from their point of view. This subject field is significant and important (especially following the recent Covid-19 pandemic). Existing research from the Department of Health, Department for Education and some of the programmes that have been put in place, as discussed below around the mental health of very young children, emphasises this point. The government has placed a strong focus on children and young people's mental health recently and in 2014 a well-being taskforce was created linking together the Department of Health and DFE. Programmes such as 'Place2Be' and 'Time to change' involve counselling in schools through a trained multidisciplinary team of clinical staff ranging from educational psychologists, youth workers, social and family workers as well as volunteers who aim to support children in their mental health and well-being. This came about due to the rise in cases of children affected and the ages of these children becoming increasingly younger. Young children in primary school have access to this service delivered through the provision of artwork and play activities (DFE, 2015). Intrinsic motivation plays an important part here, in the promotion of self-esteem, confidence, resilience and the ability to address challenge. However, extrinsic motivation unfortunately appears to be

the prevailing practice throughout schools. In this study alone all practitioners reported that their school distributed some form of tangible reward for a variety of reasons.

Having set the scene, it is important to be clear that fundamentally, the driving force behind this research was the researcher's personal interest and understanding through years of professional experience in the field. The research sets out to explore what practitioners do to motivate and reward children and then discuss with practitioners their rationale for motivating children by using tangible rewards. The research was interested in trying to understand what this might mean for children developmentally and spiritually, by looking at it from the practitioners' perspective and then exploring what these ideas might mean, when compared to existing research in the field. This research seeks to explore practitioners' understanding of what they do; and how they reflect on and understand why they do what they do; how it relates to practice; and exploring practitioners' awareness of the possible effects that extrinsic motivation can have on a young persons' development. In short, given the emphasis in practice on extrinsic motivation, the study explores the professional and personal perceptions of it as a tool in the foundation stage among the practitioners that use it. The significance of the research is that it provides a clear link between how the things that partitioners think may relate to what we know empirically about rewarding young children. In doing so, it aims to highlight gaps in professional knowledge and understanding as well as making recommendations for professional practice, regarding linking theory to practice through Continuing Professional Development in early years which is a very important aspect for staff and their individual progression and performance development as presented in Ryan & Deci's (2000) Self-determination theory around individuals and the need for the growth of areas such as autonomy, competence and relatedness to increase their enhanced performance, persistence and creativity.

1.3 Children formally attending school

As discussed previously, children are being tested from an early age in schools in the early years foundation stage (previously referred to as the reception stage). The foundation stage in England and for this study refer to the child's first formal year at school before entering key stage one. The entry age for children is the term following their fourth birthday, which means that a child can turn four years old 31st August and be attending full-time school approximately four days later. Parents are given the opportunity to defer their child's place; however, parents seldom exercise this choice as illustrated in Figure 1 (Chapter 2). This was not always the case and the age that children start school formally has changed somewhat over the years as children previously stared school in the term in which they turned five, a whole year later in comparison to now. In addition to this, the curriculum that the children follow, the Early Year Foundation Stage (EYFS) curriculum, has yet again seen revisions in 2021 that will require a deeper focus on formal learning, with a required outcome.

1.4 The research questions

It was discussed above that the giving of awards to young children in the foundation stage of school is commonplace, something which is also confirmed by many of the studies and experiments which have been presented in this research. This study also heavily illustrates how these rewards affect children in a way that can not only get in the way of their learning but can also get in the way of their social characteristics and relationships too. This EdD study is an investigation which aims to address a perceived gap in understanding, that is, a focus on the use of rewards, from the perspective of

those who use them, in this case foundation stage coordinators, teachers, higher level teaching assistants, teaching assistants and volunteers.

Framed by all the issues addressed in this chapter, this research seeks to explore the following questions:

- What are practitioners' understanding and perceptions of extrinsic motivation, how is it used with children in the foundation stage, and what are its perceived effects on children's learning and well-being?

Sub-questions include:

- What techniques do practitioners use to motivate children, if any?
- If they use techniques to motivate children, why do they do so, and what are the advantages and disadvantages from their perspective?
- What training do practitioners receive to support their understanding and employment of giving rewards to children?

The primary aims of the study are to:

1. Explore practitioners' individual views, thoughts, and beliefs in the foundation stage in terms of the perceived effects of extrinsic rewards on children's learning and their well-being.
2. To explore what support practitioners, have access to in relation to developing their own practice and identifying areas for further development and training (Continuous Professional Development – CPD).
3. To understand the factors that motivate practitioners and schools to use extrinsic methods to motivate the children.

4. To provide a definition of what is meant by both intrinsic and extrinsic motivational methods within the foundation stage.

5. To gain a better insight into the impact of extrinsic motivation upon children's learning and well-being in the foundation stage.

The primary objectives are:

1. To give a voice to foundation stage practitioners and gain a better understanding of their views and opinions, as well as the support and CPD training they would like.

2. To provide possible reasons and explanations for why practitioners and schools use extrinsic motivational methods in the foundation stage which will help highlight the pressures and challenges faced by schools with regards to league tables, Ofsted, and the pressures for schools to perform well.

3. To explore theories and case studies which provide evidence about how children's learning and well-being can be affected.

1.5 Contribution to knowledge and originality

This study is significant as it seeks to bring new evidence that reflects on some long-standing theories and practices, that state that the awarding of extrinsic prizes and motivation techniques are effective in improving outcomes for children holistically and that their use is positive (Cameron and Price, 1994; Akin-Little and Little, 2004). Methods such as behaviour charts and certificates given as a whole school assembly have been used historically in schools as a way of commemorating various aspects of the children's perceived attainment in areas of learning and behaviour (Kohn, 1999). This research explores the methods used in the foundation stage to motivate children,

particularly focusing on extrinsic motivation, and helps to further develop the understanding of the impact that these often-tangible rewards can have upon the child's learning and their individual well-being, which is significantly important. Pink (2018) contributes to this theory in discussing how rewards diminish areas such as performance, creativity, and intrinsic motivation.

The focus of this research is therefore to explore practitioners'understanding and perception of what they do and to find out the views, thoughts and beliefs of those practitioners who are working and caring for children in their first year of formal schooling. Not only is this an underexplored area, but also the possible links to children's well-being that extrinsic rewards may have makes the study important and timely. As such it offers a valuable contribution to the research that is available in this area, which in turn will highlight areas to focus on in formalised training and accreditation for professionals in the early years.

1.6 Overview of the thesis

In Chapter 2, literature relevant to the field of early years is considered – in terms of policy and assessment, professional practice and motivating learning. Chapter 3 discusses the key methods used in the research along with their methodological underpinning. Chapter 4 presents the results from the survey and questionnaire and Chapter 5 engages in analysis and discussion of this data. In Chapter 6, the key focus of the research is reintroduced along with the contribution to knowledge of this research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

Previous research regarding the effects of using extrinsic rewards to motivate children and the impact on their learning and well-being is explored in this chapter. As well as providing a definition of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, some of the key ideas about why and how it is a useful tool for encouraging children are considered.

It is quite commonplace for children in schools to receive rewards for a multitude of different things. However, the reasons behind rewarding children are perhaps moving away from goal-driven tasks or as a behaviour modification strategy and are now being given to children for the most mundane of reasons, as Paton (2009, p.1) notes: "Parents told how their sons and daughters brought home awards for remembering to bring their PE kit to school, upholding class rules and displaying good table manners". Paton goes on to discuss how secondary schools are spending a lot of money on rewards and states, "In some cases, children can win plasma televisions, games consoles, iPod, lap-tops and even flights abroad for turning up on time and working hard" (2009, p.1).

Motivation of young children in the early years is not a new phenomenon and its impact features more heavily regarding areas such as on well-being and mental health as well as learning and attainment. Hayes (2009, p.38) notes that "People have lost the idea of doing anything because it is intrinsically worthwhile-you can only work when something has an external reward. It is anti-educational". Hayes discussed how children are being rewarded for things that "should come naturally" and states that this "takes away children's natural curiosity". The idea that children are being rewarded for things that they need not be rewarded for is a useful starting point for this study.

When considering tools for motivating young children, the potential effects on children in terms of their well-being is clearly important in terms of resilience, perseverance, self-efficacy, and mindset. At present, there is much research and many initiatives around mental health in schools on the importance of children's resilience in order that they are equipped with the skills needed for education, social relationships and later life, as Rutter (1985) states "resilience seems to involve several related elements. Firstly, a sense of self-esteem and confidence; secondly a belief in one's own self-efficacy and ability to deal with change and adaptation; thirdly, a repertoire of social problem-solving approaches". Less clear, however, is how aware practitioners are of the impact they may have in this area through the techniques and practices they employ.

It is important, given its relevance and importance, to explore this concept. The present government is focusing heavily on this area within schools, both financially and through proposals and schemes that are, for example, designed to raise awareness of the current situation in schools, information on factors that contribute to children and adolescent mental health and sources of support. In 2015, the DFE (p.34) reported: "9.8% of children and young people aged 5-16 have a clinically diagnosed mental disorder". This shocking statistic is broken down further to note that "5.8% of all the children have a conduct disorder (this is about twice as common among boys as girls)".

The following literature review is structured into four sections. First the current context of early years is explored as well as some of the current challenges. Theories of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation are then introduced, in the context of these challenges. Finally, the importance of continuing professional development (CPD) is considered.

2.2 Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is the statutory framework that is currently followed in the foundation stage until the end of year one; the framework therefore covers children from birth to five years old. The framework is made up of seven areas of learning, divided into two aspects: the prime areas – Communication and language, Physical development, Personal, Social and Emotional development – and the specific areas made up of Literacy, Mathematics, Understanding the World and Expressive Arts and Design. Early years settings and foundation stage classes within a school are inspected by Ofsted under this framework.

The predominant message and the underlying ethos of the framework is that children learn through play and that practitioners providing activities and experiences should have this in mind when they are delivering them, as laid down by the DFE (2017, p.9):

> *1.8 Each area of learning and development must be implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activity. Play is essential for children's development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, to think about problems and relate to others. Children learn by leading their own play, and by taking part in play which is guided by adults.*

However, language used within the EYFS document repeatedly refers to learning, development, and education, which can be interpreted and addressed in a number of ways, using either formal and or less formal methods to achieve the same desired outcome. Such decisions are determined by the foundation stage lead who manages the early years practitioners that make up the foundation stage team. To illustrate, a mathematical early learning goal can be observed and assessed through counting by rote, flashcards or through engaging in an activity of awe and wonder – with coloured

cornflour and by counting the buried bugs that are found, all the while wearing a blindfold.

The framework includes a set of seven areas of learning and development, with Earl Learning Goals (ELGs) that children are expected to gain by the end of the reception year. The first section of the DFE (2017) document *Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage. Setting standards for learning, development and care for children from birth to five* sets out what practitioners must do in section 1.1 (DFE, 2017, p.7): "working in partnership with parents and/or carers, to promote the learning and development of all children in their care, and to ensure they are ready for school".

2.3 Policies, procedures, and assessment at the foundation stage

All schools are underpinned by policies and procedures which assist in providing regulatory boundaries to create and support the ethos of the school and assist in trying to ensure the school is consistent in its approach and that everyone within the school is treated fairly. There does not appear to be a policy, procedure or any training that addresses how to motivate children to learn although there is guidance on managing behaviour, for example, imposing sanctions for managing behaviour such as 'traffic light systems' or involvement of parents is referenced. Details around rewarding or commending a child when they have displayed effort or behaviour that had been more than satisfactory is also not present. Guidance on how and why we reinforce the behaviours we want to reward is not addressed even though the *management* of behaviour in schools as a stand-alone policy can be easily located. It is also laid out in the statutory framework (2017, p.29) that providers are responsible for the management of children's behaviour and states: "Providers must not threaten corporal punishment and must not use or threaten any punishment which could adversely affect a child's

well-being". There is no mention of how a child's behaviour can be viewed positively and possibly used to enhance their well-being and assist in motivating them intrinsically.

2.4 National school starting age in the UK and recent changes to the assessment process

The rationale for looking at the issue of motivation is quite simple. As referenced earlier, looking at a range of research (see Kohn, 1999; Engel, 2015; Pink, 2009) highlights the way that children are extrinsically motivated throughout schooling to motivate them to learn and then to learn more – exam grades are a prime example. Children starting school at an early age face immediate testing and assessments. To ensure that children are ready, practitioners have a responsibility to motivate children to learn and so achieve good results in these various tests, which can be – depending at when the child starts school – beyond the child's developmental level (Nutbrown, 2015). Staff use extrinsic motivational techniques when children are achieving and when they need to achieve more. Given the weight given to ensuring that children act and perform in the required ways, it is crucial to understand how they are motivated, given the impact these earliest years will have on later schooling.

The time when children can currently take up a school place is in the September following their fourth birthday. This would mean that a child born on 31st August would be entitled to a full-time school place aged four years and one day. However, due to recent research and concerns, children born within the summer term, April-August, of the year in which they turn four have an opportunity to defer their school place: "If a parent wishes to delay their child's admission to school until compulsory school, and

wants them to be admitted to reception at this point, they must request they are admitted out of their normal age group" (DFE, 2018, p.5).

In December 2014, the DFE amended the code to require admission authorities to make decisions in the child's best interests (as well as based on the circumstances of each case), considering several factors. Research was conducted by the DFE (2018) through two surveys over a two-year period, 2015-2017: one survey was sent to local authorities and the other to the parents of summer-born children who had requested that their child's place be delayed for admission to reception. The results showed that the number of parents requesting a deferral to school had increased significantly, even within the two years of the survey. The rate of this change can be seen below in the table published by the DfE (2018, p.13):
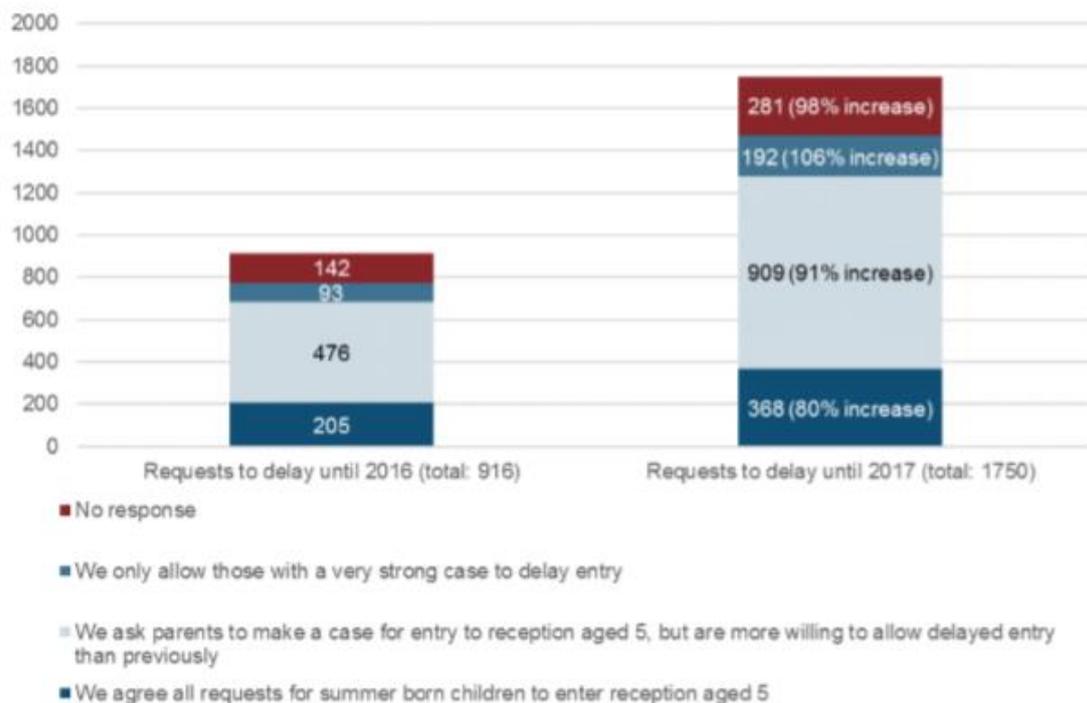
Base: 92 local authorities

Figure 1: Increase in number of requests to delay starting school from 2015-17 and 2016-17

As seen in Figure 1, the request to delay a school place into reception class increased by almost double the amount of the previous year. This poses an obvious question: why? Of the 13 questions that were included on the parent survey, one asked: "Which of these things did you take into consideration when deciding to delay your child's entry to reception by 12 months? Please tick all that apply and one option as the main reason" DFE (2018, p.27). Thirteen options were offered:

- Cost of childcare if I delayed my child's school entry.

- Availability of childcare if I delayed my child' school entry.

- Whether I felt my child would be ready for school.

- The availability of places in my preferred school.

- Evidence I had seen about summer born children in school.

- Advice from friends.

- Advice from the local authority.

- Advice from the schoolteacher/headteacher.

- Advice from pre-school/nursery.

- Medical condition/developmental delay.

- Social media e.g., Mumsnet/Facebook.

- To give my child more time to learn English because it is their second language.

- Other.

Several parents requested to delay their child starting school in the reception class, as they felt that their child was not ready for school. Almost half of the respondents to the DFE survey had cited this as their main reason as presented in Figure 2.

Parents' reasons for delaying their child's admission

Parents were asked what factors had been most influential when deciding whether or not to delay their child's school admission (see Figure 5 below).

Figure 5: Parents' reasons for wanting to delay school admission

	Main reason	Total mentions
Whether I felt my child would be ready for school	47%	97%
Evidence I had seen about summer born children in...	18%	77%
Advice from pre-school/nursery	4%	47%
Medical condition/developmental delay	13%	38%
Advice from the school/teacher/head teacher	3%	29%
Other - please comment below	9%	26%
Advice from friends	1%	22%
Cost of childcare if I delayed my child's school entry	0%	21%
Availability of childcare if I delayed my child's school...	0%	18%
The availability of places in my preferred school	2%	13%
Social media e.g. Mumsnet/Facebook	0%	12%
Advice from the local authority	1%	12%
To give my child more time to learn English, because it...	3%	11%

Base: All respondents (161)

Figure 2: Parental reasons for delaying school's admission

The reception baseline assessment has been brought back into effect. In the updated policy it states, "we believe schools and colleges will improve if teachers are free to decide how best to teach their pupils while being properly held to account for their students' education" May (2015, p1).

A previous attempt to re-launch the baseline assessment in 2016 was met with some strong critiques from high profile figures who gave their comments to the Pre-school Learning Alliance. An active campaign resulted in a paper entitled *Early years experts unite in the call to block baseline assessment.* Concerns were mainly expressed over the fact that the assessment featured a test. Professor Cathy Nutbrown (2015, p.4) commented, "It is not in the interests of young children, whose learning and other

developmental needs are better identified – over time – by well-qualified early years practitioners who observe and interact with young children as they play". On discussing what the assessment would be used for, Nutbrown (2015, p.4) claimed:

> *Part of the problem lies in a lack of understanding about what assessment is used for. It is important to distinguish between assessment for learning and assessment for school management and accountability. No one instrument can do both. Assessment for learning is ongoing and informs the teaching and learning process. It extends children's learning because it enhances teaching and tells each child's individual learning story.*

The contrast in development between children starting school is vast: some children may turn five within the first six weeks of school life, while others may have turned four the month before term began as they were summer-born children. There are numerous additional developmental issues here too, for example sitting still while being assessed may not be looked upon favourably by a four-year-old boy in the foundation stage for biological reasons. As Gurian notes, "movement seems to help boys not only stimulate their brains but also manage and relieve impulsive behaviour. Movement is also natural to boys in a closed space, thanks to their lower serotonin and higher metabolism, which creates fidgeting behaviour" (2001, p.47). These concerns are significant given the importance of assessment and the way it is used by parents, practitioners, and Ofsted.

Assessment also includes an aspect on self-regulation, including working memory, inhibitory control: and attentional flexibility. Feedback from the results of the study included in the published Standards and Testing Agency (2019, p.1) indicated that "[practitioners] were unsure of the purpose and value of the self-regulation tasks, which took longer to administer on average than other tasks".

The NFER (2018, p.4) states that "the assessment may be completed in one session or through a series of short sessions, if the teacher feels this is better for the child". This is rather ambiguous and poses questions around consistency, authenticity, and reliability of assessment. How does the practitioner delivering the assessment make the judgement that a child requires a break, especially if the child is not directly requesting this as it may be beyond their developmental level, or the assessment causes them to become anxious and affects their confidence level that they feel they could not ask for an interruption to the assessment? Baseline assessment is mandatory from September 2020, nationally using a consistent measuring analysis tool such as the Leuven process-orientated child monitoring system for young children about which Laevers and colleagues (1997, p.15) observe: "The level of well-being in children indicates how they are developing emotionally".

A recent study conducted around the views of early years and primary teachers on the 2019 baseline pilot revealed key findings of the practitioners feeling that the Reception Baseline assessment was not appropriate for 4-year-olds just six weeks into their formal school life. They also responded that they were anxious about meeting the demands that the test had upon them as practitioners. One of the participants commented how not being able to spend as much time with her class, due to the demands of the test, would impact on the children emotionally. The teachers added that children's emotional well-being could be further affected as the assessment is carried out in the first six weeks and this is a crucial time for settling in.

It can be seen from this study that this new assessment could impact how teachers give rewards as a way of compensating for not being able to be with the other children. Rewards may also be given to a child who is undertaking the assessment as a way of motivating them to do well in the test.

2.5 Supporting theory

Understanding how children learn is important to understand how and why different processes of reinforcement may encourage or discourage different types of behaviour. The behaviourist approach looks at how motives are adopted and how internal drives and external goals act together with learning to bring about behaviour.

In his reinforcement theory, Skinner (1938) discusses using different types of 'operant conditioning' to motivate an outcome or result. Motivation occurs based either on a positive or negative reinforcement type. For example, rewarding for good behaviour, in the hope of promoting it as positive and punishing for negative behaviour, with the focus on diminishing or eradicating and undesirable behaviour. The underpinning idea is that behaviour is learnt through conditioning. Also referred to as instrumental conditioning, this describes how the consequences of a response shape the likelihood of a behaviour being repeated.

Although dated, Skinner's work is useful as it underpins a lot of later thinking on behaviour. Skinner identified three different response types (operant) that can follow behaviour. He assumed that human behaviour follows laws, and that this behaviour is a response to something that is external to the person, something in their environment (McLeod, 2018, p.4). The three response types are:

1. **Neutral operant**: Neither increase nor decrease the likelihood of a behaviour re-occurring.

2. **Reinforcers**: Can be positive or negative. Responses from the environment that would therefore increase the probability of repeated behaviour in either a positive or negative way.

3.   **Punishers:** Responses from the environment which reduce the likelihood of a

behaviour being repeated and therefore lessens the behaviour.

Skinner conducted many experiments to evidence his theories around operant

conditioning (Ferster, 2002). He taught rats to pull levers and push buttons, pigeons to

read and in one experiment in his pigeon laboratory, he taught pigeons how to play

ping-pong. In 1950, Skinner set up a table tennis table with a pigeon either side, a ping-

pong ball, and a sliding door with food behind it, placed under the table. The pigeons

used their beaks to hit the ball across the table to each other, if the ball went past the

pigeon's opponent, he would in effect score a point; this would cause the door to open

and reveal the food to the winning pigeon. This method of teaching and learning

demonstrates Skinner's Reinforcer Theory and increased the probability of the pigeon's

behaviour being repeated as the pigeon learned that he was rewarded each time he

would return the ball and his opponent did not. This motivates the pigeons to repeat the

behaviour. Such an experiment was used to illustrate how behaviours can be

conditioned – with rewards to reinforce the required behaviour. These ideas can clearly

connect to motivating young people. In this case, using rewards to motivate young

people extrinsically.

Social cognitive theory is a theory of behaviour developed by Bandura in 1977

(McLeod, 2016). According to Fuller (2019), environment is key to Bandura's ideas

about how children learn to behave "because the environment is innately social and

therefore provides an abundance of people to observe and learn from. This 'modelling'

(or role modelling) is an important aspect of his work". For Bandura, children learn

from observing and then imitating the people around them. According to Fuller (2019),

watching how people behave and what happens because of the behaviour they observe

influences what behaviour is copied – behaviour that is copied is that which is

reinforced by reward and/or punishment, which can be internal or external, positive, or negative.

Motivation can also be viewed as very individualised. What motivates us differs from person to person. According to Souders (2019, p.2), "motivation also depends on stable differences, like personality traits and psychological needs". Different responses to environments, experiences, and stimulus variables that we are placed in and exposed to all play a part in how we move into action or are incentivised by a goal or motivation with some sort of end state. Our own concept of self, character and mindset contribute to what motivates our behaviour. The goal itself can be the influence that guides our behaviour. Pink (2018) describes motivation as coming from two behavioural types: Type I has no fixed behaviour traits and patterns, which come to bear through "circumstance, experience and context" (p.78). Pink goes on to say that Type Is are intrinsically motivated and that their performance exceeds that of their counterpart, Type X. Pink describes Type X as being more orientated and driven towards extrinsic rewards, having "less inherent satisfaction" when they are engaging in an activity (2018, p.77). An individual's behavioural stance can increase or limit their ability to go on and fulfil their goals and intentions as it is influenced and directed by behaviour that can determine what they go on to achieve.

These ideas are useful in understanding and applying a lens to what practitioners do and why they do what they do. Applying this to extrinsic motivation in young children in the foundation stage, practices could be used as punishment through discipline or taking back a given reward or the awarding of a reward for achieving the desired outcome or set goal. These ideas shape the focus for the research and the questions asked and will be explored later in the thesis.

2.5.1 Extrinsic motivation defined

There is much research concerning classifications and models about extrinsic motivation from different viewpoints. These range from research with very young children through to examples about how employees who are awarded with bonuses and enticements may further sustain or increase their productivity to a company.

Throughout the United Kingdom, using extrinsic motivational strategies is a very popular approach, as seen in the present project and mentioned in schools' behaviour management policies. Children can receive rewards in the home from parents, in schools from practitioners, or from extracurricular activity leaders and medical professionals. In the early years an example would entail children reaching a learning goal that has been set, displaying behaviour deemed as good by a practitioner in school, not having toilet accidents with parents and not portraying feelings of fear or emotional upset with a medical professional. From reviewing some of the methods used, Kroth (2007, p.5) gives a description of extrinsic motivation as something that "can be external, introjected, identified or integrated regulation", and goes on to warn that "external, or controlled, regulation is the least autonomous and is impelled by rewards and punishments". Actions are determined, or coerced, by external forces. Kroth suggests that being motivated in this way is ineffectual and that it is used in a way to make the receiver of the reward conform in some way. It is feasible to suggest that this would be applicable to young children too.

This method of incentivising is used for an array of subjects. As Mueller and Dweck (1998) state:

> *Praise for intelligence can undermine children's motivation and performance… praising children by telling them that they are smart may lead them to be driven by the scores and grades that they get in order to maintain this reputation, in addition to this the children will use these*

> *grades to assess their individual ability… praising for intelligence also affects the children's 'development of stable ability for failure (p.34).*

Children take on this praise to not only measure their seeming success but also as a measure of failure should the score be lower than before. Johnson and Johnson (1985, p.260) categorise extrinsic motivation as "motivation for outcomes separate from and following an activity". This could mean that if the reward or prize is not in any way connected to the activity, then it can be perceived to have no purpose. Kohn (1999, p.160) observes that:

> *This is the reason so many parents and teachers insist that punishments and rewards are effective at dealing with children. "One more word and you're grounded for the week" can produce silence. "If you put away your toys, I'll get you that Nintendo game you want" can clean up a room in a hurry. Extrinsic motivators are hard to discard, not only because many people have no idea what to do instead, but also because they get the job done.*

This is a pivotal point – not knowing what to do to replace these material incentives and, in this case, deterrent threats. It may be that in this way a quick fix serves a purpose. There are contrasting ways of supporting children in different ways, one of which is intrinsic motivation.

2.6 Effects of extrinsic motivation on children's learning and well-being

What effects can motivation have on children's learning and well-being? A common theme shared with other early years theorists is that rewarding children through an extrinsic method has an impact and an adverse effect upon their learning and well-being (Dweck, 2000; 2006; Street, 2018; Hollinsey, 2018; Bethune, 2018; Kohn, 2011; Conkbayir, 2018; Engel, 2015). Street (2018, p.75) discusses how the giving of rewards reduces interest in a task as participants become pre-occupied with the prize. He goes

on to say that by way of contrast, intrinsic motivation is acquired when independence, positive support and attention is directed towards the process of learning, rather than the outcome.

This research is widely available, and these pedagogues and educational experts are renowned and respected, and their work has been used in research for many actively involved early years professionals. It has a heavy influential impact upon education vocational programmes and teacher training qualifications. However, this abundance of viewpoints and research does not come from adult learning centres or features in most school policies or practices, in that extrinsic rewards are rarely mentioned outside of behavioural and self-regulatory policies and procedures.

Theorists who have researched extensively around the subject of extrinsic motivation and the impact that it has on well-being, mental health and learning would seem to agree that the giving of tangible rewards provokes a preoccupation with the reward, therefore causing an interruption in the child's learning. There is also a consensus that these rewards lack consistency, in that there is no agreed format for how, why, and when to give such rewards This in turn means that some children will receive more rewards than others, without there being any feasible explanation for why this is. The possible effects that this inconsistent approach can have upon children is vast in terms of resilience, self-efficacy and being motivated intrinsically. Engel (2015, p.66) supports this theory:

> *When children are offered concrete rewards for an activity that is*
> *already meaningful or pleasurable, they begin to question its intrinsic*
> *value. When we entice young children to draw, solve problems, or read*
> *by offering them some reward (whether it's a candy, a smiley face*
> *sticker, or the promise of success later on). They have little reason to*
> *attend to what they like about doing it. Soon enough they begin to think*
> *it's worth doing only when there is a prize.*

Considering what additional adverse consequences may occur if the children become dis-engaged – if they are not motivated to put in the necessary effort to learn – the children's learning will certainly start to diminish. This could have catastrophic implications for their holistic education, while also spilling over into other areas of their life such as mental health and well-being.

Research shows that the giving of tangible rewards decreases children's willingness to attempt activities and challenges in which they may be deemed as not being able to complete, or not be successful (Dweck, 2000), instead selecting a task where they would appear to be displaying intelligence or being able to accomplish an outcome or goal. Dweck (2000) describes a previous research project (Meuller and Dweck, 1998) in which they were going to "praise for intelligence" (Dweck, 2000, p.117). Two groups of students were assigned a task of completing a problem-solving activity and were all told that they had done very well. For one group, the praising ceased there, however for the control group, the praising of intelligence continued. The third and final 'effort group' were praised for how hard they had worked on the task. The results were measured through which activity the students chose next and the findings produced some interesting results: of the initial group two thirds opted for a "task that would ensure they would keep on looking smart" (Dweck, 2000, p.117). Of the effort group, 90% "were not interested in ensuring success, they were interested in pursuing a potentially fruitful challenge. This means that even before failure occurred, student's goals were dramatically affected by the feedback they received. Most of the children who were praised for their intelligence were no longer interested in challenge and learning" (Dweck, 2000, p.117). The research bears an underlying familiarity to that carried out by Lepper, Greene and Nisbett (1973) in their classroom experiment to test their 'over justification' hypothesis. This experiment produced results

demonstrating that the giving of rewards has an adverse effect in diminishing the involvement and efforts of the individual – in this case, children in kindergarten.

A meta-analysis of several in-depth studies of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (Cameron and Pierce, 1994, p.363) reported that rewards did not affect or decrease intrinsic motivation and that on looking at the findings, verbal praise increased intrinsic motivation. The meta-analysis carried out by Cameron and Pierce was met with a barrage of counterarguments. Many errors in the meta-analysis were uncovered, which included the use of 96 experiments. Deci and colleagues carried out their own meta-analysis which involved 128 experiments. Findings were unanimous and "showed that, in fact tangible rewards do significantly and substantially undermine intrinsic motivation" (Deci et al., 1999, p.2). In addition to this regarding teachers who award and use these systems Deci and colleagues (1999, p.2) cautioned, "there is indeed reason for teachers to exercise great care when using reward-based incentive systems". Otherwise, this can become the child's motivation for undertaking tasks or taking part in activities as they become focused on the prize, rather than doing something where they will be personally gratified from within.

A further meta-analysis was carried out a decade later, entitled 'Re-examining the over justification effect' (Akin-Little and Little, 2004). It was claimed that the awarding of extrinsic motivators had no detrimental effects on the sample used. However, there is no correlation between the experiments. The research carried out by Akin-Little and Little (2004) consisted of 17 students aged between 8 and 9. The experiment involved how well the children could follow the class rules and the variables had no similarity and so could not be equally measured. The children were observed for a half hour period and were told that they would be awarded points and the value of the points could be exchanged for a tangible prize. The results of this

experiment concluded that the students had been familiar with the class rules since kindergarten and knew what was expected of them. However, during the reward period, their scoring of behaviour points was heightened during the observation time.

In their discussion of their research, Akin-Little and Little (2004, p.9) reported "as such, it is impossible to conclude that rule compliant behaviour is due to intrinsic motivation". The findings demonstrated that there could be an issue with giving rewards to children who do not have any deficits in behaviour or social aspects, which therefore would infer that this kind of reinforcement is not useful for all children. The research does not seem to be valid as the conditions, variables and methods used were all very different from the original classroom experiment and the over justification hypothesis and can therefore not be used as an authentic critique of it.

Theories around extrinsic motivation that may impact children's learning and well-being are widely available. However, even with this knowledge widely accessible, these well-researched concepts are either not known about in the field or are not drawn upon by practitioners when devising policies or delivering school curriculums.

2.6.1 Effects of extrinsic motivation on children's learning

According to Kohn (1991, p.4), "curriculum obviously matters in many respects, but the point to be emphasised here is that the perceived need to bribe children often tells us more about what they are being asked to learn (namely, that it lacks intrinsic appeal) than about how learning per se takes place". The syllabus that is being followed and taught to children and the method by which it is taught are both deficient in that, in order for the children to access and absorb the learning, the teacher feels it necessary to bestow rewards upon the children, whether this is for concentration and effort or

attempting to advance the children's learning further and moving them on to the next steps, even though at times the present learning has perhaps not been consolidated.

It has been discussed that there is an insurmountable amount of pressure on practitioners throughout the school system to perform and achieve goals and targets in their learning; this is also prevalent within the foundation stage with very young children. It can be very challenging to teach and encourage children to reach and attain all the early learning goals when they have often not been able to establish full toilet training or have never attended a setting before and are adapting to being separated every day from their parent or carer. There are practitioners and theorists who are of the opinion that tangible rewards to motivate children are effective in addressing these goals.

2.7 Intrinsic motivation defined

Intrinsic motivation can be described as an internal emotional behaviour in which a person feels compelled to do something because they feel the benefit and value of doing so and that it in turn raises self-efficacy in terms of resilience, perseverance, risk-taking and engagement in an activity or experience (Kohn, 2011; Dweck, 2000; Gray, 2013; Street, 2018).

As discussed, motivation is an attribute that is internal, within an individual. It therefore does not rely on external factors or stimuli to be present, and the undertaking of a task is within the control of the person; they decide when they have devoted enough time, attention and effort to the activity and can cease when they are personally satisfied with the outcome or product.

2.7.1 Intrinsic motivation in children's learning

Although the literature above spans decades, distinct commonalities and a shared theoretical perspective are shared between them. Collectively they suggest the importance of children being supported and motivated to develop self-efficacy, perseverance, and an ability to accept when things go wrong and use this to motivate by providing an extra challenge. They report the significance of engaging in an activity for its own sake while taking risks and simply enjoying participation. Coon and Mitterer (2010) offer a clear-cut description of intrinsic motivation: "intrinsic motivation occurs when we act without any obvious external rewards. We simply enjoy an activity or see it as an opportunity to explore, learn and actualize our potentials". From a similar stance Brown (2007) says, "intrinsic motivation refers to the reason why we perform certain activities for inherent satisfaction or pleasure; you might say performing one of these activities in reinforcing in-and-of itself"'. Both definitions lend themselves to affirmative and positive terminology. They imply that when a person is approaching or engaged in an activity intrinsically that it is carried out instinctively and effortlessly. Relating this to young children in the foundation stage, these interpersonal qualities are imperative in supporting their curiosity, ability to approach challenges and take risks as well as perseverance when the plan does not quite work out.

As previously discussed, a profound experiment was carried out in an American pre-school. This historic trial was carried out over four decades ago in 1973 by three psychologists: Lepper, Greene and Nisbett. These three men conducted their series of tests aspiring to gather evidence to test their 'over justification' hypothesis. Theories behind their supposition were that if given some sort of reward for taking part in an activity that this would influence their involvement in the activity and they effort they

put into it. They believed that both would diminish and have an overall effect upon any end results, whether this be a test score or painting.

The experiment focused on three sets of pre-school children who were given an "attractive drawing activity" (Lepper and Greene, 1978, p.111). The children were placed in three separate areas of the classroom. The first group of children were presented with the drawing materials and told at the beginning of the activity that they would get a shiny 'Good player' certificate when they had finished their drawing. The neighbouring group were given the same set of equipment for their activity, and they were also to receive a prize in the form of a certificate, but this group of children were not informed of this until the end of the drawing session. Group number three received drawing materials but it was not mentioned to this group of children that they would receive anything; the children were given the activity simply to participate in. Although dated, this experiment highlights that this important area has been considered for some time.

A duplication of the activity was made two weeks later to "provide a measure of children's subsequent intrinsic interest in the activity" (Lepper et al., 1978, p.112). The findings met with the three psychologist's pre-supposed ideas. The initial group of children who had been told that they would receive a prize of a certificate for their drawings showed a significant decrease in both their engagement and effort in the activity. This was primarily measured through time spent on the activity and the quality of the drawings produced in comparison to the initial set of drawings that the children had made. The second set of children that had been awarded a certificate at the end of their activity after having no notion that they would receive anything did not show any real decrease in their involvement of the activity either, although this had been expected. Group three, who had not been told they would get anything and who were

not given any form of reward did not show any reduction in the time they spent at the activity or in the effort and outcome of the quality of their drawings. Lepper and colleagues (1978, p.112) concluded triumphantly in their report that, "the pattern of results, suggesting the importance of subjects' perceptions of their activity as a means to an extrinsic goal – as opposed to the simple association of the activity with the reward per se – has proven an experimentally robust finding". Although this experiment is historic, it does provide an interesting account of what can happen in a short space of two weeks if children are enticed with external motivators. It also provides an interesting and useful evidence-based model on which to build and use as an authentic example.

2.8 UK views on children's well-being and mental health

Well-being and health have become a much-discussed phenomenon throughout the whole of society. It has come to feature in most aspects of life, including work/life balance, schools and is viewed as a priority. There are policies and procedures around mental health and well-being, with both workplaces and schools offering support resources through occupational health, personal assistance programmes and staff specifically employed within schools to support children who may need emotional support.

As discussed above, there is a huge pressure placed upon both practitioners and children to achieve success, in both the teaching of the curriculum and of the achievement of academic success by the children. This in turn will compel teachers and teaching assistants of even young children within their foundation stage of school to employ methods that they believe will assist in producing these results.

This pressure will undoubtedly be picked up by the children, who will feel the undercurrent of the teacher's anxiety to produce results. This may in turn cascade and produce feelings of stress and even fear among the children, therefore having a detrimental effect upon their own well-being. The UK has seen the focus on mental health and well-being needs of children increase at a high rate, with the demand and need for support for outweighing the support and resources that are available to them. Hollinsley (2018, p.18) reports on referrals that were made to children and adolescent mental health teams (CAMHS) and the Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Service (EWHMS): "it was uncovered in 2016 that the median of the maximum waiting time for all providers was 26 weeks for a first appointment and nearly 10 months for the start of treatment". Considering this unfortunate lack of services and resources and the waiting times, it would be fair to suggest that the children's mental health and well-being will not improve without the intervention of the expertise that is required for their needs and may decline further, in turn affecting their ability to absorb the learning on offer. Furthermore, a child that is in need may be an additional strain for the teacher and practitioners to bear.

Hollinsley (2018, p.19) goes on to suggest that "school leaders and schools that put every child first and recognise that the mental health and well-being of children is as high, if not higher than academic achievement". Attempts made to further motivate these children extrinsically may only place an extra layer on what is already a worsening situation.

Bethune (2018) discusses the importance of paying attention to the happiness of both groups – children and school staff – to support and try to help with the deterioration of the mental health and well-being of all parties. However, with the increase of additional assessments in the foundation stage of school, this may be

somewhat of a tall order: as the intensification increases, practitioners may be forced to forego happiness for fear of this being viewed as time wasting or not productive. Kohn (2011) refers to this as feel bad education, in that children and teaching staff should not be feeling happy or good when imparting or receiving learning, as this may be deemed to be ineffective.

2.9 Extrinsic motivation's effects on well-being and mental health

As discussed earlier, one of the reasons children are extrinsically motivated in schools is to try and advance their achievements and efforts in their academic scores. However, an abundance of research suggests that this can have a detrimental and lasting negative affect on the child's well-being and mental health.

Additionally, research highlights that children as young as four are already facing academic pressure, either by being faced with the early years foundation stage profile or the new baseline assessment. Teachers have a big responsibility in ensuring that each child works towards achieving these outcomes and many of the practitioners working in this age group have been shown to use a form of reward system to incentivise children to attain these goals. Hollinsey (2018) discusses how this puts pressure on schools, which then cascades down to the children, and can have a serious impact on a child's self-esteem and being alongside children who are high achievers can lead to a negative self-image. Hollinsey (2018) adds how important it is for children to fail – it helps them to build up resilience and develop a balanced mindset. The giving of extrinsic rewards can reduce autonomy, love of learning and a loss of intrinsic motivation. Street (2018) adds that it is far better to develop and foster a sense of interconnection among children rather than a competitive environment – to promote their positive mental health and well-being:

Improved cohesion in schools is also significantly related to better mental health, greater intrinsic motivation, greater participation, more prosocial behaviour, greater success in terms of academic, social, and emotional outcomes and ultimately a safer more equitable education system (Street, 2018, p.87).

The figure below illustrates Street's Contextual Well-being model. Street describes the attributes that are essential in supporting children's holistic well-being. It can be seen within the policy and practice area that necessary to this well-being is a culture of 'NO awards or rewards'. This is explained in terms of the impact it can have from both a positive and negative aspect.
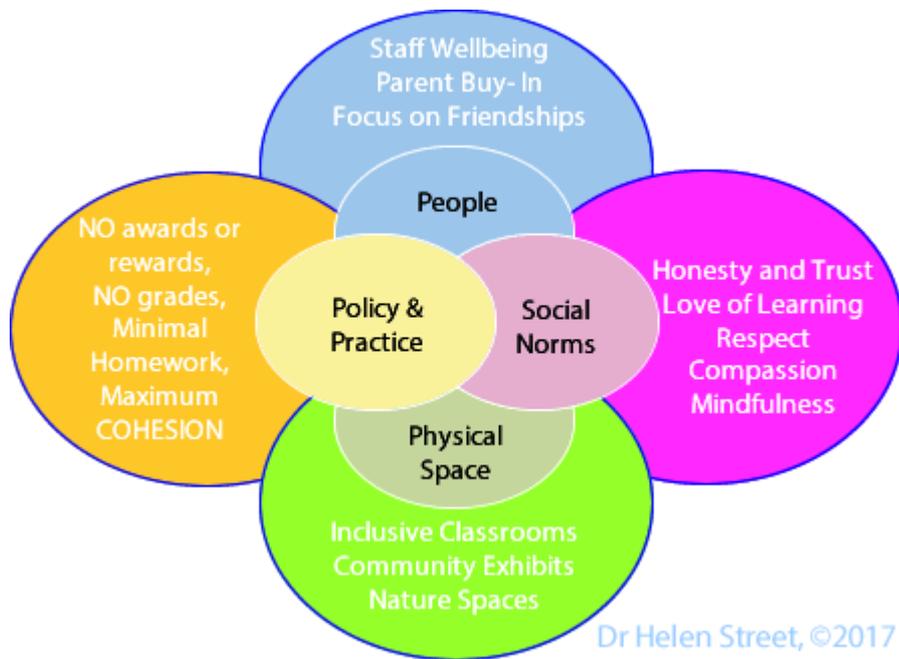
Figure 3: Contextual Well-being Model

Policy and Practice	Negative Impact	Positive Impact
Rewards and Awards	Public display of extrinsic rewards and awards for positive social behaviours, academic effort, and outcomes. Praise used to support compliance.	No extrinsic rewards and awards. Praise and feedback support autonomy and personal growth. Focus on intrinsic motivation and intrinsic rewards.

Table 1: Rewards and awards within Contextual Well-being model

As can be deduced from Table 1, the positive effects of no extrinsic rewards are shown to influence personal growth, this will in turn develop self-efficacy and confidence and therefore enrich holistic well-being.

2.10 Motivating children in the early years foundation stage

Behaviour and conforming to school life appear to be a strong focus throughout school life. This now appears under the new guise of self-regulation and is the new way for describing what used to be called behaviour, behaviour modification and behavioural management. Most schools have a policy for managing behaviour within their set of school policies.

One of the schools used to form part of this study described in detail through their Behaviour and Exclusion Policy (2015) the stages and specific methods of how sanctions for unacceptable behaviour will be dealt with. This spans over four pages of the eight-page policy. There is also a section of the policy which gives information on how the school rewards good behaviour, this spans over two pages giving information on the school's traffic light system, key time, achievement certificates, house points,

golden assembly, and class stickers (pp.3-4). Some of the systems for rewarding good behaviour are managed by set rules, for example when awarding achievement certificates, a maximum of three children from each class are selected each week and receive a certificate from the deputy or head of the school. However, the policy states:

> *Where no names are included one week or for several weeks for a class for whatever reason, the maximum of three names at a time rule still applies – missing three weeks does not mean that twelve names can be included for week four. The number of children who can be rewarded in this way is therefore restricted to three and is awarded.*

> *Where a pupil's work or behaviour has been particularly noteworthy their name can be written in the achievement book which is kept in the staff room. The entry in the book needs to include the child's full name, correctly spelt, and the reason why the certificate has been awarded.*

The giving of house points was an additional area where restrictions were placed on giving awards to these children (p.4):

> *To preserve the value of House Points they may only be awarded 'one at a time', irrespective of the value or magnitude of the act that led to the award.*

Within the policy, there is no mention of praising the children verbally, using the reward systems to boost self-esteem or to enhance well-being. The policy states under the school's traffic light system (p.4): "Working hard, helping others and good manners are rewarded through a traffic light system". The policies and procedures are given as part of the staff induction to the school. This is therefore the set of instructions that is received by staff members on how children's achievements are commemorated within the school.

This is not to say that staff members do not verbally praise the children, recognise the children's efforts, enhance their well-being, and strive to be consistent

among the children, considering their individuality. It is to illustrate what the staff do and do not receive as instruction when they take up a post at the school regarding the management of the behaviour of the children. Additionally, children are also rewarded for formal achievements, for example producing good handwriting or reading. Teachers and practitioners in the foundation stage have been subjected to increasing pressure for children in their classes to achieve learning outcomes at a very young age to fulfil the EYFSP which provides a formal measure of the school. Starting school age and assessments are discussed in the next section of this chapter.

Considering this it is reasonable to suggest that teachers may reward children who are achieving and on track to meet all the learning outcomes to encourage them further, while also extrinsically rewarding the children who are not yet or nearly achieving the learning outcomes in an attempt to enhance their ability to achieve the learning goal. The extrinsic reward here is being used to try and incentivise and improve the learning that must be accomplished. Attempting to encourage the children in this way using these reward methods can often be counterproductive. As Kohn (1991, p.4) states, "curriculum obviously matters in many respects, but the point to be emphasised here is that the perceived need to bribe children often tells us more about what they are being asked to learn (namely, that it lacks any intrinsic appeal) than about how the learning per se takes place".

There is a real pressure on practitioners working within the foundation stage with young children to not only support and encourage them to achieve learning outcomes but to also prepare them for their next stage – entering key stage one. Teachers and support staff may feel that if the children do not appear ready for the next class, or do not achieve the learning outcomes that this could influence the reputation of

the school or indeed the practitioner may feel that this reflects on their own teaching ability. Kohn (1999, p.159) comments:

> *But teachers operate within significant constraints, with their students'*
> *standardised test scores published in the newspapers and scrutinised as*
> *if they were a meaningful measure of learning, teachers often feel*
> *obliged to get children obsessively concerned about how they are doing.*
> *These pressures on teachers must be eased for counterproductive*
> *practices in the classroom to stop.*

Unfortunately, although this perceived preoccupation with grades with children as young as four may require a shift in attitude, the re-introduction of the baseline assessment from the government may only increase the pressures on practitioners and in turn the children in the foundation stage.

2.11 Training and professional development of staff in the foundation stage

The statutory framework for the early years foundation stage (2017, p.21) states:

> *3.20. The daily experience of children in early years settings and the*
> *overall quality of provision depends on all practitioners having*
> *appropriate qualifications, training, skills and knowledge and a*
> *clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Providers*
> *must ensure that all staff receive induction training to help them*
> *understand their roles and responsibilities. Induction training*
> *must include information about emergency evacuation*
> *procedures, safeguarding child protection and health and safety*
> *issues. Providers must support staff to undertake appropriate*
> *training and professional development opportunities to ensure*
> *they offer quality learning and development experiences for*
> *children that continually improves.*

The statutory guidance is for all personnel working with children in the foundation stage. It gives instructions to all providers for the requirements of staff qualifications, training, support, and skills working with children in this stage.

This is a requirement of the DFE (2017, p.4), which states that "a good early education is the foundation for later success" and goes on to say why this is an important period in a child's initial introduction to formal schooling: "The Reception Year holds a unique and important position in education. It marks a significant milestone in a child's life, representing both a beginning and an end". Requirements for staff working in the foundation stage of local authority schools state that there should be a person with Qualified Teacher Status, Early Years Professional Status, Early Years Teacher Status or an equivalent level six. This staff member should be included within the ratios and therefore working directly with the children. Statutory ratios in the foundation class are 1:13. Additional staff working within a foundation stage class would usually consist of a teaching assistant qualified to level three or a higher-level teaching assistant, which is the equivalent qualification of a level four. There may also be other staff in class if there are requirements for this, for example if there are children with special additional needs and disabilities which may require more specific care, a practitioner may be employed to provide support for the child on a 1:1 basis for a set number of hours.

As stated in the Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage (2017, p.21), "effective supervision provides support, coaching and training for the practitioner and promotes the interests of children". Details are not given as to what training and coaching should be provided, except for safeguarding and paediatric first aid. It is therefore a school's decision as to which training is provided. Continued professional development may also be determined by budgetary constraints or the school's vision of

what is important. In short, any training given is at the discretion of the responsible person, which may in the case of a school be the headteacher. Therefore, training reflects local needs as decided by the person in charge, as opposed to statutory direction regarding continuing professional development expectations. The challenge also involves the budgets available as well as the priority that leaders give to this important area. As Eraut (1994, p.12) notes, "the best employers give considerable support to CPD through management and appraisal and through funding attendance at CPE (continued professional education) activities". Eraut (1994) also states that this training and development is often for the good of the organisation, career development of the individual or to gain information and knowledge about new ways of working or concepts. It could be argued that training tends not to focus on current practices or why there are carried out, and this forms a focus for this thesis.

Continuing professional development relates to the activities and practices that individuals and organisation undertake to develop and improve the work they do. There are many theoretical viewpoints which stress the importance of continued professional development and see it is a very positive means of support from employers to encourage this as a means to promote best practice and better outcomes but also for staffs' own sense of professional development and expertise – and also an investment in staff. Support from the workplace and its leaders is key, as Taylor (1997) states, employers should recognise the importance of continued professional development and ensure that this is made available to them, if this is not provided it is neither professional nor ethical: "clearly the onus cannot rest entirely with the practitioner. Stakeholders, particularly employing agencies must also recognise the crucial importance of continuing professional development and make the resources available to support their staff. Failure to do so is unprofessional and unethical".

There is little research around continued professional development from the perspective of the needs of children. As discussed, any training and development usually stems from staff development needs, training and development that is mandatory, changes to practice considering legislation or to inform best practice. Training enhances knowledge and supports turning theory into practice. Deci and Ryan's (2000) self-determination theory, which describes the need for certain contributors to be present for self-determination to grow is useful when thinking about the value of CPD. Self-determination theory was developed through research by Deci and Ryan (2000) as a psychological context for giving insight into human motivation. It makes sense to assume that staff feel a sense of self-worth if they have been identified as worthy of the investment of finances and time for CPD. This in turn will produce a sense of greater self-efficacy and skills such as autonomy and psychological growth. These skills assist in the development of forming values and belief systems, which in relation to this study will underpin the practitioner's thoughts and understanding around what they do. Regarding the place of CPD when considering practices connected to extrinsic motivation and why the practitioners do what they do is therefore relevant, particularly if there is an absence of such training.

Self-Determination Theory (SDT)
(Ryan & Deci, 2000)
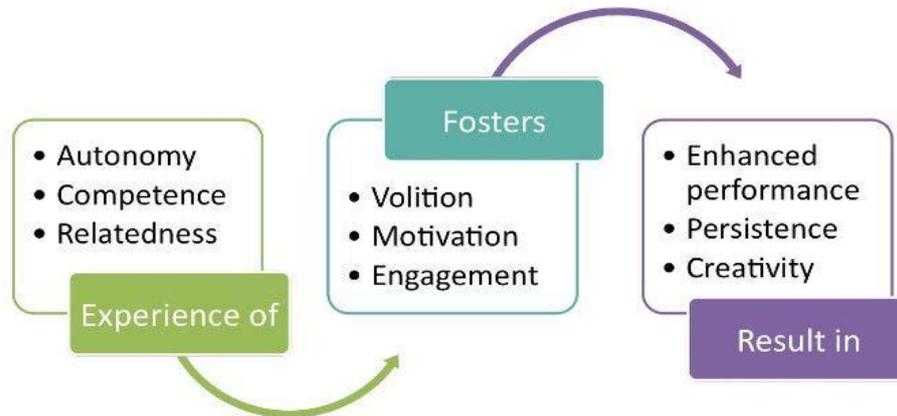
Figure 4: Self-determination theory

Practitioners who have developed autonomy, personal independence, and confidence to demonstrate this through their viewpoints by demonstrating their professional skill and knowledge and the ability to display relatedness through being part of a group or organisation and having a sense of connectedness to this group. To achieve psychological fulfilment of growth, well-being and internalisation self-development theory identifies the need to meet these three basic psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness.

Ryan and Deci (2000, p.12) state: "Whether individuals realise their natural tendencies depends on whether individuals experience what SDT considers to be fundamental nutrients required to achieve these tendencies". Just as plants need water, sunshine, and minerals to thrive, SDT argues that the satisfaction of three basic needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness are essential for individuals to achieve psychological growth, internalisation, and well-being. Having one's needs satisfied

leads to more autonomous forms of motivation and improved mental health and well-being.

Budgetary constraints are a major factor within any aspect of the day-to-day running of a school. This has become more prevalent with many schools becoming part of an academy: in 2010 schools were invited and actively encouraged to set up their own schools as so-called 'free schools'. Schools were able to break away from the control of their local authority. The schools which became academies receive their funding directly from the central government, whereas they had previously received it locally. In the government's academies bill, it stated that becoming an academy "will give schools the freedoms and flexibilities they need to continue to drive up standards. In turn schools also have freedom over where to apportion their budget, which reverts to the head of the school holding the authority to grant training and other development programmes.

2.12 Conceptual framework

The key concepts guiding this study are drawn from the theoretical framework and embedded in the literature that is framed around the key idea that the giving of rewards in an attempt to motivate children to conform or achieve an outcome affects both their learning and well-being. In addition, it is underpinned by the idea that practitioners' beliefs around their rewards-giving practice is guided by their own experiences, knowledge and continued professional development. To better understand these issues, the core concepts that this study is interested in are: motivation, prior knowledge and well-being, and practitioner CPD. Figure 5 below illustrates the conceptual framework for this study and how these elements interconnect with the action of giving of reward and behaviour
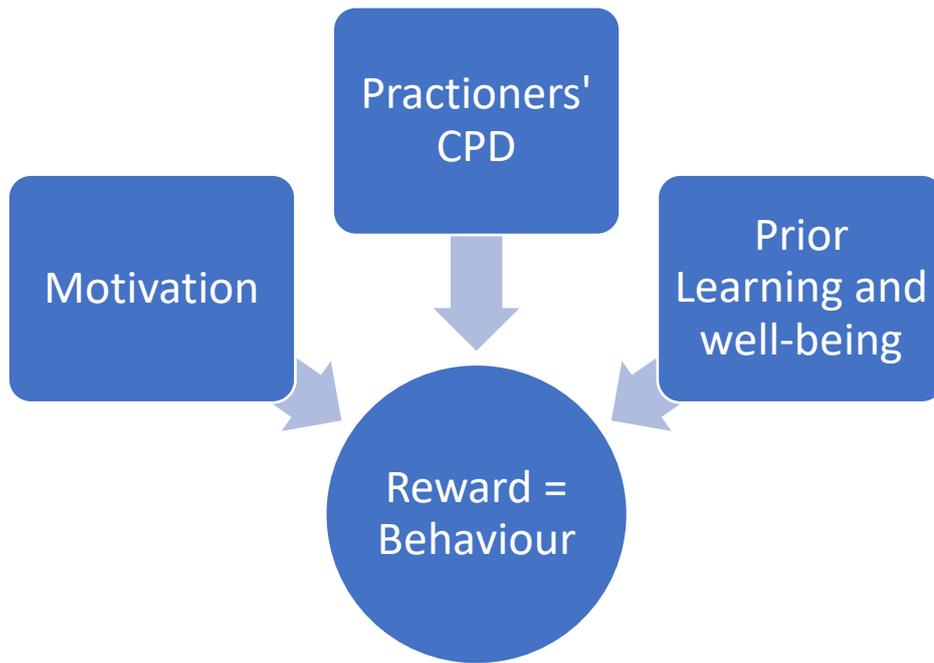
Figure 5: Conceptual framework

The key concepts are explained in more detail in the following section.

Motivation

This study also considers motivation and some of its theoretical underpinnings. Although this study is predominantly concerned with intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, there is a need to examine motivation and theories as a stand-alone concept. The literature review has looked more deeply at this theory and particularly at the behaviours that initiate and guide an individual, driving them towards achieving a specific goal. The literature review has explicitly explored Bandura's social learning theory of motivation and the concept of self-efficacy, looking at an individual's drive and motivation to accomplish as well as the belief that they can do so.

2.12.1 Extrinsic motivation

According to the literature review, extrinsic motivations (Street, 2018, p.87) describe the aspect of motivation that is, as Kroth (2007) describes it, an action that is persuaded by an external force. Johnson and Johnson (1985) and Mueller and Dweck (1998) also discuss how extrinsic motivation is the giving of tangible rewards as an external stimulus with the view to influencing the outcomes of the individual receiving it.

2.12.2 Intrinsic Motivation

Intrinsic motivation is described as an internal attribute and therefore comes from within the individual as opposed to being subject to needing an external token to influence or produce a result, as shown in the work of Deci (1975), Docking (1990), Kohn (2006, 2011) and Dweck (2000). Berkowitz's (2012, p.48) theoretical stance around the giving of rewards describes practitioners as "biologically disposed to give children rewards as motivators for good behaviour", and he goes on to suggest that there are five main reasons why rewards are given:

1. *It's easy*

2. *It can appear to work -in the short run*

3. *Behaviourist psychology*

4. *Discipline programmes*

5. *Tangible rewards seem to reduce bad behaviour and increase rule following*

Berkowitz provides a view on the value of extrinsic motivation in relation to behaviour and its use as a motivational technique. Looking at these given reasons may help to show an understanding of why schools choose to motivate children in this way.

"In environments where extrinsic rewards are most salient, many people work only to the point that triggers the reward and no further" – Pink (2009, p.58) describes

how recipients of rewards only do the minimum of what is expected of them. Pink goes on to describe how they are offered rewards for effort, for example "a prize for reading three books, but many won't pick up a fourth". This is a direct notion of how extrinsic motivation, given with the expectation that this will increase effort, may fail in the short term as illustrated in Berkowitz' second reason for giving rewards, however this diminishes over time. An illustration of Pink's thoughts on the negative effects of extrinsic rewards is found in Figure 6.

CARROTS AND STICKS: The seven deadly flaws

1. They can extinguish intrinsic motivation.

2. They can diminish performance.

3. They can crush creativity.

4. They can crowd out good behaviour.

5. They can encourage cheating, shortcuts, and unethical behaviour.

6. They can become addictive.

7. They can foster short-term thinking.

Figure 6: Pink's theory on effects of extrinsic motivation

Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation theories that underpin this key concept are informed by the following: Lepper and Greene,1978; Mueller and Dweck (1998); Motivation theory by Bandura, 1977; Behaviour Reinforcement theory by Skinner,1938 and Kohn's work on punished by rewards (Kohn, 1999)

Practitioner CPD

To understand motivation within this study, prior learning and how this interlinks with the continued professional development of the practitioners is explored. This includes looking into how the practitioners are trained, what knowledge and experience they have, the ethos of the school and how their reward systems and motivational methods are being used. These are considered in terms of how they impact on the children's learning and well-being; currently there is not enough understood in this area. The theories used to support these concepts and assist in exploring them at a deeper level demonstrate how the relationships between the idea to form an investigatory tool to address the research question. In this aspect, Self-Determination theory (Ryan &Deci (2000) and the Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage DFE, 2017 are particularly useful.

Practitioners' prior learning and well-being of the children

The role of prior learning in extrinsic motivation is important to understand. Social cognitive theory, developed by Bandura, (1977) argues that individuals are not passive but are active in the development of their behaviour, that their behaviour is shaped and influenced by their environment, beliefs and their own experiences. What this means is that prior learning will shape practice in the relation to reward giving, because beliefs and experiences will influence what a practitioner believes will work and what will not, in relationship to behaviour. In turn, these practitioner beliefs impact directly, as discussed upon the child's well-being where confusion, distress and a general lack of understanding of reward giving affects their disposition to learn- Kohn (1999). Street's well-being model (2017) which illustrates the personal, social and emotional aspects that are required for children's learning and well-being to flourish. Street (2017)

describes through her model how when rewards and awards are negated, this leads to improved well-being and positive impact on learning.

2.13 Conclusion

The purpose of this literature review is to provide an understanding of the different aspects around the motivation of children, specifically extrinsic motivation, and intrinsic motivation and how children's learning and well-being are affected when tangible rewards are given to incentivise subjects – in this case children in the foundation stage.

From the research reviewed around Greene and colleagues' (1975) experiments in the classroom and Dweck's (1999) growth mindset there exists extensive research that children's learning and well-being is affected with the giving of rewards. The case studies presented in this study provide evidence that children's involvement, interest, and effort is affected by rewards as well. These are all essential characteristics necessary for building self-efficacy, resilience and risk taking in future life.

This study focuses on practitioners who work in the foundation stage of primary school and their understanding and perceptions of the effects of giving extrinsic rewards. The field of research is significant as the voice of the practitioner is not usually heard around this subject and therefore little such research exists. The study highlights the need for a greater understanding of the impacts of rewarding young children and could support practitioners and schools in the long term. This could be gained through continued professional development, development of policy with practitioners' input and dissemination of this study to practitioners.

As discussed, a practitioner may follow the school rules and regimes in their professional role within the school but could feel differently personally and may adopt a different method of motivating children, if they had the flexibility and freedom to do so.

In the next chapter, the methods for this study are discussed, alongside the rationale for their use. The key ideas from the literature review and their use in the design and analysis of the data is also discussed.

Chapter 3: Research Methods

In this chapter I explain the approach taken to selecting methods. Given the importance I give to the views and beliefs of practitioners, it is important to clearly outline my approach to the research, my rationale for undertaking this approach as well as to demonstrate my understanding of research paradigms, to be clear about the philosophical assumptions and underpinnings informing my work.

3.1 Ontological, epistemological, and methodological approaches

This study seeks to present an understanding of the role of beliefs and views around how best to motivate children on the behaviour and practice of those who work with them. I do not seek a universal truth. Instead, I seek to explore the viewpoints of participants and understand how these may have been formed based upon their experiences. It is therefore based on the premise that knowledge is socially constructed and will vary depending on the individual, space, place, and time. This position ties in clearly with a constructivist ontological position.

Ontology refers to the position one takes regarding a world view. The ontological standpoint taken in this study is that there is no single truth, as the research is constructed from the perspectives of individuals who come with their own backgrounds and stories. This study takes a constructivist approach, whereby the view is taken that individuals have different and individualised perceptions formed by their own experiences, both personal and professional, which in turn impacts upon their beliefs. These are key as this informs their opinions on what they think of the world from their own viewpoint. Taking this position, a more personal and interactive method, for example observations and interviews, and perceptions and interpretations of people

is important, along with understanding context. In contrast, an objectivist approach sees the world as it is and stand firm in the concept that reality is self-evident and that facts are facts independent of us and that they are not constructed. Constructivists stand against this view, conveying that there are many individual opinions, thoughts and beliefs that make up our own personal view of how we see the world.

The epistemological position taken in this research is important to be clear on, as it is informed by the ontological stance and directs research interest in data collection techniques. To provide evidence to answer the research question and gain an insight into how practitioners understand the use of extrinsic motivation and the effects upon learning and well-being in the foundation stage, epistemological positions can largely be seen as two standpoints: positivists and interpretivist. This study is interested in what people do and why as well as what they thought about these actions. The epistemological framework chosen therefore is an interpretivist one and is discussed further in this chapter.

The ontological and epistemological stances taken in this study have informed the methodological approach and in turn the way in which the data has been collected and the analysis techniques which have been used in this study. Methodology in this study refers to quantitative and qualitative approaches. It is important to be clear that these are not presented as one being better than another, they are simply approaches that support the ontological and epistemological stances. This research, underpinned by a constructivist ontological worldview, and an interpretivist epistemological understanding as to who we can know the world, thus takes a qualitative methodological stance.

This study focuses on two methods for collecting data: qualitative and quantitative. Qualitative research is by far the most frequently used approach in

interpretivist research and in this study was used to gain insights and opinions. Merriam (1988) discusses how the qualitative research approach is focused on meaning and the ways in which people understand their lives and make sense of the world. Some context was provided through use of a survey and supported the gathering of information and was a useful tool to select the interview sample from. The sample size in a qualitative study is usually small and methods such as interviews are used to collect richer data, which is focused on the individual's belief systems and viewpoints. A quantitative approach is generally used to gather numerical data or information that can be converted into practical statistics to illustrate opinions and personal viewpoints. Surveys can be used to look at what is happening, patterns and themes that may be emerging, whereas the qualitative approach can illustrate how and why this may be so.

However, considering the ontological and epistemological approach to presenting what can be known from this study as a representation of a collective viewpoint acquired through an exploration of patterns and themes within data, an embedded, mixed-methods approach was considered to be effective to capture key ideas, while interviews allowed a deeper exploration of these ideas. This study remains qualitative in intention, but pragmatic in approach, using a mixture of methods. As discussed, the study used both qualitative and quantitative methods to explore, analyse and present the data.

From the nature of collecting data by way of researching the opinions of individuals, the research paradigm is almost self-selected and somewhat automated. However, this research consists of an embedded mixed-methods approach, using the two methods of qualitative and quantitative to draw out the evidence from the collated data in different ways. It is important to be clear that mixed methods in the context of this study simply means a mixture of techniques, as opposed to deeper ontological and

epistemological considerations. At times it will be necessary to analyse the data statistically and at other times to employ a more narrative approach, for example, when quoting elements of a transcript. Both methods will prove to be beneficial to the overall study. Brannen (2007, p.183) states:

> *Multi-method research is not necessarily better research. Rather it is an approach employed to address the variety of questions posed in a research investigation that may lead to the use of a range of methods.*

An embedded mixed methods design was also selected to offset the limitations of the qualitative methods, in terms of having larger numbers which may be more widely representative and generalisable. However, using quantitative methods alone would not allow me to explore the richness of this significant study. The story illuminates the data, which justifies the chosen method. Although the study took on a predominantly qualitative approach, the secondary method supported the first and enhanced the study by combining the two approaches as supported by Creswell (2018, p.237), who discussed how the connecting of both collated datasets forms a better measurement instrument. Using an embedded mixed method offers an advantage with one method supplementing the other, whereby the narrative and detailed qualitative data and the generalizable approach of qualitative date can also enrich the validity of the study and provide an improved way of understanding the research problem.

Interpretation of responses lends itself naturally to an interpretive model and this was the main approach adopted here. Combined with the selected methodology, approaches were used to root out the viewpoints and experiences of the practitioners, though not to convey any personal preconceived notions or judge beliefs and opinions in any way. Phothongsunan (2010, p.2) observes:

> *This is because the purpose is not to generalise, but to explore the meanings which participants place on the social situations under investigation.*

The intention throughout this study was to obtain accurate, professional, and personal accounts of individuals and their experiences of using extrinsic motivation and their thoughts of the impact that this has upon children. It was important to gather data from the foundation stage practitioners within schools on a small scale through questionnaires. After being previously piloted by individuals from a variety of backgrounds, the questionnaires were sent to the selected schools in their refined version. Questions were formulated from the research question, with some general questions about the school itself and the systems in place, as well as general details about the practitioners. From the responses given, and by way of obtaining a more comprehensive and somewhat individual relationship with the practitioners, semi-structured interviews were then carried out. Using interviews as the second methodological phase of the inquiry strengthens and supports the study as observed by Gillham (2000, p.2):

> *This multi-method approach to real-life questions is important, because one approach is rarely adequate; and if the results of different methods cover (agree or fit together) then we can have greater confidence in the findings.*

3.2 The research question

The research question forms a pivotal part of any academic inquiry as Bryman (2007, p.1) affirms:

> *For many writers on social research methodology and for practising social researchers, the research question has an important status as the*

linchpin of the research process. The research question is viewed as a crucial early step that provides a point of orientation for an investigation. It helps to link the literature review to the kinds of data that will be collected. As such, formulating a research question has an important role in many accounts of the research process as a stage that helps militate against undisciplined data collection and analysis.

For the question and answer which consistently demonstrates in a sustained way how it relates back to this original query, Dunleavy (2003, p.20) states:

You define the question: you deliver the answer. The unique features of this situation are often hard to appreciate. Throughout our earlier careers in education someone else defines the question. At first degree and master's levels we can concentrate solely on delivering an answer that satisfies this external agenda. So, it can be quite hard to understand the implications of instead defining and then answering your own research question.

The question posed was: what are early years practitioners' understanding and perceptions of extrinsic motivation, how it is used with children and what are the perceived effects on their learning and well-being? The focus is of an exploratory nature, to investigate, but equally to look more deeply at the practitioners' own understanding of the methods used to motivate children.

3.3 Research design

The data collection for this study used two different techniques. A questionnaire survey and semi-structured interviews were designed to draw on key themes and ideas from the literature. An embedded mixed-methods approach is beneficial for interpreting data in a narrative way, by employing a qualitative approach and through illustrating in a visual and simple way with quantitative diagrams and graphs. Creswell (2009, p.203) states that, "finally, there is more insight to be gained from the combination of both

qualitative and quantitative research than either form by itself. Their combined use provides an expanded understanding of research problems".

A questionnaire survey was selected to help gather a wide response and a large enough range of views to start to get a feel for what the practitioners' views were in this area, relying again on a qualitative approach that was considered the most effective way to gather narratives for the sample. Raghunath (2018, p.1) suggests that a qualitative method "serves as the conduit to rich data". It was a rather lengthy and arduous task putting together the questionnaire survey, consisting of a lot of back-and-forth dialogue with the university supervisors, with a fair amount of drafting and redrafting. However, this proved to be crucial as the survey was the starting point from where all other research and investigation would originate. Equally important would be to keep in mind the purpose of the study and fulfilling the research question, as discussed by Berdie and Anderson (1974, p.25): "many well-meaning investigators have neglected to specify their goals and have designed broad questionnaires which collected abundant data, only to find that most of the resulting information was not related to the issue at hand".

The different sections on the survey asked the practitioners to firstly describe their role in the foundation stage and the school's systems on rewards; in the last section of the survey, practitioners were asked to give their personal thoughts about rewards and the motivation of children in their first school year. The initial questions asked for some simple details about the practitioners, which were also very quick to answer, queries around age, gender and qualifications; careful attention was paid when structuring the questions in order to be ethical and sensitive towards the individual respondents in that when asked for personal details such as gender, participants were given three options of 'Male, Female and Prefer not to say'. This way the practitioner would feel confident and interested in completing the survey and would answer all the

questions. The second half of the survey asked for the views and beliefs of the practitioners – this was a necessary aspect of the process and where the research was hinged. It is most often the case that this is the most difficult part in which to gather responses, as supported by Gillham (2000, p.26), "questions about attitudes, opinions, beliefs etc are the most difficult to write and the most problematic to answer". However, most practitioners working in the foundation stage have experience of working with reward systems within school and therefore in putting in these questions to enquire about both professional and personal thoughts, it was thought it would not be too problematic for the staff to give their opinions. In addition to this, the questionnaire survey was completely anonymous, unless the respondent volunteered to participate in the next part of the study, and this would help to quell any fears of comeback from employers over expressing their own beliefs personally or professional views about the school's own reward systems. The questionnaire survey was constructed using a software package, this was advised by the university supervisor as it would greatly assist with analysis of the collected data later. Using an electronic system also assisted with security of the information from a confidentiality aspect, as any data could be stored on a password-protected computer. Floyd and Fowler (2002, p.150) emphasise the importance of storing this potentially sensitive information: "Beyond that, the main issue with respect to protecting survey respondents is the way in which the information they provide will be treated. Maintaining confidentiality in general is easier when answers are entered directly into a computer then when there is a paper questionnaire or interview schedule".

Due to the slow response rate of the questionnaires, it was necessary to try and accelerate the rate and number of responses. A colleague holding some training for moderation in the foundation stage was approached and asked if she would ask

practitioners attending if they would participate in the survey in a hard copy. Although this was not the preferred method, it proved to be very successful and the returns from the questionnaire were boosted. However, the responses then had to be uploaded on to the electronic survey individually and carefully to ensure that accurate responses were inputted.

Anonymity was a strong advantage of using the questionnaire survey. Names of schools, practitioners or any other involved individuals were not necessary or useful to this study, this in turn would hopefully give the respondents confidence to express their thoughts and beliefs fully, safe in the knowledge that there would be no link back to them. Opportunities were provided at the end of the survey for the practitioner to submit their personal details, name and email, if they would wish to have a further role in the next part of the study by taking part in the semi-structured interview, though this was optional. Although it was quick and quite simplistic to send the questionnaire in this way and an easy way to receive information back from the practitioners, there were disadvantages here, which turned out to be quite major. The main disadvantage was it was very difficult once the questionnaire was emailed to get it back from the practitioners. Staff working in schools do have heavy work schedules and limited time, so although many of the practitioners had expressed that they would like to be part of the study, the reality of pressing duties and time restraints may have outweighed their positive intention. This will be discussed further in below. A further disadvantage when using questionnaire surveys is the matter of interpretation and misunderstandings of the questions that were presented. Respondents may choose to seek assistance from others in the hope of clarifying what is being asked which may or may not prove to be useful. Reviewing the survey several times and piloting it with other individuals helped with

any ambiguity about what was being asked of respondents; these evaluations were then used to put together the final questionnaire.

As this study set out to explore the views of practitioners, semi-structured interviews were chosen to find this out in a more in-depth way. The questions that had been put together were formed using information gathered in the questionnaires. The original research question was also considered and what information was needed and remained outstanding to answer this.

It was known at the onset that crucial information would not be able to be obtained through the questionnaire survey alone and it would therefore be necessary to use a method that would be more focused and personal to the individual practitioner. This was also important as the study was particularly focused around the practitioner's own viewpoint and beliefs as well as their opinions of the school. The findings were interesting in that some of the practitioners conveyed that they had a different standpoint to that of the school, but they followed what the school did, as described here by one of the practitioners when talking about the reward system used in her classroom:

> *Yeah, like yeah, obviously I don't think that they should have that. But that's what the school does. So, you kind of have to follow.* (Practitioner H).

The semi-structured interviews had the same questions to put to the practitioners taking part, but it was advised by the university supervisor to make questions specific to the pending interviewee as well. This was done through looking at the questionnaire responses and extracting an area that was thought would be interesting to support the investigation and explore the area more deeply. Incorporate this approach into the interview questions turned out to be very effective, is discussed further below.

3.4 The sample

The sample involved in this study was a combination of foundation stage leaders, teachers, higher level teaching assistants (HLTAs) and teaching assistants. For the questionnaires there were 33 participants made up of qualified teachers, HLTAs and teaching assistants. All the samples involved were female, aged 30-49 working in the foundation stage of primary schools. The sample was obtained by contacting the schools directly as there are established professional links to feeder schools and early years network groups. The sample make-up is illustrated in the following Table 2.

Role	Qualification level	Years of experience	Age
Teacher	7	3-5	30-39
Foundation stage leader	6	5-10	30-39
Early years practitioner	3	20+	50-59
Teacher	6	1-3	19-29
Early years practitioner	3	15-20	40-49
Teacher	6	1-3	40-49
Teacher	6	1-3	30-39
Teacher	6	5-10	40-49
Teaching assistant	3	15-20	30-39
Teacher	6	5-10	40-49
Foundation stage leader	6	10-15	40-49
Teaching assistant	3	20+	30-39
HLTA	5	5-10	50-59
Foundation stage leader	6	5-10	19-29

Teaching assistant	3	3-5	30-39
Teacher	6	1-3	19-29
Teaching assistant	4	5-10	50-59
Teaching assistant	3	10-15	40-49
Foundation stage leader	6	5-10	30-39
Teacher	6	1-3	19-29
Early years practitioner	3	1-3	40-49
Teacher	6	5-10	30-39
Early years practitioner	3	10-15	50-59
Foundation stage leader	6	3-5	30-39
Early years practitioner	3	15-20	50-59
Teacher	6	20+	40-49
Teacher	6	1-3	30-39
Teacher	6	20+	40-49
Teaching assistant	3	1-3	40-49
Teacher	6	5-10	30-39
Teacher	6	10-15	40-49
Teacher	6	1-3	40-49
Teaching assistant	3	15-20	30-39

Table 2: Questionnaire sample group

Carrying out this study with staff from the foundation stage in schools, brought a mixture of feelings. As discussed, it would be a new venture working with this group within a formal structure of a school setting and this brought about a new challenge,

which was both exciting, challenging and a little unnerving. The slight anxiety came about as all research that had been carried out in the past had been conducted within day nurseries, the majority of which was in the workplace with colleagues and usually with individuals who did not have as much experience and qualifications. The day nursery organisation is also usually much less formal, although assessments still take place, albeit in a somewhat less official capacity, a certain level of progress is still expected to be demonstrated by the children as requested by Ofsted (2015, p.6): "identify children's starting points and ensure that children make progress in their learning through effective planning, observation and assessment".

The study is directed at one main area of the school it helped to keep it more focused and manageable. The participants taking part in the research worked at primary schools in a town in the southeast of England, the schools cross over two borders, which thus involves two different sets of local authorities. The demographics of the schools are varied, which made the study interesting in that the views of the practitioners personally may have been one thing but looking at the needs of the children and parents they felt compelled to convey that this dominated their thoughts and shaped their practice. This could be seen as a slight disadvantage as what the practitioners were saying in their answers may not be what they thought or felt in general, but because of the differing needs they felt that they had to work in this way. This will be discussed further and in more detail in the analysis and findings.

Teachers, foundation stage leads, HLTAs and teaching assistants participated in both the questionnaire survey aspect of the study and the semi-structured interviews that followed. Selecting a range of professionals would help to produce a wider assortment of experiences which would play a part in the views and beliefs held by the practitioners. It was not known, through a lack of experience in carrying out research on

this scale, what would be a good sample size to generate a substantial amount of data to fulfil the research question. Floyd and Fowler (2002, p.36) discuss the sample size: "like most decisions relating to research design, there is seldom a definitive answer to how large a sample should be for any given study". The sample size should not be a preoccupation of the study, rather the focus is the need to answer the research question or to test the hypothesis, "an analysis plan that addresses the study's goals is the critical first step" (Floyd and Fowler, 2002, p.36). Advice was sought by the university supervisors who advised that between 27-30 responses would be a fair amount to aim for and would provide a respectable number to work with.

The research method selected can affect the sample size of interviewees. When conducting quantitative research, it may be as simplistic as collecting numbers and amounts of how many respondents said yes or no to something. With qualitative data collection, the research seeks different details and descriptions.

3.5 The questionnaire

Personal Information

Information was gathered around gender, age, years' experience in early years, qualification level, role within the school, employment length at the school, and how many children were in the class the practitioners currently worked in.

Extrinsic motivation in practitioner's school

This area looked at the reward systems that were in place at the school, the frequency that rewards were given, reasons for giving rewards, and the importance of giving rewards in the school from the perspective of the practitioners.

Practitioner's personal perceptions of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation

Here, practitioners were asked how much they thought that rewarding children improved attainment, behaviour and promoted consistency among children. This was to explore issues raised in the literature which describes the correlation between extrinsic rewards and the part they play in behaviour modification or self-regulation and their use in promoting learning outcomes in foundation stage children. In addition, practitioners were asked whether they believed that rewards had any effect on children's well-being, if rewards worked better with boys or girls, whether Ofsted and parents expected children to be rewarded, the number of rewards used, and finally the advantages and disadvantages of rewarding children in this way.

3.5.1 Piloting the questionnaire

As discussed, it took several drafts and redrafts of the questionnaire to eventually come up with a final bank of questions which would support the gathering of views to answer the research question. Having spent a lot of time being very close to the questionnaire through repeated visits to add more questions it was important to have it looked over by other individuals who were somewhat removed who would be able to test out the questions and give advice and feedback on how to revise it before it went live. Munn and Drever (2007, p.33) discuss this:

> *There are good reasons why piloting is important. By the time you and your colleagues have lived with the questionnaire for some weeks you have come to know exactly what you mean by every question. It is very difficult for someone so closely involved to imagine how respondents might interpret it differently, when they encounter it for the first time. It is only when the returns come in that you may realise that some respondents have misunderstood what was meant.*

The group that completed the piloting consisted of six individuals. Three of the group were from the same early years setting, a 64-place day nursery for local authority employees: an early years nursery manager with 31 years' post-qualifying experience, a nursery supervisor of 2-3-year-old children with 12 years' post-qualifying experience, and the nursery office finance assistant. The day nursery staff ranged from 40-50 years of age and all females. The remaining three in the pilot group consisted of two males and one female aged 20-49 years. One of the males was a university lecturer, the other was an overseas friend, a graduate working in finance, and the remaining female was an undergraduate. It was thought that using a variety of individuals would hopefully provide a wide spectrum of replies.

The group was asked to complete the questionnaire and comment to the best of their ability on any aspect that they thought would help to improve it, including typographical errors, structure of the questions, including ordering, whether they could be understood, and the questions' usefulness in addressing the research question. In addition to this the members of the pilot group were also asked to report on how long it had taken them to complete the questionnaire. This was particularly important as consideration needed to be given to the time constraints which staff in the foundation stage of a school would be under in their busy days with the children and other responsibilities. This was conveyed to the group verbally and there was no formal feedback sheet drafted for the group to form their responses on. It may have made things a little clearer if some form of sheet had been used to avoid any potential mix up of responses. Instead, the group gave their responses either through a hard copy, or by emailing bullet points of their findings. The electronic link was sent to each of the group, and they were asked if they could complete the questionnaire within one week. Responses collated from the group were very varied and interesting.

3.6 Data collection: the questionnaire surveys

Participants for the questionnaire survey were selected by contacting the school's headteachers and asking if research could be carried out within their foundation stage with their practitioners. The schools were known to the researcher as there is a working relationship between the schools and setting where some of the children will go on to attend and through various early years network meetings and training courses. However, several practitioners within the foundation stage were not personally known and this meant that the schools would need to be approached in a more formal way. Therefore, the questionnaires were sent for the attention of the foundation stage teacher or lead. In this way, by explaining in the email who the survey was targeted at, it was hoped that the teacher would pass on the electronic link to the rest of their foundation stage colleagues. It was expected that it may take a little time for the practitioners at the school to respond as in the first instance they may not all have access to their own email at the school as well as the time restraints that may be upon them to access their emails and then furthermore to fill in a questionnaire.

3.7 Piloting the interview questions

Using the research question as a guide, coupled with looking at potential gaps in the questionnaires and responses to the survey, questions were formed to support answering the research question more fully. Rubin and Rubin (2005 p.153) support this method of devising questions: "When you know what information, you need to answer your research puzzle, working out the main questions is quite straightforward. You create separate main questions that ask about each of the pieces of missing information". The pilot was carried out with a former colleague, female, 40 years old who had worked in

early years for approximately 9 years in a day nursery setting and is now qualified and employed as a social worker.

The participant was asked to look at the structure of the questions and the way that they felt the questions would be received, the ordering and sequencing of both the question and the prompts and to rate the difficulty of the questions. The pilot interview also needed to be tested in terms of the time it took to complete; even though this would be approximate, it would still be useful to have some indication. As previously discussed, the practitioners' time in school can be somewhat limited and participation in research would be of secondary importance in comparison to teaching and other early years responsibilities in the foundation stage. When asked how the participant found the interview questions in view of these aspects, she responded by saying

> *I found the questions flowed very well and were relevant to extrinsic*
> *motivation. I understood each question fully and it was not difficult or*
> *too time consuming. Overall, a good experience and thought-provoking*
> *to future practice.*

The interview was approximately 25 minutes long, given that some of this was also discussing some of the structure and content, this was an ideal amount of time, adequate for collating answers and not too long to take up too much of the participants' time away from their duties and responsibilities in school.

The pilot participant pointed out some typographical errors, simple spelling mistakes and suggested some of the prompts to be used would be better if reordered and may help with the flow of the interview. On redrafting the interview questions, it would have been rather disjointed, had it been left in the original state and may have caused implications for the study later. Gillham (2007, p.25) echoes the importance of piloting the interview questions and schedule:

It is sometimes only through this detailed exercise that you come to see a particular question is building up problems for you at the stage of final analysis. And if you fail to deal with them now, there will be cause to regret it later.

Meeting with the participant to carry out the pilot and discuss the questions and content was very useful and she gave some helpful suggestions and raised some interesting thoughts around how the future potential participants may receive the questions.

3.8 Data analysis

The data analysis for both aspects of the research, survey questionnaires and interviews, took an inductive approach. The data was explored, and emerging themes and patterns framed the codes that were to be used to form the analysis. Another consideration when coming up with the codes was how this would support answering the research question through the concepts covered in the literature review.

3.8.1 Analysis of the survey data

As there were many questions in the survey, it was a big task to keep the codes to a manageable level. This was also due to the variation in responses that were given. The software package NVivo assisted in making some sense of the data by categorising and sub-categorising the responses. It was also useful to repeatedly look at the responses and narrow them down to main key themes so that the analysis reports could be produced with results that were clear and easy to understand. The surveys were input into NVivo to show correlations between two aspects of the survey and investigate possible links, recurring patterns and any anomalies which could not be captured quantitatively, perhaps due to their reference being infrequent.

Preliminary codes were drawn up and when all the responses had been looked at, the list of codes was finalised. The list of codes was still rather extensive, but it was felt that the codes could not be reduced further or some of the valuable comments would be lost and may even skew the data. Inputting the codes and responses into NVivo was quite simplistic. Running the responses produced reports on the frequency of certain words or phrases, and the reports could be printed off or put into the main text of the study to illustrate clearly where themes and patterns had formed. Details within the report also showed personal aspects such as age, gender, job role and other data which was also used to form some of the data analysis. The rest of the questionnaire data responses were analysed for actual content related to the study focus and to address the research question. Looking at the two areas together, personal, and topical data produced additional data, for example looking at answers given by a foundation stage lead and investigating whether there was much difference to that of a teaching assistant.

For example Table 2 illustrates a clear overview of the sample used showing the participants' role, age, qualification and how many years' experience each had. The bar chart in Figure 7 helps to show the possible links between the qualification held by a practitioner and their answers to the questions from the survey around rewards. Producing the data in this quantitative way was useful as it helped to show the number of practitioners who had similar responses and the role they held within the school. The possible links and reasons for this are discussed in Chapter 5.

Using NVivo to support the quantitative analysis of the survey data also supported a more objective way of evaluating the questionnaires, using statistical data to illustrate how many years a practitioner had worked in early years and their views on how important they felt rewards were (Figure 6) generated robust numerical results.

3.8.2 Analysing the data from the interviews

The interviews were recorded using a Dictaphone. All interviewees were made aware that this method would be used to make an account of what had been said. This was supported with verbatim narratives of the interviewees. Moreover, the interviewee could be assured that they were being listened to and the interviewer did not have to become distracted by note taking.

As discussed, the researcher needs to be aware of their own bias and recording in this way can help to decrease subjectivity (Halcom and Davidson, 2006). Due to the qualitative approach to this area of the research, NVivo was again used and like the questionnaires, key themes and patterns were identified to form codes. Drawing up the codes was not easy, and it assisted me to both read and listen to the transcripts at the same time repeatedly to pull out the topics that would support the study and address the research question. In short, the interviews were systematically analysed to identify key themes of interest; acquired through a process of iteration (Braun and Clarke, 2012). Explicitly, this involved a process of first data familiarisation, coding, identifying and themes whilst also highlighting anomalies

Extracting reports from NVivo was an additional way to re-read the first draft of analysis. The codes were further reduced and categorised to make the analysis clearer. Throughout the analysis the codes and themes were consistently reviewed and changed as the transcripts were looked at more deeply and new ideas emerged. The interview transcripts were again put into NVivo, and the analysis approach became quantitative as graphs and diagrams illustrated the frequency of words, beliefs and ideas that had been conveyed by the interviewees. This method assisted in revealing what the practitioners thought and how many of them thought it, which ascertained the emphasis of the coded theme and its significance within the study.

3.9 Reflexivity

It was felt that carrying out the interviews might at times be a little personally challenging. As discussed in the introduction chapter, the underlying incentive came from a professional and personal journey, having previously extrinsically motivated very young children, 0-5 years, for many different reasons and using several different methods. Rewards included stickers given out for sitting nicely and still on the carpet at group time, stamps on the backs of hand for staying dry while potty training, various rewards given for being kind to friends or generally not displaying physical and emotional tendencies even when something is particularly challenging or beyond a developmental stage. However, rather than defend or prop up these now dated practices at the setting, it was carried out with a positive meaning and message and what was thought at the time to be good and best practice. These methods were also upheld by parents, who, it appeared, were in favour of the setting using these reward styles.

After carrying out a small-scale research project as part of an MA assignment, it was thought that these methods would all be proven to be justifiable and even an advantage in supporting children. It was a very deep and rich lesson when the data strongly illustrated the opposite. In hindsight, it was one of the best pedagogical experiences and rewrote personal theories, views, and beliefs about motivating children, a real journey of discovery. At the setting we had been extrinsically motivating children, albeit with positive intentions. But it was extremely important that the research supported the staff at the setting to change the way that supporting and motivating children was done with careful consideration of their well-being and learning. Previously, perhaps subconsciously, the staff motivated children extrinsically and it appeared that it was with an adult agenda in mind. If the children did not have

any toileting accidents, then staff did not have to change them which can be one of the less pleasant aspects of the practitioner's role. If stickers were given to children who sat nicely on the carpet at group time, this again would benefit the staff in not having to stop the flow of the activity or need to address the child. One of the overarching reasons that extrinsic rewards were awarded to the children at the setting was to children who found conforming to the rules and boundaries of the room challenging. The staff would give them gold stars and set them a goal for the week, this tended to mainly be an issue for the boys.

As discussed, this research has formed the linchpin to deeply reflect on methods that are used and look at their reasoning and purpose. In this case, the unrealistic expectations put upon children, especially boys, expecting them to sit still for long periods on the carpet, often in large groups, while the practitioner delivers yet another often lengthy adult-led activity, often being spoken to if they could not maintain sitting still and concentrating and conflictingly given a sticker or reward if they could. This expectation was not only unrealistic, but actually goes against the very need for children, especially boys, to have freedom to be able to move and learn physically. Guerian (2001, p.47) supports this theory:

> *Unaware of how necessary it is for boys to use space, teachers inadvertently consider the boys impolite, rude or out of control. In fact, they are often just learning in the way their spatial brains learn. Girls do not generally need to move around as much when learning. Movement seems boys not only stimulate their brains but also manage and relieve impulse behaviour. Movement is also natural to boys in a closed space, thanks to their lower serotonin and higher metabolism, which creates fidgeting behaviour.*

This kind of realisation produced feelings of shock and guilt. The entire staff team had been using rewards and incentives to make the children conform in some way.

However, it needs to be stated that most staff did not feel that this was their underlying reason for giving children rewards. One of the staff said that she 'felt a bit mean' (Lister, 2003, p.6) that the stickers and rewards were being taken away; it can be deduced from this that staff felt that extrinsically rewarding the children was a positive thing to do.

3.10 Ethical considerations

For this study to progress it was necessary to obtain approval from the university's ethics committee. The guidance on ethical approval was followed throughout so that all aspects were covered. The practitioners and headteachers at the schools were presented with consent forms (Appendix A). The forms outlined how the research was to be conducted through questionnaires and interviews, how the data would be stored and used, and that each participant would have the right to withdraw at any point of the project. Signatures were received from the headteacher and participants which illustrated that they had understood the process of what was to take place. In addition to this, the consent forms included information regarding how the participants' data would not be shared with anyone other than the university and examiners and that collated information would be stored securely and meet all the requirements under the General Data Protection Regulation legislation (GDPR).

Included in the questionnaire was a further question asking the practitioner if they would like to expand on the information that they had given in their response to the questionnaire by taking part in an audio recorded interview. This was useful to know and an effective and efficient way of being able to ascertain which practitioners would be willing to take part in the next phase of the data collection.

As a practitioner approaching this research, it was already felt that this project could be viewed by the foundation stage staff as somewhat intrusive and judgemental. It was therefore necessary to have a sensitive and empathetic approach in the hope that this would make the participants feel more relaxed. This was extremely important in order to collect the practitioner's true views and thoughts around extrinsic motivation and would in turn provide some rich data.

Interviews can feel quite daunting, particularly if they are recorded as was the case with these interviews. It was necessary to have comradery and support the practitioner in feeling at ease with the interview. In the information sheet (Appendix B) details were highlighted about how the data would be stored securely and how any information obtained would be used and who it would be viewed by. Some time had passed between receiving the information consent form, so this was again discussed with all participants prior to the interview to ensure that they understood everything.

It was equally important to ensure that any collated data was conveyed accurately and as neutrally as possible. Although the questions put to the practitioners were prepared and therefore controlled in some way by the researcher, it was important in order to address the research question that the responses were communicated as they were intended by the respondent. Mishler (1986, p.118) states further,

> *It brings into the foreground the hidden problem of power, both in the*
> *interview situation itself and in the mainstream tradition of social*
> *science research. Whose interests are served by the asymmetry of power*
> *between interviewer and respondent? Who benefits from investigators'*
> *control of the interpretation, dissemination, and use of 'findings'?*

3.11 Timing of the research process

This research study began in February 2016 but was unfortunately deferred for a year. At the onset the new baseline assessment for the foundation stage was undergoing consultation regarding implementation. The decision to roll-out the assessment that year was then upheld. After a further consultation and additional revision regarding how the assessment would be conducted, it began the pilot phase in September 2018 and finished in July 2020. NFER (2018, p.2) said the following regarding the pilot stage:

> *The pilot is a key part of the development process and will be used to ensure that: the assessment approach, systems and guidance are fit for purpose and the outcomes of the assessment meet all key requirements. Participation in the pilot is voluntary. However, by taking part, teachers and pupils will make an important contribution to the finalisation of the materials in terms of their suitability, accessibility, and reliability.*

Six weeks later, the new baseline assessment was launched in schools, in September 2020 across all reception classes in England. This is an example of how the research is constant and the complexity of striving to stay abreast of changes is paramount. As discussed earlier, this new assessment could possibly increase pressure on practitioners within the foundation stage which could in turn prompt them to feel it necessary to reward and incentivise children to achieve a pleasing result for the school in the new baseline assessment.

As the study was carried out with practitioners working within the maintained sector, the data collection needed an element of precision with regards to the timing and analysis of the questionnaires, selecting prospective participants for interview and finally arranging and carrying out the interviews. As discussed, all the practitioners work in the foundation stage classes of schools and are therefore employed to work in term-time and have a shorter working day.

It was necessary then to undertake all the data collection, as well as carry out analysis of the questionnaires, within the term. Arranging the interviews was pleasingly a smooth process as teachers and teaching assistants made time either before school started or at a time when they had their own planning and preparation time. The questionnaires were distributed in February and March 2018 after piloting and re-drafting in January 2018. The questionnaires were then analysed at the end of March. It was important to analyse the questionnaires so that participants could be selected and the interview questions for the pending semi-structured interviews could be drawn up and piloted in preparation for carrying out interviews before the end of term. The timing of the data collection process featured in some of the responses from the interviews as they were carried out in May 2018 and so the children within the foundation classes were in their third and final term. One participant was asked:

> *But sometimes they can lose interest in doing something for its own sake, so rather than approaching a risk or new thing or doing something they did like the reward and in turn this can affect their perseverance, resilience, and confidence, so you know, willing to have a go, keep going and confidence. What do you think about this? Have you got any experience of this? And if you've got an example of it.*

The practitioner responded:

> *Yeah, and some of them do lose, some of them aren't interested in it by the end of reception. And you could say I'm gonna move you and they're just not bothered; they don't care either way…* (*Practitioner D*).

Therefore, as the interview took place at a time when children are usually well established in their class, this may have provided a different outcome to the question if it had been asked at the beginning of the school term when rewards were a new experience in the context of a school setting and the practitioner may have felt that the

children's interest and desire to achieve a reward was higher. It would be interesting to see if the responses were different if the interviews were carried out at the beginning of the school year, when children are frequently anxious and not very willing to separate from their parents or carer, attainment emerges slowly, concentration is developing and there are quite often personal hygiene accidents.

Overall, the collection of data was carried out and collated within a good time frame and at the convenience of the practitioners. It was fortunate that some of the staff offered to hold their interviews after the school day had ended which greatly assisted and supported any potential pressure on the practitioner to be needed back in the classroom. In addition to this, being relaxed would also give the practitioner more time to think about their responses to the questions and therefore producer richer data in the interviews.

3.12 Positionality, strengths, and limitations

> *The distinctions we make between the inner and the outer, between object and subject, abound in our vocabulary. In fact, we take pains to depersonalize our language to create the illusion that we ourselves have had no hand in our own work* (Eisner, 1993, p.50).

Above Eisner is discussing how researchers strive to be as objective as they can, denouncing biases, and she goes on to describe how "we refer to the 'author', we use the imperial 'we', we talk about 'subjects' or use the even more depersonalized 'S'" (1993, p.50). It is a very difficult task to try and achieve objectivity when involved in a project that has some emotive aspects attached to it, which in this case are the children and practitioners within the foundation stage.

Theories and research have moved on greatly since the small-scale research at the setting was carried out. As discussed, this has reshaped personal practice and

produced a strong belief and newfound ethos around the way children are motivated in their learning and how their well-being is supported. Considering this, it was important to try and resist conveying personal values and opinions when carrying out face-to-face, audio recorded interviews with the participants of this research. Rubin and Rubin (2005, p.82) report:

> *Researchers often have strong feelings on their topics and wonder if it is okay to express those views during interviews. You should resist the urge to make strong statements of your morality in the middle of an interview…*

This was very important to adhere to as a researcher's own epistemological point of view on this subject could potentially affect or even skew the data; Rubin and Rubin (2005, p.82) go on to warn:

> *A related problem occurs if strong personal feelings or biases cause you to distort what you are hearing. You may not follow up on leads that contradict your preconceptions, and in doing so may not get subtleties, evidence or details that might lead you to question your belief.*

It is therefore vital to acknowledge through personal reflection and scrutiny that the researcher's own values on the subject will to some extent influence the initial research question, the conducting of the research and data collection and also the final outcome. Here, this approach to the research can be seen to have flaws as the study seeks to gain opinions based upon the practice and beliefs of individuals.

It was at times difficult to contain the urge to either agree with the participant or join in their discussion about what they felt. At times an almost instinctive nod of the head, or a vocalised 'mm' in response to the participants answer can be heard on the recordings. As a fellow practitioner it was very difficult to maintain restraint at times. Here, feelings of empathy and a feeling of comradery emerged and in some instances a

desire for networking almost overtook the need for researching. At times it took a conscious effort to remain focused in the mode of researcher and not a colleague. It was difficult not to reveal and discuss personal beliefs and values around extrinsic motivation and the giving of rewards to young children and a consistent approach was also hard to maintain as all the respondents were very different in the answers that they gave to the questions. Although nodding and vocalising could also be viewed as having a potential adverse effect upon the research or add a potential bias to the responses of participants, there is also an underlying possibility that this approach may also have assisted in putting the practitioner at ease and therefore provoking richer and deeper data as they were relaxed and confident to give their independent and individual responses. This will be discussed further in the personal reflections chapter.

It is also essential to be aware of personal bias when analysing any collated data; interpretation of given accounts needs to be conveyed factually and accurately for the overall research to not become skewed or influenced by personal thoughts or beliefs or by conducting guesswork on what was thought to be the participant's intention in their given response as this cannot be truly or fully known as Cortazzi (1993, p.26) explains: "a fundamental methodological point made by controversial analysts is that the analyst can never have access to all the knowledge for interpretation which participants themselves have".

However, being employed in a day nursery and not working within a local authority school was an advantage and did assist with the overall execution of the study as there were no collegial connections or links. Although some of the practitioners were known to the researcher, this was purely through attending the same training courses and networking events in the past. Therefore, both the practitioners who completed the questionnaires and the foundation stage staff that volunteered to take part in the

interviews would not have much knowledge of the researcher's own values, beliefs and opinions of the research topic and so would potentially not be influenced by them when giving their responses. In addition, it is also seen as a strength that not being employed within a local authority school environment meant that there were no preconceived ideas of what the situation would be with regards to extrinsic motivation and the giving of rewards. There was no notion of what each individual school had in place as a policy, procedure or what training or information, if any, was received or given through the induction process when the staff member took up their post at the school. The investigation was purely exploratory and made for some very interesting research. Considering this, it would be difficult to be subjective as the information being sought could not be known until the questions had been asked of the respondents and so could not be assumed.

Considering the foundation stage practitioners who gave their details on the initial questionnaire survey, this could perhaps be viewed as a limitation of the study in that of the 33 questionnaires that were carried out, only 10 of the respondents were interviewed. This was done in an attempt to keep the study manageable, but also most of the respondents to the questionnaire had expressed that they did not want to be involved in the study further. Even so, this did mean that the practitioners who had put their names forward to be interviewed were the only ones to have their opinions and voices heard. It would have been interesting to know what the remaining 23 foundation stage practitioners thought and in turn how this could have affected both the data and the outcome of the study. It may also have been interesting and again altered the dynamics if students or supply teaching staff were involved, as they would not be employed directly by the school and would therefore not have been aware of the school's ethos regarding extrinsic motivation and the giving of rewards in the

foundation stage. Students may also be more aware and up to date with more contemporary practices and research around the subject too.

3.13 Credibility and trustworthiness

Reliability and validity are important concepts in research. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011, p.179) define validity as:

> *an important key to effective research. If a piece of research is invalid, then it is worthless. Validity is thus a requirement of both quantitative and qualitative/naturalistic research.*

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011, p.199) go on to define reliability as "essentially a synonym for dependability, consistency, and replicability over time, over instruments and over groups of respondents." In qualitative research these issues are also important, but the focus is on trustworthiness and reliability instead. Although the sample size was small, the data collected in this study was credible, as the responses were consistent on areas such as behaviour, consistency, support training and policies, which in turn demonstrates the suitability of the research methods in terms of addressing the research question. Establishing the trustworthiness of the data through understanding the research methodology and its employment leading to credibility within the findings. The methodology used in this research study is transferable in that it could be applied to any school system and any year group whereby the same set of data collection techniques could be used even down to the same set of questions that were asked in this study. This supports the trustworthiness of the data.

In this study the data was analysed and re-analysed and looked at carefully. Only after reading and re-reading were the codes for analysis devised. The codes for analysis of the interviews were used in the same way for all the transcripts to ensure

that the codes were trustworthy and credible in relation to address the research question. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011, p.204) discuss the importance and implications of these issues in interviews around bias:

> *The sources of bias are the characteristics of the interviewer, the characteristics of the respondent and the substantive content of the questions. More particularly this will include the attitudes, opinions, and expectations of the interviewer:*
>
> - *A tendency for the interviewer to see the respondent in his/her own image*
>
> - *A tendency for the interviewer to seek answers that support her/his preconceived notions*
>
> - *Misperceptions on the part of the interviewer of what the respondent is saying*
>
> - *Misunderstandings on the part of the respondent of what is being asked*

Although not framing this process as reliability testing in the strictest sense, by ensuring that the themes and categories within the coding have been developed "with all conceivable precautions in place against… distortions and bias, intentional or accidental, and mean the same thing for everyone else who uses them" (Krippendorff, 2004, p.211), the process I used did permit the establishment of credibility and confidence in the data analysis. Lincoln and Guba (1985) consider this process an important practice in establishing the trustworthiness of qualitative data analysis.

Chapter 4: Results

4.1 Introduction

This study seeks to discover early years practitioners' experiences, thoughts, and beliefs around extrinsic rewards, both in their working environment and in their own personal views. The research question to be answered allow an exploration of what practitioners do to motivate young children, why they do what they do, and what they think of the various impacts of these practices on young children. In this chapter, data from the questionnaire is first presented, followed by data from the interviews.

4.2 Questionnaire

As the research explores several issues, it is necessary to categorise it to look at some specific areas in more detail. As some of the questions in the survey are quite distinct from each other in that some request personal data such as age and qualifications, extrinsic motivation in their place of employment and finally the survey asks for the practitioner's own ethos around rewarding children, it will be clearer to segment the findings under these areas.

4.2.1 Practitioners' demographic information

From the 33 questionnaire surveys received, 33 (100%) of the respondents were female. Early years settings are staffed mostly with women; there are very few males employed both in the nursery sector and within the foundation stages of schools. (theory). This is not to say that there are no male early years practitioners, merely to point out that there were no males participating in this study. From the sample that completed the survey,

there were no students, apprentices, or other categories other than qualified staff. When asked for their age, the following responses were given.

16-18	0	0%
19-29	7	21.21%
30-39	10	30.30%
40-49	11	33.33%
50-59	5	15.15%
60+	0	0%
Not Answered	0	0%

Table 3: Ages of practitioners

As illustrated, most of the respondents were aged between 30-49 years, with no very young practitioners or more mature staff (60+). However, age alone does not demonstrate any significance as a standalone result. Therefore, practitioners were asked to state: their length of employment in the sector; what qualifications they held; their views on the use of reward systems; what training they had received; what reward policies existed. What would happen if reward systems were no longer in place was explored in terms of employment experience and an aspect of their viewpoint from the perspective of the school in terms of what they thought of the reward system, if they had been given any training or guidance on how to use any systems, if there were any written policies and procedures in place which could be referred to, and how they thought it might be received if rewards were no longer used within the school. Results are shown in Figure 6.
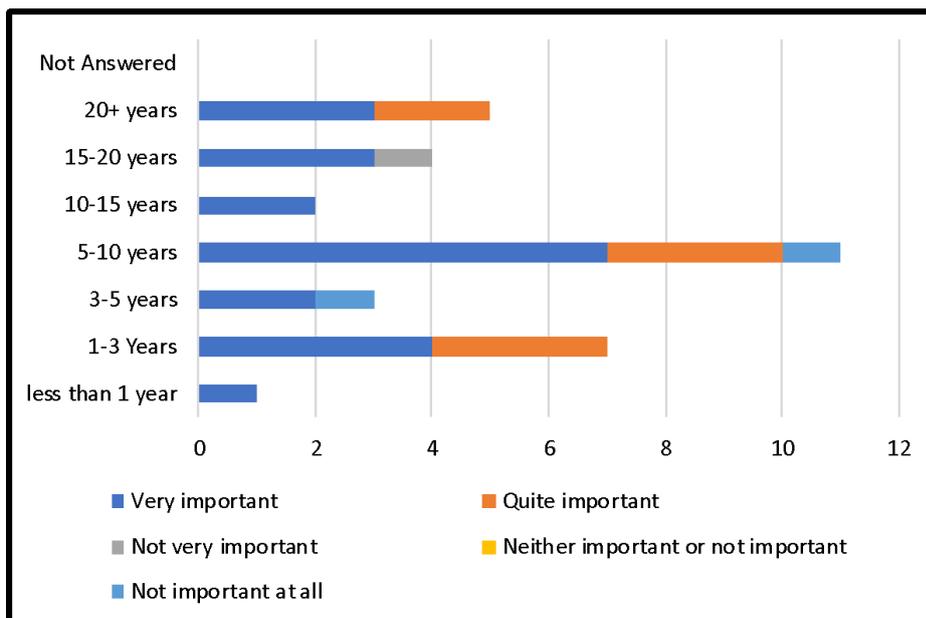
Figure 7: How many years practitioners have worked in early years and their views on how important they felt rewards were

Considering the data on how long the practitioners had worked in early years and what their viewpoint was when asked how important they felt it was that children are rewarded in their workplace, 10 practitioners who had worked for 5-10 years in the early years sector said they thought that the giving of rewards was either: 'very important' or 'quite important. Looking deeper into this and reviewing what reasons they gave in the explanation for their answer is provided in the next section.

4.2.2 Rewarding behaviour

The given responses have a common theme of the rewards encouraging positive behaviour in the children; behaviour and extrinsic motivation will be discussed in more detail later in the study.

> *Children respond well to praise and reward; positive behaviours are reinforced (Practitioner D).*

Gives them motivation and encourages positive behaviour (Practitioner A).

It promotes good behaviour (Practitioner F).

The reward system helps the children work together as a cohesive group and makes them feel valued, however it is also important for them to understand that there is a high expectation of their behaviour, so the reward is for actions above and beyond this (Practitioner E).

The children respond very well to positive reinforcement. The reward systems we use are usually given for effort in attainment or effort for behaviour etc. The actual levels of attainment or behaviour will vary according to the child (Practitioner B).

Other responses to this question included more around the children's well-being, in particular their self-esteem:

Children in my setting need to feel proud and that they are doing well.

Growth mindset, enabling children to celebrate when they are doing well. So, a child that tries really hard to get an answer wrong is still rewarded and conversation had about how well they tried, rather than focus purely on the fact the answer is wrong.

Gets positive results and creates happy, enthusiastic children.

The questionnaire survey asked practitioners if they held an early year's qualification with the following question asking at what level this was. These questions also led on to what role the practitioner held within the school. Practitioners with a level six qualification or above all held teaching roles, whereas practitioners below this level were working as higher-level teaching assistants (HLTAs) and teaching assistants. It was possible to analyse participants' views on the use of extrinsic rewards and their level of qualification. Figure 7 shows the qualifications of practitioners and their answers to the following question in the 'Personal perceptions of extrinsic and intrinsic

motivation' section: 'In your view does rewarding children: improve their attainment, increase their efforts and promote consistency among all children?'
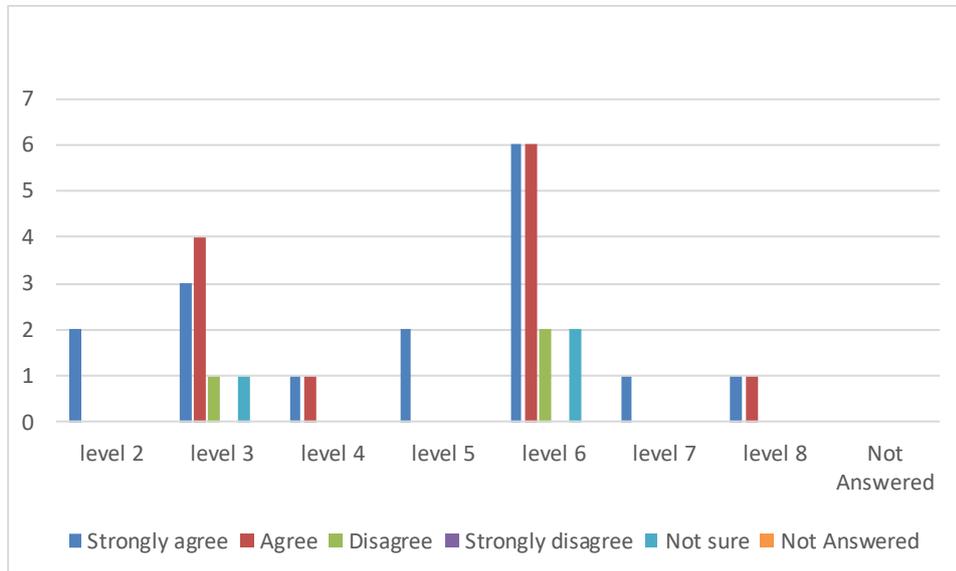
Figure 8: Qualifications held by early years practitioners and their beliefs about rewards improving children's attainment

The data here was a little surprising, with a very close result between teachers (level six and above) and teaching assistants (below level six), with 13 (39%) qualified teachers either agreeing or strongly agreeing that they thought that rewarding children improved their attainment, and 12 (36%) teaching assistants also agreeing or strongly agreeing with this statement. Most participants regardless of role believed that reward giving improved attainment. With a preconceived bias, it was expected that the teachers would believe that the giving of rewards supported the notion that it would improve attainment more than the teaching assistants would.

The responses submitted from both sets of practitioners was again extremely close. Overall, 24 (73%) of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the giving of rewards improves children's attainment, 7 (21%) disagreed, and the remaining 2 (6%)

were unsure. To try and understand the reasons behind the practitioner's responses, the questionnaire asked for practitioners to expand on their answers. The submitted comments were rather mixed.:

> *Rewarding can work on a short-term basis but does not seem to build up over time* (Practitioner E).

> *For every reward system, the key is what is the learning?* (Practitioner D).

> *Not all children respond to rewards, so consistency isn't always achieved* (Practitioner D).

> *Children might increase their effort in an activity in order to be rewarded but this does not necessarily mean their attainment is improved* (Practitioner A).

> *Children respond well to praise and for some this is key to motivating them in learning and development* (Practitioner B).

> *The children enjoy their rewards, and it encourages them to try harder, for which they get more rewards etc.* (Practitioner C).

> *They feel happy if they receive it, disappointed if they can't. Can be detrimental-they wonder why they did not get a sticker even though they feel they tried hard* (Practitioners D).

Figure 8 shows the practitioner's qualifications and what their beliefs were on whether rewarding children supported increasing their efforts.
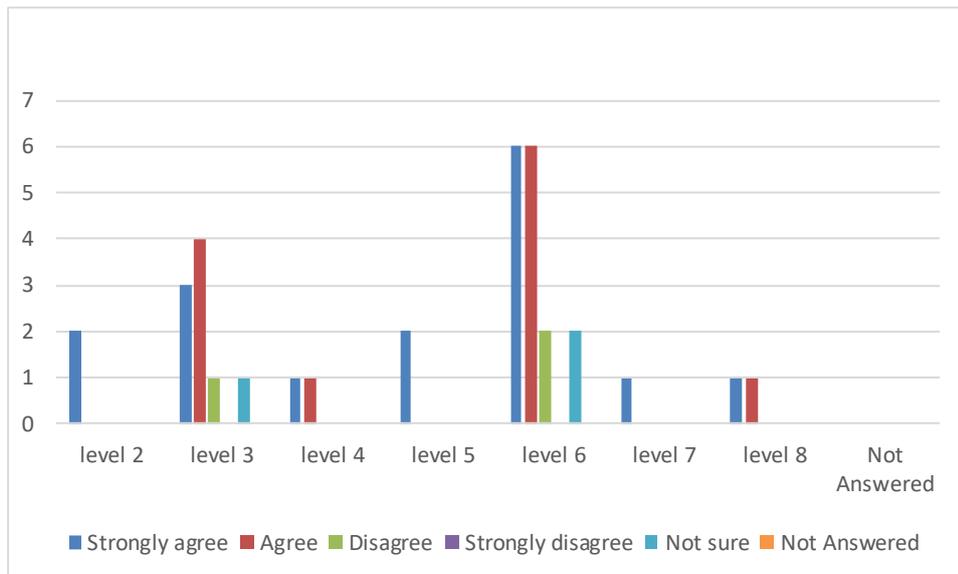
Figure 9: Qualifications held by practitioners and their beliefs about rewards increasing children's efforts

These two aspects of the survey produced a similar outcome to the previous chart. There was a strong similarity in the answers given by both the qualified teachers, the HLTAs and the teaching assistants. Only two practitioners, who were both qualified teachers, disagreed that they thought that rewards increased children's efforts, with two qualified teachers and one teaching assistant unsure. Possible reasons for this will be deliberated in Chapter 5's discussion.

4.2.3 Extrinsic motivation in the practitioners' schools

This section of the questionnaire was used to try and gain an insight into what reward systems were in place in the practitioners' schools. Although the practitioner may have been following the school's policy and procedures within the school, it may have contrasted with what they believed or felt should be happening in the foundation stage. This is a major quest of this study and will play a huge part in addressing the research question of exploring what are early years practitioners' understanding and perceptions

of extrinsic motivation, how it is used with children and what are the perceived effects on their learning and well-being? Questions were asked around what types of rewards were given, the frequency of rewards and the various reasons that the children were rewarded.

When asked whether a reward system was used in the practitioner's classroom, 28 (85%) answered 'yes', 1 (3%) answered 'sometimes' and 4 (12%) answered 'no'. Of the four practitioners who answered 'no' further analysis of their responses showed that two used reward systems. The four practitioner's surveys were looked at in more detail in this section. Findings revealed that although two of the practitioners had responded that they did not give rewards, their surveys went on to give details of "behaviour charts, sunshine, muddy puddles and thunder clouds" as a way of illustrating how the children were in their behaviour and attainment. The other two practitioners did not award daily or through stickers and beads, but they did award certificates for attendance. Further discussion in an interview with one of the practitioners from this school revealed some insight as to why this method was used; this is discussed further in the results of the interviews section of the study. The frequency of reward giving was quite varied: 21 (64%) of practitioners responded that rewards were used every day in their class, 5 (15%) replied that they gave rewards every few days, 1 (3%) said every week, 2 (6%) responded that they only awarded very occasionally and 4 (12%) did not answer this question. However, over half of the practitioners said that they gave rewards every day. It was interesting to see the answers given in the interviews when a question regarding the monitoring of the reward giving was asked, to look further at consistency. In addition to this and again to investigate more around consistency, practitioners were asked, 'If rewards are given, are they given individually, to the whole class, or both?' Results are shown in Table 4.

Individually	7	21.21%
To the whole class	1	3.030%
Both	21	63.64%
Not Answered	4	12.12%

Table 4: How rewards are given to children by practitioners

Class size within the schools was varied, but not vastly. The average class size was 26-30 children, reported by 20 (60%) of practitioners, with 10 (31%) of respondents having a class size of 21-25 children. The two private schools included in the study both had fewer than 15 children in their classes, which equated to 3 (9%) of the total. Although the size of the class and any effect that this may have upon extrinsic motivation and well-being was not the focus of this research, the question was asked to consider the implications of class size in brief. The number of children could potentially put pressure on practitioners to either reward children. Difficulty may also arise with consistency of reward giving. The size of the class in the schools within the foundation stage will be discussed further in Chapter 5's discussion.

The practitioners were asked on the survey if the children had any involvement in the rewards systems used. The reason for asking this question was to try and find out if the children were given any responsibility within the reward giving if they took part in setting their own goals and targets or supporting their peers with theirs. From the 33 respondents, 21 (64%) answered that the children were involved, 11 (33%) responded that they were not – these included practitioners who said they did not give rewards – and 1 (3%) did not respond. Some of the practitioners gave examples and reasons for why they involve the children in the process of giving rewards:

Sometimes I ask children to be monitors and they choose children sitting well to reward (Practitioner C).

Children suggest other children who they feel have been a good/worked hard etc. (Practitioner A).

Whole school behaviour policy (Practitioner E).

They get a treat if they fill the marble jar. They choose winners on fancy dress days. (Practitioner B).

Vote for the best talent exhibited by our talent show. Vote individually for reward once the marble jar is filled. Weekly merit and courtesy awards given to individual children (Practitioner A).

The question put to practitioners regarding which rewards were given revealed a large variety between schools, as illustrated in Figure 9. There are many different methods used as schools are free to opt into whichever method they like. The following extrinsic rewards were mentioned by practitioners.
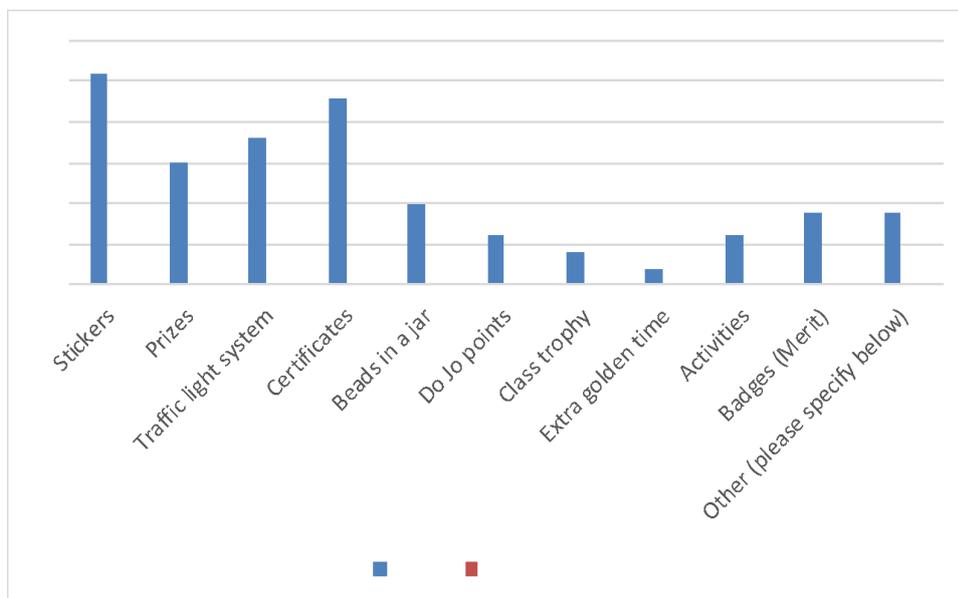
Figure 10: Rewards methods used by practitioners in the foundation stage

Although the giving of stickers was a very popular choice of reward, the list provided as options on the questionnaire was by no means an exhaustive one: 9 (27%) of practitioners added 'other' when asked which rewards were given in their school. Other extrinsic motivators included:

- Verbal praise

- Stars in a star box

- Sunshine, rainbow, muddy and thunder clouds

- Golden tickets

- Happy and sad faces

- Showing work to senior management, teacher or whole class

- House points

- Golden broom

- Maths challenge

- 100% attendance

From all the rewards mentioned only one was not a tangible reward: verbal praise. Verbal praise was only given as a response in the 'other' by 2 (0.66%) practitioners from the 33 who responded. The questionnaire survey then turned to the reasons that rewards were given. This was particularly interesting and although this aspect of the results is illustrated within section two of the results, it can be used to demonstrate the practitioner's personal thoughts around what the rewards are given for as it is usually the practitioner who decides this. The practitioners responded with the answers seen in Figure 10.
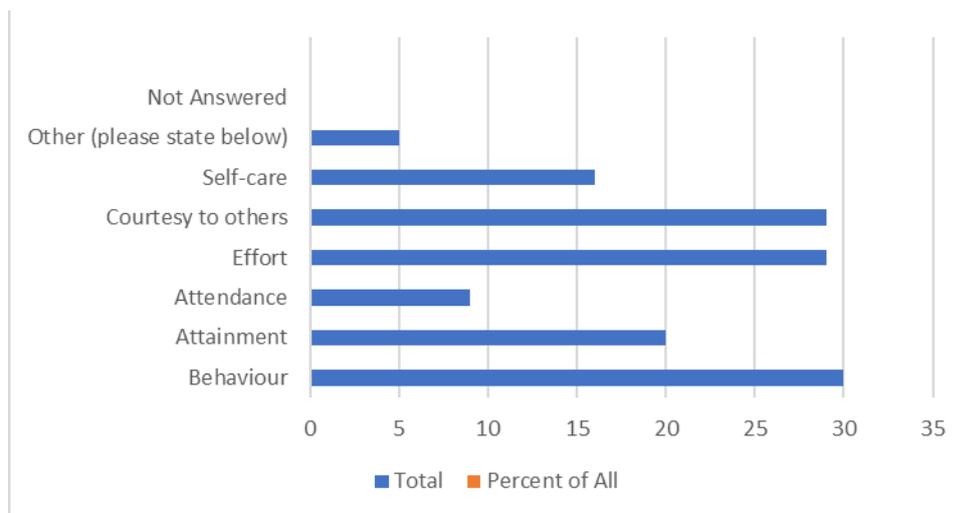
Figure 11: Reasons for giving rewards

As can be seen, 'behaviour' was the biggest reason for the giving of rewards to children in the foundation stage, with 30 (90%) of practitioners selecting this as one of their reasons. 'Effort' and 'courtesy' to others emerged very close to this, with 26 (88%) of practitioners selecting this as a reason. When asked in the next question for what reason children were most frequently rewarded, 'behaviour' was still the highest reason with 16 (48%) of respondents choosing it, while 'effort' was selected at 11 (33%) and 'courtesy' to others was selected by 3% of respondents.

Having looked at what rewards are used and what they are used for, we need to understand that using rewards as extrinsic motivation is a complex issue. Looking deeper at consistency in extrinsic motivation, we can see that this is one of the main areas where children's well-being can be affected. To investigate whether all children were rewarded, practitioners were asked 'Do all of the children usually receive a reward?' Over half of practitioners, 18 (55%), answered 'yes' to this question, 4 (11%) answered 'no', 7 (21%) said 'sometimes', 3 (10%) chose 'other' and 1 (3%) were not sure. One practitioner selected two choices of answer, which was included in the results. The following question asked practitioners to expand on their given response.

Responses show their comments on reward systems used in their school to illustrate the differing practices across the schools and the procedures related to how rewards are given.

> *Through the Do Jo system all of the children get rewarded* (Practitioner C).

> *All children are rewarded as they move up the traffic light system* (Practitioner A)

> *It's important all children are rewarded* (Practitioner E).

> *Not the same child every day* (Practitioner B).

> *All children try hard and so are rewarded for their effort* (Practitioner J).

> *It's not really logged as to who is receiving more rewards than others, apart from behaviour and attendance* (Practitioner A).

> *We track house points and golden certificates* (Practitioner B).

> *Only children who have worked hard or behaved well* (Practitioner D).

> *Adults try to reward all children with a sticker at some point, but not daily* (Practitioner E).

> *Stickers improve listening at times, but also take away from girls recognising why they are learning* (Practitioner C).

A specific question around consistency was put to the practitioners, which will be presented in the next section as it asked for the practitioner's own views on the subject.

4.2.4 Practitioners' personal perceptions of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation

This section of the questionnaire was open-ended and designed to elicit the perspectives of participants about the use and impact of rewards on young children. Referring to the question around consistency, practitioners were asked if they believed that rewards

promoted consistency among children: 8 (24%) strongly agreed, 11 (33%) agreed, 8 (24%) disagreed, 2 (6%) strongly disagreed and 4 (12%) were not sure. When asked to expand on this the practitioners gave responses which clearly evidenced consistency as a problem for children and their well-being, in that it causes confusion and unfair treatment as these examples illustrate:

> *There is never going to be total consistency among children but giving out rewards such as Do Jo put all children on an even playing field* (Practitioner D).

> *I think that some children struggle to see other children getting praise or rewards and think they're not so good* (Practitioner B).

> *Rewarding a child based on their own individual goals keeps a consistent system throughout the class. All children feel included and that their efforts are recognised* (Practitioner I).

> *Disagree with all three statements, every child is different and what will work for one child may not work with another* (Practitioner H).

The reasons given were rather different from each other, thus it was important to ask what the reasons were behind the given responses as quantitative data was not enough to understand how the practitioners felt about the choices they had made. This method was useful when analysing the responses to the question of how important practitioners felt it was to reward children.

Within this section of the questionnaire, the practitioners were asked for their views regarding rewards and gender. The question was put to them 'Do you think that rewards work better…?' options were given for the practitioners to select from: 'with boys, with girls, just as well with boys and girls, gender makes no difference'. Overwhelmingly, 32 (97%) of the practitioners responded that they thought rewards either worked just as well with boys and girls or that gender made no difference. On

reflection about this question, the options appear to be asking the same thing, and this is a consideration for the revision of this question. One practitioner, who made up the remaining 1 (3%,) said that she thought that rewards worked better with boys. This practitioner was later selected to be interviewed. When asked, 'On question 22, you indicated that you thought that rewards worked better with boys. Can you expand on it a bit please?', Practitioner I responded:

> *I just noticed that they're, they are more into wanting rewards than girls, girls are quite happy with 'oh well done'. That's what I've just noticed, they're quite easily satisfied. Whereas boys are more – they need more encouragement to do things. So, they prefer the rewards and the stickers, because they need the extra boost. I've only had very few girls that have erm, like refuse even from a reward. It's a bit funny really, but that's how I've noticed, I've only got a few girls that I struggle with as I've got a big group of boys that need more rewarding things to do. A bit like bribery, it sounds really bad, when you think about it. I said, after I did the questionnaire, it was an eye-opener.*

In the interviews, when examples were given for discussing behaviour, most of the practitioners discussed boys in their accounts.

This main aim of this study was to obtain some insight into the views of practitioners and their understanding and perceptions of extrinsic rewards. It was not to have a strong focus on parents or children. However, it would support the research to also understand some of what the practitioner's thoughts and motivations were about reward systems. If the practitioners felt that the giving of extrinsic rewards was something that parents expected, this may be a factor which contributed to the practitioner's beliefs around rewards or formed part of their rationale for giving them. To gather some information around this, the practitioners were asked: 'In your opinion,

is reward in school expected by parents?'. Options for responses were: 'yes, no, unsure', which gave the following results.

Yes	17	51.52%
No	6	18.18%
Not sure	10	30.30%

Table 5: Do parents expect their children to receive rewards in school?

A very mixed reaction was reported by practitioners on this question, with 30% being unsure if this was something expected by parents or not. However, some of these practitioners did include comments behind their answers, and one practitioner included a personal and powerful account about her own son:

> *Not sure, as a parent with a child with challenging behaviour. He is given rewards to make him behave, I disagree with this. My son's efforts and achievements are never commemorated, other than when his behaviour has improved. Parents that I have worked with in the past and more so currently will comment if their child has not received a certificate or reward and will often question why not. Parents feel it is unfair that if a child misbehaved at the beginning of the term, why are they being punished at the end?* (Practitioner H).

There was a combination of other reasons for the answers that practitioners had provided, and this came from both qualified teachers and the teaching assistants:

> *No, I do not believe it's expected, but parents when I let the children out at the end of the day are on the whole really positive if a child says, 'look what I got!' Yes, parents are eager for visual indication their child is doing well. Yes, I'm sure parents appreciate rewards for their child's hard/good work and behaviour* (Practitioner C).

In addition to investigating the practitioners' understanding and perceptions of extrinsic motivation on learning, this study also set out to gather evidence on the

practitioners' thoughts about the perceived effects of extrinsic motivation on children's well-being. It seemed like this question might pose difficulties as this can be an emotive area and perhaps somewhat difficult to describe a personal view about. However, 'to gain a better insight into the impact of extrinsic motivation upon children's learning and well-being in the foundation stage' was one of the research aims and from looking at this and how it could be addressed the question 'Do you think that extrinsic rewards have any effect upon children's well-being?' was used. Although this was a closed question, practitioners were again asked to explain their answer in order that their thoughts could be conveyed in a more effective way, leading to a better understanding of what they thought of the effects of rewards on children's well-being.
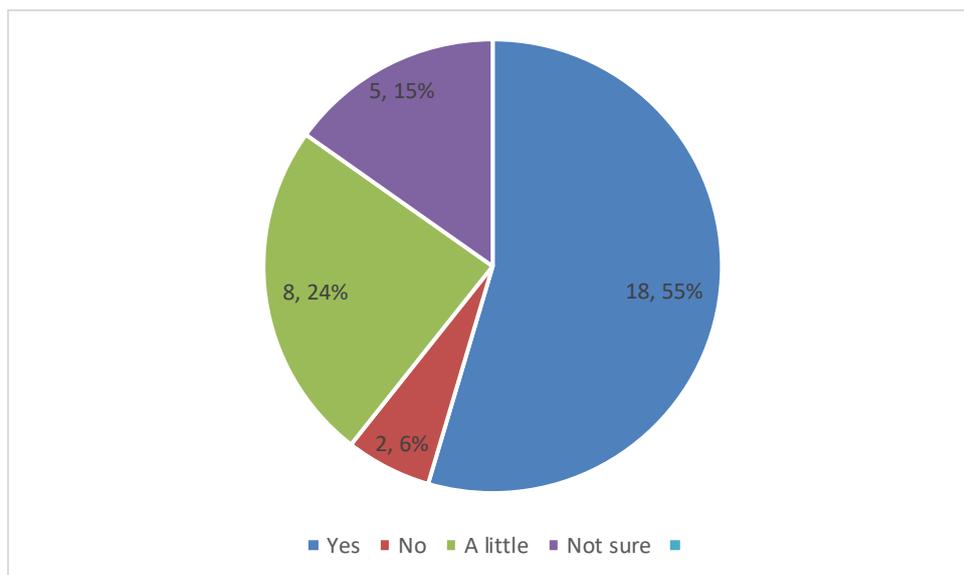
Figure 12: Practitioners' responses to extrinsic rewards and their effect on children's well-being

Over half of the practitioners 18 (55%) answered either 'yes' or 'a little' when asked if they felt children's well-being was affected by extrinsic rewards. Only 2 (6%) of the total, did not think that the children's well-being was affected; the remaining 5

(15%), felt unsure whether well-being was affected or not. Of the 2.6% of respondents who answered 'no', which equated to one practitioner, they explained as follows:

> *But I still need to emphasise pride in self.* (Practitioner D).

Looking at other comments submitted by practitioners, it was apparent that the question had been understood and received in different ways. The comments revealed that several practitioners had submitted comments illustrating that they felt that the use of extrinsic rewards had a positive effect on the children's well-being, while other practitioners gave a view that giving rewards has a detrimental impact upon the well-being of children:

> *Yes, children are very proud when they earn rewards. Their peers and parents are also able to praise them for their achievements* (Practitioner B).

> *Yes, I am not sure they always have the positive effect that we assume they would have- children can become upset when they do not receive the rewards* (Practitioner E).

> *Yes, they encourage the child to feel a sense of achievement and good about themselves* (Practitioner F).

> *Yes, can demotivate if they feel they never get one or make them only put in effort for a reward* (Practitioner C).

> *Yes, especially for those children that feel they need to show their parents that they have achieved something; this is generally looking at more deprived children* (Practitioner G).

> *Yes, for a short time* (Practitioner I).

Although a little frustrating to the research, these responses do assist in seeking to explore the understanding and perceptions of practitioners, which appears to be very

individualised. Of the 79% of the respondents who answered 'yes' or 'a little' to this question, 12 were teaching assistants and 15 were qualified teachers.

Option	Yes	No	A little	Not sure
level 2	2	0	0	0
level 3	3	0	4	2
level 4	2	0	0	0
level 5	1	0	0	1
level 6	9	2	3	2
level 7	1	0	0	0
level 8	1	0	1	0
Not Answered	0	0	0	0

Table 6: Level of qualification held by practitioners and their beliefs about whether extrinsic rewards have an effect on the well-being of children

These results are quite striking and, although only focused around one aspect, well-being, it illustrates the inconsistencies around what giving rewards to children in the foundation stage means from one practitioner to another. As can be seen from the comments, the contrast between the thoughts and beliefs of the practitioners about what they feel are the effects on children's well-being is somewhat striking. Considering this is small-scale research, it could still be suggested that there is a need for some guidance and training around the motivation for practitioners to give rewards to children to provide less of a variance for what they think the purpose of the reward is and what it provides. This will be discussed more in Chapter 5 along with any future recommendations.

On the final question on the questionnaire practitioners were asked to offer their opinion of the advantages and disadvantages of using rewards systems. This was an open-ended question. Similar to the well-being question, this query drew on practitioners' own thoughts about what they feel and believe regarding reward systems.

Six of the practitioners did not complete this section; of the remaining 27 there were some very interesting thoughts and beliefs. Some of the comments around advantages of reward giving submitted by the practitioners included:

> *Encourages the child/children to continue with their efforts. (Although this can be done verbally). Children know what we expect of behaviour in school* (Practitioner B).

> *Children know how to try and be better learners* (Practitioner F).

> *It motivates children to do well* (Practitioner A).

> *They can share achievements with others and parents* (Practitioner J).

> *Promotes confidence, self-esteem, pride in achievements* (Practitioner B).

> *Provides a tangible consequence to effort and good behaviour* (Practitioner D).

> *Helps children to understand the expectations on them in the setting and with regard to their learning attitude* (Practitioner C).

> *A headteacher's reward gives children a sense that -'the headteacher that hardly sees me actually knows what I have achieved, my teacher must have told them how I am doing' this reward is sent home, children really enjoy getting posts, especially as in this day and age not many people do. The reward is then shared more at home* (Practitioner H).

> *Children that never receive rewards or praise at home may flourish more that someone is actually identifying their efforts and so on* (Practitioner C).

> *Token rewards may be something they never ever receive. For some children this can really promote their self-esteem* (Practitioner A).

> *Advantages- incentives, children's positive behaviour acknowledged, a way to talk about negative behaviour* (Practitioner J).

Notably, many of the responses discussed behaviour and increasing the children's efforts, with one practitioner commenting "consistent across the school". A lengthy and thought-provoking response came from a teaching assistant who discussed how the giving of a reward from school can make a child "flourish", particularly when receiving rewards or praise at home.

Practitioners were also asked to submit what they felt the disadvantages were in giving rewards to children in the foundation stage:

Promotes expectations (Practitioner E).

Loses its meaning (Practitioner F).

Causes upset between other children (Practitioner E).

Has an effect on self-esteem (Practitioner H).

Forced efforts or positive behaviour just to receive a reward (Practitioner D).

Positive behaviour/effort loses its true meaning (Practitioner E).

Sometimes it can be used as a punishment for bad behaviour (Practitioner B).

Children can become sad if they done receive rewards (Practitioner J).

Some children can be focused on rewards instead of intrinsically being motivated (Practitioner F).

Not always possible to be consistent. Poorly behaved children get rewarded for something that a well-behaved child would do as a matter of course and not get rewarded (Practitioner A).

Children expecting something/reward for all that they do- disadvantage. Not loving learning for learning's sake (Practitioner E).

Who are we doing it for? Children benefit more from adult enthusiasm (Practitioner F).

> *Some children might do things /activities/tasks only for a*
> *reward* (Practitioner B).

Despite the range of use, practitioners did not necessarily see rewards as a good idea. Comments focused on the downside of children being motivated only by rewards and the impact it can have on a child's self-esteem and friendships. One insightful comment focused on how a badly behaving child can be rewarded for good behaviour, while a well-behaved child is not acknowledged for behaving well.

4.3 Interviews

Information gathered from the questionnaire responses was used to devise questions for the practitioner interviews. On the advice of the research supervisor, additional questions were given to each interview participant which were specific to a response that they had submitted on their questionnaire. Questions were also specific to the aspect of the responses that had provoked interest and was felt needed to be explored more deeply. In addition to this, any area that appeared to have either not been covered in the questionnaires or that needed to be explored in more depth to address the research query was used to formulate the interview questions.

A total of 10 interviews were carried out, with five teachers and five practitioners qualified to at least level three. The participants were given letters as a key to help identify them throughout the study while protecting their identity. Table 7 illustrates this together with details of their job role, age and the number of years' experience they had working in early years.

Practitioner	Age	Role	Years' experience in early years
A	40-49	Early years lead	20+
B	50-59	Teaching assistant	20+
C	30-39	Early years lead	5-10
D	30-39	Teaching assistant	15-20
E	19-29	Early years lead	20+
F	19-29	Teaching assistant	5-10
G	30-39	Teaching assistant	20+
H	30-39	Teaching assistant	15-20
I	40-49	Teacher	5-10
J	40-49	Early years lead	5-10

Table 7: Interviewees for semi-structured interviews

The results of the interviews produced a very broad spectrum of responses. However, similar themes and patterns emerged, which assisted with the analysis and organisation of results. As discussed in Chapter 3, the software analysis tool NVivo was used to provide some systematic ordering and quantitative analysis of the interview transcripts. This provided clear illustrations and supported the presentation of the data to be understood by the reader. It was first necessary to become familiar with the transcripts fully in order to be able to select the categories that not only created the themes but were also supportive in their ability to answer the research questions.

4.3.1 Coding the results

As discussed, deciding which codes to use to analyse the interview data focused on which themes and patterns emerged after repeatedly reading the transcripts. Through a process of iteration and constant comparison, 24 codes were developed to analyse the 10 transcripts but several also emerged more inductively. To make the codes more manageable and easier for the reader to follow and understand, the codes were grouped under themes. In total seven themes were selected and are used for the presentation of the results with the codes moved into one of the themed categories as follows:

Behaviour

- Gender

- Behaviour

Institutional/ Sector

- Policies, training and guidance

- Motivation in early years and caring attitude

No rewards

- No rewards – negative impact

- No rewards – parent's reactions

- No rewards – positive impact

- No rewards – staff reactions

Observations and experiences

- Own thoughts, negative, unnecessary

- Own thoughts, positive motivator

- Positive consistency, individual specific

- Negative consistency

Starting school

- Starting school, age and stage appropriate

- Starting school, pressure on staff

- Starting school, working parent pressure

- Starting school, high- expectations, pressure on children

Well-being and positive impact.

- Well-being – impact on learning

- Well-being – impact on emotional health

- Well-being – expectancy

- Well-being – own sake

Well-being and negative impact

- Well-being – lose interest and longevity

- Well-being – meaningless

- Well-being – negative impact

- Well-being – negative impact, competition

The interviews were coded in accordance with how many times a particular theme was discussed within the interviews, not merely the mention of the word. This was to show where practitioner's views were weighted and presented their views and beliefs sequentially. From the presentation of these responses, it can be seen how this directly addresses the research question of what are early years practitioners' understanding and perceptions of extrinsic motivation, how it is used with children in the foundation stage and what are the perceived effects on their learning and well-being? Table 8 below shows how many practitioners discussed the themes and how many times within the interviews references were made to the subject of that code.

No	Code	Number of respondents	Number of references to codes
1	Behaviour and Control	10	67
2	Motivation in early years/caring attitude	10	61
3	Consistency – negative	10	58
4	Policies, training and guidance	10	36
5	Well-being – mental health	6	34
6	Starting school – pressure on the children	10	31
7	Own thoughts – positive motivator	7	29
8	Well-being – lose interest, longevity	7	26
9	Consistency	8	25
10	Starting school – age appropriate	8	21
11	Well-being – impact on learning	5	19
12	Well-being – own sake	6	18
13	Own thought – negative, unnecessary	3	17
14	Well-being – expectancy	6	13
15	No rewards – parent reactions	8	11
16	Starting school – pressure on staff	5	11
17	No rewards – staff reactions	5	9
18	No rewards – negative impact	4	9
19	No rewards – positive	6	8
20	Well-being – expectancy, lose interest	2	6
21	Gender	2	4
22	Starting school – working parents pressure	2	2
23	Well-being – negative impact, competition	1	2
24	Well-being – meaningless	1	1

Table 8: Number of respondents and frequency of referencing codes

It is useful to scrutinise the results further by looking at how the practitioners responded within these codes themes, and this is done in the following subsections.

4.3.2 Behaviour and control

All 10 interviewees made references to behaviour and control in their interviews, with this code being the most frequently mentioned. Practitioners discussed a variety of different things around this, with some discussing how using rewards was beneficial in supporting children to improve their behaviour and with other practitioners mentioning that they felt the rewards were used as a control measure.

A foundation stage leader was asked for her thoughts on the giving of rewards, considering things such as 'competition and well-being in children, children doing something for its' own sake rather than for a reward, control measures, using it as a positive incentive or both'. The foundation stage leader answered:

> *Yeah, so there are some children who will always try their best, always sit perfectly, whether there are rewards or not. There are other children that need reminders' the practitioner went on to say 'We'll also really try and reward children when they're being good, if they are not normally like that [laughs], so a child who is never normally sitting quietly on the carpet, when he's having a really good day, I'll say 'you are having a really good day today, I'm going to move you up [the traffic light reward system], cos then they think, 'ooh yes, that's supposed to be like this every day [laughs]* (Practitioner A).

Putting the same question to a HLTA, the practitioner discussed her thoughts on the giving of rewards around children with special educational needs. The issue of rewards that match individual needs and behaviours is challenging, especially for children with SEND:

> *...or are we rewarding the Asperger's child, because actually he hasn't called out? Whereas the child that is sitting there and doesn't call out all the time we forget about them or whatever. So, I think it's trying to get something that works for each child and making sure you reward, you know, the child that is sitting there good, very erm, may not be controlled, but actually he is just a calm child* (Practitioner B).

A teaching assistant who works alongside a foundation stage leader in a class of 21-25 children and has 20+ years post-qualifying experience offered her thoughts around using reward systems. Some practitioners felt that the giving of rewards was positive in motivating children, as this foundation leader comments:

And genuinely, I think for us, for me it's a good way of encouraging
them, it does work, and it does motivate them to do things. If you are
struggling, if I have got a group and I'm struggling cos one wont
concentrate, sometimes just the 'I'm not going to have to move you down
am I?' and that's it, it's helpful to have that, and I don't think,
personally, I don't think it does them any harm (Practitioner C).

There are similar attitudes within the three given accounts, with all the practitioners, who all have a good level of experience in early years, conveying that they think rewards are useful in supporting children's behaviour in the classroom and being able to conform to foundation stage regulations, such as sitting on the carpet. There is a need to address children's needs in a distinctive way, therefore the subject of giving rewards is complex as even in this small research study, there are inconsistencies in practitioners' thoughts and beliefs.

Other practitioners felt that rewards sometimes used by the school to enhance the children's grades in government assessments and therefore increase the kudos of the school. This was a contrasting tone to the accounts. A teaching assistant with 20+ years post-qualifying experience and had worked in their school for 3-5 years had responded on her initial questionnaire that she felt that rewards were used too much and that she found that particular children were rewarded more than others. When asked to elaborate, they discussed the school's approach:

They go, the guideline would be like, 'we're [the school] not gonna
spend the time with the special needs children, let's get the mediocre
ones, cos that's gonna get the grades for the whole school (Practitioner
D).

The overall results from this section depict a strong theme of rewards being used as a behaviour strategy in school – children who do not usually demonstrate appropriate behaviour are likely to be rewarded, for example, when sitting still on the carpet. It is

important to note that many of the practitioners were asked for their own thoughts around the giving of extrinsic rewards and not in conjunction with anything else, be it the school's ethos or their own role within the school. The subject of rewards used to motivate children to comply and demonstrate what the school depicts as appropriate behaviour is an important finding in this research and will be discussed in detail in the findings section of the report.

4.3.3 Motivation in early years, caring attitude

The whole interview cohort provided information around their motivation for working in early years and their attitude towards working with this age group. Across the 10 transcripts, 61 references were made to this subject. All practitioners were asked to give an account of their career journey in early years. Two HLTAs responded by saying:

> *I love my child, but do I love other children? And I decided I did. Covering maternity leave as a foundation stage leader a teacher described part of her journey into working in early years* (Practitioner B).

> *I came out of university and did six months of supply, erm working across [laughs] the ages, so I worked in the foundation stage all the way up to year six and that just reiterated that I really did love early years and that was the space where I wanted to work* (Practitioner E).

One teaching assistant had recently moved up to year one, but had worked in early years for eight years, post-qualifying, and said:

> *Oh, cos there was nothing else I really wanted to do other than work with children, that's really, there wasn't really anything else that interested me apart from working with children. I don't know really, I've just always liked working with children, there was nothing else, I wanted*

more of a practical job. I couldn't sit at a desk at a computer all day and that's what I knew from the start really (Practitioner F).

The whole cohort of interviewees gave positive accounts of why they had selected to work in early years and what motivated them to remain (those for whom it was possible) working within the foundation stage of the school. The presentation of these comments illustrates the practitioners' attitudes towards pedagogy and why this was their chosen vocation, which in turn affects our attitude towards things.

4.3.4 Consistency

An additional and fundamental area to investigate within the schools was consistency. As discussed throughout this thesis, consistency is one of the central issues that practitioners face when following a rewards system within school. This was broken down into two different codes: consistency in a positive sense, where practitioners felt that their approach and rewarding in the area of extrinsic motivation had a positive effect and was carried out fairly among the children; and in a negative sense, where practitioners felt that the giving of rewards was not consistent and was therefore unfair at times and overlooked some children.

Ten practitioners were recorded referring to consistency in the giving of rewards in a negative sense and eight practitioners referred to it as positive. This first set of responses from three of the practitioners show how the giving of rewards can be inconsistent. Practitioners may give awards because another child has already received a reward that day or that another child is producing pleasing results in their schoolwork.

...but we try to do it fairly. And also, that's another thing we try to do with rewards is make sure, there are quiet children who always behave beautifully, and you don't notice (Practitioner G).

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You do get star of the week assemblies and things like that as well… and you think oh my goodness that child has done brilliant work and actually that child does brilliant work all the children practically. So, you kind of have to think, what has somebody else achieved, so you are sort of giving them selectively and stuff like that (Practitioner H)

It's caused a lot of problems in the past, with children that, at the end of the day they'd get their sticker as they walked out the door if they were a superstar. So, the ones that didn't get a sticker were quite upset. So, it does have quite a negative affect and then what, over to their parents? (Practitioner H).

When asked if the giving of rewards was monitored in some way and if so, how, a teacher in the foundation stage unit responded:

It's consistent with the children as they respond well to that. Erm, it is because we know which children need to complete their sticker charts. So, we would be aware of who hasn't hit their ten stickers to get a chart (Practitioner I)

Responding that she felt there was an obvious lack of consistency, a teaching assistant commented:

I could set a dojo and say erm, for sitting nicely on the carpet, where the teacher next door may say for coming in the classroom quietly. And then the children are confused, so that teacher might give me one for sitting nicely, but that's not one of the dojos, so how am I getting one now? So, I think the children get confused in regard to that (Practitioner D).

As discussed, there was a wide range of responses. Each practitioner gave their view on consistency in their individual settings through reflective accounts, some of which commented on the potential impact they felt this could have on children's well-being. This is another fundamental aspect of this research and some of the provided accounts from the interviewees assist in addressing part of the study aims, which is to

'explore the individual views, thoughts and beliefs of practitioners in the foundation stage in terms of the effects of extrinsic rewards upon children's learning and their well-being'.

4.3.5 Policies, training, and guidance

To provide evidence of the potential difficulties involved in trying to be consistent regarding the giving of extrinsic rewards in the foundation stage, it was helpful to investigate how the practitioners and the school underpin their practice, considering any policies, training, and guidance that there may be provided by the school to support this.

The whole interviewee cohort responded to and discussed the question, 'Is there a policy, procedure, guidance and/or training at your school to guide the staff with any reward system that you have got in place?' The practitioners mentioned:

> *No, I've never had any training. I would imagine the policy I would have read when I started [6 years ago]. We're given all the policies when we first start, but that's not a regular thing and I don't think I've ever done. I've had no training through the school though* (Practitioner G).

> *No, I'm afraid not. No, I haven't seen a policy on rewarding only in discipline. So, we have a discipline policy, but nothing rewarding. Since I started, I just picked up from the teachers, but I haven't been on any rewarding training* (Practitioner F).

> *Erm, so we follow the whole school behaviour management policy erm which is shared with all staff, it's available on our website erm so everyone can read it. It's the running document, erm but there's no, I wouldn't say there's any specific training on it. Erm, it's discussed and reviewed with the teachers, and I always feed back to my staff of what's said, but yeah* (Practitioner C).

One of the teaching assistant practitioners mentioned that she had received some training at her school on a specific reward method:

> *Yeah, so she came in, she was privately educated, and all sorts and she said, 'reward systems work really well, because they seem to like the children, just keep giving dojos, keep giving dojos, they'll just comply'. But it's interesting because most of the behaviour issues are in her class* (Practitioner D).

This was the only reference to any training on the giving of rewards in any of the schools. The remaining practitioners all mentioned that any rewards would be in the behaviour policy of the school. Overall, this suggested that there was no specific guidance documented anywhere that staff could be inducted with or refer to if they needed it. None of the staff, except for one teaching assistant, received any training to demonstrate how to use the reward systems that the schools had in place. Often, the staff commented that they would just join the class and learn as they went along, with one teaching assistant commenting:

> *No, there's no training, it kind of is up to the individual teacher, but the school does follow a similar behaviour chart* (Practitioner E).

4.3.6 Starting school – pressure on children, staff, age appropriateness and pressure on working parents

The age at which children are required to attend school in the UK was lowered to four in 2008 following a government review. Since the review, parents of summer-born children and children with SEND have been permitted to delay their place if their parents request it. This option was introduced in 2017 and was put in place to support these groups of children. However, if a child defers their foundation stage place for a year, when they do start school, it will be put into Year One, fully omitting the

foundation stage, where the structure and learning are more formal, and the ethos is not learning through play as it is in the foundation stage of primary school.

A question regarding school starting age was put to all of the practitioners: 'thinking about the age that children start school, what do you think of this and the expectations of them at that age, especially with things like the EYFSP?' This question aroused a variety of responses from practitioners. Many felt that the expectations of children were high and that there was also a lot of pressure on the staff to get them through the early learning goals. One of the practitioners felt that when the children start school at this age, it also affects them physically and the children get very tired, as one practitioner stated:

> *They do struggle, I think some of them at first but, yeah it doesn't take long for them to get into the routine and it's tiring, I think. I think from that point of view, we expect a lot from them in how young they are. But then you have gotta see it from the other side, the ones that you pressure, and they thrive. Some of them need that, some of them are more than ready to start* (Practitioner G).

Another practitioner felt that the children were very young to be starting school:

> *I actually think it's far too young for them to start school, erm a lot of pressure on them, especially this time of year, when they've got to meet erm, forgotten the word now. Just like their expectations as well as in a normal day, erm sitting on the carpet far too much, listening and yeah reaching those goals and not having enough time playing. Although, we do have a lot of free play, it's just not enough erm a lot is expected of them at that age* (Practitioner H).

The question also included what effect children starting school at this age had on the practitioners. Not only are the practitioners expected to support the children in reaching the early learning goals earlier, but goals have also been revised, with the children

needing to achieve even higher results to meet them. Eight of the practitioners gave their views and thoughts around this, with 11 references made to this code. One foundation stage leader remarked:

> *So, it's quite a pressure to get those children to the early learning goals at the end of reception. The key stage one curriculum has now been made harder, so if they do not get the early learning goals, they are left behind when they go into year one, so there's quite a pressure to get to a certain level at the end of reception and that does put pressure on the children and it puts pressure on us a little bit of the fun when you get into the summer term* (Practitioner A).

This teacher also went on to explain how they bring children in at lunchtime to do extra work with those who they feel are on the borderline of where they should be: "Because the government says they must get there" (Practitioner A).

On reflection, it would have been useful to ask if practitioners felt that the giving of extrinsic rewards fluctuated at all at times where they required an accelerated progression in the children's achievements as they worked towards the early learning goals. Only two of the 10 participants commented on the pressure that is put on parents when their children take up a place at school at this age. One of the practitioners referred to the pressures that are put on working parents in particular and that they perhaps did not have a choice but to send their child to school at this age:

> *But then there's pressure on parents cos they're trying to work or whatever, just make a living let alone, not many parents have the choice to say, 'I can afford to stay at home' that's the thing as well* (Practitioner B).

The other comment regarding parents was not linked to the pressure on parents, but to the perceived pressure on teachers by taking on responsibilities felt to be those of parents:

And I also feel as if in some ways erm teachers are taking more of a
parental role. You know a lot of this is not happening because more and
more parents are working, so (Practitioner I).

4.3.7 Well-being

For this aspect of the interview the practitioners were asked: 'Some research has suggested that extrinsic motivation can have a negative impact upon children's well-being and can actually demotivate them in their learning too, for example they may lose interest in doing something for its' own sake and in turn this can affect their perseverance, resilience, and confidence. Could you tell me about your thoughts around this?' In addition to this question, two other queries were put to the practitioners, 'Have you any experience of this', and 'Can you give me an example?'

On reflection, the question put to practitioners was quite in-depth and perhaps too lengthy. But it was felt that the question needed to be detailed to try and get as much information in this area as possible. The two additional queries were added so that practitioners thought about the subject of well-being in a holistic way.

Giving that well-being is one of the major research areas of this study, it was important to try and break it down into manageable and clear aspects to investigate and address what practitioners thought about the effects of extrinsic rewards on children's well-being. It was somewhat difficult to attempt to have well-being as a stand-alone code, therefore, well-being was given five sub-codes as detailed below.

4.3.7.1 Well-being – mental health

As one of the main aspects of the research project, well-being is an area where there is a lot of evidence to suggest that extrinsic motivation influences children's mental health (Kohn, 1999; Dweck, 2000; 2008; Engel, 2015; Sharp, 2002) To find out what the

practitioners felt about this, they were told that evidence and research has shown that the giving of extrinsic rewards can have a negative impact upon children's well-being and learning. They were not asked if they thought that the giving of rewards has an effect, they were asked what they thought about the fact that extrinsic rewards do negatively impact on well-being. A teaching assistant commented:

> *And I have noticed that erm, err I think you'd see a massive increase in mental health regarding children, so like I said about those parents who need those sticker rewards to praise the child and to say, 'oh yeah you can have your tablet tonight or whatever', those parents would just think they're not achieving. And I think that would increase, yeah mental health issues regarding the children think, yeah and I think that's bad enough as it is* (Practitioner D).

4.3.7.2 Well-being – losing interest, longevity, and meaninglessness

This was an area which considered whether the practitioners felt that the giving of extrinsic rewards was effective in holding the children's interest, whether it gave them gratification and self-worth and continued to do so throughout the child's time in the foundation stage class. Nine of the practitioners gave information here, with 32 references being made to this code. On losing interest in the giving of rewards by the end of the foundation stage one practitioner commented:

> *It has happened before that children just aren't bothered, and I will just substitute by trying to find something else to say. So even if it's as simple as 'you can stay in and help with the book bags at the end of the day', some children do lose interest, it doesn't work for all of them* (Practitioner G).

Another practitioner felt that the longevity of reward giving may diminish as the school had recently introduced a new reward system:

*And that's the worry I have about the dojo, because at the moment it's
quite fun it's quite new. But I just think when these children get to year
two, year three you know, is that still going to be, are they still going to
be motivated to still do it for a dojo? You know, and I think that's where
it comes back to the fact that an extrinsic motivation is only going to last
for as long as it captures those children* (Practitioner E).

4.3.7.3 Well-being – own sake

Six of the interviewees discussed the children doing something for its' own sake rather
than for some sort of reward. This area would also give insight into children's self-
development of intrinsic motivation and the important interpersonal qualities of positive
well-being, resilience, perseverance, and self-efficacy. One teaching assistant with over
20 years' experience working in early years discussed how she had observed some
children that she had worked with, which had motivated her to think that some children
are intrinsically motivated by what they do in school:

*So, there are certain children that I have worked with, and they have got
that mentality of just approaching something and being proud of what
they have achieved* (Practitioner C).

4.3.7.4 Well-being – expectancy

Some practitioners felt quite strongly when considering well-being and the expectancy
that children have regarding being rewarded extrinsically. This will be discussed in
greater detail in the findings chapter as the effect upon well-being provides a very
interesting and perhaps debatable area. A foundation stage lead gave her account of a
boy who she felt expects some sort of reward for doing or carrying out various things:

*If you don't reward him, he gets a bit miffed, so in terms of his
resilience, he's expecting to be rewarded when he's done something*

good and then in life it doesn't work like that, you know. I could see that there would be an issue with him, erm so we need to be careful that we don't reward him just for things that are run of the mill (Practitioner A).

4.3.7.5 Well-being – negative impact, competition, and impact on learning.

The question of extrinsic rewards and the potential negative impact was raised along with competition and the impact on children's learning. Practitioners discussed how children would 'measure' themselves against other children by how many stickers they had and how if rewards were only used when children get something right in their learning then, "I think it will have a negative impact" (Practitioner C). Discussing the potential impact on learning that using extrinsic motivation in the foundation stage can, this practitioner also commented:

> *Yeah, I think I do agree and that is why it's about being enthusiastic, it's about something that is important for that child's journey, erm because otherwise, why would they bother* (Practitioner C).

Another practitioner talked about parents' anxieties over assessments and how this is cascaded down to the children:

> *So, a couple of children get a bit wobbly cos their parents know and then get them ready for it and the parents panic that their children are where they want them to be, but that puts pressure on them in the classroom and when they do the SATS* (Practitioner I).

With the pending new baseline assessment, it is feasible that this could start to be the case in the foundation stage classrooms, because of the testing system, although the children here are almost three school years younger.

4.3.8 No rewards – parent's reactions, staff reactions, positive impact, negative impact

To gain an insight into how the practitioners felt about rewards a question was put to them to ask what they envisaged could be the potential impact if the school no longer partook in the giving of any tangible rewards. Observations of the participants' responses to this were interesting and produced mixed reaction. One practitioner, whose opinion was very much in favour of rewards, commented:

> *I definitely think they're a good thing. I think you've got something to fall back on and it gets them doing more and I kind of think it would be difficult not, I think you would automatically put something in place. I'm not sure what else you would use other than verbally saying and I think with stickers or that's just a little something extra* (Practitioner G).

Discussing how she felt the staff at the school would react, one teaching assistant remarked:

> *Our teachers would crumble [laughs] I'm sorry, but they would* (Practitioner D).

It was interesting to note some of the responses regarding how practitioners felt parents would react if there were no longer rewards in the school. Some practitioners felt that parents would not really be affected by this, and others felt strongly that they would:

> *I've never had parents say that they don't like the way we do reward systems and quite often we'll have parents go 'I've done that at home, it works really well, and they'll do the same as us'* (Practitioner G).

Eight of the 10 respondents mentioned parents and their thoughts around reward systems, with 11 references to this point. However, during a semi-structured interview with Practitioner A, a comment was made that provoked a very profound moment for this research. This is discussed more deeply in Chapter 5, but briefly, the practitioner's

school is situated in a deprived area of town, and she had been discussing a particular

boy in her group in one of the foundation stage classes. He lives alone with his mother

and the family are supported by a family worker. Practitioner A believes that rewards

are used too much, especially in motivating children to conform through their

behaviour, through talking about parents and her own thoughts around the subject she

reported that one of the parents, described as 'hard to reach', had a care plan target with

her child of spending two minutes with him per day. The practitioner described how she

would use the reward to show the parent when she was collecting her child as a way of

opening up communication between them and also to convey as a positive to the parent

as something that her child had achieved in school.

4.3.9 Gender

As mentioned earlier, only 1 (0.33%) practitioner from the 33 respondents said that she

felt that rewards worked better with boys. It was felt that this needed to be explored

more deeply in the interview. The practitioner described how she had come to this

answer:

> *Er, mm [laughs], I just noticed that they're more into wanting rewards*
> *than girls, girls are quite happy with a 'oh well done'. That's what I've*
> *noticed, they're quite easily satisfied. Whereas boys are more, they need*
> *more encouragement to do things. So, they prefer the rewards and the*
> *stickers because they need the extra boost. I've got a few girls that have*
> *erm, like refuse even from a reward. It's funny really, but that's how I've*
> *noticed, I've only got a few girls who I struggle with as I've got a big*
> *group of boys that need more rewarding things to do* (Practitioner I).

There was an expectancy that more practitioners would have a definitive opinion on

whether boys or girls responded better to rewards. The majority chose the answer

'works just as well with boys as with girls'. This could be because practitioners really

felt this, or they may have thought that this is the option that they ethically should be choose so as not to appear to have a gender bias.

As previously mentioned, although the neutral answer was selected by the practitioners, any account that was given regarding behaviour and rewards or rewards in general, boys were used as an example to demonstrate a scenario. It may be interesting to return to the original question with practitioners about how they felt rewards work best with boys or girls in light of the account that they gave regarding rewards and boys. If the only options to choose for this question were 'boys' or 'girls' rather than 'works just as well with both options', the data would have produced a very different result. However, this may not be ethical as it would force the practitioners to choose and decide where they may not have explicit thoughts in this area. Gender is an interesting area to explore in any respect, within extrinsic rewards gender is fascinating to research and the impact that it can have on both boys and girls.

The results of this data convey a clear response to the research question. It shows how all these areas are relevant to addressing the research question, what are early years practitioners' understanding and perceptions of extrinsic motivation, how it is used with children in the foundation stage and what are the perceived effects on their learning and well-being? The results of the data collection show how practitioners view extrinsic motivation as a tool to manage behaviour and stimulate outcomes. Breaking well-being down into five areas demonstrated in greater detail the understanding that practitioners had on the impact of extrinsic motivation on well-being. There are areas where practitioners felt that tangible methods of reward had a positive impact and other practitioners felt it was necessary, therefore this had to be divided to encompass both possible responses. It was necessary to section the results in this way in order that the codes could be used to show the practitioners' understanding holistically.

4.3.10 Conclusion of interview data

The interviews produced a wide variety of responses. The practitioners were passionate in their thoughts and beliefs and were very forthcoming. They were confident in discussing their school's approach to the giving of rewards, even if at times this appeared to conflict with their own personal views.

There were common threads among the answers, such as a frequent reference to behaviour when discussing giving rewards and the giving of rewards when children have produced something that is considered good or have excelled in their learning. This directly links back to the research question and addresses the query, what are early years practitioners' understanding and perceptions of extrinsic motivation, how it is used with children in the foundation stage and what are the perceived effects on their learning and well-being?

As mentioned earlier, one of the practitioner's responses gave a powerful reflective insight and deepened thinking around how extrinsic rewards in her school with one of her parents is used to support a mother and son to develop attachment within their relationship. However, this practitioner strongly conveyed in her views around the giving of extrinsic rewards that she did not favour them. Consideration of the giving of rewards in this way had not been overlooked, as it was not even thought about initially at the onset of this study.

The overall thoughts, values, and beliefs of the practitioners towards extrinsic motivation in schools and its effect on children's learning and well-being in the foundation stage will be discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 5: Discussion

5.1 Introduction

This research suggests that practitioners' understanding and perceptions of the effects of extrinsic motivation and how it is used in the foundation stage and its perceived effects on their learning and well-being is somewhat superficial, goal-driven, and instrumental. The practitioners do not hold a consistent view of why they use extrinsic motivation, in line with existing theory around the use of rewards and the detrimental effects they can have on children's learning and well-being, as outlined in the existing literature. Scholars (such as Dweck, 2000, 2006; Street; Hollinsey and Bethune, 2018; Kohn, 2011; Conkbayir, 2018; Engel, 2015) are consistent in their theoretical viewpoints that extrinsically motivating children diminishes their engagement and the involvement necessary for their learning and well-being,

The following discussion presents in more detail the views and beliefs of the practitioners included in this study and their understanding of the extrinsic motivation systems that they use with the children in their schools. The study involved an all-female cohort of early years practitioners ranging from 19 to over 60 years old, with qualifications ranging from level three to eight. They all worked in the foundation stage of primary schools. This study set out to explore the question: 'how is practitioners' understanding of extrinsic motivation used with children in the foundation stage and what is its' effects on their learning and well-being?' To address the aims of the study, 33 early years practitioners from at least 15 primary schools (as the questionnaires were anonymous only some of the practitioners gave their school name on their consent form) completed an online questionnaire. Ten of these practitioners were then chosen to take part in semi-structured interviews.

Results from the questionnaires and interview transcripts clearly show the practitioners views and thoughts around extrinsic motivation and convey both their professional and personal understandings around the subject as well as their practice. This discussion chapter will expand on the results shown in Chapter 4 and is structured around the conceptual framework presented in Chapter 2. The three main concepts that were used in this research will be considered again, based on the findings. The following diagram uses the original themes from the conceptual framework and shows how, through the research findings that have emerged through this research, these concepts have been re-considered and elaborated upon to create a new conceptual model that illuminates the original and expands on the theory that underpins it. In doing so it highlights the key contribution of this research, that in all the domains linked to extrinsic motivation, consistency is key.

Figure 13: Findings relating to the original concepts of the study

5.2. Consistency

Figure 13 was constructed using the original core concepts from Chapter 2. Re-using the conceptual framework in this way brings together and demonstrates the relationships of the conceptual framework and shows what this means theoretically, along with how these are interlinked. The research showed that, for each of the key concepts, consistency was crucial, in terms of giving rewards, frequency and type of reward, as well as in terms of the implications of consistency in policy and training and how a lack of consistency in reward giving comes from the practitioners' prior learning, which has real implications on how this affects children's well-being. The responses from the practitioners were rather mixed and demonstrated a need for streamlining of the procedure rewards giving in the foundation stage and links directly with the next aspect of this new model.

The lack of consistency around the role of policy, procedures, and training in the foundation stage with regards to motivation and the giving of rewards links directly with the practitioners' perceptions of extrinsic motivation. Moreover, as there is an absence of any central policy, procedure or training, there remains a great difficulty to achieve any consistency, as discussed, as the practitioners do not have any overarching guidelines to follow and therefore have a more individualised approach to rewarding the children.

This new model and these core interlinked themes are explored further in this chapter along with how this model can be used going forwards along with the implications for professional practice and development and proposed as a new strategy for the use of reward systems in the foundation stage to motivate children.

5.3 Consistency and the use of rewards in schools

It was interesting to see how many different rewards systems were used across the schools. In total, 20 different methods of rewarding children in the foundation stage were identified as being used across the schools in this study. Schools have the freedom to choose any reward system that they feel would work best. Some choices of reward system that are popular and used by a high number of schools: from the 33 responses received on the questionnaire, 26 early years practitioners said that stickers were used in their foundation class, certificates were mentioned by 23 practitioners, 18 of the foundation stage classes used a traffic light system as one of their extrinsic motivation systems, and 15 gave prizes as a way of rewarding the children in their class.

It was clear from the data collected that many of the practitioners were confident and satisfied with giving the rewards that they did. From the responses collected both from the questionnaires and the semi-structured interviews, some practitioners gave a definitive response about why they used extrinsic motivators but, contradictorily, they were also unsure about what other methods they could use. This suggests that while there was confidence in practice, there was little awareness of why they did what they did – especially in relation to why they do not adopt alternative options.

The most frequently given reason as to why rewards were given by practitioners was behaviour. A similar theme ran through foundation stage classes around behaviour – for example, the necessity for children to sit on the carpet and to sit nicely, which is interpreted as sitting still and not talking, especially when the leading adult is speaking. There is a vast amount of research that says children learn through play and play usually involves moving around. Gurian (2001, p.47) discusses how movement allows children to explore and discover through playing purposefully in their environment. However, early years and teaching staff across schools are insistent on carpet time

being a time in which learning takes on a very different process, where the children need to conform. Street (2015, p.5) notes that there is a common belief that children need to be sitting still to pay attention, but their learning is actually increased when they are active. The data collected in this study has a strong behavioural and self-regulation theme, with a recurring pattern coming through. It was also noticeable and worth mentioning again that each encounter of behaviour that was discussed where it would appear the child was not conventionally following the class expectations around how to behave; the example would always be featured around a boy. Although this is not the focus of this study, it was an aspect that was very apparent when analysing the questionnaire and interview data.

The behaviour of boys in the classroom is a well-researched area (Gurian, 2001; Baron-Cohen, 2003; Palmer, 2006; Hemery, 2005; Fine, 2010). McClure (2013, p.1) notes that boys are often berated for their behaviour and various pillars of the community, including teachers, police and politicians, judge boys' behaviour without trying to understand it. He adds that boys are often seen as the difficult choice in a classroom. This research appears to suggest that conforming to behavioural expectations is entrenched early on. The Ofsted education inspection framework (2022) states that there is a requirement for the provider to have high expectations of children's behaviour and conduct, and practitioners are not necessarily aware that this is what they are doing. However, the staff did not give examples where they felt that extrinsically rewarding boys supported them in their behaviour and therefore this would suggest that McClure (2013) was right when he observed that practitioners' understanding of giving rewards is insubstantial.

For some practitioners, there was a sense that the boys themselves both wanted and needed them more than the girls. Gendered differences were understood as the boys

needing more encouragement to do things and the rewards gave them an extra boost. It could be suggested that practitioners felt it was necessary to reward boys extrinsically to support or incentivise them in this area.

Examples of reward system that are sometimes used as a measure to penalize children for their behaviour were clear and raise the question of the consequences of engaging in forms of reinforcement without an underpinning understanding of child psychology. To illustrate, a child was placed on the traffic light system, ranging from gold to red, gold being the highest point and red depicting the lowest, the place which they had earned through positive means would be lowered to reflect what they had done wrong. In the classroom and in the child's eyes this would perhaps diminish any intrinsic motivation, self-efficacy and in turn their overall confidence and well-being; this is discussed in more detail later in this section. This raises the question of how children are motivated through these means and refers to the original research question around what are early years practitioners' understanding and perceptions of extrinsic motivation, how it is used with children in the foundation stage and what are the perceived effects on their learning and well-being? Clearly, understanding is limited, and the effects are only understood superficially. There is evidence available from DFE (2015), as reported in the literature review, that 9.8% of children and young people are suffering and living with a clinically diagnosed mental health illness, with a ratio of 2:1 of boys to girls.

5.4 Consistency and policies, procedures, and training on the use of reward systems

A specific policy or procedure concerned with reward systems was not found in any of the 33 schools involved in this research. Nor was there any recollection of any form of

training being given on the use of reward systems. This meant that what practitioners' chose to do and why, was open to interpretation and lacked consistency from practitioner to practitioner and across settings. This is interesting given the use of rewards and that rewards were mentioned in at least one of the schools' policies under 'Behaviour and exclusion policy'. The policy detailed how the school uses different systems, such as the traffic light system and 'key-time'. Achievement certificates are awarded weekly in the school assembly, with a maximum of three children being chosen; house points are awarded 'only one at a time, irrespective of the magnitude of the act that led to the work'. Class stickers are also given out; the guidance given around this is that 'staff may, if they wish, award their own stickers as an incentive in their own classroom'. Despite the focus on types of reward systems to use and how success – or not – could be captured, there is no rationale provided about how these techniques and outcomes link to ideas of child development or evidence for its effectiveness. This policy will be discussed further in the next section of the discussion around consistency generally.

This policy does not discuss how it will motivate the children in any other way other than to demonstrate desirable behaviour. Any mention of training or support in this school or any other school was absent. It can be suggested that staff did not have a central and streamlined approach to the overall delivery of extrinsic rewards or any awareness of why this could be problematic. Only one practitioner gave information on how staff operated within the school in terms of how to use the reward systems employed by the school. Again, the emphasis was on discipline and conforming and staff simply picked up on what the other staff were doing. There was no formal induction in place, or any training or mentoring. This means that the practice of extrinsic motivation is in danger of being open to interpretation, with a clear risk of

misinterpretation and inconsistent practice. This comes at the detriment to children through differing and confusing expectations from the practitioners who are responsible for them.

5.5 Consistency in giving rewards

Following on from the policies, procedures and training in foundation stage classes and the overall school, it has been repeatedly illustrated that there is a lack of consistency around the giving of extrinsic rewards to children. The data suggests that there is no central method, policy or procedure that supports this system and outlines how to operate it within early years classrooms, the responsibility is left to the individual teacher to deliver quality provision. The interviews suggested a strong theme regarding the importance of consistency in the giving of extrinsic rewards, with all 10 participants mentioning consistency as important. However, results show that the giving of rewards can be viewed as somewhat randomised, with some children being treated unfairly. One of the foundation stage practitioners reported that she felt the children liked the rewards they receive, but also felt that some of the children were overlooked. It was clear that the children who appeared to portray desirable behaviour regularly were not rewarded in the same way as children who did not adhere to the boundaries in place. In this instance, good behaviour is not rewarded and the children who usually conformed missed out.

This unsystematic way of reward giving to children, who are only around four years old, is important to understand as it could create a negative impact on the children's emotions as they try to understand why they have not received a reward, especially when a peer – who is repeatedly spoken to or on the red traffic light system – has received recognition for doing what they have been doing without prompting. As

discussed in Chapter 4, this ignites competition among the children, thus potentially affecting their relationships and emotional well-being. The bestowing of a reward on a child that is seemingly at the centre of disruption or non-conformity runs the risk of embedding the behaviour in the classroom. While it may incentivise the child to act in accordance with the class rules, the longevity of this impact is questionable. This can be seen when referring to the literature and experiments in the classroom, for example Greene and colleagues (1975) demonstrates a change in children's level of involvement in both quality of the product and time and effort spent on it when they are rewarded extrinsically.

Like aspects around the giving of rewards for behaviour, the giving of extrinsic motivators to these children who are seen to struggle with their behaviour, suggests that prizes or offerings are an almost grateful response for the child being compliant in the classroom. A question arises here around the primary function of the reward. In this research it appears that the extrinsic motivator is centred around what outcome is most to the practitioner's advantage. Discussing praising children, Kohn (2006, p.35) notes how when a teacher praises a child and starts with 'I' from the perspective of the teacher it sends a message that the child has conformed to what the teacher wants and is therefore approved of by the teacher – yet this does nothing for the child's well-being, self-esteem, or engagement in learning. This research by Kohn links back to the literature used in the study: it is direct and somewhat hard-hitting and practitioners in this research clearly stated that these ideas echo those found within the foundation stage of their school.

5.6 Consistency around practitioner's personal perceptions of extrinsic motivation

On reflection, whether extrinsic motivation has any impact is a very broad question and received some very mixed responses from practitioners in the foundation stage. Practitioners largely felt that using these motivational methods increased a child's efforts. Although most respondents reported that they feel children's attainment is improved when using reward systems, the views were still mixed and unsure about why this was the case from a pedagogic point of view. Similar results were collated around the question of children's efforts and whether practitioners believed that this was increased through the application of extrinsic motivational methods. However, findings also illustrated that there was some ambiguity and not everyone understood the subject.

The results show a lack of consistency in the beliefs of practitioners and highlight that not all practitioners believe rewards increase effort or attainment, but they were unsure why this was the case. Therefore, there is a concern that some practitioners may be continuing to award children despite having a belief system that does not endorse it as an effective method to motivate children. It should be acknowledged that this may affect the bestowing of prizes, certificates, and points from the practitioner to the children and in turn, this might affect the overall consistency of the system, conveying mixed messages to children as they continue to be awarded for behaviours and attainment from some practitioners, but not all. This may also contribute to affecting the children's overall well-being. Consistency is a major aspect in this research that directly affects children's well-being and their engagement in learning. Linking this back to the literature, from the very early classroom experiments of Lepper, Greene and Nisbett (1973) through to Street (2018), the contextual well-being

model provides direct evidence that consistency is key in fostering children's learning and well-being.

When considering what this means from the school's perspective, it is reasonable to claim that as there is no established policy, procedure, training, or induction process for the practitioners to follow, there is nothing in place to guide them in this reward giving system. How can they streamline a process when the process is so open to individual interpretation? Clearly, practitioners are neither supported nor trained in the practices they use.

In the pursuit of providing a balanced view of this area, it should be noted that all the schools demonstrated a supportive culture in their foundation stage classrooms and teams. In their questionnaire and interview responses, it could be seen that the practitioners respected their colleagues and that their passion for children was evident. Staff who responded that they thought rewards impacted on the children positively gave this response in a well-intentioned way. One of the practitioners spoke emotively about her love of working with the children and gave an account of what she thought when a child was rewarded if it was given in a meaningful way – when the teachers are respected then it is a successful method, especially when the child is awarded a prize at the end of achieving 10 gold awards. Although it can clearly be seen that the practitioner has a well-meaning attitude towards giving children points and prizes, it is worth considering whether such rewards appeased the practitioner more than the child. This is not to criticize or condemn this action, but to raise it as a possible consideration for further research. It does however support the statement at the beginning of this chapter in that practitioners' understanding and the effects of extrinsic motivation can be deemed somewhat superficial and that the act of bestowing rewards, as discussed in

the literature review, is detrimental to children's learning and well-being (Street, 2018; Holinsey, 2018; Conkbayir, 2015 Engel, 2015).

5.7 Other issues - starting school age and pressures on children, parents, and staff

One reason for investigating school starting age was to find out the thoughts of the foundation stage practitioners about regarding children starting school – currently set at four years old. School starting age changed in 2008, where previously children had started full-time education, the term following their fifth birthday. Data from the DFE (2018) discussed in the literature review illustrates how, of the 1,750 requests to defer their child's school place, 47% parents said that they felt their child would not be ready for school.

The intention was to look more deeply at whether the practitioners felt any pressure in addition to finding out their opinions about how this affected the children and their parents, if they believed that it did at all, both from a positive or negative perspective.

Results from the interviews showed that there was a fear of pressure on children when they start school, with concerns about having to get the children through the early learning goals by the end of the reception year – and having to conform to rules such as sitting on the carpet for lengthy periods, with not enough time to being engaged in free play and exploration. Only two of the practitioners mentioned parents in relation to starting school age, with two references made to practitioners' thoughts on working parents and the stress that is endured generally when their children start school. It was suggested there is additional pressure on working parents as the need to have their child in full-time education can be a deciding factor in their child attending due to childcare

issues, economic reasons, and their own emotional well-being. This was again featured in the DFE (2018) deferral of school place data, where 21% of parents pointed out the cost of childcare if they deferred their child's place. Practitioner comments suggested that pedagogy is less at the heart of why young children start school at the age they do and more about the childcare needs of parents. Many practitioners believe that support for working families and their young children is important. It would be interesting to look more deeply at the statistical data for parents deciding to offset or defer their child's place in terms of any pressure that they may feel; the viewpoint of the practitioner would also be interesting and may create an interesting, follow-up study.

Children starting school at this young age may have some bearing upon the practitioner being more inclined to give them rewards as a mark of their achievement, an incentive to improve and as a motivator to the next step and achievable outcomes that can be marked off on the early years foundation stage profile. The recently introduced baseline assessment may also be an additional contributory factor in terms of pressure being placed on the heads of schools, foundation stage leaders and the practitioners within these teams, which will then undoubtedly cascade down to the children. This may lead to a further increase in the extrinsic rewards that practitioners give in the foundation stage units and classes – to incentivise and motivate them in their learning so that their attainment levels fair well for their school in the assessments. Interestingly, these attainment levels are not connected to future education outcomes in future key stages. As the baseline assessment is a recently introduced evaluation and measurement of the children's four-year-old academic levels thus far, the first few cohorts of children may see a more rigorous approach to the lead up to the assessment. Alternatively, practitioners in the foundation stage may have the ethos and approach that the children may provide a better outcome in their assessment if the environment,

staff, and children are prepared and relaxed about the assessment, which may help to diminish a knock-on effect of unease and tension on the children. In turn this will produce an ambience of calm in their surroundings, enhancing the children's well-being and providing a positive learning environment in which the children can consolidate and flourish in a positive setting. As discussed in the literature review, to support the effect on children's well-being and address the research enquiry, Gray (2013, p.153) states:

> *...positive emotions broaden our perception and range of thought, which allows us to see what we didn't see before, put ideas together in new ways, experiment with new ways of behaving, and in these ways build our repertoire of knowledge, ideas and skills?*

Practitioners working in the foundation stage classrooms require a top-down approach in terms of support. Senior staff in schools, including the head, should be prepared to guide and support staff through their assessment processes with children so that they feel confident in what they are doing; this will assist in their approach and management of the assessments with children. This research suggest that such an approach is not currently happening.

5.8 Extrinsic motivation, giving rewards and parental expectations

Involving parents and their thoughts on extrinsic motivation – from the perception of the practitioner – formed part of the questionnaire and was also discussed in detail in one of the practitioner's semi-structured interviews. What practitioners feel about parental expectations for their children in terms of receiving rewards and motivation in this way is relevant to this enquiry. If this was a contributory factor, then this too may affect the practitioners' approach to awarding children for areas such as success in learning outcomes, displaying desirable behaviour, or toileting success. Many of the

practitioners felt that it was something that the parents expected, which again highlights a focus on external factors and not pedagogic concerns that shape practice.

It was found that parents expected and were enthusiastic about visual and tangible markers, such as stickers, that would indicate to them that their child was doing well. It may be that parents who look for whether their child is receiving rewards interpret this as confirmation of how their child is progressing in school. This conflates behaviour with learning, which is unhelpful and problematic from a pedagogic point of view. Practitioners have capacity and time constraints at the beginning and end of the day and their remit for communicating with parents may be somewhat limited. Therefore, parents – especially working parents who may not drop off their child at school in the morning or pick them up at the end of the day – may value or even rely on extrinsic indicators like stickers and certificates to understand how their child is doing in school.

Other insightful ideas were offered about the role of rewards and parents, and at least one parent saw that something tangible, like a visual reward, can be used as a positive way to promote communication and social and emotional development. That stickers were useful for parents to connect with their children was a surprising reason for validating a reward system. In this example, the suggestion of stickers being given for an abundance of reasons to reach out to parents and support them in connecting with their children was interesting and not something that is mentioned in the literature and so perhaps give a new perspective to this area.

Use of extrinsic motivators does not only provoke competitive actions among children, but parents can also become passionate about this too. Sticker charts and names against traffic lights can be seen by all who enter the classrooms. It is also possible to see names on boards on red traffic light ready to go into 'the book' at the

end of the day. These items could also be seen by parents – as could the children's targets and goals that they were working towards. This kind of display in the classroom-initiated comments from parents, not only about their own child, but about other children too, commenting on aspects such as which reading level they were on and how fantastic they were for being on the gold traffic light. These comments sometimes caused distress or even anger among the parents of other children. Questions around the benefits of this system and who it is really for need to be asked. The pedagogic value is unclear and remains questionable.

5.9 Removing rewards and potential effects on children, parents, and staff

Findings in this study revealed that some practitioners felt that the children themselves would need something extra if there were no rewards in the school, commenting that something should at least be in place to give to the children. Rewards need to be tangible rather than internal. One of the practitioners reported that she did not feel that to solely endorse the child verbally or in some other non-extrinsic way would be enough to commemorate what the child had done or produced, as she discussed giving them something additional to appraise the child. This could indicate that perhaps the practitioner did not feel confident in her efforts to praise the child in this way. The practitioner was demonstrating support of the reward giving scheme and did not appear to consider what the effects would be if it was no longer in place, whether this could see improvements within the school or have an adverse effect. It may pose a challenge to appear to go against a whole school system and staff may feel it is too big of a task to take on.

This investigation discovered one school that did not use extrinsic rewards. Attendance certificates and a prize that was awarded at the end of four weeks of perfect

attendance were the only tangible items that were given out. Even this was a little controversial, as the children were not really in control of their attendance at school. However, this was in an inner-city school situated in an area with high deprivation, so potentially the school was trying to incentivise parents through rewarding the children in this way. A practitioner in this school expressed fear that children thought that their efforts were inadequate or they themselves were somehow lacking. Again, this suggests that an emphasis on external validation rather than internal/intrinsic satisfaction is the default position in terms of what practitioners believe children need, failing to realise the effects that this can have on the children in terms of their intrinsic motivation. This was discussed in the literature review, which noted that Engel's (2016) observation that giving children rewards promotes the idea that an activity, task, or puzzle is not worth doing if there is no prize at the end of it.

5.10 Extrinsic motivational rewards and effects on well-being and learning

The results of this research have demonstrated a concern that the notion of sticker or prize has the potential to be seen by children as a form of validation. This is concerning as it is a practice that has the power to inflict possible emotional impairment on children. This is explored in the literature by Gray (2013), Dweck (2000), Holt (1990) and Kohn (1999) who provide evidence, case studies and theories which can be seen as underpinning the areas explored in this research.

In terms of well-being, the potential to affect children's mental health has been raised but this in response to having no rewards in school and not to children just not being successful. In addition, using extrinsic rewards to communicate with parents who may need additional support to engage with their children at home raises concerns about what is the result of a child who receives an unfavourable account of their day in

school? It was suggested that rewards were offered to children that were already advanced in their learning, to produce an even greater standard and so fair better for the school. This illustrates a focus that reinforces achievement – but it can also conversely reinforce a lack of success for those that do not get rewarded in this way.

This again brings to bear the question of consistency around practitioners' motivations for children's learning. It is clear from this research this is usually on the adult's agenda. When a bar has been set higher after just one day of receiving a reward, the child who is asked to do more may not receive anything for reproducing and expanding their efforts. This can pose challenges for a child's well-being. This could influence the child's efforts in the future as they become demotivated and disillusioned in their learning. Intrinsic motivation may also diminish as the activity that the child is undertaking is done to meet another individual's agenda and is not self-directed or independent learning that has come from the child's own desire to learn the skill or piece of schoolwork. This aspect is evidenced in the literature in work by Lepper, Greene and Nisbett (1973), Deci (1975), Kohn (1988), Donaldson (1978). In addition, Street (1991) illustrates why this aspect is vital in supporting children's learning and well-being. Street (1991) reported how he wants children to be in charge of their learning and to make healthy life choices, be creative and discover their passions. He goes on to say how critical this is for life-long intrinsic motivation and well-being.

5.11 Summary of discussion

It can be seen through this research, that there is no clear consensus about what the key purpose of extrinsic motivation is, how it works and why. What is clear though is that consistency matters across all the key underpinning domains shaping practice and, by adding this lens to the theoretical and conceptual framework, this thesis makes a

significant contribution to our understanding of the role of motivation, CPD and prior learning and well-being. Practitioners believe that there are adversarial, contributory factors in the awarding of extrinsic rewards in the foundation stage on children's learning and emotional well-being and yet they continue to engage in the practice. Many practitioners supported the giving of rewards and motivating children extrinsically, while others did not support the method. Responses seen in both the survey data and interviews included how practitioners felt that the giving of rewards both motivated children and supported in them conforming to class and teacher expectations, as well as motivating them to learn. Those who did not support rewarding engaged in the practice because of the top-down and hierarchical structure within the school, that they were compelled to follow. This was evident among practitioners at all levels, including teaching assistants, teachers, and foundation stage leads – qualification status had no bearing on what the practitioner felt or believed. Age and experience also had no significant impact on the practitioners' thoughts and beliefs.

However, this research has, by giving voice to practitioners, demonstrated a better understanding of practitioners' views, opinions and perceptions as well as the support and training they need. In this study it can be observed that some of the practitioners had different viewpoints focused on the school's systems that were in place around rewards and the methods used for intrinsically motivating children, in comparison to their own personal views around the subject, which was another original aim of the research.

In answering the research question around what are early years practitioners' understanding and perceptions of extrinsic motivation, how it is used with children and what are the perceived effects on their learning and well-being? The findings suggest that although they follow the school's behaviour policies and practices for reward

systems, some practitioners working within the foundation stage of schools do so with an internal personal conflict. Their own thoughts and belief systems about the motivating of children in their classes are compromised in favour of following the school's systems. While some practitioners may be in favour of the reward systems, they still believed that rewards and prizes were overused within their settings. Some said that they thought the use of rewards in the foundation stage was overused by practitioners to boost attainment and conform through their behaviour. In this research here is little if any sense of a pedagogic understanding or motivation in either the choice of reward or why they work.

As detailed in Chapter 2, the findings of this research reiterate concerns about the giving of rewards and their effects on children's learning and well-being. The notion that repeatedly awarding children gifts, prizes and points has a direct effect on their ability to develop and inhibits the intrinsic motivation of both their learning and their emotional well-being can be seen in the work of Lepper, Greene and Nisbett (1973), Deci (1975), Kohn (1988), Donaldson (1978), Sharp (2002), Dweck (2000 and 2008), Kohn (1999), Gray (2013), and Engel (2015).

It has been shown both in the literature and through the practitioners involved in this study that there is a strong belief that the continued presentation of tangible rewards to children supports a reduction in their intrinsic motivation and therefore interpersonal skills such as effort, self-efficacy, resilience, perseverance, risk taking, confidence and autonomy. Many scholars (such as Kohn, 2011; Dweck, 2000; Gray, 2013; Street, 2018) point out that this is the case. The child becomes reliant and dependent on a prize, reward, or point to motivate them to do better and eventually motivates them just to do anything. However, despite concerns shared among practitioners, rewards are still commonly used.

It was evident from the practitioners who were interviewed that their choice to work with children in the early years was just that – a choice. Many of them gave accounts of their passions for working with children in this age group and of how they found pleasure in being involved with children's growth and development. Most of the practitioners also said that they felt there was a lot of pressure on the children in the foundation stage to reach the early learning goals to complete the early years foundation stage profile before progressing into year one of school. It was apparent that there was real anguish among the practitioners over this and they displayed real concern about what the children were asked to achieve, and the pressure was felt by both the children and the practitioners.

As discussed, from the responses given, it was evident that all the practitioners at all levels of qualification and experience had a genuine caring attitude towards the provision that was received by the children and about their welfare. The practitioners could be seen to be well-intentioned in their giving of rewards and attempting to motivate and boost the children extrinsically. Their understanding of how children are affected by the presentation of awards, prizes and giving out individual certificates in front of the school is that most practitioners feel it is positive to reward children. Their understanding of extrinsically motivating children is that it motivates them to do more in terms of their learning; it makes them feel proud and supports them to do the right thing in their behaviour. These two secondary concepts were discussed both conceptually and theoretically in Chapter 2 and are necessary to give a holistic picture of the study. This is not informed by pedagogy but based on their 'common sense' understanding of why this may be so.

The findings of this study delivered a strong theme around consistency, although most of the practitioners said that they understood that the methods by which rewards

were given to children were both inconsistent and even sometimes viewed as unfair. The practitioners' understanding of the knock-on effects that this can have on children was that it affects them in terms of consistency: the children can become confused, upset and even resentful of their peers. The practitioners accept that rewards are given out to incentivise children to display appropriate behaviour or to commemorate when they had already done so, this was another of the key ideas used to develop the conceptual framework by looking at motivation. As seen in both the literature review and the results of this study, there appears to be a preoccupation for rewarding to incentivise children to show appropriate behaviour and to motivate them in terms of achieving desired learning outcomes. Practitioners felt that the giving of rewards can influence children's behaviour and to teach them to some extent about what is acceptable or is a boundary in the classroom.

As reported in Chapter 4, the behaviour policies within schools, also known as procedures for dealing with unwanted behaviour, are the only guidance that schools hold where rewards and the school's various methods and systems on extrinsically motivating the children are mentioned. There was no standalone policy found in any school on theory, ethos, delivery, or guidance about how and why rewards are given. Similarly, and importantly, staff also reported that they did not receive any training when they took up their posts in the foundation stage as practitioners, although there were two accounts when an external provider had come to the school and introduced the Do-Jo points system. However, there was no follow-up or monitoring of the training, moreover the training took place several years ago, with no refresher, thus there is a risk that the system may become diluted, especially as existing staff leave and new staff take up posts.

The practitioners were of the understanding that all children liked to receive rewards and other extrinsic motivators – only one practitioner discussed a child who did not like to be given a reward. Despite this collective belief, it was interesting to note that there were findings which revealed that towards the end of the foundation stage, the interest and enthusiasm of receiving a reward by a child had somewhat diminished and some of the practitioners felt that they were no longer as effective at potentially motivating the children both in their learning and behaviour. It would be interesting to investigate whether the foundation stage practitioners also felt that their own interest and enthusiasm for giving rewards had waned over the course of the school year too. To have carried out this research at the end of the children's time in the foundation stage may have produced contrasting results as the giving of extrinsic rewards is taken to be merely part of the routine or that the children are no longer rewarded for the efforts and attainments that they were when they first entered the foundation stage as these areas are now established and the goal posts are moved in terms of learning and acceptable conduct.

The findings have shown through the comments of the foundation stage practitioners taking part in this study that children certainly appear heightened in their efforts and emotions in striving to achieve a tangible award at the beginning of the foundation stage year. It cannot be known from this small study to what extent and whether this is a positive or an aspect for concern. The literature that has been used to support this research has guided this discussion and provides important links to answer the research question.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

6.1 Introduction

> *If school is a dog, our tests are its tail. And that tail is wagging hard. This wouldn't be a problem if the tests predicted something valuable. It might be worth the constraints the tests imposed on children and teachers if the scores predicted something important. Do they?* (Engel, 2015, p.176).

Engel makes a bold statement here regarding the continuous testing and assessment of children. She poses a question about the value and significance of carrying out tests and what they prove, from the perspective of their usefulness to the child. As discussed in the study, children in the foundation stage are to undergo a new baseline assessment test within the first six weeks of their formal school life. This connects to considerations of the usefulness and longevity that extrinsic reward methods produce and poses the question: do they work? And what are the effects if they are shown not to?

6.2 Research question, aims, and objectives

The intention of this research was to explore what early years practitioners working in the foundation stage of school understood were the effects of extrinsic motivation strategies on children's learning and emotional well-being. To obtain the views of practitioners, the study gave them the opportunity to voice their thoughts and belief systems around extrinsic motivation.

It was important to employ a suitable methodology that would encapsulate the practitioners' personal views and their professional working knowledge and thoughts to try and address the key aim of the research, which was as follows:

To explore what are early years practitioners' understanding and perceptions of extrinsic motivation, how it is used with children in the foundation stage and what are the perceived effects on their learning and well-being?

Using an embedded mixed methods approach to carry out the research proved to be a very suitable and fitting method. A survey allowed me to capture attitudes and thoughts while interviews enabled me to explore in more detail the responses of a range of individual practitioners. Kohn (1991) asked whether rewards motivate students and based on this research they do – they simply motivate students to get rewarded. Unfortunately, this is often at the expense of an interest in, or excellence at, whatever it is they are doing.

6.3 Key findings

In this section I outline the key findings of this study and the strong foundation that the literature provided that supported the exploration and emergence of these findings. Theories around learning, behaviour, and motivation – illustrated in Chapter 2 – were a very useful reference point throughout the study and relating findings critically to the literature proved vital in addressing the research question.

The main themes explored in answering the research questions involved children's well-being regarding the early age at which they start school, with consideration of early testing and achieving end of year goals. As discussed, children in the UK are required to start school the term following their fourth birthday, which could equate to a child taking up a place at school at 48 months old. The expectation of a child is that they will have met all the early learning goals which form part of the early years foundation stage profile. This means meeting and achieving all the goals in the seven areas of learning including: communication and language, physical development,

personal, social and emotional development and the specific areas of literacy, mathematics, understanding the world and expressive arts and design.

This is an important aspect of this research and addresses in part the research question around the effects on children's well-being and learning. As discussed in the literature chapter, at this very young age, children's learning and development is only in the preliminary stages and intrinsic motivation which should be the underlying interpersonal quality that influences how they are motivated. Children at this very young age should be encouraged to approach school tasks, experiences and activities with intrinsic momentum carrying them through. Already, due to traffic light systems and other extrinsic methods, the realms of their learning and well-being are being affected adversely, according to this research. The tasks in the foundation stage, primarily the baseline assessment and early learning goals, may be more achievable if children started school later or if the goals were set at a later stage in the child's school life, which has been shown in this research to put pressure on both children and practitioners.

Practitioners reported how it was also stressful and put them under undue pressure, especially when children start school and when the early years foundation stage profile has to be completed. It was clear in this research that children will sometimes remain inside when it is time for outdoor play in order to finish a task that will enable them to successfully meet the early learning goal for which they have needed extra support. There are concerns here regarding a focus on assessment rather than the time children need in an outdoor space for their well-being more holistically.

The act of rewarding children in the short-term may provide successful results in terms of the children conforming and progressing in their learning, but methods such as not having access to outdoors will undoubtedly affect their longevity – the benefits tend

to be short-term rather than long. Using tangible rewards did appear to decline towards the end of the foundation year, but it also appeared to coincide with either a decline in their learning or it being stilted in some way. Most of the practitioners agreed that they felt children were very young in the foundation stage and that a lot was expected of them; from basic skills like sitting on the carpet, through to what was requested of them in areas of literacy and numeracy. This raises important questions about the purpose of the foundation stage and what the ultimate aim of the time young children spends there really is. The research also suggests that to be effective, extrinsic rewards should be used minimally from the very beginning if it is to have any longer-term value, especially for areas in which they are predominantly used – learning and behaviour – which strongly emerged through this study.

The connection between behaviour and gender was another key finding that appeared throughout the data as a regular theme. Use of reward systems in the foundation stage as a behaviour modification strategy has been a very common thread throughout the research. It has been discussed that extrinsic rewards as conveyed by practitioners are used specially to motivate boys in demonstrating desirable social behaviour. This was despite a lack of a specific policy, practice or any training given to staff, at any level, on the giving of rewards or extrinsic motivation or the potential impact of treating boys and girls differently. Despite this, practitioners were expected to employ strategies that they saw demonstrated in practice and carry these out to the best of their ability. A key finding therefore related to a primary focus on behavioural control and gender in the use of extrinsic rewards.

Mention of rewards or reward strategies employed by the school could only be found in the behaviour policy of one school. Informally looking at a few of these policies, schools described what rewards they had in place and within this was an

account of how rewards, such as the traffic light system, were revoked if a child displayed unsuitable behaviour in the classroom. The research revealed that it created a sense of displeasure and frustration for practitioners, as they felt some of the children were simply being bribed. There was also a sense of submission, as if the reward system was something that they had to do to fit in; that it was an expectation and requirement of the school. This research supports previous literature which suggests that this is true for many schools. This research has highlighted that staff responsible for the foundation stage believe that rewards support children's attainment, effort and behaviour, even with the knowledge of the implications for longevity, but there has been no real argument put forward to change it. Thus, to support change, practitioners need to start raising any concerns that they have with the existing systems and take ownership of them. This supports another key finding around the lack of training or understanding of what is done and why in settings.

Throughout this research consistency has been a dominant theme. This is demonstrated and discussed in the literature, data analysis and findings of the study. In the earlier chapters, ideas around consistency about giving extrinsic rewards produced a mixed result among practitioners, which suggests cause for concern when a child cannot gauge or surmise that a reward is given differently, depending on which practitioner is awarding it, their attitudes to behaviour and learning and other contributing factors. Examples in the data demonstrated the differences in practitioners' approaches. Although this research is by no means generalisable, if the results presented reflected the national picture, it would be concerning. This finding again highlights the importance of the need for training and a clear understanding of what is practiced and why – this would help support consistency in terms of approaches to rewards.

6.4 Original contribution to knowledge

This study sought to garner an understanding of what a cohort of early years practitioners working in the foundation stage class of schools in the southeast of England understood were the effects of extrinsic motivation on children's learning and well-being.

In carrying out this research it is clear that there is a great deal of literature that has considered the impact of extrinsic motivation on young children. Absent in the literature is research that considers the individual who gives the reward, in terms of their thoughts and motivations. This clear gap is one that this research has contributed to filling by offering the perspectives of practitioners working in the foundation stage. The literature review of this study demonstrates, through empirical evidence, the effect that extrinsic motivational methods can have on children's learning and well-being. However, there has been no voice given to practitioners to explain their views on this. This research begins to address this important omission.

6.5 Implications of the research on professional development

It is clear from this research that there is a need to support practitioners and settings in both understanding and training in relation to the things they do. It should be a professional expectation that regular CPD be offered to ensure that practitioners get the opportunity to ask questions about what they do as well as to understand the rationale – and possible impact – of certain practices. Given the importance of the foundation stage, these measures should be a statutory expectation.

In terms of explicit ideas for professional practice, the following suggestions emerge as a result of this research:

- Explicit training on theories of child development should be mandatory for all staff working in the early years

- All settings should have a clear rationale in their policies and documentation that outlines what approach they take to rewarding and motivating children, and why.

- Information on rewards and motivations techniques used in settings should be shared with parents.

- Regular continuing professional development opportunities for reflection on practice in the area of supporting learning should be offered to all early years practitioners.

6.6 Limitations and further research

This research has raised further questions that relate to scrutinising the manufacturers of stickers and merit awards if schools are going to be steadfast about the idea that children benefit in some way through these rewards. For example, it is important to know whether there is any guidance that is issued with the stickers around the importance of ensuring children are also verbally praised or at least informed as to why they are receiving the award. In this way they could even endorse training, which would benefit them even more from a financial perspective as well as from the sale of the stickers and prizes. It is felt that some accountability lies here, in a system that is used heavily throughout schools with the potential to affect learning and well-being should at the very least be issued with some informed guidance.

More research would need to be carried out to find out where the main ethos for extrinsic motivation comes from within individual schools. As there is no specific documented policy within schools, it may be difficult to review or amend the practice.

It appears that the awarding of extrinsic motivators is simply something that has always been done and carried out in schools.

One of the limitations of the study is the sample size. It would have been interesting to see if a greater response to both the questionnaire and the semi-structured interviews would have brought about a variation in the data that was collated. Further research could consider regional and geographical differences, for example, rural versus urban settings, as well settings that are fee paying and those that are not could provide some interesting comparisons.

A prominent limitation of this research is that of the researcher's own personal and professional bias for the subject of extrinsic motivation. As an insider with professional interest in the research, there is the potential for missing important contextual data. A further limitation of this study was that it did not pose questions to the school which claimed that they did not partake in rewards. This would have been useful to probe a little deeper and emphasise the contrast with other schools through interviewing more of the practitioners at this setting.

6.7 Personal and professional development and reflections

Conducting this study has greatly improved my knowledge of the research process. The overall experience and the skills gained throughout the course of the study will help to build on existing knowledge of the subject.

It has been interesting, although at times overwhelming, looking at the available theory and literature around the subject. However, this has assisted with critical thinking and prioritising the origin of the research, in terms of authenticity, source, author and theory. Skill is required to ensure that authentic and reliable evidence and research is used to support findings. At the outset of this research, this was an area that

was both confusing and daunting. An abundance of journals and books required discipline in selecting useful and relevant theories that would support the research and build a catalogue of research to produce a strong literature review. This research has given me more experience in scrutinising the literature with a more investigative mindset and thus the ability to critique and look beyond what is given has been developed and served to encourage me to look more deeply and with more confidence.

The overall personal and professional impact that this programme of study has given me is invaluable. The impact that this has had on my professional practice has greatly enhanced my knowledge and awareness. Through extensive research it has been insightful to work with a different age group of children, in a different environment, and a different sector of the early years workforce.

Approaching the schools for permission and the detailed ethics involved, although an important prerequisite for conducting the research, was at times frustrating as re-drafting paperwork was sometimes an arduous task. On reflection, a better understanding of the importance of this aspect of research was gained and gave confidence that the research would be conducted appropriately and ethically while assuring the safety of all involved. At the outset of the research an element of anxiety was experienced as embarking on research in schools and with teachers felt a little unnerving; all previous research had been conducted in nurseries and pre-schools with early years practitioners who were not qualified beyond level four.

As discussed at the beginning of the research, I was uncertain how teachers would receive the research, particularly during the interview process. No notion of the teacher's views on the area of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation was known. This presented an advantage as having no prior knowledge of their perspectives prevented

any bias and subjectivity. In addition to this, it also made the interviews an interesting and deeply satisfying experience.

Conducting the interviews and listening to the views of others even when times their responses differed from the views held by the interviewer was another aspect of the research that has impacted on my professional practice. Listening to the viewpoints of others that may sometimes conflict with one's own is important for personal growth and development, promotes discussion and learning on all sides and enriches perspectives.

Appendices

Appendix A

Researcher:

Supervisor:

Mrs. Sheralee Virdi   Dr. Carol Fuller
Tel: xxxxxxxxxxx   Tel: xxxxxxxxxx
Email: xxxxxxxxx   Email: xxxxxxxxxx

Research Project: Extrinsic and Intrinsic Motivation

Practitioner Consent Form

I have received a copy of the information sheet and have read and understood the requirements of this research project.

Any queries that I may have, have been addressed.

Name of Practitioner:

Position:

Name of school:

Could you please delete as appropriate?

I consent to taking part in this research project by filling out the questionnaire:
Yes/No

I consent to my information being used anonymously for the purposes of the research:
Yes/No

I would be interested in participating in an audio-recorded interview:
Yes/No

Signed:
Date:
Appendix B

Researcher: **Supervisor:**
Mrs. Sheralee Virdi   Dr. Carol Fuller
Tel: Tel: 01183782662
Email: Email: c.l.fuller@reading.ac.uk

Appendix B

Research project: Extrinsic and Intrinsic motivation
Project Researcher: Mrs Sheralee Virdi

What is this study about?

This study forms part of my EdD doctoral thesis being carried out at the University of Reading. I am looking at the views, thoughts and beliefs of practitioners working in the foundation stage and what they feel about extrinsic rewards and the possible effects upon children's learning and their well-being. One of the aims is to give practitioners a voice to put across their individual viewpoints.

Why are you selected?

You have been selected as you work in the foundation stage and therefore will be using reward systems as a way of motivating children. You will have good knowledge and experience to be able to share.

Taking part
Taking part is purely optional. Also, if you do take part and later on decide that you no longer wish to, you can withdraw at any time by contacting me on the contact information given at the top of this sheet.

What happens if you do take part?

There will be a questionnaire about the range of reward systems, how these are used and what you think about them and their effects overall. There is a further opportunity to also take part in an interview

I am currently undertaking a qualification, the EdD at the University of Reading.

As part of an assignment which is looking at Educational Leadership and Management, I will be carrying out a piece of action research. My aim is to look at the role of the team leader in a workplace day nursery. I would specifically be interested in examining more closely the team leaders experience in becoming a team leader and how they presently view their role.

After holding an initial information meeting to discuss this, I will be asking team leaders if they would share some of their thoughts, feelings, and experiences around these areas.

There will be a short questionnaire and a follow up, recorded interview to discuss areas around the role of the team leader generally or personally. The questionnaire responses will be stored securely and transcripts from the interviews will be anonymised.

The research and/or findings will be shared with the tutors within the University of Reading. The tutor for this module is Dr. Alan Floyd. Dr. Floyd's details can be found at the top of this letter.

 Involvement within this project is on an absolute voluntary purpose. Should you wish to view the results any data and reports will be shared with you upon request. In addition to this you will remain involved as the research progresses, should you wish to do so. You will have the

right to censor, comment or withdraw any contributions that you have made. Your requests in this area will be respected at all times.

I am requesting permission to carry out this research and also impart my findings with the individuals referred to.

Could you please sign below to grant me with permission? If there are any queries, please approach me via my details given above.

Sincerely

Sheralee Virdi

Assignment Tutor:
Dr. Alan Floyd
c/o University of Reading
Reading
Berks

Appendix C

Exploring Extrinsic Motivation in the Foundation Stage

Overview

This online Survey is to explore practitioners perceptions of extrinsic motivation in the Foundation stage of school and its' impact upon learning and well-being.

Why we are consulting

To gain an understanding and give the practitioners a voice.

Introduction

1 Are you

Please select all that apply

☐ Male   ☐ Female   ☐ Prefer not to say

2 How old are you?

Please select only one item

○ 16-18   ○ 18-29   ○ 30-39   ○ 40-49   ○ 50-59   ○ 60+

3 How many years have you worked in Early Years?

Experience

Please select only one item

○ less than 1 year ○ 1-3 Years ○ 3-5 years ○ 5-10 years
○ 10-15 years ○ 20+ years

4 What is your current role within the school?

Please select all that apply

☐ Foundation Stage lead ☐ Teaching assistant ☐ Teacher
☐ Student ☐ Volunteer ☐ Other please state

(Required)

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5 How long have you worked at this school?

Experience

Please select only one item

○ Less than 1 year ○ 1-3 years ○ 3-5 years ○ 5-10 years
○ 10-15 years ○ 15-20 years ○ 20+ years

6 What is the size of your class?

size of class

Please select only one item

◯less than 15   ◯15-20   ◯20-25   ◯25-30   ◯30-35
◯35-40   ◯40+

7 Do you use reward systems in your class?

Please select all that apply

☐Yes   ☐No   ☐Sometimes   ☐Never   ☐Not sure

8 If you have answered 'Yes' or 'Sometimes', how often do you give rewards?

frequecy of reward giving

Please select only one item

◯Everyday   ◯Every few days   ◯Every week
◯Very occasionally

9 If rewards are given, are they given:

Please select only one item

◯Individually   ◯To the whole class   ◯Both

10 Are the children involved in the process? For example, voting for each other or a team, involved in setting tasks and/or targets, Choosing prizes and other rewards?

involvement of children

Please select only one item

◯ Yes　◯ No　◯ Not sure

11 Which reward methods are used?

Please select all that apply

☐ Stickers　☐ Prizes　☐ Traffic light system　☐ Certificates
☐ Beads in a jar　☐ Do Jo points　☐ Class trophy
☐ Extra golden time　☐ Activities　☐ Badges (Merit)
☐ Other (please specify below)

12 From question 11, which 3 reward methods are used most often?

frequecy of reward giving

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(Required)

Please select all that apply

☐ Stickers ☐ Prizes ☐ Traffic light system ☐ Certificates

☐ Beads in a jar ☐ Do Jo points ☐ Class trophy

☐ Extra golden time ☐ Activities ☐ Badges (merit)

☐ Other (please specify below)

13 In your workplace, how important do you think it is that children are rewarded?

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Please select only one item

◯ Very important ◯ Quite important ◯ Not very important
◯ Neither important or not important ◯ Not important at all

Please explain why you think this

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┌─────────────────────────────────────────────┐
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14 If rewards are given, what are they given for?

Please select all that apply

☐ Behaviour ☐ Attainment ☐ Attendance ☐ Effort
☐ Courtesy to others ☐ Self-care
☐ Other (please state below)

Reasons

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15 From the list above, which is the most frequently rewarded?

reasons for giving

Please select only one item

◯ Behaviour ◯ Attainment ◯ Attendance ◯ Effort

◯ Courtesy to others ◯ Self-care

◯ Other (please state below)

16 Do all of the children usually receive a reward?

(Required)

Please select all that apply

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Sometimes ☐ Not sure ☐ Other

Could you please give a brief explanantion for your answer?

(Required)

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Personal perceptions of Extrinsic and Intrinsic motivation.

This final section of the survey asks you to give your own personal views and beliefs around Extrinsic and Intrinsic motivation.

Extrinsic Motivation is the giving of tangible rewards with the aim of motivating or commemorating an outcome. This method is often used as an incentive or reward for a variety of things for example; attainment, behaviour and effort.

Intrinsic motivation is where activities, challenges and experiences are carried out for its own sake, without the potential or giving of an external reward. The motivation and satisfaction comes from involvement in the activity and/or experience.

Your responses in this next section does not appertain to your day to day involvement in your employment, but your thoughts on an individual basis.

17 In your view, does rewarding children:

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Not sure
Improve their attainment *Please select only one item*	O	O	O	O	O
Increases their efforts *Please select only one item*	O	O	O	O	O
Is consistent amongst all children *Please select only one item*	O	O	O	O	O

18 Do you think that extrinsic rewards has any affect upon children's well-being?

(Required)

Please select all that apply

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ A little ☐ Not sure

Could you please explain your answer? (Required)

[   ]

19 Do you think that rewards work better:

	Strongly agree	Agree	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Not sure
With boys *Please select only one item*	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
With girls *Please select only one item*	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Just as well with boys and girls *Please select only one item*	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Gender makes no difference *Please select only one item*	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

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20 Do you feel that rewarding children is something that Ofsted expects?

Please select all that apply

☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ Not sure

Could you please explain your answer

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21 In your opinion, is rewarding children in school expected by parents?

Please select all that apply

☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ Not sure

Could you please explain your answer (Required)

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22 Do you think reward systems are:

Rewards usage

Please select only one item

◯ Used too much   ◯ Used about the right amount
◯ Used too little

Rewards usage

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23 In your opinion, what are the advantages and
disadvantages of using reward systems?

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Appendix D

Exploring intrinsic motivation at the foundation stage

<u>**Questions for Interview**</u>

1. Could you please briefly tell me about your career journey in early years?

    Prompts: Roles and responsibilities

    Reasons for choosing early years

    Attitude (Caring/Education)

    Motivation

2. Thinking about the age that children start school, what do you think of this and the expectations of children at this age? For example, the EYFSP?

    Prompts: Pressure on the children

    Pressure on staff

    Readiness for school

3. Turning to the main subject of the study, extrinsic motivation, what are your own thoughts on the use of rewards in the Foundation stage generally?

    a. Prompts:

    is there a policy, procedure, guidance and/or training to guide the staff with any reward system in place?

    Competition and well-being

    Children doing something for its own sake or for a reward.

    Individual and specific praise

    Control measure/ positive incentive/both

    Consistency across the school

    Individual staff using their own methods

    Judgements and decisions

4. If no extrinsic rewards are used in your current workplace, why is that?

> Prompts: What do you use instead?
>
> Could it improve things?
>
> Or would it have a negative impact?
>
> How would it be received by staff?
>
> What might the reactions of the parents be?

5. Some research has suggested that extrinsic motivation can have a negative impact upon children's well-being and can demotivate them in their learning too, for example, they may lose interest in doing something for its own sake and in turn this can affect their perseverance, resilience and confidence. Could you tell me your thoughts around this?

   a. Have any experience of this?

   b. Can you give me an example?

6. Summarising the meeting and the discussion around: starting school age and expectations, policies, procedures and training, Use of rewards in the Foundation stage and well-being, is there anything else you would like to add?

Appendix E

Interview transcript 5

Date: 17:05:18

Time: 00:14:06

E: Interviewee

SV: Interviewer

SV: Right E, I've got eight questions, the last one's not really a question, it's more of a summary of the meeting. Erm it's just for you to answer the questions in any way you want to. If you want any more information, or something you don't understand, tell me and I'll go back to the question. Alright?

E: Yep

SV: Alright, so the first one's a bit of an ice breaker, so could you, please would you tell me about your career journey in Early years?

E: So, I started in a nursery for eight years and did my level three, level two and level three in Early years and then I went on to work in a school and I briefly worked in foundation stage and now I'm in year one.

SV: OK, and what about roles and responsibilities?

E: So, I do group work with children now in year one, erm I do a literacy lesson, phonics lesson and a maths lesson. So that's with the lowers of the class and that's my main responsibility and then I do it, it's called precision in the afternoon, where I take children out and do words, erm high frequency words and that's about it.

SV: Ok, cool and what was your reason for choosing early years? Why did you want to get into it? Work with young children?

E: Oh, cos there was nothing else I really wanted to do other than work with children, that's really, there wasn't anything else that interested me apart from working with children.

SV: What, what?

E: I don't know really, I've just always liked working with children, there was nothing else, I wanted more of a practical job. I couldn't sit at a desk or a computer all day and that's what I knew from the start really.

SV: Thank you, now I'm thinking about the age the children start school.

E: Yeah.

SV: Erm as you know they start at four, what do you think about the expectations of them at that age and erm for example they have to complete or reach the Early learning goals and things like that?

E: They have high expectations, like I think some of it is a bit too high, well most of it actually. They do expect a lot from such a young age now. Erm, most children don't get the expected, well that's what I've realised from being in school, I didn't actually realise how high they expect, even into year one, you have to catch, they say you have to catch them young for them to basically pass the year six SATS. If you don't catch them young throughout the school, then they've got not much chance as sad as it sounds, but it's too high of expectations.

SV: Mm

E: For their age.

SV: What do you think about the pressure on the children themselves and the pressure on staff to get them there and then there's readiness for school and things like that?

E: It is a lot of pressure, erm. I think the year two SATS is not as much pressure as the year six. Cos the teachers, the children don't know they're sitting SATS, well that's in my school anyway. They make it so it's Victorian days, when they do their papers and things, so we set it back to Victorians and pretend it's that and not many of them cotton on, unless the parents know. By which we don't say to the parents when the SATS are, but it goes around when it is.

SV: Mm, yeah

E: So, a couple of children get a bit wobbly cos their parents know and then get them ready for it and the parents panic that their children are where they want them to be, but that puts pressure on them in the classroom and when they do the SATS.

SV: Mm

E: But I do think it's an unfair way to assess the children.

SV: Mm

E: Cos if you're not confident or anything, you've got this paper in front of you and we know that the children might know it, but as soon as you're in that environment to do a test, you don't get the best out of the children.

SV: Yeah

E: So, I just think it's unfair.

SV: Yeah. Ok, turning to the main subject.

E: Yeah.

SV: Of my study, which is extrinsic motivation.

E: Yeah (laughs)

SV: Erm, I did put blurb about it in the questionnaire.

(both laugh).

SV: Just really rewarding children from outside, giving them something.

E: Yeah

SV: Is there a policy, procedure, training and/or guidance for the staff at your school for any reward system that you have got in place?

E: No, I'm afraid not.

SV: Is there not?

E: (Laughs) No. I haven't seen a policy on rewarding, only in discipline.

SV: Ok

E: So, we have a discipline policy, but nothing rewarding. Since I started, I just picked up what the others do and carry that through. So, I just picked up from the teachers, but I haven't been on any rewarding training.

SV: Ok, ok. Alright, lovely. Thank you. Erm ok, so turning to your own thoughts about rewards and things aside from the school, what are your own thoughts of the use of the rewards in the foundation stage, so young children really that have just started school. Erm thinking about things like the competition between children and their well-being, erm and children doing something for its own sake, so having a go at something, rather than like doing it to get something out of it.

E: Yeah

SV: Doing it is like getting gratification out of it. Erm, and using it as a control measure, for say like behaviour or as a positive incentive.

E: Yeah

SV: You don't have to answer all of those things.

E: Yeah, no it's fine.

SV: Just to be thinking about those things.

E: Mm, well there is a lot of competition with the younger ones, I find, cos there are a few who have a wall chart and things and they look at each other's reward charts and be like 'oh they've got more stickers than me'. Erm and they might have it for different reasons, but the children won't understand that they've got it for different reasons. Erm, with group work, if you're doing group with the children and they all get a sticker, it's fine. But it's quite hard to then if you're in a group and if you say 'if you do this then we've got some lovely stickers there' and one child doesn't do so well, I just find it hard to, how do you not give that child any sticker?

SV: Mm

E: So, I just, mm it's hard. I don't know, I just follow what the school does.

SV: Mm but what do you think yourself?

E: It's nice that they get rewards and things, but not, I don't think stickers are the answer really.

SV: Ok

E: Just because, just say that they lose it and then they come and say, 'I want another sticker I've lost it' and things like that.

SV: What happens if that happens?

E: They get another sticker.

SV: Alright, ok, oh good.

E: Yeah. Well, that's what I've done if they've lost it. Erm, a couple of teachers have got like charts they go onto the charts they don't really lose them, but if you're doing group work, then I just give them to them, but it's not. I find verbal praise works a little bit better or different reward. Like, oh if we have a behaviour problem with a child then if they're rewarded to go on the computer for 10 minutes after, that works better than having a sticker.

 SV: Ok

E: Because, they'll be like, 'I don't want a sticker, it's boring.

SV: Yeah

E: Well, they get used to it and they don't want that anymore and they'll be like 'oh it's just a sticker so I'll play up'.

SV: Yeah

E: Sort of thing, so I think, I don't know or a fun activity instead, to do after work better I find with the behaviour.

SV: Yeah

E: But if erm the children, the children that you know get on with it every day and have the stickers and everything, it works for them, because they're quite happy with just a sticker, but I find with behaviour children, it's 'sticker?'. They don't really care as much.

SV: Mm mm

E: Or if they lose it, it's a massive problem.

SV: Ok. On the questionnaire that you kindly completed.

E: Yeah

SV: Thank you for that, erm on question 22, you indicated that you thought that rewards worked better with boys.

E: Yeah

SV: Err can you just expand on it a bit?

E: Er, mm (laughs) I just noticed that they're, they are more into wanting rewards than girls, girls are quite happy with 'oh well done'. That's what I've just noticed, they're quite easily satisfied. Whereas boys are more, they need more encouragement to do things. So they prefer the rewards and the stickers, because they need the extra boost. I've only had very few girls that have erm, like refuse even from a reward.

SV: Mm

E: It's a bit funny really, but that's how I've noticed, I've only got a few girls that I struggle with as I've got a big group of boys that need more rewarding things to do.

SV: Alright, ok

E: A bit like bribery, it sounds really bad, when you think about it. I said, after I did the questionnaire, it was an eye opener.

SV: Yeah

E: I was like oh, like and it does make you really think about what you do.

SV: Mm good.

E: Like I said that to K, it made us think, wow actually. I mean I went back and changed some answers.

SV: Mm, well until you stop and think about things, you don't think about things.

E: Yeah, no, well I just do what the others do.

SV: Mm

E: Basically, yeah.

SV: Ok, this is for erm, well you answer it how you feel. If no rewards were used in the school.

E: Mm

SV: Do you think this would have an effect upon the children. Thinking about little prompts I've got here, what could take its place? I mean you have already said a couple of things that could take its place, could it improve things?

E: Mm

SV: Or would it have a negative impact? How would it be received by staff do you think and what might the reactions of the parents be? Again, it's just things to think about, you don't have to answer all of those in there.

E: No, but I think if it changed, we started from foundation, they don't know any different, they won't know. If there's no stickers anywhere, then they won't expect a sticker, it's what we have they expect. So, I think if we changed it, starting from foundation, the children that already know about it, they might understand that if it's changing, but from foundation you could easily change it, then parents wouldn't know any different.

SV: Mm

E: And maybe reward with different fun activities instead of stickers.

SV: Mm

E: I think if the parents know that and have a policy to read.

SV: Mm mm

E: That, that's what's happening, I think you wouldn't have any problems. I think it's if you change and don't tell them or suddenly take the stickers away.

SV: Yeah

E: That's a bit different.

SV: Yeah

E: And I think they might ask, 'well why haven't we got a sticker today then?'.

SV: Yeah

E: But I think, if you have a different policy from the beginning, for the new set of children from September, then they won't know any different.

SV: Do you think it could improve things then? Or do you think it could have a negative or?

E: I don't really know; I think it might. It might make more, a variety of activities come out of it as well for the children. Instead of a sticker.

SV: Mm mm. that's interesting.

E: And say well done, see you later.

SV: Yeah, yeah

E: It is a bit like that, conveyor belt.

SV: Yeah, yeah.

E: I don't know, until it happens, sort of thing, which I don't think it will.

SV: Yeah, yeah. Ok, lovely, thank you. This is a bit of a wordy one I'm afraid, some research has suggested that this kind of motivation can have a negative impact upon children's well-being and can actually demotivate them in their learning too for example they might lose interest, erm in doing something for its own sake. So, they'll only do it if they kinda know there's a reward or erm or even if there wasn't a reward, they lose interest in approaching activities in, not in the same way, erm and in turn this can affect their perseverance, resilience and confidence. Erm, can you tell me what your thoughts are around this and if you've got any experience of it and if you have can you give me an example?

E: Erm, I think some children expect a reward, so if there's no reward at the end, they just won't bother basically and then quite a lot of the children will come to you and be like 'erm 'so what are we doing after this? So if I do this what happens?'.

SV: Ok

E: And that actually makes you think like 'oh ok'. So, they're only doing it for the reward at the end erm, so their well-being, you're not getting the best out of them either and they'll rush to get a reward.

SV: Mm

E: They'll rush cos they know what's at the end, so I don't think you get the best out of them, if they have got that reward at the end.

SV: Yeah

E: Yeah, they just go for the reward, not, but I think, I don't think, I think if it wasn't there, you'd get more time out of them as well, cos they won't be rushing through to get to that sticker or reward, computer.

SV: Right, yeah, lovely.

E: And if it's not there, Huh. Cos they're used to it, they're used to having that there.

SV: Yeah, yeah

E: Sometimes it's refusal, they won't do anything.

SV: Gosh

E: With behaviour children at school, that's what I've noticed anyway.

SV: Yeah, gosh that's interesting. Ok, last one.

E: Ok (Laughs)

SV: It's not even a question. Summarising the meeting and the discussion around: starting school age and expectations, policies, procedures and training, the use of rewards in the foundation stage and well-being, is there anything else you would like to add? That you can think of.

E: Mm no I don't think so, just that it would be a good idea to have a policy at the school, so all the staff know what to do from the beginning and then maybe have some training on it and all of us link together that's the best, cos we've done that for discipline and come up with something. But we all reward differently, we all have some kind of stickers or activity, but we all do it differently from all the TAs and teachers, so, I don't know.

SV: Lovely, thank you very much.

E: That's alright

Appendix F

Code Summary

INTERVIEW ANALYSIS
18/10/2018 11:27 Practitioner D

File Type	Number of Files	Number of Coding References	Number of Words Coded	Number of Paragraphs Coded	Duration Coded

Node

Nickname:	**Nodes\\Behaviour and control**				
Classification:					
Aggregated:	**No**				
Document	10	67	7,332	167	

Nickname:	**Nodes\\Gender**				
Classification:					
Aggregated:	**No**				
Document	2	4	171	4	

Nickname:	**Nodes\\Motivation in EY,caring att**				
Classification:					
Aggregated:	**No**				
Document	10	61	2,095	61	

Nickname:	**Nodes\\Negative consistency**				
Classification:					
Aggregated:	**No**				
Document	10	58	2,747	58	

File Type	Number of Files	Number of Coding References	Number of Words Coded	Number of Paragraphs Coded	Duration Coded

Nickname: **Nodes\\No rewards negative impact**

Classification:

Aggregated: **No**

Document	4	9	647	9	

Nickname: **Nodes\\No rewards, parents reactions**

Classification:

Aggregated: **No**

Document	8	11	513	12	

Nickname: **Nodes\\No rewards, positive**

Classification:

Aggregated: **No**

Document	6	8	296	8	

Nickname: **Nodes\\No rewards, staff reactions**

Classification:

Aggregated: **No**

Document	5	9	389	9	

Nickname:	Nodes\\Own thoughts, negative, unnecessary				
Classification:					
Aggregated:	No				
Document	3	17	700	17	

File Type	Number of Files	Number of Coding References	Number of Words Coded	Number of Paragraphs Coded	Duration Coded
Nickname:	**Nodes\\Own thoughts, positive motivator**				
Classification:					
Aggregated:	**No**				
Document	7	29	1,330	29	
Nickname:	**Nodes\\Policies, training and guidance**				
Classification:					
Aggregated:	**No**				
Document	10	36	1,205	38	
Nickname:	**Nodes\\Positive consistency, individual specific**				
Classification:					
Aggregated:	**No**				
Document	8	25	1,024	25	

Nickname: **Nodes\\Starting school, age and stage appropriate**

Classification:

Aggregated: **No**

Document	8	21	828	23

Nickname: **Nodes\\Starting school, pressure on staff**

Classification:

Aggregated: **No**

Document	5	11	440	11

Reports\\Code Summary Report

File Type	Number of Files	Number of Coding References	Number of Words Coded	Number of Paragraphs Coded	Duration Coded

Nickname: **Nodes\\Starting school, working parents' pressure**

Classification:

Aggregated: **No**

Document	2	2	57	2

Nickname: **Nodes\\Starting school-high expectations, pressure on children**

Classification:

Aggregated: **No**

Document	10	31	6,873	159

Nickname: Nodes\\Well being impact on learning

Classification:

Aggregated: No

Document	5	19	882	21

Nickname: Nodes\\Wellbeing mental and emotional health

Classification:

Aggregated: No

Document	6	34	1,598	34

Nickname: Nodes\\Wellbeing, expectancy

Classification:

Aggregated: No

Document	6	13	631	15

File Type	Number of Files	Number of Coding References	Number of Words Coded	Number of Paragraphs Coded	Duration Coded

Nickname: Nodes\\Wellbeing, expectancy\Wellbeing, lose interest and longevity

Classification:

Aggregated: No

Document	2	6	298	6

Nickname:	Nodes\\well-being, lose interest, longevity, meaningless			
Classification:				
Aggregated:	No			
Document	7	26	1,079	26

Nickname:	Nodes\\Well being, negative impact			
Classification:				
Aggregated:	No			
Document	8	22	1,166	22

Nickname:	Nodes\\Wellbeing, negative impact\well-being, competition			
Classification:				
Aggregated:	No			
Document	1	2	133	2

Nickname:	Nodes\\Wellbeing, negative impact\well-being, impact on learning.			
Classification:				
Aggregated:	No			
Document	1	1	53	1

File Type	Number of Files	Number of Coding References	Number of Words Coded	Number of Paragraphs Coded	Duration Coded

Nickname:	Nodes\\Wellbeing, own sake			
Classification:				
Aggregated:	No			
Document	6	18	711	18

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