Do boys need 'Lads and Dads'? Interventions to increase resilience in the face of educational failure

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Introduction

The question of boys' achievement and behaviour has occupied a dominant position in the discourses of schooling and teacher education for the last two decades. It might be imagined that after two decade's intense scrutiny and debate, some resolution and closure to this particular argument might be in sight, but this appears not to be the case. The issue continues to attract the attentions of researchers (Jackson, 2010; Martino & Rezai Rashti, 2010; Francis *et al*, 2010; Zyngier, 2009; Mills *et al* 2008; Cushman, 2008, Skelton, 2001, for example). The UK's Department for Education (DfE) maintains a Gender and Achievement website with a significant focus on "what works" for boys and the popular media continues to generate hype around the issue through programmes such as *Gareth Malone's Extraordinary School for Boys*. The programme attracted a large volume of web blogs by members of the public critical of schools and female teachers, blaming them for the failure of boys and celebrating folk hero Gareth as a male role model. Moreover, recent recruitment of practising primary and secondary school teachers as Teacher Research Associates at the author's institution has coincidentally and unintentionally fielded eight project proposals concerned with boys' education out of a possible eleven. A recent article in the Education Guardian used humour to address the media tendency to homogenise and stereotype boys following a research discovery that (all) girls will achieve more highly than (all) boys if the classroom is temperature is warmer (Hanson, 2011).

Why so much attention should be paid to boys is a matter which itself demands the attention of researchers. The fact that girls, on average, continue to outperform boys in the majority of published exams and tests is no longer adequate to explain the continuing level of interest. Quinn et al (2006) have suggested that academics are themselves partially to blame, having set up discourses which unwittingly valourise hegemonic masculinity. It is certainly true that ongoing tensions between feminist and pro-feminist scholars on the one hand and supporters of the "boy turn" (Weaver-Hightower, 2003) or recuperative masculinity politics (Mills *et al*, 2007) have kept boys' issues to the fore. Concerns about fathering and the ongoing government campaigns in the UK and Australia to boost the number of male entrants to teaching also contribute and have attracted the attentions of researchers such as Thornton & Bricheno (2007), Hutchins et al (2007) Ashley & Lee (2003), Younger & Warrington (2006) or Skelton (2001) who have produced evidence that male teachers are not the role models for boys imagined by government ministers.

Concern about workforce gender imbalance has spread from teaching to other related professions. A report by the organisation Youth Work Now on gender imbalances in youth work appeared to echo concerns with feminisation in teaching. In this report 27 out of 42 universities offering youth worker training responded to a survey through which it was identified that 1129 women were training as youth workers as against 601 men, a trend said

to be worsening. Similar reasons for the lack of male entrants to teaching, including fear of paedophilia, were given. A local authority head of youth service was quoted as saying "Boys in particular tend to lack strong role models in their lives. Sometimes all they have are bossy women telling them what to do". Such is the background for an investigation of a "lads and dads" strategy to raise boys' attainment in an area of social deprivation in the North of England.

Every Male Matters

Every Male Matters is the title of a project that has embraced an entire town. Frantonvale (pseudonym) is a self contained new town established by a development corporation in 1964 in order to rehouse slum populations displaced from a large, North Western industrial city. The town is well laid out with a good provision of scenic open spaces and good motorway access, but blighted by poor quality and now crumbling 1960s style mass housing. Much was promised about social regeneration and new employment opportunities, but few of the promises were kept and the town has become the victim of a reputation every bit as damaging as the slum areas it replaced. Reasons for this include the failure to provide the levels of industrial employment that were promised and a failure to provide accessible public transport links. Young people are thus unable to travel and denied opportunities available to their counterparts in nearby market towns served by good metro rail links to the region's main cities.

Much of such industrial employment as was established early on left the town during the recession of the 1970s and attempts to bring it back subsequently have met with limited success and further setbacks. According to a 1998 Hansard report, the unemployment rate for Frantonvale was 34.3%, with male unemployment at 38%, described as "staggering" (Hansard, 1998). Current employment is said to be mainly Health & Social Work (24.5%), followed by Wholesale & Retail (16.1%), neither of which is an occupation suited to males displaced from the background of a traditional industrial city. The claimant rate for the government Job Seeker's allowance during 2009 was more than three times the national average, running at 12.6% in one ward and 9.7% in another, according to the local MP (Sudworth, 2009).

The population of Frantonvale is approximately 46 000, just over half the planned 80 000 envisaged by the development corporation. There are nineteen primary schools and three secondary schools within its boundaries. The schools are fundamentally committed to raising the achievement and aspiration of their pupils and work co-operatively toward this aim. A co-operative known by the acronym SHARE was formed and funded initially by the schools pooling grant money awarded by the previous New Labour government under a £1b initiative known as extended schools – part of an agenda familiar as Every Child Matters, introduced in response to a damning report on the neglect and murder in 2000 of eight year old Victoria Climbie (House of Commons, 2003).

According to the previous Labour government's Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF), Extended Schools can help to improve pupil attainment, confidence, motivation and attendance, reduce exclusion rates, allow teachers to focus more on learning rather than behaviour management and enhance children's and families access to services. This is achieved through extended childcare provision from 8:00 am until 6:00 pm, parenting support, swift access to specialist services such as speech and language therapy and a varied

menu of activities (including study support, play/recreation, sport, music, arts and crafts and other special interest clubs, volunteering and business and enterprise activities), in a safe place, for primary and secondary schools (DCSF, 2010). SHARE has subsequently been set up as a private company in order to secure sustainability in promoting these objectives. It is now housed in offices located at one of the schools.

Sixteen members of SHARE took part in a joint consultation on the priorities for Frantonville and it was decided that boys' achievement and the involvement of males in education ranked number one. The Every Child Matters agenda is well known in the UK and it proposes five outcomes:

1. Be healthy
2. Stay safe
3. Enjoy and achieve
4. Make a positive contribution
5. Achieve economic well-being

Every Male Matters is derived conceptually from this. The project identified five outcomes to present to fathers:

1. Encourage your child to be healthy
2. Keep your child safe
3. Aid your child to enjoy and achieve
4. Make a positive contribution to your child's education
5. Help your child to achieve economic wellbeing

A key driver for this was the perception of male parent disengagement from schooling evidenced by the fact that support for school events, including parents' evenings was said to be 80% from female parents or carers. Another initiative, predating Every Male Matters and known as Fathers and Children Engage (FACE) had grown out of a five week parenting course run by a local children's centre in 2005. A group of fathers who attended this have continued to meet, developing a website, blog forum and activity programme. The group's rhetoric is one of positive male role models for children:

> I am a dad like many others who face problems when parenting my children especially around the issues facing teenagers. I never thought about the impact a positive male role model could have on my family and how it could influence my children's lives in regard to Drink, drugs, under age sex and anti social behaviour. That Positive Role Model is Me!

The FACE group is not part of the Every Male Matters project, although some attempt was made by the latter to engage with it at the outset in order to provide a seamless provision to parents. It had been hoped that EMM would work with school age children and their male carers whilst FACE worked with pre-school children and their male carers. In practice, the groups have gone their separate ways, aiming to provide their own activities and avoid overlap where possible. It is nevertheless of some significance that Frantonvale as an area has spawned two different initiatives with the aim of engaging males in child care and parenting.

EMM, whilst having in common with FACE the desire to engage male parents and carers, was also influenced by research carried out by the Princes Trust. The report *The culture of youth communities* (YouGov, 2008) identified a major problem of inter-generational

disengagement and raised alarm in the popular media through its headline claim that 58% of young people reported that finding a sense of identity was their main reason for joining a gang. Moreover only 34% (n=1724) had a parent they considered a role model and 60% were more likely to turn to a peer than a parent with a problem. Young males were said to be less likely than females to have a positive role model and more likely to become NEETS (not in education, employment or training). Some of the Princes Trust data are compatible with work carried out by the author's institution in collaboration with the Children's Rights Alliance for England (CRAE). This work investigated inter-generational relationships with a view to understanding the process of cultural transmission across generations, ultimately through a European network to be known as EICIN (European Inter-generational Cultural Identities Network). A pilot survey of 600 secondary school students in the North West region, currently under analysis, revealed the following information (first 165 cases analysed to date). Table 1 shows the results of asking young people first how easy it was for them to talk to their mother or father about "things that really bother you", then to identify alternatives if they felt it was not easy to talk to parents:

Table 1
Young People's Preferred Confidantes (EICIN)

Communication	Frequency	Percent
Alternative Communication		
Sibling	84	50.9
Friend (same age)	99	60.0
Friend (older)	94	57.0
Grandparent	116	70.3
Aunt/Uncle	47	28.5
Teacher	37	22.4
Youth Leader	3	1.8
Doctor/Nurse	1	.6
Religious Leader	4	2.4
Other Adult	5	3.0
Other – Coach	7	4.8
	Average[*]	SD[*]
Ease of Mother Communication	3.69	.84
Ease of Father Communication	2.82	.50

It is clear that the young people found it easier to communicate with mothers than fathers (means on a 1 – 5 scale of ease) although the analysis has not yet separated boys from girls. Most notably, friends either the same age or older scored significantly better than teachers, who in turn scored significantly better than community leaders, including youth workers. These data are consistent with earlier work undertaken by the author and a colleague in primary schools in the South West of England. The data are derived from detailed interviews with boys in Y4 (age 8 – 9) and Y6 (age 10 – 11).

Table 2
From *Women Teaching Boys*

Table I
Boys' Reported Preference for Emotional Support
(39 boys across 7 schools)

1. Mother	8.8
2. Father	8.2
3. Friend same age	7.6
4. Older boy	6.4
5. Older girl	5.9
5. Nobody	5.9
5. Male teacher	5.9
8. Female teacher	5.7
9. Brother	4.5
10. Sister	4.3
11. Male youth leader	2.9
12. Female youth leader	2.0

(From Ashley & Lee, 2003)

Unfortunately, the 2003 research did not ask about grandparents. Had it done so, it might have found a similar result to the work currently in progress where grandparents are the most popular of all confidantes, exceeding peers by a factor that will be tested for significance when the analysis is complete. Table 3 below, from the current inter-generational survey, shows data derived from questions about relationships with older people (see appendix for survey questionnaire). Grandparents again are reported on positively, 90.3% to date of young people reporting that they have a grandparent whom they like and enjoy spending time with. The questions about on-line relationships were particularly important to the project which had theorised that the rise of social networking technology might impact on inter-generational relationships. It will be seen that the young people are generally wary of and disinclined to trust adults unless they know them well – data which are entirely consistent with the Prince's Fund report. The young people also report a significant degree of control with regard to on-line encounters with adults (see Ashley, 2011).

The most significant finding, however, is that 93.9% of young people of secondary school age believe that adults assume bad things about them just because they are young whilst 83.6% feel themselves to have been the victims of discrimination by adults on the grounds of age. These figures align themselves not only with the Princes Trust report but a whole sequence of damning reports similar to the Victoria Climbie report that suggest that, in spite of Every Child Matters, the UK is a country that cares little for its children and, relative to comparator nations, a bad place for young people to grow up in. Probably the most frequently cited of these is the comprehensive review of child well-being in rich countries

undertaken by UNICEF which revealed the UK to be ranked overall 18.2 out of 21 nations.[1] On the two dimensions of family and peer relationships, and behaviours and risks, the UK came bottom of the UNICEF tables by a significant margin.

Table 3
Secondary school students reported relationships with older people (EICIN)

Relationships with Older People	Frequency	Percent
Spend Time with Grandparent	149	90.3
Look up to Adult Family Member	109	66.1
Look up to Other Adult	132	80.0
Trust Adults		
Don't Trust Any[*]	14	8.5
Wary of those don't know well	105	63.6
Trust them if they are vetted	4	2.4
Trust most adults	42	25.5
Communicate with Adults on Internet		
Generally No.	46	27.9
Only if I know them	29	17.6
Yes, when I want to	90	54.5
Participate in activities alongside adults	54	32.7
Adults Assume Bad Things	155	93.9
Adults Discriminate Against	138	83.6

A 2005 report by Save the Children[2] and a 2008 report by the Children's Society[3] paint similar pictures to the UNICEF document. A 2009 report from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation *Today's Social Evils* claimed that government and the media were the most frequently cited sources of negative images of young people. The Children's Rights Alliance for England, moreover, provide data to suggest that the UK is the worst performing European nation on the measure of youth custody. A rhetoric of "feral youth" promoted by Tony Blair whilst prime minister has bequeathed the legacy of a discourse that demonises young people in hooded tops ("hoodies") – perhaps one of the most significant of "moral panics" since the introduction of this term by Cohen's analysis of the mods and rockers phenomenon (Cohen, 1987). A statement made by the present prime minister of the UK, David Cameron, that the British people should be prepared to "hug a hoodie" resulted in ridicule by the right wing populist press and indicated something of the size of the mountain that would need to be climbed to discover a "big society".

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[1] UNICEF (2007) *An overview of child well-being in rich countries,* Inoccenti Report Card , Florence: UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre.
[2] Bradshaw, J. Mayhew, E. (eds) (2005) *The well-being of children in the UK.* London: Save the Children.
[3] Layard, R. & Dunn, J. (2009) A Good Childhood: searching for values in a competitive age

"Lads and Dads" - An equitable approach?

Given the particular problems faced by Frantonvale, it is unsurprising that initiatives to support young males should be proposed. Nevertheless, EMM did not receive universal support. Some dissenting voices within SHARES were raised concerning why only every boy as opposed to every child should matter. An obvious starting point for research would be to examine in more detail the evidence presented and case made to justify the initiative. Whilst it is known that 80% of the attendance at parents' evenings was female, this needs to be set within a national context. Comparator data, including qualitative accounts, need to be available, for example, on the gender balance at parents' evenings in other situations. Data such as these might reveal that the picture is more nuanced than the bald figures of male unemployment in Frantonvale, "staggering" though they are, suggest. The mission of the Centre for Leaner Identity Studies is to "research the impact of educational policy and pedagogical practice on the lives of individuals." The diagram below points toward an approach based upon the interaction of a multiplicity of identity markers which has to preclude homogenising "all boys" as a unit of study. A methodological bent toward detailed pictures of individual lives requires an in depth understanding of precisely what it is like to be a young person in Frantonvale and why it might be difficult for such a person, whether boy or girl, black or white, seven or twenty seven years of age to "matter".
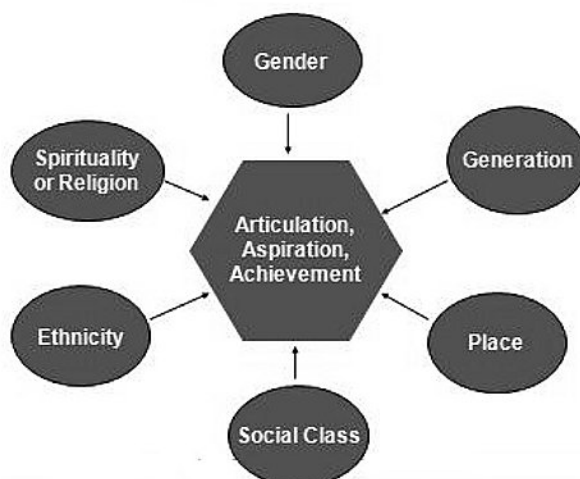
The term "lad", though it rhymes conveniently with "dad", is one that needs to be treated with caution as a badge of identity. There is now a substantial literature about something called "laddishness" (Francis, 2009; Jackson, 2006; Younger & Warrington, 2005 and many others). Some have attributed the term "lad" to the seminal study of anti-school working class youth by Paul Willis (Wills, 1987). As a theory of male behaviour in the face of the decline of heavy industry, this appears promising, but other uses of the term weaken this. The term "lad" was familiar to the author as a pupil at a boy's HMC public (i.e. fee paying, independent) school in the 1960s. The meaning there was boys who resisted (or appeared to resist, see Mac-an-Ghaill, 1994) the school culture of academic achievement and demonstrated "hardness" by challenging and cheeking the masters. Lad also has strong regional connotations. In the North of England, for example, middle class choirboys would

be referred to as "lads" during rehearsal, whereas in the South of England the word "boys" would invariably be used. Young men in another study by the author used the term "lad" as a signifier of age. "Boys" were pre-pubertal whilst "lads" were post-pubertal (Ashley, 2009).

Francis (1999) argued that "laddism" was appropriated by middle class males as a backlash against 'political correctness', but this does not seem compatible with accounts of middle class "lads" dating from the 1960s. What seems more likely is that the phenomenon of "laddism", now generally understood to be a form of academic self-harm by young males drawn toward behaviours associated with hegemonic forms of masculinity (Connell, 2005, Jackson, 2003), does not properly derive from the term "lad". There are important boundaries to explore between culturally restricting forms of hegemonic masculinity and the use of the term "lad" to describe spirited behaviour in young males that some teachers (of either gender) may find difficult to handle. An important meta-analysis of the literature on male role modelling carried out by the then UK Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) in 2008 concluded that

> "...the use of same-gender teachers to improve achievement tends to be successful with girls and wholly unsuccessful with boys ...bonding between male teachers and students can actually serve to reinforce laddishness" (QCA, 2008).

This is related to a phenomenon reported in a seminal study by Askew & Ross (1988) and much discussed by the influential work of Gilbert & Gilbert (1998). It is that male teachers, challenged to "command and control" (Button, 2006) as the "alpha males" in front of boys, resort to crudely populist behaviour which denigrates female colleagues and fails to challenge boys to achieve in those areas of the curriculum that are allegedly difficult for boys because they are not about football or "war, guns and cool, tough things" (Martino & Meyenn, 2002). Jackson (2010) provides a more recent account of how male teachers have been "sort of laddish with them" secretly subscribing to the discourse that only male teachers can control the "tough" boys.

Laddism, understood in contexts such as these, is all about the level of male engagement in the development of emotional intelligence, sensitivity, a broad, cultural curriculum and inter-personal relationships. It is the old and unavoidable question of *what kind of men*? which was asked by Skelton (2001, 2002) at the beginning of the decade and Cushman (2008) again toward the end because so little progress seems to have been made. It should be very clear, then, that if there are to be "lads and dads", not all "dads" might be suitable. The SHARES project, with its focus on developing boys' aspirations for education and employment through men's aspirations for parenting, has the potential to be a piece of research of significance. Whether it is of sufficient significance to ride any storms based upon whether all children or only boys "matter" will depend upon the values it adopts and the models of masculinity it subscribes to.

Theorising Resilience

Orthodox explanations of the achievement gap between boys and girls have tended to stress the links between hegemonic masculinity, relational theories of gender and laddishness. According to these, boys withdraw from effort in schoolwork because academic work is seen as feminine – an idea traceable back at least to the musings of Thomas Carlyle and other Victorian commentators who valorised the muscular effort of the labouring man (see Madox-Brown, 1863). Modified versions of this theory, such as Mac-an-Gaill's account of "real

Englishmen" stress the principle of "effortless achievement" (Mac-an-Ghaill, 1994). Boys can do well at school, but must conceal the effort needed from peers. Edley & Wetherell (1995) cite *Tom Brown's Schooldays* (a novel about public school life written by Thomas Hughes in 1857):

> "Tom Brown…is a thoroughly English boy. Full of kindness, courage, vigour and fun – no great adept at Greek or Latin, but a first rate cricketer, climber and swimmer, fearless and skilful at football, and by no means adverse to a good stand-up fight in a good cause…." (From Mangan, 1987, p137, quoted in Edley & Wetherell 1995.)

This middle class version of hegemonic masculinity advantages those boys who are discrete and articulate enough to maintain the illusion of effortless achievement. Researchers such as Jackson (2003) have questioned why it is that boys do this and conclude that the theory of self-worth protection (Covington, 1992) provides a coherent and satisfactory explanation. Boys particularly fear failure in those endeavours where girls are conspicuously successful since to be beaten by a girl in front of one's peers is the ultimate humiliation (or a girl substitute boy in a boys' school, see Reay 1998). Avoidance or denigration of schoolwork is an easy way out. The effortless achievement illusion is a more subtle one, since if a boy is seen to fail he can always say it was because he "had something better to do".

Resisting the fear of failure is an endeavour that requires *resilience*. Interest in resilience as a conceptualisation of success or failure at school has increased in recent decades as researchers have begun to discard medical deficit models in favour of strengths based approaches (Doll & Lyon, 1998; Howard & Johnson, 1999; Rhee *et al*, 2001; Ungar, 2008; Martin & Marsh, 2009). Alva (1991) describes academically resilient students as those who 'sustain high levels of achievement motivation and performance despite the presence of stressful events and conditions that place them at risk of doing poorly in school and ultimately dropping out of school' (Alva, 1991:19). Strength based theories of resilience draw on life history methodologies which attempt to identify the environmental conditions associated with observed resilience. Rhee et al (2001) derive the following synthesis of what they describe as decades of longitudinal research into the subject:

- Caring, supportive adult in the life of the child or adolescent
- Opportunities for initiative or involvement in meaningful activities
- High expectations for behaviour

The attraction of this is that it identifies two key criteria over which an organisation such as SHARES might have control. High expectations for behaviour might be set by the schools and community if it is truly believed that these make a difference. Opportunities for involvement in meaningful activities might be provided. The third criterion of a caring, supportive adult is also one amenable to positive intervention although there will be difficulties if a child is subject to ongoing abuse or more likely neglect/time deprivation in the home. There are published and validated measurements of resilience that might be used to evaluate these conditions. The California Healthy Kids Survey Resilience Supplement asks children to grade on a 4 point Likert scale of truth the following statements:

> In my home, there is a parent or some other adult who:
>
> - Expects me to follow the rules
> - Is interested in my schoolwork

- Believes that I will be a success
- Talks to me about my problems
- Always wants me to do my best
- Listens to me when I have something to say

At home I:

- Do fun things or go fun places with my parents or other adults
- Do things that make a difference
- Make decisions with my family

Of some significance to projects such as EMM is the singular adult, - "a parent" in the case of the California survey, or "a caring supportive adult" in the case of Rhee *et al*.   This may be associated with the well regarded work of Bowlby and Ainsworth on attachment which stressed that a child needs to form a unique, nurturing bond with one close adult (Ainsworth et al, 1978; Bowlby, 1982; Barrett & Trevitt, 1991; Neufeld & Maté, 2004).   Though most commonly the biological mother, the principal carer could be male or female and biologically related or unrelated to the child. This raises significant questions in a situation where (a) the child may be living with only one parent, probably the mother and (b) the father wishes to or is encouraged to take a more active role. There are also questions about the relative role of each parent in a two parent family, whether this is of the conventional kind or whether both parents are the same sex.

Pleck (1987), in an historical account of American fathering, provides evidence that there never was a "golden age" of the two parent nuclear family in which fathers played a significant emotional role in the upbringing of children. Populist accounts of stereotypical families tend to stress complimentary role theory in which the mother provides the regular physical care and emotional stability, whilst the father teaches the boy how to "be a man" through such activities as play fighting (Biddulph 1997; Gurian & Stevens, 2010). A more likely account of successful parenting in two parent families is that the second parent provides emotional support and relief for the principal caregiver, thus allowing him or her to form more successful nurturing bonds with the child. Doll & Lyon (1998) provide a more detailed summary of the conditions believed to build resilience:

Table 4 Life history factors associated with resilience

Individual/personal	Family	School and community
• Good intellectual ability • Language competence • Positive temperament • Positive social orientation/peer friendships • Self efficacy and self-esteem • Achievement orientation/high expectations • Flexible coping style • Engagement and initiative in productive	• Close affectionate relationship with at least one caregiver • Effective parenting (warmth, structure and high expectations) • Access to guidance from extended family	• Access to responsive school • Relationship with positive adult role model • Connection with pro-social organization • Support of significant non-parental adult

activity		

Again, the stress is on the singular, "at least one caregiver". Significantly, a role is allocated to the extended family and this might well be a significant role for grandparents if the EICIN data are significant.

These considerations raise significant questions about the kind of input fathers will provide. To what extent will it be an emotional one that is affectionate and provides the child with warmth, structure and high expectations? If so, high expectations of what? To what extent will it be one that is complimentary to and supportive of the other parent? Will the father, in other words be a "lad" or a "dad"? Table 5 below is derived from the SHARES framework. The left hand column shows three of the tasks the project has set itself and the right hand column raises questions about these tasks that derive from the above discussion and might need to be answered during the course of any research. It will be seen that if the answers are negative, there could be a "lad" tendency, whilst if they are positive, there might be a "dad" tendency.

Table 5

SHARES Task objective	Implied research question
Increase self-confidence in male parents/carers and promote participation in family activities	Do male parents/carers lack confidence, and if so, why? Do male parents not participate in family activities? If not, why not?
Promote the importance of education and the role of the schools.	Do male parents not understand the importance of education or understand/value it less than female parents?
Introduce a range of sustainable activities and workshops	Will these include the arts and other activities that develop boys socially, emotionally and culturally?

Conclusion: Possibilities for research

This paper has described a potentially unique and certainly significant arena for the testing out of issues concerned with boys' achievement and behaviour. The context is one that demands resilience in pupils and their families if achievement is to be raised and aspirations met. The paper has drawn attention to the need for any serious research to take place within a framework of gender equity. The research has the potential to be significantly more powerful if it is placed within a national context, particularly if this is informed by the outcomes of the UNICEF Innocenti report.

Questions that might be addressed and data that might be gathered.

1. The existing EICIN survey could be administered across the school population of Frantonvale, and in international comparator contexts. The survey contains a demographic section which is drawn directly from the established large scale HBSA (Health Behaviour of School Age Children) survey (University of Exeter). The EICIN survey is currently on-line at http://surveys.edgehill.ac.uk/eicin2

Potential questions to be answered would include:

- How do the young people of Frantonvale compare demographically with the Northern region of England and international comparator regions?

- What are the educational and employment aspirations of the young people of Frantonvale?

- Who are the main role models and emotional confidantes for the young people of Frantonvale?

- How do the young people of Frantonvale feel about the adults in their community?

- How do the young people feel treated by their local community?

2. The California Healthy Kids (resilience) survey could be administered across the school population of Frantonvale. This is also a validated survey with a comparator baseline.   It would answer the following questions:

- How resilient are the young people of Frantonvale in comparison with nationally computed norms?

- Are there any differences in indicated resilience between boys and girls?

- What strengths and resilience building factors currently operate within Frantonvale?

- What are the main areas in which resilience could be improved through targeted development of parenting skills?

Longitidinal extension of the study might allow indicated resilience at age eleven to be associated with educational outcomes at age sixteen (or similar).

3. Focus groups on masculinity. Focus groups or other qualitative interviews could be conducted to establish the views of masculinity held by male parents and possibly also by boys.

- What predominant models of masculinity are held by the male parents of Frantonvale?

- How do the male parents of Frantonvale perceive their role within the family? What images of families are held?

- What models of young manhood do the male parents of Frantonvale consider to be desirable aspirations for their sons?

- What are the views of the male parents of Frantonvale on gender equity and how to the aspirations they hold for their sons compare with the aspirations they hold for their daughters?

- What models of masculinity are held by the boys in Frantonvale? Who are the role models they admire?

- What attitudes are held by the boys of Frantonvale toward gender equity?

- How do the boys' conceptions of masculinity impact upon their performance at school and aspirations for education and employment?