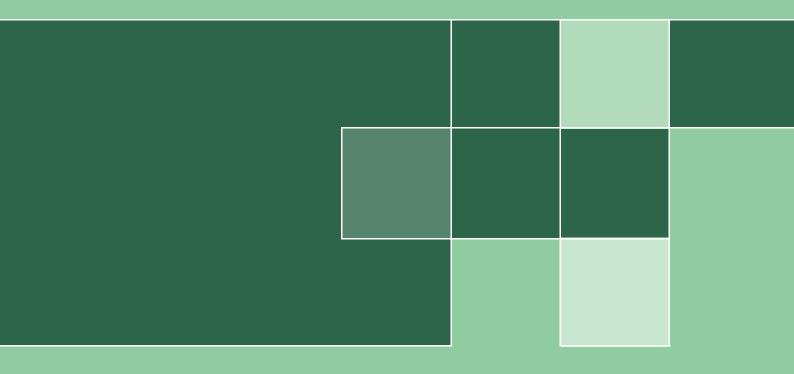# REFLECTION, RENEWAL AND REALITY: TEACHERS' EXPERIENCE OF SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND INCLUSION

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NASUWT
The Teachers' Union

The largest teachers' union in the UK

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Executive Summary

Background

The 1997 Green Paper *Excellence for all children* (DfEE, 1997) outlined the Labour Government's commitment to high quality education for pupils with special educational needs (SEN), within the context of inclusion. Whilst the Coalition Government's 2011 Green Paper *Support and aspiration: A new approach to special educational needs and disability* notes that there is 'much that is excellent in the support for these children, young people and their families' (DfE, 2011, p2), it expresses concern that 'children and young people with SEN don't achieve as they could' and claims that the 'case for change is clear' (DfE, 2011, p2). The 2011 Green Paper offers an 'ambitious vision for reform' (DfE, 2011, p13) and 'includes wide ranging proposals to improve outcomes for children and young people who are disabled or have SEN, minimise the adversarial nature of the system for families and maximise value for money.' (DfE, 2011, p13).

In 2006, the NASUWT commissioned research[1] on SEN and inclusion in order to explore the impact of policy on teachers' experience in their schools. Stage 1 of the research was a literature review (Ellis et al., 2008) published in 2008. This concluded that the field was complex due to both 'SEN' and 'inclusion' being broad terms and subject to interpretation. Gaining evidence through empirical research on teacher experience and interpretation of national legislation and guidance was therefore considered important for the second stage of the research.

Research aims

The main aim of the research was to explore how teachers are experiencing policy and practice for SEN and inclusion in their schools. The predominant focus was the variability inherent within the identification, provision and outcomes in relation to SEN. In order to explore political, professional and personal differences in attribution of causes and solutions to this variability, the following research questions were explored:

1. How are teachers interpreting and implementing policy for SEN and inclusion?
2. How are teachers experiencing teaching pupils with SEN in a policy context of inclusion?
3. What are the training and support needs identified by teachers in relation to SEN?

Purpose of this report

Drawing on data gathered through the empirical research phase of the project, this report seeks to offer an insight into teachers' experience of and opinions on the current policy context that was shaped by the former Labour administration as well as offering a perspective on the nature and likely impact of the Coalition Government's proposals for change. As part of this commentary, consideration is given to the fitness for purpose and potential consequences of the 2011 Green Paper *Support and aspiration: A new approach to special educational needs and disability* (DfE, 2011).

Methods

This research project drew on over 1,500 responses to an online survey from a range of teachers in primary, secondary and special schools. Case study data was gathered from over 100 teachers in a range of schools from four local authorities (LAs). The methodology employed sought to investigate the following areas pertinent to the education of pupils with SEN:

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[1] From Canterbury Christ Church University, Canterbury, Kent

1. the relationship between the definition of SEN in the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice and the identification of SEN;
2. training, support and development needs;
3. policy and guidance for SEN and inclusion;
4. the deployment of support staff;
5. behaviour and SEN;
6. LA support.

These areas had been identified through the literature review (Ellis et al., 2008) carried out for stage 1 of the project. In relation to each of the six areas, an exploration of recent literature (2006-2011) was conducted that served to update the original literature review and ground the findings within the national policy context.

The findings represent a synthesis of the responses to the survey and data gathered from the case study visits to schools. However, different questions were asked, so case study data and survey data is not directly comparable. The case study visits provided the opportunity to probe more deeply into some issues, albeit with a smaller number of teachers.

Findings

Chapter 1: The relationship between the definition of SEN in the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice and the identification of SEN

1.1 There was overwhelming consensus from the case study schools that the purpose of identification of SEN was that pupils could be allocated the provision and additional monitoring they needed to make progress.

1.2 Teachers interviewed expressed greater confidence in identifying SEN when either there was a clear need for 'special educational provision' (DfES, 2001, p6) to be made for the pupil, or the pupil had a 'label' such as dyslexia or autism spectrum disorder (ASD). There was less clarity where it was necessary to make a judgement based on whether the pupil's current performance represented 'a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of the same age' (DfES, 2001, p6). It was evident from the survey data that a variety of criteria is used to identify pupils as SEN in addition to the formal definition within the SEN Code of Practice.

1.3 In the case study schools it was evident that the identification of SEN is strongly influenced by data related to rates of academic progress and response to existing provision. Primary schools were often able to utilise the enhanced opportunities afforded by their setting to gain additional data to inform identification. Because of their size, secondary schools tended to be more reliant on the quality of attainment data from feeder primary schools, existing documentary evidence and entry level testing.

1.4. The schools visited all expressed confidence in their own SEN identification systems. Some case study schools were aware that SEN identification rates could favourably affect their contextual value added score and in some cases carry funding benefits. However, schools also noted that relatively high percentages of pupils with SEN impacted upon behaviour and learning and that the cost of provision for pupils with SEN typically exceeded the funding.

1.5 There was general awareness in the case study schools that SEN identification rates varied between schools in the same LA and even between schools serving very similar

catchment areas. SENCOs in particular recognise, and have experienced, that the definition of SEN and other elements within the Code of Practice, such as the triggers for School Action (SA), are open to interpretation.

1.6 Many of the class and subject teachers in case study schools had not been directly involved in the classification of a pupil as having SEN, because the identification had taken place prior to the pupil joining their class or subject group, but fully acknowledged their responsibility for provision and the monitoring of progress. When class and subject teachers suspect a pupil may have as yet unidentified SEN, they typically supply data and raise concerns with the SENCO and/or via regular SEN review meetings.

1.7 The identification of SEN takes place alongside identification of a range of additional needs. Many case study schools were accustomed to identifying vulnerable groups. Some schools, particularly secondary, highlighted the problem in determining whether the range of social, emotional and cognitive difficulties experienced by the pupil could reasonably be classified as SEN. The majority of survey respondents were confident in their ability to identify the learning needs of pupils with SEN.

1.8 There was concern, particularly in primary school settings, that any policy directives to reduce the number of pupils identified as SEN would conflict with existing practices that seek to promote early identification and timely intervention.

1.9 Some interviewees expressed a view that it was very difficult to get a statement for behavioural, emotional and social difficulties (BESD) unless it could be attributed to a medical condition such as ASD or mental health.

1.10 Some special schools, notably those with an original designation of moderate learning difficulty (MLD), have experienced a change in pupil population, with the balance of intakes shifting towards more severe and complex needs, including significantly challenging behaviour. The majority of special school respondents to the survey also noted this.

1.11 Many secondary school staff interviewed highlighted the pervasive effects on attainment and behaviour across the curriculum of long-term delays and differences in basic skills such as language and literacy. An issue raised by some of these schools was the extent of delay or difference that warranted identification as SEN against the criteria set out in the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice (DfES, 2001).

Chapter 2: Training, support and development needs

2.1 When asked if they needed more training in SEN, the majority of survey respondents answered positively. There was strong agreement with the suggestion that 'the Government should provide more SEN training for all teachers'. The majority of survey respondents also indicated that more knowledge about SEN would be useful. However, the number of respondents identifying this as useful was less than for those identifying more time, increased access to specialist teachers who work directly with pupils and more additional adult support. The majority of case study respondents, whilst acknowledging that more training would always be considered desirable, did not prioritise SEN training as an immediate need.

2.2 Training requirements were very varied. Some teachers interviewed expressed a need in relation to particular categories of SEN (e.g. ASD, dyslexia, dyspraxia, dyscalculia,

attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)), while others, particularly secondary subject teachers, were concerned with feasibility issues such as how to teach/motivate pupils with SEN within the diverse and demanding group setting of the classroom.

2.3 Within the survey responses, there was a strong view that initial teacher training (ITT) inadequately prepared teachers to teach pupils with a range of SEN, irrespective of how recently they had qualified. Almost three quarters of respondents expressed this opinion. Case study respondents reported that SEN routes within ITT were often optional. There were very varied experiences reported about ITT and SEN. Some spoke highly of their experiences during ITT, particularly where there was an effective reciprocal relationship between the taught content provided by the higher education institution (HEI) and the experience of SEN teaching provided through placement in special and mainstream schools.

2.4 There was acknowledgement in case study interviews that postgraduate routes, particularly the graduate teacher programme (GTP), were already overloaded and that it is often difficult for trainee teachers to relate any SEN knowledge to practice until they begin their teaching. Valued ITT experiences included opportunities to observe and/or work in special school settings or to work in class with specialist teachers/advisers.

2.5 Despite acknowledging shortfalls regarding the coverage of SEN in their ITT, most of the survey respondents responded positively when questioned about their ability to identify the learning needs of pupils with SEN and assess their progress. However, only half of mainstream respondents felt they were able to effectively teach pupils with a range of SEN in their current class(es). This may be indicative of a teacher view on feasibility rather than related to a deficit in their knowledge, skills and understanding. The majority of case study interviewees were of the view that there were inherent limitations to what could be taught about SEN during ITT and a general acceptance that it was necessary to learn through experience, particularly during the newly qualified teacher year.

2.6 For mainstream and special school teachers, the most likely sources of information were seeking advice from a SENCO and/or another colleague in school and using specialist SEN or other websites.

2.7 There was limited evidence that nationally produced guidance to strengthen the teaching of pupils with SEN was impacting on practice. Only a third of mainstream and special school teachers had accessed any of the government-produced Inclusion Development Programme (IDP) materials for SEN.

2.8 Survey respondents reported that the main forms of training undertaken since September 2004 were school-based, usually as 'one-off' after-school sessions or all/part of a staff development day. A minority of questionnaire respondents reported that they had received no training on SEN or inclusion since 2004. Very few respondents had undertaken courses that provided a qualification or credits towards one.

2.9 An interesting and unexpected finding was that case study interviewees valued the opportunity to talk to the researchers about SEN and inclusion issues. A number commented on the usefulness of having the time and opportunity to be able to reflect critically on their practice in a non-judgemental setting.

Chapter 3: Policy and guidance for SEN and inclusion

3.1 There was variation between schools visited in the extent to which they accessed national policy and guidance for SEN and inclusion directly or drew upon LA interpretation. Class and subject teachers interviewed generally reported that they did not directly engage with national policy and guidance for SEN and inclusion. They tended to receive an interpretation of policy and guidance from another source such as the SENCO or senior leadership team. Some schools cited the sheer amount of electronic communication from central government as a barrier to access.

3.2 The main triggers for class and subject teachers to engage with national policy were Ofsted inspections and statutory duties. The influence of Ofsted requirements on practice was also confirmed by survey data. Less than a fifth of teachers surveyed reported that national policy and guidance for SEN and inclusion was clear to implement in practice.

3.3 School staff interviewed expressed varied views surrounding Ofsted depending on personal experience of the outcome and process. Within the survey, nearly half of mainstream teachers felt that their latest Ofsted inspection appropriately recognised the progress of pupils with SEN in their school but only around a sixth thought that Ofsted inspectors recognise the effect that having a high proportion of pupils with SEN can have on a school. Case study schools valued inspectors who demonstrated a real understanding of SEN and the increased complexities of pupils placed in special school settings. All schools visited placed a priority on Ofsted because of the effect on school reputation and morale of staff.

3.4 The majority of survey respondents said that they experience a tension between policies for inclusion and policies for raising academic standards. There was considerable concern expressed in the case study interviews that national age-related performance measures were superseding progress measures as indicators of teaching effectiveness.

3.5 Many school staff interviewed were concerned that, although the term 'achievement' was widely used, those responsible for making judgements about the school's performance frequently blurred the distinction between attainment and achievement. Schools felt that as a consequence there were sometimes unrealistic expectations regarding closing the gap between particular children's current performance and age-related expectations. Although many pupils with SEN had targets that contributed to holistic learning outcomes, it was felt that increased emphasis on academic attainment often served to marginalise progress made in these areas.

3.6 Many case study schools were heavily focused on using data to track academic achievement for all pupils, including those with SEN. These schools were able to demonstrate that they actively interrogated data in order to identify those not making adequate progress and instigate changes in provision and practice accordingly.

3.7 The majority of mainstream survey respondents thought that there was insufficient funding for SEN. Case study interviewees recognised that funding cuts were already taking place in the light of the current economic climate (interviews took place later than the online survey). Most concern was expressed in relation to funding cuts that would result in reductions in teaching assistant (TA) support and/or in specialist LA and other support services.

3.8   Case study special schools expressed a greater degree of satisfaction with their funding, acknowledging that it was linked to provision required to meet their pupils' complex needs. However, they noted that as new forms of support, particularly technology, are developed funding needs to keep pace. Only a quarter of special school survey respondents thought their school received insufficient funding to provide an appropriate education for all pupils.

3.9   An issue that emerged from the case studies was that developments in technology and usage by pupils have impacted on the workload of teachers but perhaps not as expected. In-school e-mails, electronic communication with parents and pupils, online marking and reporting, electronic tutor support and multimedia lesson preparation, in addition to external communications from government, LAs, etc., resulted in teachers reporting working longer hours.

Chapter 4: The deployment of support staff

4.1   Just over half of survey respondents felt that the progress of pupils with SEN was dependent on the availability of a TA. Within case study interviews, there was an overwhelming view that the effective inclusion of pupils with SEN in classrooms was dependent on the availability of support from a TA. The most frequent concern expressed in the interviews was that budget cuts would lead to a reduction in support staff.

4.2   It was evident from the case studies that schools employ a range of support staff and use a variety of deployment strategies. These range from individual support for a particular pupil with SEN to allocation of support to a class or teaching group. Case study interviewees were aware of problems inherent in routinely and exclusively allocating support staff to pupils with SEN. Only a third of survey respondents felt their schools employed a sufficient range of support staff.

4.3   Survey data suggests that TAs are typically employed to support pupils with SEN and/or low-attaining pupils. From case study interviews it is clear that additional or extra provision and targeted 'catch-up' programmes are delivered mainly by support staff in both primary and secondary schools.

4.5   Only about a third of teachers within the survey felt they had sufficient time and/or opportunity to liaise with support staff. This was also an issue highlighted by case study interviewees. Teachers interviewed often reported using a variety of opportunistic strategies to address this issue, often relying on goodwill and informal arrangements. Some schools had developed written recording methods to share information, including electronic communication.

4.6   In the survey, over half of mainstream teachers and a majority of special school teachers felt that their TAs were sufficiently trained. Some secondary staff interviewed raised the point that TAs had knowledge about SEN but often did not have sufficient subject knowledge to effectively support pupils with SEN in class.

Chapter 5: Behaviour and SEN

5.1   The main concern reported by teachers during case study interviews related to the fact that they were dealing with behavioural difficulties in the group setting of the classroom. They highlighted the combined impact of factors, including the number of pupils in a class exhibiting behavioural difficulties, the form the behaviour took, the availability of in-class support and the overriding need to meet the learning needs of the rest of the class.

5.2 There was consensus amongst school staff interviewed that the inclusion of more pupils with SEN in mainstream schools had not significantly contributed to any increase in general behavioural problems in schools. However, just under a half of survey respondents felt that the behaviour of pupils with SEN was more challenging than those without SEN. The survey responses indicate that the most difficult form of SEN to include in lessons is BESD.

5.3 From the survey and amongst interviewees, there was an overwhelming perception that behaviour in schools generally had become more challenging in recent years. Across all survey respondents, the main reason for this perceived increase in challenging behaviour was thought to be social factors, including parenting and a general deterioration of behaviour in society. A lot of interviewees also attribute behaviour to these factors.

5.4 Very few teachers interviewed expressed a need for more training in behaviour management specifically for pupils with SEN. The majority of survey respondents reported having a good understanding of why their pupils exhibit behavioural difficulties and felt they had a sufficiently wide range of strategies to manage behaviour. Some teachers interviewed expressed an interest in training that would allow them to understand more about how all children learn and develop in order to better understand the responses of their pupils to classroom teaching.

5.5 Most secondary schools visited were operating a support system for teachers so that pupils with persistent behaviour problems could be placed in another class or in another designated area. Behaviour policies characteristically were based on rewards and staged sanctions with consistency from all staff being raised as a crucial issue. For persistent behaviour problems, the tracking of pupils through staged sanctions systems was often perceived as unwieldy and in some cases offered considerable potential for pupils to manipulate the system.

5.6 Despite the concerns expressed regarding certain aspects, most teachers interviewed felt their school's behaviour policy worked reasonably well for the majority of pupils. There was acknowledgement that there were some pupils, including some with SEN, for whom the standard combination of rewards and sanctions did not work and a degree of realism that this was likely to be the case with any behaviour policy. This positive perspective was not reflected in survey data, with only 29% of mainstream teachers indicating that their school's policies were effective in supporting teachers to manage behavioural difficulties.

5.7 Interviewees in primary schools generally expressed less concern about behaviour than their secondary colleagues. Ongoing low-level disruption was seen as draining across both contexts but secondary school case study respondents reported an increase of, and concern about, refusal to work, lack of respect for teachers and peers, poor listening skills, apathy and low motivation for school-based learning.

5.8 A frequently reported problem in case study interviews was that some pupils could not be left to get on with their work unless constantly chivvied by adults. Another frequently reported factor was the pervasive impact of long-term underachievement, particularly in literacy, on pupils' ability to access and respond to the secondary curriculum.

5.9 Special school teachers interviewed generally expected to experience ongoing and challenging behavioural difficulties and class size and the allocation of adult support reflected this need. Behaviour tended to be viewed as an aspect of the pupil's overall

learning difficulty, illustrated by some staff who conceptualised challenging behaviour as a means of communication within a relationship rather than noncompliance. From the survey data, many special school staff also appear to feel personally well equipped in terms of strategies and their understanding of why pupils exhibited behavioural difficulties. However, opinion was more varied regarding support from their schools and the effectiveness of the school's behaviour policy in supporting teachers to manage behavioural difficulties.

Chapter 6: Local authority support

6.1   Timely access to specialist support when needed was crucial to mainstream teachers interviewed. Whether that was a behaviour specialist, SENCO, an experienced and/or special school teacher, support from a specialist trained TA, and/or educational psychologist, it mattered that teachers were able to access specialist practical advice that took into account the context in which they were working. There was real concern from interviewees that blanket cuts to LA services would impact on the specific services that they identified as valuable. From the survey, there was a strong indication that mainstream teachers wanted greater access to specialist teachers who either work directly with pupils or advise the teacher/school.

6.2   Interviewees' experiences of LA support varied, with personal relationships at the heart of effective support. Such relationships had tended to develop over time. The extent to which LA staff know their school was cited as a crucial factor. One small LA visited received exceptionally positive endorsement from its schools and teachers involved in the case studies.

6.3   It was clear from case study interviews that LAs played a role in the interpretation of policy and the allocation of training and support services. This was noted through differences in the use of provision mapping and the take-up of IDP materials between schools in different LAs. However, survey data indicated that only approximately 40% of respondents considered that LA policy and guidance influenced school practice.

6.4   Case study interviews suggest there is variability in the frequency and quality of LA support. Differences were frequently attributed to personal relationships and the quality of the support offered by individual advisers. Teachers particularly valued the expertise of speech and language therapists and educational psychologists and behaviour specialists who carried out classroom observations and worked with pupils in class.

6.5   It was clear that case study schools did not look exclusively to their LA for support. Increasingly, schools were looking to collaborate with other schools to provide both on and off-site shared provision as well as accessing support from special schools. Some schools visited perceived that there would be a continued move towards increased working with networks of schools, voluntary bodies and other professionals (e.g. health and social services). From the survey, it appears that teachers do not prioritise the LA as a source of information. Only around a third of mainstream survey respondents said they were likely to seek information from LA support or advisory staff and fewer still indicated they would access the LA website or support networks.

Core messages

Chapter 1: The relationship between the definition of SEN in the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice and the identification of SEN

While the Coalition Government's current concern regarding identification of SEN is primarily focused on issues of variability, funding and accountability, teachers' main concern regarding identification relates to its link to provision. Schools need to identify what provision their pupils need in order to make progress in the setting in which they are currently placed. Once this differing emphasis is understood it can be seen that teachers are not deliberately ignoring or manipulating Government guidance on the identification of SEN contained within the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice (DfES, 2001).

When provision and progress are placed at the heart of identification of SEN, then it is the current 'educational need' rather than any inherent 'learning difficulty' that becomes the main focus for teachers' assessment. This 'need', inherent within the term 'SEN', depends on the educational environment in which the pupil is placed and must take account of the nature and assessment of the 'learning' that is required. If the learning that is required is defined in terms of prescribed levels of subject attainment, then the pupil's educational needs will be different than if the learning required is defined in terms of a broader range of personal achievements.

If provision and progress take priority over funding and accountability as the core purpose for identification of SEN in schools, then variability is inevitable because school contexts are not standardised. It follows that an emphasis on reducing variability in identification rates of SEN through changes to policy and practice should not be seen as the solution to concerns about educational outcomes for pupils with SEN. Changes to identification criteria would serve only to reconstruct the size, nature and funding of the SEN population. There would still be individuals, categorised or not, who would make less progress in the group setting of their classroom than that made by their same-aged peers. This has implications for funding and there is a need to examine how funding is arranged to ensure that the range of pupils' needs are supported adequately.

Rather than continuing with the pursuit of reducing variability in identification rates of SEN, it would seem more productive for the Government to harness the expertise of teachers and parents to explore how positive and meaningful 'outcomes' can be conceptualised and achieved for all pupils, irrespective of their categorisation.

Chapter 2: Training, support and development needs

If initiatives for teacher training and continuing professional development (CPD) for SEN are to impact on teaching quality and outcomes for pupils with SEN, then they must address issues of relevance, feasibility and, of course, quality. As such, due regard must be given to determining the relevant knowledge, skills and understanding that teachers need if they are to teach pupils with SEN in the group setting of the classroom. Strategies that may be appropriate for individual pupils assigned to particular categories of SEN may not be feasible to be delivered by teachers whose classes have an imbalance of pupils with learning and/or behavioural needs. If intended academic outcomes for pupils with SEN are to become more literacy-based, then for some secondary teachers the priority for training may need to be cross-phase literacy teaching and language development rather than in relation to specific forms of SEN.

For training to be effective it needs to be reconceptualised to cover a range of inputs and experiences that lead to improvements in practice. In addition to the more traditional forms, training in SEN might usefully include:

- dedicated time to access, use and evaluate existing guidance on SEN – much of which has been of high quality with the potential to impact positively on practice;

- opportunity and time to work with SENCOs and other colleagues with particular expertise and/or experience in SEN in their own school context;
- opportunity to access, implement and evaluate local guidance and support from LA specialist teachers, educational psychologists, speech and language therapists and other providers, either internally or externally;
- active engagement in sharing of practice between local mainstream and special schools.

It would be useful to consider ways of securing greater coherence between training that seeks to improve the subject learning and behaviour of all pupils and that which is deemed 'SEN-specific'. Current perspectives on training for teachers seem to be on how SEN pupils differ from their peers rather than on the skills and attributes that all pupils need to develop in order to effectively learn in group settings. This can lead to fragmentation in relation to what training is needed for pupils with SEN and what training is needed for non-SEN pupils.

The 2010 White Paper (DfE, 2010) and the 2011 Green Paper (DfE, 2011) signal changes in relation both to ITT and CPD, placing considerable emphasis on the role of teaching schools. Planning any new training initiatives for SEN needs to involve dialogue between providers and teachers if it is to meet necessary requirements for efficacy, relevance and feasibility.

Chapter 3: Policy and guidance for SEN and inclusion

The brokering of the Government's relationship with teachers through policy dissemination requires significant reappraisal. It is crucial that Government and schools develop effective working relationships if their shared concern for the wellbeing and achievement of children and young people with SEN is to be addressed. Much of the guidance produced by the previous Government has been of good quality with the potential to impact positively on teachers' professional development and pupil progress. Use and take-up of policy and guidance is based on perceived utility and consequently varies according to job role and responsibility. It would be useful to consider how policy and guidance could be better signposted in order to reach its intended range of recipients. For many class and subject teachers, policy and guidance needs to be succinct, supportive in tone and perceived as useful to their practice. Of particular concern to schools is the tone of recent comments from official sources (e.g. Ofsted, 2010) regarding overidentification rates and low expectations for pupils with SEN. There is a feeling that blame is being apportioned to schools without due regard to the efforts schools and teachers are making to effectively include pupils with a range of SEN.

Chapter 4: The deployment of support staff

There is a strong view amongst teachers that the inclusion and progress of SEN pupils is dependent upon additional TA support. It is crucial that the validity of this consensus view is further researched to take on board the facilitating effect that TAs may have on teaching groups of pupils, including those with SEN. For example, it was evident from case study interviews that teachers believe that TAs have an impact on pupil learning through the closer monitoring they can provide for pupils who have yet to develop the necessary skills and/or dispositions to sustain attention on a task in the group setting. Intervening early served to limit negative and off-task behaviour that would impact on the rest of class as well as refocusing the individual on their learning. The positive effect of TAs and other support staff on teachers' job satisfaction, levels of stress and workload should not be ignored as a factor likely to impact, albeit indirectly, on pupil learning.

Only about a third of teachers within the survey felt they had sufficient time and/or opportunity to liaise with support staff. This was also an issue highlighted by the case study interviewees. Teachers interviewed often reported using a variety of opportunistic strategies to address this

issue, often relying on goodwill and informal arrangements. Some schools had developed written recording methods to share information, including electronic communication. This raises significant issues about how support staff are involved in the planning and assessment processes, about the key features of good practice and the relationship between effective practice and learning outcomes for pupils with SEN. This is an area that warrants further research.

Chapter 5: Behaviour and SEN

Behaviour in schools remains of more concern for many teachers than SEN, in spite of the general view that schools' behaviour policies work for the majority of pupils. The entrenched behavioural characteristics of some pupils, perceived to be largely attributable to factors outside school, strongly suggests that 'more discipline' per se will not suffice to address the troubling issues of teaching and learning faced by teachers in the group setting of classrooms. Teachers cannot be blamed or expected to address this issue without due consideration of the fact that the problematic behaviour of individuals and its exacerbation in groups is not confined to schools.

There is a need to consider the dual challenge for teachers in mainstream schools and a range of settings, including special schools, pupil referral units (PRUs) and alternative provision, of not only managing behaviour but also getting disaffected and disruptive pupils to meet nationally prescribed academic targets.

Chapter 6: Local authority support

The quality and take-up of LA support is very varied. Any actions that impact on LA support for schools risk destroying any effective relationship and benefits that have developed over time. Neither should it be assumed that schools will necessarily have the capacity to fill the gaps in support provision either at practical/resource level or in terms of professional knowledge and skills. Rather than addressing variability and budget constraints through blanket cuts, consideration needs to be given to developing policies and approaches that identify and retain effective working practices between LAs and their schools and replacing or strengthening those that fall short.

In the context of cuts to services and the changing role for LAs, schools will need to establish a new relationship with their LA and a range of other services, including health and care services and the third sector. A concern is that developing and maintaining these multiple relationships will place considerable additional demands on schools. This could impact adversely on the quality of education for all pupils but especially those with SEN.

Background and aims of the research

Background

In 2006, the NASUWT-commissioned research on SEN and inclusion in order to explore the impact of policy on teachers' experience in their schools. Stage 1 of the research was a literature review[2] published in 2008. This concluded that the field was complex due to both 'SEN' and 'inclusion' being broad terms and subject to interpretation.

The 1997 Green Paper *Excellence for all children* (DfEE, 1997) outlined the Labour government's commitment to high quality education for pupils with SEN, within the context of inclusion. The period immediately following this saw the publication of revisions to existing policy and guidance documents (e.g. DfES, 2001, DfEE/QCA, 1999a, 1999b) to reflect this inclusive orientation as well as the issuing of new policy and guidance. Further change for schools came with the introduction of the Every Child Matters (ECM) policy initiative (Treasury Office 2003, DfES, 2004a). *Removing Barriers to Achievement: The Government Strategy for SEN* (DfES, 2004b) brought SEN policy under the ECM umbrella.

When we wrote the literature review (Ellis et al., 2008) for the first phase of this project, the most recent literature included was from 2007. At that point it felt as if we were writing at a period of change in relation to SEN and inclusion. Ofsted (2004) had previously been critical of aspects of how the national policy of inclusion was being implemented in schools. Whilst not directly critical of government policy, there was a sense that the policy at national level was not delivering fully in terms of making a positive impact on pupils with SEN in schools. Baroness Warnock's (2005) widely reported paper *Special Educational Needs: A New Look* was potentially more damaging because of her high-profile status through the highly influential Warnock Report (DES, 1978). She commented:

> "There is increasing evidence that the ideal of inclusion, if this means that all but those with the most severe disabilities will be in mainstream schools, is not working."
>
> (Warnock, 2005, p32)

Warnock's criticisms were followed by the report by MacBeath et al. (2006) *The Costs of Inclusion*. The title alone indicated that this was not likely to be an entirely positive account of the effects of the policy of inclusion. However, it was the widespread reporting (e.g. BBC, 2006) of the comment, attributed to Professor John MacBeath, that inclusion could be seen as a form of abuse that perhaps dealt the greatest blow to general confidence in current policy.

The House of Commons Education and Skills Committee undertook a comprehensive review in response to emerging criticisms. It stated:

> "Having received over 230 written submissions, taken evidence from over 40 witnesses in oral evidence, made visits to schools, and having considered the recent Warnock report, as well as Ofsted and Audit Commission reports, it is clear that there are significant problems with the current system of SEN provision and high levels of dissatisfaction amongst parents and teachers."
>
> (House of Commons Education and Skills Committee, 2006, p13)

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[2] Ellis, S., Tod, J., and Graham Matheson, L. (2008) *Special Educational Needs and Inclusion: Reflection and Renewal*. Birmingham: NASUWT

With the exception of the small number of 2007 sources that came to our attention and were added during the editing process, it was at this point that we left the story in the 2008 literature review. There was a sense that all was not well in relation to the policy for SEN that had been pursued up until this point, but it was not clear what the government response would be.

Central to government concerns has always been variability in SEN identification, provision and outcomes. Our original literature review (Ellis et al., 2008) attributed this variability to the interpretative nature of many terms associated with SEN – not least the term itself. It followed that gaining evidence through empirical research on teacher experience and interpretation of national legislation and guidance was considered important for the second stage of the research.

The lifespan of the research project has covered a period of considerable debate in relation to SEN, beginning at a time when criticisms were emerging regarding government policy and concluding with a new government in power promising to 'remove the bias towards inclusion' (DfE, 2011, p5). Fourteen years on from the previous government's *Excellence for all children* (DfEE, 1997), the Coalition Government's 2011 Green Paper *Support and aspiration: a new approach to special educational needs and disability* (DfE, 2011) notes that there is 'much that is excellent in support for these children', but expresses concern that 'children and young people with SEN don't achieve as they could' and that the 'case for change is clear'. The Green Paper offers an 'ambitious vision for reform' and 'includes wide ranging proposals to improve outcomes for children and young people who are disabled or have SEN, minimise the adversarial nature of the system for families and maximise value for money.' (DfE, 2011, p13).

The publication of this report is timely, coinciding with what is likely to be a period of considerable change in relation to SEN. Drawing on data gathered through the empirical research phase of the project, this report seeks to offer an insight into teachers' experience of and opinions on the current policy context that was shaped by the former Labour administration, as well as offering a perspective on the nature and likely impact of the Coalition Government's proposals for change.

Research aims

This research aims to explore how teachers are experiencing policy and practice for SEN and inclusion in their schools. The predominant focus of this research is the variability inherent within the identification, provision and outcomes in relation to SEN. In order to explore political, professional and personal differences in attribution of causes and solutions to this variability, the following research questions were explored:

1.   How are teachers interpreting and implementing policy for SEN and inclusion?
2.   How are teachers experiencing teaching pupils with SEN in a policy context of inclusion?
3.   What are the training and support needs identified by teachers in relation to SEN?

These research aims were met through a methodology that involved an exploration of recent, relevant literature, an online survey and case study visits to schools.

It is hoped that the research will provide a valuable insight into how teachers currently experience and view issues of SEN and inclusion and contribute to further debate as changes proposed by the Coalition Government are implemented and take effect. It will inform and influence the NASUWT's work with government and with national organisations on matters relating to SEN and inclusion.

It is also recognised that this report is likely to serve a number of other purposes, including strengthening the knowledge of teachers and others with regard to current areas of debate in relation to SEN and inclusion. In particular, it is likely to be of value to teachers and others pursuing additional and higher qualifications in the SEN field.

The structure of the report

The report is structured using six main chapter headings that reflect the areas of investigation during the research process. These are:

1. The relationship between the definition of SEN in the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice and the identification of SEN.
2. Training, support and development needs.
3. Policy and guidance for SEN and inclusion.
4. The deployment of support staff.
5. Behaviour and SEN.
6. LA support.

Recognising the variety of purposes the report is likely to serve for a diverse range of readers, it is structured to allow each of these areas to be accessed individually. A consequence of adopting a structure that supports this type of use is that some data is necessarily used in more than one chapter if it relates to more than one of the six themes. The reporting of each of these six areas follows a standard structure:

- **Exploration of the literature**
  An exploration of recent literature (2006-2011) is provided at the start of each chapter. This serves to update the original literature review (Ellis et al., 2008) and ground the data gathered within the national policy context.

- **Presentation and discussion of data**
  Data collected from the online survey and case study visits is presented together with discussion of possible interpretations and emerging themes.

- **Findings**
  A set of findings is presented, synthesised from responses to the survey and data gathered from the case study visits to schools.

- **Emerging issues and implications for policy**
  Each chapter ends with an interpretative commentary that highlights and debates emerging issues and implications for policy and practice. Drawing on the literature and case study and survey data, this section represents the researchers' interpretation of current key issues and is intended to contribute to further debate by teachers, schools, LAs, policy makers and others. As part of this commentary, consideration is also given to the fitness for purpose and potential consequences of the Green Paper *Support and aspiration: a new approach to special educational needs and disability* (DfE, 2011). Points within this section should be viewed as informed by but not necessarily reflective of teacher opinion from the research.

Methodology

The methodology sought to investigate the following areas pertinent to the education of pupils with SEN:

1. The relationship between the definition of SEN in the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice and the identification of SEN.
2. Training, support and development needs.
3. Policy and guidance for SEN and inclusion.
4. The deployment of support staff.
5. Behaviour and SEN.
6. LA support.

The methodology adopted for the project involved three distinct elements:

- Exploration of literature.
- A survey of teachers.
- Case study visits to schools.

These data sources were selected for the following reasons:

- The review of literature offers the reader the opportunity to access a synthesis of recent literature (2006-2011) so that they are fully aware of the national policy context in which the findings are grounded.
- The survey data provides descriptive statistics obtained from teachers with different roles and responsibilities in a variety of schools. Survey questions were designed to gain views and opinions surrounding issues of SEN identification, provision and teacher training and professional development in SEN, within the local context of the teacher's own school.
- The case study data seeks to explore in more depth teachers' day-to-day experience of SEN issues, particularly those that relate to identification, provision and training.

There is a clear rationale for placing these three data sources together in the six investigative areas outlined above and, in so doing, departing from the more traditional research reporting style that separates literature from both empirical data and discussion. During the research process we became increasingly conscious that political, professional and personal perspectives on the complex area of SEN and inclusion were not seen as interrelated and interdependent factors that all serve together to impact on the experiences and outcomes of individual pupils with SEN and their parents.

Placing the child with SEN at the centre of our research concerns reflects a view that it is crucial for all parties involved in the educational experience of the child to be able to access and understand the perspective of the others.

Exploration of the literature

The review of literature seeks to explore the current policy discourse in relation to each of the six areas of investigation. It covers primarily recent literature, acting as an update to the literature review (Ellis et al., 2008) that formed stage 1 of the research project. However, where necessary to explore either an enduring issue or the background to an emerging issue, earlier literature is accessed. The literature review adopts a reflective and exploratory stance. The purpose is not to present simply what the literature says – readers can access the original source for that – but to debate both the possible implications for schools and how the particular piece of literature

influences the area of research under investigation. Inevitably, it is not an approach that can be entirely free from bias, reflecting our own perceptions and beliefs as researchers in the selection and juxtaposition of material and the subsequent discussion.

The survey

The survey was intended to explore the perspectives of a wide range of teachers in schools located in different LAs in relation to the experience, interpretation and implementation of policy and guidance. The original intention was that the survey would be sent to schools in 20 selected LAs.

For cost-effectiveness and efficiency, the survey was designed to be distributed and completed electronically. The first iteration of the survey was sent by e-mail to all schools in the selected areas for whom an e-mail address was available. This resulted in an extremely poor response rate, assumed to be related to the fact that the only available e-mail address for most schools was admin@xxxschool or similar. It was assumed that in many cases use of this generic e-mail address prevented the survey reaching the targeted respondents.

The low response rate necessitated that the project team rethought the method of survey distribution. It was agreed through a project steering group meeting that the survey would be distributed to NASUWT members via e-mail. This entailed some compromises but also some benefits. The target population was now teachers belonging to one teaching union, although the survey remained open to all teachers. To encourage wider participation, NASUWT Representatives in schools were sent a flyer by e-mail that could be used to advertise the research to non-NASUWT members. Using the NASUWT's distribution channels meant that the survey was able to reach a wider audience and was not limited to just the 20 LAs originally planned. Though survey respondents were not asked to indicate, it is likely that due to the method of distribution the vast majority were NASUWT members.

The survey was completed online, using the Bristol Online Survey (BOS) system. Separate surveys were sent to teachers in mainstream and special schools, although the questions were identical as far as possible, to allow for comparison. Copies of the survey are provided in Appendix A.

Total number of responses

There were 1,555 responses to the online survey, as follows:

Mainstream teachers	1,295
Special school teachers	242
Mainstream headteachers	10
Special school headteachers	8

The response was very encouraging given that this was a comprehensive survey of complex issues. It demonstrates considerable interest and commitment from the range of teachers who responded. In spite of the encouraging response rate, it must be recognised that this is still a small proportion of the teaching profession as a whole (see Appendix B). Due to the small number of headteacher responses to the survey, their data has not been included, but headteachers' views were directly sought during case study visits.

At least one response was received from each LA area, with the exception of Bath, Camden and Merton. The highest number of responses were received from Kent (47), Hertfordshire (46), Nottinghamshire (36) and Birmingham, Hampshire, Lancashire (34). This is likely to be a reflection of the way the survey was distributed or NASUWT representation in the area rather than a lack of interest or particular interest on the part of teachers in certain areas.

It should be recognised that within a survey of this nature the sample of respondents is likely to be skewed towards those who have a strong interest in issues surrounding the inclusion of pupils with SEN. Survey responses were anonymous.

Within the report, the survey responses are generally presented as percentages for ease of comparison, but it should be borne in mind that the numbers of respondents from mainstream and special schools are different – 5% of mainstream respondents is 65, whereas 5% of special school respondents is 12.

Demographic profile of survey respondents

The majority of teacher respondents were female (79%), aged over 35 (71%) and had been teaching for more than ten years (54%). Two hundred and nine special school teachers (86%) had worked in mainstream schools (see Table 1).

	Gender		Age range					Years as teacher					Not UK qualified
	m	f	u25	26-35	36-45	46-55	56+	NQT	2-5	6-10	11-15	15+	
Mainstream teachers	255	1,040	76	332	308	405	174	72	280	262	179	488	14
Special school teachers	66	176	4	37	62	87	52	7	26	34	35	136	4

Table 1: Profile of teachers completing the survey

The proportion of male respondents from mainstream schools at 19.6% is below the proportion of male teachers in England (25.4%). Similarly, the proportion of male respondents from special schools at 27.6% is below the figure for England of 38%. Twenty-nine per cent of respondents in the survey are aged under 35, against the figure for England of 34%. At 14.7%, the number of respondents aged over 55 is lower than the England figure of 18%. Appendix B provides information on teachers in England, to set a context for the study.

Most of the teachers who completed the survey identified themselves as class teachers (see Table 2):

Role in school	Mainstream	Special school
Class teacher	521	107
Subject teacher	371	65
Head of department	176	60
SENCO	144	-
Specialist teacher	-	36
Outreach teacher	-	16
Head of Key Stage/KS manager	98	14
SEN support teacher	54	-
Inclusion leader/manager	46	5
Head of year	42	1
Assistant headteacher	38	11
Deputy headteacher	37	9
Other(s)	138	

Table 2: Roles of those completing the survey

Type of schools reflected (mainstream teacher survey)

The largest group of respondents from mainstream schools (53%) were from secondary schools. Just over 40% were from the primary phase (primary, junior, infant). The distribution of respondents is shown in Table 3.

Type of school	Number	Percentage
Infant	36	2.8
Junior	56	4.3
Primary	434	33.5
Middle	25	1.9
Secondary	686	53.0
Academy	7	0.5
Sixth-form college	3	0.2
Other	48	3.7

Table 3: Types of school reflected in the mainstream survey

Figures from the NASUWT suggest that the proportion of responses from primary, secondary and special schools broadly reflects their membership profile.

The case studies

The methodology for the case study element of the research was based on the intention of visiting 20 schools, consisting of five schools in each of four LAs. Within each LA, two secondary schools, two primary schools and one special school were to be visited, with six members of staff being interviewed from each school.

Case study methodology was designed to build upon survey findings in terms of providing illustrative examples of teachers' experience of SEN and inclusion in their own school settings. It was acknowledged at the start of the research that, due to cost and time, case study data was not going to provide a representative sample of respondents in terms of type of school and LA. Selection of a small sample of LAs was initially based on them having different 'SEN' profiles after data was obtained for all LAs in terms of:

- size;
- total SEN budget 2009-10;
- SEN budget per pupil;
- percentage of pupils with statements;
- percentage of pupils who failed to reach Level 4 at Key Stage 4 English and maths in 2009.

While this served to provide a list of possible LAs from which to select a sample of four, there were understandable difficulties in securing permission from schools to carry out case study visits. Schools are exceptionally busy and were required to release staff from teaching duties in order to engage in interviews. Interviewing required a day in each school. It is also possible that some headteachers were wary of the consequences of taking part in any research activity. This was in spite of assurances that data would be treated with due regard for ethical requirements and confidentiality. Due to the difficulties in securing access to case study schools from selected LAs, it was decided that opportunity sampling would have to be employed. This involved asking the funders of the research (the NASUWT) to harness support from Regional Officers to identify and approach potential case study schools in their LA. This led to the selection of two shire counties, a London borough and small metropolitan borough. From the four LAs a list of possible case study schools was made available to the researchers. These were approached and case study visits in each LA were secured. Payment was made to schools to cover teacher release time. Each school visit involved interviews with:

- the headteacher and/or other senior leader;
- the SENCO/inclusion manager;
- two teachers relatively new to the post;
- two experienced teachers.

In addition, headteachers were given the option of making available for interview any other staff member that they considered to be relevant to the research project.

Due to difficulties in securing case study visits within the required timescale, 18 schools were visited instead of the intended 20. This sample comprised of seven primary schools, seven secondary schools and four special schools. In total, 108 school staff were interviewed.

Interviews were conducted either with individuals or pairs, according to the headteacher's preference. An interview schedule (see Appendix C) was used, based broadly on themes explored within the survey. Though the schedule was used to define a trajectory for data collection, the interview took the form of professional dialogue, with avenues of interest often directed and explored by the interviewee. Those interviewed were assured that the purpose of the interview was not to make a judgement about either an individual or school's degree of compliance with local and national policy and guidance, but to explore how such policy and guidance was being experienced, interpreted and implemented. Typically, each interview lasted between 45 minutes and an hour and was conducted within a relaxed setting.

Data was collected by the same two members of the research team in order to ensure consistency. Interviewing in pairs, one researcher asked questions and the other prioritised the recording of the interviewees' responses but also contributed to the discussion.

The rich interview data was collated into themes relating to the core research questions. This allowed for the identification of trends obtained by recording the frequency of types of responses to interview questions.

It is fully acknowledged that case study data is limited due to both the size and selection of the sample. However, this should not serve to marginalise its contribution within the research data. Face-to-face interaction with case study interviewees yielded rich data that provided a real insight into how teachers were experiencing policy and practice in relation to SEN and inclusion.

CHAPTER 1: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE DEFINITION OF SEN IN THE SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS CODE OF PRACTICE AND THE IDENTIFICATION OF SEN

Exploration of the literature

National concerns over variability in the identification of SEN

Ofsted's (2010) report *The Special Educational Needs and Disability Review: A Statement is Not Enough* found that children and young people with similar needs were not being treated equitably and appropriately and that parental perception of inconsistency in this respect was well founded. Across education, health services and social care, and across the range of LAs, assessments were different and the thresholds for securing additional support were at widely varying levels. The proportions of children and young people with statements ranged from 0.8% to 3.9% across all 152 LAs. For pupils identified with SEN but without statements, the range was 12.7% to 29.4% for all LAs and 14.6% to 27.1% for the 22 visited. Inspectors frequently found that pupils with a statement in one LA had a similar level of need to those provided for at School Action Plus (SA+) in another. Inspectors found that it was helpful to schools where LAs provided clear guidance and challenged levels of identification using a provision map or matrix of need.

However, it was not so much the detail in the report but three key observations that attracted considerable media interest:

- "…some pupils are being wrongly identified as having special educational needs…" and "…relatively expensive additional provision is being used to make up for poor day-to-day teaching and pastoral support." (Ofsted, 2010, p9)
- "Some schools visited believed that identifying more pupils with special educational needs resulted in a positive influence on the school's contextual value-added score. This provided an incentive for higher levels of pupils to be identified as having special educational needs." (Ofsted, 2010, p22)
- "In local areas where the formula for funding schools took into account the proportions of children identified as having special educational needs, this gave an obvious motivation for schools to identify more such children." (Ofsted, 2010, p23)

The popular media interpretation at the time was that schools were identifying pupils with SEN as a way to compensate for poor teaching or for gain, either in the league tables or financially. These headline-grabbing elements, critical of the teaching profession, detracted attention from in-depth exploration of issues of variation contained within the document.

The issue of variation is not new and had already been noted by Ofsted in 2004 when they observed:

> "The inconsistency with which pupils are defined as having SEN continues to be a concern. Some schools use the term to cover all who are low-attaining, or simply below average, on entry, whether or not the cause is learning difficulty."
>
> (Ofsted, 2004, p10)

The difference in this earlier report was in the tone and approach. Rather than seeking to apportion blame or find a motive, Ofsted had speculated on the extent to which differences in identification mattered, commenting:

> "Clearly, if pupils are not achieving their potential this is a concern, regardless of whether the school has identified them as having SEN. However, looseness in the

use of the SEN designation does not help to focus on the action needed to resolve problems and, in the worst cases, it can distract schools' attention from doing what is necessary to improve the provision they make for all low or below average attainers."

(Ofsted, 2004, p10)

In its 2010 report, Ofsted was more direct, stating that the term 'special educational needs' was being used too widely. In our original literature review (Ellis et al., 2008), we also highlighted the issue of variability and, importantly, the different interpretative layers that contributed to this. We made the point that the LA interprets national policy and guidance for SEN and inclusion and develops systems and processes. Schools then interpret these systems and processes to develop their own practice. Most importantly, however, we suggested that the term 'special educational needs' was highly interpretable and so variability in identification was to be expected.

In terms of how schools were identifying SEN, Ofsted (2010) found that around half the schools and early years provision visited used low attainment and relatively slow progress as their principal indicator. In nearly a fifth of these cases, there was very little further assessment. Inspectors reported that some schools they visited had identified pupils as SEN when their needs were no different from those of most other pupils. The report suggested that these pupils 'were underachieving but this was sometimes simply because the school's mainstream teaching provision was not good enough, and expectations of the pupils were too low.' (Ofsted, 2010, p9)

Ofsted (2010) suggested that the apparent incorrect identification of pupils with SEN could dilute the focus on overall school improvement. Inspectors found that some schools focused on providing additional help for pupils with identified SEN rather than on improving the quality of their standard offer for all pupils. In some of their visits to schools, inspectors reported meeting pupils 'who were provided with significant additional support whose needs could and should have been met by appropriately differentiated teaching, good learning and pastoral support earlier on.' (Ofsted, 2010, p22).

Returning to themes from their 2004 report, Ofsted (2010) noted that in some of the less effective schools visited this overidentification contributed to lowering expectations for children and young people. It was suggested that having identified pupils with SEN based on low attainment and relatively slow progress, some providers saw the pupil's SEN as a reason for continued low attainment or slow progress. Thus the SEN label was being used to explain, and possibly justify, why the pupil might make limited progress. Though Ofsted acknowledged that the providers they visited generally wanted to have access to the right support to help children and young people achieve more, they also suggested that 'in too many cases there was a culture of excuses.' (Ofsted, 2010, p22). A similar observation is made within the Lamb Inquiry (2009) through reference to Sir Alan Steer's (2009a) view that 'identifying high numbers of children as having SEN may be unhelpful, may in some ways act as an excuse for low attainment and may draw attention away from what the school needs to do to enable those children to learn and progress.' (Lamb, 2009, p25).

Concerns expressed were not just restricted to those pupils considered to be unnecessarily identified. The report suggested that there was insufficient discrimination in the application of the term 'SEN' that risked diverting attention from those who were in need of a range of specialist support. Interestingly, Ofsted also began to question the utility of the term 'special educational needs', querying whether, in the case of children and young people who need

complex and specialist support from health and other services to enable them to thrive and develop, the term 'educational needs' always accurately reflected their situation. Ofsted's view was that there was a need to:

> "…not only move away from the current system of categorisation of needs but also start to think critically about the way terms are used."
>
> (Ofsted, 2010, p9)

In addition to the numerous critical findings, Ofsted (2010) recognised some common features of good practice in assessment and identification:

- careful analysis of progress and development made by all children and young people;
- accurate evaluation of the quality of provision, both academic and pastoral, offered to all children and young people;
- staff who could identify frequently found learning difficulties;
- clear thresholds and referral routes to different services with higher levels of specific expertise;
- good understanding of the thresholds for referral used by different services;
- assessments with partner services carried out swiftly and in a streamlined way, working within good local protocols;
- assessments accessible for children, young people, parents and families;
- trust in previous assessments, built upon in a formative way.

Again returning to a theme from their 2004 report, Ofsted tackled the question of whether inconsistency in the identification of children and young people with SEN, at any of the three levels of School Action, School Action Plus and a statement of SEN, actually matters. Their findings suggested:

- yes, if the standard offer of education or care is insufficiently adapted for frequently found needs;
- yes, if such identification is the only way parents and schools can gain access to expertise or support from a range of 'in-house' or external services;
- yes, if SEN or disability are used as a reason for lower expectations and an excuse for poor outcomes;
- no, if the total package of services and support is appropriately customised to each pupil's individual needs;
- no, if the provision that follows identification is, in any case, of poor quality and is not effective.

> (Ofsted, 2010, p24)

Ofsted (2010) found that when a pupil was identified as having SEN at School Action level, this usually led to some additional help from within the school. When a child was identified as having SEN at School Action Plus, or especially with a statement, this usually led to the allocation of further additional resources from within and outside the school. The issue for Ofsted, however, was the quality of the provision and the impact on pupils. The additional provision was often not of good quality and did not lead to significantly better outcomes for the child or young person. It was suggested that for some pupils identified for support at School Action level the additional provision often fulfilled a compensatory role, making up for poor whole-class teaching or pastoral support. Even for pupils at School Action Plus level and with statements, Ofsted reported that the provision was often not meeting their needs effectively, 'either because it was not appropriate or not of good quality or both' (2010, p7). Though the statement of SEN meant that the pupil was likely to receive the service prescribed within it, the statement in itself did not mean that their current needs were being met.

Exploring the reasons for variability

Within the Ofsted (2010) report there is a strong implication that schools and, to some extent, LAs are making mistakes in identification. The comment that 'despite extensive statutory guidance the consistency of the identification of special educational needs varied widely, not only between different local areas but also within them' (Ofsted, 2010, p7) carries the sense that, despite being told clearly how to identify SEN, schools are getting it wrong. Underpinning this comment, however, is an assumption that the 'extensive statutory guidance' (Ofsted, 2010, p7) contributes to clarity. Within our original literature review (Ellis et al., 2008), we noted Lambe and Bones' (2006) reference to additive and generative models of inclusion. A generative approach involves starting afresh, having determined to pursue an inclusive approach. In contrast, an additive model is one where changes are made to existing systems and structures. In England, the approach adopted has largely been additive. When the Labour government expressed its commitment to inclusion in *Excellence for all children* (DfEE, 1997) it set about revising existing policy and guidance to reflect this inclusive orientation. Such an approach can cause difficulties as the amended documents frequently reflect the attitudes, values and priorities of a former time. Lamb, whose inquiry we consider later, noted:

> "The education system is living with a legacy of a time when children with SEN were seen as uneducable. Too often they are still set the least demanding challenges. We found many examples where disabled children and children with SEN were sidelined rather than challenged to be the best that they could possibly be."
>
> (Lamb, 2009, p2)

In explaining the complexity of the issues surrounding identification and the inevitable variation that has resulted, the history of special education cannot be ignored. Historically, emphasis was placed initially on a medical model of disability and difference. This is evident in the definition of the official category of 'feeble-minded' used at the start of the 20th century, which describes such children as suffering from:

> "…such an incomplete cerebral development that they are behind other children, at the same age and station in life, in mind and conduct, and do not profit by their environment and by education to the same extent as average children."
>
> (Hollander, 1916, p46)

Within a policy and cultural context where the belief was that the difficulty resided entirely within the individual and the purpose of identification was to determine whether that individual should be placed in a special facility or not, such a definition presents few problems. Essentially, the definition is focusing on how the pupil presents and whether they can cope with the same sort of environment and education provided for a typical child. Although terminology changed through the 20th century (see Ellis et al., 2008), it was a period dominated by the medical model and the associated focus on individual deficit.

The adoption of a policy of integration following the 1981 Education Act and subsequently inclusion in 1997 led to an increasing focus on the nature of the learning environment, to the point where the 2001 Code of Practice suggests:

> "The assessment process should always be fourfold. It should focus on the child's learning characteristics, the learning environment that the school is providing for the child, the task and the teaching style. It should be recognised that some difficulties in learning may be caused or exacerbated by the school's learning environment or adult/child relationships. This means looking carefully at such

matters as classroom organisation, teaching materials, teaching style and differentiation in order to decide how these can be developed so that the child is enabled to learn effectively."

<div align="right">(DfES, 2001, p44)</div>

Identification of SEN becomes a more complex and subjective process once this approach is adopted. Within the Code's description of a fourfold assessment process, there is acknowledgement that the child brings something to the situation, expressed here in terms of 'learning characteristics', but that the degree of difficulty experienced is also influenced by all aspects of the environment. No longer is identification solely based on how the pupil presents and whether they can cope with the same sort of environment and education provided for a typical child. The suggestion is that the aspects of the environment need to change; this means that an individual school's willingness and ability to develop its own practice become variables in determining whether a pupil can be considered to have SEN.

Despite this, the formal definition of SEN still refers to pupils having a learning difficulty defined in terms of 'a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of the same age' and a requirement for 'special educational provision' defined in terms of 'additional to, or otherwise different from, the educational provision made generally for children of their age in schools maintained by the LEA, other than special schools, in the area' (DfES, 2001, p6). Though the phrases are different, the underlying criteria expressed are very similar to Hollander's (1916) definition of feeble-minded, even though this came from a very different period in the history of special education. As soon as context and conditions are recognised as variables that can and should be considered and manipulated, the notion of 'educational provision made generally' loses clarity and relevance in the identification process. As schools develop their inclusive practice, some practice that was once considered 'additional to, or otherwise different' (DfES, 2001, p6) becomes standard and 'part of the school's usual differentiated curriculum offer and strategies' (DfES, 2001, p52) and no longer an indicator of SEN. Ofsted (2010) highlighted this issue in their comment that:

"Nearly one fifth of the schools visited suggested that they provided many interventions that could be considered 'additional' and 'different' when, in other schools, such provision was regarded as the norm."

<div align="right">(Ofsted, 2010, p40)</div>

Arguably, the current difficulties in identification have been 'stored up' by the reliance on a definition of SEN that has its origins a long time before the commitment to integration and subsequently inclusion. Schools are faced with having to make approximate judgements based on:

- a degree of difficulty in learning, which the Code of Practice (DfES, 2001) covers descriptively rather than in terms of specific performance indicators; and
- an appraisal of whether what they need to provide for the pupil is sufficiently 'additional to or otherwise different from' (DfES, 2001, p6) what other schools might provide to be construed as 'special educational provision' (DfES, 2001, p6).

The first point is dependent on an interpretation of the Code's description of triggers for School Action and School Action Plus. The second point may reflect the extent to which an individual school's inclusive practice has evolved rather than the pupil's level of difficulty.

Far from being a secure reference point that contributes to consistency in identification, the Code of Practice (DfES, 2001) includes numerous interpretable phrases such as 'significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of the same age', 'educational provision made generally for children of their age', 'additional and different', 'inadequate progress', 'the school's usual differentiated curriculum offer and strategies' and 'differentiated learning opportunities' that are not conducive to consistency. Though Ofsted suggested that identification of SEN varied widely despite extensive statutory guidance, it could be argued that it is the nature of the guidance itself that has contributed significantly to this inconsistency.

As previously noted, Ofsted had commented on variations in schools' use of the term 'special educational needs' in their 2004 report through their observation that:

> "Some schools use the term to cover all who are low-attaining, or simply below average, on entry, whether or not the cause is learning difficulty."
>
> (Ofsted, 2004, p10)

Within this comment there is an implicit assumption that a learning difficulty can be clearly defined and that being low-attaining is not a relevant factor. The Code of Practice definition of SEN offers a rather tautological definition of what constitutes a learning difficulty, stating that:

> "Children have a learning difficulty if they…have a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of the same age."
>
> (DfES, 2001, p6)

In terms of identifying whether a child has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than other pupils of the same age, their attainment would seem to be quite a sensible reference point. However, it is interpretable how low attainment would need to be before it could be considered evidence of a significantly greater difficulty in learning.

Lamb's (2009) point referred to earlier regarding the legacy of a time when children with SEN were seen as uneducable is relevant in relation to expectations of the achievement of pupils with SEN. The language of the Code of Practice is focused on difficulty and failure. As already indicated, the definition of a learning difficulty refers to 'a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of the same age.' (DfES, 2001, p6). If teachers look further into the Code for more guidance on identification, they encounter the suggestion that:

> "The key test of the need for action is evidence that current rates of progress are inadequate. There should not be an assumption that all children will progress at the same rate. A judgement has to be made in each case as to what it is reasonable to expect a particular child to achieve. Where progress is not adequate, it will be necessary to take some additional or different action to enable the pupil to learn more effectively."
>
> (DfES, 2001, p52)

Given that SEN is defined in terms of a 'significantly greater difficulty in learning' and notions of inadequate progress, it seems paradoxical that there is ongoing concern (e.g. DfES, 2005a, DfE, 2011) regarding the underachievement of pupils with SEN. Underachievement is entirely consistent with the criteria set for identification; presumably, if the pupil *was* achieving, they could not be viewed as making progress that was inadequate. To engage in such speculation runs the risk of accusations of accepting low expectations of pupils with SEN. However, such accusations miss the point. The issue is not whether teachers should be concerned over the

progress of pupils with SEN. It is, of course, entirely appropriate to expect all pupils, including those with SEN, to make progress from their own starting points and for teachers to intervene where such progress is not made. The issue under scrutiny is the co-existence of a Code of Practice that emphasises educational difficulties and notions of inadequate progress as defining features of SEN alongside policy and guidance that regularly remarks critically when the group of children defined in this way underachieve.

The SEN Green Paper (DfE, 2011)

Ofsted reported in September 2010, after the Coalition Government had come into office. The review had been commissioned by the previous government 'to evaluate how well the legislative framework and arrangements were serving disabled children and young people and those who ave special educational needs.' (Ofsted, 2010, p5). The Coalition Government's 2011 Green Paper *Support and aspiration: a new approach to special educational needs and disability* (DfE, 2011) has shifted the discourse from variations in identification to an issue of overidentification of SEN. This is not a new concern for policy makers. In his foreword to the Green Paper *Excellence for all children*, David Blunkett commented that 'as our policies take effect, the proportion of secondary age children whom schools need to identify as having SEN should move closer to 10%' (DfEE, 1997, p12). The replacement of the original Code of Practice's (DfE, 1994a) three school-based stages with School Action and School Action Plus could be seen as a means of removing those pupils recorded at Stage 1 from schools' SEN registers. The revised Code of Practice (DfES, 2001) made clear that differentiation was part of standard teaching rather than an indicator that the pupil had SEN. In reality, this change in the school-based stages made minimal impact on the overall numbers of pupils recorded as having SEN. In 2006, the House of Commons Education and Skills Committee stated that around 1.45 million children were categorised as having some sort of SEN in England in 2005 – 18% of all pupils. The 2011 Green Paper states that in January 2010 21% of the school population were identified as having SEN.

The 2011 Green Paper sees replacing School Action and School Action Plus with a single category of SEN as the solution to both variation and perceived overidentification. This has the potential to radically reduce the number of pupils recorded as having SEN by removing a significant proportion of those currently classified by schools as School Action.

Presentation and discussion of data

As the preceding section highlights, the identification of SEN has been the subject of ongoing debate due to variability in identification rates between LAs and between individual schools. Both the survey and the case study interviews explored how schools were determining whether or not a pupil had SEN.

Mainstream survey respondents were provided with the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice definition of SEN and asked how helpful they found it. Twenty-eight per cent said the definition was helpful and 32% unhelpful, 33% were ambivalent and 6% said they had not seen it. The proportion saying the definition was helpful was the same for primary and secondary teachers (28%). Of those who had not seen the definition, slightly more (in relation to total population) were male (25%), 34% were newly qualified teachers or had been qualified less than five years and 30% had been qualified more than 15 years.

Thirty-nine per cent of mainstream respondents said that this definition informed their school's identification of pupils with SEN, 33% said it did not and 27% were unsure. A higher proportion of primary respondents said the definition informed their school's identification of pupils with

SEN (45% compared with 34% secondary) and a higher proportion of secondary respondents were not sure (34% compared with 19% primary).

Mainstream respondents were asked to indicate which criteria from a provided list a pupil would have to meet to be identified as having SEN (see Table 1.1). The majority (83.2%) of respondents indicated that the one criterion a pupil would have to meet to be identified is the formal definition of SEN from the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice (DfES, 2001). This was followed by 'has a diagnosis or label (e.g. dyslexia, autism)', which was identified as a necessary criterion by 70.3%.

Criteria used for identifying SEN			
	In my school a pupil would have to meet this criterion before we identified them as having SEN:		
Criterion	Yes	No	Not sure
	%	%	%
Low-attaining compared with others in their class/school	45.1	42	12.9
Low-attaining compared with national expectations for pupils of their age	53.3	35.4	11.3
Has a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made for them[3]	83.2	12	4.8
Has a diagnosis or label (e.g. dyslexia, autism)	70.3	25.3	4.4
Requires support in lessons from a teaching assistant	46.3	46.7	6.9
Regularly requires differentiated work	48.2	42.9	8.9
Regularly disrupts the rest of the class	36.2	53.9	9.9

Table 1.1 Mainstream teachers' views on criteria a pupil would have to meet before being identified as having SEN

Respondents could select more than one of the criteria shown in Table 1.1 as necessary before a pupil was identified as having SEN. The spread of responses in Table 1.1 serves to illustrate that though the majority of respondents indicated that the formal Code of Practice definition was a criterion that had to be met, a range of other criteria was also being used in some schools, alongside or instead of the formal definition. It is perhaps to be expected that judgements about whether a pupil met the formal definition of SEN would be informed by other criteria. For example, 'low-attaining compared with national expectations for pupils of their age' was identified as a necessary criteria (see Table 1.1) by over half of the survey respondents. Only the formal definition of SEN and a diagnosis or 'label' attracted higher percentages. A number of the response options available could be seen as indicative of a greater difficulty in learning or representative of special educational provision.

In order to explore how central the formal definition was to the identification of the pupil as having SEN, teachers were asked which of the criteria alone would lead to a pupil being identified as having SEN (see Table 1.2).

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[3] The Code of Practice (DfES, 2001), definition of SEN

Criteria used for identifying SEN			
	Any of the criteria that alone would be sufficient for your school to identify a pupil as having SEN		
Criterion	**Yes**	**No**	**Not sure**
	%	%	%
Low-attaining compared with others in their class/school	29.8	55.2	15
Low-attaining compared with national expectations for pupils of their age	34	50.1	15.9
Has a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made for them	84.4	7.3	8.3
Has a diagnosis or label (e.g. dyslexia, autism)	81.2	11.4	7.3
Requires support in lessons from a teaching assistant	39.2	48	12.8
Regularly requires differentiated work	32.5	53.6	13.9
Regularly disrupts the rest of the class	33.7	52.6	13.7

Table 1.2 Mainstream teachers' views on criteria that alone would be sufficient for the school to identify a pupil as having SEN

The majority (84.4%) said that having 'a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made for them' was sufficient for a pupil to be identified as having SEN. For 81.2%, having 'a diagnosis or label (e.g. dyslexia, autism)' was sufficient.

Though the majority of respondents have highlighted what might be viewed as the 'right' responses, of greater interest in terms of national concerns over consistency in the identification of SEN is the spread of other criteria that alone would apparently lead the school to identify the pupil as having SEN.

The survey data set out in Tables 1.1 and 1.2 does suggest that schools are using a range of criteria to identify children with SEN while staying broadly loyal to both the Code of Practice definition and the more traditional medicalised definition relating to the child having a diagnosis or label. This provides some explanation for the variation in identification identified by Ofsted (2010).

At the time of the case study interviews, schools were aware of government concerns about variability and overidentification of SEN, having been alerted by media reports. Interviewees fully accepted that there was variability in identification between schools in their LA but when describing their experiences it was clear that the Code of Practice definition did not provide sufficient guidance to address the identification dilemmas they experienced in their day-to-day teaching. The following examples illustrate this:

> "It's not easy (i.e. identification) as a subject teacher. I have children with very low literacy and low attention – they are very difficult to teach, but are they SEN? I don't know. Do they need extra support? Yes. Have we got that? No. Do they disrupt others? Yes."
>
> (Secondary modern foreign languages (MFL) teacher)

"I have students who don't have SEN but who cannot access the curriculum because they have difficulty with attention and engagement, so I have to ask, 'Is there a specific reason for this? Or are they just low-achieving?'"

(Secondary teacher)

These teachers' confusion and reluctance about using 'low-achieving' as a criterion for SEN identification is important, suggesting a degree of awareness of Ofsted's criticism of schools that use SEN to denote children who are 'low-attaining, or simply below average, on entry, whether or not the cause is learning difficulty.' (Ofsted, 2004, p10). However, their confusion cannot be attributed to lack of competence or flagrant disregard for the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice because there was an overwhelming consensus from interviewees that the purpose for identification of SEN was so that the child could get the provision they need to make progress.

The Code of Practice's (DfES, 2001, p6) reference to 'a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of pupils of their same age' and the advice that the 'key test for action is evidence that the current rates of progress are inadequate' (DfES, 2011, p69) would seem to support the need for teachers to make use of attainment testing and rates of progress in the identification of SEN. However, an overarching and ongoing Government concern in relation to SEN is the underachievement of pupils with SEN (e.g. DfES, 2005a, DfE, 2011). Teachers are experiencing the paradox of using significant discrepancies in attainment from age-related norms and notions of inadequate progress to identify SEN while at the same time being told that SEN is not an excuse for low achievement (DfE, 2011). While it is acknowledged that there may be some interpretation in the term 'significant', one headteacher noted:

"I want my SENs to make better progress than they would in other schools but you can't make an entry level 2 child make the same end point as an entry Level 4."

(Headteacher – secondary)

Another commented:

"We need to challenge the assumption of underachievement of SEN as it is bloody obvious in maths, science, English and MFL."

(Headteacher – secondary)

Case study data found that criteria used to identify SEN included the use of attainment tests and progress profiles that would identify pupils who were low-attaining compared with national expectations for pupils of their age.

The main purpose for teachers in retaining the SEN category was so that children could get what they needed and to facilitate all staff having an increased focus on monitoring their rate of progress. Within the survey there was only limited support from respondents (mainstream 10% and special school 12%) for the abandonment of the term 'SEN' and associated procedures. There was rather more support though for the SEN Code of Practice to be revised (35% mainstream, 47% special).

Given that teachers interviewed considered that one of the main purposes for special educational needs identification relates to provision, it makes sense to judge their practice in identification of SEN against 'triggers for intervention' cited within the SEN Code of Practice Guidance. These include:

- "shows signs of difficulty in developing literacy or mathematics skills which result in poor attainment in some curriculum areas";

- "presents persistent emotional or behavioural difficulties which are not ameliorated by the behaviour management techniques usually employed in the school";
- "has communication and/or interaction difficulties, and continues to make little or no progress despite the provision of specialist equipment".

(DfES, 2001, p52 for primary and DfES, 2001, p68 for secondary)

From a teacher's perspective, if a pupil is significantly low-attaining, then that pupil could reasonably be construed to have a 'learning difficulty' when placed in the group setting of the class in which they are required to make prescribed levels of progress in predominantly literacy-based subjects.

In listening to teachers' dilemmas in deciding whether a pupil has SEN, it can be seen that variability in identification rates is not only understandable but inevitable once the individual's needs are considered in relation to:

- the group context in which they are placed;
- the feasibility of providing differentiation to meet the diverse needs of the class;
- the pace, level and nature of curricular learning demands;
- the availability of additional support.

Case study data suggested that teachers and their LAs continued to place particular credence on a medicalised model of identification in which 'within child' constitutional, biological factors automatically lead to an identification of SEN. This was often irrespective of whether the pupil either needed or could be given additional provision. Teachers' comments reflected that it is easier to identify pupils who have an underlying 'medical' condition than to make decisions about whether or not a pupil who is not making progress should be categorised as having SEN. A number of comments illustrated this point:

"Dyslexia is easy to identify."

(Inclusion manager – secondary school)

"SEN identification gives me an explanation – like dyslexia or ASD – but MLD is not an explanation. SEBD…that's different because there is no easy answer."

(Subject teacher – secondary)

"I don't like labelling per se but a diagnosis is useful."

(Primary teacher)

The continued practice of placing priority on medicalised rather than environmental models of identification can be understood in terms of the history of special education. The use of the phrase 'root cause' within the 2011 Green Paper (DfE, 2011, p70) reinforces the notion that there are identifiable, and reliable, diagnostic criteria that can serve to reduce variability within the application of the term 'learning difficulty' and which are central to the identification of SEN. However, although teachers appear to feel more confident in identifying SEN based on a label or diagnosis from a medical practitioner or psychologist, it does not solve their problem in meeting the learning needs of children whose learning difficulties can largely be attributed to environmental factors. As one teacher noted:

"We need to identify behaviour problems but often these pupils are not SEN."

(Subject teacher – secondary)

Another influence of the medical model emerged during discussions with teachers, including those from special schools, about the criteria for statementing children with SEN. There was a consensus view across all schools that it was becoming more difficult to get a statement of SEN, with those pupils placed in special schools reflecting a high level of complex needs, such as pupils with profound and multiple learning disabilities (PMLD) and ASD with challenging behaviour. Of particular concern was the difficulty in getting a statement for pupils with significant BESD. One headteacher from a special school observed:

> "Statemented children have become more complex and you cannot get a statement for SEBD unless it's medical."

This headteacher explained that by 'medical' they meant pupils such as those with a diagnosis of ASD or Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) involvement. This headteacher confirmed that there had been a directive from the LA on this stance. A secondary SENCO told us: "The bar has been raised," in relation to securing a statement.

Although there is continued use of medicalised models for identification of SEN, a cautionary note was provided by a special school headteacher who noted, when discussing provision for statemented pupils:

> "If you think of an SEN child in medical terms, you are not going to get anywhere – you need to think in educational terms."
>
> (Headteacher – special school)

Some of the special school staff interviewed, particularly those who were currently working in or had worked in schools with an original designation of 'MLD', reported experiencing a change in pupil population, with the balance of intakes shifting towards more severe and complex needs, including significantly challenging behaviour. This was a view reflected in the survey. Sixty-nine per cent of special school respondents felt that pupils had more significant/complex behavioural difficulties than was the case five years ago. This change in the special school pupil population is likely to be a result of the policy of inclusion pursued and mainstream schools' increased capacity to include pupils with higher level needs.

There was acceptance from case study respondents that identification rates vary and recognition that some schools within the same LA and/or catchment area had higher identification rates than others. Headteachers, SENCOs and some class teachers interviewed were aware from media coverage that Ofsted's (2010) *The special educational needs and disability review* had highlighted concern that teachers were overidentifying SEN. However, there was consensus from interviewees that this was not due to pervasive reasons such as increased CVA scores or funding benefits. Whilst acknowledging that it could affect CVA, it was also noted that:

> "It's a postcode lottery. We do have more SEN pupils than the national average – this impacts on our CVA – but the downside (of having high numbers of SEN) is that it brings with it behavioural issues and affects A-C grades. Ofsted have now become more concerned with performance than progress."
>
> (Headteacher – secondary)

In relation to budget benefits that might be associated with maintaining a high proportion of pupils on the SEN register, one headteacher observed:

> "You don't see HTs quaffing champagne on their SEN budgets – it always costs more to provide for our SEN than we get a budget for."
>
> (Headteacher – secondary)

Special Educational Needs – *Reflection, Renewal and Reality*

A number of teachers, particularly those with specific responsibility for SEN, and Early Years practitioners noted that within good SEN practices there was a need for early identification and intervention. Referring to Ofsted's (2010) widely reported criticism of schools, one respondent commented:

> "We have to be concerned with early identification and treatment, so how does this fit with overidentification?"
>
> (Headteacher – secondary)

This comment reflects a view that early identification has the potential to highlight pupils who may not turn out to have SEN but may be experiencing some transitory difficulties. There is a degree of conflict between the government expressing concern at apparent overidentification whilst at the same time emphasising the importance of early identification.

For many headteachers and SENCOs, issues of identification rates for SEN were seen within the overall context of the increasing diversity of their intake, often due to social and cultural factors, policy directives for inclusion and increased pressures to reduce attainment gaps and tackle low achievement. Highlighting the number of different groups schools need to identify, one respondent commented:

> "We now have LAC, SEN, vulnerable, G&T, BEM, FSM to identify and there is overlap – they all have needs and they all need identification."
>
> (SENCO – large secondary school)

Interestingly, although teachers accepted that the identification of SEN was subject to variability and were able to describe their dilemmas in deciding whether or not a child should be categorised as SEN, the majority (76.8%) of mainstream survey respondents expressed confidence in their ability to identify their pupils' learning needs. This confidence gap between identification of SEN and identifying learning needs is understandable given that all teachers are involved in the latter but only some have responsibility for determining whether a pupil should be categorised as having SEN.

All those with leadership responsibility for compiling SEN registers, usually headteachers and SENCOs, were confident about how they identified SEN, irrespective of whether their identification rates were considered to be higher or lower than national or local averages. All used a range of data, including:

- SEN lists from previous schools and classes;
- entry level test CAT scores;
- entry level attainment profiles (particularly those pupils who enter secondary at NC level 2)
- progress reports and teacher concerns – increasingly, particularly in primary, based on pupils who are not making two or more levels of progress in a Key Stage (see Progression Guidance);
- diagnostic tests;
- parental information and any information from other agencies, particularly health.

Primary schools were often able to utilise the enhanced opportunities afforded by their setting to gain additional data to inform identification. Because of their size, secondary schools tended to be more reliant on the quality of attainment data from feeder primary schools, existing documentary evidence and entry level testing. The majority of case study respondents noted the need to revisit identification rates of SEN at the end of Year 7 following pupil response to secondary education. Year 7 was frequently the year in which nurture groups were implemented and mixed ability classes endorsed, even in schools that set by ability in Year 8 and onwards.

Although acknowledging difficulties inherent within the identification of SEN and overlap with other categories, there was consensus in case study schools that the SEN category should be retained. This was in spite of knowing the limitations and sometimes pitfalls of labelling that is associated with SEN. In particular, recently trained primary teachers interviewed expressed concern about identifying and labelling pupils as SEN. Illustrating this point, one teacher told us:

> "We know our children so well that an eagerness to label is detrimental – as soon as you give a label it is for life. If you give a label, it is not going to switch the lights on – but then parents think, 'If my child has a label, then you need to give him different teaching.'"
>
> (Class teacher – primary)

Another said:

> "I don't see pupils as 'SEN', I see them in relation to NC Levels so that we all talk the same language."
>
> (Subject teacher – secondary)

From the case study interviews it was evident that what followed on from identification of SEN was often the allocation of provision that was already in place in the school. In some schools, the adoption of provision mapping had encouraged this focus through the process of determining what provision was required at Wave 1, Wave 2 and Wave 3, based on the profile of need within the school. Once drawn up, the provision map was typically used to represent the provision currently offered by the school and as evidence to parents and others that the school can respond to pupils' diverse needs. Provision often recorded included nurture groups, additional literacy and numeracy groups, circle of friends groups and social skills groups, as well as more individualised approaches. The underlying question for schools in relation to SEN provision is whether, as the school is already offering the provision, it meets the criteria for being 'special'. The SEN Code of Practice construes special provision as that which is: 'additional to, or otherwise different from, the educational provision made generally for children of their age in schools maintained by the LEA' (DfES, 2001, p6). Using this as a reference point requires that a number of factors are taken into account to inform whether provision is 'special' or not, such as the nature of provision made 'generally' in local schools and the number of pupils, including non-SEN pupils, who use this provision.

This is an important point, as, if the 'standard offer of education or care is insufficiently adapted for frequently found needs.' (Ofsted, 2010, p24), then the need for the allocation of provision deemed by the school to be 'special' may be an indication of the school's need to develop its 'usual differentiated curriculum offer' (DfES, 2001, p52). Consequently, the pupil may not meet the national criteria for identification as SEN, even though within their own school they are receiving provision that is 'additional to, or otherwise different from' (DfES, 2001, p6) that which it provides for the majority of pupils.

In some cases, the approach of looking first at what teachers could provide as part of their quality first inclusive teaching and then at what interventions were necessary at Wave 2 and Wave 3 led to critical consideration of whether, as this was provision that was *already* in place in the school, it could be construed as 'additional to, or otherwise different' (DfES, 2001, p6).

The overall picture concerning the identification of SEN suggests that while the Coalition Government's current concern about identification is primarily focused on issues of variability, funding and accountability, teachers' main concern about identification of SEN is through its link

to provision. These differing perspectives are, of course, understandable given the differing roles of teachers and government.

Once this differing emphasis is understood, it can be seen that variation is unlikely to be the result of teachers deliberately ignoring or manipulating government guidance, particularly that which relates to the identification of SEN delivered to schools through the SEN Code of Practice. Once issues of provision are placed at the heart of identification of SEN then it is the current 'educational need' rather than inherent 'learning difficulty' that becomes the focus for teachers. This need, inherent within the term 'SEN', depends on the educational environment in which the pupil is placed and must take account of the nature and assessment of the learning that is required.

Findings strongly suggest that once contextual factors are taken into consideration in the identification of SEN, variation is an inevitable consequence of the definition of SEN as outlined in the SEN Code of Practice, unless it is possible to standardise school provision and resources.

Findings

1.1   There was overwhelming consensus from the case study schools that the purpose of identification of SEN was that pupils could be allocated the provision and additional monitoring they needed to make progress.

1.2   Teachers interviewed expressed greater confidence in identifying SEN when either there was a clear need for 'special educational provision' (DfES, 2001, p6) to be made for the pupil, or the pupil had a label such as dyslexia or ASD. There was less clarity where it was necessary to make a judgement based on whether the pupil's current performance represented 'a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of the same age' (DfES, 2001, p6). It was evident from the survey data that a variety of criteria are used to identify pupils as SEN in addition to the formal definition within the SEN Code of Practice.

1.3   In the case study schools, it was evident that the identification of SEN is strongly influenced by data related to rates of academic progress and response to existing provision. Primary schools were often able to utilise the enhanced opportunities afforded by their setting to gain additional data to inform identification. Because of their size, secondary schools tended to be more reliant on the quality of attainment data from feeder primary schools, existing documentary evidence and entry-level testing.

1.4   The schools visited all expressed confidence in their own SEN identification systems. Some case study schools were aware that SEN identification rates could favourably affect contextual value added score and in some cases carry funding benefits. However, schools also noted that relatively high percentages of pupils with SEN impacted upon behaviour and learning and that the cost of provision for pupils with SEN typically exceeded the funding.

1.5   There was general awareness in the case study schools that SEN identification rates varied between schools in the same LA and even between schools serving very similar catchment areas. SENCOs in particular recognise, and have experienced, that the definition of SEN and other elements within the Code of Practice, such as the triggers for School Action, are open to interpretation.

1.6   Many of the class and subject teachers in case study schools had not been directly involved in the classification of a pupil as having SEN, because the identification had taken place prior to the pupil joining their class or subject group, but fully acknowledged their responsibility for provision and the monitoring of progress. When class and subject teachers suspect a pupil may have as yet unidentified SEN, they typically supply data and raise concerns with the SENCO and/or via regular SEN review meetings.

1.7   The identification of SEN takes place alongside identification of a range of additional needs. Many case study schools were accustomed to identifying vulnerable groups. Some schools, particularly secondary, highlighted the problem in determining whether the range of social, emotional and cognitive difficulties experienced by the pupil could reasonably be classified as SEN. The majority of survey respondents were confident in their ability to identify the learning needs of pupils with SEN.

1.8   There was concern, particularly in primary school settings, that any policy directives to reduce the number of pupils identified as SEN would conflict with existing practices that seek to promote early identification and timely intervention.

1.9   Some interviewees expressed a view that it was very difficult to get a Statement for BESD unless it could be attributed to a medical condition such as ASD or mental health.

1.10   Some special schools, notably those with an original designation of MLD, have experienced a change in pupil population, with the balance of intakes shifting towards more severe and complex needs, including significantly challenging behaviour. The majority of special school respondents to the survey also noted this.

1.11   Many secondary school staff interviewed highlighted the pervasive effects on attainment and behaviour across the curriculum of long-term learning delays and differences in basic skills such as language and literacy. An issue raised by some of these schools was the extent of delay or difference that warranted identification as SEN against the criteria set out in the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice (DfES, 2001).

Emerging issues and implications for policy

- Ofsted (2010) found that the consistency of the identification of SEN varied widely, not only between different local areas but also within them. The 2011 Green Paper also raises a concern regarding over-identification of SEN. Though Ofsted's observation that identification of SEN varied widely 'despite extensive statutory guidance' (2010, p7) implies that schools are not making appropriate use of what has been provided by central government, there is a need to question whether it is the interpretable nature of this guidance that has contributed significantly to this inconsistency. When schools use the current Special Educational Needs Code of Practice (DfES, 2001) as a guide to identification, they are faced with numerous interpretable phrases, such as 'significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of the same age', 'educational provision made generally for children of their age', 'additional and different', 'inadequate progress', 'the school's usual differentiated curriculum offer and strategies' and 'differentiated learning opportunities', that are not conducive to consistency.

- Overall, there was little confidence among teachers interviewed that current legislation and guidance provided comparable processes between schools regarding identification of SEN.

- Identification of SEN is complex and historically placed emphasis initially on a medical and subsequently a social model of disability and difference. It is clear from the research conducted that the current identification system is already more easily applied to forms of SEN that are relatively stable across contexts and largely attributable to a physical or medical need. A concern is that the 2011 Green Paper is written with a focus primarily on these forms of SEN and the promised 'new single assessment process' will bias identification towards a medical model. There is a risk that this could lead to the underidentification of those children whose difficulties in learning are a manifestation of an ongoing interaction between emotional, social and cognitive factors.

- Any definition of SEN that makes reference to the influence of contextual factors is likely to lead to variability in identification rates between schools and within LAs. The current definition of SEN makes reference to 'educational provision which is additional to, or otherwise different from, the educational provision made generally for children of their age in schools maintained by the LEA' (DfES, 2001, p6). Therefore the identification of the child as having SEN is in part a reflection of what provision and support is available in a particular school and community. It is interesting to note that the 2011 Green Paper itself refers to 'school-based catch-up support which is normally available' (DfE, 2011, p58), which again introduces a contextual element related to what is normally available in any one school. The implication is that there is a standard expectation of what all schools should be providing irrespective of their catchment area and the profile of their pupil population.

- Currently, considerable emphasis has been placed on identification of SEN (e.g. Ofsted, 2010, DfE, 2011). This is likely to be a distraction from the need to address real concerns about provision and outcomes. While identification as having SEN may serve to highlight both a difficulty and a need for provision, in itself it does not necessarily inform specific teaching approaches. The 2011 Green Paper proposes clearer 'guidance for professionals about how to identify SEN accurately' (DfE, 2011, p67). This assumes a straightforward link between identification and provision required. While there may be some categories of SEN for which this model might be applicable, there remains concern about those pupils for whom the link between identification and provision is less clear cut. Whilst it is entirely appropriate to pursue improvements in educational provision for pupils with SEN, a simplistic notion of transferable 'best practice' needs to be challenged.

- In isolation, variability in identification of pupils as SEN is arguably inevitable and not especially problematic. However, the link between identification as having SEN, funding and access to support introduces issues of parity of experience for both pupils and their parents/carers. Identification is important if there is a finite amount of resources to which identification as SEN provides access. In the current economic climate, it is necessary to recognise that identification as SEN presently offers some degree of protection against cost-saving measures both locally and nationally. For many parents the fundamental principle within the Code of Practice (DfES, 2001) that a child with SEN should have their needs met means that identification as SEN offers a degree of protection and school accountability. The Coalition Government's 2011 Green Paper identifies replacing School Action and School Action Plus with a single category of SEN as the solution to variation and perceived overidentification. However, there may be serious implications if a reduction in apparent overidentification also leads to a reduction in early identification.

- The emphasis on pupil achievement within national policy and a concern that pupils with SEN are underachieving has also introduced another dilemma in identification. There is a need to explore how underachievement and inadequate progress are conceptualised by government, Ofsted, LAs and schools. The Code of Practice states that 'The key test of the need for action is evidence that current rates of progress are inadequate' (DfES, 2001, p52) and that 'Where progress is not adequate, it will be necessary to take some additional or different action to enable the pupil to learn more effectively' (DfES, 2001, p52). The definition of SEN requires the pupil to be in need of special educational provision described in terms of that 'which is additional to, or otherwise different from, the educational provision made generally for children of their age in schools maintained by the LEA' (DfES, 2001, p6). Inadequate progress therefore would seem to be inextricably linked with the identification of pupils as having SEN. It is currently open to interpretation how underachievement and inadequate progress are conceptually different. It could be experienced as paradoxical therefore for teachers to be told with concern or any degree of surprise that a significant number of pupils with SEN are underachieving when notions of inadequate progress are embedded in the definition of SEN. For example, if a pupil is making good progress from their own baseline (i.e. 'achieving'), even if not exceeding, meeting or closing the gap with national expectations, is it legitimate to identify them as having SEN? In raising this issue, the intention is not to defend low expectations but to highlight the issue that teachers have to make sense of the differing received messages surrounding inadequate progress and underachievement. This is important because it relates directly to government concerns regarding schools' overidentification of SEN and teachers' low expectations for pupils with SEN.

- The 2011 Green Paper is committed to a focus on outcomes and promises to 'introduce an indicator in performance tables which will give parents clear information on the progress of the lowest attaining pupils' (DfE, 2011, p58). It would seem important for such 'progress' to be articulated in terms of both attainment and achievement if wider holistic outcomes are to be recognised. For some pupils with SEN, and their parents, progress that only recognises academic attainment may be inappropriate and could lead to negative experiences of school and feelings of failure. For schools and their teachers, there will be a need for clarity about what measures are used, what the data will be used for and the extent of responsibility assigned to the school.

- The 2011 Green Paper and Ofsted (2010) have brought into sharp focus the issue of identification of pupils. Debates on this topic are likely to provoke strong feelings, particularly in the light of messages from Ofsted (2010) and reinforced by the 2011 Green Paper that seemed to apportion considerable blame to teachers and schools. Teachers in the schools visited as part of this research were concerned that identification should recognise how the individual's learning difficulties are experienced within the group setting of the classroom in order that appropriate provision could be put in place. These schools were generally data-rich environments and used pupil-level data to enable them to spot any pupils who were underachieving, ask themselves why and intervene to address this. There is a need for sensible debate regarding identification freed from some of the more emotive suggestions contained in these recent documents.

- There are many pupils, besides those with SEN, who experience, in Booth and Ainscow's (2002, p4) terms, 'barriers to learning and participation'. It was evident from case study interviews that schools focused on a range of vulnerable groups, of which pupils with SEN were one. This heightened awareness may be attributable to Ofsted's (2000) *Evaluating Educational Inclusion*. The reality is that the practice and provision available in a school

to address the needs of a particular vulnerable group may also meet the needs of a range of pupils deemed vulnerable under different headings. This is an alternative perspective to one that views pupils with SEN as necessarily always in need of provision that is distinct. However, unlike other vulnerable groups, those with SEN are subject to identification and provision through a Code of Practice (DfES, 2001) and frequently a discrete funding stream.

- In some schools the use of provision mapping has contributed to a stronger focus on the development of a range of provision and interventions available to meet the diversity of the school population. A potential risk of such an approach is that the child with SEN is fitted to the available provision rather than triggering the identification of provision required for the individual. A wide range of provisions within any one school require rigorous communication and monitoring systems to ensure quality and coherence of experience for the individual pupil.

CHAPTER 2: TRAINING, SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT NEEDS

Exploration of the literature

Training for teachers in relation to SEN: an enduring issue

According to Hodkinson (2010, p64), inclusion has stalled in schools because educational institutions are not fit to include all children due to barriers of 'lack of knowledge, lack of will, lack of vision, lack of resources and lack of morality' (Clough and Garner, 2003). The premise underpinning this suggestion is that inclusion is dependent on teachers' attitudes and competence: if schools are to become inclusive, they must develop an ethos that enables all pupils to be supported and which provides for the needs of teachers (Hanko, 2003). As far back as the Warnock Report (DES, 1978), the training of teachers was highlighted as a factor that inhibited the successful implementation of SEN strategies and it is a point that has been made subsequently by various other commentators, but there remains a common feeling among professionals that training to date has been 'woefully inadequate' (Corbett, 2001).

In an earlier (2009) paper, Hodkinson reports the findings from a literature review of the English government's response to the issue of training pre-service teachers in the delivery of effective SEN support, focusing on literature between 1970 and 2008 on ITT, higher education institutes (HEIs) and SEN. Miller (2008) commented that the Government's lack of action on training had enveloped its policy within a 'groundhog day' and Hodkinson's review shows that the 2002 standards for qualified teacher status (QTS) 'bear a remarkable resemblance' to those laid out in the Warnock Report (DES, 1978), suggesting that successive governments had made little or no progress in regard to training for SEN. A comment made by Ofsted reiterates that of Warnock, stating that teachers 'were being asked to lead children with significant learning needs and manage difficult situations without enough learning' (Ofsted, 2003, p24). *Removing Barriers to Achievement* (DfES, 2004b) again made it clear that the Government expected every teacher to be a teacher of children with SEN. Within this document, the Government proposed a three-tier training model of:

- Core skills: for **all** teachers in **all** schools.
- Advanced skills: **some** teachers in **all** schools.
- Specialist skills: in **some** local schools.

<div align="right">(DfES, 2004b)</div>

Hodkinson (2009) reported that Vickerman (2007) found only 29% of HEIs in England offered trainees mandatory modules in SEN, with 42% offering optional modules and 50% developing trainees' knowledge of SEN in a purely theoretical way. According to Winter (2006), trainees could receive as little as ten hours' training on SEN issues. In 2007, the Teacher Development Agency (TDA) worked with HEIs on a project that involved the delivery of three training modules focusing on SEN and disability with a four-week special school placement piloted in 20 HEIs. This was said to have had a very positive response but there was no data from the TDA. In a debate on SEN, MPs asked about the significance of these initiatives and Miller (2008) said she could find no official statistics of the number of trainees who had received specialist training, suggesting nothing had changed. The new standards for QTS (TDA, 2007) were seen by the Government as an important vehicle for the development of trainees' SEN knowledge but still promote a 'technicist approach' (Pearson, 2007, p26) of auditable competences rather than values of pedagogical principles that underpin SEN practice. It could be argued that the standards might only restrict the further development of SEN knowledge to promote the Government's agenda of personalised learning: as Ofsted (2008) found, there is considerable variation between programmes. The recommendation from the study is that Government and HEIs need to work together to provide co-ordinated learning programmes.

The House of Commons Education and Skills Committee (2006) highlighted the issue of training through its clear recommendation that:

> "…the Government fully implements its own strategic approach to training outlined in the SEN Strategy: putting into practice the "triangle of training needs" in order to achieve the proposed three tiers of specialism in every school; making SEN training a core, compulsory part of initial training for all teachers; and ensuring appropriate priority and quality of continuing professional development to equip all of the workforce. There is a broad consensus of agreement on these proposals and yet little progress has been made since 2004. This is not acceptable."
> (House of Commons Education and Skills Committee, 2006, p116)

The Inclusion Development Programme (IDP) materials followed in 2008. These had been proposed in *Removing Barriers to Achievement* (DfES, 2004b) so it is unclear whether these would have been issued anyway or were a direct response to the reminder from the Education and Skills Committee.

The first two sets of IDP materials released focused on speech, language and communication needs and on dyslexia. These were followed in 2009 by materials for supporting pupils on the autism spectrum and materials for supporting pupils with BESD in 2010. Research by Lindsay et al. (2011) looking at a number of government initiatives aimed at improving teachers' knowledge, skills and understanding in relation to SEN and disabilities (SEND) reported positively on the uptake and use of the IDP materials.

The IDP materials were intended to strengthen CPD in relation to SEN and were disseminated through the National Strategies. Alongside this development, the TDA developed the SEND Training Toolkit for students in ITT. The Toolkit was made available to providers of primary undergraduate courses in ITT in HEIs in Phase 1 (2008-09), followed by materials in 2009-10 for providers of secondary undergraduate courses and for providers of the postgraduate teacher training (PGCE) primary/secondary in 2010-11 (Lindsay et al., 2011). In addition to the toolkit, there was an extended placement initiative that allowed undergraduate primary and secondary ITT students to gain first-hand experience of pupils with SEND, particularly the specialist provision that is available, by spending periods of time in a special school setting. The Lindsay et al. (2011) research reported positively on both the toolkit and the extended placement initiative.

Mandatory Training for SENCOs

The House of Commons Education and Skills Committee report had also identified a number of issues related to the role, status and qualification of SENCOs. It stated:

> "Special educational needs co-ordinators (SENCOs) should in all cases be qualified teachers and in a senior management position in the school as recommended in the SEN Code of Practice."
> (House of Commons Education and Skills Committee, 2006, p74)

Though neither the original (DfE, 1994a) nor the revised Code (DfES, 2001) could be accused of encouraging it as an approach, some schools chose to appoint staff without a teaching qualification to the role of SENCO as this was not specifically precluded. The suggestion that the SENCO should be part of the senior management team had been put forward in the Code of Practice (DfES, 2001) and *Removing Barriers to Achievement* (DfES, 2004b). In discussing this issue, the House of Commons Education and Skills Committee made an important point about the status of the Code of Practice, noting:

> "Firmer guidelines are required rather than the Government asking schools to 'have regard to' the SEN Code of Practice. The role and position of a SENCO must reflect the central priority that SEN should hold within schools."
>
> (House of Commons Education and Skills Committee, 2006, p74)

This issue is relevant not just to the SENCO's place on the senior leadership team. The Code only states that schools, LAs and other bodies that may be involved 'must consider what this Code says' and 'must fulfil their statutory duties towards children with special educational needs but it is up to them to decide how to do so – in the light of the guidance in this Code of Practice.' (DfES, 2001, piii). This status allows considerable flexibility in how schools and LAs interpret many aspects of the Code of Practice.

The Education and Skills Committee also highlighted the need for SENCOs to receive 'ongoing training opportunities to enable them to keep their knowledge up to date' (House of Commons Education and Skills Committee, 2006, p116).

Of the three points – the need to be a qualified teacher, the need to be appropriately trained and the need to be part of the senior leadership team – two have subsequently been addressed by government. The Education (Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators) (England) Regulations (2008) required SENCOs to be qualified teachers from September 2009. The Education (Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2009 introduced the requirement for SENCOs new to the role from 1 September 2009 onwards to undertake a mandatory course. This was referred to in the regulations as 'The National Award for Special Educational Needs Co-ordination'. The regulations state that the qualification must be gained within three years of appointment. So far, the course has been funded by the TDA. It remains to be seen what will happen if the funding ceases but the mandatory requirement remains. In such a situation, schools appointing a teacher to the SENCO role who has never held the role before would need to factor in to their considerations the cost of training.

The National Award for Special Educational Needs Co-ordination course is accredited, providing 60 credits towards a Master's degree, and takes a year to complete on a part-time basis. The award is therefore both a professional and academic qualification. Special schools are not covered by the regulations and so there is no requirement for a special school SENCO to undertake the course.

The House of Commons Education and Skills Committee's (2006) point regarding the SENCO's membership of the senior leadership team has not been fully addressed. The position is still that the SENCO should be part of or have direct access to the senior leadership team. The notion of direct access is not clarified and is open to interpretation, potentially representing a very different level of influence from membership of the senior leadership team.

The focus on training within the 2011 Green Paper (DfE, 2011)

The 2011 Green Paper has also placed emphasis on the issue of training, referring to plans to 'strengthen initial training' and 'boost the availability of advanced-level continuous professional development' (DfE, 2011, p60). It seems that a focus for some of the training will be on identifying children's needs. The terminology related to training in identification is interesting: the 2011 Green Paper notes the concern that:

"Children's needs should be picked up as early as possible, but teachers tell us that they have not always had training to identify children's needs, or to provide the right help."

(DfE, 2011, p9)

Training in identification per se is likely to be of limited value to classroom teachers if it does not also contribute to a better knowledge and understanding of strategies and approaches that are feasible to implement in a classroom context. There is perhaps a need to question the difference between identifying what a child needs in order to learn in terms of teaching approaches, support and additional resourcing and identifying a child's needs in terms of the form of SEN they have. The former will always be important in terms of improving the education of pupils with SEN and/or disability. The latter is important where identification of a particular type of need (e.g. ASD, dyslexia) informs teaching approaches or the need for specific interventions. In recognising the valuable contribution that identification of the particular type of need can sometimes make, it should not lead to an assumption that prioritising this as a focus for training will address perceived concerns regarding the education of pupils with SEN.

The terminology regarding the focus of identification also changes at points within the 2011 Green Paper, at times referring to identifying children's needs and elsewhere to identifying SEN. One proposal, for example, refers to being 'much clearer in guidance for professionals about how to identify SEN accurately' (DfE, 2011, p67) and seeks to improve teachers' ability in this area. It is important to recognise that identifying SEN accurately is different to either identifying children's needs or the type of SEN they have. The former would seem to relate to identifying whether or not a pupil fits within what is essentially a socially constructed category. As has already been explored in Chapter 1, the definition of SEN that is currently used is open to interpretation. It is difficult to imagine how greater accuracy in identification in relation to an interpretable category can be achieved through training. The issue the Government would seem to be wrestling with in relation to which pupils schools view as having SEN would not seem to be one of accuracy but of consistency. Consistency would seem to be best achieved through clearer national criteria rather than training – though some training may be necessary in how to apply the criteria.

Given the emphasis the 2011 Green Paper places on the identification of children's needs and more accurate identification of SEN, it is interesting to note how few of the factors identified by Ofsted (2010, p47) that influenced successful learning related directly to issues of identification (See Table 2.1).

When children and young people learned best:	When children and young people's learning was least successful:
They looked to the teacher for their main learning and to the support staff for support	Teachers did not spend enough time finding out what children and young people already knew or had understood
Assessment was secure, continuous and acted upon	Teachers were not clear about what they expected children and young people to learn as opposed to what they expected them to do
Teachers planned opportunities for pupils to collaborate, work things out for themselves and apply what they had learnt to different situations	The roles of additional staff were not planned well or additional staff were not trained well and the support provided was not monitored sufficiently
	cont'd

When children and young people learned best:	When children and young people's learning was least successful:
Teachers' subject knowledge was good, as was their understanding of pupils' needs and how to help them	Expectations of disabled children and young people and those who had SEN were low
Lesson structures were clear and familiar but allowed for adaptation and flexibility	Communication was poor: teachers spent too much time talking, explanations were confusing, feedback was inconsistent
All aspects of a lesson were well thought out and any adaptations needed were made without fuss to ensure that everyone in class had access	Language was too complex for all children and young people to understand
Teachers presented information in different ways to ensure all children and young people understood	The tone, and even body language, used by adults was confusing for some of the children and young people who found social subtleties and nuances difficult to understand
Teachers adjusted the pace of the lesson to reflect how children and young people were learning	Activities and additional interventions were inappropriate and were not evaluated in terms of their effect on children and young people's learning
The staff understood clearly the difference between ensuring that children and young people were learning and keeping them occupied	Resources were poor, with too little thought having been given to their selection and use
Respect for individuals was reflected in high expectations for their achievement	Children and young people had little engagement in what they were learning, usually as a result of the above features
The effectiveness of specific types of support was understood and the right support was put in place at the right time	

Table 2.1 Factors identified by Ofsted (2010) that contribute to successful and unsuccessful learning

However, it would be wrong to suggest that no support could be found in Ofsted's report in relation to the 2011 Green Paper's interest in strengthening teachers' ability to identify pupils' needs. Ofsted (2010) noted that careful analysis of need, close monitoring of each individual's progress and a shared perception of desired outcomes was a feature of effective provision. However, the other characteristics of effectiveness practice noted were:

- high aspirations for the achievement of all children and young people;
- good teaching and learning for all children and young people;
- evaluation of the effectiveness of provision at all levels in helping to improve opportunities and progress;
- leaders who looked to improving general provision to meet a wider range of needs rather than always increasing additional provision;

- swift changes to provision, in and by individual providers and local areas, as a result of evaluating achievement and wellbeing.

Again, there is not a strong message that better identification of need is the determining factor. Indeed, it would be possible to argue that training would be better focused on the features of practice that Ofsted (2010) suggest are present when children and young people learn best.

Within the 2011 Green Paper, training appears to be conceptualised as 'spreading best practice' (DfE, 2011, p67) from either mainstream or special schools with outstanding Ofsted reports. The use of special schools in this way is not a new idea: *Excellence for all children* (DfEE, 1997, p49) expressed an intention to 'examine how special school staff can work more closely with mainstream schools and support services to meet the needs of all pupils with SEN' and *Removing Barriers to Achievement* (DfES, 2004b, p26) referred to a role for special schools in 'sharing their specialist skills and knowledge to support inclusion in mainstream schools'

The Importance of Teaching (DfE, 2010) set out proposals to develop a national network of teaching schools, intended 'to lead and develop sustainable approaches to teacher development across the country' (DfE, 2010, p23) and drive school improvement. The 2011 Green Paper extends this idea in relation to SEN, seeking to find ways of ensuring 'that the expertise of special schools, and mainstream schools with excellent SEN practice, is harnessed and spread through Teaching Schools partnerships' (DfE, 2011, p60).

Though the 2011 Green Paper presents its interest in strengthening training within the context of a new approach to SEN and disability, it should be recognised that the previous government placed considerable faith in strengthening ITT and CPD in relation to SEN (e.g. DfEE, 1997, DfES, 2004b). Research by Lindsay et al. (2011) reported positively on a number of the Labour Government initiatives aimed at improving teachers' knowledge, skills and understanding skills in relation to SEND. Copious materials were also produced by the National Strategies related to SEN and inclusive teaching. There has therefore been no lack of training materials in relation to SEN. Before the Government seeks to produce more materials, there is perhaps a need to identify what is already currently available and canvass teachers' views on preferred formats and modes of delivery.

Presentation and discussion of data

In the survey, only 12.4% of mainstream and 27.7% of special school teachers indicated that they had an additional qualification in SEN. The special school percentage is interesting in relation to the recent Policy Exchange study of special schools (Hartley, 2010), which found that on average 52% of teachers in a school had a qualification in SEN, with 23% of respondents saying that all their teaching staff had a qualification in SEN. It should be recognised that the term 'qualification' is interpretable: some of our survey respondents may have interpreted this as a nationally recognised award or completion of an accredited university course, whereas others may have interpreted qualification as any course on which some form of certificate was provided on completion. A small number of respondents in the survey had included, for example, the SEN pathway in their initial teacher education. Most of those who had recorded that they had a qualification in SEN had completed certificates/diplomas/advanced diplomas either in general SEN/learning difficulties or in a specific area, such as dyslexia or working with deaf children. Of the mainstream respondents, 22 had a Master's degree in a related area (others were studying for a Master's), five were qualified teachers of the deaf or visually impaired and two had been nurses before qualifying as teachers. Mainstream teachers who qualified 11-15 years ago were more likely than others to have an additional qualification in SEN.

The majority of survey respondents felt that their ITT did not adequately prepare them to teach pupils with a range of SEN in mainstream schools (see Tables 2.2 and 2.3). Only 13% of mainstream respondents and 10.7% of special school respondents felt their ITT was adequate in this respect. Only 9% of special school teachers felt that their ITT had prepared them for teaching pupils with the range of SEN in their current school (Table 2.4). There was no marked difference between recently qualified and more experienced teachers in their views in the preparation provided by their ITT.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know	Does not apply to current role
My initial teacher training adequately prepared me to teach pupils with a range of special educational needs in mainstream schools	2.3%	10.7%	14.7%	36.3%	35.4%	0.1%	0.6%

Table 2.2 Mainstream teachers' views on initial teacher training

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know	Does not apply to current role
My initial teacher training adequately prepared me to teach pupils with a range of special educational needs in mainstream schools	1.2%	9.5%	10.7%	31.8%	41.7%	0%	5%

Table 2.3 Special school teachers' views on initial teacher training

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know	Does not apply to current role
My initial teacher training adequately prepared me to teach pupils with a range of special educational needs in my current school	2.5%	6.2%	5.4%	26.9%	54.5%	0%	4.5%

Table 2.4 Special school teachers' views on the extent to which their initial teacher training prepared them to teach in their current setting

There were very varied responses from case study respondents concerning the extent to which their ITT prepared them to work effectively with pupils with SEN. Respondents noted that there was often limited coverage of SEN on their courses but they also fully accepted that training, particularly postgraduate, was already overloaded. As one teacher noted:

> "We were trained out on GTP!' We were trained to 'solve a problem' rather than become fantastic teachers."
>
> (Secondary teacher)

If, as the direction of current policy would suggest, more training is to be delivered in schools, then there is risk that this experience could become more common.

There was also general recognition that it was difficult for trainees to relate any SEN knowledge to practice until they began their teaching, although this varied depending on their placements. There was a general feeling from those interviewed that:

> "You learn to be a teacher by being a teacher."
>
> (Primary teacher)

When asked about their ITT, it emerged that the majority of courses covered policy requirements and trajectories for SEN and so included signposting the SEN Code of Practice, the Special Educational Needs Act 2001, standards raising and inclusion.

Examples given of any direct experience of working in specialist SEN settings were limited. Three respondents had chosen to work in a special school/unit for one of their ITT placements and two cited their prior experience as TAs working with pupils with SEN as useful during their subsequent ITT. Of the examples cited, working in a special school for pupils with BESD was noted as being a very valuable experience during ITT, as was completing an optional specialist module on dyslexia.

Survey data showed that the main forms of training for SEN and inclusion undertaken by all respondents since September 2004 were 'one-off' after-school sessions (53%), as all or part of a staff development day (46%) and a sequence of related after-school sessions (21%). Twenty-two per cent of respondents indicated they had an opportunity to collaborate with or observe another teacher, but only 16% of special school teachers had received training to support the sharing of expertise between special and mainstream schools. Fifteen per cent of respondents had received no training on SEN or inclusion since 2004. Thirteen per cent had worked on courses that provided a qualification or credits towards one. The year 2004 was specified in the survey question as this was the date *Removing Barriers to Achievement* (DfES, 2004b) was published, outlining the then government's strategy for SEN, including the three-tier model of training.

The survey respondents indicated that the main barriers to undertaking training were time (24%) and workload (29%). Having nothing suitable or of interest available locally was a particular issue for some special school respondents (19%). Only a very small percentage from both groups (8.6% mainstream, 7.4% special) referred to lack of support from the school or headteacher. Only 8% of all respondents said there were no barriers to them undertaking training.

Many case study teachers noted, particularly in special schools, that much of their training time was taken up with issues to do with safety and behaviour. Positive handling training was a requirement for many special school staff and because this requires regular updating there was

limited time and funding left for other SEN training. Mainstream teachers also reported that whole-school training time had to prioritise safety and wellbeing issues such as cyberbullying and positive handling as well as the overriding priorities linked to subject areas and standards raising.

The majority of respondents from both mainstream (61.4%) and special schools (60.7%) said they needed more training in SEN. Looking at the responses from mainstream teachers in relation to the time they qualified (Table 2.5), it is perhaps unsurprising that the highest proportion indicating that they considered they needed more training were newly qualified teachers and the lowest were experienced teachers who had been qualified for more than fifteen years. It is interesting that the percentage of 'not sures' is approximately the same across all groups (excluding newly qualified teachers).

	No. of years as a teacher				
	NQT (n =72)	2-5 (n = 280)	6-10 (n = 262)	11-15 (n = 179)	15+ (n = 488)
Need more training on SEN	76%	67%	63%	64%	53%
Not sure	14%	22%	24%	21%	22%

Table 2.5 Respondents' years of experience and their perceived need for training

It needs to be recognised that the relatively high positive response in regard to needing training may be a reflection of the fact that most professionals seek to improve their practice rather than an indication of a large proportion of teachers feeling they were currently insufficiently equipped to carry out their role. To explore this issue, both the mainstream and special school teacher surveys contained questions relating to teachers' belief in their ability to teach pupils with SEN. Respondents were asked to consider their level of agreement with a set of statements referring to what could arguably be seen as representing the key components of effectively teaching pupils with SEN. The statements and the responses are shown in Tables 2.6 and 2.7.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know	Does not apply to current role
I am generally able to identify the learning needs of pupils with SEN in the class(es) I currently teach	19.3%	57.5%	12.4%	7.5%	1.7%	0.4%	1.3%
I am generally able to effectively teach pupils with a range of SEN in my current class(es)	10.6%	38.8%	20.7%	21.2%	6.6%	0.5%	1.6%
I am generally able to effectively assess the progress of pupils with a range of SEN in my current class(es)	11.7%	47.7%	20.2%	14.1%	4.2%	0.5%	1.5%

Table 2.6 Mainstream teachers' views on current capacity in relation to teaching pupils with SEN

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know	Does not apply to current role
I am generally able to identify the learning needs of pupils in the class(es) I currently teach	40.1%	51.7%	4.1%	1.7%	0.4%	0%	2.1%
I am generally able to effectively teach all the pupils in my current class(es)	31%	43%	12.8%	8.3%	2.1%	0%	2.9%
I am generally able to effectively assess the progress of all pupils in my current class(es)	30.6%	49.6%	12.4%	3.3%	0.8%3	0%	3.3%

Table 2.7 Special school teachers' views on current capacity in relation to teaching pupils with SEN

Scrutinising these percentages further in terms of the proportion of teachers expressing levels of agreement or disagreement reveals a varied picture in terms of teachers' belief in their ability to teach pupils with SEN. Approximately half of mainstream respondents felt able to indicate a level of agreement with the statement 'I am generally able to effectively teach pupils with a range of SEN in my current class(es)' and just over a quarter disagreed. Caution should be exercised in interpretation of this statistic. An inevitable limitation of this type of question is that it only captures the individual respondent's belief in their ability. Their belief may be different to the reality. Nevertheless, at the level of teacher experience it does mean that a sizeable proportion (27.8%) of teachers are carrying out their role believing that they are not able to effectively teach all the pupils in their current class(es). A further salient point in trying to determine what the reality might be is the relatively high proportion of ambivalent responses in relation to effectively teaching pupils with SEN. These responses also need to be viewed in the context of responses to other questions. Fifty-one per cent agreed or strongly agreed that the progress of most pupils with SEN in their class is dependent on the availability of a TA and only 32% said the school employed a sufficient range of support staff to fully support the needs of children with SEN. When considering the statement 'I am generally able to effectively teach pupils with a range of SEN in my current class(es)', respondents may not have been answering on their personal capacity in terms of knowledge, skills and understanding in relation to SEN. They may have been making a comment on an issue of feasibility based on their perceptions of the need for additional support and of the amount of support currently available. It is also unknown whether particular types of need affected teachers' responses when considering the part of the statement referring to 'a range of SEN in my current class(es)'. We know from another question that 89.1% of mainstream respondents indicated that the inclusion of more pupils with SEN has meant that they need more strategies to manage behaviour. If teachers included pupils whose form of SEN included a behavioural component in their consideration of 'a range of SEN in my current class(es)', this is also likely to have impacted on perceptions of current personal capacity.

As might be expected, teaching experience appears to be a factor influencing responses regarding perceived ability to 'effectively teach pupils with a range of SEN in my current class(es)'. A total of 45.8% of newly qualified teacher respondents agreed that they were generally able to teach pupils with a range of SEN, compared with 49.3% of respondents who qualified 2-5 years ago, 52.3% who qualified 6-10 years ago and 54.2% of those who qualified 11-15 years ago. However, this drops to 46.5% of those who qualified more than 15 years ago.

It should be recognised that although there is a general increase that goes alongside length of service the increase is not particularly great.

Approximately 60% of mainstream respondents indicated that they felt they were generally able to effectively assess the progress of all pupils in their current class(es), though a sizeable minority (18.3%) disagreed.

There was a far higher level of agreement (76.8%) in relation to the statement 'I am generally able to identify the learning needs of pupils with SEN in the class(es) I currently teach' and a far smaller proportion disagreeing (9.2%). A possible picture emerging is that teachers feel confident in their ability to determine what pupils' learning needs are but are considerably less sure in how to meet these needs through their teaching or to assess progress. This is an interesting finding in the light of the 2011 Green Paper's focus on strengthening teachers' capacity to identify children's needs as this appears to be an area where teachers already appear to feel confident.

Special school respondents indicated higher levels of agreement and lower levels of disagreement in relation to their capacity to assess pupils learning needs, teach effectively and assess progress. There were also fewer ambivalent responses (see Table 2.7).

The survey data would support the view that there is a need to investigate further the knowledge, skills and understanding that teachers require to teach pupils with SEN effectively. It is worthy of note, however, that when asked within the survey what would be most useful to them in relation to the SEN of pupils they currently work with, 'more knowledge about SEN' received fewer positive responses than 'more time', 'greater access to specialist teachers who work directly with pupils' and 'more additional adult support' (see Table 2.8).

	Combined totals for strongly agree and agree	
	Mainstream	**Special school**
More **time**	86.5%	82.6%
Greater access to **specialist teachers** who work directly with pupils	84.7%	59.5%
More **additional adult support**	83.2%	61.1%
More **knowledge** about SEN	72.6%	60.3%
Greater access to **specialist teachers** who advise the teacher/school	72%	53.3%
More **senior leadership team support/ understanding**	63.2%	10%
More **strategies**	60.7%	44.2%
Greater access to **educational psychologists**	60.4%	63.6%
More **external agency support**	58.9%	61.6%

Table 2.8 Respondents' views on what would be most useful to them in relation to the pupils with SEN they currently work with

This is not necessarily at odds with teachers' apparent desire to have more training. The question set out in Table 2.8 asks about the relative utility of 'more knowledge about SEN' not about more training in SEN. The choices set out in the table were not intended to compete with

training and it should also be recognised that a number of the options also afford an opportunity for increasing the teacher's knowledge, skills and understanding in relation to SEN.

It was evident from the survey data that teachers did not just rely on what might traditionally be considered to represent training in relation to SEN. Respondents were asked to indicate (from a list) where they would be most likely to look for information in relation to SEN. For mainstream teachers, the most likely sources of information were:

- seeking advice from a SENCO (79%);
- seeking advice from another colleague in school (75%);
- using a specialist SEN website (67%);
- using other websites (51%);
- using government websites (49%).

As might be expected, the survey data indicated that recently qualified teachers were particularly likely to seek advice from SENCOs or other colleagues in school. When asked where they would go for information on SEN, the majority of case study interviewees said they sought advice from the SENCO, who, in most schools visited, was seen as a valuable and relevant source of information.

Results were similar for special school respondents. The most likely sources of information were:

- using a specialist SEN website (81%);
- seeking advice from a specialist colleague in school (80%);
- using other websites (72%);
- using books/magazines/ journals (61%);
- using government websites (57%).

The finding that most teachers seek support and guidance from their SENCO and/or colleagues, coupled with the previously discussed finding that they receive most of their training in their own schools, has implications in terms of the variability in provision and outcomes for pupils with SEN that is of ongoing concern for the government. If teachers' training and CPD is overly dependent on the setting in which they are placed, then of course it follows that teachers' professional knowledge, skills and understanding in SEN is going to vary depending on the quality of the support, the SENCO and the experiences and opportunities they are given in their school setting. It is with this in mind that high quality national SENCO training is justified. Despite the strong indication in the survey and interviews that teachers look for support in school when in need of information in relation to SEN, only 36.6% of mainstream survey respondents agreed that they felt well supported in teaching pupils with SEN; 39.9% disagreed with this and 21.9% were ambivalent.

In common with survey respondents, many teachers interviewed also said that they made use of websites. A commonly cited approach was to use the relevant SEN category as a search term. Interestingly, very few teachers and a minority of SENCOs and headteachers interviewed said they had used the IDP materials. One SENCO interviewed noted:

> "Navigation [of IDP website materials] is too complex and there is a need to register, which deters busy teachers – some of the materials are a bit basic."
>
> (Secondary SENCO)

The limited use of the IDP materials by staff in case study schools reflects the survey data, which indicated that just under a third of mainstream respondents had accessed these, although just under 78% of those who had used the materials had found them useful.

Clearly, there are implications for the Government in assuming that the development of electronic resources to support teacher training in SEN is sufficient to address an identified need. Following the development of any specialist SEN materials, there need to be strategies to facilitate and monitor take-up, use and evaluation of these by teachers in classrooms.

Case study data suggests that most teachers seem to be effectively compensating for perceived shortfalls in their training for SEN by using available resources, including their colleagues' experience and knowledge and electronic materials. From these responses teachers may well be giving the message that if 'training' is designed to be useful to them in their current job, then such training would need to include a range of opportunities, experiences and activities, including those provided from within their school, between local schools and from their LA and other agencies.

Survey respondents were asked to give an example of a good training experience. The hundreds of examples are so varied that they are difficult to summarise, with courses ranging from an hour to ten weeks. It is clear though that what teachers value is training on specific issues, giving them knowledge and ideas that they can use in their classrooms, for example:

> "The most useful have been one-to-one or small group sessions in school (occasionally inter-school), generally specific to individuals or types of SEN; often unrecorded, never accredited, but highly focused and relevant to perceived need to know."

> "The Autistic Child in the Classroom, run by LEA advisers. Gave very specific ideas that were actually workable!"

> "Team-Teach training given by staff who work in a local special school. We've had a full day and a more recent half-day refresher. It was well structured, well prepared and relevant to behaviour issues we had in school at the time. It was also valuable to gain the insights of specialist teachers."

> "Two years ago. One-hour training on pupils with hearing difficulties. Run by outside specialists who gave very precise information and practical classroom strategies."

A number of survey respondents replied to say that they were unable to give us an example of good training, for example:

> "No, sorry. All after-school training has been shockingly poor by 'consultants' who clearly cannot cope in a classroom so have gone on to become 'advisers/experts'."

> "None of the training I have received since completing my Dip SpLD has been 'good' – it has been delivered by non-specialists and has usually been a cobbled together booklet of information."

Survey respondents were asked what training they would like. Again, the hundreds of responses are difficult to categorise but a significant number said that any training would be useful. Some

of the survey respondents wanted help in dealing with a specific condition – such as dyslexia and autism. Others wanted more generic training on how to deal with SEN, early identification, planning and strategies to engage pupils and manage behaviour. Some survey respondents raised particular issues:

> "How to make the SEN children more independent so myself or the TA does not have to work with them all the time."

> "General help on how to differentiate effectively for several children working well below level but not all at the same level."

When asked what training they need/would like in relation to SEN, case study interviewees predictably gave a variety of responses. Many respondents had some difficulty stating what training they needed because in the main they knew what they should do with their individual pupils with SEN but often found it difficult to effectively deliver such strategies in the context of a typical class of 25-30 pupils.

Even interviewees with the benefit of several years' experience struggled to identify what else could usefully have been included during ITT. As one teacher suggested:

> "I would tick 'yes' to more training but do not know what that would be."
>
> (Secondary SENCO)

Many case study teachers expressed a view that more support in class would be just as important to them as more training on SEN.

Although case study respondents acknowledged that it was necessary to know about types of 'common SEN' and strategies, they expressed a view that either they already had some knowledge from their training, practice or personal experience or that such additional information could always be obtained from the SENCO.

When asked what specific SEN training would be useful to them, interviewees typically cited topics that would be relevant to their current roles and needs of the pupils they had at the time. For example, if a pupil was either coming into or already placed in their class/subject group with a specific 'lower incidence' SEN, then respondents said that of course they would need to know about this – one teacher cited Fragile X as an example and another Down's Syndrome. Other specific categories named more frequently seemed to be linked to national emphasis on the reporting of pupil progress in literacy and numeracy. A number of secondary teachers identified dyscalculia, dyspraxia and dyslexia as areas for additional training. Other specific categories cited by interviewees were those likely to present particular difficulties when teaching pupils in a classroom context, namely ADHD and ASD. The naming of specific categories was slightly more prevalent in primary settings. Secondary school staff were more interested in any form of training or guidance materials that would enable them to motivate and teach pupils with SEN in their subject area. Articulated in a variety of ways, a common theme emerging from both primary and secondary interviewees was the need for any strategies or approaches presented within training to be relevant and applicable to the group setting of the classroom. Though all teachers were very aware of their responsibility for the progress of all their pupils, secondary interviewees in particular stressed that the prescribed, time framed subject targets that needed to be met by the class were a factor influencing the strategies and approaches it was feasible to implement for individuals.

Many teachers spoken to during case study visits were concerned with pupils who were presenting with both SEN and behavioural and social problems. Consequently, most case study teachers were concerned with how to get pupils engaged in their lessons. Responses regarding training fell broadly into two categories: understanding human behaviour and the curriculum.

- **Understanding human behaviour**
  Comments related to training in this area included:

  "Understanding the psychology of behaviour so that we know why some pupils behave and others don't (in class)."

  (Secondary teacher)

  "It is not just the teaching…they are not doing it for sake of it."

  (Primary teacher)

  "We need to bring back psychology, sociology **and** philosophy if we are to 'beat them at their own game'."

  (Primary teacher)

  "Working with BESD pupils alongside experienced teachers."

  (Secondary teacher)

  "Just finding out how I teach a pupil with SEN in a class of 30."

  (Secondary teacher)

  "How to get pupils engaged in a group."

  (Secondary teacher)

  "Attachment Theory."

  (Primary teacher)

  "Teachers need to know 'what not to do' for ASD, dyslexia and behaviour."

  (Primary SENCO)

- **Curriculum**
  Comments related to training in this area included:

  "More on ICT and SEN, like use of the VLE."

  (Secondary teacher)

  "P levels."

  (Primary teacher)

  "Secondary teachers need more on teaching literacy – they are not trained to teach literacy but they do teach English and often have responsibility for raising literacy levels."

  (Head of department – English)

  "It would be useful to have some prepared subject resources for pupils with SEN."

  (Secondary MFL teacher)

When asked in case study interviews what type of training was useful, there was overwhelming support for training that aimed directly to improve current classroom practice. Responses included:

> "Teacher training says, 'This is how it is'…but it's not 'one thing for all' but what works for a particular child in a particular class."
>
> (Primary teacher)

> "More observation in other teachers' classes so that you could see how your own pupils responded to different settings – but you would need to know what you are looking for."
>
> (Secondary teacher)

Interviewees showed a strong preference for training that was specifically relevant to pupils they were currently teaching – often with the training being carried out in the school. A secondary teacher expressed this as:

> "Training in our own school because you were then talking about the children you were teaching and share ideas."

Other secondary teachers noted:

> "You can learn about types of SEN but individuals vary within SEN categories and each context is different so you need to do it in your own schools; it's good when what you cover on courses at HE is followed up with what you do in class."

> "The very best training was when we had an ed psych come into class who worked with us on pupil behaviour – it was brilliant."

A number of interviewees also noted the value of the demonstration of strategies and approaches in their school and/or class setting.

Some teachers, both primary and secondary, were appreciative when their SENCOs, as well as providing a list of pupils with SEN who would be in their class, had provided a list of strategies that either applied to a specific category (e.g. dyslexia) or had proven useful with the particular child named on the list. Although not typically considered training, this contributed to the teacher's ability to teach this pupil and others with this type of need more effectively and so could be seen as building teacher capacity in relation to SEN.

In-school training that was cited as useful in relation to SEN included:

- social and emotional aspects of learning (SEAL);
- praise and reward;
- communication, interaction and behaviour;
- breaking barriers to boys' underachievement;
- positive handling.

Although interviewees welcomed training in their own school setting, it was noted by a few that there was a risk if SEN training was undertaken exclusively in the teacher's own setting. The following two responses reflect this view:

"You need to get out of your own school at times otherwise you can become blinkered – it's good to think outside the box at times and meet other teachers from different types of schools…we thought we were good at independent learning, then we visited another primary school and it was amazing."

(Primary teacher)

"Doing SENCO accredited training allowed me to meet other people – you get tunnel vision so anything that helps from the outside is good."

(Primary SENCO)

It was noteworthy that when discussing training for SEN with interviewees, phrases such as 'coverage of SEN in training' were interpreted by many respondents as linked to specific SEN categories such as autism or dyslexia rather than training that covered areas such as 'differentiation' or 'behaviour management'. Illustrating this point, one teacher commented:

"We learnt about differentiation and had to show that in our planning, but we didn't do much about teaching SEN pupils."

(Primary teacher)

Case study interviewees were fully accepting that they have responsibility for teaching all pupils in their classes, including those with SEN. However, in spite of this, there may still be fragmentation within the minds of teachers as to which initiatives, training and strategies apply to 'non-SEN subject teaching' and which relate to 'teaching individuals with SEN'. The issue that more knowledge and experience was needed about subject difficulties experienced by pupils, not just those with SEN, was noted by those case study subject teachers who said that more training in how to teach literacy to pupils who had found this difficult would be a needed area of training for them.

A view that 'training for SEN' may sometimes be viewed through a rather narrow lens was reflected in a comment by a teacher who said that:

"I went on training for motivational starters, which was excellent but very poorly attended."

(Secondary teacher)

The low attendance noted by this teacher is interesting in the light of teachers frequently reporting that getting pupils to get started and stay on task was problematic, particularly if there was no additional adult support and the class had too many pupils with concentration difficulties. Motivational starters would seem to be a very relevant topic in relation to the teaching of pupils with SEN. It is reasonable to posit that pupils who experience greater difficulties in learning than their peers will need more motivation than those who find learning relatively easy. It is, of course, likely that teachers did not attend this course for a variety of reasons. However, it may also be the case that training relevant to SEN is still viewed in relation to how pupils with SEN differ from their peers, rather than the extent to which they share the need to develop those behaviours that allow them to learn in the group setting of the classroom. These behaviours include those that characterise motivation, self-efficacy and independent learning, including self-monitoring and self-evaluation, and making use of feedback, positive and negative, to improve learning.

There was a clear feeling of frustration from teachers we spoke to who did not feel supported by the Government in their pursuit of trying to find effective ways of teaching pupils with SEN in mainstream settings. Reflecting this view, one teacher commented:

> "Often, because we get permanently criticised by government, training that reaffirms we're doing the right thing is valuable."
>
> (Primary teacher)

Interestingly, feedback voluntarily expressed during the case study visits was very positive, with interviewees noting that they valued the opportunity to talk to the researchers about their work on SEN and inclusion. A number commented on the usefulness of having the time and opportunity to reflect critically on their practice in a non-judgemental setting. Virtually all teacher interviews were conducted in pairs and secondary school teachers in particular were enthusiastic about having the chance to talk to other colleagues about their experiences and views on SEN and inclusion. It may be that structured opportunities of this nature that involve reflecting critically on practice should be recognised as a potentially useful professional development activity.

Both the previous and current government have seen special schools as a source of expertise that could be utilised to develop practice in mainstream schools. Special school teachers were asked about outreach work within the survey. Fifty-two (21%) out of the 242 special school teachers who completed the survey said that they were involved in outreach work to mainstream schools. Of these respondents, slightly less than half (25) agreed that they had sufficient training for their outreach work, with 16 saying that they did not. It was generally felt that mainstream schools welcomed their involvement (79%) and generally acted on the recommendations made (69%). Only 13 respondents (25%) thought that outreach work took staff away from necessary duties in their own school, with 44% disagreeing with this statement. There are clearly differences in the form outreach from special schools takes. Of the 52 respondents who are involved in outreach work, 23 said that the role mainly involves direct working with pupils, 18 disagreed and ten were ambivalent. Twenty-eight said that the role mainly involves advising and training staff, with 13 disagreeing and again ten being ambivalent. Twenty-six respondents said that their role involved a combination of working with pupils and advising/training staff, with 17 disagreeing.

Findings

2.1 When asked if they needed more training in SEN, the majority of survey respondents answered positively. There was strong agreement with the suggestion that 'the Government should provide more SEN training for all teachers'. The majority of survey respondents also indicated that more knowledge about SEN would be useful. However, the number of respondents identifying this as useful was less than for 'more time', 'increased access to specialist teachers who work directly with pupils' and 'more additional adult support'. The majority of case study respondents, whilst acknowledging that more training would always be considered desirable, did not prioritise SEN training as an immediate need.

2.2 Training requirements were very varied. Some teachers interviewed expressed a need in relation to particular categories of SEN (e.g. ASD, dyslexia, dyspraxia, dyscalculia, ADHD), while others, particularly secondary subject teachers, were concerned with feasibility issues such as how to teach/motivate pupils with SEN within the diverse and demanding group setting of the classroom.

2.3   Within the survey responses, there was a strong view that ITT inadequately prepared teachers to teach pupils with a range of SEN, irrespective of how recently they had qualified. Almost three quarters of respondents expressed this view. Case study respondents reported that SEN routes within ITT were often optional. There were very varied experiences reported about ITT and SEN. Some spoke highly of their experiences during ITT, particularly where there was an effective reciprocal relationship between the taught content provided by the HEI and the experience of SEN teaching provided through placement in special and mainstream schools.

2.4   There was acknowledgement in case study interviews that postgraduate routes, particularly the GTP, were already overloaded and that it is often difficult for trainee teachers to relate any SEN knowledge to practice until they begin their teaching. Valued ITT experiences included opportunities to observe and/or work in special school settings or to work in class with specialist teachers/advisers.

2.5   Despite acknowledging shortfalls regarding the coverage of SEN in their ITT, most of the survey respondents responded positively when questioned about their ability to identify the learning needs of pupils with SEN and assess their progress. However, only half of mainstream respondents felt they were able to effectively teach pupils with a range of SEN in their current class(es). This may be indicative of a teacher view on feasibility rather than related to a deficit in their knowledge, skills and understanding. The majority of case study interviewees were of the view that there were inherent limitations to what could be taught about SEN during ITT and a general acceptance that it was necessary to learn through experience, particularly during the newly qualified teacher year.

2.6   For mainstream and special school teachers, the most likely sources of information were seeking advice from a SENCO and/or another colleague in school and using specialist SEN or other websites.

2.7   There was limited evidence that nationally produced guidance to strengthen the teaching of pupils with SEN was impacting on practice. Only a third of mainstream and special school teachers had accessed any of the government-produced IDP materials for SEN.

2.8   Survey respondents reported that the main forms of training undertaken since September 2004 were school-based, usually as 'one-off' after-school sessions or all/part of a staff development day. A minority of questionnaire respondents reported that they had received no training on SEN or inclusion since 2004. Very few respondents had undertaken courses that provided a qualification or credits towards one.

2.9   An interesting and unexpected finding was that case study interviewees valued the opportunity to talk to the researchers about SEN and inclusion issues. A number commented on the usefulness of having the time and opportunity to be able to reflect critically on their practice in a non-judgemental setting.

Emerging issues and implications for policy

- The previous government placed considerable faith in strengthening ITT and CPD in relation to SEN (e.g. DfEE, 1997, DfES, 2004b). The current Government has also placed emphasis in this area, referring to plans to 'strengthen initial training' and 'boost the availability of advanced-level continuous professional development' (DfE, 2011, p60). Whilst there was an acknowledgement that more training would always be considered desirable, few teachers interviewed perceived that their current level of knowledge was a barrier to teaching pupils with SEN effectively. For the Government, an emphasis on reducing the variability in quality and accessibility of relevant training that characterises the current situation would seem to be more of a priority than 'more' training. Respondents saw training as only one of a range of factors that could contribute to better outcomes for pupils with SEN. More knowledge in SEN was seen as less important than increased access to specialist teachers who work with pupils in the classroom and additional adult support. These findings suggest that in seeking to improve outcomes for pupils with SEN, the possible contribution of more training needs to be considered alongside, rather than as a replacement for, a range of support. Consideration could usefully be given to replacing a narrow view of training with one that views the nature of in-school support, the quality of SENCO and other colleagues' knowledge and expertise, the availability and quality of external support and time to explore, use and evaluate existing training materials as all contributing to teacher training and professional development in SEN.

- Teachers' professional development in relation to SEN varies considerably:
  i) It appears that coverage varies on ITT courses, with some teachers reporting that they felt well prepared and others indicating they had covered little on SEN. School placement during training is also a relevant factor. Some trainees had been in schools where there was a high proportion of SEN or had pupils in their class with particular needs and had learned from this. Whilst this was valuable, a pertinent question is how, as a trainee with limited background knowledge, they are able to judge whether any practice advocated or observed is good practice. The quality of the placement school is therefore a variable and the input provided by HEIs in relation to the use of an evidence base and opportunities afforded for supported critical reflection on practice would seem to be important in ensuring trainees can make informed judgements about the types of teaching approaches and strategies they should seek to emulate. This raises questions about SEN and ITT within restructured teacher training programmes that are more school-based.

  ii) A teacher's training in SEN can finish once their newly qualified teacher year is completed and, as indicated, this grounding may be of variable quality. Subsequent CPD is dependent on the priority the school attaches to staff development in relation to SEN, the available support from SENCOs and others with expertise in SEN and the individual teacher's motivation to pursue additional training.

  iii) A common response from teachers in the interviews was that they would seek advice from the SENCO and/or other member of staff if they were unsure regarding the strategies and approaches to employ with a pupil with SEN in their class. Whilst teachers did not perceive this as a problem, a potential issue is that the quality of advice received is dependent on who else is in their school. Many SENCOs are knowledgeable and well trained and are well placed to give such advice. However, there is still a risk of overreliance on one person rather than a team and a lack of an external perspective through, for example, involvement of LA support service staff.

There is a need for further research on the role and value of internal and external support.

- Given the different experiences of teachers, any additional training for SEN would need to offer a degree of personalisation reflecting their individual starting points, current professional development needs and future aspirations. Such ongoing professional development cannot be considered in isolation from in-house and external expertise and support. There is a tendency currently to focus on separate aspects of training (i.e. ITE, NQT, CPD) whereas it may be more beneficial to focus on continuity and progression so that there is greater coherence within the teacher's portfolio of evidence that relates to subject-based development for all pupils, including those with SEN, and that which is currently regarded as 'SEN-specific'.

- There is a need to consider what type of training and experiences teachers require as they progress through different stages of their careers. For example, it would be possible to provide some understanding of how a pupil with a high incidence need might present in class and a few key strategies that it is feasible to incorporate in class teaching to reduce barriers to learning. This may contribute to trainee confidence and competence. This general level of preparedness does not address the issue that pupils within any one category are not a homogeneous group. As teachers progress they are likely to need training that allows them to problem solve in relation to specific pupils, selecting and evaluating strategies based on the pupil's response to teaching rather than relying upon generic lists of strategies linked to a particular type of need.

- Schools currently harness in-house expertise to provide training and support in SEN, which is valued by teachers and support staff. This is a cost-effective and relevant approach but this must be balanced with access to, and engagement with, enduring and emerging evidence for effective practices from outside teachers' immediate school context. Whilst it is positive that teachers are reporting that they make use of in-house capacity, the negative angle is that the quality of advice from a colleague is entirely dependent on that colleague's experience and expertise. In the current climate of reductions in LA services nationally, there is a need to look at how schools identify and draw on appropriate, high quality external training, development and support.

- There is a need to distinguish between high and low incidence needs. Teachers interviewed were clear that training was better when it related to a situation they were experiencing and included ideas that were feasible to use in the classroom setting. Training in relation to the high incidence needs that teachers will typically encounter is likely to be the most helpful. Training in relation to low incidence needs is likely only to be relevant when it is known that a pupil with this particular SEN will be joining the class or school.

- The 2011 Green Paper proposes 'to be much clearer in guidance for professionals about how to identify SEN accurately' (DfE, 2011, p67) and seeks to improve teachers' ability in this area. It is relevant to note that many of the class and subject teachers interviewed had not been involved in the identification of pupils as having SEN. For many teachers, their role in identification will be in the form of spotting and reporting that a child is experiencing difficulties in learning rather than any formal identification as SEN. Recognising when pupils are not learning (or not learning as well as they might) and intervening is already, and has long been, an integral part of a teacher's role.

- Within the 2011 Green Paper, training appears to be conceptualised as 'spreading best practice' (DfE, 2011, p67) either from mainstream and special schools with outstanding Ofsted reports. There are three key points to note:

  i)   Any training that may emerge as a result of the 2011 Green Paper needs to be conceptualised within a framework that recognises that the teacher will be teaching the pupil with SEN within the group setting of the classroom. Strategies that have emerged from special schools or studies of what works with individuals may not necessarily transfer to a mainstream setting, although some principles might.

  ii) The 2011 Green Paper's proposal that schools with outstanding Ofsted reports could act as training providers needs to be further explored. There are a number of fundamental questions relating to the evidence available that schools with outstanding Ofsted reports are necessarily best placed to train teachers in how to secure improved outcomes for pupils with a range of SEN from a range of backgrounds.

  iii) The relationship between teaching schools and HEIs remains unclear, though there is reference in the White Paper (DfE, 2010, p23) to inviting 'some of the best higher education providers of initial teacher training to open University Training Schools'. Whilst many interviewees valued school-based experiences that teaching schools might in the future provide, a salient point is that some survey and case study respondents expressed interest in training related to child development and psychological perspectives on behaviour and learning that typically would be taught by HEI tutors. A question therefore is whether teaching schools will necessarily have the expertise to provide high quality training in these areas. Many HEIs would also pride themselves on, and stress the importance of, the development of trainees as reflective practitioners, able to engage with evidence bases that inform practice. It is encouraging that the National College reports that the TDA anticipates 'that all teaching schools will have strong and meaningful links with at least one university partner to support their work' which could involve delivery of 'accredited ITT Masters-level work and practice-based research' (2011, p6). However, a question that remains is whether TDA 'anticipation' is sufficient to ensure these important areas of professional development are given sufficient priority in comparison to the acquisition of practical competences.

- There is a need to identify and address barriers that contribute to variability in the take-up and use of the existing training materials on SEN, including the IDP. Before the Government embarks upon the production of any more materials, there is a need to identify why many teachers are not accessing what is currently available and canvass their views on preferred formats and modes of delivery.

- The model of training in *Removing Barriers to Achievement* (DfES, 2004b) that related to degrees of expertise would seem still to offer a useful framework for training. The model encourages a focus on the skills all teachers need, the advanced skills that some staff in every school need and the skills that some staff in a local cluster of schools need. Such an approach places emphasis on considering individual school and local capacity and seems a more realistic alternative to the assumption that it is individual teacher capacity that needs to be built.

- There is a need to explore what a teacher can realistically do within their whole-class teaching that reduces barriers to access and participation for all pupils, including those

with SEN. Such an approach recognises that the issue for teachers is that they seek to meet the learning needs of individual pupils with SEN within the group setting of a classroom and reflects principles set out by Corbett and Norwich (1999) and O'Brien (1998). The previous government's term 'Quality First Inclusive Teaching' (e.g. DfES, 2002, DfES, 2005b) had some utility in highlighting this priority. The risk with such a term was that it implied that there was a level of practice that could be deemed 'quality' with the implication that anything falling short of this was somehow sub-standard. The Coalition Government has now moved to the term 'quality teaching', which may make this an even stronger implication, particularly in the light of Ofsted comments that 'For pupils identified for support at School Action level, the additional provision was often making up for poor whole-class teaching or pastoral support' (Ofsted, 2010, p7). Freed from the potentially unhelpful rhetoric of 'quality', the notion of exploring what the teacher can incorporate within their practice that improves access and engagement for their pupils, including those with SEN, is an important area for research and development. There would be a need to include consideration of, for example:

(i) what this teaching would look like for particular forms of need (e.g. for BESD);
(ii) what this teaching would look like in a particular subject area (e.g. MFL).

An important caveat is that proper account must be taken of feasibility. This includes recognising the nature and number of needs within the class and the support available. Without this regard for feasibility, the risk is that teachers are presented with an impractical list of desirable strategies.

CHAPTER 3: POLICY AND GUIDANCE FOR SEN AND INCLUSION

Exploration of the literature

Much of the significant government policy and guidance related to SEN and inclusion had already been issued by the time our original literature review (Ellis et al., 2008) was published. By this point, criticisms were emerging (e.g. Warnock, 2005, MacBeath et al., 2006, House of Commons Education and Skills Committee, 2006). It was also the start of a period that saw the publication of a number of reviews looking at specific areas related to SEN.

Reviews related to SEN

In 2008, the *Bercow Review of Services for Children and Young People (0-19) with Speech, Language and Communication Needs* (Bercow, 2008) found that overall one in 14 five year olds were starting school with serious speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) and made 40 recommendations around five themes:

* communication is crucial;
* early identification and intervention are essential;
* a continuum of services designed around the family is needed;
* joint working is critical;
* the current system is characterised by high variability and a lack of equity.

This was followed by the action plan *Better communication: An action plan to improve services for children and young people with speech, language and communication needs* (DCSF, 2008). The prioritisation of this area and substantial financial support was based on the rationale that communication problems can lead to serious disadvantage in later life – from initial frustration at not being able to express oneself, to bullying, reduced educational achievements, fewer job prospects and even the descent into criminality. The package of measures included:

* the appointment of a new Communication Champion to raise the profile, drive reform and lead the National Year of Speech, Language and Communication (2011/12);
* 16 pilot areas to identify good practice, which would lead to a national framework;
* the University of Warwick to lead a three-year research programme;
* 12 organisations working to support children with SLCN given grants.

The Lamb Inquiry was set up to look at SEN and parental confidence. The report, published in 2009, concluded that there needed to be a major reform of the current system, with a key point being that SEN must be embedded in school leadership. The other main messages were that parents needed to be listened to more, the system needed to be more ambitious for children and there needed to be a radical overhaul of the system with a cultural shift in the way schools, LAs and other professionals work with parents and children. Despite these problems, Lamb (2009, p6) argued: '…it is not the current framework that is at fault but rather the failure to comply with both the spirit and the letter of the framework. We therefore need to ensure that what the best are doing today the rest can, and will, do tomorrow.' This argument was based on the fact that:

> "In talking with parents of disabled children and children with special educational needs (SEN), we met some of the happiest parents in the country and some of the angriest. Many had children who are well supported and making good progress. But we also met parents for whom the education system represents a battle to get the needs of their child identified and for these to be met. The crucial issue is that both experiences happen within the same system."
>
> (Lamb, 2009, p2)

This is a compelling argument, based on a view that if some LAs and schools can operate effectively within the existing framework then the framework itself cannot be at fault. However, a counter view would be that if the national framework is intended to provide a degree of consistency of approach and parity of experience then it is clearly not providing this, given the variation identified.

Change was recommended in four main areas:

- children's outcomes to be placed at the heart of the system;
- a stronger voice for parents;
- a system with a greater focus on children's needs;
- a more accountable system that delivers better services.

The report has 51 recommendations including:

- the Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA) develops guidance on the effective deployment of TAs;
- the DCSF commissions the TDA to develop materials to support training at an advanced level in each of the five main areas of SEN;
- the DCSF commissions the TDA to develop teachers with specialist SEN and disability skills across clusters of schools;
- preparation for working with parents of disabled children and children with SEN is included in initial and continuing training across the children's workforce;
- the DCSF reviews the effectiveness of a range of approaches to preventing and tackling bullying of children with SEN and disabilities and invests further in those with the most impact;
- the DCSF commissions the National Strategies to promote disability equality schemes as a vehicle for working with disabled pupils to identify and address bullying;
- all School Improvement Partners (SIPs) working with mainstream schools receive training in SEN and disability; and that, in reporting to the school governing body, the headteacher and the LA, SIPs report on the extent to which the school has promoted good outcomes and good progress for disabled pupils and pupils with SEN.

Though the Lamb Inquiry was commissioned by the previous Labour government, the Coalition has drawn extensively on it to inform the 2011 Green Paper.

In 2009 the findings of the Rose Review were published. The review had been commissioned to explore the identification and teaching of children and young people with dyslexia and literacy difficulties. The review said that it was important to implement high quality interventions for these children. Although there were problems, the review found much good provision which was commended by parents. It recommended that the DCSF should commission short courses for teachers on selecting and teaching literacy intervention programmes and should fund some teachers to undertake specialist courses so that expertise can be shared across LAs and school partnerships. The review made the point that dyslexia, once questioned, is now widely acknowledged as a specific difficulty in learning to read. Rose (2009) suggested that personalised learning was a critical driver in helping children make the best possible progress – central to this was assessment for learning with the use of assessing pupil progress materials to see if a child is having difficulties.

Rose (2009) quotes the observation from a McKinsey and Company report that 'The quality of an education system cannot exceed the quality of its teachers' (Barber and Mourshed, 2007, p16) and suggests that:

> "Virtually all recent reviews of educational provision call for more and better training of teachers and other members of the workforce. This review is no exception. It accepts, however, that the economic climate is hardly favourable for meeting what is likely to be the most costly aspect of its recommendations: high quality training for the workforce. In consequence, the review looks to providers to make even better use of existing training resources, so that any additional funding that may be available can be concentrated where it will make most impact."
>
> (Rose, 2009, p16)

In its consideration of the skills that teachers need, the Rose Review referred back to the three-tier model presented within *Removing Barriers to Achievement* (DfES, 2004b) and discussed what the core, advanced and specialist skills represent in relation to teaching pupils with dyslexia. It also reiterated the DfES's (2004b) point that every teacher should expect to teach children with SEN and they need to be equipped with the skills to do so effectively.

The review affirmed the importance of schools and parents working together, and refers to the Lamb Review of SEN, noting the steps the DCSF has taken to strengthen workforce knowledge, skills and understanding of SEN and disability, including:

- encouraging ITT providers to build on their coverage of SEN and disability by offering specialist units for primary undergraduate ITT, launched in June 2008, with £500,000 funding to aid dissemination. These include a Unit entitled Learning and Teaching for dyslexic pupils;
- similar units for secondary undergraduate courses and for PGCE courses will be rolled out in September 2009;
- developing materials enabling subject/curriculum tutors to check their knowledge of SEN and disability in relation to their subject area;
- promotion of enhanced opportunities for student teachers to gain experience of working in special schools or other specialist provision;
- promoting the use of specialist materials for the induction of new teachers;
- developing nationally approved training for SENCOs, who have a key role in each school in ensuring effective provision for children with SEN and disabilities and are an important link with parents.

A number of initiatives recommended by the reviews above have been discontinued following the election of the new government in 2010.

National Strategy materials on SEN and inclusion

Whilst various inquiries and reviews were taking place looking at the operation of the current system, schools necessarily carried on with their day-to-day practice. The National Strategies were prolific in their production of materials intended to support the development of this practice. The Primary National Strategy in particular diversified into the production of guidance materials related to SEN and inclusion. As we noted in the original literature review (Ellis et al., 2008), the National Strategies emphasised a generic strengthening of teaching and learning (rather than specialist approaches) based on a belief that this would lead to better outcomes for all children, including those with SEN. In terms of the future direction of policy for SEN, perhaps the most significant contribution from the National Strategies was the waves of intervention

(e.g. DfES, 2002, 2005b). The term 'Wave 1' was used to describe the inclusion of all children in a high quality lesson. This was also referred to as quality first inclusive teaching. Wave 2 interventions involved small group work. In the early documentation (e.g. DfES, 2002) it was made explicit that these were not primarily SEN interventions. However, as the waves model has evolved, a more flexible approach has generally been adopted where the defining feature of a Wave 2 provision is that it involves small group work. It might, for example, be involvement in a speech and language group and some or all of those within it may have needs at School Action or School Action Plus. Wave 3 provision involved specific targeted approaches for individual children identified as requiring SEN intervention.

The potential source of confusion for schools was how this three-tier model fitted with the two school-based stages of the Code of Practice (DfES, 2001) and whether an intervention at Wave 2 or Wave 3 constituted the 'additional to, or otherwise different' (DfES, 2001, p6) provision that is part of the definition of SEN (see Chapter 1 for further discussion of this issue).

The process of provision mapping is associated with waves of intervention. There is not a single model of provision mapping, though there are some common principles. A number of government guidance documents (e.g. DfES, 2002, DfES, 2005b, DfES, 2006) and independent authors (e.g. Gross and White, 2003, Ekins and Grimes, 2009) present models of provision mapping. Broadly, provision mapping involves a school considering its profile of need and determining what provision it has available and what more it needs to make available. A typical approach would be for a school to consider firstly what provision it makes at Wave 1 and whether there is more that could be done to develop practice at this level. After this has been considered, the school would then look at the interventions it needs to make available at Waves 2 and 3. At all points, the decision is based on the school's own profile of need so, though there might be some similarities, there is not a set range of interventions that a school should offer. It should also be noted that the provision map should be kept under review and changed to reflect differences in cohorts and emerging trends, such as, for example, an increase in new entrants into Reception with speech and language difficulties.

Ofsted (2010) reported positively on the use of provision mapping, stating:

> "A few of the LAs and schools visited used provision mapping to improve provision and outcomes for children and young people with additional needs. The best provision mapping observed did not simply list what was available; it also showed which interventions were particularly effective. This contributed to efficient planning to meet the needs of individuals or groups, kept pupils and their parents up to date with progress following an intervention and helped a school or an LA to evaluate its overall effectiveness."
>
> (Ofsted, 2010, p63)

The 2011 Green Paper also notes that 'many schools have developed new approaches to planning, reviewing and tracking the progress of all pupils that have enabled them to achieve what IEPs aimed to do without many of the associated bureaucratic burdens.' (DfE, 2011, p98). It goes on to cite provision mapping as one such approach. The individual education plan (IEP) had been introduced through the first Code of Practice (DfE, 1994a). The Code required IEPs to be produced for pupils at stage 2 and beyond. The revised Code (DfES, 2001) also carried a strong expectation that pupils with SEN would have an IEP. By 2005 a different message was emerging with the statement that:

> "It is now government policy that IEPs are only one method by which schools can plan for pupils with SEN. They are not statutory and are merely one way of planning

and recording the additional or different provision for a child with SEN and recording outcomes for individual pupils. Where schools have arrangements to plan individually for all pupils and record their progress – as will become more common with personalised learning – then IEPs may be unnecessary."

<div align="right">(DfES, 2005b, p214)</div>

A similar message was provided in the document *Effective Leadership: ensuring the progress of pupils with SEN and/or Disabilities* (DfES, 2006), which stated:

"IEPs are not a statutory requirement. Where schools have a policy of individual planning and recording for all pupils then the pupil with SEN should not need an IEP."

<div align="right">(DfES, 2006, p22)</div>

The 2011 Green Paper states that advice on using IEPs will be removed and schools will be encouraged to explore the ways in which provision mapping and other new approaches 'can be used to enable pupils with SEN to develop, progress and fulfil their potential.' (DfE, 2011, p99).

As the previous chapter outlined, the first phase of the IDP materials was launched in 2008. These represented the fulfilment of a proposal within *Removing Barriers to Achievement* (DfES, 2004b). The first two sets of IDP materials released focused on speech, language and communication needs and on dyslexia. These were followed in 2009 by materials for supporting pupils on the autism spectrum and materials for supporting pupils with BESD in 2010. The IDP materials were not mandatory and so there was no requirement for schools to use them.

DfE-funded research conducted by Lindsay et al. (2011) looked at a number of government initiatives aimed at improving teachers' knowledge, skills and understanding in relation to SEN, including the IDP materials. With regard to impact, the report found that:

- awareness of and engagement with the IDP continued to increase over the project. By November 2010, six out of ten teachers nationally were aware of the IDP: 66% of primary and 49% of secondary teachers;
- three quarters of SENCOs had attended LA training on the IDP;
- between 70% (dyslexia) and 84% (autism spectrum) judged training to be effective;
- SENCOs reported that the IDP CPD had promoted discussion of pupils' teaching and learning needs (96% SENCOs), improved teachers' knowledge (94%), improved teachers' empathy with pupils' having barriers to learning (90%) and benefited the learning of targeted pupils (89%);
- between two thirds and three quarters of teachers judged that the IDP materials had improved their knowledge, understanding and confidence to teach pupils with dyslexia, speech, language and communication needs (SLCN), ASD and BESD;
- nine out of ten SENCOs reported that IDP training had led to improvements in pupils' learning;
- newly qualified teachers were more confident to support pupils with SEND if they had received IDP training.

<div align="right">(Lindsay et al., 2011, p11)</div>

In the context of this chapter's focus on the influence of centrally produced policy and guidance on schools, engagement with the IDP is an important area of enquiry. As Lindsay et al. (2009) note, uptake by schools was likely to be dependent on the needs and priorities of each LA and school but also the perceived usefulness and relevance of the IDP materials themselves.

The demise of the National Strategies

The National Strategies contract ended on 31 March 2011 and the website closed on 28 June 2011. Though the timing may lead to an assumption that the ending of the National Strategies was related to the change of government, their fate was sealed within the Labour government's White Paper *Your Child, Your Schools, Our Future* (DCSF, 2009a), which had stated that the current central contract would not be renewed when it came to an end in 2011. The 2009 White Paper presented the National Strategies as a necessary and successful phase in school improvement nationally, describing them as 'crucial to our success over the last 12 years in addressing national priorities, and raising standards at all levels' (DCSF, 2009a, p56). The 2009 White Paper, however, proposed a move away from school improvement activity 'controlled and delivered from central and local government through national programmes' (DCSF, 2009a, p56) in favour of every school driving its own improvement and the tailoring of support 'more closely to the specific challenges and issues faced by individual schools' (DCSF, 2009a, p56).

The Labour Government's 2009 White Paper promised that:

> "We will ensure that there is a smooth transition to the new arrangements, and that the legacy of high-quality programmes and guidance that the National Strategies have developed over the last 12 years continues to be accessible to schools and LAs."
>
> (DCSF, 2009a, p59)

The Coalition Government has transferred the materials produced by the National Strategies to the National Archives website.

Presentation and discussion of data

A key area of investigation was the extent to which national policy and guidance for SEN and inclusion impacted on practice in schools. Within both the survey (see Appendix A) and the case study interviews (see Appendix C) questions were asked that sought to explore this issue.

Forty-one per cent of all survey respondents thought that national guidance on SEN and inclusion influenced practice in their school. It is important to note, however, that just under 49% of respondents were either ambivalent or indicated that they did not know whether national guidance influenced practice in their school. The proportion of respondents disagreeing that national guidance influenced school practice was very low (approximately 10%). These figures seem to suggest that some respondents may not be aware when a particular piece of national policy or guidance is the driver for certain developments within their school. This issue was pursued through another question within the survey, which asked respondents about the influence of any specific national guidance document. Only 13.7% of mainstream respondents considered that a specific national policy or guidance on SEN and inclusion had been particularly influential on their practice. The figure for special school respondents was slightly higher at 19.8%.

In addition to the small proportion indicating that a specific piece of national policy or guidance had influenced practice, the other area of interest is the large number of respondents indicating that they were 'not sure'. These figures suggest that respondents do not know enough about the policy or guidance documents to comment, or do not know enough about how they link to school practice.

There is a degree of inconsistency between the larger proportion (41% of all respondents) indicating that national policy and guidance influences practice and the relatively small number of respondents who felt a specific national policy or guidance document had influenced their school's practice. These apparently contradictory responses may reflect that there are some respondents who believe that practice is influenced by national policy and guidance but struggle to identify specific pieces of policy and guidance that have exerted an influence. Documents cited as influential were the Code of Practice, closely followed by ECM and the IDP, with a few references to the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA).

Questions within the survey also explored the perceived clarity of national guidance. Only 17% of all survey respondents thought that national guidance was clear for them to implement in practice. However, responses to this question need to be understood in the context of the previously discussed questions regarding awareness of policy and guidance, which suggested that teachers were not directly engaging with policy and so would not be able to comment on its clarity. This seems to be borne out by the fact that 55% were ambivalent or did not know whether national guidance was clear to implement in practice.

Though an assumption from the percentages presented above might be that schools looked to local rather than national policy and guidance, this is not borne out by the similarly low percentages presented in Chapter 6 regarding the influence of local policy and guidance.

Respondents were asked what had been most influential on school practice in relation to SEN and inclusion. A significant majority (see Table 3.1) indicated that they thought Ofsted requirements were more influential than local or national policy and guidance.

	Mainstream	Special
Ofsted requirements	59%	63%
Local authority policy and guidance	20%	22%
National government policy and guidance	20%	15%

Table 3.1 Influence of Ofsted and national and local policy

Respondents were asked whether they had heard of specific terminology and interventions related to SEN (see Table 3.2). This set of questions drew more positive responses in relation to the level of awareness. The majority of respondents reported that their schools were in the process of implementing these programmes or they were already embedded in school practice.

	Have not heard of this		Have heard the term but do not understand what it means		Understand the term but my school has not started to implement it		My school is in the process of implementing this		I consider this to be embedded in school practice	
	Main-stream	Special	Main-stream	Special	Main-stream	Special	Main-stream	Special	Main-stream	Special
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Assessment for learning	0.7	1.6	1.5	3.7	3.6	15.7	33.8	37.2	61.4	42.6
Personalised learning	2.3	3.7	4.9	4.1	25.0	15.7	43.2	28.1	25.3	48.8
Quality first inclusive teaching	50.7	53.3	10.4	18.2	13.2	12.3	13.2	6.6	13.4	10.3
Waves of intervention	29.4	41.7	10.4	12.0	11.5	23.5	18.4	9.5	30.5	13.6
Provision mapping	31.9	35.1	12.7	13.2	12.8	19.8	19.6	16.1	23.8	16.1
Assessing Pupils' Progress	3.4	5.8	3.4	3.3	7.6	17.3	50.6	35.9	35.9	38.0

Table 3.2 Awareness of terms associated with SEN

The comparatively low level of awareness indicated in relation to quality first inclusive teaching, waves of intervention and provision mapping is interesting in the context of consideration of the influence of centrally produced guidance on practice. These represent nationally encouraged (e.g. DfES, 2005b, DfES, 2006) approaches to planning and provision for pupils with SEN. In contrast, only 0.7% of mainstream respondents indicated that they had not heard of Assessment for Learning, 2.3% had not heard of Personalised Learning and 3.4% had not heard of Assessing Pupils' Progress (APP). The difference may reflect that a higher priority is attached to those areas that relate to the curriculum and assessment.

Particularly surprising is the high proportion of respondents indicating they had not heard of quality first inclusive teaching. Less awareness in relation to waves of intervention and provision mapping could perhaps be explained because these relate more to the strategic management of provision rather than directly to classroom practice. Quality first inclusive teaching, however, does have practical application in terms of class and subject teachers developing their standard classroom practice to include a broader range of learners. It should be recognised that although respondents may not have known the term 'quality first inclusive teaching' this is not necessarily an indication that they are not teaching in a manner that reflects its principles or that their schools have not prioritised developments in this area.

The principles of ECM underpinned educational policy from 2003 onwards. In the context of exploring the influence of national policy on practice, this was an important policy initiative to consider within the research. Survey respondents were asked how ECM had affected their practice in relation to pupils with SEN. Forty per cent of respondents said there had been increased emphasis on social and emotional development, although 47% thought there had been an increase in paperwork and bureaucracy. More special school respondents than mainstream thought it had resulted in better inter-agency working (33% and 21% respectively) and working more closely with parents (31% and 25%). The responses are summarised in Table 3.3.

	More paperwork/ bureaucracy	Increased emphasis on social and emotional development	It hasn't affected our practice	Closer working with parents	Better inter-agency working	Faster access to external agencies
Mainstream schools	47.7%	38.9%	26.9%	24.8%	21.5%	7.7%
Special schools	46.7%	46.2%	26.0%	31.4%	33.5%	12.4%

Table 3.3 Effects of Every Child Matters

Most of the comments supplied by survey respondents on whether ECM had affected practice were negative, relating to more paperwork, delays in accessing services and minimal progress towards interagency working. A number of respondents said that the common assessment framework had also led to more paperwork and delays in accessing external services. Some respondents said that they were recently/newly qualified teachers who were not teaching before ECM and were thus unable to make a comparison or to comment. There were some concerning comments:

> "Every Child Matters is a document which is bandied about but never read outside the SMT. We are told about it but not able to access it."

> "Has not been part of the school's official practice."

> "Not sure what the term means. I've heard it mentioned in adverts, etc."

Some respondents said that the ECM agenda had raised awareness of the issues, while a number of respondents commented that ECM had not affected their practice:

> "ECM is at the heart of our school ethos."

> "Every child mattered before the agenda became trendy."

> "It hasn't directly affected my practice as I already thought every child should matter, hence I became a teacher!"

The responses to the survey can be interpreted in different ways. The increase in bureaucracy is on the surface a negative outcome of ECM but if through more detailed information being gathered on children and young people they are better protected, it may be viewed as necessary. However, if considerable time and effort are devoted to evidencing how the school meets each of the five ECM outcomes, we might question the necessity. Similarly, 'increased emphasis on social and emotional development' is on the surface a positive finding but we are aware of the view of Ecclestone and Hayes (2009) that schools have become too preoccupied with the emotional lives of pupils. From this perspective, an 'increased emphasis on social and emotional development' could be viewed negatively as a distraction from the teacher's core role.

Despite representing a major government initiative to strengthen the teaching of pupils with SEN, only 30% of mainstream teacher respondents and 33% of special school respondents reported that they had accessed any of the IDP materials for SEN. Sixty per cent of mainstream and 58% of special school respondents had not used them, and 10% and 9% respectively were not sure whether they had or not. Of those who had used the IDP materials, 11% of mainstream and 13% special respondents found them very useful; 67% and 58% respectively thought they were quite useful. Three per cent of mainstream respondents who had used the materials found them not at all useful.

In terms of the effects of the previous government's policies for SEN and inclusion, 19% of special school respondents and 18% of mainstream respondents felt that the these had been beneficial to pupils with SEN. However, these figures need to be interpreted in the context of a large proportion of respondents (52% mainstream, 53% special) who were either ambivalent or indicated that they did not know. For both special school and mainstream teachers, the proportion disagreeing that government policies for SEN and inclusion had benefited pupils represented a sizeable minority – 27% and 30% respectively. Although 48% of mainstream teachers felt that the inclusion of more pupils with SEN had led to pupils in their school being more accepting and understanding of disability and difference, only 36% felt that policies adopted by their school had supported this.

The case study visits provided a valuable opportunity to explore further the nature of teachers' engagement with, and perception of, policy and guidance in relation to SEN and inclusion. The visits involved interviewing a range of staff and perhaps not surprisingly responses to questions concerned with policy and guidance varied according to the interviewee's role and responsibilities.

Senior staff interviewed reported that they needed to know about national policy both for external and internal evaluation and to keep abreast of any emergent sources of funding that might be of benefit to the school. Headteachers engaged with policy in a variety of ways. In some cases, it was directly from the source, either because they had become aware of information they needed to access or because of direct communication to schools from central government. Awareness of national policy, guidance or a particular initiative often came about through an LA source in the form of either an individual member of the LA's advisory team or headteacher briefings organised by the LA. In a number of cases, it was clear that headteachers placed considerable faith in the LA to disseminate to them the important elements of national policy and they valued this service. It was also clear from discussions that headteachers and their senior leadership teams spent time engaged in discussions regarding the implications of any changes in policy or new policy initiatives before disseminating the key information to school staff.

Concern was expressed by a number of headteachers regarding the sheer amount of electronic communication from central government. It was evident that a number of headteachers interviewed saw themselves as 'gatekeepers', working in their school's interests to select the most relevant elements of the information. A key factor in judging relevance was whether information related to a statutory responsibility or an aspect of practice that the school would be inspected on. In addition, headteachers also took notice of information that related to areas already identified by the school as priorities or for some other reason appeared directly relevant to the school's context. Reflecting the need to be selective, one headteacher explained:

> "We cannot do all things – you just need to do a few things better. If you are brave enough, you can do your own thing."
>
> (Headteacher – secondary)

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Another referred to the importance of interpreting policy in a manner reflecting the school's context, remarking on the need to:

> "Interpret policy such that it was of maximum benefit to my pupils."
>
> (Headteacher – secondary)

Class and subject teachers interviewed generally reported that they did not engage directly with national policy and guidance but received interpretations from another source such as the SENCO or a member of the senior leadership team. The exception to this was if they had attended externally run courses such as LA training events or academic courses run by HEIs where policy issues were typically included. For most teachers, engaging directly with national policy and guidance did not appear to be a high priority. Most seemed content that if anything of significance was produced somebody would draw it to their attention. Despite not generally engaging with national policy, there was a perception that policy and guidance changed fairly frequently. In some cases this belief seemed to serve to reinforce the view that there was a limited need to engage in national policy. The view that policy was regularly changing was not confined to class and subject teachers. One secondary headteacher observed:

> "There is no stability – political cycles at most have a five-year turnaround; a child's schooling takes 13 years. It takes five years for any new policy to become settled and embedded but it is changed all the time."
>
> (Headteacher – secondary)

The political influence on educational policy was noted by a number of headteachers and teachers we spoke to. One secondary headteacher complained:

> "It's to do with political whim, not about pupils' education – Gove[4] judged schools' progress in GCSEs against different A-C criteria than those that were in place when pupils took their GCSEs. So how are we expected to take policy seriously when they change the goalposts?"
>
> (Headteacher – secondary)

Whilst a number of headteachers were very candid in expressing critical views on national policy it was also evident that national policy influenced senior leadership teams' priorities, particularly in relation to raising standards. A number of teachers spoke of the very close monitoring of attainment by members of the senior leadership team. In some cases the expectations regarding pupil attainment were considered to be unrealistic. One secondary teacher explained:

> "We are in no doubt that the main [policy] focus with management is to crack the A-C barriers – the worry is that if pupils do not get a 'C' grade then they become second-class citizens – the risk is that boys become the 'D-C cohort'."
>
> (Secondary teacher)

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[4] www.cypnow.co.uk/Education/article/1049102/Government-accused-shifting-goalposts-200-schools-fail-reach-new-target

Despite representing a major policy initiative, from the case studies we were not left with the impression that ECM had made a significant impact either positively or negatively on teachers. Few teachers voluntarily named it when asked about influential national policy during the interviews but when prompted acknowledged that they had heard of it. In a lot of cases class and subject teachers then proceeded to talk about it as something that was quite high profile two or three years ago but was now talked about far less.

SENCOs interviewed were more aware of ECM due to involvement in the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) and Team Around the Child (TAC) processes. Reaction to our questions about ECM during the case study visits served to confirm a view emerging from the survey data that even significant pieces of government policy and guidance do not make a direct impact on class and subject teachers, especially in secondary schools.

An example of the role of LAs in ensuring that national policy and guidance influences practice in schools was the use of provision mapping as an alternative to IEPs. In one of the LAs visited this had reportedly been heavily promoted by SEN advisory staff through training events and guidance materials. All the SENCOs we spoke to in this LA referred to a reduction in IEPs, often retaining these only for some pupils at School Action Plus with complex needs and/or considerable multiagency involvement and those with statements. There was also an example of an LA that had been proactive in promoting the uptake in the use of the IDP materials. In another LA, the promotion of the IDP materials had not taken place due to a lack of clarity over whether this would be led by SEN or School Improvement staff.

It has already been noted in relation to the survey data (see Table 3.1) that Ofsted was considered more influential than local or national policy and guidance. There was broad agreement between school staff interviewed that interest in policy was heightened by Ofsted visits. Headteachers and teachers were acutely aware of the need to demonstrate compliance with statutory guidance and engagement with high-profile national initiatives, including certain National Strategy materials.

Within the case study visits, views regarding Ofsted varied depending on the personal experience of Ofsted visits.

The significance of Ofsted to schools was highlighted by one headteacher who commented:

> "It is important because it matters very much to teachers' morale – your school can go from 'outstanding' to 'satisfactory' depending on any changes to inspection criteria and interpretation by the inspectors – this is devastating for staff."
>
> (Headteacher – secondary)

Interviewees expressed a view that inspectors' understanding of SEN issues influenced Ofsted outcomes and this was often felt to vary depending on the particular inspection team. Within the survey, only 13% of mainstream respondents felt that Ofsted inspections recognised the effect that a high proportion of pupils with SEN can have on a school and 55% felt they did not. Forty-five per cent of mainstream teachers felt that their latest Ofsted report appropriately recognised the progress of pupils with SEN in their school. Interestingly, a higher proportion (57%) of special school respondents agreed with this view.

Inspectors who demonstrated a real understanding of SEN were viewed positively – this was particularly noticed in special schools where it was largely felt that inspectors did recognise that the pupils had complex needs and recognised the teaching and learning challenges. In the small

number of special schools visited, headteachers were proactive in supplying Ofsted inspectors with very detailed data plotting individual pupils' progress (and in a few cases the deterioration), the intention being to give Ofsted evidence that provision was intensely personalised, rigorously monitored and data driven. This provision of such detailed evidence was time-consuming and may not be feasible for mainstream schools, particularly secondary schools, given staffing levels for pupils with SEN and, in some cases, a decrease in the use of IEPs and less use of small steps monitoring programmes that can record very small changes in progress on a variety of social, emotional and cognitive scales.

It may be that in mainstream schools the comment made by one teacher interviewed that Ofsted is "less interested in progress, more in attainment" has some validity, whereas in a special school the intake now is typically such that Ofsted has to recognise the importance of individually referenced holistic progress rates as a measure of school effectiveness rather than normatively measured attainment levels. A SENCO from a special school told us:

> "All of the systems set up for mainstream generally do not take account of schools with a high level of SEN. Society cannot accept that all pupils with SEN are not going to thrive in mainstream schools, although some will. So Ofsted reports that schools are failing – often Ofsted inspectors do not have knowledge of severe SEN or disability so they are scared to say things."
>
> (SENCO – special school)

It was, however, noticed that inspection had been frustrating for special schools in that a school could receive 'outstanding' in all areas other than attainment because such a measure was based on expected national results at KS4. Within the survey, 42% of special school teachers felt that Ofsted recognised the complexity of pupils' needs. Sixty-nine per cent felt these needs had become more complex since starting work in their current school.

Within the survey, the respondents were asked a single question exploring their views on whether they experience a tension between policies for inclusion and policies for raising standards. Just under 80% of mainstream respondents agreed that they did. In comparison, just under 66% of special school respondents indicated they experienced this tension.

During the case study visits, many teachers said that they experience a tension between raising standards and inclusion simply because:

> "You want to do your best for all pupils in the class. If we have to concentrate on getting higher GCSE grades, we then have to put a lot of effort into borderline pupils and that means that those at either side are at risk of not getting enough attention or recognition for progress."
>
> (Secondary teacher)

Another secondary teacher noted:

> "It's confusing – we have setting for ability for A-Cs, but for inclusion we now have mixed ability. The Government needs to make choices about attainment and diversity."
>
> (Secondary teacher)

There was not, however, disagreement with an agenda that sought to raise expectations and outcomes for pupils with SEN. One headteacher stated:

> "Standards raising enables us to be more inclusive and provide greater variety of provision – it's the only chance some of our pupils will have to make something of themselves."
>
> (Secondary headteacher)

Such views were not solely from senior leaders. One secondary teacher told us:

> "It's hard, but ensures you challenge SEN pupils, not use it as an excuse."
>
> (Secondary teacher)

Many case study respondents brought data with them to show how they used it to track pupil progress, including of those with SEN, and to decide upon a course of action. Monitoring was largely undertaken against academic achievement although many primary and some secondary respondents regretted that progress in social and emotional areas, although being important for a pupil's future progress and in line with the ECM agenda, did not have as much value as rates of progress measures for literacy and numeracy.

Most case study respondents were concerned with how 'standards' were judged and the fact that this seemed to change with undue frequency. Discussions within the interviews focused on issues related to the distinction between attainment and achievement and the problem of political swings with regard to what counts as valuable. Many school staff interviewed were concerned that, although the term 'achievement' was widely used, those responsible for making judgements about the school's performance frequently blurred the distinction between attainment and achievement. A number of teachers felt that this 'blurring' sometimes led to unrealistic expectations within their own school regarding closing the gap between particular children's current performance and age-related expectations. A number of headteachers expressed a similar concern in relation to LA and Ofsted expectations of, and judgements about, the school.

It was noted that a considerable amount of work and investment had been put into providing a range of qualifications for secondary school pupils but that ultimately for both schools and pupils what was being counted as progress was academic GCSEs grades A-C.

At the time of the case study visits (July 2010 to March 2011) schools were fully aware of and expecting funding cuts. When asked about funding respondents predictably noted that there was insufficient funding for SEN. Special schools generally expressed greater satisfaction with their funding but noted that ongoing developments in technology to support pupils with significant and complex needs meant that there was not sufficient funding to meet the cost of required provision. There was a degree of difference between special school and mainstream perspectives reflected in the survey data, with only 7.7% of mainstream teachers feeling their school receives sufficient funding to provide an appropriate education for pupils with SEN compared with 24% of special school teachers. However, with 69.5% of mainstream respondents and 60.7% special respondents disagreeing with this view, it is clear that there is a perception among many teachers that funding is insufficient.

Mainstream and special school headteachers reported spending a considerable amount of time identifying any funding streams that could be of benefit to all their pupils, including those with SEN. Some made reference to the problems of projects and other short-term sources of funding.

These included implications for staff stability and the associated issue of sustainability once funding had come to an end. In case study schools, funding cuts that might lead to a reduction in TA support were of particular concern for the class and subject teachers we spoke to.

Though not directly related to policy or guidance, an issue that emerged from discussions within the case study interviews was the impact of advances in technology, which seem to have brought about additional pressures that may not have existed a few years ago. In supporting a national and school level focus on standards, most teachers were involved in working with electronic data – either directly or as a printout – in relation to the monitoring of pupil progress. In secondary schools in particular, electronic systems were used for pupil tracking, particularly in relation to behaviour. Teachers also reported that they spent a lot of time preparing PowerPoint presentations that included features such as video clips in order to engage pupils. There was a feeling that many pupils had come to expect this type of lesson content and it had become the norm.

The issue of workload generally came up as a regular topic within the interviews. Comments we received included:

> "No drug in the world could give you this buzz but it's exhausting."
>
> (Secondary teacher)

> "We all have early starts and late finishes – work spills into all weekends. There's a huge workload. All the Internet resources make it worse in a way with a long time spent planning good PowerPoints."
>
> (Secondary teacher)

> "I work all day and at home – I do all my lesson plans, chase pupils' work, as it is all sent electronically, keep up to date. E-mails are massive at secondary school."
>
> (Secondary teacher)

> "I have masses of data to work on – I can report but not reflect on what is working for who under what conditions. Marking is a particular issue in English – there's no time for moderation. As a subject teacher, I'm not stretching myself – I just have to cope with basic teaching and behaviour."
>
> (Secondary teacher)

> "I have struggled with workload because I like to do a good job. I have become more efficient and organised but if I have a family I may have to give up my leadership role – it's different for men but for women they have to give up their career because of workload that comes with any promotions."
>
> (Primary SENCO)

> "Every September, I think there must be something else I can do as a career – then I close the door and teach. I like the job but wouldn't want to be a teacher forever."
>
> (Secondary teacher)

The survey asked what the Government should do to improve outcomes for pupils with SEN. The suggestions attracting the highest level of agreement from mainstream were a reduction in class size, early intervention at an early age and more one-to-one support for pupils with SEN. Special school respondents indicated a high level of agreement with early intervention (at an early age and at the first sign of difficulty) as well as with a reduction in mainstream class sizes. There was a clear vote against removing the term 'SEN' and its associated procedures. There was a core of support from both special school (46.7%) and mainstream respondents (35.3%) for revising the SEN Code of Practice.

Tables 3.4 and 3.5 show the 'Strongly Agree' and 'Agree' and 'Strongly Disagree' and 'Disagree' categories combined. The items are arranged in order of level of agreement.

The Government should:	Strongly Agree or Agree	Disagree or Strongly Disagree
Reduce class sizes	92.7%	1.0%
Promote more early intervention (at a young age)	91.5%	1.1%
Provide more one-to-one support for pupils with SEN	86.3%	3.4%
Promote more early intervention (at first sign of problem/difficulty)	81.1%	0.8%
Provide more SEN training for all teachers	83.9%	4.5%
Train more SEN specialist teachers	83.1%	3.9%
Reduce bureaucracy related to SEN	81.1%	1.5%
Increase the amount of special school outreach support to mainstream schools	80.0%	19.8%
Introduce a more supportive inspection framework	76.4%	2.1%
Provide more support/advisory service input	70.5%	5.7%
Provide more access to split placement arrangements (e.g. mainstream/special school, mainstream/short stay schools)	70.2%	11.0%
Allow more small schools	67.1%	4.2%
Change testing arrangements at national level	66.0%	9.4%
Establish more units within mainstream schools	64.5%	16.4%
Provide more educational psychology input	63.6%	8.9%
Resource some mainstream schools in each area in relation to a particular form of SEN	58.8%	14.7%
Change the curriculum requirements at national level	56.6%	12.9%
Place more pupils with SEN in special schools	55.2%	19.5%
Revise the SEN Code of Practice	35.3%	5.2%
Abandon the term 'SEN' and associated procedures	9.6%	46.6%

Table 3.4 Mainstream teachers' views on what the Government should do

The Government should:	Strongly Agree or Agree	Disagree or Strongly Disagree
Promote more early intervention (at a young age)	95.9%	0.4%
Promote more early intervention (at first sign of problem/difficulty)	95.4%	0.8%
Reduce class sizes in mainstream schools	91.7%	0.4%
Provide more SEN training for all teachers	91.3%	2.1%
Train more SEN specialist teachers	90.1%	1.2%
Reduce bureaucracy related to SEN	88.8%	1.6%
Introduce a more supportive inspection framework	87.2%	1.2%
Allow more small schools	85.5%	0.8%
Change testing arrangements at national level	81.0%	3.7%
Increase the amount of special school outreach support to mainstream schools	81.0%	4.9%
Provide more one-to-one support for pupils with SEN	78.5%	5.4%
Change the curriculum requirements at national level	75.6%	7.0%
Provide more support/advisory service input	74.8%	5.4%
Provide more educational psychology input	71.5%	5.4%
Provide more access to split placement arrangements (e.g. mainstream/special school, mainstream/short stay schools)	71.5%	10.3%
Place more pupils with SEN in special schools	61.6%	10.3%
Resource some mainstream schools in each area in relation to a particular form of SEN	54.9%	13.6%
Revise the SEN Code of Practice	46.7%	6.6%
Establish more units within mainstream schools	45.4%	25.6%
Abandon the term 'SEN' and associated procedures	12.0%	45.4%

Table 3.5 Special school teachers' views on what the Government should do

Findings

3.1 There was variation between schools visited in the extent to which they accessed national policy and guidance for SEN and inclusion directly or drew upon LA interpretation. Class and subject teachers interviewed generally reported they did not directly engage with national policy and guidance for SEN and inclusion. They tended to receive an interpretation of policy and guidance from another source such as the SENCO or senior leadership team. Some schools cited the sheer amount of electronic communication from central government as a barrier to access.

3.2 The main triggers for class and subject teachers to engage with national policy were Ofsted inspections and statutory duties. The influence of Ofsted requirements on practice was also confirmed by survey data. Less than a fifth of teachers surveyed reported that national policy and guidance for SEN and inclusion was clear to implement in practice.

3.3 School staff interviewed expressed varied views surrounding Ofsted depending on personal experience of the outcome and process. Within the survey, nearly half of mainstream teachers felt that their latest Ofsted inspection appropriately recognised the progress of pupils with SEN in their school but only around a sixth thought that Ofsted

inspectors recognise the effect that having a high proportion of pupils with SEN can have on a school. Case study schools valued inspectors who demonstrated a real understanding of SEN and the increased complexities of pupils placed in special school settings. All schools visited placed a priority on Ofsted because of the effect on school reputation and morale of staff.

3.4 The majority of survey respondents said that they experience a tension between policies for inclusion and policies for raising academic standards. There was considerable concern expressed in the case study interviews that national age-related performance measures were superseding progress measures as indicators of teaching effectiveness.

3.5 Many school staff interviewed were concerned that, although the term 'achievement' was widely used, those responsible for making judgements about the school's performance frequently blurred the distinction between attainment and achievement. Schools felt that as a consequence there were sometimes unrealistic expectations regarding closing the gap between particular children's current performance and age-related expectations. Although many pupils with SEN had targets that contributed to holistic learning outcomes, it was felt that increased emphasis on academic attainment often served to marginalise progress made in these areas.

3.6 Many case study schools were heavily focused on using data to track academic achievement for all pupils, including those with SEN. These schools were able to demonstrate that they actively interrogated data in order to identify those not making adequate progress and instigate changes in provision and practice accordingly.

3.7 The majority of mainstream survey respondents thought that there was insufficient funding for SEN. Case study interviewees recognised that funding cuts were already taking place in the light of the current economic climate (interviews took place later than the online survey). Most concern was expressed in relation to funding cuts that would result in reductions in TA support and/or in specialist LA and other support services.

3.8 Case study special schools expressed a greater degree of satisfaction with their funding, acknowledging that it was linked to provision required to meet their pupils' complex needs. However, they noted that as new forms of support, particularly technology, are developed funding needs to keep pace. Only a quarter of special school survey respondents thought their school received insufficient funding to provide an appropriate education for all pupils.

3.9 An issue that emerged from the case studies was that developments in technology and usage by pupils has impacted on the workload of teachers but perhaps not as expected. In-school e-mails, electronic communication with parents and pupils, online marking and reporting, electronic tutor support and multimedia lesson preparation, in addition to external communications from government, LAs, etc., resulted in teachers reporting working longer hours.

Emerging issues and implications for policy

• The research findings suggest that there is not the expected timely link between the issuing of government policy and guidance for SEN through to changes to classroom practice in schools. The exception is when these changes are statutory or directly inspected by Ofsted. It may be that teachers are prioritising areas where they perceive there is a high level of accountability. An overemphasis on accountability could risk

placing compliance above creativity and in so doing could compromise professionalism and innovation. It could be that the sheer amount of policy and guidance generally issued to schools precludes against the effective take-up of specific policy and guidance for SEN and inclusion.

- It would be useful for the Government to identify barriers to take-up and usage of already produced training and guidance materials. It is likely that consideration will need to be given to format, tone, and national, local and school dissemination strategies. Perhaps the greatest barrier to address is teachers' perceptions that government guidance is likely to be of limited practical value and will inevitably be replaced in the relatively short term. Greater consultation with teachers regarding policy and guidance for SEN could serve to build a more positive relationship between policy and practice. The tone of some comments within the 2011 Green Paper relating to teachers' and schools' apparent overidentification and low expectations hardly encourages full engagement with and shared commitment to the aims of any new initiatives or materials.

- Policy and guidance against which schools feel they are inspected or accountable is more likely to directly influence practice. As the DfE website[5] states: 'The Code itself does not place any statutory duties on schools. Rather it gives guidance on how schools and LAs can meet their duties under the 1996 Education Act and the various SEN regulations.' Commenting on this issue, the Education and Skills Committee (2006, p74) stated: 'Firmer guidelines are required rather than the Government asking schools to "have regard to" the SEN Code of Practice.' Lack of clarity regarding the status of the Code of Practice (DfES, 2001) may be another factor contributing to variations in the identification of SEN.

- Change in response to national policy and guidance is more likely to take place if somebody (or a team) has specific responsibility for leading this in the school and it is given priority (and appropriate time) by the senior leadership team. Logically, in relation to SEN, this role could be fulfilled by the SENCO, but unless they are part of the senior leadership team (as recommended within the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice (DfES, 2001)) and have appropriate time and training it may be difficult to effect change.

- The LA can exert an influence if it promotes a particular aspect of national policy or guidance. If policy and guidance is expected to directly influence practice in schools, then attention must be given to the variation in dissemination strategies and the potential impact this could have on pupil experience in schools. It is important to note the role that good LAs play in helping schools to interpret policy and in helping to ensure consistency and quality of implementation locally.

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[5] www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/sen/sen/faqs/a0013088/code-of-practice-mandatory, accessed 5/1/12

CHAPTER 4: THE DEPLOYMENT OF SUPPORT STAFF

Exploration of the literature

Like the issue of identification of SEN, the deployment of support staff is a topic that was present in sources consulted as part of our original literature review but has since become a high-profile issue. In its 2004 report, Ofsted noted that in recent years there had been 'a significant change in schools' approach to staffing in order to support pupils with SEN, with a trend towards employing teaching assistants and other non-teaching staff and away from specialist teachers' (Ofsted, 2004, p16). The report noted a tendency in schools to allocate a TA to the lowest attaining pupils and a belief amongst teachers that these pupils would make little progress without that support.

Ofsted highlighted a number of problems both with methods of in-class support and withdrawal for work out of class. With regard to in-class support it was suggested that the allocation of a TA to a low attaining group reduced the extent to which the teacher planned tasks so that pupils with SEN could undertake them successfully. The suggestion was that whilst teachers were planning and teaching lessons that were well matched to most pupils' needs, they relied on TAs to break the tasks down further so that pupils with SEN could participate. Consequently, the focus was on how to enable access to the activity the rest of the class was undertaking with insufficient focus on what the pupil with SEN needed to learn or on how to improve their understanding and skills. Ofsted (2004) saw this as a common reason why a significant number of pupils with SEN made too little progress, despite good teaching for the majority of the class.

The problems Ofsted identified with regard to support out of class were associated with the pupil's loss of contact with the class teacher and their peer group. As well as the issues related to the social dimension of inclusion, this also raised the point that pupils with SEN were being denied access to teaching by a qualified teacher. Ofsted (2004) phrased this point with a degree of caution, stating:

> "Additionally, those pupils who needed contact with the best teaching, whatever the personal qualities and skills of the teaching assistants, were denied it."
>
> (Ofsted, 2004, p17)

In expressing the point in this way, Ofsted seemed to be attempting to make it clear that they were not criticising the quality of TAs but critiquing the effects of methods of deployment.

Ofsted's 2006 report *Inclusion: Does it Matter Where Pupils Are Taught?* also made reference to the use of TAs. It suggested that there was a general misconception that provision of additional resources, including the allocation of TA support, was the key requirement for individual pupils. Specifically, on the subject of the use of TAs, the report commented:

> "Pupils in mainstream schools where support from teaching assistants was the main type of provision were less likely to make good academic progress than those who had access to specialist teaching in those schools."
>
> (Ofsted, 2006, p3)

Throughout the document, Ofsted uses the term 'specialist teaching' to refer to teaching by a teacher who has experience and qualifications across a range of learning difficulties and disabilities (LDD) (Ofsted, 2006). The report does not elaborate particularly on what such specialist teaching might entail or what experience and qualifications might contribute to this.

However, it does give some broad indications of what the specialist teachers contributed in the schools visited as part of the review, suggesting:

> "Their understanding of the implications of the pupils' LDD enabled a greater sophistication in assessing and planning. These teachers had higher expectations for pupils over the longer term. They applied their knowledge of the pupils' difficulties successfully to ensure that their barriers to learning were reduced. They were more confident in managing the various support strategies, such as in-class support, and adapted curricula to meet the pupils' changing needs. They actively encouraged pupils' independence. Involvement in the curriculum was enabled through careful consideration of teaching strategies, appropriate resources and focused support."
>
> (Ofsted, 2006, p10)

Though Ofsted (2004, 2006) had raised the issue of the deployment of support staff, the reporting of research by Blatchford et al. (2009) in particular has fuelled the debate about the effectiveness of TAs and other additional adult support. The finding that attracted the greatest attention was the negative relationship between the amount of support a pupil received and the progress they made in core national curriculum subjects. The report noted:

> "The more support pupils received, the less progress they made, even after controlling for other factors that might be expected to explain the relationship such as pupils' prior attainment, SEN status and income deprivation."
>
> (Blatchford et al., 2009, p34)

The research report was complex, providing detailed information on methods used to gather data and the analysis process. However, as is often the case, the findings were reported in the media as sound bites, separate from much of the surrounding discussion that set them in a broader context. An article (Marley and Bloom, 2009) in the *Times Educational Supplement* (*TES*), for example, carried the title 'Teaching Assistants Impair Pupil Performance'. Other titles from the time included *The Independent*'s 'Children worse off with classroom assistants, report says' and the *Daily Telegraph*'s 'Teaching assistants "fail to improve school results"'. The discourse established through the reporting of research by Blatchford et al. was one of failure. The general storyline portrayed was of significant increases in the number of TAs employed over recent years at considerable expense and the apparent realisation through the Blatchford et al. (2009) research that this was not only making no difference but seemingly leading to worse progress. The Blatchford et al. findings had been reported early in September. At the end of 2009, there was widespread coverage in the press of a report by Richard Handover for the then Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families, Ed Balls, which recommended up to 40,000 TA posts could be lost.

The storyline established through the reporting of the Blatchford et al. (2009) research that TAs made little difference was therefore supplemented with the message that a reduction of 40,000 posts could represent an efficiency saving.

A systematic literature review by Alborz et al. (2009) represented more positive reading. The literature suggested that trained and supported TAs could have a positive impact on the progress of individual or small groups of children in the development of basic literacy skills. It also seemed that there was a less measurable but nonetheless important effect in terms of the contribution of 'sensitive' TA support in facilitating pupil engagement in learning and social activities with the class teacher and their peers. Alborz et al. expanded on the notion of

'sensitive' TA support, suggesting the sensitivity involved both facilitating interaction and being aware of times when pupils need to undertake self-directed choices and actions.

Alborz et al. (2009) reported on the effects of the availability of TA support on teachers. From the literature reviewed, they concluded that:

> "Use of TA support allows teachers to engage pupils in more creative and practical activities and to spend more time working with small groups or individuals. Class-related workload is somewhat reduced when working with a TA, but the teacher role may become more managerial as this workload may increase. An adult presence in the classroom makes teachers feel supported and less stressed. The knowledge that pupils were receiving improved levels of attention and support was also reported to enhance job satisfaction for teachers."
>
> (Alborz et al., 2009, p1)

Farrell et al. (2010) discussed the key findings from the Alborz et al. (2009) systematic review of literature that related specifically to the impact of TAs on academic achievement. A point noted by Giangreco et al. (2001) and Giangreco and Doyle (2007) was that there had been no systematic review of literature focusing on the key question of whether support staff in classrooms had an impact on raising standards.

The Farrell et al. (2010) paper notes the well-documented rapid increase in the numbers of TAs and the fact that for some years the Government explicitly recognised the 'valuable and supportive role' that TAs can play. For example, the *Good Practice Guide* (DfEE, 2000) referred to HMI reports that have 'confirmed the tremendous contribution that well trained and well managed teaching assistants (TAs) can make in driving standards up in schools' (Alborz et al., 2009, p4) with a further HMI report (Ofsted, 2002) suggesting the quality of teaching in lessons where TAs were present is better than in lessons without them. This view is supported in other studies (e.g. Lee, 2002, Butt and Lance, 2005), which are positive about the impact of TAs on pupils' learning but there is continuing uncertainty about the impact of TAs on raising standards.

In total, the Farrell et al. (2010) paper reports on 13 papers used within the Alborz et al. (2009) systematic review – nine focus on targeted intervention studies (TAs selected to work with a small group of pupils with an identified learning problem and attainment measured before and after) and four on non-targeted intervention studies where the mere presence of a TA in the classroom is linked to academic achievement. The conclusion from the review of this literature is that, where properly trained and supported, TAs can have a positive impact on primary pupils' progress, especially for literacy and language (findings were less positive for numeracy). However, Farrell et al. (2010) acknowledged that findings from large-scale studies linking the presence of TAs in primary schools with pupils' academic progress mirrored the findings of Blatchford et al. (2009) in suggesting that TAs had no impact. A recommendation from Farrell et al. (2010) is that schools and LAs need to have clear objectives when appointing TAs. Expanding on this issue, Farrell et al. (2010) explain that if the aim of having TAs is to increase teachers' levels of job satisfaction and provide more general support then there is evidence in a range of studies that they are doing a good job. If, however, the aim of TAs is to raise academic attainment, research would suggest they should only be appointed if they have specific tasks to perform with an identified child or group of children and they are provided with sufficient training, support and monitoring at all times. The implications of the review for the training of teachers are that trainee teachers need to be trained in how to work with TAs so they can be fully prepared when they begin teaching, school staff need training on how to develop effective teams of teachers and TAs and teachers need to be skilled in offering support and mentoring to TAs as well as pupils.

Webster et al. (2010) organised the findings of the five-year Deployment and Impact of Support Staff (DISS) study, of which the Blatchford et al. (2009) report referred to above was a part, into three areas – deployment, practice and preparedness – and reported on these:

Deployment: TAs' employment and deployment are inextricably linked with inclusion. TAs enabled pupils with SEN to be included in mainstream classes and it is frequently said that without them schools would struggle to cope. It is clear that TAs have a direct pedagogical role in supporting and interacting with pupils, usually working one-to-one or in small groups. The interactions that SEN pupils have with TAs are much more sustained and interactive than those with teachers, where pupils tend to be passive. The main effect of this deployment though is that it leads to pupils with SEN becoming separated from the teacher and the curriculum so they miss out on teacher-pupil (and pupil-pupil) interactions. TA support is thus an alternative to the teacher, rather than additional.

Practice: The quality of interactions is questionable. TAs are more concerned with task completion than learning and understanding and inadequate preparation means that TAs' interactions are reactive rather than proactive. The key difference is that in teacher-pupil talk teachers generally open up the pupil, whereas in TA-pupil talk, TAs generally close down the interaction linguistically and cognitively. Thus TAs do not make best use of the extended and more frequent interactions they have with pupils. The study recommends that teachers need to monitor TA interactions and modify as appropriate, with more training necessary.

Preparedness: The study found that many TAs go into lessons unaware of what teachers will ask them to do to support pupils, mainly due to lack of time for teacher-TA communication. Coupled with a lack of training, this has a bearing on learning outcomes for pupils with SEN: teachers need more training in how to make use of TAs. It is noted that since publication of the project findings in September 2009 the Government has published plans to invest in training in SEN for teachers (DCSF, 2010).

Webster et al. (2010) conclude that there is a need to go back to first principles and ask whether TAs should have a pedagogical role. Giangreco (2009) argues that instruction given by paraprofessionals should be supplemental, rather than primary or exclusive so they are not required to make pedagogical decisions. Reviews by Alborz (2009) and Slavin (2009) cited by Webster et al. would suggest that if TAs are to have a pedagogical role they need preparation and training and to receive support and guidance from the teacher/school about practice. Webster et al. (2010) suggested there was scope for building on the findings of the DISS study on positive approaches to learning (PAL), commenting:

> "TAs may be more effective in terms of having an indirect effect on pupil learning by helping with classroom organisation, limiting negative and off-task behaviour, and ensuring lessons run more smoothly. TAs could support pupils' development of what are sometimes referred to as 'soft' skills – confidence and motivation, dispositions toward learning and facilitating collaborating between pupils – that many now see as important for work in school, but also beyond. Such factors were measured in the DISS study in the PAL survey, and a consistently positive effect of TA support was found for pupils in Year 9. Further research is required to shed light on the practice that produced these outcomes in order to inform TA development."
> (Webster et al., 2010, p331-332)

Webster et al. (2010) commented on the effect of the availability of TA on the teacher, making the point:

> "It is worth noting that findings from teacher questionnaires consistently showed that, from the teachers' perspective, TAs and other support staff had a strong positive effect on their job satisfaction, levels of stress and workload – chiefly by relieving teachers of many of their administrative duties. Results from systematic observations also confirmed teachers' views that TAs in particular had a positive effect in classrooms, in terms of reducing instances of off-task behaviour or disruption and allowing more time for the teacher to teach."
>
> (Webster et al., 2010, p321)

This distinction between impact on pupils and impact on teachers represented a degree of subtlety that was not captured in the popular discourse regarding TAs at the time. It introduced the possibility that though direct impact of TA support on individual pupils may be difficult to identify, there was a positive impact on teachers that may, in turn, impact positively on pupils generally. The issue though still remained that, if the intention of TA support was to benefit the pupil(s) to which this support was assigned, the lack of evidence for this impact remained a concern. Certainly, Ofsted's (2004, 2006) earlier concerns and the more recent research of Blatchford et al. (2009) serve to challenge any complacency 'concerning the routine deployment of classroom-based support staff to lower attaining pupils and pupils with SEN' (Blatchford et al., 2009, p141).

Several writers have responded to the findings from Blatchford et al. (2009). Balshaw (2010) suggests these are unsurprising findings but notes that many schools have begun to look at TAs in a more rounded way, with a focus on four dimensions of the role – support for teachers, the curriculum and the whole school, as well as particular pupils – first recommended in the good practice guide (DfEE, 2000). This has led to an alternative framing of the issues, so Balshaw queries why this is not featured in the report. She also notes that it has been found that schools encouraging the development of TAs is a significant factor, as is deployment of higher level teaching assistants (HLTAs), and this is not mentioned in the report. Most importantly, Balshaw suggests, the attitudes of school leaders matter, making the point that 'Those leaders who see the potential of the skills of their support staff and have confidence in those colleagues then deploy them more creatively.' (Balshaw, 2010, p338). Drawing on her personal experience, Balshaw also notes that where more experienced TAs have engaged in the professional development of their peers, and in many cases become first-line managers, it has meant that they themselves have become confident in taking a wider role in the school.

Balshaw suggests the report is couched in out-of-date perceptions of SEN – the focus is on perceived weakness in individual pupils and supportive interventions that are supposedly needed and it is set in terms of using paraprofessional support for pupils rather than creating a learning environment characterised by teamwork.

Fletcher-Campbell (2010, p339) describes the DISS project as extensive yet 'disappointing, even depressing' in the assumptions it makes and the way it conceives of SEN. She argues that "Learning needs' and 'behavioural needs' are taken as 'givens' and unproblematic – the pupil 'has' them and there is no challenge of the curriculum or pedagogy to which the pupil is exposed, and no hint of the possibility of the social construction of special educational needs' (Fletcher-Campbell, 2010, p339). This, Fletcher-Campbell continues, leaves the impression that pupils with SEN do not fit the norm and are thus an inconvenience to the system. TAs are welcome because they allow more time for teachers to teach, but this ignores the fact that many

TAs are graduates, even teachers, and makes an assumption that time with the teacher is necessarily better.

Giangreco (2010) begins with a quotation from the children's poem *Helping*:

> "Some kind of help is the kind of help that helping's all about. And some kind of help is the kind of help we can all do without."
>
> (Silverstein, 1974, p101)

The important message conveyed is the need to recognise that when reference is made to 'TA support' this may encompass a broad range of practices and pupil experiences.

Giangreco notes that there has been a rapid increase in the numbers of TAs (UK) and paraprofessionals (US) without a 'theoretically defensible foundation and a substantive evidence base' (2010, p341) and no literature to date 'has offered a compelling rationale in support of assigning the least qualified school personnel, namely teacher assistants, to students with the most complex learning challenges' (2010, p341). There is praise for the DISS report for providing a substantial contribution to the evidence base. Giangreco says that data calling into question the current deployment of TAs must not be seen as blaming them or as a call to remove them and makes the point that 'Anyone familiar with schools knows of caring, hardworking, underappreciated teacher assistants who are considered assets in their schools, yet inappropriately are expected [to] carry-on teacher type duties without adequate training, planning, supervision or compensation' (2010, p344). Giangreco argues that before looking at the role of the TA it is necessary to reconceptualise all roles in school, to look again at the roles of teachers and special educators and the interplay between them. Giangreco concludes that 'in order for students with disabilities to receive equitable opportunities, effective instruction, and appropriate supports in inclusive schools, an expectation of teacher engagement is essential, as is their preparation and support for such direct instructional roles' (2010, p345). This, he suggests, 'necessitates collaboration with special educators and a rethinking of their roles, potentially involving a shift away from traditional pull-out approaches narrowly focused on remediation, toward more collaboration, co-teaching, differentiation, and universal design in classrooms' (2010, p345).

Ofsted (2010) was critical of how additional adults were deployed in some schools, commenting:

> "Where additional adult support was provided in the classroom for individuals, this was sometimes a barrier to including them successfully and enabling them to participate. In too many examples seen during the review, when a child or young person was supported closely by an adult, the adult focused on the completion of the task rather than on the actual learning. Adults intervened too quickly, so preventing children and young people from having time to think or to learn from their mistakes."
>
> (Ofsted, 2010, p46)

The Coalition Government introduced the pupil premium (£2.5 billion of extra money by 2014-15) as a method of providing support for the most disadvantaged pupils. The money 'will follow poorer children directly to the school they attend' (DfE, 2010, p4). It is for schools to decide how to spend the money but 'there will be clear transparency requirements to ensure it is spent on improving the life chances of our poorest young people' (DfE, 2010, p4). Clearly, based on the favourable views schools express regarding the impact of TAs, one use of the pupil premium could be in increasing additional adult support. In its review of possible ways of using

the pupil premium, the Sutton Trust listed the overall cost benefit of TAs as 'Very low/no impact for high cost' (Higgins et al., 2011, p7). In the wake of earlier coverage of the issue of TA use, such a finding was not wasted on the press. The Mail Online, for example, carried the headline 'Teaching assistants 'do not help improve grades', report into Pupil Premium spending finds'. However, as might be expected from a synthesis of a range of research studies, the Sutton Trust report presented a more complex, mixed picture, stating:

> "Most studies have consistently found very small or no effects on attainment, though pupils' perceptions and attitudes may be more positively affected. There are also positive effects in terms of teacher morale and reduced stress of working with a teaching assistant. One clear implication from this is that if teaching assistants are used with the intention of improving the learning of pupils, they should not undertake the tasks they are routinely assigned. There is some evidence that there is greater impact when teaching assistants are given a particular pedagogical role or responsibility in specific curriculum interventions where the effect appears to be greater, particularly with training and support. Even here, however, comparisons with qualified teachers suggest they are consistently less effective (achieving about half the gains compared with qualified teachers)."
>
> (Higgins et al., 2011, p28)

Whilst by no means a ringing endorsement of the impact of TAs, the Sutton Trust report raised important issues regarding the way TAs are used. There is some support, it seems, for TAs to be used to run targeted intervention programmes. However, it should be recognised that one reason for more evidence of impact in relation to the use of TAs in this capacity may be that evidence is easier to gather using entry and exit data. Referring to the issue of an evidence base, Blatchford et al. (2008, p13) commented that 'the general view in schools was that support staff did have an impact on pupil attainment, behaviour and attitudes: the problem headteachers faced was proving it.'

The 2011 Green Paper devotes a paragraph to the issue of TA use that reflects some of the issues highlighted by the recent research (e.g. Blatchford et al., 2009, Alborz et al., 2009) and the earlier Ofsted (2004, 2006) criticisms, stating:

> "Within schools, support staff can make a real difference to the achievement of pupils with SEN, but they need to be deployed and used effectively in order to do so. Some schools have helped to achieve significant improvements in the outcomes of their pupils with SEN by reviewing the amount of time spent with, and type of support from, teaching assistants. Evidence published in 2009 showed how teaching assistants can have a positive impact on pupils' self-esteem. However, teaching assistant time should never be a substitute for teaching from a qualified teacher. Too often, the most vulnerable pupils are supported almost exclusively by teaching assistants."
>
> (DfE, 2011, p63)

Though acknowledging the potential contribution of support staff, the 2011 Green Paper was clear in its message that:

> "Children with SEN need more, not less, time with the school's most skilled and qualified teachers."
>
> (DfE, 2011, p63)

Presentation and discussion of data

It was clear from the survey responses that a main role for the TA was supporting pupils with SEN and/or low attaining pupils – 71% of mainstream respondents agreed that this was how the TA was used. Case study interviewees were also asked questions about how support staff were deployed in their school, how they as individuals worked with support staff and their perception of the efficacy of working with TAs to support SEN pupils. Those interviewed were generally aware that support staff could potentially have an adverse effect on the development of the independence of pupils with SEN, and also that teachers should not delegate the teaching of pupils with SEN entirely to their TAs. Most were able to elaborate on the methods of deployment they employed within their classes to avoid these problems developing. In some schools, it was clear that such methods of deployment were very much an established part of policy. It was clear that the majority of teachers interviewed were aware of general messages from research and media coverage concerning the impact of support staff on the progress of pupils with SEN. In spite of the critical nature of some of these messages, there was an overwhelming and passionate view in case study schools that the inclusion and progress of pupils with SEN was dependent on the availability of support from a TA. There was less consensus on this point within the survey, with only 51% of mainstream respondents saying that the progress of most pupils with SEN in their class was dependent on the availability of support from a TA. Only 10% of respondents indicated that there was no TA in their classroom or the question did not apply to their current role and 24% disagreed (i.e. progress is not dependent on the availability of a TA).

There was an agreed view amongst interviewees that the teacher made decisions about teaching and was responsible for the delegation and monitoring of TA support in their classrooms. However, most teachers reported that there was insufficient time to liaise. This was easier in primary settings and often took place during lunch breaks and informal meetings. It was evident that such arrangements often relied on the goodwill of TAs to stay on a little after their contracted hours and teachers to give up part of their lunch breaks. Many primary and secondary teachers also talked of the importance of developing a good professional relationship with the TAs they worked with, particularly where the TA's role involved working extensively within the classroom. A stable team of TAs and models of deployment that allowed TAs and teachers to become used to working with each other over a period of time seemed to be important factors in the development of such relationships. From discussions within the interviews it seems that this familiarity allows the TA and teacher to know each other's expectations, based on an understanding of respective roles and responsibilities when working together.

Only 36% of mainstream survey respondents felt that there were sufficient opportunities to receive feedback on pupils' learning from TAs. Forty-six per cent disagreed and 9% indicated they have no TA or the question did not apply to their current role. This finding reflects a recent GTC (2010) report that found that there were only limited opportunities for TAs and teachers to communicate and plan and prepare for, and feed back on, lessons, particularly in secondary schools. A number of secondary teachers interviewed noted problems with a high turnover of support staff and with not knowing if and when TA support would be available in their class. Such factors are likely to make effective planning for the use of the TA in a lesson difficult.

Sixty per cent of special school respondents felt they had sufficient opportunities to receive feedback on pupils' learning. This is quite a big difference compared with their mainstream counterparts and might be partly explained by generally smaller teaching groups with adult to child ratios that afford far closer working between the adults in the classroom throughout a lesson. However, it might also be that special schools place high priority on providing this time

as part of a more individualised approach to learning and assessment that is typically a characteristic of the special school environment.

From the survey responses, it appears that teachers are satisfied with their knowledge of the TA role and their ability to work effectively with TAs. The majority of mainstream and special school respondents (75% and 86% respectively) either agreed or strongly agreed that they knew and understood the role of the TA. Only 27% of mainstream respondents and 19% of special school respondents indicated that they felt they required more training in order to work effectively with the additional adults in their classroom.

Amongst mainstream survey respondents, there was less difference than might have been expected between the views of experienced and less experienced teachers and the need for training in order to work with adults in the classroom – 29% of newly qualified teachers said they needed more training, compared with 26% of teachers who qualified more than 15 years ago. Forty-five per cent of respondents who had been teaching for 15 years or more indicated that they did not need additional training in this area.

Most teachers interviewed felt that the TAs they worked with had sufficient training in SEN and sometimes knew more about specific SEN than they did. Some secondary teachers noted that, although their TAs knew about the SEN of their pupils, some did not have sufficient subject knowledge to effectively support pupils with SEN in the lesson. Some schools had addressed this by having TAs attached to subject departments. The survey responses offered a less positive view with regard to TAs' training. Only 36% of mainstream teachers felt that support staff were sufficiently trained to support the needs of pupils with SEN. Forty-two per cent disagreed and 19% were ambivalent. Fifty-one per cent of special school survey respondents thought support staff were sufficiently trained to support the needs of all pupils. Thirty-four per cent disagreed.

From the case study visits, it was evident that most schools employed a range of support staff and used a variety of support strategies, ranging from one-to-one support for statemented pupils to working with small groups, both in and outside the classroom. Schools were conscious of needing to meet their obligations regarding TA support for statemented pupils. The schools visited were in LAs that operated different funding arrangements with regard to statutory assessment. In some LAs, funding was directly linked to the issuing of a particular child's statement, whereas in others, funding had been devolved and so the specification of TA hours placed a responsibility on the school to provide this from its budget. In schools in LAs where an individual statement brought funding, there was considerable awareness of the implications of fluctuations in the number of statemented pupils on roll for the budget.

Irrespective of differences in funding mechanisms, case study schools prioritised covering the statutory obligations for support. Most of the schools visited allowed the TA allocated to a particular pupil to offer support to other pupils in the class to a varying extent and depending on the nature of the statemented child's needs. This was done in the interests of fostering independence in the pupil to whom the support was linked and also in pursuit of what the school considered to be the best use of resources.

In primary schools, there appeared to be a move towards TAs running 'catch-up' programmes and less emphasis on general in-class support, though it was evident that TAs were also used to fulfil this role. In secondary schools, as well as general in-class support there was a focus on TAs running additional literacy interventions using specific programmes such as Success Maker, or additional ICT. Though most schools operated a mixture of general in-class support and work

on targeted interventions, variability in practice was evident. Where schools had moved heavily in the direction of using TAs to lead intervention groups, there was a strong focus on monitoring and evaluation in order to evidence impact.

In the survey, 32% of mainstream respondents and 57% of special school respondents felt that their school employed a sufficient range of support staff to fully support the needs of children with SEN. In both the mainstream and special school surveys, teachers agreed that the availability of more additional adult support staff would be useful. Of mainstream respondents, 83.2% agreed with this suggestion. The percentage of special school teachers supporting this view is lower (61.2%), though only more time and greater access to educational psychologists attracted higher levels of agreement.

The reasons that interviewees gave for needing support staff were usually related to the fact that teachers are required to teach a wide range of pupils in a group setting. This required the teacher preparing material that spanned a number of Key Stages, such as from KS2-4. One problem was that even where the teacher had differentiated the task the pupil was still required to engage with it. This required constant chivvying and coaxing that prescribed the need for additional adult support. If pupils were not enabled to get on with their work, then not only did they not make the required progress but behavioural problems also ensued. This often had a negative impact on the learning of the whole class. An issue that emerges from views expressed by interviewees is whether the impact of TAs should be considered not only in relation to the pupils to whom their support is directed but also in relation to making the class teaching of a diverse range of pupils manageable.

Reflecting the period during which the case study visits took place, there was considerable concern amongst those interviewed that anticipated budget cuts would result in fewer TAs, with some schools already experiencing a reduction in this area. Some interviewees highlighted issues of feasibility that cuts to TA support might raise. One teacher told us, for example:

> "You can't keep the same curriculum with the same A-C expectations, have this level of diversity and less TAs."
>
> (Secondary teacher)

Temporary contracts were highlighted as a particular issue, meaning that it was difficult to maintain a stable staff team. TAs on temporary contracts often looked for the security of permanent employment elsewhere before their contracts ended. Some teachers also reported experiencing a reduction in the number of TA hours across the school, which had led to less time to liaise because the maintenance of hours for directly working with pupils had been prioritised.

The data gathered through the survey and the interviews broadly reflect the GTC's (2010) findings that although evidence suggests that the more TA support pupils receive, the less progress they made, individual teachers believed that TAs had a general positive effect on pupil learning and behaviour, including improvements in progress.

Findings

4.1   Just over half of survey respondents felt that the progress of pupils with SEN was dependent on the availability of a TA. Within case study interviews, there was an overwhelming view that the effective inclusion of pupils with SEN in classrooms was dependent on the availability of support from a TA. The most frequent concern expressed in the interviews was that budget cuts would lead to a reduction in support staff.

4.2   It was evident from the case studies that schools employ a range of support staff and use a variety of deployment strategies. These range from individual support for a particular pupil with SEN to allocation of support to a class or teaching group. Case study interviewees were aware of problems inherent in routinely and exclusively allocating support staff to pupils with SEN. Only a third of survey respondents felt their schools employed a sufficient range of support staff.

4.3   Survey data suggests that TAs are typically employed to support pupils with SEN and/or low attaining pupils. From case study interviews it is clear that additional or extra provision and targeted 'catch-up' programmes are delivered mainly by support staff in both primary and secondary schools.

4.5   Only about a third of teachers within the survey felt they had sufficient time and/or opportunity to liaise with support staff. This was also an issue highlighted by case study interviewees. Teachers interviewed often reported using a variety of opportunistic strategies to address this issue, often relying on goodwill and informal arrangements. Some schools had developed written recording methods to share information, including electronic communication.

4.6   In the survey, over half of mainstream teachers and a majority of special school teachers felt that their TAs were sufficiently trained. Some secondary staff interviewed raised the point that TAs had knowledge about SEN but often did not have sufficient subject knowledge to effectively support pupils with SEN in class.

Emerging issues and implications for policy

• Case study data in particular indicates a strong belief amongst teachers that having a TA present is what makes teaching a diverse range of pupils manageable. Despite Ofsted (2004, 2006) criticisms of the use of TAs and also research from Blatchford et al. (2009) regarding evidence of impact, teachers seem in no doubt that TAs are essential. This would seem to reflect the Blatchford et al. point that although most headteachers and teachers would talk about the positive impact of TAs, the problem is proving it. The impact may not be measurable in relation to the individual pupil or group with SEN to whom support is allocated. However, because teachers are dealing with SEN within the group setting of the classroom, it could be that support relates to the feasibility of teaching a class with a diverse range of needs and abilities. Responses from interviewees suggested that TAs were able to provide the closer attention and monitoring that some pupils needed to enhance their access and participation. For such pupils, this support represented an aspect of the 'additional or different action to enable the child to learn more effectively' (DfES, 2001, p33) prescribed within the SEN Code of Practice (DfES, 2001).

• Though evidence from Ofsted (2004, 2006) and Blatchford et al. (2009) serves to challenge any complacency 'concerning the routine deployment of classroom-based support staff to lower attaining pupils and pupils with SEN' (Blatchford et al., 2009, p141), it is also necessary to be mindful of the Farrell et al. (2010) observation that:

"There is a clear lack of evidence on the impact of TAs on the wider curriculum in both primary and secondary schools. In addition, further work is needed on the impact of TAs in supporting pupils with behaviour problems. The few controlled studies that have addressed this area tend to report mixed findings (Alborz et al., 2009). Finally, few high quality studies have addressed the impact of TAs in raising the academic attainments of pupils with identified SEN, for example, autism,

Down's syndrome, specific learning difficulties. In the recent DCSF study (Blatchford et al., 2009) there were insufficient pupils falling into these and other categories to make it possible to undertake a meaningful statistical analysis of the impact of TAs in raising the attainments of these pupils."

(Farrell et al., 2010, p46-47)

Given comments by Farrell et al. (2010) and the 2011 Green Paper's acknowledgement that 'support staff can make a real difference to the achievement of pupils with SEN, but they need to be deployed and used effectively in order to do so' (DfE, 2011, p63), it would seem necessary that further research is undertaken. This would need to focus on what type of additional support is effective for what type of pupil in which type of setting. It follows that the nature of training for TAs and other support staff needs to be closely aligned to their roles and responsibilities in relation to improved outcomes for pupils with SEN.

- Within the case study research, respondents noted that it was important for the deployment of TAs to be managed and monitored such that teachers could work collaboratively with, and not in parallel to, their TAs. Teachers needed to know in advance whether or not they would have a TA in their lesson for planning purposes and to have time and systems to liaise both before and after lessons. The benefits of the opportunity to liaise prior to the lesson are evident; this allows the teacher and TA to be clear about their respective roles and responsibilities. The need for liaison following a lesson may be less immediately obvious. However, where this is in place it allows the TA to report to the teacher on a particular pupil or group's performance and progress and thus contributes to assessment and informs future planning. It is notable that only a third of survey respondents felt they had had sufficient opportunities to receive feedback on pupils' learning from the TA.

- Schools were conscious of needing to meet their obligations regarding TA support for statemented pupils. There is variation between LAs in funding for the provision identified as part of the statement. In some LAs, funding was directly linked to the statement, meaning that if a set number of TA hours were specified, the LA provided the funding for these. In other LAs, the funding had been delegated. In such cases the school was required to draw on the delegated budget to fulfil any TA hours specified in any individual pupil's statement. Irrespective of differences in funding mechanisms, case study schools prioritised covering the statutory obligations for support. Funding mechanisms potentially have implications for the school's ability to secure a stable workforce of support staff. Most schools, to a greater or lesser extent and depending on the nature of the statemented child's needs, allowed the TA allocated to a particular pupil to offer support to other pupils in the class. This was done in the interests of fostering independence in the individual pupil to whom the support was linked and also in pursuit of the best use of resources.

- It was evident from case study interviews that the quality of the professional relationship between the classroom teacher and TA was usually built over time and as such was dependent on modes of TA deployment that allowed both parties to work together over a sustained period. Though the concept of a professional relationship in this context is rather nebulous, the value attached to it by interviewees would suggest there is a need for further research into the essential features of this relationship.

- If TAs and other support staff are deemed important in the pursuit of improved outcomes for pupils with SEN, their role must be seen as complementary rather than compensatory. There is a need for both policy makers and schools as individual organisations to continue to seek ways to address the communication and planning requirements between teachers and TAs and other support staff. The reliance on goodwill to allow liaison to take place between TAs and teachers needs to be examined. Though many staff (both TAs and teachers) may simply accept this as part of their roles, such an essential task should not be left to chance. Due regard needs to be given to the development of frameworks that provide the time and opportunities necessary for effective collaborative working.

CHAPTER 5: BEHAVIOUR AND SEN

Exploration of the literature

Labour government guidance to schools

The 2007 guidance document *School Discipline and Pupil Behaviour Policies* (DfES, 2007) arrived too late for inclusion in our original literature review. Its general significance was in setting out the provisions of the Education and Inspection Act 2006. It covered the statutory power to discipline introduced in the Act as well as including a range of other guidance that aimed to help schools understand their overall legal powers and duties as regards establishing a school behaviour policy and disciplining pupils. It provided general advice on good practice regarding rules, rewards and sanctions, as well as more specific, detailed advice on certain key sanctions such as the use of detentions and the confiscation of pupils' property.

The specific significance of *School Discipline and Pupil Behaviour Policies* (DfES, 2007) in relation to SEN was the inclusion of an extensive section on 'Taking account of individual pupil needs'. This section focused primarily on pupils with SEN and/or disabilities but also referred to other groups defined by Ofsted (2000) as 'at risk' within the education system, including:

- minority ethnic and faith groups, Travellers, asylum seekers and refugees;
- pupils who need support to learn English as an additional language (EAL);
- children looked after by the LA;
- sick children;
- young carers;
- children from families under stress;
- pregnant schoolgirls and teenage mothers;
- any other pupils at risk of disaffection and exclusion.

(DfES, 2007)

The document included a range of short scenarios that described an approach employed by a school and then offered an alternative, preferable response, italicised below. For example:

"A pupil is admonished for failure to follow a long and complicated instruction given by an adult, but the pupil has speech and language difficulties and cannot process complex language.

"*A more appropriate response would be for the adult to make instructions short, and clarify understanding by asking the child to repeat them.*"

(DfES, 2007, p48)

This section mixed scenarios where the better practice described was simply desirable in the interests of being sensitive to individual differences with those where the existing practice risked contravening legislative requirements and could result in the school's actions being subject to challenge on grounds of discrimination.

Though 'consistency' is often regarded as a watchword in relation to behaviour management, it was clear from the guidance that this could not be interpreted as responding in the same way to every pupil. Effectively, the guidance required schools to differentiate in their responses to behaviour. This poses a particular challenge to any schools that operate policies based on a standard, fixed disciplinary response to certain offences.

In an unusual but ultimately useful awareness-raising section, *School Discipline and Pupil Behaviour Policies* (DfES, 2007) moved away from guiding schools primarily on what to do to a consideration of why some pupils behave in the way that they do. It posits and then expands upon three reasons:

- pupils who do not have the necessary understanding or skills;
- pupils who can behave but choose not to;
- pupils who have the necessary skills but are experiencing trauma.

School Discipline and Pupil Behaviour Policies: Guidance for Schools was republished in 2009 in a glossier style and with the standard DCSF-style cover that was in use at this time (DCSF, 2009b).

The Coalition Government's concern with behaviour

The 2010 Schools White Paper (DfE, 2010) focuses firmly on authority and discipline. It paints a bleak picture of the current situation in schools, suggesting:

> "The greatest concern voiced by new teachers and a very common reason experienced teachers cite for leaving the profession is poor pupil behaviour. We know that a minority of pupils can cause serious disruption in the classroom. The number of serious physical assaults on teachers has risen. And poorly disciplined children cause misery for other pupils by bullying them and disrupting learning."
>
> (DfE, 2010, p9)

This does seem rather at odds with the consistent message from the previous government (e.g. DfES, 2005c, DCSF, 2009b) that 'the majority of pupils enjoy learning, work hard and behave well' (Ofsted, 2005, p3). This finding was based on data from schools inspected by Ofsted in 2003/04 that indicated that 'behaviour was good or better in 90% of primary schools, 68% of secondary schools and 80% of special schools and PRUs' (Ofsted, 2005, p3). More recent figures cited by the House of Commons Education Committee would suggest that behaviour has in fact improved:

> "The 2009/10 Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector found that pupils' behaviour was "good or outstanding in 89% of primary schools and 70% of secondary schools inspected in 2009/10". This compares with 95% primary and 80% secondary in 2008/09 and 93% primary and 72% secondary in 2007/08."
>
> (House of Commons Education Committee, 2011, p9)

A positive view is also presented by Sir Alan Steer, who states:

> "Behaviour standards in schools are high for the great majority of young people. The misconduct of a few represents a small percentage of the seven million pupils in the school system. Concern over behaviour standards among the young is often fuelled by the news of well publicised incidents. Invariably these are unrepresentative and rare."
>
> (Steer, 2010, p8)

Such observations should not lead to complacency. The DfE's written memorandum to the House of Commons Education Committee summarising the findings of a range of surveys undertaken by teaching unions on the subject of pupil behaviour noted:

"There is violence and assault in our schools. NASUWT have estimated that there is one assault (verbal or physical) every seven minutes. A recent poll by the Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL) found that 38.6% of respondents had dealt with physical aggression that academic year. Most reported incidents (87%) involved violence towards another pupil, more than a quarter involved violence against the respondent, with 44% of incidents involving another teacher or a member of support staff."

(House of Commons Education Committee, 2011, p9)

The Coalition Government seems to have framed behaviour in schools as a widespread problem to be solved and sees the solution in increased powers for schools and teachers. The White Paper expresses the intention to:

- increase the authority of teachers to discipline pupils by strengthening their powers to search pupils, issue same-day detentions and use reasonable force where necessary;
- strengthen headteachers' authority to maintain discipline beyond the school gates, improve exclusion processes and empower headteachers to take a strong stand against bullying, especially racist, homophobic and other prejudice-based bullying;
- change the current system of independent appeals panels for exclusions, so that they take less time and headteachers no longer have to worry that a pupil will be reinstated when the young person concerned has committed a serious offence;
- protect teachers from malicious allegations – speeding up investigations and legislating to grant teachers anonymity when accused by pupils.

(DfE, 2010, p32)

These four proposals are framed in terms of granting schools something additional to support them in the complex task of addressing issues of behaviour. However, a year earlier Steer (2009b) had made the point that 'Schools have a broader range of powers than ever before to prevent and tackle poor behaviour' (Steer, 2009b, p6). He found little evidence of a need or desire among the profession for schools to be given wider powers. Rather there was a need for a dissemination strategy to raise awareness and understanding of the powers that already exist (Steer, 2009b). On the subject of increased powers, the House of Commons Education Committee (2011) commented:

"We welcome the proposals set out in the Schools White Paper for additional powers to improve standards of behaviour, but recognise they will be limited in their impact. Witnesses placed much greater stress on the importance of increasing and improving initial teacher training and continuing professional development on behaviour management for teachers."

(Education and Skills Committee, 2011, p34)

Other proposals in the White Paper represented greater accountability in relation to behaviour. It expresses the intention to:

- trial a new approach to exclusions where schools have new responsibilities for the ongoing education and care of excluded children;
- focus Ofsted inspection more strongly on behaviour and safety, including bullying, as one of four key areas of inspections.

Behaviour and SEN

The 2011 Green Paper identifies an increase in the number of pupils identified with BESD, reporting a rise of 23% between 2005 and 2010. It reports that: 'Some 26 per cent of young people at School Action Plus and 14 per cent of pupils with statements have a behavioural, emotional or social difficulty (BESD) identified as their primary need.' (DfE, 2011, p69).

Somewhat surprisingly for a Green Paper on SEN, consideration of behaviour focuses initially not on those pupils who have BESD but on the effects of behaviour directed towards others with SEN. It comments that: 'Disabled children and children with SEN are more likely to experience bullying than their peers' (DfE, 2011, p69) and 'The behaviour of other children can cause particular distress for disabled pupils and pupils with SEN' (DfE, 2011, p69). Whilst the issue is relevant, it seems strange that, having identified that a significant proportion of pupils have BESD, there is not more coverage of addressing the needs of this group of pupils.

The 2011 Green Paper expresses an intent to ensure assessments 'identify the root causes of the behaviour rather than focus on the symptoms' (DfE, 2011, p70). The two examples of root causes given in the 2011 Green Paper are pupils with underlying communication problems and those who 'display challenging behaviour, labelled as SEN, which is actually the result of other issues, including difficulties in their home lives' (DfE, 2011, p69). The inference from these examples is that identification of cause will lead to the more accurate identification of those whose presenting BESD can be attributed to an SEN. It appears that there is an intention to dissect the current category of BESD and either place pupils under a different category of SEN (e.g. speech, language and communication needs) or remove them from the SEN framework, constructing them instead as part of a vulnerable group due to other factors such as their home lives. Neither of these outcomes are necessarily problematic in themselves. However, the issue that continues to confront teachers and others concerned with the identification process is the point at which a pupil's social and emotional problems are so entrenched in their very being and pervasive across all contexts that they meet the criteria for an SEN, regardless of original cause.

The difficulties in defining BESD have been well documented (e.g. DfE, 1994b) and in many ways the 2011 Green Paper has highlighted the right issue in raising questions about the meaning of this category. The Green Paper's overall concern with overidentification of SEN would suggest that any strategies to strengthen the accuracy of identification are likely to lead to fewer pupils being identified as having BESD. However, regardless of designation, pupils who experience difficulties in building and maintaining the reciprocal relationships required for learning in school settings will not disappear and will continue to require appropriate resourcing.

Teacher training in relation to behaviour

Goodman and Burton (2010) raise the issue that although initial teacher education in England includes compulsory content on general behaviour management (TDA, 2009), there is no mandatory specialist training component for working with students who have BESD. They also note that 'there is no compulsory continued professional development dedicated to upskilling teachers already working with this group of students' (Goodman and Burton, 2010, p224).

Goodman and Burton suggest that their study 'depicts a situation in which teachers, despite their lack of training, have through a combination of creativity, trial and error and their own commitment to teaching, found ways to engage with this group of students' and argue that 'Whilst this dedication is inspiring, the pressure placed on teachers to try to meet the needs of students with BESD with apparently very little support either in training or additional support staff is huge' (Goodman and Burton, 2010, p234). The interpretation by Goodman and Burton is that this is evidence of the need for more training. Drawing on Poulou's (2005) earlier work that

stressed that how teachers interact with pupils with SEN has a huge impact on pupils' development, they argue that 'teacher training must prepare teachers to interact effectively if these students are to have a successful education' (Goodman and Burton, 2010, p234).

The point that Goodman and Burton give limited attention to, however, is the issue of what the focus of this training might be, given that 'BESD' is a somewhat imprecise term (Cole and Visser, 2005). The pupils who fall under the broad umbrella term of 'BESD' are far from a homogeneous group. This point was demonstrated through the DfE's (1994b) attempts to define 'EBD':

> "Their behaviour may be evident at the personal level (for example through low self-image, anxiety, depression or withdrawal; or through resentment, vindictiveness or defiance); at the verbal level (for example the child may be silent or may threaten, or interrupt, argues or swear a great deal); at the non-verbal level (for example through clinginess, or truancy, failure to observe rules, disruptiveness, aggression or violence); or at the work skills level (for example through an inability or unwillingness to work without direct supervision, to concentrate, to complete task or to follow instructions)."
>
> (DfE, 1994b, p7-8)

Goodman and Burton (2010) seem to be focused primarily on those students with BESD who present as being hyperactive and lacking concentration, presenting challenging behaviour and being disruptive and disturbing. Positively, rather than focusing simply on the management of behaviour, they suggest that the challenge for teachers 'is to engage the student with BESD whilst minimising disruption and providing effective educational provision to all the other students present in the classroom, including meeting any SENs presented by other students' (p224).

Goodman and Burton report that some (of the eight) teachers involved in the research suggested 'a need for training on labels for different sorts of BESD and the implications of each of these labels on how best to work with the students to which these classifications are assigned' (Goodman and Burton, 2010, p233). They do not expand on what these labels might be. Clearly, a label in the form of a diagnosis of ADHD or ASD might reveal some implications for practice whereas the label of 'disruptive' is primarily a description of the child's effect on others. Goodman and Burton argue that their respondents' interest in training in relation to labels is consistent with work by Atici (2007), which examined pre-service teachers' understanding of classroom management and strategies for coping with difficult behaviour. Atici reported that, as well as needing to experience different teaching situations and becoming competent in contemporary teaching methods, pre-service teachers needed a greater understanding of child psychology.

Presentation and discussion of data

In the light of concerns expressed by policy makers and the media regarding standards of behaviour in schools, the survey asked respondents whether they thought that behaviour in schools had become more challenging in recent years. Of mainstream respondents, 82.2% said it had. Only 7.5% thought it had not, and 10.3% were not sure. Special school teachers were asked whether there had been an increase in challenging behaviour in mainstream schools and there was a similar response – 90.5% thought there had, 1.7% disagreed and 7.9% were unsure. A majority (66.9%) of special school respondents thought this had impacted on their school (e.g. through more referrals or pupils placed there), although 16.1% disagreed.

There was a view from many teachers interviewed during the case study visits that the behaviour of some individual children was becoming more challenging.

Survey respondents who had indicated that there had been an increase in challenging behaviour were then asked to indicate what they considered the main reason for this to be (see tables 5.1 and 5.2).

Main reason	%
Parents taking less responsibility for their children	37
General deterioration of behaviour in society	19.7
Insufficient power to discipline pupils in school	16.2
Inclusion policies (school, local and/or national)	9.7
Constraints/demands of the curriculum	5.7
Insufficient training for teachers on behaviour management	1.6
Other (please specify)	10

Table 5.1 Mainstream teachers' perceived reasons for behaviour becoming more challenging in recent years

Main reason	%
Parents taking less responsibility for their children	27.4
General deterioration of behaviour in society	22.8
Inclusion policies (school, local and/or national)	15.5
Insufficient power to discipline pupils in school	7.8
Insufficient training for teachers on behaviour management	7.8
Constraints/demands of the curriculum	5.9
Other (please specify)	12.8

Table 5.2 Special school teachers' perceived reasons for an increase in challenging behaviour in mainstream schools

It should be noted that the percentages in tables 5.1 and 5.2 represent the proportion of those who indicated in the preceding question that they felt challenging behaviour had increased, not of the survey respondents as a whole.

An interesting feature of the responses regarding reasons for a perceived increase in challenging behaviour is that the two most commonly identified factors are largely external and difficult for schools to directly change. In terms of teacher experience, it presents a picture of teachers who perceive there to be a problem (behaviour is more challenging) but attribute this to factors (home and society) over which they have little or no control. School staff interviewed during the case study visits also attributed a perceived increase in challenging behaviour to social factors, mainly related to family breakdown, parenting issues and social problems such as unemployment, drug use and gang culture. The quotes below illustrate the types of views expressed:

> "Our school is calm in lessons, it's outside class that is the problem – this is greater than any issues we might have about SEN."
>
> (Headteacher – secondary)

Special Educational Needs – *Reflection, Renewal and Reality*

"The ones that cause us problems are often selfish, unkind, do not relate, do not communicate. Children are more confident and streetwise – it's a problem with behaviour that manifests itself as amoral and hurts others."

(Secondary teacher)

"They are used to instant gratification – there's no fear of any punishments and they do not come from homes with employed parents or job aspirations."

(Secondary teacher)

"Year 7 are getting more belligerent – 'I know my rights!' – this stems from home, which says, 'You can have whatever you want, you don't have to work for it.' It comes from the benefits systems. Children pick it up from their parents."

(Secondary teacher)

"The problem we are experiencing is apathy and lack of aspiration. We have to supply provision AND develop their mindsets."

(Secondary teacher)

"There are rising mental health issues – you have to permanently exclude to get children into special provision for behaviour or a PRU."

(Headteacher – secondary)

"It's a shifting culture; some children do well, some children are always going to struggle because of emotional problems."

(Secondary SENCO)

"Society is changing and we are not adapting to it. We expect the pupils to just adapt to what we give them in school."

(Headteacher – secondary)

"We have to cope with low self-esteem, little or no parental support, young carers, and parental attitude to school."

(Headteacher – secondary)

"Pupils' whole focus is on e-communication – that's how they relate to each other."

(Secondary teacher)

"We have more incidents of pupils being defiant and abusive to adults. It's the 'Am I bovvered?' attitude."

(Secondary teacher)

As Table 5.1 shows, some mainstream survey respondents believe that insufficient power to discipline in schools is the reason that behaviour has become more challenging. This belief would give support to a government view that extending this power would be beneficial but this would need to be set against two important considerations. First, the 173 mainstream respondents who suggested insufficient power to discipline as the reason that behaviour had become more challenging only represents just over 13% of the 1,295 mainstream teachers who responded to the survey. This is not compelling evidence for a strong belief amongst teachers that either insufficient power to discipline lies behind any experienced increase in challenging behaviour or, by implication, that increasing this power would offer a solution.

Secondly, according to Steer (2009b), teachers already have broader powers than ever before and yet, in the survey, 82.2% of mainstream respondents still reported that they felt behaviour had become more challenging in recent years. It does not seem therefore that the increase in powers in the wake of the 2006 Education and Inspections Act has been accompanied by a perception by teachers that behaviour is improving or that any perceived increase in challenging behaviour has been slowed or halted. This raises the question of whether more powers would make a difference.

The lowest ranked reason for an increase in challenging behaviour was a lack of training for teachers in behaviour management. An interpretation of this in relation to the more frequently identified reasons is that teachers feel they have the knowledge and skills, but are faced with behaviour that is influenced by external factors that cannot be addressed by increasing their own professional capacities. Calls for more or better training in relation to behaviour management by government and others have considerable face validity but there is a need to recognise that teachers in this survey are not perceiving a lack of training to be the key issue. Very few teachers interviewed during the case study visits expressed a need for more training. Those that did express this need were interested in training that would improve their understanding of the reasons for behaviour problems (i.e. more psychology) and in relation to specific troubling behaviours (e.g. self-harming and mental health issues). They typically did not express a need for training in behaviour management strategies per se. Teachers' main concern was how to manage groups of pupils where behaviour disrupted the learning of others.

In the context of this research, any link between behaviour and SEN is an important consideration. Fewer than 10% of mainstream respondents who felt challenging behaviour had increased attributed this to a policy of inclusion. However, 48.7% indicated that they found the behaviour of pupils with SEN more challenging than the behaviour of other pupils. Just under a third (31.2%) disagreed with this view. In interpreting this data, it is important to recognise that of course not all pupils with SEN exhibit challenging behaviour. There are types of SEN that often have a behavioural component as well as pupils whose primary SEN is BESD. Taking this into account, a possible interpretation of the data is that when pupils do exhibit problematic behaviour it is experienced as more challenging by teachers than the behaviour that might be exhibited by pupils without SEN.

Within the case study interviews there was a consensus view that the inclusion of pupils with SEN in mainstream schools had not significantly contributed to behaviour problems per se but that the mix of pupils, and the number with behavioural problems in any one class, impacted on the feasibility of effective behaviour management for class and subject teachers. Pupils with forms of SEN that impacted on their ability to work in groups such as pupils with ASD, ADHD and BESD were noted to contribute to difficulties in managing the whole class if the ratio of pupils with particular behavioural problems and learning differences was too high.

Survey respondents felt that by far the most difficult form of SEN to include in lessons is BESD (59.9% mainstream and 44.6% special school respondents). This percentage was considerably higher than those for other forms of SEN. For mainstream respondents the next highest group was pupils with ASD: 12.7% indicated that this group of pupils were the most difficult to include. For special school respondents the next highest group after BESD was pupils with severe learning difficulties (including profound and multiple learning difficulties): 16.4% indicated that this group of pupils was the most difficult to include. The mainstream survey suggests some degree of difference in views between phases regarding the inclusion of pupils with BESD: 47% of primary respondents considered pupils with BESD to be the most difficult to include, compared with 61% of secondary school respondents.

Special Educational Needs – Reflection, Renewal and Reality

Despite the suggestion that behaviour from pupils with SEN was found to be more challenging, there was strong agreement (81%) amongst mainstream respondents that they had a good understanding of why some pupils with SEN exhibit behavioural difficulties in their classroom. Of course, knowing why the behaviour may be occurring and being able to respond effectively are two linked but different matters. Fifty per cent of mainstream respondents agreed that they had a sufficiently wide range of strategies to manage the behaviour of pupils with SEN, while 23.5% neither agreed nor disagreed, 23.5% disagreed and 2.3% strongly disagreed. Clearly, there is some cause for concern if only half of respondents feel they have the strategies at their disposal to manage the behaviour of pupils with SEN. In a separate question, 89.1% of mainstream respondents indicated that the inclusion of more pupils with SEN has meant that they need more strategies to manage behaviour.

Ninety-one per cent of special school respondents said they had a good understanding of why some pupils exhibit behavioural difficulties. However, unlike their mainstream colleagues, the percentage indicating that they had a sufficiently wide range of strategies to manage the behaviour of pupils with SEN was high at 82%. Though this presents a positive picture, 69% of special school respondents thought that pupils have more significant or complex behaviour difficulties than was the case five years ago. Forty-seven per cent indicated that they were unable to teach some pupils in their class because of their behaviour.

In interpreting the data from special schools, it seems that teachers have considerable personal capacity: they know why the behaviour is occurring and have the strategies to deal with it. Yet almost half feel that they are unable to teach some pupils in their class because of their behaviour. It seems that this does not cause special teachers to question or doubt their own knowledge, skills and understanding. This may reflect an awareness among special school teachers that by virtue of their school's designation they are generally dealing with more complex educational needs and it is unrealistic to expect to be able to predict and control every form of behaviour that occurs. The interviewees from special schools generally had a very different attitude to behaviour from their mainstream colleagues. For them, significant behavioural issues were expected given their intake and these took priority in order that learning could be facilitated. Behaviour was often seen not as a problematic response but as the pupil's way of communicating. They perceived that looking at behaviour as communication rather than a lack of compliance had proved useful in their outreach work with mainstream teachers. It appears that for special school teachers the behaviour may be more likely to be seen as a part of the pupil's overall need, whereas for mainstream colleagues the behaviour may be seen as a threat to good order and discipline and consequently the progress of the class.

Both mainstream and special school staff interviewed acknowledged that both the ratio of staff to pupils and their level of expertise was a core issue when dealing with behavioural difficulties presented by pupils with SEN. This was a limiting factor in mainstream schools, particularly in the light of any reduction of TA support and was not always fully addressed in special schools.

Within the survey 64% of special school staff suggested that they were well supported in school to manage behavioural difficulties. Fifty-five per cent said that the school's policies were effective in supporting teachers to manage behavioural difficulties. Despite the fact that the majority of responses were positive in relation to the issue of support from the school and its policies, this is still an area that warrants exploration. Over a third of special school respondents did not feel they could indicate a level of agreement with the view that they were well supported in their school to manage behavioural difficulties. Almost half of special school respondents did not feel they could indicate a level of agreement with the view that the school's policies were effective in supporting teachers to manage behavioural difficulties. The possible picture emerging is that special school teachers generally have a high degree of faith in their own abilities but in some cases may be largely reliant on this because of a lack of support from the school and its policies.

Mainstream respondents presented a far more negative view than their special school counterparts in relation to the support offered by the school and its policies. Only 34% agreed that they were well supported in school to manage the behavioural difficulties of pupils with SEN and only 29% indicated that the school's policies were effective in supporting teachers. In terms of teacher experience, the worrying picture that emerges from the mainstream survey data is that there is a sizeable proportion of teachers who do not consider that they have a sufficiently wide range of strategies to manage the behaviour of pupils with SEN and do not feel well supported by their school and its policies.

Most interviewees felt that their school behaviour policy worked for most pupils. This contrasts with the more negative view expressed by survey respondents in relation to support from the school's policies. This difference may reflect a difference in the pupils that interviewees and survey respondents brought to mind when responding to the questions. The survey specifically asked about the effectiveness of policies in supporting teachers to manage the behavioural difficulties of pupils with SEN whereas the interviews explored effectiveness in relation to most pupils. This distinction was highlighted in a comment from one teacher that:

> "Our behaviour policy works for most students who are doing it on purpose and set out to disrupt but it doesn't work for those who do not have the social skills to behave in a group."
>
> (Secondary teacher)

Within this teacher's comment, there is recognition that if the pupil has not yet developed the skills necessary to behave in a group setting then a standard combination of rules, rewards and sanctions is likely to have a limited impact on behaviour. There will be some pupils with SEN who are operating at a developmental level considerably below their chronological age. There will also be other pupils whose type of SEN often includes a behavioural component. For example, schools will encounter pupils on the autism spectrum whose behaviour might be a response to anxiety provoked by a particular social situation or sensory overload. It is unrealistic to expect a policy that is designed to promote and maintain good order and discipline for large groups to work for every individual. A key message may be that it is important to adhere to a few well-known key principles and implement some proven strategies really well, rather than attempting to develop ever more complex systems in the hope of developing a policy that will work for all. The secondary interviewees who appeared most content with their schools' behaviour policy were those who understood their part within it but also recognised the roles and responsibilities of other personnel in relation to behaviour, including senior and middle leaders, pastoral and SEN staff. Importantly, these teachers also had confidence in these staff to fulfil these roles and responsibilities. Teachers interviewed were critical of systems where behavioural issues were not followed up or routes to access to appropriate in-school support were not clear.

Although interviewees acknowledged that the number of pupils who exhibit intransient behaviour problems were relatively few, they felt that they used up a considerable amount of resources, including staff time, and had a negative effect on staff retention and morale. Reference was also made to the problem of ongoing low-level disruption and other forms of frequent low-level behaviour. This was seen as draining by both primary and secondary teachers interviewed. Secondary teachers in particular reported problems with refusal to work, lack of respect for teachers and peers, poor listening skills, apathy and low motivation for school-based learning. Maintaining the level of whole-class vigilance necessary to minimise opportunities for these behaviours to develop and intervening early at the sign of a problem took a lot of teacher attention. This was a reason cited in the context of difficulties involved in managing the learning and behaviour of the whole class as well as offering the necessary attention and support to pupils with SEN.

Consistency and feasibility were the two most frequently mentioned issues relating to behaviour: all staff needed to adhere to the school's policy and systems had to be manageable to operate. Many schools had developed support strategies whereby disruptive pupils could be placed with another teacher or class. A number of secondary schools referred to a sequence of numbered consequences (e.g. C1-C2-C3). Consistency in implementation and follow-up of the school's rewards and sanctions between staff was noted as a crucial issue. Knowledge of the sequence of sanctions and associated tracking was also noted as important. Some secondary staff interviewed felt their school's policy involved too many stages and therefore did not lend itself to sufficient close monitoring. Consequently, deferred sanctions such as detentions were imposed but were not followed up. The motivation behind such systems seemed to be to avoid pupils reaching the higher level sanctions such as exclusion but a number of teachers felt the reality was that there were so many stages that nothing actually happened to the pupil as a consequence of their behaviour.

A number of secondary schools used electronic systems to log incidents and outcomes so that the pupil could 'travel through the sanctions system'. Though this would seem to offer the potential for improved monitoring, a number of interviewees suggested that it was not always possible to say where a pupil was at any point in time within the sanctions system and this resulted in pupils being able to play the system. Time delays between rule breaking and sanctions being implemented were also identified as a problem. Lack of parental support was noted as a factor that was sometimes a barrier to sanctions, such as detention or extra work being implemented.

One teacher described their school's system:

> "I can park up to two pupils, phone staff members on call, log behaviour on SIMS – but I can only do this if you have already taken action, then inform HoD. All these actions have to be logged and tracked and unless everyone does it systematically it doesn't work. It works for us because we do it at departmental level and we have made it an area for action."
>
> (Secondary teacher)

This teacher speaks positively and confidently of a system that sounds complex. The comments highlight the issue that individuals have to fully understand the system and there needs to be consistency in its operation.

Though there was a perception amongst case study respondents that behaviour was getting worse due to factors outside the schools, those interviewed generally accepted that schools had a responsibility to attempt to work constructively with all pupils. However, many articulated issues of feasibility associated with being expected to manage a wide range of behaviour and a variety of learning differences/ difficulties in a group setting and with curricular targets that were heavily literary based. Although teachers interviewed generally acknowledged that pupils should feel included, be praised and be enabled to achieve success, they noted that this was often difficult, particularly in the absence of additional adult support in class, the support of parents outside class and any willingness or effort from the pupil. One head of department commented:

> "We have a wide spread of abilities ranging from NC level 2-5, plus a few with behaviour problems. If there is no TA support, and just one subject teacher, then this leads to difficulties."
>
> (Secondary HoD)

There was a degree of frustration that government emphasis on a need for more discipline was based on an assumption that all pupils had appropriate social behaviour in their repertoire and

all that was required was for them to be disciplined into using that behaviour. There was also a feeling that national policy for schools was serving to reduce measures of progress to literacy-based academic subjects measured by A-C GCSE grades. Many teachers interviewed pointed out that they are able to make valuable progress with their pupils in, for example, the development of social and emotional skills, but this was seldom recognised.

Teachers felt it important that it was realised that they have to manage pupil behaviour in the group setting of the classroom in order that they can get pupils to meet prescribed targets for progress in academic subjects. Some teachers interviewed highlighted the issue that some pupils' behaviour was exacerbated by a curriculum that was unsuited to them. Though this was an issue raised in case study visits, only 5.7% of mainstream survey respondents identified the constraints and demands of the curriculum as the main reason for any perceived increase in challenging behaviour.

Secondary interviewees expressed concerns that long-term underachievement in literacy in particular presented a barrier to pupils accessing and responding to the secondary curriculum. Teachers found it very difficult to differentiate their lessons so that they were accessible to pupils with poor literacy skills. Where pupils struggled to access the task or were unable to make little progress without adult assistance, this often led to problematic behaviour and a general deterioration in the child's attitude to learning in the subject. A frequently reported problem was that some pupils could not be left to get on with their work unless refocused on the task through constant chivvying either by the teacher or an additional adult.

A number of secondary headteachers we interviewed spoke of managed move systems operated between local schools. The general feeling was that these systems could be effective and that pupils could benefit from a fresh start in a new environment. However, it was evident that such systems depend on all schools participating and being prepared to take their share of pupils. The general view was that managed moves tended to work best if the issue was primarily the pupil developing a reputation amongst peers and staff through their frequent misbehaviour. However, there was less confidence in managed moves as a means of effecting change where the behaviour related to complex social and emotional issues. In such cases, it was felt that the problems would emerge again in the new setting. Headteachers were generally keen to avoid the use of exclusion. One headteacher commented:

> "Exclusion is bad for the pupil and the school and must be avoided, but it is very difficult to get statements for pupils with BESD unless you can cite ASD and there are limited PRU places."
>
> (Headteacher – secondary)

Another noted:

> "Exclusion must be avoided for the child's sake – it's a harsh place on the streets."
>
> (Headteacher – secondary)

These comments reflect a more widespread view amongst primary and secondary headteachers interviewed that there were often few options if the child was not placed in a mainstream school.

Findings

5.1   The main concern reported by teachers during case study interviews related to the fact that they were dealing with behavioural difficulties in the group setting of the classroom. They highlighted the combined impact of factors, including the number of pupils in a class exhibiting behavioural difficulties, the form the behaviour took, the availability of in-class support and the overriding need to meet the learning needs of the rest of the class.

5.2   There was consensus amongst the school staff interviewed that the inclusion of more pupils with SEN in mainstream schools had not significantly contributed to any increase in general behavioural problems in schools. However, just under a half of survey respondents felt that the behaviour of pupils with SEN was more challenging than those without SEN. The survey responses indicate that the most difficult form of SEN to include in lessons is BESD.

5.3   From the survey and amongst interviewees, there was an overwhelming perception that behaviour in schools generally had become more challenging in recent years. Across all survey respondents, the main reason for this perceived increase in challenging behaviour was thought to be social factors, including parenting and a general deterioration of behaviour in society. A lot of interviewees also attribute behaviour to these factors.

5.4   Very few teachers interviewed expressed a need for more training in behaviour management specifically for pupils with SEN. The majority of survey respondents reported having a good understanding of why their pupils exhibit behavioural difficulties and felt they had a sufficiently wide range of strategies to manage behaviour. Some teachers interviewed expressed an interest in training that would allow them to understand more about how all children learn and develop in order to better understand the responses of their pupils to classroom teaching.

5.5   Most secondary schools visited were operating a support system for teachers so that pupils with persistent behaviour problems could be placed in another class or in another designated area. Behaviour policies characteristically were based on rewards and staged sanctions, with consistency from all staff being raised as a crucial issue. For persistent behaviour problems, the tracking of pupils through staged sanctions systems was often perceived as unwieldy and in some cases offered considerable potential for pupils to manipulate the system.

5.6   Despite the concerns expressed regarding certain aspects, most teachers interviewed felt that their school's behaviour policy worked reasonably well for the majority of pupils. There was acknowledgement that there were some pupils, including some with SEN, for whom the standard combination of rewards and sanctions did not work and a degree of realism that this was likely to be the case with any behaviour policy. This positive perspective was not reflected in survey data, with only 29% of mainstream teachers indicating that their school's policies were effective in supporting teachers to manage behavioural difficulties.

5.7   Interviewees in primary schools generally expressed less concern about behaviour than their secondary colleagues. Ongoing low-level disruption was seen as draining across both contexts but secondary school case study respondents reported an increase of, and concern about, refusal to work, lack of respect for teachers and peers, poor listening skills, apathy and low motivation for school-based learning.

5.8   A frequently reported problem in case study interviews was that some pupils could not be left to get on with their work unless constantly chivvied by adults. Another frequently reported factor was the pervasive impact of long-term underachievement, particularly in literacy, on pupils' ability to access and respond to the secondary curriculum.

5.9   Special school teachers interviewed generally expected to experience ongoing and challenging behavioural difficulties and class size and the allocation of adult support reflected this need. Behaviour tended to be viewed as an aspect of the pupil's overall learning difficulty, illustrated by some staff who conceptualised challenging behaviour as a means of communication within a relationship rather than noncompliance. From the survey data, many special school staff also appear to feel personally well equipped in terms of strategies and their understanding of why pupils exhibited behavioural difficulties. However, opinion was more varied regarding support from their schools and the effectiveness of the school's behaviour policy in supporting teachers to manage behavioural difficulties.

Emerging issues and implications for policy

- The predominant concern for case study teachers was behaviour that is typically referred to as low-level disruption rather than specific extreme acts, though some interviewees did offer examples of these. In identifying low-level disruptive behaviour as the predominant concern, the cumulative effect on teaching and learning of several pupils exhibiting these behaviours, often simultaneously, should not be underestimated.

- The view expressed in government documents is that the majority of children enjoy coming to school, work hard and behave well. Whilst most schools would probably agree with this, a very real issue is that of critical mass. The concern for schools is the proportion of pupils they encounter who do not enjoy coming to school, work hard and behave well. The behavioural and attitudinal profile of the class is also a salient issue for teachers. Teachers found it harder to teach classes that included both a significant proportion of pupils prone to engage in low-level disruption and individual pupils who exhibited more challenging and/or unpredictable behaviours. Teachers were often well aware of the reasons for individual pupil behaviour and had strategies to cope with both low level disruption and more challenging behaviour, but it was the combination of behaviours, often occurring simultaneously, that was experienced by teachers as problematic.

- The 2011 Green Paper proposes 'training teachers in a range of behaviour management techniques' (DfE, 2011, p69). However, within the research, very few teachers expressed a need for more training in behaviour management specifically for pupils with SEN. Given an apparent mismatch between the government and teacher perceptions surrounding training needs, it would seem timely for the Government to engage with teachers to seek their views on the content, form and purpose of any training before rolling out a national programme.

- It would seem essential that any guidance or training does not seek to trivialise or ignore the fact that teachers experience behavioural difficulties in group settings. Neither should any training in behaviour management suggest that there is a finite range of strategies that will allow teachers to anticipate, prepare for and manage the entire range of pupil responses they will experience in the classroom. Teaching inevitably involves responding to the complex needs of individual learners and therefore involves making multiple decisions in non-routine situations (Haggarty, 2002, drawing on the work of Darling-

Hammond, 2001). Centrally produced guidance materials and toolkits could usefully contribute to the general preparedness of beginning teachers but it is important that their limitations in providing a panacea to concerns regarding classroom behaviour are acknowledged.

- The 2011 Green Paper expresses an intent to ensure assessments 'identify the root causes of the behaviour rather than focus on the symptoms' (DfE, 2011, p70). This endorses some teachers' views regarding their training needs in relation to child development and psychology (see chapter 2). The face validity of the notion of identifying a root cause needs to be explored more fully. There is certainly a strong argument that understanding the meaning or purpose of the behaviour for the individual is important and can inform strategy selection but this is not the same as saying that it is always necessary to pinpoint a root cause. There needs to be due recognition that identifying root causes is not always easy given the range of adaptive behaviours that pupils develop in response to their own unique and individual experiences. Nor is knowing the cause necessarily a prerequisite to identification of the solution, as demonstrated by the reported efficacy of some cognitive-behavioural and solution-focused approaches.

- Although BESD is accepted by teachers, policy makers and others as a legitimate category of need, it is a very broad category and does not fit well with the staged approach outlined in the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice (DfES, 2001). As noted previously, the 2011 Green Paper has addressed issues of the identification of BESD by seeking to base this more on the root cause than on observed behaviour. The examples given are pupils with underlying communication problems and those who 'display challenging behaviour, labelled as SEN, which is actually the result of other issues, including difficulties in their home lives'. (DfE, 2011, p69). The inference from these examples is that identification of cause will lead to the more accurate identification of those whose BESD can be attributed to an SEN. The issue for teachers is the point at which a pupil's social and emotional problems are so entrenched in their very being and pervasive across all contexts that they meet the criteria for an SEN, regardless of original cause.

  The difficulty in defining BESD is well documented and it is important that any strategies to strengthen the accuracy of identification do not result in those who do not meet any revised SEN criteria losing access to the support and provision they need to learn effectively within the group setting of the classroom. Increased accuracy in identification of pupils with BESD may well serve to reduce their number and in so doing may influence statistics on A*-C at GCSE specifically for pupils with SEN. However, regardless of designation, pupils who experience difficulties in building and maintaining the reciprocal relationships required for learning in school settings will not disappear and will continue to require appropriate resourcing.

- There were clear differences in concerns regarding behaviour between primary, secondary and special school interviewees. It has been noted (Parsons, 1999) that primary schools have an intrinsic pastoral quality. The nature of responses in our interviews seemed to reflect this. Secondary schools were reliant on systems to recreate this pastoral quality. Consequently, secondary teachers tended to see the behaviour as primarily a problem in relation to teaching the class. Other staff had the responsibility of exploring the behaviour from the perspective of the problem it represents for the individual and any underlying causes. This is not the same as suggesting that secondary teachers are not interested in the pastoral needs of their pupils but a recognition that in

the context of teaching the pupil for perhaps two 45-minute lessons a week it is difficult to achieve the pastoral relationship that a primary colleague has with their pupils. Schools that ensure there is a good system of communication between subject teachers and pastoral staff are likely to be most successful.

- The 2011 Green Paper's proposals to train 'teachers in a range of behaviour management techniques' (DfE, 2011, p69) and its expressed belief in the importance of 'good pastoral care' (DfE, 2011, p69) will need to take account of the differences between phases in terms of the perceived issues related to behaviour and schools' differing organisation and structures.

- The amount of problematic behaviour in school was not an issue that our respondents in the survey and interviews attributed to a higher number of pupils with SEN in mainstream schools brought about by a national policy of inclusion. Indeed, from interview discussions, it seemed that teachers felt a degree of reassurance if the behaviour was part of the pupil's SEN. This is not to suggest that the presenting behaviour was any less disruptive or easier to deal with but having some understanding of why it was happening seemed to be helpful. Greater concern was expressed in relation to behaviour that was persistent and resistant to attempts to ameliorate it through the use of the school's behaviour policy and other interventions and for which there was either no obvious explanation or the reasons related to home and community factors.

CHAPTER 6: LOCAL AUTHORITY AND OTHER EXTERNAL SUPPORT

Exploration of the literature

The 2010 White Paper *The Importance of Teaching* makes it clear that the Government sees a continuing role for LAs. However, it is undoubtedly going to be a changing role due to the Coalition Government's expressed intent 'to extend autonomy and freedom for schools in England' (DfE, 2010, p52) and the suggestion that 'academy status should be the norm for all state schools, with schools enjoying direct funding and full independence from central and local bureaucracy' (DfE, 2010, p52).

When we completed the first literature review, the Labour government's academies programme was well under way. The first three academies had opened in 2002 and, by September 2007, 83 academies were open and providing secondary education (House of Commons Committee of Public Accounts, 2007). The Labour government had originally introduced academies as a result of ongoing concern over the performance of secondary pupils in the cities. They aimed to introduce new, high quality buildings, a new ethos, a new structure of governance and new staff, along with a higher level of private sector input. By the General Election in 2010 there were approximately 200 academies in England.

In July 2010, the Academies Bill was passed by Parliament. The resulting Academies Act made it possible for all maintained schools to apply to become an academy, with all schools judged 'outstanding' by Ofsted to be approved unless there were good reasons not to do so. One of the controversies surrounding the Act was that it had not been introduced as a proposal via a Green or White Paper. The proposals regarding academies and free schools led to concerns that they would be outside the rules that apply to mainstream schools regarding the admission of children with SEN. Children/parents would not be able to complain or enforce their rights through an LA or SEN and Disability Tribunal (SENDIST) because they were not parties to the contract that controls the academy. Subsequent amendments to the Academies Bill meant that academies would be required to discharge their duties with regard to learners with SEN.

When the White Paper was published in November 2010, it continued the theme of encouraging schools to become academies, stating:

> "It is our ambition, therefore, to help every school which wishes to enjoy greater freedom to achieve Academy status. Some schools will not want to acquire Academy status just yet, others do not yet have the capacity to enjoy full Academy freedoms without external support or sponsorship. But our direction of travel is towards schools as autonomous institutions collaborating with each other on terms set by teachers, not bureaucrats."

> (DfE, 2010, p12)

The 2010 White Paper also proposed to make changes to the existing system where 'it has been virtually impossible to establish a new state-funded school without LA support' (DfE, 2010, p11) to one where support is offered to 'teachers, charities, parent groups and others who have the vision and drive to open free schools in response to parental demand, especially in areas of deprivation where there is significant dissatisfaction with the choices available' (DfE, 2010, p52).

These changes raise the question of what LAs will be doing when they lose some of their responsibilities as increasing numbers of schools become academies. The 2010 White Paper identified five key areas:

- LAs will encourage good schools to expand and encourage free schools or academies to meet demand.
- LAs will co-ordinate admissions and ensure fair access to all schools, including academies and free schools.
- LAs will stand up for the interests of parents and children and promote high standards.
- LAs will act as the champion for vulnerable pupils in their area.
- LAs will move over time to a strategic commissioning role, championing educational excellence.

These proposals cast the LA in a more strategic role rather than having direct involvement with schools. The new proposals would seem to allow schools to choose to continue to commission services from the LA. However, in an era of significant budget constraints, the problem for LAs may be whether they can afford to retain staff on their payroll without the guarantee that sufficient schools will commission work to cover the cost. One argument would no doubt be that if the services offered by these staff are of sufficient quality then schools will pay for them. Few LAs, or indeed the individual staff involved, are likely to have experience of operating in a market economy of this sort. It should also be recognised that schools face tough decisions regarding budgets and that reducing their use of external support may be a ready source of savings.

The issue for pupils with SEN is the effect of these changes on the range of support services typically provided by the LA. It has been common practice for LAs to maintain teams of centrally managed staff in advisory and support service roles, but the 2011 Green Paper has proposed a number of significant changes in the LA's role in relation to pupils with SEN and/or disabilities. Within this changed role, LAs are seen as uniquely placed to maintain a strategic overview of the needs of local communities and to ensure services meet those needs. Under the proposals, LAs will work more effectively and collaboratively with local health services and will play a strong strategic role in the new school system, acting as champions for parents and families, vulnerable children and educational excellence. Under these reforms, the core features of the LA's role are likely to be:

- strategic planning for services that meet the needs of local communities;
- securing a range of high quality provision for children and young people with SEN or who are disabled;
- enabling families to make informed choices and exercise greater control over services.

(DfE, 2011)

The 2011 Green Paper sees LAs as continuing to play a vital role in supporting individual disabled children and children with SEN and their families, with the move to a more strategic commissioning role meaning they need to work collaboratively with a range of providers. An intention is expressed within the Green Paper to explore how the voluntary and community sector could be used to introduce more independence to the process.

Though framing the future role of LAs positively, the changes are based on a view that the current SEN systems are not working effectively. The Green Paper highlights the issue, identified by some parents, that there may be a conflict of interests between the LA's duty to ensure special educational provision and their duties in relation to assessment. The implication is that the LA's decisions about whether to issue a statement and the provision specified within it could be influenced by the provision the LA was practically and financially able to make available.

The Green Paper states:

> "Today's system for supporting children with SEN is based on a model introduced 30 years ago. It is no longer fit for purpose and has not kept pace with wider reforms; it fails children and undermines the effective use of resources, and it does not make the best use of the expertise in the voluntary and community sector."
>
> (DfE, 2011, p15)

As noted in chapter 1, high variation in identification rates between LAs is identified as an issue within the 2011 Green Paper. The DfE (2011) reported that in January 2010 the proportion of pupils with SEN recorded by LAs ranged from 11.9% to 33.5%. There were also significant local variations in where children with statements of SEN attend school: in 2010, pupils with statements placed by LAs in maintained special schools varied from 7% to 68%, those placed in maintained mainstream schools from 16% to 67% and those in non-maintained special or independent special schools from 1% to 23%.

Currently, LAs take decisions on statutory assessment based on correspondence with other agencies. Based on the information received, the LA takes a decision on whether to issue a statement and the provision to be specified within it. The proposal is for a less bureaucratic and adversarial approach where agencies come together to agree support with parents and the responsibilities of different agencies are clear. The time limit for the statutory assessment process will be reduced from 26 to 20 weeks.

Concern regarding the perceived adversarial nature of the current system is reflected in the Green Paper's criticism of the information regarding provision provided by LAs for parents. LAs are already required by The Special Educational Needs (Provision of Information by Local Authorities) (England) Regulations 2001 to publish the provision they expect schools to make for children with SEN but without statements and the provision made available for those children by the LA. However, the Green Paper, drawing on information from Ofsted, suggests that this information is rarely provided clearly or effectively and states that:

> "Clearer local information on what is available for families and from whom could help reduce the need for parents to invest their time and energy in an appeal to the Tribunal in order to get the right support, as well as saving local authorities and local services the expense of this process."
>
> (DfE, 2011, p66)

To address this issue, the proposal is to ensure that LAs set out a local offer indicating the support that is available for children with SEN or who are disabled and their families and from whom. LAs will be expected to work with parents, local schools and colleges, and other local services, including those on the proposed Health and Wellbeing Boards, to develop the offer.

In relation to school provision, the 2011 Green Paper proposes that the local offer would describe what additional or different provision schools make for children with SEN and cover four key areas:

- curriculum – how the curriculum offers breadth and balance and is tailored to meet children's individual needs;
- teaching – how teaching is adapted to meet children's SEN and how arrangements are made to secure specialist expertise;
- assessment – how ongoing teacher assessment is used to identify barriers to learning for children with SEN; and
- pastoral support – how parents are involved in children's learning and how the school supports the education and wellbeing of disabled children and children with SEN.

(DfE, 2011, p46)

Presentation and discussion of data

Only 38.4% of mainstream respondents and 42.5% of special school respondents thought that LA guidance had been influential on school practice in relation to SEN and inclusion but only a small percentage of respondents (mainstream 11.6%, special 12.8%) disagreed. A large proportion of respondents were either ambivalent (33.8% mainstream, 34.3% special) or indicated that they did not know (16.1% mainstream, 10.3% special).

Only 6.8% of mainstream and 9.9% of special school respondents felt that a specific local policy or guidance document on SEN and inclusion had been particularly influential on their school's practice. However, it should be noted that 59.1% of mainstream teachers and 51.7% of special school teachers indicated that they were 'not sure'.

The relatively high proportion of 'not sure' and 'neither agree nor disagree' responses to the two questions exploring the influence of LA policy may be a reflection of respondents' level of direct engagement with policy and guidance. It is possible therefore that local policy and guidance does influence practice but teachers are not aware of this, perhaps because they are receiving distilled relevant messages from the SENCO or members of the senior leadership team and do not know the original source.

Only a minority of mainstream and special school respondents (16.2% and 21% respectively) indicated that they felt that guidance on SEN and inclusion provided by the LA was clear for them to implement in practice. However, 58.1% of mainstream teachers and 55% of special school teachers were ambivalent or unsure. As with the previous questions discussed related to LA influence, the meaning behind the high proportion of 'neither agree nor disagree' responses (mainstream 42.4%, special 43%) is an important aspect to consider. For some respondents a response may genuinely be indicative of a carefully considered appraisal of the clarity of the LA guidance. However, it is possible that this relatively high percentage is again reflecting a lack of awareness of either what LA guidance has been produced or of LA guidance as the source of information that has been distilled to them by the SENCO or members of the senior leadership team.

As stated in chapter 3, the majority (59.7%) of respondents said that Ofsted was more influential than either local or national policy and guidance. To put the percentages regarding the influence of LA policy and guidance and its clarity in perspective, only 41% of all[6] survey respondents thought that national guidance on SEN and inclusion influenced practice in school. Only 17% thought that

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[6] Special and mainstream respondents

national guidance was clear for them to implement in practice. It does not therefore seem to be the case that the relative low percentages in relation to LA policy and guidance are an indication that schools are engaging directly with national policy and guidance and bypassing the LA.

The survey asked respondents to indicate how likely they were to consult particular sources if they required information in relation to SEN. A relatively small proportion of respondents indicated they were likely or very likely to seek information from LA websites (mainstream 23.7%, special 31.4%), LA support/advisory staff (32% mainstream, 38.4% special) or an LA support network (19.9% mainstream, 26% special). This compared with, for example, 57.4% of special school teachers and 49.4% of mainstream teachers indicating they were likely or very likely to use government websites (e.g. TeacherNet, National Strategy site, The Teacher Training Resource Bank (TTRB)).

When teachers were asked what would be useful to them in relation to the SEN of pupils they currently work with, a number of options presented related to services an LA might provide. These were:

- greater access to **specialist teachers** who work directly with pupils;
- greater access to **specialist teachers** who advise the teacher/school;
- greater access to **educational psychologists;**
- more **external agency support.**

Of mainstream respondents, 84.7% agreed or strongly agreed that 'specialist teachers who work directly with pupils' would be useful. Only 'more time' attracted a higher level of agreement (86.5%). It is impossible to know whether respondents interpreted the reference to 'specialist teacher' as meaning a member of staff employed on a full or part-time basis by the school or an LA peripatetic teacher. An important element seemed to be direct working with the pupil as fewer respondents (72%) agreed that greater access to 'specialist teachers who advise the teacher/school' would be useful to them. A total of 60.4% of mainstream respondents agreed that 'greater access to educational psychologists and more external agency support' would be useful and 58.9% agreed that 'greater access to external agency support' would be useful. Respondents may not necessarily have thought exclusively about LA services when considering the contribution of external agencies; it is likely that many respondents based their responses on experiences of dealing with health and social services.

Special school respondents presented a different view, with 63.6% indicating that 'greater access to educational psychologists' would be useful. The percentage is not that different to the mainstream survey, but in the case of special school respondents only 'more time' attracted a higher level of agreement (82.6%) than 'greater access to educational psychologists'. A total of 59.5% agreed or strongly agreed that 'specialist teachers who work directly with pupils' would be useful, while 53.3% agreed that 'greater access to specialist teachers who advise the teacher/school' would be useful to them. The smaller proportion of special school respondents suggesting that these forms of support would be useful may be indicative that special school teachers believe they largely have the necessary expertise either personally or within their setting. The interest in educational psychology support may be indicative of a perceived need for a psychological perspective on a child's behaviour and learning that is not available in-house.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, few survey respondents thought that their school received sufficient funding to provide an appropriate education for pupils with SEN. Only 100 mainstream respondents (7%) thought there was sufficient funding, with 69.5% saying 'no' and 22.8% 'not sure'. There was no significant difference between primary and secondary schools. Special

school respondents were slightly more positive, with 24% saying they had sufficient funding, 60.7% saying 'no' and 15.3% 'not sure'. It is not possible to determine from the survey data whether respondents saw the perceived lack of funding to be due to LA decisions regarding budget allocation or a general lack of funding for education from central government.

Case study respondents were asked about their experience of LA support and other support from external agencies. As would be expected, respondents' views varied depending on their LA. One LA visited was overwhelmingly endorsed by its schools as providing timely and effective support. For most interviewees, timely access was an important factor in relation to perceptions of the utility of support provided by the LA.

The quality of support varied depending on the individuals involved. Some respondents said that some LA support staff were out of date in their knowledge. This criticism did not necessarily relate to their specialist area but to their knowledge of wider developments in schools related to the curriculum and assessment. This had implications when advice was offered related to classroom practice. However, others spoke very highly of specialist support received from LA personnel. In particular, teachers liked LA personnel who worked directly in their classrooms. This did not necessarily mean direct working with pupils, but teachers felt more positive about advice and guidance offered by specialist teachers, advisory staff and educational psychologists if these personnel had some form of direct experience of the classroom context.

In many cases, the LA had interpreted national policy and guidance and then disseminated it to their schools. This was seen as helpful by some schools, while other headteachers felt that they needed to access national policy directly so that they could make best use of it for their own school needs and not just be fed 'the party line'.

In one LA visited, provision mapping and waves of intervention had been heavily promoted by advisory staff as an alternative to maintaining high numbers of IEPs, based on the model contained within *Leading on Inclusion* (DfES, 2005b). In schools we visited in this LA, IEPs tended to be retained only for statemented pupils and those at School Action Plus with complex needs and/or a broad range of multi-agency involvement. This was different to other LAs where provision mapping had been adopted but schools were still maintaining IEPs for most, if not all, pupils identified as having SEN. While the nature of this research means it is not possible to comment on the relative merits of IEPs and provision mapping in relation to pupil outcomes, the effect on the use of IEPs in this LA was an example of how important the LA can be in ensuring that nationally produced guidance impacts on practice in schools.

Headteachers and SENCOs interviewed emphasised the importance of the quality of the relationship. One headteacher noted:

> "What you get from the LA is as good as the relationship you make with them. It takes time to build up a relationship and how well it works depends very much on the people involved."
>
> (Primary headteacher)

The time necessary to develop relationships and the influence of personal and professional qualities of individual personnel were common points raised in interviews. For those schools that experienced a very good relationship with their LA, there was considerable concern about cuts to LA services, including specialist teaching services and educational psychology services. Schools that did not particularly value the input of their LA were still concerned about cuts and noted that their main aim was to explore policy initiatives in order to locate and pursue any funding stream that may be of benefit to their pupils.

It was evident that schools did not look exclusively to their LAs for support. Some bought in services and training. Others made use of collaborative initiatives between clusters of local schools, including working with special schools.

Findings

6.1   Timely access to specialist support when needed was crucial to mainstream teachers interviewed. Whether that was a behaviour specialist, SENCO, an experienced and/or special school teacher, support from a specialist trained TA, and/or educational psychologist it mattered that teachers were able to access specialist practical advice that took into account the context in which they were working. There was real concern from interviewees that blanket cuts to LA services would impact on the specific services that they identified as valuable. From the survey, there was a strong indication that mainstream teachers wanted greater access to specialist teachers who either work directly with pupils or advise the teacher/school.

6.2   Interviewees' experiences of LA support varied, with personal relationships at the heart of effective support. Such relationships had tended to develop over time. The extent to which LA staff know their school was cited as a crucial factor. One small LA visited received exceptionally positive endorsement from its schools and teachers involved in the case studies.

6.3   It was clear from case study interviews that LAs played a role in the interpretation of policy and the allocation of training and support services. This was noted through differences in the use of provision mapping and the take-up of IDP materials between schools in different LAs. However, survey data indicated that only approximately 40% of respondents considered that LA policy and guidance influenced school practice.

6.4   Case study interviews suggest there is variability in the frequency and quality of LA support. Differences were frequently attributed to personal relationships and the quality of the support offered by individual advisers. Teachers particularly valued the expertise of speech and language therapists and educational psychologists and behaviour specialists who carried out classroom observations and worked with pupils in class.

6.5   It was clear that case study schools did not look exclusively to their LA for support. Increasingly, schools were looking to collaborate with other schools to provide both on and off-site shared provision as well as accessing support from special schools. Some schools visited perceived that there would be a continued move towards increased working with networks of schools, voluntary bodies and other professionals (e.g. Health and Social Services). From the survey, it appears that teachers do not prioritise the LA as a source of information. Only around a third of mainstream survey respondents said they were likely to seek information from LA support or advisory staff and fewer still indicated they would access the LA website or support networks.

Emerging issues and implications for policy

•   Just as we cannot talk about pupils with SEN as though this represents a homogeneous group, so we cannot talk about LAs as though they are all the same. They vary not just in size but in the models and utility of support they provide. A view that any blanket cuts in LA support will have minimal impact on 'frontline' delivery for pupils with SEN needs to be examined in relation to individual LAs, their geography and existing capacity and cost in relation to support to schools for SEN. The notion of frontline delivery in itself may be

unhelpful in minimising the contribution of a range of staff, including those employed by the LA, who impact positively at the point of delivery.

- It was clear from the case study interviews that the perception of the utility of LA support services was varied and dependent on a range of factors. Schools were often able to identify particular services and individuals as being valuable and there was anxiety about their possible loss. The size of the LA may well be a factor but even in larger LAs it was the quality of the relationship that underpinned effective practice. Such relationships had tended to develop over time and relied not just on the professional knowledge of the LA personnel but their personality and understanding of the particular school context. In case study schools where good working relationships had been established and their support highly valued there was a very real concern about the impact of proposed cuts on established good practice. The direction of current government policy in relation to the LA role may make it more difficult to develop and sustain the type of relationships that schools reported on positively.

- LAs are potentially an important conduit for policy and guidance for central government. Indeed, some schools openly acknowledged that they acted on what their LA had highlighted as important and were confident that by doing this they would be sufficiently compliant with any national requirements. Whilst Ofsted has an important role in monitoring compliance with national policy and guidance, the LA is better placed to interpret national policy and guidance for its schools based on awareness of the local context and also individual schools' needs, priorities and capacity for change. The LA can also challenge practice where schools are not engaging appropriately with national policy and guidance intended to improve outcomes for pupils with SEN. It was evident from case study interviews that some LAs were fulfilling their support, challenge and intervention role within the context of an established and productive working relationship with the school. Any changes to the LA role that seek to address variability in practice between LAs should have due regard for the good practice that exists in some areas and ensure that this is preserved. A diminished role for LAs, either as a by-product of financial constraints or deliberate policy direction, risks contributing to the variability in the experiences of pupils with SEN. Whilst it would be too simplistic to assume that a reduction in LA influence will be universally detrimental, there is an important question of what will happen in the future if LAs are not there to serve as a conduit for policy or guidance from central government or fulfil a support, challenge and intervention role. There are inherent risks if these responsibilities are left to schools.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS AND CORE MESSAGES

This research has sought to explore how teachers are experiencing SEN and inclusion in their schools. The predominant focus of the research has been the variability that is of enduring concern within the field of SEN and inclusion.

Identification rates for SEN vary between LAs and schools; the allocation and funding of additional resources for SEN varies; there is variability in how well teachers are prepared to teach pupils with SEN and in the amount and quality of support teachers receive once they are qualified; and parents and carers vary in whether they seek special or mainstream provision for their children. Of particular importance is that outcomes for pupils with SEN not only vary but also are often lower than expected.

Variability in the identification of SEN

The identification of SEN is at the core of concerns about variability. Such identification rests on assessing the child, their environment and the reciprocal interaction between these two factors. The identification of SEN is thus necessarily complex and variable due, not least, to the impact of different and changing environmental factors on the child's cognitive, social and emotional progress. Over the years, government has placed faith in guidance within the SEN Code of Practice (DfES, 2001) as a mechanism for securing some consistency in the identification of SEN. This guidance bases identification of SEN on the individual child's progress compared with same-aged peers and also against the child's response to existing educational provision.

Findings from this research do not challenge that there is variability in the identification of SEN. They do challenge, however, any assumptions that national variability in identification rates can be attributed to schools and their teachers deliberately overidentifying SEN, either for reasons related to funding or as an excuse for their pupils' lack of progress.

Findings also support a view that teachers are not ignoring the identification criteria for SEN within SEN Code of Practice guidance but they are experiencing the terms used within the Code's definition being open to interpretation. Not surprisingly, teachers find it easier to identify SEN that have a predominantly medical or physical root cause than those that are less visible, but nonetheless pervasive, such as those characterised by social and emotional delays and difference.

Findings strongly suggest that teachers seek to identify pupils with SEN so that a focus is maintained on the pupils' rates of progress and the need for access to any existing additional provision and/or a requirement for referral for 'specialist' provision. There was broad consensus from teachers that SEN should be retained as a distinct category from other forms of need, such as those often subsumed under the heading 'vulnerable'. However, in some cases, particularly for some pupils recorded at School Action, the rationale would often seem to be that identification as having SEN 'protects' by ensuring that the individual is not overlooked. The majority of schools now have well-developed data monitoring systems that allow them to identify any pupils who are not making expected progress and to intervene accordingly. This would seem to be an alternative method of ensuring that pupils are not overlooked and 'get what they need'. Where schools have secure monitoring systems for all pupils and this monitoring is used to inform the need for interventions, it may be timely to question whether identification as SEN is serving a purpose.

It is unfortunate that the climate for this debate is one in which a degree of blame (e.g. Ofsted, 2010, DfE, 2011) is being directed at teachers and schools for operating the existing system

incorrectly when, as this report suggests, the system itself has inherent problems that lead to variation. The risk is that schools and teachers will be placed in a position where they feel they need to defend their practice rather than being encouraged to engage in professional dialogue regarding the utility of the term 'special educational needs' and its associated processes.

One solution to address issues of variability or excess in the identification of SEN would be to change or replace the existing identification criteria that are currently contained within the SEN Code of Practice. This has already been suggested through the publication of the 2011 SEN Green Paper. However, findings from this research suggest that any change would need to be mindful of the risk of underidentification of those pupils for whom the root cause of their learning difficulties does not lie within visible and easily identifiable medical or physical conditions. This would include those with significant and pervasive social and emotional delays and/or difference.

Early identification of SEN is more feasible in early years settings where the child is observed over time in response to different adult:child ratios, tasks and activities. However, as a child moves through the education system, early identification is likely to become more problematic if any nationally revised identification criteria for SEN marginalises the effect on progress of the child's school learning environment. In mainstream contexts, this environment is characterised by pupils having to learn a prescribed curriculum in the group setting of the classroom.

It is acknowledged that variability in identification of SEN is an area of concern in schools, particularly when it is directly linked to issues of equity and fairness regarding allocation of resources. However, it must also be acknowledged that any changes to the identification of SEN will not, in themselves, provide a quick-fix solution to government concerns about parental confidence in the identification of SEN or to the cost and poor outcomes that are currently associated with this category of learners.

Changes to identification criteria would serve only to reconstruct the size, nature and funding of the SEN population. There would still be individuals, categorised or not, who would make less progress in the group setting of their classroom than that made by their same-aged peers. The significant changes currently proposed to SEN identification and associated funding will necessarily impact on the experiences of parents and their children. Particular consideration needs to be given to the transitional arrangements that are afforded to protect those pupils, currently identified as having SEN, who will fall outside the future single category of SEN proposed in the 2011 Green Paper.

Variability in provision and outcomes for SEN

Variability in outcomes for pupils with SEN is understandably another significant area for policy makers. Findings from this research suggest that teachers are experiencing SEN policy directives for this in two ways.

One is related to the dominance of a 'standards raising' agenda whereby school practice is now driven by prescribed expectations for National Curriculum rates of progress. As a consequence, National Curriculum data is being used much more extensively to identify and address the learning needs of individuals, including those with SEN, who are vulnerable in terms of not meeting prescribed rates of progress.

A concern for teachers is that the dominance of narrowly defined academic targets as a measure of progress for pupils with SEN risks marginalising progress such pupils have made in other areas of learning, including social and emotional aspects of learning, that is experienced

as 'achievement' for that individual. As a consequence, both teachers and pupils can be deemed 'failures' even if the pupil has made progress when this is not in the areas that are prioritised and published. Attention to the balance between achievement and attainment may serve to improve pupil motivation, behaviour and progress and impact more fairly on measures used for teacher appraisal.

The second area of concern for teachers relates to the relationship between the identification of SEN and assessment of the pupil's response to provision. Children are identified as having SEN, via the SEN Code of Practice, in terms of the extent to which their rate of progress is significantly below that of their same-aged peers. However, once identified, it is felt by teachers that they are expected to somehow enable those individual pupils with SEN to either 'catch up' with their peers or make the same rate of progress.

In reality, this can lead to expectations, particularly from Ofsted inspectors but also sometimes from senior leadership within schools, that are often experienced as unrealistic. High expectations are recognised as necessary by teachers, but such expectations need to be reasonable and take account of the context in which the child is learning – in schools this is within the group setting of the classroom and against prescribed curriculum targets. Teachers are particularly concerned that the English Baccalaureate was introduced as a (retrospective) performance measure in the 2010 performance tables. This measure recognises where pupils have secured a C grade or better across a core of academic subjects – English, mathematics, history or geography, the sciences and a language. Many pupils with SEN, including those with SLCN and dyslexia, experience difficulties with literacy. The narrowing of performance measures to those subjects that are heavily reliant on literacy is placing further pressure on teachers and giving less choice to pupils, regardless of the root cause of their learning difficulty.

Teachers in special schools also have to provide considerable evidence of their pupils' academic progress in response to provision but are on the whole afforded greater understanding by Ofsted inspectors in terms of their pupils' barriers to learning. Some teachers in mainstream schools noted that Ofsted inspectors vary in their understanding of the barriers to learning that are experienced by some pupils with SEN, and the challenges of teaching such pupils in group settings with variable levels of adult support.

Overall, teachers are experiencing conflict between the identification of SEN based on a significant delay in rate of progress and the expectation that pupils with SEN should make the same rate of progress across all subjects as measured by National Curriculum levels and sub-levels. This fails to take on board that 'SEN' covers a broad category and that categories of SEN do not impact equally on all subject areas. Pupils who experience dyslexia, for example, are likely to show uneven progress depending upon the subject area under assessment.

Unsatisfactory rates of progress for pupils with SEN might in some cases be attributed to low expectations. However, instructing teachers to 'raise expectations for SEN' will not in itself suffice to address government concerns about the relatively poor educational outcomes of pupils with SEN. Conflict between the identification of the broad category of SEN and assessment based on increasingly narrow measures of progress needs to be further explored if progress made by all pupils with SEN, and their teachers, is to be recognised and valued.

Variability in teachers' knowledge, skills, understanding and experience of SEN

Findings confirmed that training for SEN is variable. Survey data reflected that teachers want more training in SEN. At face value these findings endorse the viewpoint of government that more training is required if outcomes for pupils with SEN are to be improved. However,

exploration of this issue from interview data suggests that addressing teacher training for SEN is far from simple. Teachers do want more training but they did not prioritise that as a solution to the problems surrounding outcomes for pupils with SEN.

Most teachers feel that they know what their pupils with SEN need in terms of teaching. If teachers encounter particular issues with specific types of SEN, they report being able to ask colleagues, particularly their SENCO, for advice and support. There is also a plethora of guidance available from websites, including government sources.

For teachers, the core issues for training are those of feasibility, relevance and quality. Teachers are required to teach pupils with diverse needs in group settings and within the context of delivering and assessing a prescribed curriculum. The make-up of the class group, the curriculum subject being taught and the availability of additional adult support all impact on the behaviour and learning of a pupil with SEN.

The training teachers 'need' to improve their teaching is obviously going to vary depending on their personal level of professional development and experience in SEN and the nature and demands of their current teaching roles. Affordability is also emerging as an issue during a period of economic recession.

This research suggests that any narrow conceptualisation of 'training' needs to be reappraised to include professional development opportunities and experiences that include: access to a combination of in-school and local support and practical guidance; time to liaise with colleagues to share and evaluate strategies and approaches used with pupils in their own school context; opportunities to work collaboratively in the classroom either with internal or external specialists/advisors, including teachers from special schools; time and opportunity to access, use and evaluate the existing plethora of guidance; input on specific SEN in terms of how their pupils are likely to respond both as individuals and in groups.

Teachers need training in relation to SEN that is going to contribute directly to their capacity within their current context. For most mainstream teachers, this is a class containing 25-30 pupils, usually with a wide range of abilities. Teachers do not value training that just fuels any guilt they are experiencing about knowing 'what' to do for individual pupils with SEN without being able to solve the 'how' of doing this in group settings.

Teachers also recognised that if they are to improve outcomes for pupils with SEN, they may need training that is not necessarily SEN specific. For example, secondary school teachers are not trained to teach literacy and do not necessarily have a deep enough understanding of how differences and delays in language development and communication can impact on pupils' learning and behaviour in the classroom. Likewise, some teachers felt that an emphasis on subject teaching during training may have limited the time spent on the development of their skills and understanding in relation to the psychology of learning and child development.

It is of course the case that individuals may not know what they need to know until they are given that knowledge. However, that does not justify deciding what teachers need to know, giving it to them and expecting outcomes for pupils to improve. Teachers are experiencing challenges in the classroom on a daily basis and have a valuable contribution to make in relation to informing the nature and purpose of teacher training for SEN. It is important that teachers' views, some of which are expressed in this report, continue to be sought and are appropriately valued by policy makers if any new initiatives for SEN training are to be effective in terms of cost and impact.

Core messages

This research project set out to examine teachers' experience of SEN and inclusion as a route to understanding and contributing to the debate about concerns surrounding the variability within policy, provision and practice for SEN and inclusion. Publication of the report on the research conducted has coincided with the beginnings of what is likely to be a period of significant change in relation to educational provision for pupils with SEN. Teachers are at the front line of implementing national policy changes and are crucial to the bringing about of improvements in outcomes for pupils with SEN. If teachers' reported experience of the reality of teaching groups of pupils, including those with SEN, is ignored or dismissed as professional weakness, then any policy changes, however laudable and well intentioned, are unlikely to lead to their intended outcomes. It is with this in mind that the following core messages have been extrapolated from the findings of this research. It is hoped that these messages will be of interest to policy makers, professionals and parents who are involved in the education of pupils with SEN.

Chapter 1:

The relationship between the definition of SEN in the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice and the identification of SEN

While the Government's current concern regarding identification of SEN is primarily focused on issues of variability, funding and accountability, teachers' main concern regarding identification relates to its link to provision. Schools need to identify what provision their pupils need in order to make progress in the setting in which they are currently placed. Once this differing emphasis is understood, it can be seen that teachers are not deliberately ignoring or manipulating government guidance on the identification of SEN contained within the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice (DfES, 2001).

When provision and progress are placed at the heart of identification of SEN, then it is the current 'educational need' rather than any inherent 'learning difficulty' that becomes the main focus for teachers' assessment. This 'need', inherent within the term 'SEN', depends on the educational environment in which the pupil is placed and must take account of the nature and assessment of the 'learning' that is required. If the learning that is required is defined in terms of prescribed levels of subject attainment, then the pupil's educational needs will be different than if the learning required is defined in terms of a broader range of personal achievements.

If provision and progress take priority over funding and accountability as the core purpose for identification of SEN in schools, then variability is inevitable because school contexts are not standardised. It follows that an emphasis on reducing variability in identification rates of SEN through changes to policy and practice should not be seen as the solution to concerns about educational outcomes for pupils with SEN. Changes to identification criteria would serve only to reconstruct the size, nature and funding of the SEN population. There would still be individuals, categorised or not, who would make less progress in the group setting of their classroom than that made by their same-aged peers. This has implications for funding and there is a need to examine how funding is arranged to ensure that the range of pupils' needs are supported adequately.

Rather than continuing with the pursuit of reducing variability in identification rates of SEN, it would seem more productive for the Government to harness the expertise of teachers and parents to explore how positive and meaningful 'outcomes' can be conceptualised and achieved for all pupils, irrespective of their categorisation.

Chapter 2:

Training, support and development needs

If initiatives for teacher training and CPD for SEN are to impact on teaching quality and outcomes for pupils with SEN, then they must address issues of relevance, feasibility and, of course, quality. As such, due regard must be given to determining the relevant knowledge, skills and understanding that teachers need if they are to teach pupils with SEN in the group setting of the classroom. Strategies that may be appropriate for individual pupils assigned to particular categories of SEN may not be feasible to be delivered by teachers whose classes have an imbalance of pupils with learning and/or behavioural needs. If intended academic outcomes for pupils with SEN are to become more literacy based, then for some secondary teachers the priority for training may need to be cross-phase literacy teaching and language development rather than in relation to specific forms of SEN.

For training to be effective it needs to be reconceptualised to cover a range of inputs and experiences that lead to improvements in practice. In addition to the more traditional forms, training in SEN might usefully include:

- dedicated time to access, use and evaluate existing guidance on SEN – much of which has the potential to impact positively on practice;
- opportunity and time to work with SENCOs and other colleagues with particular expertise and/or experience in SEN in their own school context;
- opportunity to access, implement and evaluate local guidance and support from LA specialist teachers, educational psychologists, speech and language therapists and other providers – either internally or externally;
- active engagement in sharing of practice between local mainstream and special schools.

It would be useful to consider ways of securing greater coherence between training that seeks to improve the subject learning and behaviour of all pupils and that which is deemed 'SEN specific'. Current perspectives on training for teachers seems to be on how SEN pupils differ from their peers rather than on the skills and attributes that all pupils need to develop in order to effectively learn in group settings. This can lead to fragmentation in relation to what training is needed for pupils with SEN and what training is needed for non-SEN pupils.

The 2010 White Paper (DfE, 2010) and the 2011 Green paper (DfE, 2011) signal changes in relation both to ITT and CPD, placing considerable emphasis on the role of teaching schools. Planning any new training initiatives for SEN needs to involve dialogue between providers and teachers if it is to meet necessary requirements for efficacy, relevance and feasibility.

Chapter 3:

Policy and guidance for SEN and inclusion

The brokering of the Government's relationship with teachers through policy dissemination requires significant reappraisal. It is crucial that Government and schools develop effective working relationships if their shared concern for the wellbeing and achievement of children and young people with SEN is to be addressed. Much of the guidance produced by the previous Government has been of good quality with the potential to impact positively on teachers' professional development and pupil progress. Use and take-up of policy and guidance is based on perceived utility and consequently varies according to job role and responsibility. It would be useful to consider how policy and guidance could be better signposted in order to reach its intended range of recipients. For many class and subject teachers, policy and guidance needs to be succinct, supportive in tone and perceived as useful to their practice. Of particular concern

to schools is the tone of recent comments from official sources (e.g. Ofsted, 2010) regarding over identification rates and low expectations for pupils with SEN. There is a feeling that blame is being apportioned to schools without due regard to the efforts schools and teachers are making to effectively include pupils with a range of SEN.

Chapter 4:

The deployment of support staff

There is a strong view amongst teachers that the inclusion and progress of SEN pupils is dependent upon additional TA support. It is crucial that the validity of this consensus view is further researched to take on board the facilitating effect that TAs may have on teaching groups of pupils, including those with SEN. For example, it was evident from case study interviews that teachers believe TAs have an impact on pupil learning through the closer monitoring they can provide for pupils who have yet to develop the necessary skills and/or dispositions to sustain attention on a task in the group setting. Intervening early served to limit negative and off-task behaviour that would impact on the rest of the class, as well as refocusing the individual on their learning. The positive effect of TAs and other support staff on teachers' job satisfaction, levels of stress and workload should not be ignored as a factor likely to impact, albeit indirectly, on pupil learning.

Only about a third of teachers within the survey felt they had sufficient time and/or opportunity to liaise with support staff. This was also an issue highlighted by the case study interviewees. Teachers interviewed often reported using a variety of opportunistic strategies to address this issue, often relying on goodwill and informal arrangements. Some schools had developed written recording methods to share information, including electronic communication. This raises significant issues about how support staff are involved in the planning and assessment processes, about the key features of good practice and the relationship between effective practice and learning outcomes for pupils with SEN. This is an area that warrants further research.

Chapter 5:

Behaviour and SEN

Behaviour in schools remains of more concern for many teachers than SEN, in spite of the general view that schools' behaviour policies work for the majority of pupils. The entrenched behavioural characteristics of some pupils, perceived to be largely attributable to factors outside school, strongly suggest that 'more discipline' per se will not suffice to address the troubling issues of teaching and learning faced by teachers in the group setting of classrooms. Teachers cannot be blamed or expected to address this issue without due consideration of the fact that the problematic behaviour of individuals, and its exacerbation in groups, is not confined to schools.

There is a need to consider the dual challenge for teachers in mainstream schools and a range of settings, including special schools, pupil referral units and alternative provision, of not only managing behaviour but also getting disaffected and disruptive pupils to meet nationally prescribed academic targets.

Chapter 6:

Local authority support

The quality and take-up of LA support is very varied. Any actions that impact on LA support for schools risk destroying any effective relationship and benefits that have developed over time.

Neither should it be assumed that schools will necessarily have the capacity to fill the gaps in support provision either at practical/resource level or in terms of professional knowledge and skills. Rather than addressing variability and budget constraints through blanket cuts, consideration needs to be given to developing policies and approaches that identify and retain effective working practices between LAs and their schools and replacing or strengthening those that fall short.

In the context of cuts to services and the changing role for LAs, schools will need to establish a new relationship with their LA and a range of other services, including health and care services and the third sector. A concern is that developing and maintaining these multiple relationships will place considerable additional demands on schools. This could impact adversely on the quality of education for all pupils but especially those with SEN.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ADHD	Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder
APP	Assessing Pupils' Progress
ASD	Autism Spectrum Disorder
ATL	Association of Teachers and Lecturers
BESD	Behavioural, Social and Emotional Development/Difficulties
BOS	Bristol Online Survey
BPS	British Psychological Society
CAF	Common Assessment Framework
CAMHS	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
CVA	Contextual Value Added
DCSF	Department for Children, Schools and Families
DDA	Disability Discrimination Act
DES	Department of Education and Science
DfE	Department for Education
DfEE	Department for Education and Employment
DfES	Department for Education and Skills
DISS	Deployment and Impact of Support Staff
EBD	Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties
EAL	English as an Additional Language
ECM	Every Child Matters
GOR	Government Office Region
GTP	Graduate Teacher Programme
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HLTA	Higher Level Teaching Assistant
IDP	Inclusion Development Programme
IEP	Individual Education Plan
ITE	Initial Teacher Education
ITT	Initial Teacher Training
LA	Local Authority
LDD	Learning Difficulties and Disabilities
MFL	Modern Foreign Languages
MLD	Moderate Learning Difficulty
NASUWT	National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers
NQT	Newly Qualified Teacher
PGCE	Post Graduate Certificate in Education
PMLD	Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties
PRU	Pupil Referral Unit
QTS	Qualified Teacher Status
SA	School Action
SA+	School Action Plus

SALT	Speech and Language Therapist
SEAL	Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning
SEBD	Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SENCO	Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disability
SENDIST	Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal
SIP	School Improvement Partner
SLCN	Speech, Language and Communication Needs
SLT	Senior Leadership Team
SSEN	Statement of Special Educational Needs
TA	Teaching Assistant
TAC	Team Around the Child
TDA	Training and Development Agency for Schools
TTRB	Teacher Training Resource Bank

Appendix A: Survey questions

Questions asked in the online mainstream teacher survey:

3. Gender

Male/Female

4. Age

25 or under	
26-35	
36-45	
46-55	
56 or over	

5. Date of qualification as a teacher

NQT	
2-5 years ago	
6-10 years ago	
11-15 years ago	
more than 15 years ago	
not a UK qualified teacher	

6. Role in school

Headteacher/Principal		Deputy headteacher	
Assistant headteacher		SENCO	
Subject teacher		Class teacher	
Head of department		Head of year	
SEN support teacher		Inclusion leader/manager	
Head of Key Stage/ Key Stage manager		Other(s)	

Comments

7. Additional qualification in SEN

Yes/No

Comments

8. **In relation to SEN and inclusion, what sort(s) of training have you received since September 2004?**

'One-off' after-school sessions	
A sequence of related after-school sessions	
All or part of a staff development day	
Course accredited by university or other provider that provides an additional qualification or credits towards one	
Opportunity to collaborate with/observe another teacher	
None	
Other	

Comments

9. **Please could you give us an example of a piece of training you have undertaken in relation to SEN that you consider to have been good.**

Comments

10. **Currently, do you think that you need more training on SEN?**

Yes/No/Not sure

Comments

11. **Main barrier to undertaking more training on SEN**

No barrier	
Cost	
Time	
Workload	
Nothing suitable/of interest available locally	
Lack of support from school/ headteacher	
Other (please specify)	

Comments

12. **If you wanted to look for information in relation to SEN, how likely are you to:**

	Very likely	Likely	Neither likely nor unlikely	Unlikely	Very unlikely	Not sure
Use government websites (e.g. TeacherNet, National Strategy site, TTRB)						
Use local authority websites						
Use specialist SEN website (e.g. National Autistic Society, Dyslexia Action)						
Use other websites						
Use books and magazines/journals						
Use Teachers TV						
Seek advice from a SENCO						
Seek advice from a colleague in school other than a SENCO						
Seek advice from a specialist teacher/AST at another school						
Seek advice from a non-education-based agency or service, e.g. health, police, social services						
Seek advice from local authority support/advisory staff						
Seek advice from a local authority support network						

13. **If you use websites, which do you mainly use?**

Comments

14.   **Please give your views on the following:**

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know	Does not apply to current role
My initial teacher training adequately prepared me to teach pupils with a range of special educational needs							
In my school I feel I have been well supported in teaching pupils with SEN							
I am generally able to identify the learning needs of pupils with SEN in the class(es) I currently teach							
I am generally able to effectively teach pupils with a range of SEN in my current class(es)							
I am generally able to effectively assess the progress of pupils with a range of SEN in my current class(es)?							

15.   **Do you think that any specific national policy or guidance document on SEN and inclusion has been particularly influential on your school's practice?**

Yes/No/Not sure

Comments

16.   **Do you think that any specific local policy or guidance document on SEN and inclusion has been particularly influential on your school's practice?**

Yes/No/Not sure

Comments

17.   **Do you think your school receives sufficient funding to provide an appropriate education for pupils with SEN?**

Yes/No/Not sure

Comments

18.   **Have you accessed any of the Inclusion Development Programme (IDP) materials?**

Yes/No/Not sure

18a. If you have accessed any of these materials, how useful did you find them?

Very useful/Quite useful/Not very useful/Not at all useful

Comments

19. How has the Every Child Matters agenda affected your practice in relation to pupils with SEN?

Better inter-agency working	Closer working with parents	Faster access to external agencies	Increased emphasis on social and emotional development	More paperwork/ bureaucracy	It hasn't affected our practice

Comments

20. What (if any) form of SEN have you found the most difficult to include in your lessons?

Moderate (general) learning difficulty		Visual impairment	
Specific learning difficulty (e.g. dyslexia)		Physical disability	
Behavioural, emotional and social difficulties		Autism spectrum disorder	
Hearing impairment		Speech, language and communication needs	
Severe learning difficulty (inc. profound and multiple learning difficulty)		Other	

Comments

21. Please give your views on the following:

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
I experience a tension between policies for inclusion and policies for raising standards						
The guidance on SEN and inclusion provided by my local authority is clear for me to implement in practice						
The guidance on SEN and inclusion provided by national government is clear for me to implement in practice						
The guidance on SEN and inclusion provided by national government influences practice in my school						
The guidance on SEN and inclusion provided by my local authority influences practice in my school						
Government policies on SEN and inclusion have benefited pupils with SEN in my school						
Our latest Ofsted inspection report appropriately recognised the progress of pupils with SEN in our school						
Ofsted inspections recognise the effect that having a high proportion of pupils with SEN can have on a school						

22. In your view, which of these is most influential on school practice in relation to SEN and inclusion?

- national government policy and guidance
- local authority policy and guidance
- Ofsted requirements

23.

	In my school a pupil would have to meet this criterion before we identified them as having SEN:			Any of the criteria that ALONE would be sufficient for your school to identify a pupil as having SEN		
	Yes	No	Not sure	Yes	No	Not sure
Low attaining compared with others in their class/school						
Low attaining compared with national expectations for pupils of their age						
Has a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made for them						
Has a diagnosis or label (e.g. dyslexia, autism)						
Requires support in lessons from a teaching assistant						
Regularly requires differentiated work						
Regularly disrupts the rest of the class						

Comments

24. Please give your views on the following:

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know	No TAs present in my lessons	Question does not apply to my current role
My school employs a sufficient range of support staff to fully support the needs of children with SEN							Not an option for these questions	
My experience is that the support staff employed by my school are sufficiently trained to support the needs of pupils with SEN								
The progress of most pupils with SEN in my class is dependent on the availability of support from a teaching assistant								
In most lessons that I teach where a teaching assistant is present, I know and understand his/her role								
In most lessons that I teach where a teaching assistant is present, s/he is typically deployed to support pupils with SEN and/or low-attaining pupils								
I have sufficient opportunities to receive feedback on pupils' learning from any teaching assistants who work in my classroom								
I require more training in order to work more effectively with additional adults in my classroom								

25. **Please give your views on the following:**

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
The inclusion of more pupils with SEN has led to pupils in my school being more accepting and understanding of disability and difference						
Policies for SEN and inclusion adopted by my school have led to pupils being more accepting and understanding of disability and difference						

26. **Please give your views on the following:**

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
The inclusion of more pupils with SEN has meant that I need more strategies to manage pupils' behaviour						
I have a good understanding of why some pupils with SEN exhibit behavioural difficulties in my classroom						
I have a sufficiently wide range of strategies to manage the behaviour of pupils with SEN						
I am well supported in my school to manage the behavioural difficulties of pupils with SEN						
My school's policies are effective in supporting teachers to manage the behavioural difficulties of pupils with SEN						
Generally, I find the behaviour of pupils with SEN no more challenging than the behaviour of pupils without SEN						

27.   How aware are you of the following?

	Have not heard of this	Have heard the term but do not understand what it means	Understand the term but my school has not started to implement it	My school is in the process of implementing this	I consider this to be embedded in school practice
Assessment for learning					
Personalised learning					
Quality first inclusive teaching					
Waves of intervention					
Provision mapping					
Assessing Pupils' Progress (APP)					

28.   Do you think that behaviour in schools has become more challenging over recent years?

Yes/No/Not sure

Comments

29.   If yes, what do you think is the main reason for this?

General deterioration of behaviour in society	
Parents taking less responsibility for their children	
Inclusion policies (school, local and/or national)	
Insufficient power to discipline pupils in school	
Insufficient training for teachers on behaviour management	
Constraints/demands of the curriculum	
Other (*please specify*)	

Comments

30. **Thinking about the pupils with SEN you currently encounter in your role, which of the following would be useful to you?**

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
More **time**						
More **knowledge** about SEN						
More **additional adult support**						
Greater access to **specialist teachers** who advise the teacher						
Greater access to **specialist teachers** who work directly with pupils						
Greater access to **educational psychologists**						
More **senior leadership team support/understanding**						
More **strategies**						
More **external agency support**						

31. **In your view, what should the Government do to improve outcomes for pupils with SEN?**

The Government should:	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
Establish more units within mainstream schools						
Place more pupils with SEN in special schools						
Provide more access to split placement arrangements (e.g. mainstream/special school, mainstream/short stay schools)						
Increase the amount of special school outreach support to mainstream schools						
Abandon the term 'SEN' and associated procedures						
Provide more SEN training for all teachers						
Train more SEN specialist teachers						
Provide more support/advisory service input						
Provide more educational psychology input						cont'd

The Government should:	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
Provide more one-to-one support for pupils with SEN						
Resource some mainstream schools in each area in relation to a particular form of SEN						
Promote more early intervention (at a young age)						
Promote more early intervention (at first sign of problem/difficulty)						
Change the curriculum requirements at national level						
Change testing arrangements at national level						
Reduce bureaucracy related to SEN						
Revise the SEN Code of Practice						
Introduce a more supportive inspection framework						
Allow more small schools						
Reduce class sizes						

32. **The Special Educational Needs Code of Practice gives the following definition of special educational needs. How helpful do you find this definition?**

'Children have special educational needs if they have a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made for them.'

(DfES, 2001)

Very helpful	Helpful	Neither helpful nor unhelpful	Not helpful	Very unhelpful	I had not seen this definition before

33. **In your experience, does this definition inform your school's identification of children with SEN?**

Yes/No/Not sure

34. **Since September 2008 have you or any of your staff had to attend an SEN tribunal?**

Yes/No/Not sure

35. **Do you think that parents/carers of pupils with SEN are generally satisfied with the provision made for their children?**

Yes/No/Not sure

36. **Type of school:**

Infant	
Junior	
Primary	
Middle	
Secondary	
Special	
Other	

Comments

Questions asked in the online special school teacher survey:

3.   Gender

Male/Female

4.   Age

25 or under	
26-35	
36-45	
46-55	
56 or over	

5.   Date of qualification as a teacher

NQT	
2-5 years ago	
6-10 years ago	
11-15 years ago	
more than 15 years ago	
not a UK qualified teacher	

6.   Role in school

Headteacher/Principal		Deputy headteacher	
Assistant headteacher		Specialist teacher	
Subject teacher		Class teacher	
Head of department		Head of year	
Outreach teacher		Inclusion leader/manager	
Head of Key Stage/Key Stage manager		Other(s)	

Comments

7.   Additional qualification in SEN

Yes/No

Comments

8. **What is the school's official designation?**

Comments

9. **Have you ever held a position in a mainstream school?**

Yes/No

9a. **Which position do you currently hold?**

Headteacher/principal	
Deputy headteacher	
Assistant headteacher	
SENCO	
Subject teacher	
Class teacher	
Head of department	
Head of year	
SEN support teacher	
Inclusion leader/manager	
Head of Key Stage/Key Stage manager	
Other	

10. **How long ago were you last employed in a mainstream school?**

Under 2 years	
2-5 years ago	
6-10 years ago	
11-15 years ago	
More than 15 years ago	
Never worked in a mainstream school	

11. **In relation to SEN and inclusion, what sort(s) of training have you received since September 2004?**

'One-off' after-school sessions	
A sequence of related after-school sessions	
All or part of a staff development day	
Course accredited by university or other provider that provides an additional qualification or credits towards one	
Opportunity to collaborate with/observe another teacher	
Training to support the sharing of expertise between special and mainstream schools	
None	
Other	

Comments

12. **Please could you give us an example of a piece of training you have undertaken in relation to SEN that you consider to have been good**

Comments

13. **Currently, do you think that you need more training on SEN?**

Yes/No/Not sure

13a. **What training would you like?**

Comments

## 14.	Main barrier to undertaking more training on SEN

No barrier	
Cost	
Time	
Workload	
Nothing suitable/of interest available locally	
Lack of support from school/headteacher	
Other (please specify)	

Comments

## 15.	If you wanted to look for information in relation to SEN, how likely would you be to:

	Very likely	Likely	Neither likely nor unlikely	Unlikely	Very unlikely	Not sure
Use government websites (e.g. TeacherNet, National Strategy site, TTRB)						
Use local authority websites						
Use specialist SEN website (e.g. National Autistic Society, Dyslexia Action)						
Use other websites						
Use books and magazines/journals						
Use Teachers TV						
Seek advice from specialist colleague in school						
Seek advice from a teacher at another special school						
Seek advice from a non-education-based agency or service e.g. health, police, social services						
Seek advice from local authority support/advisory staff						
Seek advice from a local authority support network/ schools consortium						

16.   If you use websites, which do you mainly use

Comments

17.   Please give your views on the following:

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know	Does not apply to current role
My initial teacher training adequately prepared me to teach pupils with a range of special educational needs in mainstream schools							
My initial teacher training adequately prepared me to teach pupils with a range of special educational needs in my current school							
In my school I feel I have been well supported in teaching pupils in my class/subject area							
I am generally able to identify the learning needs of pupils in the class(es) I currently teach							
I am generally able to effectively teach all the pupils in my current class(es)							
I am generally able to effectively assess the progress of all pupils in my current class(es)							
I am generally able to ensure that pupils in my current class(es) can access all areas of the curriculum/all aspects of my subject							

18.   Do you think that any specific national policy or guidance document on SEN and inclusion has been particularly influential on your school's practice?

Yes/No/Not sure

Comments

19.	Do you think that any specific local policy or guidance document on SEN and inclusion has been particularly influential on your school's practice?

	Yes/No/Not sure

	Comments

20.	Do you think your school receives sufficient funding to provide an appropriate education for all pupils?

	Yes/No/Not sure

	Comments

21.	Have you accessed any of the government-produced Inclusion Development Programme (IDP) materials for SEN?

	Yes/No/Not sure

21a.	If you have accessed any of these materials, how useful did you find them?

	Very useful/Quite useful/Not very useful/Not at all useful

	Comments

22.	How has the Every Child Matters agenda affected your practice in relation to pupils with SEN?

Better inter-agency working	Closer working with parents	Faster access to external agencies	Increased emphasis on social and emotional development	More paperwork/ bureaucracy	It hasn't affected our practice

	Comments

23. **Which pupils or groups of pupils have you found it most difficult to include in your lessons (if any)?**

Pupils with:

Moderate (general) learning difficulty		Visual impairment	
Specific learning difficulty (e.g. dyslexia)		Physical disability	
Behavioural, emotional and social difficulties		Autism spectrum disorder	
Hearing impairment		Speech, language and communication needs	
Severe learning difficulty (inc. profound and multiple learning difficulty)		Other	

Comments

24. **Please give your views on the following:**

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
I experience a tension between policies for inclusion and policies for raising standards						
Since I started working in this school I have noticed an increase in the complexity of pupils' needs						
The guidance on SEN and inclusion provided by my local authority is clear for me to implement in practice						
The guidance on SEN and inclusion provided by national government is clear for me to implement in practice						
The guidance on SEN and inclusion provided by national government influences practice in my school						
The guidance on SEN and inclusion provided by my local authority influences practice in my school						
Government policies on SEN and inclusion have benefited pupils with SEN in my school						

cont'd

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
Our latest Ofsted inspection report appropriately recognised the progress of pupils with SEN in our school						
Ofsted inspectors recognise the complexity of needs of pupils in my school						

25. **In your view, which of these is most influential on school practice in relation to SEN and inclusion?**

   • national government policy and guidance
   • local authority policy and guidance
   • Ofsted requirements

   Comments

26. **Please give your views on the following:**

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My school employs a sufficient range of support staff to fully support the needs of all pupils						
My experience is that the support staff employed by my school are sufficiently trained to support the needs of all pupils						
My school employs and trains specialist support staff to work with particular groups of pupils						

27.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know	No TAs present in my lessons	Question does not apply to my current role
In most lessons that I teach where a teaching assistant is present I know and understand his/her role								
I have sufficient opportunities to receive feedback on pupils' learning from any teaching assistants who work in my classroom								
I require more training in order to work more effectively with additional adults in my classroom								

28.   Do you work with any other adults who provide regular support to pupils in your classroom?

Yes/No

Comments

29.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know	Question does not apply to current role
I think that pupils have more significant/complex behaviour difficulties than was the case five years ago							
I am unable to teach some pupils in my class because of their behaviour difficulties							
I have a good understanding of why some pupils exhibit behavioural difficulties in my classroom							
I have a sufficiently wide range of strategies to manage the behaviour of pupils with SEN							

cont'd

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know	Question does not apply to current role
I am well supported in my school to manage pupils' behavioural difficulties							
My school's policies are effective in supporting teachers to manage pupils' behavioural difficulties							

30. How aware are you of the following?

	Have not heard of this	Have heard the term but do not understand what it means	Understand the term but my school has not started to implement it	My school is in the process of implementing this	I consider this to be embedded in school practice
Assessment for learning					
Personalised learning					
Quality first inclusive teaching					
Waves of intervention					
Provision mapping					
Assessing Pupils' Progress (APP)					

31. What other resources do you find particularly helpful?

Comments

32. Do you think that colleagues in mainstream schools have experienced an increase in challenging behaviour over recent years?

Yes/No/Not sure

32a. If yes, what do you think is the main reason for this?

General deterioration of behaviour in society	
Parents taking less responsibility for their children	
Inclusion policies (school, local and/or national)	
Insufficient power to discipline pupils in school	
Insufficient training for teachers on behaviour management	
Constraints/demands of the curriculum	
Other (*please specify*)	

Comments

33. Do you think this has had an impact on your school, e.g. through more referrals or more pupils placed?

Yes/No/Not sure

34. Has your school been redesignated by the local authority since 1997?

Yes/No/Not sure

35. Are you directly involved in outreach work to mainstream schools?

Yes/No

36.   If yes, please give your views on the following:

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know	Does not apply to current role
I have had sufficient training for my outreach role							
Mainstream schools I deal with generally welcome my involvement							
Mainstream schools generally act on the recommendations I make							
My outreach role mainly involves direct working with pupils							
My outreach role mainly involves advising/training mainstream staff							
My outreach role involves a combination of working directly with pupils and advising/training mainstream staff							
Providing outreach to mainstream schools takes staff away from necessary duties in their own school							
Special schools do not receive sufficient funding to support outreach to mainstream schools							

37. Thinking about the special educational needs of pupils you currently work with, which of the following would be useful to you?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
More **time**						
More **knowledge** about SEN						
More **additional adult support**						
Greater access to **specialist teachers** who advise the teacher/school						
Greater access to **specialist teachers** who work directly with pupils						
Greater access to **educational psychologists**						
More senior **leadership team support and training**						
More **strategies**						
More **external agency support**						

38. What should the Government do to improve outcomes for pupils with SEN?

The Government should:	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
Establish more units within mainstream schools						
Place more pupils with SEN in special schools						
Provide more access to split placement arrangements (e.g. mainstream/special school, mainstream/PRU (short stay schools)						
Increase the amount of special school outreach support to mainstream schools						
Abandon the term 'SEN' and associated procedures						
Provide more SEN training for all teachers						
Train more SEN specialist teachers						
Provide more support/advisory service input						
Provide more educational psychology input						

The government should:	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
Provide more one-to-one support for pupils with SEN						
Resource some mainstream schools in each area in relation to a particular form of SEN						
Promote more early intervention (at a young age)						
Promote more early intervention (at first sign of problem/difficulty)						
Change the curriculum requirements at national level						
Change testing arrangements at national level						
Reduce bureaucracy related to SEN						
Revise the SEN Code of Practice						
Introduce a more supportive inspection framework						
Allow more small schools						
Reduce class sizes in mainstream schools						

39.   Which type of school are you working in:

Infant	
Junior	
Primary	
Middle	
Secondary	
Special	
Other	

Comments

Appendix B: Teachers in England

The following information is taken from School Workforce in England, 2010 (DfE, 2010)[7] and the General Teaching Council for England's *Annual Digest of Statistics 2009-10* (GTC, 2010).[8] Note that the GTC figures relate to registered teachers, so differ from the DfE statistics.

Full-time equivalent numbers of teachers and support staff in maintained schools, 2010 (thousands)

	Total teachers	Total support staff*	Total workforce
Nursery and primary	201.0	189.7	390.7
Secondary	209.4	126.0	335.4
Special	15.1	31.4	46.6
Total maintained	431.9	351.3	783.2

* includes teaching assistants, higher level teaching assistants, special needs and minority ethnic pupils support staff

Registered teachers in England 2010 by gender and age

	Female %	Male %
Nursery	97	3
Primary	88	12
Special	75	25
Secondary	62	38
Total	423,708 74.6%	144,109 25.4%

Age	
Below 35	34%
35-44	25%
45-54	23%
55+	18%

Location of in-service teachers by government office region (GOR)

GOR	'000s	%
North East	205	3.6
North West	379	6.6
Yorkshire and the Humber	453	7.9
East Midlands	459	8.0
West Midlands	635	11.0
Eastern	822	14.2
London	1362	23.6
South East	1179	20.4
South West	275	4.8

7 www.education.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000997
8 www.gtce.org.uk/documents/publicationpdfs/digest_of_statistics0910.pdf

Appendix C: Case study interview schedules

Headteacher – Mainstream

Theme: Provision

- From your perspective how would you describe the nature and efficacy of SEN provision within your school?
- If we went around the classrooms here, how would we typically see teaching assistants being used?
- What have you found to be the most effective use of teaching assistants?
- How is the quality of SEN provision monitored in your school?
- How do you think parents of pupils with SEN feel about the provision your school makes?
- In your experience what sorts of things have bothered the parents of pupils with SEN?
- As the headteacher what do you see your role as in relation to SEN provision in your school?

Theme: Pupil progress

- What do you use as evidence to say that your school is doing a good job for pupils with SEN?
- What do you use as indicators of individual progress by pupils with SEN?
- Do you think the Ofsted inspection process allows opportunities for you to demonstrate the progress made by pupils with SEN in your school?
- The previous government expressed concern about the underachievement of pupils with SEN. How would you suggest this issue should be addressed?

Theme: Experience of national policy and guidance

- How do you feel that government policy and guidance up until now has affected your school's practice in relation to pupils with SEN?
- What changes do you anticipate with a new government?
- If you were advising the Government, what do you think should happen in relation to policy on SEN?
- Looking at the school's development to date, what have been the positive effects of the national policy of inclusion that has been pursued?
- Looking at the school's development to date, what have been the negative effects of a national policy of inclusion that has been pursued?
- How have your roles and responsibilities changed in recent years as a result of government guidance and policy for SEN and inclusion?
- Are there any other policies or guidance, not specifically related to SEN and inclusion, that have impacted on your roles and responsibilities?
- How do you think your staff would respond to this question – are there any policies or guidance they would be likely to see as impacting on them?
- Do you experience any degree of tension between the standards raising agenda and the inclusion agenda?

Theme: Identification

- As you know, there is considerable variability between schools in the number of pupils they identify as having SEN. Given the commonly cited figure is around 20% of pupils having SEN, why do you think this is?
- According to the DCSF Achievement and Attainment Tables for 2009, your school had X% of pupils with SEN (total SA, SA+ and SSEN). Does this figure stay relatively stable year on year?

- Have you seen any change in the type of SEN reflected in this figure?
- How confident are you in the reliability of your identification procedures for SEN?

Theme: Local authority

- Are you broadly happy with how your LA organises funding for SEN?
- Can you tell me how this funding operates for SEN in this LA?
- Do you think your school receives sufficient funding to provide an appropriate education for pupils with SEN?
- What about LA support services – how are these organised?
- What's your view on the special school provision available within the LA?
- What are the most useful forms of support you receive from the LA?
- Are there any aspects of LA support you are less happy with?

Theme: Training

- Can you tell me a little about any training in relation to SEN and inclusion that has been undertaken in recent years?
- What are the main issues and barriers in relation to training?
- What do you think are some of the key characteristics of successful training?
- From your experience what have you found to be the best kind of training for your staff?
- Are there any SEN or inclusion-related areas where you feel your staff are in particular need of training?

Theme: Behaviour

- How effective do you feel your school's behaviour policy is in dealing with the pupils you currently have on roll?
- Are there any particular groups of pupils the policy doesn't work for?
- What do you consider to be the greatest challenge for the school in terms of behaviour?
- Are there any kinds of behaviour your staff find particularly difficult to deal with?
- If we were to ask your class teachers, what do you think would be their main concern with behaviour?
- What do you consider to be the main contributory factors behind the more problematic forms of behaviour you encounter?
- Do you think that the national policy of including more pupils with SEN in mainstream schools has had any effect on either the type or amount of problematic behaviour you encounter?
- Are there differences in how you apply the behaviour policy for pupils with SEN?

SENCO/Inclusion Manager – Mainstream

Theme: Identification

- Talk me through how a pupil would be identified as having SEN.
- How are class teachers involved in the identification process?
- From your perspective, what is the purpose of the child being identified as SEN?
- What is the purpose of the child being identified as SEN for the child and/or parent?
- As you know, there is considerable variability between schools in the number of pupils they identify as having SEN. Given the commonly cited figure is around 20% of pupils having SEN, why do you think this is?
- According to the DCSF Achievement and Attainment tables for 2009, your school had X% of pupils with SEN (total SA, SA+ and SSEN). Does this figure stay relatively stable year on year?
- Have you seen any change in the type of SEN reflected in this figure?
- How confident are you in the reliability of your identification procedures for SEN?

Theme: Provision

- What do you see your role as in relation to SEN provision in your school?
- How do you feel about the organisation and management of SEN provision in your school? Is it as you'd like it to be, or are there any areas for development?
- If we went into the classes, would the teacher know which children in the class were on the SEN register?
- If we were going into one of the classrooms, what sorts of things could we expect to see in place for pupils with SEN?
- If we went around the classrooms here, how would we typically see teaching assistants being used?
- What have you found to be the most effective use of teaching assistants?
- How much movement is there once a pupil is identified as having SEN? Do pupils come off the SEN register, or move back from School Action Plus to School Action?
- How is the quality of SEN provision monitored in your school?
- Within the school's overall budget are you broadly satisfied that sufficient funding is allocated to provide an appropriate education for pupils with SEN?
- How do you think parents of pupils with SEN feel about the provision your school makes?
- In your experience what sorts of things have bothered the parents of pupils with SEN?

Theme: Progress

- What do you use as evidence to say that your school is doing a good job for pupils with SEN?
- What do you use as indicators of individual progress by pupils with SEN?
- Do you think the Ofsted inspection process allows opportunities for you to demonstrate the progress made by pupils with SEN in your school?
- The previous government expressed concern about the underachievement of pupils with SEN. How would you suggest this issue should be addressed?

Theme: Experience of policy and guidance

- How do you feel that government policy and guidance up until now has affected your school's practice in relation to pupils with SEN?
- What changes do you anticipate with a new government?
- If you were advising the Government, what do you think should happen in relation to policy on SEN?

- Looking at the school's development to date, what have been the positive effects of the national policy of inclusion that has been pursued?
- Looking at the school's development to date, what have been the negative effects of a national policy of inclusion that has been pursued?
- How have your roles and responsibilities changed in recent years as a result of government guidance and policy for SEN and inclusion?
- Are there any other policies or guidance, not specifically related to SEN and inclusion, that have impacted on your roles and responsibilities?
- How do you think your staff would respond to this question – are there any policies or guidance they would be likely to see as impacting on them?
- Do you experience any degree of tension between the standards raising agenda and the inclusion agenda?

Theme: Local authority
- Can you explain how LA services are organised?
- What's your view on the special school provision available within the LA?
- What are the most useful forms of support you receive from the LA?
- Are there any aspects of LA support you are less happy with?

Theme: Training
- Can you tell me a little about any training in relation to SEN and inclusion that has been undertaken in recent years?
- What are the main issues and barriers in relation to training?
- What do you think are some of the key characteristics of successful training?
- From your experience what have you found to be the best kind of training for your staff?
- Are there any SEN or inclusion-related areas where you feel your staff are in particular need of training?

Theme: Behaviour
- How effective do you feel your school's behaviour policy is in dealing with the pupils you currently have on roll?
- Are there any particular groups of pupils the policy doesn't work for?
- What do you consider to be the greatest challenge for the school in terms of behaviour?
- Are there any kinds of behaviour your staff find particularly difficult to deal with?
- If we were to ask your class teachers, what do you think would be their main concern with behaviour?
- What do you consider to be the main contributory factors behind the more problematic forms of behaviour you encounter?
- Do you think that the national policy of including more pupils with SEN in mainstream schools has had any effect on either the type or amount of problematic behaviour you encounter?
- Are there differences in how you apply the behaviour policy for pupils with SEN?

Class Teacher – Mainstream

- Tell me a bit about pupils with SEN that you teach at the moment.

Theme: Identification

- How are pupils usually identified as having SEN?
- What involvement do you have in the identification process?
- What are the criteria by which the school makes the decision that a child has SEN?
- What do you see as the purpose of the child being identified as SEN?
- What is the purpose of identification as SEN for the child and their parent?

Theme: Provision

- What information do you typically already have on pupils with SEN before they come to you?
- Do you have to ask for information on the pupil or is it routinely given?
- How do you decide how to adapt the curriculum/lessons for the child?
- Where do you get your strategies and ideas from?
- How do you know if a particular strategy or approach is appropriate?
- Do your pupils with SEN have some sort of individual plan?
- (If yes) Who prepares it?
- If I was to come into your class, what sorts of things would I see going on that were additional or different for pupils with SEN?
- Is there anything additional or different that the pupils with SEN receive from anywhere else other than in your classroom?
- (If yes) What information do you receive on this?

Theme: Use of TAs

- Can you explain how TAs typically work with pupils with SEN?
- Do you have opportunities to liaise with any TAs who work in your classroom?
- What do you do that the TA can't do?
- What does the TA do that you can't do?
- If you didn't have the TA available, what differences would pupils with SEN experience?
- What impact would it have on you as the teacher if a TA was not available?
- There has been a lot of criticism of the practice of routinely allocating TAs to low-attaining pupils or pupils with SEN. Do you think this is a criticism that could be levelled at your school?

Theme: Progress

- What evidence do you look for that the pupils with SEN are making progress?
- When do you decide to change what you're doing or adjust a pupil's targets?
- How do you decide when a pupil needs to be moved from, say, School Action to School Action Plus or taken off the SEN register?
- Do you know of any pupil who has been moved from School Action Plus to School Action or from the SEN register completely? What about any pupil who no longer requires a statement of special educational needs?

Theme: Teaching pupils with SEN in a group setting

- In what ways have you had to adapt your general classroom teaching to include a wider range of pupils with SEN?
- Do you experience any degree of tension between the raising standards agenda and the inclusion agenda?

- (How much of a concern is this – a constant concern, an occasional niggling thought?)
- How do you achieve a balance between responsibilities for pupils with SEN and your responsibilities for the class as a whole?

Theme: Training

- What type of teacher training course did you follow?
- Tell me about the coverage of SEN on your initial teacher training course.
- How well do you think it prepared you in relation to teaching a range of pupils with SEN?
- How much support have you had in school in developing your knowledge, skills and understanding in relation to SEN?
- What training have you had in relation to SEN in recent years?
- Was that provided 'in-house', by an outside person coming in, or you attending an event elsewhere?
- What do you think are some of the key characteristics of good training in relation to SEN?
- Currently, do you think you need more training in SEN?
- (If yes) What would that be?

Theme: Behaviour

- Tell me about the behaviour you encounter in the class(es) you teach.
- Are there behaviours that cause you particular concern?
- (If yes) What's the nature of this concern?
- What do you think are some of the causes for some of the more problematic behaviour you encounter?
- Do you think you encounter any more challenging behaviour from pupils with SEN than from those without SEN?
- Does your school's behaviour policy work for pupils with SEN?

Headteacher – Special

Theme: Provision

- From your perspective how would you describe the nature and efficacy of provision within your school?
- If we went around the classrooms here, how would we typically see teaching assistants being used?
- What have you found to be the most effective use of teaching assistants?
- How is the quality of provision monitored in your school?
- How do you think parents feel about the provision your school makes?

Theme: Pupil progress

- What do you use as evidence to say that your school is doing a good job for your pupils?
- What do you use as indicators of individual progress?
- Do you think the Ofsted inspection process allows opportunities for you to demonstrate the progress made by pupils in your school?
- The previous government expressed concern about the underachievement of pupils with SEN. How would you suggest this issue should be addressed?

Theme: Experience of national policy and guidance

- How do you feel that government policy and guidance up until now has affected your school's practice in relation to pupils with SEN?
- What changes do you anticipate with a new government?
- If you were advising the Government, what do you think should happen in relation to policy on SEN?
- Looking at the school's development to date, what have been the positive effects of the national policy of inclusion that has been pursued?
- Looking at the school's development to date, what have been the negative effects of the national policy of inclusion that has been pursued?
- How have your roles and responsibilities changed in recent years as a result of government guidance and policy for SEN and inclusion?
- Are there any other policies or guidance, not specifically related to SEN and inclusion, that have impacted on your roles and responsibilities?
- How do you think your staff would respond to this question – are there any policies or guidance they would be likely to see as impacting on them?
- As a special school, do you experience any degree of tension between the raising standards agenda and the inclusion agenda?

Theme: Identification

- As you know, there is considerable variability between mainstream schools in the number of pupils they identify as having SEN. Given the commonly cited figure is around 20% of pupils having SEN, why do you think this is?
- How satisfied are you with the admissions procedure for your school?
- Have you seen any change in the type or level of need of your pupils in recent years?

Theme: Local authority

- Are you broadly happy with how your LA organises funding for SEN?
- Can you tell me how this funding operates for SEN in this LA?
- Do you think your school receives sufficient funding to provide an appropriate education for your pupils?
- What's your view on the special school provision available within the LA?

- What about LA support services – how are these organised?
- How satisfied are you with the amount and timing of LA support services?
- What are the most useful forms of support you receive from the LA?
- Are there any aspects of LA support you are less happy with?

Theme: Training

- Can you tell me a little about any training in relation to SEN and inclusion that has been undertaken in recent years?
- What are the main issues and barriers in relation to training?
- What do you think are some of the key characteristics of successful training?
- From your experience what have you found to be the best kind of training for your staff?
- Are there any SEN or inclusion-related areas where you feel your staff are in particular need of training?

Theme: Behaviour

- How effective do you feel your school's behaviour policy is in dealing with the pupils you currently have on roll?
- Are there any particular groups of pupils the policy doesn't work for?
- What do you consider to be the greatest challenge for the school in terms of behaviour?
- Are there any kinds of behaviour your staff find particularly difficult to deal with?
- If we were to ask your class teachers, what do you think would be their main concern with behaviour?
- What do you consider to be the main contributory factors behind the more problematic forms of behaviour you encounter?
- Do you think that national policy of including more pupils with SEN in mainstream schools has had any effect on either the type or amount of problematic behaviour you encounter?
- Are there differences in how you apply the behaviour policy for particular pupils?

SENCO/Inclusion Manager – Special

Theme: Identification

- Talk me through how the needs of a pupil are identified when they are placed at your school.
- From your perspective, what is the key purpose of the placement of the child in a special school.
- What is the purpose of the placement of the child in a special school for the child and/or parent?
- How are class teachers involved in the needs analysis process?
- As you know, there is considerable variability between schools in the number of pupils they identify as having SEN. Given the commonly cited figure is around 20% of pupils having SEN, why do you think this is?
- How satisfied are you with the admissions procedure for your school?
- Have you seen any change in the type or level of need of your pupils in recent years?

Theme: Provision

- How do you feel about the organisation and management of provision in your school? Is it as you'd like it to be, or are there any areas for development?
- If we went around the classrooms here, how would we typically see teaching assistants being used?
- What have you found to be the most effective use of teaching assistants?
- If we were going into one of the classrooms, what sorts of things could we expect to see in place for pupils with SEN?
- How do you think parents feel about the provision your school makes?
- In your experience what sorts of things have bothered the parents?
- How much movement is there between special school and mainstream?
- How is the quality of provision monitored in your school?

Theme: Pupil progress

- What do you use as evidence to say that your school is doing a good job for your pupils?
- What do you use as indicators of individual progress?
- Do you think the Ofsted inspection process allows opportunities for you to demonstrate the progress made by pupils in your school?
- The previous government expressed concern about the underachievement of pupils with SEN. How would you suggest this issue should be addressed?

Theme: Experience of national policy and guidance

- How do you feel that government policy and guidance up until now has affected your school's practice in relation to pupils with SEN?
- What changes do you anticipate with a new government?
- If you were advising the Government, what do you think should happen in relation to policy on SEN?
- Looking at the school's development to date, what have been the positive effects of the national policy of inclusion that has been pursued?
- Looking at the school's development to date, what have been the negative effects of the national policy of inclusion that has been pursued?
- How have your roles and responsibilities changed in recent years as a result of government guidance and policy for SEN and inclusion?
- Are there any other policies or guidance, not specifically related to SEN and inclusion, that have impacted on your roles and responsibilities?
- How do you think your staff would respond to this question – are there any policies or

guidance they would be likely to see as impacting on them?

- As a special school, do you experience any degree of tension between the standards raising agenda and the inclusion agenda?

Theme: Local authority

- Are you broadly happy with how your LA organises funding for SEN?
- Can you tell me how this funding operates for SEN in this LA?
- Do you think your school receives sufficient funding to provide an appropriate education for your pupils?
- What's your view on the special school provision available within the LA?
- What about LA support services – how are these organised?
- How satisfied are you with the amount and timing of LA support services?
- What are the most useful forms of support you receive from the LA?

Theme: Training

- Can you tell me a little about any training in relation to SEN and inclusion that has been undertaken in recent years?
- What are the main issues and barriers in relation to training?
- What do you think are some of the key characteristics of successful training?
- From your experience what have you found to be the best kind of training for your staff?
- Are there any SEN or inclusion-related areas where you feel your staff are in particular need of training?

Theme: Behaviour

- How effective do you feel your school's behaviour policy is in dealing with the pupils you currently have on roll?
- Are there any particular groups of pupils the policy doesn't work for?
- What do you consider to be the greatest challenge for the school in terms of behaviour?
- Are there any kinds of behaviour your staff find particularly difficult to deal with?
- If we were to ask your class teachers, what do you think would be their main concern with behaviour?
- What do you consider to be the main contributory factors behind the more problematic forms of behaviour you encounter?
- Do you think that the national policy of including more pupils with SEN in mainstream schools has had any effect on either the type or amount of problematic behaviour you encounter?
- Are there differences in how you apply the behaviour policy for particular pupils?

Class Teacher – Special

- Tell me a bit about pupils that you teach in your class at the moment.

Theme: Identification

- When a new pupil is placed in your school, how are their needs assessed?
- How involved are you in the process of identifying and assessing needs?
- What do you think parents see as the purpose of the placement of their child in a special school?

Theme: Provision

- What information do you typically have on pupils before they join your class?
- Do you have to ask for information or is it routinely given?
- How do you decide how to adapt the curriculum/lessons for the child?
- Where do you get your strategies and ideas from?
- How do you know if a particular strategy or approach is appropriate?
- Do your pupils have some sort of individual plan?
- (If yes) Who prepares it?

Theme: Use of TAs

- Can you explain how TAs typically work in your classroom?
- Do you have opportunities to liaise with any TAs who work in your classroom?
- What do you do that a TA can't do?
- What does the TA do that you can't do?
- If you didn't have a TA available, what difference would it make to your pupils?
- What impact would it have on you as a teacher if a TA was not available?

Theme: Pupil progress

- What do you look for as indicators of individual progress?
- Are there any particular assessment tools that you use to measure progress?
- When do you decide to change what you're doing or adjust a pupil's targets?
- Do you think the Ofsted inspection process allows opportunities for you to demonstrate the progress made by pupils in your school?

Theme: Training

- What type of teacher training course did you follow?
- Tell me about the coverage of SEN on your initial teacher training course.
- How well prepared did you feel in relation to teaching a range of pupils with SEN in mainstream schools?
- How well prepared did you feel in relation to teaching pupils in a special school?
- What training have you had in relation to SEN in recent years?
- Was that provided 'in-house', by an outside person coming in, or you attending an event elsewhere?
- What do you think are some of the key characteristics of good training in relation to SEN?
- Currently, do you think you need more training in SEN?
- (If yes) What would that be?
- Are you involved in any outreach work to mainstream schools?
- (If yes) What form does that take?

Theme: Behaviour

- Tell me about the behaviour you encounter in the class(es) you teach.
- Are there behaviours that cause you particular concern?
- (If yes) What's the nature of this concern?
- What do you think are some of the causes for some of the more problematic behaviour you encounter?
- Does your behaviour policy work for all the pupils in your school?
- Are there differences in how you apply the behaviour policy for particular pupils?
- Do you think that the national policy of including more pupils with SEN in mainstream schools has had any effect on either the type or amount of problematic behaviour you encounter in your setting?