

AN EXAMINATION OF THE EFFECTS OF THE SEAL PROGRAMME ON CHILDREN  
WITH SEBD IN A MAINSTREAM GREEK-CYPRIOT PRIMARY SCHOOL TO  
CHANGE THEIR BEHAVIOUR.

By

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A thesis submitted to

The University of Birmingham

For the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

The University of Birmingham

July 2010

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## **ABSTRACT**

Previous research has highlighted that Greek-Cypriot teachers need to be offered a solid programme to support their practices with regard to SEBD children, and to provide support to SEBD children in order to meet their educational needs. This study examines the effect of the SEAL programme on children with SEBD in a mainstream Greek-Cypriot primary school in terms of changing their behaviour.

Five teachers were interviewed in the researcher's attempt to identify the way that teachers understand the concept of SEBD, the kinds of SEBD behaviours observed, and the provision made available by the Ministry of Education and Culture of Cyprus (MOEC) and by the school under consideration to support the teachers' practices. A seminar was given to raise awareness of the concept and to provide information on the SEAL programme to the teachers. Finally, a series of observations took place, before during and after the implementation of the programme with SEBD children (Years 1, 2, 3) in order to address changes in their behaviour.

This study highlights different challenges that the teachers appear to come across while trying to educate SEBD children, and a number of areas that need to be improved within the Greek-Cypriot education system to improve practices with regard to SEBD children. Results also indicate the improvements in teaching practices and SEBD children's behaviour after the implementation of the SEAL programme. Further research into strategies that could be used by teachers, and changes in the education system, are called for.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Undertaking a study such as this involves many people and a great deal of their free time. I therefore take this opportunity to give my thanks to those most directly concerned.

I acknowledge with gratitude the support and encouragement given to me by my supervisors, Dr. John Visser and Dr. Jodi Tommerdahl, who challenged and guided me through every step of this study.

Others whose support I am grateful for include my university colleagues and friends who stood by me, encouraging me to gather strength and courage in order to complete this study. Formal thanks to all the participants who agreed to voluntarily participate in this study. Their co-operation is highly appreciated.

Last, but not least, my greatest appreciation goes to my dear parents and siblings. Without their guidance, love, inspiration and encouragement to be the best I could be, the completion of this study would have not been possible. For this I will be eternally grateful.

## **ABBREVIATIONS**

COP = Code of Practice

CPD = Continuing Professional Development

EBD = Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties

I.E.P. = Individual Educational Plan

MOEC = Ministry of Education and Culture

PSHE = Personal, Social and Health Education

SEAL = Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning

SEBD = Social Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties

SEBS = Social, Emotional and Behaviour Skills

SEN = Special Education Needs

SENCO = Special Needs Coordinator

## **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Orientation and definitions**

This thesis uses mixed research methods to examine the effects of the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) programme on children with Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (SEBD) in a mainstream Greek-Cypriot primary school, in terms of changes in their behaviour. An extensive appraisal of the current literature on the SEAL programme, and the different theories that construct it, are presented.

One of the things that make this study so fascinating is that it raises awareness around the concept of SEBD within the Greek-Cypriot education field, by introducing a programme (SEAL) that aims to support the teaching practices of mainstream Greek-Cypriot primary teachers, while supporting children with SEBD in terms of helping such children fulfil their educational needs.

Teachers' concerns about their children's behaviour have been an area of continuing research interest at the international level for the past fifty years, especially in Cyprus (Poulou, 2005). Numerous definitions of the concept of SEBD have been offered through the years, leaving practitioners exposed to a myriad of problems and strategies to choose from and to implement (Visser and Stokes, 2003; Cole and Daniels, 2002; Evans, Harden and Thomas, 2004).

According to the Special Needs Code of Practice (DfES, 2001) children with SEBD tend to

“... demonstrate features of emotional and behavioural difficulties who are withdrawn or isolated, disruptive or disrupting, hyperactive (with) lack of concentration; those with immature social skills; and those presenting challenging

behaviour arising from other complex special needs, may require help ...” (p.87, section 7:60)

Practices around children with SEBD vary, depending on the practitioners’ use of terminology and understanding of the concept.

SEAL is a programme which has been recently launched by the Primary National Strategy in England to enhance all children’s Social, Emotional and Behavioural skills (SEBS). The framework was developed as part of the Primary National Strategy and was first implemented as part of the National Primary and Attendance Pilot in 2003 (Hallam, Rhamie and Shaw, 2006a). At the time of writing, approximately 80% of primary schools across England currently implement it (Humphrey et al., 2008). At the same time, Local Authorities are continuing to build capacity in schools through local support strategies, and by offering training and development in terms of new enhanced curriculum matters (McCauley, 2008).

The SEAL framework is thought to promote and reinforce the development of effective SEBS (DfES, 2003b; Ofsted, 2007; Humphrey et al., 2008). SEBS involve making positive relationships with other people, understanding and managing oneself and one’s emotions, thoughts and behaviours, understanding, and responding to the emotions and behaviours of others, in ways that are in the best long-term interest of oneself and others (Faupel, 2003; DfES, 2003b; Zins et al., 2004). According to the DfES (2003b) and Ofsted (2007), there is a broad range of evidence available to support arguments for the effectiveness of developing children’s SEBS in a number of areas, including greater education and work success, improvements in behaviour, increased inclusion, improved learning, and greater social cohesion. This study will only aim to analyse how behaviour can be improved.



The different components that underpin the framework appear to be key elements that children with SEBD often present difficulties with. Therefore, it is the researcher's belief that the SEAL programme can be proposed as a means of supporting children with SEBD to improve in different areas with regard in which they present difficulties. This is an argument that will be explored in detail in Chapter 2 – Review of the Literature.

Behaviour problems can have different observable traits that may stem from various causes, such as abuse or neglect, physical or mental illness, sensory or physical impairment, or psychological trauma. They may sometimes arise from features of the school setting, a disability, or from the family background of the individual child (Maras, et al., 2006; Cooper, Smith and Upton, 1994; Fogell and Long, 1997; Miller, 2007). This is why it is important to be able to offer these children the chance to develop their SEBS in an attempt to help them improve in the different areas within which difficulties are evident.

In September 2007, Secondary SEAL was also launched to promote SEBS with the potential of enhancing the learning and personal development of all members of the school and in all aspects of school life (DfES, 2007). This study will only emphasise the delivery of Primary SEAL.

## 1.2 Rationale

The research reported in this thesis is a continuation of my professional development as a Special Educational Needs (SEN) teacher and, specifically, in the field of behaviour problems which have been a continuing interest for the last seven years. Throughout those years, my main concern has been how to fulfil the educational needs of children with behavioural problems, as this appears to be one of the major aspects that mainstream primary teachers in

Cyprus seem to be challenged by (Poulou, 2005; Angelides, 2000). Whilst completing my Master's degree (Koundourou, 2007), I identified some of the different challenges that mainstream primary teachers encounter when educating children with SEBD. This led me to consider ways in which the work done in educational research could be used to support these children's needs.

### 1.3 Children with SEBD in Cyprus

Generally speaking, looking at the concept of SEBD and how children can be supported adequately, was not an easy task, as the concept appears to be a complex one of the education system of Cyprus and has many aspects that could have been explored. These aspects could include the way children with SEBD are currently identified within the Greek-Cypriot educational field, what the main causes of children with SEBD, what strategies Greek-Cypriot teachers use to tackle children with SEBD, and many others. Also the vast majority of research that has been carried out in Cyprus has been concentrated on highlighting the need for radical reconstruction of the educational system, emphasising the different problems and the needs of the teachers. Nevertheless, researchers fail to provide something more solid and tangible in the form of support for those teachers.

With regard to provision for children with SEBD in Cyprus, the Ministry of Education and Culture (MOEC) appears to place these children in the category of children with disruptive behaviour. MOEC also emphasises that teachers are considered to be in a position to handle those behaviours that take place in the classroom. MOEC also emphasises that, for a child to be considered with SEBD, s/he has to have a learning difficulty as well. In that case, individuals are then provided with support offered by SEN teachers who are employed by MOEC. These teachers visit the school in question and provide individual support to these

children. Otherwise, these children are educated in the same way as the rest of their classmates (MOEC, 1996).

What has been the Greek-Cypriot teachers' concern, over the last few years, is the need to be provided with a programme and/or strategies to support those children, as the teachers appear to lack knowledge with regard to this aspect of schooling (Koundourou, 2007; Angelides, 2004; Vlachou, 1997). Therefore, the need for a specific study to focus on the above area was deemed to be essential.

#### 1.4 The SEAL programme within the English context

As already mentioned, the SEAL programme aims to develop all children in terms of improving their SEBS. As authors of the SEAL programme argue (DfES, 2003b), SEBS have five components as first identified by Goleman (1996). These include self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills. The authors of the programme argued that these five components are embedded into a wide range of school learning outcomes, based on a whole school approach. For teachers to be in a position to develop them successfully, they also need to employ different behavioural management approaches to be able to manage the behaviour observed by those children and, at the same time, to enhance the children's thinking/cognitive skills, in order for them to be able to understand the purpose of the different actions taken (DfES, 2003b).

Having said that, looking into research on the five components in terms of thinking/cognitive skills and behaviour management approaches for teachers in the classroom, it became clear that there are different issues to consider before implementing the programme. This is something that the authors of the SEAL programme failed to address in the SEAL guidance

booklet. Furthermore, while critically analysing the above, I was not able to find any research analysing or highlighting that all the theories that make up the SEAL programme together underpin the development of SEBS. Therefore, my attempt to analyse each one of the theories that the programme is based on, proved to be very challenging.

Despite such limitations, there is evidence to support the effective outcomes of this programme into different schools across England. Since Cyprus is an island which has been directly influenced by the English approach to education, it was my intention to attempt to implement the programme to support teachers' practices with regard to children with SEBD.

#### 1.5 Transferring the SEAL programme to mainstream Greek-Cypriot primary schools

Before attempting to implement the SEAL programme, different issues were also considered, such as the different stimuli that spark off cross-national attraction, different decisions that have to be taken in terms of cultural issues before implementing such a programme and, finally, the importance of entering the school and classrooms with the intention of implementing the programme without interfering with the teachers' work (Phillips and Ochs, 2004).

#### 1.6 Aims in the context of previous research

The background discussion demonstrates that it was my intention to undertake a study which:

- Presented the mainstream Greek-Cypriot primary education system and identified where children with SEBD were located, and what is in place for them within schools;
- Introduced and presented the SEAL programme, the kind of needs it supports, as well as the different skills and theories that construct it;

- Identified the link between the SEAL programme and children with SEBD;
- Identified key principles that need to be in place to support the educational needs of children with SEBD;
- Produced a brief definition of SEBD children that was used as part of this research in order to be able to identify the children concerned;
- Identified key issues with regard to transferring the SEAL programme from England to Cyprus;
- Bore in mind the features of the education system in Cyprus, and the direct influences that arise in terms of implementing part of the SEAL programme that was translated and solely adapted for the purpose of this study;
- Examined whether the SEAL programme can be effectively introduced within mainstream Greek-Cypriot primary education;
- Addressed the impact that the programme may have regarding teaching practices and improvement on children's behaviour.

To achieve the above aims, my intention was to consider, in more detail, the nature of the research project that might be undertaken. There are a number of studies related to the concept of behaviour and putting into place effective strategies for supporting children's needs. These use a mixed methods procedure. Researchers such as Jones and Smith (2004), Kelly et al. (2007), Burnard and Nesbitt (1995) and Nicolaidou, Sophocleous and Pthiana (1996) prefer a combination of methods in their research in order to be able to produce more reliable and accurate findings.

Bearing in mind the main aims of this study, a research investigation was marked out, in which my research questions, my philosophical position, the choice of sample and

establishing trustworthiness, were detailed, with the use of interviews and observations as my research tools. My study was divided into two phases. Phase A involved semi-structured interviews with mainstream Greek-Cypriot primary teachers who were already involved with children with SEBD. My aim was to evaluate the way participants' perceive and understand the concept of SEBD within their educational setting, to identify the kinds of SEBD behaviours that take place in the classroom and to address the support available from MOEC and the school in order to support these children.

Results on the above indicated that teachers fail to fully understand the concept of SEBD, something that influences the way they feel about teaching these children, the way they educate "normal children" about the concept of SEBD, as well as the way they identify SEBD behaviours. Also the fact that the support offered by MOEC and the school is limited, left teachers exposed to the myriad problems they face in their attempt to support these children, leaving them with the responsibility to come up with different strategies of support. A number of areas in which MOEC should aim to improve in the future are also highlighted.

For the second phase of this research, part of the SEAL programme was translated and adapted to be implemented in the school, solely for the purpose of this research. Lesson plans were developed for teachers to use with their children. Children with SEBD that took part in the programme were from Years 1, 2 and 3. Then, a series of observations were undertaken before, during and after the implementation of the SEAL programme, in order to address possible changes on the behaviour of children with SEBD. Before observing behaviours during the implementation of the programme, a seminar was given for teachers in order to enhance their awareness of the concept of SEBD and to be presented with the SEAL programme, where its main aims and objectives were outlined in detail. After the completion

of the observation phase, informal interviews were conducted with teachers to address comments and suggestions on the programme and the possible impact on the behaviour of children with SEBD. Finally, a year after the implementation, teachers were again interviewed to address whether or not they still use any of the teaching strategies that were used during the implementation of the SEAL programme and to comment on the behaviour of children with SEBD.

It is also important to mention that, even though the SEAL programme is based on a whole school approach, I chose to work only with some of the classes. This is because the time I had to carry out the research was limited.

Results obtained from the observations indicate that the implementation of the SEAL programme has helped teachers to improve on their teaching practices. Teachers were able to increase the attention given to the children with SEBD, to accept and listen to them and to promote and reward good behaviour. The issue of differentiation emerged, raising concerns about the way teachers are delivering their lessons. This was also a subject that was analysed in the course of the discussion. However, this is an issue that requires further research, something that I am planning to do in the future.

The implementation of the programme also had an impact on the behaviour of children with SEBD. Children with SEBD appeared to be more enthusiastic and their participation increased. They were able to solve their problems on their own, without their teacher's involvement. Also there is evidence that their self-esteem was improved and that they were able to understand the importance of making and maintaining friendships.

However, despite the above conclusions, the question arises as to whether these improvements were because the programme had influenced the practices of the teachers involved or whether they were influenced by the researcher's presence in the classroom and wanted the researcher to obtain positive research outcomes. This argument can be based on the assumption that, as soon as the programme was removed, teachers tended to use their old strategies, and some of the children with SEBD resumed behaving in the same way as they did prior to the implementation of the SEAL programme. This issue is analysed in more depth in the discussion chapter.

### 1.7 Brief outline of the structure of the thesis

The thesis is divided into six more chapters.

Chapter 2 – Review of the Literature. This provides an account and an assessment of the literature, in which the mainstream Greek-Cypriot primary education system, along with education offered for SEBD children, will be reported. Following this, the SEAL programme will be presented, followed by an in-depth description of the different skills, components and theories that construct it, and how they are related to the study. In addition, further emphasis will be placed on children with SEBD, and how to improve their behaviour.

Chapter 3 – Methodology. This gives further details of the methods used to carry out this study, placing emphasis on issues related to sampling issues, discussing and developing the tools for collecting data, establishing trustworthiness (validity and reliability) and considering different ethical issues.

Chapter 4 – Fieldwork. This provides a description of the fieldwork that was undertaken during the data collection process.



Chapter 5 – Presentation of data. This consists of gathering and presenting all the necessary and appropriate data.

Chapter 6 – Discussion. This consists of a detailed analysis and discussion of the information gathered from the participants. While considering the theories that are highlighted in the literature review, alongside further analysis, this enables the researcher to come up with a unique conclusion regarding the effectiveness of the programme within the particular context being considered, and will give the researcher the chance to make some further recommendations for the future.

## **CHAPTER 2 – REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE**

### **2.1 Introduction**

The methodology of the literature was formulated after wide reading was undertaken at the beginning of this research. It was essential to explore different aspects, concepts, terms, and theories related to this study in order to be able to formulate the background to this study. In the first stage of this research, the mainstream Greek-Cypriot primary education system was explored, where children with SEBD are located, how they are defined, and what provision is available for them. Access to further sources such as articles, journals and research reports was essential, in order to obtain an understanding of the research context and, at the same time, be able to identify different conclusions with regard to the research topic. Information was mainly gathered using an electronic approach, as nowadays researchers are able to access most documents that they need electronically. Information was also gathered from MOEC directly, to obtain information that was not available either on the internet or from the University library. Key words used were the structure of mainstream Greek-Cypriot primary education, legislation and policies of SEN in Cyprus, defining SEBD, Special Educational Needs (SEN) teachers, and teachers' attitudes. Nevertheless, access to data regarding SEN and SEBD in Cyprus was limited since the concept of SEN is relatively new, and researchers investigating these concepts are few in number. While analysing the research with regard to education and support offered to children with SEBD in Cyprus, it became clear that teachers are currently seeking additional support and advice. It was the view of the present researcher to introduce a programme for them that would support them as teachers. This programme was SEAL.

The SEAL programme was launched in England in 2003. Since it is a programme which schools have just started implementing, it makes it quite difficult to obtain different evaluations and assessments on the way it is implemented, and its impact. Different search mechanisms were used to examine the framework. First, the researcher got hold of a hard copy of the SEAL framework. This gave her the opportunity to become familiar with what the programme is about, its aims and objectives, its theoretical constructs, the way it has been delivered, and the materials offered. Secondly, it was necessary to get hold of different reports relating to the English context such as those of OfSTED and DfES in order to acquire the UK government's evaluation on its implementation. Thirdly, it was essential to get hold of different evaluations, assessments, and reports that have been undertaken within the individual schools in which the framework has already been launched. Once again, information was mainly gathered using an electronic approach. Key words used were background information on the SEAL programme, its implementation, materials, SEBS, the five components that make up the SEBS, and its theoretical constructs (cognitive/thinking skills and teachers' behaviour management skills). Access to people who were directly involved with launching the framework was also necessary.

To conclude this brief overview on the research mechanism used in this study, information was also gathered with regard to the concept of SEBD, and how the needs of children who exhibit such difficulties are met within their schools. This enabled the researcher to link the concept of SEBD with the SEAL programme.

## 2.2 Defining SEBD within the English context

There is a long history of debate and concern about who the children now said to have EBD and where they are most appropriately placed (Smith and Thomas, 1993a in Cole et al, 1998). Before the 1920's,

“children who displayed extreme or unmanageable behaviour were most likely to be classified by such medical terms as ‘idiot’, imbecile’ or ‘fatuous’ (Bridgeland 1971, p.46).

The assertion of these descriptions was that these children were physiologically defective and their maladaptive behaviour was a direct consequence of this (Cooper, 1999).

Prior to 1980's, there was the 1944 Education Act that officially recognised the term ‘maladjusted’. The term ‘maladjusted’ was defined by the Ministry of Education in 1953 as

“pupils who show evidence of emotional instability or psychological disturbance and require special education treatment in order to effect their personal, social or educational readjustment” (Cole et al, 1998, p.4).

Laslett (1983,p.6 in Cole et al, 1998, p.5) also commented that ‘maladjustment’ was ‘a kind of catch-all for children showing a wide range of behaviour and learning difficulties’.

Later on, in 1978 the Warnock Report was published. The central argument of the report is that children who have physical or other disabilities (including maladjustment children) should, where possible be educated in mainstream schools. According to the report, children with emotional and behavioural disorders present specific characteristics of maladjustment that are not always noticeable until the child has been at school for some time (Warnock, 1978).

The 1981 Education Act, implemented several of the Warnock Reports key principles, and since many features of the political and education climate appeared favourable to the needs of children with SENs and particularly children who, in opposition to the individual pathology implications of the term ‘maladjusted’, were now defined as having ‘emotional and behavioural difficulties’. This term, though it unstated that the difficulty was experienced within the individual child, it did not entail, as ‘maladjusted’ had, and that the fault lay within the child. A child’s EBDs could be the result of inappropriate environment as well as individual pathology in a normally acceptable environment. This remarked a growing acceptance of the idea that the environment was the key to EBDs and disaffection in general (Cooper, 1999).

Elton Report (DES, 1989) emphasised on whole-school preventative approaches to behaviour management and discipline to consider what actions can be taken in order to secure a methodical atmosphere and the need for all teachers to learn to apply basic classroom techniques in schools for effective teaching and learning to take place (Wheldall, 1992; Kounin, 1977 in Cole et al, 1998, p.19). These messages fed into Circular 8/94 (DfE, 1994a) *Pupil Behaviour and Discipline*, and have been carried forward in the current advice on the education of children with EBD (DfE 1994a). “Since its publication the Elton Report has proved highly influential in helping to shape the espoused policies of schools and teachers for dealing with problem behaviour. It has been instrumental in introducing important values and insights that had been known for many years by EBDs specialists to a wider audience of teachers. It has helped to bring behavioural methods into the classrooms of mainstream teachers throughout the century (Cooper, 1999).

In the next part of this sub-heading the most common British definitions used with regard to SEBD are explored. These are the definitions given by the 9/94 Circular, the SEN Code of Practice 2001, and the SEBD Guidance 2008.

The 9/94 Circular (DfE, 1994a, p.7) provides a particular view of the parameters of EBDs:

“... children with EBD are on a continuum. Their problems are cleared and greater than sporadic naughtiness or moodiness and yet not so great as to be classed as mental illness ... they range from social maladaptation to abnormal emotional stresses ... are persistent and constitute learning difficulties ... determining whether a child has EBD depends on frequency, persistence, severity or abnormality and cumulative effect of the behaviour in context compared to other children ... they may become apparent through withdrawn, passive, depressive, aggressive, or self-injurious tendencies ... generally behave unusually or in an extreme fashion to a variety of school, personal, emotional or physical circumstances”

DfE Circular 9/94 stated quite clearly that children with EBD (emotional, behavioural and development) have SEN. Legislation categorises them as having ‘learning difficulties’ as they face barriers which cause them to have significantly greater difficulty in learning, in comparison with their classmates. Unfortunately, this definition fails to state at which point on the continuum naughtiness changes from social, emotional and behaviour difficulties to mental illness.

According to Jones (2003), the term EBD first appeared in policy document in the early 1990s. Due to changes in British Special Education, twenty years ago, behaviour problems started to be defined in a completely different way. The term was revised by the DfES Code of Practice (2001), placing emphasis on social skills and, the term ‘social’ is added to the label. More precisely, in the SEN Code of Practice (2001, p.87, section 7:60) it is noted that:

“Children and young people who demonstrate features of emotional and behavioural difficulties who are withdrawn or isolated, disruptive or disrupting, hyperactive (with) lack of concentration; those with immature social skills; and those presenting challenging behaviour arising from other complex special needs, may require help ...”

Furthermore, in section 6.64 of the SEN Code of Practice (p.71), it is pointed out that despite any individualized behaviour management children are receiving, the children have BESD (behaviour, emotional and social difficulties) which interfere with their learning, while in section 7.53 (p.85) the focus moves to highlighting the fact that individual children may have needs which span two or more areas. Having said that, the term offered by this Code of Practice is confusing. Whilst in many sections there is reference to difficulties, as also supported by Visser (2003) and Pritchard (2004), there is a different description of the label and the term becomes Behaviour Emotional and Social Development which replaces ‘Difficulties’ (7.52, p:85), moving the definition away from ‘learning difficulties’ towards a more multi-agency approach.

The term, revised by the DfES (2004d), emphasises social skills and the term ‘social’ is added to the label, and the DfES uses the term ‘behavioural, emotional and social difficulties’ (BESD) and the Social Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties Association (SEBDA) uses social, emotional and behavioural difficulties (SEBD) (Cole, 2003). EBD and BESD/SEBD continue to be used interchangeably.

More recently, a BESD Guidance was published in 2008 to update and revise guidance on the education of children with BESD. It states the following with regard to revised guidance on the education of children and young people with BESD:

48. The Special Educational Needs (SEN) Code of Practice (2001) provides guidance on the SEN duties, guidance to which schools, local authorities and others working with them must have regard. The Code sets out four areas of SEN: Cognition and Learning; Behavioural, Emotional and Social Development; Communication and Interaction; and Sensory and/or Physical Needs.

49. The SEN Code of Practice, at paragraph 7:60 describes BESD as a learning difficulty where children and young people demonstrate features of emotional and behavioural difficulties such as: being withdrawn or isolated, disruptive and disturbing; being hyperactive and lacking concentration; having immature social skills; or presenting challenging behaviours arising from other complex special needs. Learning difficulties can arise for children and young people with BESD because their difficulties can affect their ability to cope with school routines and relationships.

(BESD 2008 Guidance, p.12)

The aim of this report is to pull together existing advice (9/94 Circular and the 2001 Code of Practice) on improving achievement, health, and emotional well-being for children whose behavioural, emotional and social difficulties are continual and, at the same time, they act as an obstruction to their learning. This report also advises schools on how to prevent discrimination against disabled children.

Defining SEBD is problematic in that there is a difference in opinion over what are deemed to be social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. Professional and personal values and attitudes, central and local government policy and practice, and parental pressure, can all influence the way the term is defined, and therefore the way in which children fall under any given definition at any time (Visser and Stokes, 2003; Cole and Daniels, 2002; Evans, Harden and Thomas, 2004; Visser, 2007).



Having the label SEBD can be of great significance for children, not just in the way they perceive themselves, but in the way others see and treat them. Cooper (1999) reports that even when children's overall abilities fall within normal levels, if underachieving in one or more areas of schoolwork it is assumed that children have SEBD. Frequent criticism of the poor quality of work can result in children acting-out or exhibiting challenging behaviour in the classroom (Cooper, 1999).

Children, who exhibit SEBD, are often withdrawn from social involvement, leading to social isolation in the learning environment. This may lead to truancy or school refusal. It is a difficult world to live in for many of the children, and many of the emotional problems they have may mean they are pre-occupied to the extent that it interferes with the learning process. The same emotional difficulties have a negative effect on concentration which, in turn, can influence both cognitive abilities and academic attainment (Jones and Jones, 1998). Even mild problems can impact on employment, education, relationships and daily life (Getzel and Gugerty, 1996).

The above definitions of the concept of SEBD in England appear to be in contrast with the definitions relating to children with SEBD in Cyprus. More specifically, within the Greek-Cypriot educational context, there does not appear to be legislation focusing explicitly on children with SEBD. Provision comes only under the 2001 Circular, and its reference to all children with SEN. However, there appears to be some serious gaps in the legislation, as when teachers attempt to read it, the information provided is too vague and is not clearly presented. Also, not many teachers seem to be aware of the legislation (Koundourou, 2006), and there are researchers who argue that the MOEC has failed to provide an explicit understanding of its implications (Hadjyiannakou, 2005; Angelides, 2005).

## 2.3 The mainstream Greek-Cypriot primary education and children with SEBD

### 2.3.1 An overview of the structure of the Greek-Cypriot mainstream primary education system

The Minister of Education and Culture of Cyprus, Mr Andreas Demetriou, at the 48<sup>th</sup> session of the International Conference on Education in Geneva 2008 stated that:

The overall aim of the education system in Cyprus is the development of free and democratic citizens... who contribute.... to the promotion of cooperation, mutual, understanding, respect and love among individuals and people for the prevalence of freedom, justice and peace.

Demetriou, A. Minister of Education and Culture, Cyprus  
UNESCO (2008, p.77)

The Greek-Cypriot education system is currently allied with the outcomes of the developments that were established in the Republic of Cyprus in 1960. Subsequently, for education to develop and respond to the diverse demands and challenges of the Cypriot society, it was essential to increase and work on the legal framework, the curriculum, the different structures, the staffing and, at the same time, to look at different practices. The Greek-Cypriot education system reflects the dynamic elements of its society despite the problems this society faces (Stavrides, 2000).

According to Stavrides (2000), the education system appears to be exposed to different influences - international challenges, policies and orientations set up by the government, and the different social values and demands that come from the Cypriot people. Therefore the need for systematic changes, adjustment and different measures is essential.

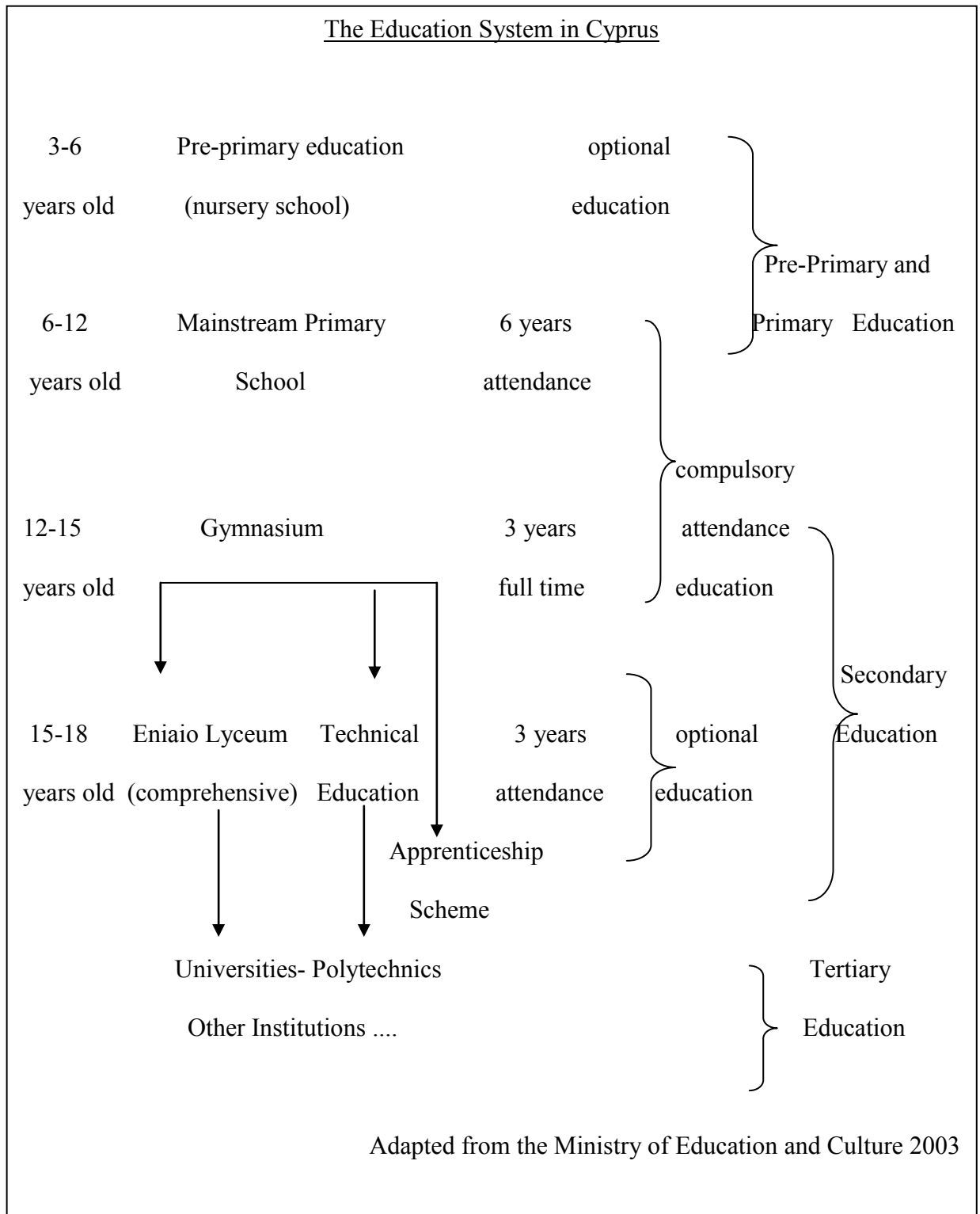


Figure 2.1 Outline of the different stages of the education system in Cyprus.

Pre-primary, primary, secondary and some sections of post-secondary education are, according to the Law 12/1965, under the authority of MOEC. MOEC is responsible for the enforcement of educational laws and the preparation of new Legislation (Pashiardis, 2001).

The vast majority of primary children with SEN attend the mainstream primary curriculum. Support when taking part in integrated lessons is provided by SEN teachers and educational psychologists, who have been employed by the government (MOEC 2003). Children with severe learning difficulties and 'high individualised needs' such as hearing and visual impairments, are located in special schools, where appropriate specialists can support them individually (UNESCO, 1995; MOEC, 2003; The European Global Education, 2005).

### 2.3.2 SEN in the Greek-Cypriot mainstream primary curriculum

Cyprus, as is the case in many other educational systems, has gone through changes over the last fifty years or so, and its development continues to take place. Over the last decade, through legislation, the Greek-Cypriot government has encouraged and supported the education of children who are considered to have SEN in mainstream schools (Angelides, 2004). Along with these are children with SEBD.

These changes have been due to numerous factors that have influenced the education system of the island, and which have gradually brought about improvements in the education system. A most influential factor was the fact that Cyprus had been a British Colony for several decades. As Phtiaka (1996) and Symeonidou (2000) point out, the colonization of the island brought changes to every aspect of the Cypriot society, including the education system. Even after Cypriot independence in 1960, this control remained, and continues up to the present day. Since Independence Day, and after the upheaval of the Turkish invasion in 1974,

improvements have been gradual regarding the education system. The right of every child to be educated alongside his/her peers was established by recent legislation (MOEC, 2001; 2003).

### 2.3.3 The Legislation for Special Education (N.47/1974)

The history of special education on the island began in 1929, and over the years, it passed through different stages; the gradual establishment of special education, the unified legislation and the special schools separation, the informal integration practices, and gradually the legislative enforcement of integration that enabled the concept to be shaped and adopted by Cypriots (Phtiaka, 2000). In 1979, the Cyprus Parliament voted in the 1979 Special Education Legislation, an important stage for the Greek-Cypriot education system. The significance of this legislation lies in the fact that it was an attempt to secure the rights of children with SEN. Through this law, four groups of children in need of special education were defined.

According to the legislation 47/1979, children considered to require special needs education were: a) slow learners, b) emotionally disturbed children, c) moderately and mentally handicapped children, d) physically handicapped children. However, this new legislation was not influenced by developments in England at this time. The Warnock Report, which came out the previous year (DES, 1978) suggested an alternative approach to the education of SEN children, namely the option of inclusion within the mainstream school. The philosophy of the Warnock Report was introduced into Cyprus a few years later.

#### 2.3.4 The Education of children with SEN Law (N. 186/2001)

Around this time, the procedures for merging Cyprus into the European Union become more intensive, and therefore a lot of financial and social adjustments were made to the Cypriot society, in order to meet European standards. For this reason, numerous adjustments were made regarding the education of children with SEN. These adjustments were aimed at pursuing the general philosophy followed by the European countries and the countries who were signatories of the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994).

Furthermore, the absence of governmental foundation in terms of integration practice led to the establishment of a new policy; *The Law for the Training and Education of Children with Special Needs 113(1)/1999*, aimed at adopting the policy of including children with SEN into the mainstream sector (MOEC 2003).

As the Cypriot Government's responsibility is to formulate all necessary adoptions to make policy more understandable, they passed two more laws; *The Law on the Regulations for Early Detection of Children with Special Needs 185(1)2001* and the *Law on Regulations for the Training and Education of Children with Special Needs 186(1)2001*. Both laws were implemented in 2001, aiming to regulate the detection of children with SEN and their assessment, as well as choosing schools that best meet their needs (mainstream/special) and the setting up of individual educational programmes (European Agency, 2005). This was to make sure that those children were being placed and educated as active members of the mainstream school community, where all their needs can be fulfilled and progress can be assessed (European Agency, 2005). It took two years to implement the law, as it was essential to re-arrange the education system in this sector, by employing teachers with knowledge and

experience in the field of Special Education, as well as arranging the materials and technical construction within schools (Hoplarou, 2005).

According to the 185 and 186/2001 Law, a child is considered to have SEN if there is a significant difficulty with the learning process, in comparison with the rest of the children in his/her class. In Cyprus, early detection of children with SEN takes place from the age of three. Anyone who suspects that a child might exhibit some form of Special Needs, is obliged to inform the District Special Education Committee (a multi-disciplinary team, made up of different specialists, such as speech and language therapists, educational psychologists, special educators, and others), which will then evaluate the child officially, and make suitable decisions on how support should be supplied. Services available to such children are free of charge, and they are provided between the ages of three and eighteen. However, exceptions can be made and education support can be extended to the age of twenty-one, if appropriate. (European Global Education, 2004; MOEC, 1996).

#### 2.3.5 The 2003 Code of Practice (COP) for children with SEN

In 2003, the MOEC set and published a COP for children with SEN to be facilitated by the local Special Education Committees, aiming to provide guidance on procedures followed in primary and secondary vocational education. The COP provides a description of appropriate procedures to be followed by people who are directly involved with the education of young children with educational and physical difficulties.

The aim of the 2003 COP was to introduce methods of diagnosis and assessment for children who exhibit difficulties during their stay at school, and not to replace the procedures suggested by the law regarding the assessment of children with SEN. The publication of the

code offered the opportunity to schools to take responsibility for providing essential support for children who require extra support, regardless of the improvements made to date in their education.

Children with SEN attending mainstream primary schools follow the normal curriculum which may be individually adjusted to suit the needs of each child, and the different programmes as set up by the Special Needs Coordinators (SENCO), in cooperation with the teachers of the child and his/her parents (MOEC, 1996). Individual Education Plans (I.E.P) for each of those children are developed by the education team, and they determine what instructional methodology will be implemented for the child. IEPs not only include curriculum subjects, but also developmental and social skills, self-help skills, vocational training, as well as numeracy and literacy skills, and everything that may assist the person in terms of his/her holistic development (MOEC, 1996).

Through an Information Pack on Special Needs (MOEC, 1996) which the government has published, there are some guidelines on the categories of children who receive SEN. It includes children with:

- ◆ Speech and language difficulties
- ◆ Immaturity
- ◆ Specific learning difficulties
- ◆ School failure
- ◆ Health problems
- ◆ Multilingual children
- ◆ Disruptive behaviour
- ◆ Visual or Hearing Impairments



The criteria with which children are considered to be characterised by disruptive behaviour cover two categories:

1. The emotional condition of the child; relationships with others (teachers and peers), reactions while working, playing, being sad/happy and relaxed, independence and self-confidence, private emotional affairs within the school and the home environment, reaction towards other children;

2. Social development; their general behaviour, their behaviour in front of other people and different social services (hospital, post-office, market, etc.), his/her manners.

Children who exhibit disruptive behaviour do not receive any additional SEN provision and their teachers are considered capable of dealing with those behaviours as these behaviours are considered easily handled (Arxondakis and Kuriakou, 1992). Provision will only be put into place when disruptive behaviour occurs as an outcome of a learning difficulty, and provision will include additional support offered by SEN teachers or an educational psychologist. In situations where a child demonstrates severe disruptive behaviour, the school informs an educational psychologist who offers support as a matter of priority and, if appropriate, the child is then sent to a special school (MOEC, 1996).

#### 2.3.6 SEN teachers and educational psychologists

Individual support for children with SEN within mainstream primary schools is offered by SEN teachers as individuals or in special units. SEN teachers run special units in mainstream primary schools, thus taking part in the child's education. The SEN teachers are encouraged to co-operate and interact with the classroom teacher of the child concerned, as this is deemed essential to develop and deliver an individualised education programme suitable for the needs

of the child. During the development of these programmes, the SEN teachers ensure that the child is fully involved in all school and class activities (MOEC, 1996). SEN teachers are considered part of the teaching staff in the school, in much the same way as other specialist teachers such as music, physical education or art teachers (MOEC, 1999).

There is widespread support for the view that SEN teachers are necessary for providing precise assessment and possible ways of dealing with the problems which arise (Phtiaka, 2005; MOEC, 1996; Koundourou, 2007). When Cyprus was compared to many industrialised western countries, it was evident that there was a lack of professionals such as SEN teachers, speech therapists, psychotherapists, etc. This lack of specialists is not hard to explain if the historical background of the country is taken into account, and the different stages the concept of Special Needs went through, the Turkish invasion in 1974 and the different and difficult social, political and economical conditions that followed (Phtiaka, 1996; 2005).

This information was also supported by the Head of Primary Education Mr. Gregory Hoplarou employed by MOEC in 2005, after research was carried out by a team hired by the MOEC, in their attempt to address the merits and limitations of the implementation of the law (Hoplarou, 2004).

Educational psychologists are also available within schools. According to MOEC (1996), they can be called to schools, only when necessary, to take part in staff meetings and initiate discussions referring to individual cases, offering support, guidance and assess individual children's level of difficulties.

### 2.3.7 Teachers attitudes and concerns regarding education of children with SEN and disruptive behaviour

Teachers' attitudes, openness and sensitivity play a significant role when it comes to the successful inclusion of children with SEN within the mainstream school setting (Padeliadou & Lamproboulou 1997; Vlachou, 1998; Almog et al., 1997). Teachers' negative attitudes concerning disability, bring about low expectations on the part of those children, and most of the time leads to an increased chance of limited learning opportunities and low academic performance (Carrington & Brownlee, 2001; Kaufman, 2005). This is something that the whole Greek-Cypriot and international research tradition has shown to be all too common (Phtiaka, 2005). Alternatively, when teachers believe in positive outcomes, the chances for successful integration of SEN children are higher (Padeliadou et al., 1997, Koundourou, 2007).

Knowledge and qualifications within the field of SEN is limited on the part of teachers (Hoplarou, 2004; Phtiaka, 2005; Hadjiyiannakou, 2005; Angelides, 2005). Teachers argue that they face difficulties dealing with these children, and find it hard to achieve set goals. This will adversely affect a child with SEN who is trying to integrate within the mainstream setting (Phileleftheros Newspaper, November 2005). Teachers, who appear to have limited knowledge of a policy and its procedures, can lead to a lack of consistency in policy implementation.

Teachers also reported that the more they spend resolving behaviour issues, the less time they spend differentiating the curriculum (Bennett, 2006; Poulou, 2005; Koundourou, 2007). This can have a negative impact on the rest of the children in the classroom, as they can become bored and consequently disruptive as a result. Able children might not be engaged in learning,

partly as a result of the teacher spending more time on children who experience behaviour problems, as well as failing to engage in their work because it has not been sufficiently differentiated (Bennett, 2006). Teachers may also experience disruptive behaviour as being particularly stressful in classroom situations, and this may result in significant discrepancies between observed behaviours and teacher's estimations of time spent on behavioural issues (Bennett, 2006). The above statements take to be threaten teachers' views of their competence within the classroom and their ability to achieve their teaching goals for themselves and their children's as well as to a low level of teacher self-efficacy in terms of classroom management (Poulou, 2005).

The government acknowledges these gaps, and arranges frequent and voluntary educational seminars given by different SEN educators and/or educational psychologists to provide teachers with all the necessary information to improve their knowledge when working with children with SEN (MOEC, 27/09/05 and 05/10/05).

#### 2.2.8 Brief summary

From what has been outlined so far, it is evident that there is a gap within the education setting when it comes to supporting children with disruptive behaviour within mainstream Greek-Cypriot primary schools. Teachers require more support since they lack of knowledge in this area. Teachers need to be offered strategies that will enable them to support these children's needs. It is also important that these strategies do not overload teachers' time, as teachers have complained that time constraints prevent them from differentiating their lesson plans.

It is the researcher's view that teachers should be offered a programme which would support teachers' teaching strategies with regard to those children and, at the same time, support these children in terms of fulfilling their educational needs.

## 2.4 The SEAL framework

### 2.4.1 Background information around the SEAL framework

The SEAL framework in primary schools provides an explicit, whole-structured curriculum framework designed to develop the SEBS of all children (DfES, 2003b). These skills can be developed through a series of steps within the school. First, by using the whole school approach to create a climate and conditions that promotes SEBS and, at the same time, allowing such skills to be practiced and consolidated. Second, by enabling direct and focused learning opportunities for the whole class, across the curriculum and outside formal lessons, and as part of small group work. Thirdly, by using different learning and teaching approaches that support the development of SEBS and, at the same time, consolidating those already learned. Finally it provides continuing professional development for the whole school staff (Ofsted, 2007; DfES, 2003b).

The framework was developed as part of the Primary National Strategy and was first implemented as part of the National Primary and Attendance Pilot in 2003 (Hallam, Rhamie and Shaw, 2006a). At the time of writing, around 80% of primary schools across England are implementing it (Humphrey et al., 2008).

Authors of the framework argue that it is thought to promote and reinforce the development of SEBS (DfES, 2003b; Ofsted, 2007; Humphrey et al., 2008). SEBS involve making positive relationships with other people, appreciating and managing oneself and one's emotions,

affecting the way individuals think and behave, and comprehending and responding to the emotions and behaviours of other people in ways that are in the best long-term interest of individuals and others (Faupel, 2003; DfES, 2003b; Zins et al., 2004). In line with the DfES (2003b) and Ofsted (2007), there is a broad range of evidence available to sustain arguments for the effectiveness of developing children's SEBS in a number of areas. These areas include greater education and work success, improvements in behaviour, increased inclusion, improved learning and greater social cohesion.

There are many possible categorisations for SEBS. The SEAL framework uses five broad components, first developed by Goleman (1996). These include self-awareness, managing feelings, empathy, motivation and social skills. Children benefit from the development of SEBS by being given regular opportunities to practice them at school (Faupel, 2003; DfES, 2003b; Zins et al., 2004). These five components have been 'unpacked' into a wide range of whole school learning outcomes, and to more specific ones which are appropriate for particular age groups and for particular learning opportunities, as provided by curriculum materials (DfES, 2003b). The authors of the SEAL framework argue that, to be able to develop children's SEBS, the five components noted above need to be developed through the use of different thinking skills (cognitive) on the part of children so that teachers are able to manage behaviour. Then children will be able to develop positive behaviour and attendance, become effective learners, enhance their emotional health and well-being and, at the same time, develop positive relationships (DfES, 2003b).

SEBS impact directly on how each individual perceives him/herself and how he/she behaves as an individual learner. Children's difficulties in learning, or any reluctance to learn, may be caused by de-motivation, fear of failure and the impact of managing feelings and behaviour,

rather than due to any lack of ability (DfES, 2006). Therefore, to be able to put everything in place, there are conditions that need to be addressed, such as training teachers on how to use the materials, and how to deliver SEBS.

The SEBS that the SEAL framework seeks to promote are essential for allowing children to achieve all five components of the Every Child Matters outcomes (be healthy, be safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution and achieve economic wellbeing) (DfES, 2005a; DfES, 2004a). SEBS underlie almost every aspect of children's lives, enabling them to become effective learners, to get on with other people and, at the same time, become more responsible citizens (Middleton, 2007). SEBS also help schools to create a safe and emotionally healthy school environment where children can learn effectively. At the same time, SEBS are an important component of PSHE (personal, social, health education) and help children to become responsible citizens (DfES, 2003b; Ofsted, 2003; Education Bradford, 2007).

This framework is designed to be used by schools that have identified the social and emotional aspects of learning as a key focus for their work with children. These will be schools which know that the key factors holding back learning in their setting include children's difficulties in understanding and managing their feelings, working co-operatively in groups, motivating themselves and demonstrating resilience in the face of setbacks (The National Strategies, 2009).

The SEAL framework, through the way it has been structured, can offer targeted support that can be embedded in the whole school provision (DfES, 2005a). To be able to understand the above statement, the DfES (2003b) offers the following graph, using the Primary National Strategy's 'waves of intervention' model to make it more explicit:

**Wave 1:** Quality first teaching of social, emotional and behavioural skills to all children. Effective whole-school or setting policies and frameworks for promoting emotional health and wellbeing.

**Wave 2:** Small-group intervention for children who need additional help in developing SEBS, and for their families.

**Wave 3:** Individual intervention.

Figure 2.2 *Primary National Strategy's 'wave of improvement' (DfES, 2003b, p.9)*

The SEAL framework is delivered in three 'waves of intervention'. At the end of the wave continuum (Wave 1), the delivery of SEAL centres on the whole school setting. It is designed to focus on creating an ethos and climate where emotional health and wellbeing can be promoted, and provides direct teaching for promoting SEBS across the curriculum (DfES, 2003b; 2005; Humphrey et al., 2008; Lendrum et al., 2009). The above statement relating to SEAL was evaluated as part of the Behaviour and Attendance Pilot (Hallam et al., 2006a). It was found that the programme:

“...had a major impact on children's well-being, confidence, social and communication skills, relationships, including bullying, playtime behaviour, pro-social behaviour and attitudes towards school”

(Hallam et al., 2006, p.1)



#### 2.4.2 Responsibility for implementing the framework

According to the DfES (2003b), the SEAL framework should be co-ordinated by the head-teacher of the school, along with the Personal Social Health Education (PSHE) and the Citizenship co-ordinator (the Citizenship co-ordinator enables children to become healthy, independent and responsible members of society by encouraging children to play a positive role in contributing to the life of the school and the wider community) (PSHE and Citizenship Policy, 2005), and it should be delivered mainly by the primary classroom teacher in a whole classroom setting.

First of all, senior management (responsible for the organisational management and with daily responsibilities for managing the school) needs to show commitment to the principles and be aware of the possible implications the framework might have on the school, teachers and children (DfES, 2003b; Pullinger, 2007). Secondly, the teachers involved need to be trained and provided with an understanding of the emotional factors associated with learning. They are encouraged to work through a multi-agency steering group, led by the senior management, which has been trained in the use of SEAL. Teachers need to be clear and consistent when implementing policies on behaviour, bullying, race equality and inclusion. Teachers should also reinforce positive relationships between themselves, actively involve their children in different procedures, and arouse children's interest and motives during discussion. Children should also be allowed to determine their own questions for inquiry and debate, and the teachers should use behaviour management techniques that encourage children to make a choice about their behaviour (DfES, 2003b; DfES, 2007, SEAL IT, 2008). This will enable children to take ownership of their own learning and behaviour (DfES, 2003b; DfES, 2007, SEAL IT, 2008).

Good organisation and structure within schools enables head-teachers and teachers to recognise the value of the programme as something that would improve the school's ethos and values (Pullinger, 2007; Hallam et al., 2006; Ofsted, 2007). After analysing different reports from different schools currently using the SEAL framework, it has been stated by many teachers that after receiving adequate training and being provided with examples of good practice from senior staff and coordinators, they were able to adapt their current methods to enhance children's SEBS (OFSTED, 2007; Education Bradford, 2007; 2008; Humphrey, 2008). Special workshops that teachers attended to enhance their knowledge of SEAL have had a beneficial impact on their well-being, helped them enhance their confidence and self-esteem, and provided them with different ideas for activities and assemblies - something that made them feel more capable in terms of supporting and implementing this framework (Education Bradford, 2007; 2008; Humphrey et al., 2008). To ensure that effective teaching takes place, teachers should be provided with time to familiarise themselves with the SEAL resources and to develop their skills (DfES, 2007c). This is to ensure that different approaches to learning are used effectively to ensure that SEAL learning opportunities are used productively and that learning is enhanced (DfES, 2007c).

There is also evidence to support the view that developing children's SEBS within a supportive and motivational environment that, is very beneficial (DfES, 2003b; DCSF, 2008; Pullinger, 2007). It enables children to improve on their behaviour and attendance, and it can have a positive impact in terms of achievement (Butler, 2008; Pullinger, 2007).

### 2.4.3 Materials and resources offered from the SEAL's resource bank

The materials offered from the SEAL's resource bank (DfES, 2003b) aim to help children develop skills such as understanding another's point of view, working in groups, sticking at things when they get difficult, resolving conflict and managing worries. They build on work already in place in many primary schools, which pays systematic attention to the social and emotional aspects of learning through the whole school ethos - initiatives such as circle time or buddy schemes, and the taught personal, social and health education (PSHE) and Citizenship curriculum (DfES, 2003b).

Resources and materials offered from the SEAL framework's resource bank (DfES, 2003b) are structured to support teachers developing children's SEBS. These activity sessions also supplement the rest of the children's experiences where SEBS are concerned. By implementing the framework for the whole classroom, all children have the chance to benefit from this framework, not just the ones who need support in developing their SEBS (Education Bradford, 2007; East Sussex Equalities Framework for Schools, 2008; DfES, 2006c). There is a built-in progression for each year group within the schools that currently undertake it, and it is organised into six themes which can be delivered throughout the school year (Table 2.1, p. 38).

A suite of materials has been produced to support the implementation of the primary SEAL programme. The materials are organised into seven themes: 1) New Beginnings, 2) Getting on and falling out, 3) Say no to bullying, 4) Going for goals!, 5) Good to be me, 6) Relationships and 7) Changes. Each theme contains materials for assemblies, a Red-booklet for the Foundation stage; a Blue-booklet for Year 1 and 2; a Yellow-booklet for Year 3 and 4; and a Green-booklet for Year 5 and 6 (DfES, 2003b) (Table 2.1, p.38).

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Key social and emotional aspects of learning addressed</b>
1. New Beginnings	Empathy, self-awareness, motivation, social skills
2. Getting on and falling out	Self-regulation, empathy and social skills
3. Say no to bullying	Empathy, self-awareness, social skills
4. Going for goals	Empathy and self-awareness
5. Good to be me	Self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy
6. Relationships	Self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy
7. Changes	Motivation, social skills, self-regulation

*Table 2.1 Themes of the SEAL programme and the structure of resources*

All materials incorporated in the programme include ideas for ongoing activities on particular themes, and sets of questions to promote reflection and enquiry. These questions are open-ended. Even if the teacher has a definite view about what he/she thinks the answer might be, he/she should encourage children to express their own views as well as to provide evidence and examples to support these views (DfES, 2003b).

Activities in the framework are structured in a way that suits all children's learning styles, such as auditory learners (learning style by which children learn through listening), visual learners (learning style by which children learn best when ideas, concepts, data and other information are presented to them visually through different images and techniques), kinaesthetic learners (learning takes place by children when carrying out an activity). These learning styles can have a great impact on teachers' expectations of their children, regarding

what they should know, their understanding of situations and their ability to speak and listen (Aubin, 2006; Education Bradford, 2007).

Through the various activities and ideas, children are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning through participating in groups of different sizes (DfES, 2003b), something that enables them to enhance their ability to solve problems together, and encourages children to open up and share ideas with other children, and engages children to think about their future, and how they can achieve goals (Education Bradford, 2007).

SEAL materials and activities enable teachers to relate activities to different incidents that have taken place within the school and engage children's understanding of what is going on around them (DfES, 2006c). For example, a child being bullied in front of his classmates, or a child's inappropriate behaviour towards a teacher. These can be used as examples of inappropriate behaviour where teachers have the chance to explain to their children why particular behaviours are inappropriate, and how it impacts on themselves, providing examples of good behaviour. In this way children become more alert to the different consequences that arise as a result of their actions (Education Bradford, 2007; 2008).

The SEAL programme is intended to supplement, not to replace, the work that many schools are already doing in terms of providing better support in enhancing and developing children's SEBS (DfES, 2003b; McNell et al., 2007). In fact, the framework builds on the work the schools are already doing, fitting in with each school's own unique character. This enables teachers and everyone involved to demonstrate the different skills and attitudes promoted by the framework, through the way they relate to children and through the teaching styles they use (Faupel, 2007). This can be achieved by introducing whole aspects of SEAL across the

school, both inside and outside the classroom with consistency across the school community in the approaches drawn from the principles of SEAL.

What has been presented so far is an overview of what the SEAL programme is about, and how it promotes and reinforces the development of SEBS in all children's, and how its design and materials are organised to promote these skills. What follows in the rest of this chapter will be a presentation followed by a critical analysis, aimed at unpacking the different theoretical constructs and components that make up the skills and the concepts that underpin the framework, and how these influence the ability of the schools to cope with children with SEBD.

#### 2.4.4 The Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning

The authors of the SEAL framework argue that this programme underpins skills (SEBS) that help individuals manage life and learning effectively (DfES, 2003b). They add that, in order to develop these skills, it is important to develop different components such as self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills. The analysis will begin by investigating what those components are, and what effects they could have on individuals after their development.

##### 2.4.4.1 Self-awareness

Self-awareness is the ability of individuals to recognise and understand their own emotions and their effect (emotional awareness), their strengths and weaknesses (accurate self-evaluation) as well as the ability to provide them with a strong sense of self-worth (self-confidence) (Goleman, 1996; Faupel, 2003).

Being self-aware involves individuals being emotionally self-aware, and having the ability to recognise their own emotions by discriminating between their various emotions. In other words, be in a position to name or label these emotions (Faupel, 2003; Duval and Silvia, 2002). But recognition is not enough. Individuals also need to be able to understand their emotions by appreciating the fact that emotions can affect what they think, say and do (Faupel, 2003; Duval and Silvia, 2002).

The capacity for self-awareness also requires accurate self-evaluation (Duval and Silvia, 2001). This requires individuals knowing their strengths and weaknesses, what is within their competence and what is beyond them. It is about realistic assessment of their skills and competences (Faupel, 2003). As Hunter-Carsch et al. (2006) add it is through the realization of an individuals' uniqueness that each individual can achieve self-awareness that can lead to a sense of purpose and awareness in their relationships with other people.

Besides a realistic evaluation of individual skills and competences, it is also important for the individual to value him/herself as a person, and be in a position to distinguish between the belief in his/her inherent values and what s/he really cares about, on the one hand, and competencies s/he possesses on the other (Faupel, 2003). Therefore it is important for the individual child to have a realistic and balanced view of his/her attainments in order to avoid disappointment.

The ability to judge the self is essential for identifying progress towards achieving goals (Carver and Scheier, 1998) and for targeting areas for improvement (Sedikides and Strube, 1997). However, this can be a source of problems (Duval and Silvia, 2002). Enabling individuals to recognise the possibility of failing, self-evaluation can interrupt task performance and make people defensive, as shown by numerous self-serving biases in social

perception and attribution (Duval and Silvia, 2002). Having said that, Silvia and Duval (2004) argue that when self-evaluation increases concerns with the self's performance, and thus interferes with divergent thinking, then ability to improve can minimise the detrimental effects of self-evaluation. Feeling able to improve buffers the individual against defensiveness (Carver and Scheier, 1998) and minimises the effects of failure and self-evaluation (Dunning, 1995). Therefore, for children to understand how they are supposed to behave, they first need to understand the world from a cognitive perspective (Gray, 2002; Silvia and Phillips, 2004; Weare, 2009) and at the same time, their teachers should be embracing positive behaviour management approaches towards achieving this goal (Gray, 2002).

From the above, it becomes evident that developing children's self-awareness can have a positive impact on the way they recognise and understand their emotions and their effect, their strengths and weaknesses, and can lead to a strong sense of self-worth. However, judging the self can sometimes reflect negatively when coming to terms with what and how something is done. As the authors of the SEAL framework (DfES, 2003b) argue, developing self-awareness can help children develop their SEBS. However, it is also important to bear in mind and the negative consequences, mentioned in the previous paragraph that might arise during children's attempt to judge themselves.

#### 2.4.4.2 Self-regulation/managing feelings

There is a consensus among self-regulation theorists that self-regulation involves a cognitive path that requires continuous adaptations and decisions, learning to be aware of how to gain a valid understanding of different situations, and reflecting on dispositions about how different activities that involve emotions should be done, how they are done, or have been done (Zimmerman, 1998; Sanz de Acedo Lizarraga et al., 2003). Central to self-regulatory



activities are the importance of self-awareness while completing a task, monitoring progress while performing it, as well as finding new strategies when the previous ones did not lead to successful task completion (Sanz de Acedo Lizarrage et al., 2003).

According to Zimmernam (1998, p.2) self-regulation theorists

“...view learning as an open-ended process that requires cyclical activity on the part of the learner that occurs in three major phases: forethought, performance and self-reflection”.

Firstly, the forethought phase guides both the mind and the performance with regard to any specific task that needs to be undertaken, and plans for future action (Zimmernam, 1998). Secondly, the performance phase involves the processes that take place during learning efforts and influences concentration and performance (Zimmernam, 1998). This phase is about controlling every aspect involved in the development of an activity, as well as factors that may affect specification and distribution of time and effort (Sanz de Acedo Lizarrage et al., 2003). It is about controlling the urge to act in the here and now (Faupel, 2003). Finally, the self-reflection phase involves processes that occur after learning efforts - the analysis of whatever has occurred, the results obtained, and the relationships that influence a learner's reaction to that experience (Zimmernam, 1998; Sanz de Acedo Lizarrage et al., 2003).

Teachers should try to use this cycle of learning within their classrooms to enhance their children's self-regulation. Children who are self-regulated view academic learning as something they do for themselves, rather than as something that is done to or for them. It enables them to take control of their learning (Zimmerman, 1998). Therefore, teachers should teach their children how to self-assess their tasks and control their thoughts, attitudes and behaviours (Sanz de Acedo Lizarrage et al., 2003).

The above cycle of learning also has and some limitations. Teaching children to manage their behaviour often entails sufficient time to teaching, modelling and practicing (Grossman, 2004; Sanz de Acedo Lizarrage et al., 2003). In some circumstances it may not be a feasible approach with children who are too young or are less trustworthy. When feasible, though, it is more desirable to empower students to manage their own behaviour than to require them to continue to rely on their teachers (Grossman, 2004).

Patton (1981) argues that the dominant criticisms of using this kind of technique to teach children how to manage their own emotions, is that it is used by teachers as a control tactic, rather than for teaching children how to become self-directed individuals. However, he also argues that there are teachers who choose to interpret and employ behaviour management approaches as control tactics, which then results in making children behaviourally stifled, docile, over-compliant and further doubting their abilities.

As Zimmerman (1998) argues, for an academic skill to be mastered, children are required to apply cognitive strategies behaviourally within their contextual setting. Referring back to the cycle, he proposed that, for a skill to be amended, there is a need to guide the mind and actions towards the action that needs to be learned, to use techniques that will prevent children from losing their concentration and their performance, and finally to reflect on techniques and thinking that has taken place and, depending on the outcome, make considerable steps for further improvement. However, as Sanz de Acedo Lizarrage et al. (2003) argue, this kind of teaching approach is not possible in the current educational system because the emphasis is still placed on curriculum context rather than developing the ability to think and behave socially, both in and out of the classroom.

In conclusion, in order to help children become more self-regulated, there is an urgent need to look into the behaviour under consideration, find out why particular individuals behave in this way, and use effective strategies to teach children how to control the feelings that emerge out of that behaviour. However, the majority of teachers avoid using cognitive paths to teach children how to learn and reflect on different actions that involve emotions. Instead, they focus on academic achievement. So how can self-regulation be developed effectively if teachers fail to use a combination of both thinking skills and behaviour management approaches? This is another issue that reflects arguments presented by the authors of the SEAL programme, who argue that self-regulation is an essential component in order to develop children's SEBS.

#### 2.4.4.3 Motivation

When referring to motivation, psychologists refer to the reasons why individuals are stimulated into action (Covington, 2000). Motivation can have a significant impact on children's academic achievements, and motivational problems can seriously harm learning and can be the cause of the development of serious behavioural problems (Givvin et al., 2001). There are many ways in which motivational problems manifest themselves. These include low levels of effort, lack of participation, unwillingness to take on challenging tasks, giving up quickly in the face of difficulty, and so on (Givvin et al., 2001).

Over the past fifty years, two different kinds of motivation have been of interest to psychologists - intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (Covington, 2000). Extrinsic motivation means doing something, as a result of which individuals anticipate some kind of tangible reward such as good grades, recognition, or gold stars. In other words, the value of an action lies, not in the behaviour, but in what they get as a result of that behaviour. Consequently, the

rewards turn out to be unrelated to the action (Fields and Boesser, 1998; Covington, 2000). The reward is external to the individual because it comes from someone else. Obviously, behaviour teaching strategies rely on extrinsic motivation (Fields et al., 1998; Givvin et al., 2001).

Alternatively, intrinsic motivation occurs when individuals are engaged in activities for their own sake. The value lies in the behaviour itself, and the reward resides in the actions themselves and on how an individual feels about it. The reward is internal to the individual (Fields et al., 1998). Therefore the repetition of an action does not depend as much on external inducement, as on the personal satisfaction derived from overcoming a personal challenge, learning something new, or even discovering new things of personal interest (Covington, 2000).

There is evidence that teachers tend to use extrinsic motivation in their teaching practices (Covington, 2000; Fields et al., 1998; Givvin et al., 2001). Schunk (1996) attested that children who were directed to work for the goals of mastery, exploration and appreciation, demonstrated better task involvement and used more effective learning strategies than children who were directed to focus on their performance alone. Hymes (1990) argued that perhaps the given reward acts as a motivational goal in terms of achievement, in order to achieve something bigger. In other words, in order for individuals to provide themselves with some basic comforts, they work in order to achieve this goal that will secure these comforts for them. However, because they are doing it to achieve something that is necessary for them, they do it mechanically.

On the other hand, Kohn (1993) and Grossman (1990) argue that for individuals who have come to appreciate the value of learning appropriate behaviours, and who recognise the

natural benefits of positive interactions and making good choices, rewarding behaviour can destroy intrinsic motivation. Rewards destroy the natural benefits of personal satisfaction. The theory behind this thinking is that self-disciplined children do not behave appropriately when only a reward is offered. They have come to appreciate the value of learning appropriate behaviours as a reward in itself. But teachers, in their attempt to reinforce the rest of the children to become more motivated with regard to an action, make intrinsically motivated children lose the meaning and value of the action.

As previously mentioned, teachers tend to promote extrinsic motivation within their practices. They tend to motivate children to behave well in order to get a reward for good behaviour. However, as already argued, children will behave well in order to get rewarded. But as soon as they receive the reward, they are more likely to repeat specific behaviours, as the reward tends to be unrelated to the action. On the other hand, where teachers reward good behaviour on the part of children who are responsible, and who understand the consequences of inappropriate behaviour, this may result in decreasing these children's intrinsic motivation, and then the action becomes meaningless. Therefore, if enhancing motivation helps children develop their SEBS, as the authors of the SEAL framework argue, then this can be problematic within teaching, as its enhancement can reduce good behaviour and turn the children to less meaningful actions on the one hand and, on the other, make them become temporal and meaningless to children, as their target is the final reward.

Covington and Teel (1996) argue that teachers are encouraged to try to enhance the classroom climate by reinforcing motives that will reward children's attempts to accurately strengthen themselves. Providing children with the opportunity to share their knowledge with others, and getting them to explain why they have achieved different learning goals, is important for them

as individuals. It is about offering children tangible rewards that will increase their desire for learning and for success on the individual level, by enhancing their thinking skills (Covington, 2000; Fields et al., 1998; Givvin et al., 2001). This can increase the possibility that children will become motivated to learn and be taught something that is going to have a positive impact on the classroom climate and the way they work with their teacher.

#### 2.4.4.4 Empathy

Empathy is the capacity to understand, feel, perceive and be sensitive to the messages that others are sending us regarding the way individuals think and feel (Faupel, 2003; Sanz de Acedo Lizarraga et al., 2003). Empathetic educators try to understand their children from their point of view, and they often can appreciate and sense how and why their children think and feel in particular ways. This is something that appears to be very important for teachers if they want to build positive relationships with the children (Field and Boesser, 1998). Teachers understand that, given the circumstances, and their children's developmental levels, their thoughts and feelings are both natural and normal. Empathetic teachers can communicate their understanding of what their children are experiencing, and their own appreciation of why they feel and think as they do. Respecting children and their viewpoints helps children respect their view points (DeVries and Zan 1994 in Field and Boesser, 1998). But teachers do not always agree that their children should act on their thoughts and feelings (Grossman, 2004; Weiss, 2006; Weare, 2004; Sanz de Acedo Lizarraga et al., 2003). When empathetic expressions occur in the classroom, children sense that the teacher actually understands what they are thinking and feeling. Consequently, the attitudinal quality of the relationship between teachers and children creates conditions for significant learning to take place (Weiss, 2006). The outcomes of empathy result in affective responses, cognitive understanding, and helping

behaviour (Hakansson and Montgomery, 2003) which is reflected in fuller and more meaningful relational experiences (Kerem, Fishman and Josselson, 2001).

Weare (2004) argues that there is evidence that children who are angry often have problems with empathy. They present difficulties when it comes to recognising that others have the same range and intensity of feelings that they themselves do. Also, shy and withdrawn children might also present difficulties with regard to empathy, as they avoid expressing themselves to people around them, assuming that others are totally confident and only they are frightened by social encounters (Morgan, 1983 in Weare, 2004).

It is reasonable to think that the same mechanisms that cause empathy to enhance pro-social behaviours ought also to inhibit aggression and the expression of anger. However, little research has directly addressed this issue, especially with young children (Feshbach, 1989; Strayer and Roberts, 2004). It might be possible to empathise with someone who is angry. However, in practice, such instances are probably occasional. On the one hand, anger and personal distress, once activated, disrupt and prevent empathetic responses (Eisenberg et al., 1992). On the other hand, more empathetic children should be less angry.

According to Coie and Dodge (1998) in terms of the cognitive-emotional processing model, empathetic children have less anger-laden memories to recall. Therefore, they are less likely to respond with anger when provoked or frustrated. Additionally, with their better understanding of others' feelings and points of view, more empathetic children ought to be better at solving social problems which results in reducing episodes of anger (in contrast to the social cognitive distortions and deficits evident in aggressive children, which are considered to lead to increased conflict) (Coie et al., 1998). As Strayer et al. (2004) and Eisenberg (2000) argue, perhaps anger and aggression both result from the same underlying

difficulty in modifying emotion and during social interaction, as the cognitive-emotional processing model suggests. Therefore information with regard to how self-regulation – and empathy – operate during episodes of conflict, remain to be elucidated (Strayer et al., 2004). Therefore, it can be argued that empathy might be completely unrelated to pro-social behaviour, anger or aggression (Radford, 2002).

From the above it emerges that understanding the relationship between empathy, anger and aggression can have practical and theoretical implications intended for understanding aggression in children (Strayer et al., 2004). Therefore, how can the authors of the SEAL programme argue that empathy can enhance children's SEBS if it fails to reduce anti-social behaviour, anger and aggression?

Weare (2004) argues that sometimes over-emphasizing empathy can lead to a denial of the teachers' own needs when they become more concerned for others, suggesting that empathy needs to be balanced with an appropriate degree of self-regard. Hoffman (2000) also argues that dealing with a distressing experience that children have endured in the past, can remind teachers of their own past experiences, thereby evoking feelings of distress in themselves. Therefore, if a teacher attempts to be more empathetic with his/her children, this process might awaken past negative experiences and feelings that might have a negative impact on the teacher and, instead of being empathetic, cause them to become sympathetic with particular children. Once again, how can teachers be expected to enhance empathy in order to develop children's SEBS, if their attempts to do so harm their own emotions and feelings?



#### 2.4.4.5 Social skills

Empathy is predominantly about understanding how others see the world by listening to all the messages given by individuals. But the second strand of empathy refers to the individual's ability to communicate with others who have indeed listened to them, and who come to appreciate that their understanding may be very different from that of others. The skills needed are primarily concerned with how individuals influence other people to help meet their own needs, but in ways that also enable others to meet their own needs. Influence can be used as a catch-all expression for the variety of possible strategies, tactics and behaviours that can be used to achieve this (Faupel, 2003).

There are different levels of social skills. Some of these include discreet skills such as using appropriate eye contact, facial expressions, tone and volume of speech, and body posture. Some are rather more general, like the use of humour, smiles, laughter and asking for help when needed. Others include ways of being in a relationship with others, like standing up for oneself, learning to share, waiting for one's turn, acknowledging one's mistakes and so on (Faupel, 2003; Grossman, 2004).

Grossman (2004) Lopes and Salovey (2004) and Jones (1999) argue that social skills training help children who do not relate to others to improve their behaviour. Once their behaviour has changed, their peers relate better to them and consequently they reinforce and maintain behavioural improvement to some extent (Walker et al., 1995). Social skills training can be an effective tool if students misbehave, because they do not know how to behave. However, students with conduct problems tend to know how to behave but they do not want to, or do not want to think they have to obey the rules of their school community (Grossman, 2004). Bullis, Walker and Sprague (2001) also argue that behaviour improvements that might occur

through social skills training may disappear once the consequences are discontinued. According to Crossman (2004), this argument leads theorists to suggest that this might be happening in some cases. What is effective in social skills training might not be the process of learning a new skill, but the rewards that children are going to obtain when they behave in the desired way. Another argument that was raised was that it is unclear how many children with behaviour problems fit the description of children who may benefit from social skills training (Crossman, 2004).

Focusing on the limitations of this process, researchers argue that it is evident that not all children can benefit from this kind of support. These include children with behaviour problems and poor conduct behaviour. Therefore, on what evidence do the authors of the SEAL framework base their assumption that developing children's social skills can enable them to enhance their SEBS?

#### 2.4.4.6 Summary on the five components of the SEAL programme

The previous five sections (2.4.4.1, 2.4.4.2, 2.4.4.3, 2.4.4.4, 2.4.4.5) were about analysing each one of the five components that the authors of the SEAL programme argue support childrens' SEBS. The reason behind this analysis was to examine the clarity of their statements and find evidence that supports their theory.

Firstly, children attempting to judge themselves in terms of who they are and what they do, can cause serious damage to their self-worth. Secondly, to teachers attempt to teach children how to manage their feelings, they might fail to understand why children are-behaving in the way they do, and as a result, teachers might fail to teach children how to reflect on those feelings. Instead, they focus on different methods that interpret inappropriate behaviours.

Thirdly, sometimes teachers offer rewards in their attempt to motivate children to behave well or participate in the lesson, etc. However, when these rewards are offered without explaining the importance of the outcomes, children follow instructions mechanically just to receive the rewards. Also, when rewards are offered all the time, they lose their value, and children feel less attracted to them and become less motivated. Fourthly, teachers attempting to become empathetic with their children, can re-open old memories from their past that could affect them, or even become sympathetic with their children. Also, being empathetic or teaching children to be empathetic, are not related with pro-social behaviour, anger or aggression. Finally, it is unclear whether children with behaviour problems can benefit from developing their social skills. Also with children with conduct problems, who know how to behave, but choose not to, developing their social skills is not a very effective process.

Thus, it is worth questioning the authors of the programme, as to how they can argue that the development of the five components can help children develop their SEBS, when there is evidence in the literature of limitations as shown earlier. The authors of the programme also argue that all children can benefit from the development of SEBS. However, how can they make this statement when there is evidence reported above, supporting the view that not all children can benefit by working their way through the components? Furthermore, to date, there appears to be no published evidence supporting the SEAL's assumptions that the five components together underpin the development of SEBS. Therefore, based on what evidence do the authors of the programme argue that SEAL incorporate with SEBS, by developing children's SEBS through the five components?

Despite such limitations in terms of the five components, it is evident that in almost all cases, for children to gain maximum benefit, their cognitive/thinking skills and teachers' behaviour

management approaches have to be engaged. This leads the researcher to the conclusion that teachers need to follow strategies that integrate children's thinking skills (cognitive development) in conjunction with their behaviour management approaches. This argument ties in with the authors of the SEAL programme and with many other authors who have studied the development of the five components in combination with cognitive/thinking skills and teachers behaviour management approaches, in order to allow teachers to enhance their children's SEBS. Therefore what follows is a critical analysis of the cognitive development and the behaviour management approaches that support practice.

#### 2.4.5 Background context to support the SEAL programme

##### 2.4.5.1 Cognitive skills

Cognition is a broad concept that relates to how individuals perceive and interpret events (Farrell, 2005). The cognitive perspective includes thinking, planning and solving everyday problems that occur, attributing apparent causes to events, helping to develop individuals' self-concepts, expectations and beliefs, and the formation and manifestation of various attitudes (Farrell, 2005; Ayer, Clarke and Murray, 2000; Frederickson and Cline, 2002). Cognitive development is based on the premise that thoughts and beliefs primarily influence behaviours and emotions; hence, a person's appraisal of an event or situation can determine their emotional and behavioural responses (Gates, 2002; Ayer et al., 2000). Helping individuals to change how they view or appraise events can positively impact upon any emotional problems (Beck 1976, in Gates, 2002). Achieving this should lead to changes in behaviour (Ayer et al., 2000).

Cognitive approaches place a particular emphasis on ‘internal’ phenomena, such as perception and memory, which develop from previous experiences and influence current behaviour (Farrell, 2005; Ayer et al., 2000). For instance, the way children think about various things influences the way they respond to their teachers and to various situations: their responses may be different towards the same teacher and the same situation, depending on their attitudes and assumptions. Therefore, it is necessary to take into careful consideration children’s thinking and reasoning.

The cognitive approach also refers to a conscious awareness or cognitive appraisal and to current thinking and reasoning: it may be argued that changes in cognition are the *result* of changes in feelings and behaviour, rather than the *cause* of such changes (Ayers et al., 2000). It is therefore important to be able to develop these aspects of the primary curriculum.

Cognitive development can also be referred to as developing children’s thinking skills (Faupel, 2003); the development of such thinking skills has become an important aspect of the National Curriculum in recent years. Effective communication lies in the ability to think, something that teachers may take for granted. Thinking skills support cognitive processing, which helps children to understand the world around them. It is important that teachers encourage children to develop their thinking skills from an early age, by engaging them in various classroom activities that probe and challenge their views, and stimulate the expression of their opinions. Children of all abilities need a generic set of skills that will enable them to adapt their thinking skills to different circumstances. With this, children are able to draw on their own perspectives of the world, reflect and develop their own ideas and communicate effectively (Beyer, 2009).

Beyer (2009) argues that all children should be encouraged to ask questions during lessons, so that they get the chance to uncover any creative thoughts, and also contribute to the thoughts of others. There may also be occasions when the teacher introduces open-ended questions and explains to the children that there are no right or wrong answers to such questions.

Pairing children is an effective way of getting children to work together and, in turn, develop their thinking skills: in doing this, children get to work in a combination of pairings and gain the maximum benefit from working in pairs (Beyer, 2009). Developing thinking skills in this way helps children to converse interactively, asking their peers questions such as ‘What do you think?’ (Beyer, 2009).

Fisher (1999) stated: “If thinking is making sense of experience, then being helped to think better should help children to learn more from what they see, say and do” (p.52). In order to prepare children for a better future, it is necessary that they acquire the appropriate skills, so that they may gain maximum control over their lives and learning: in order to achieve this, children must be encouraged by their teachers to think critically and to be creative and imaginative. It is therefore essential that they ‘learn how to think’ and to ‘think how to learn’ to achieve this, they must be shown and taught explicitly how to do so (Fisher, 1999).

Enabling children to enhance their thinking skills, aids them in capturing the meaning of their experiences: it provides them with the appropriate ‘tools’ for thinking; they learn to be conscious of their own thinking and the thinking of others (Fisher, 1999). Vygotsky (1978) argues that, by helping children to reach a conscious level in terms of their thinking and learning processes, and helping them become more reflective, teachers will then be in a position to help their children gain control over the organisation of their learning. With regards to this, effective learning is not about manipulating information, in order to integrate

it into an existing knowledge base. Rather, it involves paying attention to what has been integrated, providing an explicit understanding of the relationship between newly-learned information and what is already known, understanding the process which facilitated this, and being aware when something new is learned. This involves not only thinking, but also a meta-cognitive process: ‘thinking about thinking’ (Fisher, 1998).

McSherry (2001) asserts how, in working towards thinking and cognitive change, children are given time to reflect on their behaviour and all possible responses; they may also be able to re-interpret other people’s behaviour and responses.

Cognitive elements also enable the development of a ‘language for emotions’. Helping children develop a language of feelings may allow them to express their emotions in words more effectively and to communicate in a more direct fashion. Teachers will then be more aware of children’s emotions, and the children themselves will be able to converse with the teacher regarding their feelings and how they might be understood (Farrell, 2005). Furthermore, children will be able to discuss their feelings in relation to imaginary concepts, which are conveniently distanced from any real concerns they may have. This provides opportunities for children to move on, through sharing their own feelings and experiences.

The ‘thinking classroom’ is characterised by intellectually challenging teaching that places high cognitive demands on children. Such classrooms demonstrate some universal pedagogical features, such as focusing on thinking time; questioning; planning; discussing thinking; collaborative learning and making thinking skills explicit, in terms of curriculum content (Fisher, 1995).

McSherry (2001) argues that there is a need for cognitive change, so that negative cycles of behaviour may be broken. It is important to shift the focus from feeling personally affronted by such behaviour, to seeing it in the context of some need that affected children may have. In relation to the above, thinking and cognitive skills can change children's responses because the way teachers think about their children will have changed. This does not necessarily mean that inappropriate behaviour presented by all children will go away; rather, it may influence the teacher's responses which, in turn, may influence the cycle of transactions, which may then influence children's subsequent behaviour during lessons. Children may receive a negative or disciplinary response for interrupting their teacher and classmates during the lesson, and they may subsequently interpret this as the teacher disliking them and may respond in a negative manner. During lessons, children should be given extra time and support, so that they may reflect on the way they behave and the way they respond to their teacher and classmates: through this, it might be possible for them to re-interpret other people's responses.

Focusing on thinking skills in the classroom is highly important, both for teachers and for children. Providing an explicit focus on thinking and cognitive skills during a lesson can support the cognitive processing of the content of the lesson, which enables better learning to take place. Children benefit from this in many ways: they will be equipped to question and search for meaning in all they do, to deal systematically yet flexibly with problems and to communicate effectively, using the appropriate language of thinking and learning. Getting children to simply do tasks in the classroom is not enough to ensure that deep learning takes place (Fisher, 1999). Managing cognition is about mastering cognition (Zimmerman, 1998).

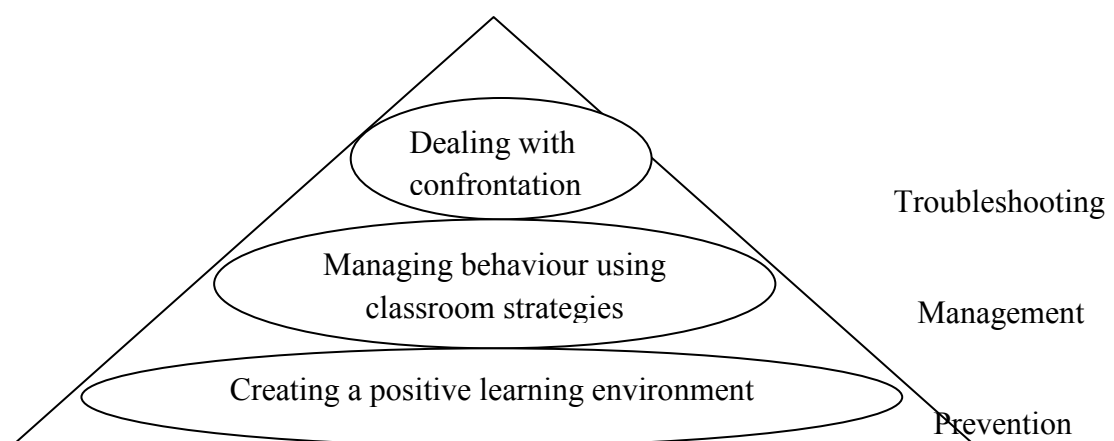


The authors of the SEAL programme (DfES, 2003b) argue that it is essential to include thinking/cognitive skills, if teachers are to support and enhance children's SEBS with the use of the five components. As already mentioned, for each one of the five components to be developed effectively, thinking/cognitive skills are required. Having established that thinking/cognitive skills are important, it is essential to move onto the next important element - how teachers can manage behaviours that take place in the classroom.

#### 2.4.5.2 Manage children's behaviour in the classroom

Behaviour is always a management issue (Fogell and Long, 1997). It is important for teachers to have the skills of good management of behaviours that take place in their classroom (Chazan, 1993; Visser, 2000). This will provide children with acceptable models of behaviour. At the same time, it will provide an academic structure to learning, maintaining a productive and industrious classroom management, as well as provide job satisfaction on the part of the teacher (Visser, 2000; Elliott, 2009).

In Figure 2.3 (below), Birkett's model (2005) illustrates the managing behaviours that occur within the classroom:



*Figure 2.3 Birkett's model of the position of behaviour management*

If the teacher's aim is to engage in learning, it is the teacher's responsibility to manage behaviours that take place in the classroom setting. In this case, the teacher takes a leadership role, which indicates that s/he is aware of the purpose of managing the behaviours that take place, and which enables progression in order to engage a sense of achievement. For this to take place, teachers need to develop good relationships with their children, something that will enable them to impact on the children's behaviours (Visser, 2000). Building these relationships through interaction on a one-to-one, group and whole class basis, provides the chance for teachers and children to work together effectively (Shelton and Brownhill, 2008).

For this to take place, a positive learning environment needs to be achieved between children and teachers (Birkett, 2005; Visser, 2000; Frost, 2009). This can include the teachers' wide range of knowledge with regard to the research topic, can ensure that all children's needs are met, can act upon evidence from teaching and learning to inform future teaching and have high expectations for children's achievements, differentiation of the curriculum, lesson content and organization with regard to how instructions and directions are given (Visser, 2000; Hull Learning Sercises, 2005).

The teacher is also expected to engage in interacting conversations with children, based on those factors which are very crucial for teachers to bear in mind, as Visser (2000) argues that learning is a behaviour.

School improvement strategies should be based on creating cultures which pursue what is best for all children. As Hopkins and Harris (1997, p.147) put it:

“When this occurs we not only begin to meet the real challenge of school improvement but we also create more effective classrooms and effective schools where all children are able to learn”.

Creating an appropriate curriculum, in conjunction with effective teaching, can enhance children's engagement and the encouragement of good behaviour (OfSTED, 2005). It is therefore important for teachers to create the right environment before attempting to manage strategies and to deal with confrontation.

As Birkett (2005) argues, the establishment of a positive learning environment at ground level (see Figure 2.3, p.53) can directly influence the way behaviours are managed, using different classroom strategies in order to support and direct childrens' learning (Visser, 2000).

The structure of the different classroom strategies supports the purpose of the lesson and its importance. The manner in which teachers manage the behaviour in their classroom gives messages to the children regarding their beliefs, values and attitudes. In particular, these messages convey the strength of belief in the importance of the task, their attitude towards individual children, the valuing of individual achievement, clear and concise rules and sanctions that operate in the classroom, reinforce desirable behaviours, praise good behaviour that takes place and work in order to ensure motivation and task appliance, and rewards good behaviour and complete work (Visser, 2000; Hull Learning Services, 2005; Fogell and Long, 1997).

As Grossman (2004) also argues, effective classroom management is based on good group management techniques that keep the group on task and functioning smoothly, without too many interruptions or disruptions, skills that keep individuals involved in productive work and techniques for solving problems.

These factors set the context in which children's behaviour takes place. The structure also models and provides parameters for the behaviour the teacher expects from the children

(Visser, 2000). Therefore, managing behaviours using different classroom strategies can help incidents of inappropriate behaviours to decrease, make the teachers' role within the classroom easier, and ensure that fewer challenges will take place within the classroom - the last stage of Birkett's model (Birkett, 2005; Fogell and Long, 1997). Therefore a well managed classroom provides children with a sense of security of purpose which enables them to make progress (Visser, 2000).

Following the above thinking for managing behaviours, it will be considered effective when there is a consistency of approach from all the teachers. It also depends on each individual teacher's level of confidence with the group of children that s/he is working with (Grossman, 2004).

The establishment of a positive learning environment at ground level will directly influence the next level (managing behaviour using classroom strategies) (see Figure 2.3, p. 59), as such an environment reduces the incidence of disruptive behaviour. Thus, fewer challenges will take place in the classroom at subsequent levels, and the role of the teacher will be made easier. This reduces the possibility of bad behaviour recurring, and the consequent need to deal with it (Birkett, 2005). Dealing with confrontation therefore requires the creation of a positive learning environment and the setting up of behaviour management strategies within the classroom.

The authors of the SEAL programme (DfES, 2003b) argue that being able to manage behaviours that take place in the classroom is very important, if teachers are to help children enhance their SEBS along with developing the five components. As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, all five components require effective behaviour management, along with cognitive/thinking skills, in order to be applied effectively.

#### 2.4.5.3 Importance of combining cognitive/thinking skills and behaviours in the classroom

Having established that developing children's cognitive/thinking skills and the importance for teachers in terms of managing behaviours that take place are important for developing children's SEBS, it is essential to outline how both aspects can be used effectively within the classroom setting. If teachers fail to use both of the above elements, there is no guarantee that children will respond effectively (Frederickson and Cline, 2002). Therefore, it is important that both elements are only used in combination in order to increase the likelihood of undesirable behaviours recurring (Frederickson and Cline, 2002).

McGuiness (1999) pointed out how:

“...raising standards requires attention to be directed not only to what is learned, but also to how children learn and how teachers intervene to achieve this” (p.1).

The teaching of thinking and reasoning plays a significant role with regard to raising standards, even in the most basic skills of the curriculum: there is growing evidence that the concept of teaching thinking could become a reality (Fisher, 1999; McGuiness, 1999).

When punishing methods are solely used within the classroom, it is unlikely that problem behaviours will be reduced (Skiba and Peterson, 2000). Furthermore, using interventions that place an emphasis on rules and punishment only serves to exacerbate violent behaviour in children (Jones and Jones, 2001). Thus, it is important that teachers develop and apply better strategies to manage behaviours within the classroom, especially with regards to those children who exhibit violent and aggressive behaviours. Such strategies require careful planning and preparation on the part of all teachers and other members of staff; a positive

classroom climate and rapport with the children needs to be established, as does behavioural expectations (these can be put forward through cognitive development), the consistent implementation of reinforcement, and the consequences of compliance and non-compliance (Myles and Simpson, 1994).

In order for the teaching of cognitive/thinking to be successful, it is essential that teachers consider what will motivate and strengthen their children's thinking skills. Children should not only be taught the skills of thinking, but should also be encouraged to question their disposition and attitudes to the concept of enquiry, in addition to being encouraged to believe that their thinking is possible, permitted and productive (Fisher, 1999).

#### 2.4.5.4 Failure to combine within the school

According to the literature (Wahl, 2002; McGuiness, 1999; Fisher, 1999; Burten, Barlett and Anderson de Cuevas, 2009), it is evident that the majority of teachers fail to combine both cognitive/thinking and behaviour management skills. Instead, they tend to concentrate on how to manage and reduce undesirable behaviour, with their main concern being how to raise standards and the achievements of the school. Ryan, Connell and Deci (1985) argued that when pressure is placed on teachers to take responsibility for standards of attainment, they tend to become more controlling. Consequently, the development of learner autonomy is decreased, and can have potentially negative effects on childrens' behaviour. Consequently, schools need to cherish a sense of rights and responsibilities in children (Osler, 2000) so that they internalize the needs for responsible behaviour and value it for the benefits which accrue to themselves as well as to others (Hallam, 2007).

McGuinness (1999) argues that teachers in England are frequently good at identifying problems and deficits in the thinking of their children. However, they tend to show less understanding of the cognitive interventions needed to develop specific aspects of childrens' thinking. Consequently, it can be argued that the majority of teachers lack the systematic 'thinking framework' needed to structure cognitive coaching within the classroom (Fisher, 1999).

Most teachers' attempts to teach thinking to their children are based on the analysis of their children's way of thinking. Regardless of the differences observed in terms of the terminology used, teachers seek to develop their children's thinking to a qualitatively higher level, moving from a literal to a conceptual level (Fisher, 1999; Adey and Shayer, 1994). As Fisher (1999) states, academic standards will increase when children's attention is directed to the content or activity of their learning, how they learn and how they are able to reflect on this, translating their learning into words.

If the above statements are assert, then how did the authors of the SEAL programme introduceit into the educational domain, when they argue that the framework is based on a combination of thinking/cognitive skills and teachers' behaviour management skills?

Jennett, Haris and Mesibov (2003) highlighted a very important point about teachers who use different techniques and approaches. They claimed that teachers might be trained to use different techniques and/or approaches to support their children. However, they use them without an understanding of, or commitment to, the underlying philosophy. Even though the techniques used might seem helpful to them, the philosophical commitment allows teachers to engage in a greater understanding, and a wider, more flexible application of the approaches used. Consistent with this idea, Cherniss and Krantz (1983) proposed that identifying with a

formal ideology provides individuals with ‘moral support’ for the different decisions they are required to make which, in turn, diminishes self doubt and enhances feelings of competence. Therefore, it is important when the teachers are presented with the aims and objectives of the SEAL programme, that it is explained to them why and how they might achieve these aims and objectives. In this way, teachers will be aware of how to use the five components effectively and, at the same time, be aware of the need not to cross the line with their development, as this might about bring other outcomes with regard to children (outcomes which have already been mentioned). Also teachers need to have explained the importance of using cognitive/thinking skills, and have the appropriate skills needed to manage the behaviours that take place in the classroom, instead of focusing on academic attainment only.

#### 2.4.6 Promoting Thinking/Cognitive Skills and Behaviour Management Approaches in the School Setting

Despite the previous argument with regard to teacher failure in combining both cognitive/thinking skills and behaviour management approaches, the authors of the SEAL programme argue that SEBS underpins the five components needed in conjunction with the integration of thinking skills (cognitive skills) and behaviour management approaches; these help promote effective learning, positive behaviour and improved attendance, emotional health and wellbeing, and positive relationships (DfES, 2003b; Humphrey et al., 2008). For the purpose of this research, particular attention will be paid to positive behaviour only, as this is the main subject of investigation in this research.



#### 2.4.6.1 Positive Behaviour

##### *Improvements in Behaviour*

It is crucial, when trying to identify the different causes underlying observed behaviours, to seek answers within the social and emotional world of the child. This will enable teachers to respond to that child's needs more effectively. Teachers should try to understand and prevent undesirable behaviour and enhance children's SEBS. This will enable children to make informed choices about their behaviour by enhancing their self-awareness, their self-understanding and the development of empathy. These abilities will allow children to predict the impact of their behaviour on themselves and on others, and to manage their feelings more effectively (DCSF, 2009).

A consistent and positive response to behaviour can have a big impact on creating an environment where social and emotional skills can flourish. Behavioural approaches can be encouraged through SEBS in conjunction with the SEAL's aim of teaching children the skills required to behave well, to participate in setting different rules, and the consequences, based on their rights and responsibilities, of making the right choices regarding their behaviour, and to help manage their emotions whilst, at the same time, encouraging them to reflect on the possible consequences of particular behaviour (Deborah, 2009; Hallam et al., 2006).

According to reviews by Pullinger (2007), and Hallam et al. (2006), based on evaluating the SEAL programme's effectiveness, SEBS enable learners to make informed choices about their behaviour by allowing them to manage their feelings effectively, enhance their self-awareness, become more empathetic, and use different calming-down strategies effectively. Thus, it is important to review and develop behaviour policy with all members of the school

community, so that SEBS are encouraged and become part of the SEAL programme (Deborah, 2009).

It is crucial, when trying to identify the causes of different behaviours, to look for answers within the social and emotional development of the child. Emotional competence plays a significant role in terms of the child's ability to interact and form relationships with the people that surround them (Saarni, 1999). As Saarni (1999) argues, children respond emotionally, and apply their knowledge strategically, regarding their emotions and relationships. This allows them to regulate their emotional experiences and negotiate interpersonal competence contributions, especially in the early stages. On the other hand, social competence is defined as effectiveness in interaction, the outcomes of organising behaviours that contribute to developmental needs (Rose and Krasnor, 1997). It has also been argued that social competence includes specific social, emotional and cognitive abilities, behaviours and motivations that are considered to be primarily individual (Krasnor, 1997). It is therefore crucial and, at the same time, important, to establish the different ways that emotional and social competences are related.

The impact of developing social and emotional competences is crucial. It enables children to enhance and develop their well-being, their school readiness, their positive interactions with teachers, their emotional knowledge, their emotional regulatory abilities and their social skills (Carlton, 2000; Shields et al., 2001).

However, in order to enable children to gain the most from their social competence, it is important to obtain a clear understanding of how emotional competence works. First, children's emotional expressiveness is central to their emotional competence. Positive effects plays a significant role in regulating social exchanges, while sharing positive affect enables

them to make friendships (Denham et al. 1990). Children, who experience positive emotions, engage better in friendships and are more assertive (Einsebeg et al., 1996).

Emotional knowledge is the second component that contributes to the development of emotional competence. Children's understanding of emotions, enables them to be more pro-socially responsive to their classmates, and puts them in a position to identify their classmates' facial expressions (Denham et al., 1990; Denham et al., 2003).

Emotional regulation is the third component which consists of extrinsic and intrinsic processes, and is responsible for monitoring, evaluating and, at the same time, modifying emotional reactions in order to accomplish goals (Thompson, 1994).

Emotional competence includes the awareness and expression of affect, emotional identification, situational knowledge and emotional regulation (Denham, 1998; Saarni, 1999) and serves the development of cognitive skills such as paying attention, inhibitory control and problem solving (Blair, 2002).

In school, most children who have been identified as antisocial are characteristically aggressive, with violent tendencies (Rutherford and Nelson 1995, cited in Zions et al., 2002). A child with antisocial behaviour might show disrespect for classroom and school rules and policies by challenging adults, bullying their peers, and engaging in verbal and physical aggression towards others (Zions et al., 2002). Regarding the SEAL programme, the ideas for enhancing the SEBS of children using methods such as discussions, circle time, etc. fail to provide guidance and support on how to handle and support aggressive behaviours. Also, the rules and discipline suggested for children, in line with the SEAL programme, may not be suitable for such children. Thus, perhaps there is a cut-off point for the SEAL programme,

with regards to supporting those children with behaviour problems: these require interventions that will aim to break the pattern of antisocial behaviour (Walker 1993) and affected children may benefit from social and academic skill instruction and having a peer and teacher mentor. These have been found as key elements in providing comprehensive services to children with antisocial behaviours (Walker, 1993). Key favoured coping strategies include praise and trying to understand difficult behaviour, while talking to peers (Axup and Gersch, 2008). However, if a child is used to experiencing mainly negative reactions, he or she may feel uncomfortable with an 'overdose' of positives, and react in a way that will restore the internal balance (Barrow, Bradshaw and Newton, 2001).

#### 2.4.7 The SEAL programme and children with SEBD

At this stage, it will be argued how the SEAL programme can supports and enhances teaching practices with children with SEBD, in accordance with the five components (OfSTED, 2007; SEAL IT, 2008; Education Bradford, 2008; DfES, 2007b), providing evidence on how the five components of the SEAL programme can contribute successfully to helping children with SEBD change their behaviour.

The vast majority of children with SEBD usually display problems when it comes to self-awareness and the management of their feelings, motivation, empathy and social skills (Grossman, 2004; Halliwell, 2003; Cole, 2006; Provis, 1999). Thus, it is the view of the present researcher that, as the SEAL programme aims to support these five components, it can also support children with behaviour problems by developing these skills. In the literature, there is evidence that children with SEBD can be supported in different ways during the lesson. These will be outlined below, providing evidence of the ways they can be

implemented through the SEAL programme, along with a presentation of the definition of SEBD.

#### 2.4.7.1 Usefulness of the SEAL programme

The DfES (2003b) report highlights the successful impact that the SEAL programme can have in supporting children who have SEBD. The wide distribution of this programme within the educational setting marks a key change in the way children with SEBD have traditionally been dealt with. In other words, these children will be the first to represent an entitlement curriculum for all children. Having said that, there are going to be children who will require additional support, and a spectrum of support will be needed to meet their individual needs (DfES, 2003b). Kay (2007) and Visser (2000) also argue that children who present characteristics of SEBD, such as being withdrawn, isolated and disruptive, with immature social skills, also benefit from behaviours being managed effectively by the teacher, and cognitive/thinking approaches being employed in the classroom to control or censure negative behaviour and, in turn, encourage positive behaviour. Bearing in mind the characteristics of children with SEBD, the following strategies could be employed by their teachers to support them within the school.

*Take every opportunity to improve children's self-esteem by rewarding and praising*

Emotional and social factors of low attainment, according to Pumfrey and Reason (1991) affect a child's perception of him/herself. They argue that the emotional impact of struggling with completing their work within the classroom can have a negative impact on a child's self-esteem, resulting in SEBD.

Children with SEBD should receive positive attention and praise for appropriate behaviours. This is because they may constantly receive criticism from people around them, regarding their inappropriate behaviour. As a result, their self-esteem may be low (Webster-Stratton, 2002; Hull Learning Services, 2005). Grossman (2004) argues that rewarding desirable behaviour such as staying on task, behaving well, etc., can have a big impact in improving children's behaviour. This is because it increases children's motivation to complete their work. Therefore, teachers should praise children when they conform to the expected standards of behaviour, or when they achieve something they have never done before (this can be in relation to schoolwork or behaviour) (Rogers, 1961; Rogers, 2004). Teachers should also try to 'catch children being good' and let them know why teachers are pleased with them (Rogers, 2004). This will give children the opportunity to improve on their behaviour problems, and on skills that they are good at.

Rewards motivate children in succeeding, and in demonstrating what is worthwhile to be successful in. Teachers should aim to find out what their children value as a reward: sometimes a word of praise or a pat on the back is enough, but many children with SEBD demand more tangible rewards (such as a wall chart with targets, a favourite game, etc.) (Halliwell, 2003). Rewards can be supported through the development of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation, which is one of the five components of the SEAL programme. Hymes (1990) argued that rewarding children can work as a motivation mechanism in terms of enhancing children's greater achievements during their time at school. However, as previously mentioned in section 2.3.4.3 (p. 39) excessively rewarding children for behaving appropriately may also have its shortcomings. This may serve only to improve childrens' behaviour for the moment. However, it may not change their attitudes (Grossman, 2004).

All children feel the need to be included in the classroom. When this does not occur, their self-esteem may be badly damaged and they might also experience characteristics of anxiety (Carr, 1985; Halliwell, 2003; Rogers, 2004). Thus, the teacher needs to encourage other children to accept them for what they are, in order to avoid feeling left out (Halliwell, 2003; Rogers, 1961). Evidence from DCSF (2009), Pullinger (2007), Hallam et al. (2006) and OfSTED (2007) support the statement that the SEAL programme teaches children how to feel good about themselves, how to manage their anxiety, deal with stress levels, learn to be more empathetic and feel optimistic about themselves and their ability to learn something, all of which helps them increase their motivation and self-esteem.

As it was noted by Hallam et al. (2006) and DCSF (2008) that after the implementation of the SEAL programme, children were more enthusiastic about attending school, and their ability to self-reflect and self-evaluate was enhanced – they thought before acting. A governor who was present at the DCSF Conference (2009) is in agreement with the above statement, adding that children even felt proud about attending school and felt part of the school community. Therefore it can be argued that by providing positive reward and praise to children with SEBD, it can have a positive impact on their self-esteem. This is something that can influence the way these children feel about being in the classroom and the way they behave towards other people and during the lesson. As a result of that, these children have a motive to try and behave well in the classroom and cause these problems.

#### *Develop Listening Skills:*

There is research (Harris, et al., 1996; Fogell and Long, 1997; Visser, 2000) which argues that a possible reason for challenging behaviour on the part of many children is a lack of a recognizable system of communication for each child such as a lack of understanding, and a

desire to vent feelings of anger and frustration. They also argued that when children are given the opportunity to make their needs known, there is always a considerable reduction in the levels of challenging behaviour. As Gordon (1974) and Fogell and Long (1997) argue, active listening, which involves teachers being interactive with their children, also provides evidence to the children that ~~of~~ their teachers are listening and understand them and they are ready to support them. This can encourage children to communicate with their teachers whenever something is troubling them, and at the same time they can help their teachers to understand what laies behind the different behaviours observed in the classroom.

Teachers need to be sensitive to the feelings of children with SEBD, by being a good listener when they are trying to communicate with them, be empathetic, and by observing their behaviours very carefully (Cole, 2006; Webster-Stratton, 2002). The teacher should encourage children to talk about their feelings and should try to look for solutions to problems, rather than dwelling on the causes (i.e. what could be done to avoid the situation in the future). It is also important for teachers to listen to children if they feel that they are being treated unfairly or disagree with the way the teacher is acting. They should be given the chance to explain his/her perception and this could increase the likelihood that they will behave appropriately (Grossman, 2004).

There will be aspects of a child's life that the teacher cannot change for the better; they need to accept this and concentrate on the parts they '*can*' change (i.e. self-esteem, patterns of behaviour in school) (Halliwell, 2003). Appreciating the world of emotions the children inhabit, and offering them understanding, with the willingness to change their behaviour, are very important (Rogers, 1961). As Corsini et al., (2000) argue, this will enable the teacher to



get closer to an understanding of the world the children live in, understanding their emotions and feelings, and respecting them at the same time.

Based on evaluations of the development of SEBS through the implementation of the SEAL programme, it is argued that SEBS will give children the chance to confront uncomfortable emotions such as anger and frustration, and allow them to become more resilient, something that will help them face up to dilemmas and challenges (DCSF, 2009). Children are now able to discuss any concerns regarding incidents in the playground, they try to listen more in lessons and they ‘mess about’ to a lesser degree (OfSTED, 2007; Middleton, 2007; DfES, 2007b). There is evidence of improvements in children’s attitudes towards learning, and they are now more engaged in class discussions. Children now feel more confident and motivated about recording their own feelings and the way they express themselves, something that has helped enhance their self-esteem and put them in a better position to understand other children's points of view, show self-control, and so on (DfES, 2007b; Education Bradford, 2007;2008; OfSTED, 2007). Therefore, teachers’ role as an active listener, can help children with SEBD express themselves something that can have a positive impact on their behaviour.

*Encourage Children to take Responsibility for their Own Actions:*

Many children with SEBD find it hard to take responsibility for their own actions. Enabling them to understand what affects their behaviour has on others, is an important step in moving towards changing unproductive behaviour patterns. Children with SEBD often act out their difficulties in ways that challenge their teachers and the way their teachers function (Provis, 1999). These children’s behaviour often triggers exceptional responses from their teachers and, as Provis (1999) and Halliwell (2003) argue, the most effective way to meet these needs is by supporting them within their own local context. Bentley (1998) argued that motivating

children to think reasonably as well as taking into consideration the people that surround them, depends on allowing them to take responsibility of their own actions. Bentley (1998) also went on to argue that schools can play a significant part in helping children to know themselves and those around them, in order to become aware of different emotional risks and problems. This will encourage children by reducing the effects of past experiences by learning to recognise the source of their distress, rehearsing and revisiting the experience and developing positive mechanisms of behaviour (Bentley, 1998).

Role-play or drama activities can be very helpful in enabling children to do this: if teachers can give the child a position of responsibility within the group, this will assist the development of mutual support and social responsibility, and will also foster a sense of trust (Halliwell, 2003). It also gives affected children the chance to develop their social skills and the ability to relate with their classmates and teachers. This can have a big impact on children's emotional development (Kay, 2007).

After studying different reports and evaluations regarding SEAL's effectiveness, the researcher found that, after its implementation, fewer instances of bullying were recorded and there has been a substantial reduction of instances of physical aggression, and fewer complaints of verbal aggression between children, in comparison to results from previous years (Aubin, 2006; Education Bradford, 2007; Pullinger, 2007; Hallam et al., 2006; OfSTED, 2007). Head-teachers have seen fewer children visiting their offices regarding incidents of inappropriate behaviour, and there has been less exclusion (Aubin, 2006).

Children's social skills and their ability to relate to peers and adults can impact upon their emotional development (Kay, 2007). Social skills training helps children with SEBD to engage in, and develop, positive personal and social relationships with a wide variety of

people, ensuring that there are opportunities to succeed and to deal sensitively with behavioural problems. It is about finding a child's strengths and focusing on these (Farrell, 2005; Kay, 2007).

Children also learn how to control feelings of frustration, anxiety and anger using calming-down strategies (Pullinger, 2007; Hallam et al., 2006; OfSTED, 2007). Children work and play more cooperatively and they learn to support one another (DfES, 2007b; OfSTED, 2007). Consequently, encouraging children to take responsibility for their own actions, by providing reasonable thinking, can reinforce them to reduce undesirable behaviours presented.

#### *Trying to Anticipate Trouble:*

Children with SEBD tend to present challenging behaviours (DfES, 2001). Teachers should try to recognise those situations in which a child commonly experiences problems; e.g. lining up at the door, coming in from break, being late for lessons, and offer help rather than criticizing bad behaviour. When children get stressed, anxious or angry, the teacher can move the individual to a quiet place to calm down (Gribble, 2009). In this way, children should be given assistance in recognising these situations for him/herself, and how to work out strategies for minimising or avoiding trouble. For example, if a child can learn to keep out of the way of other children seeking confrontation, this can make a tremendous difference to his or her life in school (Halliwell, 2003). Studies show that, by improving the self-regulation of child behaviour, the affected children present higher levels of social skills (Sanz de Acedo Lizarraga et al., 2003). This can be achieved by teaching children how to self-regulate their behaviour effectively, through using assertiveness and empathy to resolve personal conflict within the classroom (Sanz de Acedo Lizarraga et al., 2003, p.427).

After evaluating different reports on the effectiveness of the SEAL programme, it was highlighted that, through guidance provided by the co-ordinators, teachers felt more confident in identifying problems such as bullying presented by children, and they worked in their activities with this problem (SEAL IT, 2008). Motivation, according to White (1959 cited in Luth, 2001), is very important. The more the child feels competent to complete a task successfully, the more likely it is that he/she will not only succeed in the task, but be motivated to engage in it and achieve more (White, 1959 cited in Luth, 2001, p.257)

*Deal with 'Bad' Behaviour in a Positive Way:*

Due to the very nature of their difficulties, children with SEBD will not always behave like their contemporaries, and their anxiety or anger will often 'spill over' in school. When incidents or confrontations *do* occur, it is important for the teacher to deal with them in a calm and reasonable way (Halliwell, 2003). Teachers should try to remember to label the behaviour and not the child: calling a child 'stupid', 'naughty', 'bully' or 'slow' only serves to reinforce the idea in the child's mind that they are indeed stupid, naughty, a bully or slow. Instead, teachers should aim to send various reinforcing messages such as 'I like you, but I do not like your behaviour'. It is often helpful to talk about the effects the behaviour has had, and the feelings it engenders in others: e.g. 'Jane, when you take money from the teacher's drawer it lets her down and she's sad about that, because she wants to trust you'. Providing a chance for children to communicate with their own feelings about an incident can be very helpful, such as: 'John, I feel angry when you mess about because you do not give me your best work, and I know you can do better than this.' Teachers should try and stay calm in these situations: if they lose control, this will only serve to make the child feel worse, and increase the likelihood of an incident occurring in the future (Halliwell, 2003).

After analysing teachers' feelings after the implementation of the SEAL programme, it was noted that they now feel more confident and empowered to take on board the main guidelines offered from SEAL, and to expand them systematically with other adventurous ideas within subject lessons, and other activities such as day trips and celebrations (Hallam et al., 2006; Pullinger, 2007; OfSTED, 2007; Humphrey et al., 2008; McCauley, 2008). This has helped teachers to improve their skills in developing children's SEBS and to adjust their teaching methods, taking into account children's specific needs, and become better listeners (OfSTED, 2007; Education Bradford, 2008). Teachers also mentioned that the SEAL's guidance booklet (DfES, 2003b) offered to them was particularly helpful in developing all the above, as well as clarifying the contents of the resources during the individual school's training days (Education Bradford, 2007; DfES, 2007b; OfSTED, 2007).

It is very important for teachers to be able to listen to, and understand, the reactions of the children (White and Evans, 2005). According to Rogers (1980), when teachers are able to achieve this element with their children, the child's learning achievements will be increased. As Rogers (1980) explains, it is about being able to show 'empathetic understanding'. Corsini et al., (2000) also stated that it is about appreciating the world of emotions each individual is in, and offering him/her understanding, with the willingness to correct it. This will enable the teacher to get closer to understanding the world each individual child lives in, to understand emotions and feelings and to respect them (Corsini et al., 2000).

### *Be Realistic*

Fell (2002) argues that there may be a number of children with SEBD who present difficulties in terms of their learning, and who may be unable to access the curriculum across a wide range of lessons. These children may have had, or be experiencing, a whole range of

behavioural problems, which prevent them from fully concentrating on learning and reaching the academic levels expected of them. Poor social skills, low self-esteem and taught negative attitudes may all have made their perception of school less than positive (Rogers, 1951). For some children, managing their own behaviour can be extremely difficult or impossible within the context of the school, without a considerable amount of support, resources and expertise. A real issue is the time and speed at which improvements can be made and maintained: change is likely to be relative, and expectations have to be adjusted accordingly. This is the key to really making a difference, and providing a point of reference against which progress can be measured.

In setting different goals for children, the teacher should proceed with caution. Such goals need to be realistic, clear and well defined. Also, teachers should not try to change all 'bad' behaviour at once; it is important to choose one objective to start with (e.g. sitting in their seat for five minutes, not shouting out for ten minutes). Teachers also need to be consistent, making it clear to the child what they are aiming for, and rewarding them if this target is achieved. It is also important that teachers remember that it may take a long time for children to learn new patterns of behaviour (Halliwell, 2003).

SEAL 'messages' are generalised throughout the school and there is a congruency with what happens outside the classroom with what happens inside it (DfES, 2007b). It also helps schools to embed the philosophies and principles already practiced in schools (Education Bradford, 2007; 2008; Aubin, 2006) by raising awareness of the importance of developing the 'whole child' in order to have the best chance of him/her becoming a good learner. There is also an improvement in children's scores and national tests (Pullinger, 2007; Hallam et al., 2006; OfSTED, 2007).

The strategies outlined above enable children with SEBD to develop in the different areas that they present difficulties in. As these areas can also be supported through the development of the five components that underline SEBS, it can be argued that the SEAL programme can also support children with behavioural problems in terms of improving and developing their SEBS. It can also help them to improve their behaviour.

## 2.5 Transferring the SEAL programme into the mainstream Greek-Cypriot

### Primary education context

The way the concept of SEN functions in Cyprus has been criticised by a number of researchers as it does not provide equal learning opportunities to all children (Angelides and Michailidou, 2007; Angelides, 2004; Phtiaka 2000).

The Greek-Cypriot education system lacks a solid definition regarding children who present disruptive behaviour. It is the view of the researcher that a more solid definition for these children needs to be developed in order to be able to identify and include target children in this study.

According to the Special Needs COP (DfES, 2001) in England children with EBD tend to:

- Be withdrawn or isolated;
- Be disruptive and disrupting;
- Be hyperactive and lacking in concentration;
- Have immature social skills;
- Present challenging behaviour arising from other complex needs.

According to studies within Greek-Cypriot classrooms (Koundourou, 2007; Angelides, 2000) the following behaviours have been observed within the classroom:

- Talking out of turn;
- Over-activity (fidgeting around with their personal stuff such as books, pencils, etc.);
- Attention seeking;
- Withdrawn behaviour;
- Poor concentration;
- Difficulty in co-operating;
- Lack of concentration and mind wandering in the classroom.

Therefore, within the Greek-Cypriot context, children with SEBD behaviours will be considered as children who are withdrawn, require frequent attention from their teacher, avoid following their teacher's instructions, such as to complete their work or in talking out of turn, have poor concentration skills and find difficulty co-operating as well as being overactive. However, before attempting to implement the SEAL programme, it is important to keep in mind some important issues when transferring the programme from England to Cyprus.

## 2.6 Transferring programmes from one location to another

Transferring a programme from one location to another has always been a challenging issue. Phillips and Ochs (2004) argued that different aspects of successful policy observed in foreign situations can be transferred from one location to another. Nonetheless, this is very challenging, as there are a lot of issues that first need to be taken into consideration.

Phillips and Ochs (2004) argued that, a circular model could be used in order to describe the different stages of policy borrowing in Education. This model has four stages: impulses;



decision; implementation and; internalization. The first step of the model starts with the impulses that 'spark off' cross-national attraction. These impulses will appear to originate in various phenomena. Two of these phenomena are internal dissatisfaction and system collapse (Phillips and Ochs, 2004).

Internal dissatisfaction refers to the different dissatisfactions that can come from people who are internally involved in the process of borrowing such as teachers, parents, children, inspectors and others (Phillips and Ochs, 2004). In the case of this research, teachers might feel disappointed after the implementation of the SEAL programme, as it may fail to meet expected standards. Teachers might find its implementation complicated, and be unable to implement it effectively. Teachers may possibly fail to fully understand the concept of behaviour problems and this might not allow them to fully understand the framework and the way the different lessons should be implemented within their classroom setting. From the children's point of view, they might find the different strategies offered as part of the framework challenging, and the themes of each lesson plan of little interest.

System collapse refers to the inadequacy or failure of some aspects of the existing educational provision where the need for educational reconstruction is necessary (Phillips and Ochs, 2004). Previous research (Koundourou, 2006; 2007) highlighted that the Greek-Cypriot education system regarding education and support of children with special needs shows certain gaps that prevent those children being educated and supported in the most appropriate way. Therefore, attempting to implement the SEAL programme in mainstream Greek-Cypriot primary schools, where provision for children with SEBD is limited, might cause further problems in terms of applying different strategies to support those children's needs.

The second step refers to different decisions that will take place when attempting to borrow and implement the framework. In the case of this research, careful consideration should be given to the Greek-Cypriot culture. In other words, since the concept of special needs in Cyprus is relatively new, people tend to perceive it in different ways. Therefore, while attempting to present and implement the framework, great emphasis should be placed on the language used to avoid misunderstandings and/or insults.

The third step relates to the implementation of the framework. It is essential for the researcher to present the framework at the participants' level of understanding, and avoid causing any distractions to the daily timetables that teachers follow. It is also important to avoid putting any pressure on teachers during the implementation of the framework in terms of preparation.

Finally, careful attention should be given to the way in which the SEAL framework is going to enter the Greek-Cypriot curriculum. Therefore, before constructing the implementation of the SEAL framework, attention should be paid to the way the Greek-Cypriot curriculum works, and its main aims and priorities regarding education of children with behaviour problems.

## 2. 7 Brief summary

It can be seen from the literature reviewed in this chapter that behaviour problems appear to be a subject of concern for mainstream Greek-Cypriot primary teachers in terms of providing adequate support to help SEBD children to help them improve their behaviour. The authors of the SEAL programme argue that this framework can support children and help them improve their SEBS by enhancing their self-regulation, self-awareness, motivation, empathy and social skills. These skills can also be applied to children with

SEBD. Therefore, the SEAL programme could be introduced to mainstream Greek-Cypriot primary teachers in an attempt to support their work in supporting children with SEBD and, at the same time, to support these children's needs.

The study reported in this thesis is intended to draw these themes together and, through considering them, bring some light on the current issues with respect to teaching practices related to children with behaviour problems, in order to reduce incidents of inappropriate behaviour that take place within the classroom setting.

### **3. CHAPTER 3 – METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Chapter Overview**

The chapter that follows aims to provide detailed information on the different steps taken with regard to the development of the methods and methodology used in this research. In particular, this chapter will discuss why pragmatic research is appropriate for the implementation of this study, and how the use of mixed methods will enable the researcher to answer her research question. In this chapter, issues regarding the choice of my sample, and different ethical issues within the field of social research that reflect the way that the research question is going to be answered will be discussed. Following the above discussion, the next step will be to present a critical argument related to the tools for data collection that were used - interviews and observations. This discussion will begin by presenting the way in which these tools have been designed and developed. The discussion will be formulated in terms of the merits and limitations of each tool, based on the way they were developed, the choice of sample and the different ethical principles involved. In order to evaluate their effectiveness, a pilot study was undertaken. Based on the findings and conclusions from the pilot study, necessary changes were made to format the specific tools, and these were then implemented in the study.

#### **3.2 Philosophical Positions/Paradigms in Educational Research**

Within the field of educational research, paradigms present views and offer researchers a more guided scientific and valid description of phenomena that will allow them to make suggestions for the amelioration of any problem that might exist (Cohen et al., 2000; Tashakkori and Teddle, 2003)

Chapter 2 shows how the beliefs and principles on which this research is based imply a methodology which is pragmatic in nature, using mixed methods. This approach aims to emphasize the importance of individual experiences, attitudes and perspectives in providing evidence of effective and productive everyday teaching practices. In researching a phenomenon such as SEBD, its significance will be illustrated by the following discussion which contrasts my methodology with positivist and interpretivistic experimental approaches in this field.

### 3.2.1 Research Paradigms

Positivist and interpretive paradigms are essential for providing an understanding of phenomena through two different lenses. Positivism, on the one hand, seeks objectivity, measurability, predictability, controllability, patterning, the construction of laws and rules of behaviour, and the ascription of causality. On the other hand, the interpretive paradigms, endeavour to understand and interpret the world in terms of actions. In the former, observed phenomena are important; in the latter meaning and interpretations are paramount (Cohen et al., 2009).

#### 3.2.1.1 Positivism

Many other researchers have used the positivist-quantitative paradigm to test a theory or a hypothesis by producing data on the phenomenon of SEBD (Cooper and Whitebread, 2007; Kalyva, Gregoriadi and Tsakiris, 2007; Almog and Shechtman, 2007; De Monchy, Pijil and Zandberg, 2004; Poulou and Norwich, 2000). Through their analyses, researchers have been able to obtain a deeper understanding of the different phenomena surrounding the concept of SEBD. This understanding has been achieved by obtaining objective information from direct

experiences which could be measured and used to produce statements (Cohen et al., 2000; Robson, 2002) and come to different conclusions (Byrne, 2002) by explaining events that take place in terms of the reason why something might be happening and the possible outcome it could have. Even though quantitative research has been criticized for failing to provide in-depth descriptions (Cohen et al., 2000), its strength lies in its reliability, in the sense that the same measuring process, when repeated in the future, should give the same results as were initially found (Byrne, 2002).

#### 3.2.1.2 Interpretivism

Researchers have studied the phenomenon of SEBD through a qualitative/interpretivism paradigm (Blake and Monahan, 2007; Gianopoulou et al., 2008; Didaskalou and Millward, 2007; Farrell and Polat, 2003; Angelides, 2004). Qualitative/interpretivist studies have enabled researchers to observe and analyse different phenomena or individual behaviours and their relationships, resulting from the consciousness of an individual (Cohen et al., 2000). This has led them to arrive at conclusions as to why something is happening, what might be causing it, focusing on construing results and finally taking steps for effective intervention to take place (Wellington, 2000; Cohen et al., 2000; Scott, 2007; Rudduck and McIntyre, 1998).

Taylor and Gorard (2004) state that mixed method research has been acknowledged by the scientific community as "...a key element in the improvement of educational research" (2004, p.7). Consequently, mixed methods should balance each other in terms of disclosing different aspects of the subject and, at the same time, provide multiple explanations. In other words, diverse methods can be "...incompatible with each other and cut across boundaries such as the qualitative/quantitative distinction" (Wellington, 2000, p.128). Debates over the

relationship between paradigm and methodology have led to the emergence of a third paradigm: the pragmatic paradigm (Armitage, 2007).

#### 3.2.1.3 Pragmatic

Researchers introduced the pragmatic paradigm, which calls for using whatever philosophical position works best for understanding and analysing a particular research situation in order to avoid bias, and for avoiding the limitations of using a single method or a single observer or single theory studies (Cresswell, 2003; Tashakkori and Teddlie, 1998; Rocco et al., 2003). In other words, it acknowledges that there are weaknesses in the evaluation tools being used, and provides a way of handling the problem (Phillips et al., 2000). Research design and implementation decisions are made according to the methods that best meet the practical demands of a particular inquiry (Patton, 2002). According to Cresswell (2003) and Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998), this paradigm enables the researcher to focus directly on the areas of interest rather than on issues of reality and theories of society. The strength of this approach lies in its acknowledgement of the current state of the art of evaluation, which suggests that there are no 'right' approaches and the need to maintain an open approach is essential (Cresswell, 2003; Phillips et al., 2000). Researchers who use pragmatic mixed methods are mainly concerned with using techniques and procedures that will allow them to work methodically. Researchers are not committed to using mixed methods; all are compatible and potentially useful. Mixing is more likely to occur in a particular study if the researcher decides that this way of working will help him/her collect data and undertake an accurate and useful analysis (Rocco et al., 2003).

In relation to the above arguments between positivism and interpretivism, researchers such as Jones and Smith (2004), Kelly et al. (2007), Burnard and Nesbitt (1995) and Nicolaidou,

Sophocleous and Pthiaka (2006), prefer to use a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods (pragmatic studies) to produce reliable and accurate findings. Bryman (2008), Hammond (2005) and Rocco et al. (2003) support the view that the broad characteristics of one research strategy can sometimes have the broad characteristics of another, supporting the view that both qualitative and quantitative approaches can be combined successfully within a research project. Regarding the general orientation on the conduct of social research, the differences between qualitative and quantitative research lie in the continuum of three orientations: the role of theory, ontology and epistemology (Bryman, 2008).

One method can complement another method to provide an insight into different levels or units of analysis (Tashkkori and Teddlie, 2009; Bryman, 2008; Mackenzie and Knipe, 2006). Mixing methods has led researchers to develop measures for mixed method strategies of inquiry and ‘...to take the numerous terms found in the literature, such as multi-method, convergence, integrated, and combined and shape procedures for research’ (Cresswell, 2003, p.16 ). A general strategy that can be used for mixing up methods is the use of sequential procedures. With sequential procedures the researcher:

‘....seeks to elaborate on or expand the findings of one method with another. This may involve beginning with a qualitative method for exploratory purposes and following up with a quantitative method with a large sample so that the researcher can generalize results to a population’ (Cresswell, 2003, p.16).

Researchers accept that all methods have limitations. They have also increasingly accepted the underlying assumption that bias is inherent in any method used for data collection. In mixed-method evaluation design, Caracelli and Greene (1993) introduced the concept of triangulation to enhance the evaluations made and to ensure validity (Bryman, 2008;



Hammond, 2005; Rocco et al., 2003) Triangulation tests the consistency of findings obtained through different instruments rather than trying to achieve the same result using different data sources or inquiry approaches. In a case study, triangulation will increase the chances of controlling, or at least assessing, some of the damaging influences that may affect results (Bryman, 2008; Cresswell, 2003).

At this stage it is important to highlight that the pragmatic paradigm has been used in some recent research into SEBD that took place in Cyprus, such as that of Nicolaidou et al., (2006).

To avoid the limitations of a mono-method approach, a mixed method parallel exploratory design was chosen to implement my research. This design implies collecting and analysing quantitative and qualitative data in an independent manner, either simultaneously or with a time lapse in two consecutive phases within one study (Caracelli et al., 1997; Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009).

The strengths and weaknesses of this mixed-methods design have been widely discussed in the literature (Jang et al., 2008; Sosu, McWilliam and Gray, 2008; Teddlie et al., 2009; Creswell, 2009). Some of its advantages include giving the researcher the opportunity to verify and generate theories by utilizing both quantitative and qualitative strands, to present findings from both strands which are synthesized to make inferences about the inquiry problem. Specific design enables the researcher to gain an enriched understanding of the phenomena being studied. It was also claimed that, through this design, the nature of their investigation enables researchers to move back and forth between the qualitative and the quantitative strands of data, allowing them to recognise emerging themes and new insights with results being jointly reviewed into a new set of thematic variables for further analysis.

Nevertheless, while this design is useful for clarifying the purpose of inquiry and aligning it to the methodologies used, in practice particular options are neither exclusive nor singular, as mixed methods studies are frequently more complex than any single-design alternative can adequately represent (Teddle et al., 2009). Despite the limitations of this design, the researcher believes it will enable her to carry out the research effectively.

The mix method parallel exploratory design consists of two phases – quantitative and qualitative – that can take place either simultaneously or with a time lapse (Teddle et al., 2009). In this study both qualitative and quantitative data will be collected with a time lapse. The rationale for this approach is that rich data will be obtained allowing integrated analysis to take place, allowing me to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the subject being studied (Creswell, 2009; Teddle et al., 2009). The exploratory inductive process within my study will begin with descriptive evidence driven by different sub-questions that emerge from my main research question (the questions are outlined in Section 3.3, p. 92).

### 3.3 Research Questions

In previous research (Koundourou, 2007) the fact that teachers in mainstream Greek-Cypriot primary schools face difficulties while supporting children with SEBD within their classes was highlighted. These difficulties can arise as a result of different aspects of the classroom situation such as lack of knowledge of the field, limited time to organize materials and offer individual support to children with SEBD, limited support offered by MOEC and limited material available within the school to supplement their teaching when dealing with these children. In other words, what teachers seek most is greater support when teaching children with SEBD.

The main question of this study is about introducing the SEAL programme to support teachers' work in their attempts to support children with SEBD in the mainstream primary classroom setting and, at the same time, how to support children with SEBD.

Therefore the main research aim will be:

to undertake an examination of the effects of the SEAL framework on children with who exhibit SEBD in a mainstream Greek-Cypriot primary School to change their behaviour.

Considering the main research question, some sub-questions automatically emerge that need to be answered:

- a) What kinds of needs do children with SEBD present within the particular school being studied?
- b) What provision is currently in place for children with SEBD within the case study school?
- c) What are the teachers' perceptions with regard to the concept of SEBD?
- d) What changes are evident in terms of the behaviour of children of SEBD within the particular school being studied after the implementation of the SEAL programme?
- e) What were the teachers' first impressions of the implementation of the SEAL programme?
- f) What were the teacher's impressions a year after the implementation of the SEAL programme? Do they still use some of the strategies that were introduced to?

The first phase of this research comprises semi-structured interviews with three primary classroom teachers working in a particular school, and the head teacher of the school. Semi-structured interviews were used to gather information on the situation that currently exists in

the case study school, the kind of needs displayed by children with SEBD, classroom teachers' understanding of SEBD, and their perceptions of the concept of SEBD, formal interviews will be carried out with participants. The data obtained will help the researcher explore different issues based on the participants' statements. Such an approach involves a qualitative type of research in that the researcher will have the opportunity to observe and analyse different phenomena, including the basic characteristics of human actions (feelings, thoughts and desires) and their relationships, to come to conclusions with regard to why some behaviours take place, by providing a complete and detailed description. Information gathered from these interviews was be studied using qualitative analysis procedures such as content analysis.

The second phase of the research involves a quantitative evaluation of the impact the SEAL programme had on SEBD children's behaviour after its implementation, using a structured observation schedule to enable the researcher to gather data specifically in relation to the frequency of individual behaviours. Therefore, through necessity, part of the SEAL programme was translated into Greek. Then part of the programme was adapted – solely for the purpose of this study- to the needs of children who present SEBD in the case study school. This quantitative type of research by which the researcher will attempt to classify features, count them and construct statistical models in an attempt to explain what has been observed.

The third phase of the research involved informal interviews with all the teachers who took part in the implementation of the programme, in order to evaluate its effectiveness. Specific interviews were evaluated using qualitative analysis procedures.

The fourth phase of the research involved informal interviews with the classroom teachers, a year after the implementation of the SEAL programme, to identify whether teachers still use strategies presented through the implementation of the programme and the impact that this has had on their children's behaviour.

Having identified the research question, together with all the sub-questions that emerge from it, the next step was to decide on the research strategies that were going to answer the questions successfully. Accordingly, the next few pages consist of a presentation and a critical analysis regarding the philosophical position that shaped the character of this research.

Also, the choice of using a quantitative method for evaluating SEAL's effectiveness is in agreement with a recent evaluation on the SEAL programme that took place in England (Humphrey et al., 2008). This research study was carried out in three phases. The first phase comprised interviews with SEAL leads in a number of different Local Authorities across England. The second phase involved a quantitative evaluation of SEAL small group work, and the third phase of their study took place at the same time as the second phase, and involved detailed case studies of a number of nominated lead practice schools in the north-west of England.

The second phase of the above research, which is the one that is most relevant to the second phase of this research, involved a crossover design used in the quantitative impact evaluation phase. Children selected to participate in that study were chosen on the basis that extra support was essential for developing their social emotional and behavioural skills. Children were divided into two groups. Each group received a small intervention at different times within the term. After that, the researchers used different kinds of rating reports and

measurement tools to evaluate the impact of support offered to small groups. The crossover design used in the research enabled the researchers to provide a robust indication of the impact of small group intervention, in that it allowed for the analysis of any change in scores from pre-test to post-test for the children involved in the intervention (Humphrey et al., 2008).

The type of data analysis and operations used in this research will be discussed in terms of my research question and the sub-questions. Emphasis was laid on the sample strategy that was used, and the ethical framework that has shaped the tools for data collection. After that, the methods for gathering data are going to be described, including the ways in which the researcher planned to ensure the trustworthiness (the validity and the reliability) of the findings.

According to Rocco et al. (2003), when undertaking research using mixed methods, it is important to be able to provide information on how the data will be analysed and a rationale for why the particular tools used for data collection were chosen, and whether qualitative or quantitative research will be used. The rationale will enable me to obtain a deeper understanding and greater knowledge of the research topic, and how it could best be analysed, based on the philosophical assumption she intended to follow. Therefore the following sections will provide a brief description of the researcher's philosophical position. This will be followed by a detailed description of the issues that shaped the research, and how and why particular tools have been chosen.

### 3.3.1 Philosophical Position

After deciding which paradigm to use and the kind of methods to be incorporated, the next step is to have an explicit look at the researcher's philosophical point of view in terms of ontology, epistemology and methodology.

Ontology is the examination of what exists or what there is. Ontology helps social researchers to gain an understanding of different ways to view the world, in terms of the subject of the study being carried out (Thomas, 2009). Ontologically the different theoretical assumptions the researcher of this study has based on the different beliefs about the nature of the social reality, need explanation. This project took place in a primary school in Cyprus. In terms of ontology, the problems that already exist whilst educating children with SEBD have been presented, by providing evidence of the different facts pertaining to the Cypriot context and then testing to see how specific problems can be overcome by using a particular technique. In Cyprus, children with SEBD are included in all classroom activities alongside the rest of the children (MOEC, 1996; Koundourou, 2007). In cases where additional support is required, a special educator/psychologist visits the school occasionally. Schools in Cyprus accept that there are difficulties in educating children with SEBD, but they still expect teachers to deal with them in the same way as they do with the rest of the children in the classroom (MOEC, 1996).

Epistemology looks to study the world's knowledge as defined ontologically. Epistemology centres upon questions relating to the structure of thinking; what is knowledge, how do we know about different things regarding knowledge, whether there are different kinds of knowledge, and whether there are any good procedures for discovering knowledge (Thomas, 2009). Consequently, in terms of this research, epistemology should aim to take into

consideration the rival views about the different way researchers create their knowledge around the concept being studied in this study. There is evidence that children with SEBD learn better through interaction; they need to be given the chance to express their feelings, to identify for themselves the limitations their behaviour could cause to themselves and/or the school community, and try to improve on it (Koundourou, 2006). They need to be motivated while, at the same time, attempts should be made to enhance their self-esteem. The above-mentioned key elements of support can be offered through emotional literacy programmes which aim to help children develop their social skills, their self-awareness, self-regulation and which teaches them to be more empathetic. These key elements can be offered through the SEAL programme (Faupel, 2003). As Thomas (2009) also highlights, within social science, researchers should be more concerned about all the 'knows' and the 'unknowns' and, it is important to bear in mind that nothing is certain.

In terms of methodology, a critical analysis of evaluations of the implementation of the SEAL programme within England and within the educational system of Cyprus will be undertaken, looking at the way children (especially those with SEBD) learn. Necessary changes will then take place with regard to the programme to be able to fulfill the needs of children with SEBD as far as possible. There is evidence to support the belief that the SEAL programme works effectively within the primary school setting in the UK (BESD 2008 Guidance; DfES, 2003b; Pullinger, 2007; OFSTED, 2007). It is also important to note that both the English and the Cypriot education systems are child-centred (Middleton, 2007; MOEC, 1996). Bearing this in mind, along with the main elements of pragmatism, and the fact that part of the programme is being translated into Greek in conjunction with some content changes, it should be possible to support them, if not in the same way, then at least in a similar way, since there are some differences in the history of education, culture and beliefs in the two countries.



### 3.3.2 Research Tools

Both qualitative and quantitative researchers use many tools for data collection. These include interviews and observations, questionnaires, and surveys (Rudduck and McIntyre, 1998; Cohen et al., 2000; Robson, 2002). However, it is up to the researcher to carefully choose the ones that are most appropriate for his/her research, and will give him/her the chance to collect all the data. In the previous section it was concluded that it would be best if a mixed method design was used to gather the data.

Bearing in mind the research questions, it is essential to use tools that will:

- A. Gather general information on the current situation that exists within the case study school in terms of children with SEBD and their education, the teachers' perceptions of SEBD and incidents of SEBD that were observed;
- B. Measure the feasibility of the SEAL programme and the impact it has on children/teachers and on the school as a community.

To be able to answer part (A), a qualitative tool was needed. For this reason interviews were chosen as the most appropriate tool. Interviews were needed which contained open-ended questions. Open-ended questions enabled to the researcher to:

- Address information on the current situation that exists with regard to SEBD children in the mainstream primary school in Cyprus in which this research was carried out;
- Address the kinds of needs presented within the particular school and what provision is currently in place for children with SEBD;
- Identify how teachers perceive the concept of SEBD; and
- Identify the beliefs and attitudes that influence practice.

Interviews were chosen instead of questionnaires and surveys for a variety of reasons. Questionnaires are used as a tool for collecting information, providing structure and collecting arithmetical data without the researcher having to be present. Most of the time the data collected are easy to understand and they are straightforward in terms of their analysis. Having said that participants might have some difficulties in reading and understanding the context of the questions made, or even have limited writing abilities, and as a result, they might fail to answer all questions with (Cohen et al., 2000). There is also the issue where the respondents are free not to respond to a questionnaire given to them to complete, or not even return it. Therefore, the number of questionnaires that will be returned complete it is not guaranteed (Cohen et al., 2000). For this reason, questionnaires were discounted.

Regarding the use of survey research, such an approach encompasses a cross-sectional design in relation to which information is collected predominantly by questionnaires/structured interviews, and a body of qualitative or quantitative data is collected in connection with two or more variables which are then examined to detect patterns of association (Bryman, 2008).

The use of interviews provides the researcher with quality information, avoiding bias by maintaining a practical picture of people's diverse opinions on dissimilar themes (Sharp, Peters and Howard, 2002). It was the researcher's intention to work on a single case (a mainstream primary school) and work with both quantitative and qualitative tools to obtain data. Therefore survey research would not have enabled desirable outcomes to be obtained.

In terms of using interviews, two types of interviews are most commonly used: semi-structured and unstructured. Structured interviews were not chosen as their content and procedures need to be organized in advance. In other words, the sequence and wording of the questions are determined by means of a schedule and the interviewer is left with little freedom

to make modifications (Cohen et al., 2000; Lankshear and Knobel, 2004). Structured interviews:

“... are best suited to research requiring data from many people because the format of the interview enables relatively easy comparisons to be drawn across responses to each question” (Lankshear and Knobel, 2004, p.201).

The above information suggests that structured interviews are more formal and need to be pre-planned to a high level of detail. For this reason they fall under the category of quantitative approaches. Therefore, semi-structured and unstructured interviews would be able to provide me with the opportunity to obtain the appropriate responses that would enable me to complete my research.

Moving on to part (B), to be able to answer this type of question, a more structured tool was required. Through the second question it was aimed to:

- Address the main findings after implementing the SEAL programme in the school;
- Address the impact of the implementation on children/teachers/school.

Observations were chosen as the most appropriate tool to address the feasibility of the programme as they gather ‘live’ data from ‘live’ situations, to actually look at what takes place (Patton, 2002). This enabled the researcher to enter the classroom during the implementation of the programme to monitor behaviour. After comparing these behaviours, the researcher would then be able to address the programme feasibility and the impact it had on children, teachers and the whole school community.

A highly structured observation schedule needed to be followed that enabled the researcher to make comparisons between settings and situations and frequencies. As the observer, the researcher adopted a passive, non-intrusive role by noting down observations of the factors being studied (Cohen et al., 2000; Bryman, 2008).

At the end of the field work phase, it was essential to discover the teachers' feelings and thoughts on the programme. Therefore, a brief informal interview was needed at the end of the implementation with all the classroom teachers and the head teacher of the school.

Information on interviews and observations in terms of mixed methods, especially when researching the concept of SEBD within the school context, enabled the researcher to indicate how representative the sample of participants was and, at the same time, to explore people's internal constructions (Happner, Kivligham and Wampold, 1999). Meanwhile, specific tools gave the researcher the chance to investigate other aspects of data which may be relevant to the study. The specific methodology used added to, and enhanced, the applicability of the general interpretative approaches (Cohen et al., 2000).

In view of the fact that this research took place in only one school in Cyprus, it was vital for this research to take the form of a case study. Grounded theory and ethnographic research were not chosen, as the former aims to generate a theory to explain what is central in the data, and the latter can usually be analysed using grounded theory (Robson, 2002).

A case study is a detailed and intensive examination of a single case or setting (Bryman, 2008) and is designed to exemplify a more universal principle (Nisbet and Watt, 1984). A case study provided me with a unique example of what is taking place within a school, with real people in real situations, and enables the reader to gain a clear understanding of different

theories and principles presented by the participants, as well as how different ideas, perceptions and concepts arise. There is a tendency to associate case studies with qualitative research methods such as participant observation and unstructured interviews (Bryman, 2008). This is because these methods are considered particularly helpful when it comes to presenting a detailed examination of a particular case (Bryman, 2008). However, as Bryman (2008) argues, there have been case studies that have employed a mixed method approach. It is also argued that case studies are particularly valuable when the researcher has little control over events. Also, the case is an object of interest in its own right, and the researcher aims to provide an in-depth elucidation of it (Bryman, 2008).

A number of issues should be taken into account when considering research that intends to examine the suitability of a framework to be developed, based on teachers' personal experiences, attitudes and the observations that were carried out. For this kind of research, in order to be able to grasp its usefulness, it is essential to go beyond merely reporting and reflecting on practices and experiences. Only this will facilitate a resourceful analysis that will enable the researcher, ultimately, to come to alternative conclusions. During the preparation for this research, consideration was given to the choice of the sample, and the ethical framework that was going to be used. An overview of these issues is given in the next two sub-sections of this chapter, with an indication of their place in the context of my research.

### 3.4 The Choice of Sample

The quality of a piece of research not only stands or falls by the suitability of the methodology used and the chosen instruments. It also depends on the suitability of the sampling strategy that is adopted (Cohen et al., 2000). It is important to be able to obtain data from a group or a subset of a total population so that the knowledge gained represents the total

population under consideration (Cohen et al., 2000). Consequently, there follows a description of the judgments and decisions to be made about the sample size, representation, generalisability, the way the sample was accessed, the sampling strategy that was used and how the sample was chosen, based on the design of the research and the data collection methods that was used.

#### 3.4.1 Sample size

The size of the sample always depends on the purpose of the study, the nature of the participants that will participate, and the kind of relationships the researcher wishes to explore within subgroups of the sample (Cohen et al., 2000). For this reason, it was my responsibility to obtain the minimum sample size that would accurately represent the population being targeted. The size of the sample was also determined, to some extent, by the style of the research. In the research there were a number of interviews with some teachers and the head-teacher of the case study school, followed by some observations of the participating teacher's classes.

#### 3.4.2 Representation

When conducting a case study, if a valid sample is to be obtained, it is important to take into consideration the extent to which the sample actually represents the whole population. Representation can be achieved by looking accurately at the different characteristics of the wider population and the frame of the sample that is going to be used (Cohen et al., 2000). Denzin and Lincoln (2005) argue that the issue of representation is one which 'will not go away'. Therefore, variables such as age, group and school have an effect on this study.

Case study research is characterized by its flexible design, enabling data collection tools to be adapted and made appropriate to specific case(s). In this way, detailed and in-depth knowledge of particular cases can be generated (Cohen et al., 2000). Bearing this in mind, it would have been more appropriate for this study, in terms of validity, to include schools from all the towns of Cyprus. However, if the researcher was to implement this research in more than one school, the researcher would have to adapt its design to each of them, something that would take up most of the time available for data collection. To be able to generate a detailed and in-depth knowledge of each one of the cases would require a great deal of time (Bryman, 2008). Therefore, the researcher preferred to concentrate on implementing the framework in one particular school, to provide explicit data with regard to particular cases within the chosen school, and to gather the required data in more detail and depth.

#### 3.4.3 Generalisability of the data

The related issue of representation concerns the degree to which the findings of any piece of research are applicable to other circumstances, and hence are useful outside the immediate sphere of the participants involved (Denscombe, 2002; Robson, 2002).

Within case study research, the criteria for selecting prospective participants is a crucial preliminary point (Denscombe, 2002; Bryman, 2008). Bryman (2008) and Lunt and Livingstone (1992) argue that findings can be generalized only in terms of the population from which the sample was taken. Therefore, the sample to be included in this study had to be chosen on a basis that would allow reasonable and justifiable generalizations. One way of achieving this was to select the sample on the basis of its particular characteristics (Denscombe, 2002).

These qualities were as follows:

- The school that I chose to take part in the study was a school with a considerable large number of children attending it, therefore the sample of the children that was going to take part in the study will be more reliable;
- Following the above thinking, having a large number of children attending the school, there would be children from different ethnic backgrounds, from different cultures, and there would be children coming from different socioeconomic backgrounds, something that would enable me to come across with different cases of behaviour that could be used to be explored for the purpose of this study.

Generalizing the findings of this study will be possible to a limited extent. Almost all schools in Cyprus face problems, if not of the same kind, then of similar ones. Therefore, it is worth attempting to generalize the findings, but to leave it to the readers to judge whether they are relevant to their teaching practice.

The generalization of data in terms of locality is very important. Different assumptions can be made for each Greek-Cypriot school, because they vary in terms of population, ethnicity, and the extent of problems that occur within each school. Therefore, the sample had to be chosen based on what the researcher considered to be problematic behaviour. In addition, the research had to be adapted to those needs, and not on what is considered as problematic behaviour within the Greek-Cypriot education system as a whole (Bryman, 2008; Robson, 2002).

Bryman (2008) and Lunt and Livingstone (1992) also argued that it is impossible to assess whether there is a time limit on the findings that are generated. In Greek-Cypriot mainstream



primary schools, the problem of educating children with SEBD has been subject to numerous criticisms. To assess the degree of the problem at present is difficult, as there is no published data on the subject. At the same time, MOEC has not published the precise number of children with SEBD attending Greek-Cypriot mainstream primary schools (Koundourou, 2007). For this reason, before conducting this research, it was important to identify the extent of the problem within the case study primary school. This issue was dealt with successfully during the process of gathering general information about the school. It is also important, after publishing the results of this study, to make it clear that the specific findings referred to the case study school. However, since this is a problem that affects almost all primary schools in Cyprus to a different degree and level, general assumptions regarding the results and findings obtained should be avoided (Denscombe, 2002). However, this research will give the opportunity for readers to engage in the interpretation and evaluation of the findings (Denscombe, 2002).

#### 3.4.4 Access to the sample

To be able to carry out this research, permission was required from MOEC. After that, the head teacher of the school and all potential participants were also contacted by letter, which provided a brief description of the research (see Appendices 1/2/3/4/5, p.381/383/386/387/388).

#### 3.4.5 Sample strategy to be used

In this research a non-probability sample was used. In non-probability samples, also known as purposive samples, the probability of members of the wider population being selected for the sample is unidentified (Cohen et al., 2000). In this case, some of the members of the school population were excluded and some others were included, meaning that each member of the school population did not have an equal chance of being included (Cohen et al., 2000). Therefore, in this research, and in terms of generalisability, a particular section of the school population was chosen to participate. Non-probability samples are usually used in small scale research and usually in case studies, where the researcher is not planning to generalize the final findings (Cohen et al., 2000).

A non-probability sample, according to Cohen et al. (2000), does not represent the whole population (in this study the population of children attending mainstream primary schools in Cyprus). Instead, it seeks to represent the particular group in the sample selected. A non-probability sample strategy was chosen since only one school took part in the research, and only a small number of teachers participated.

In each primary school in Cyprus there are, for example, 2 or 3 sets of Year 1, Year 2, Year 3, etc. Therefore, each classroom teacher has his/her own classroom. This study worked with only some of the year groups (Years 1+2+3). Therefore, it was left to the teachers concerned to decide which one of them would participate. Because the number of teachers within the school was limited, the researcher did not have to concern herself with who was going to participate and who was not. This sampling limitation was highlighted by Bryman (2008) who stated that it is possible that the researchers' decision about which people should take part can be influenced by their judgement about how friendly or cooperative the people concerned are

likely to be, or how comfortable the researcher feels about working with them. This limitation can be a source of bias when using the non-probability sampling method.

#### 3.4.6 Choosing the sample based on the research design and the methods used for obtaining data

Interviews were the first primary method employed. They involved the head-teacher and the classroom teachers who were directly involved in teaching children with SEBD within the case study school. They were used to obtain in-depth descriptions of the current situation regarding the education of children with SEBD and were used for the gathering of all necessary data for the construction of the case study.

The study was carried out in an urban school in one Cypriot town, rather than in a rural school, for reasons of variety, as children attending the school have different backgrounds (ethnic, educational and economic) (Koundourou, 2007). The specific school was chosen for the following reasons:

- It was geographically accessible to me since daily contact with the school was required;
- There was a broader acceptance of the implementation of the programme by parents who were going to give their informed consent for their children to participate. According to previously undertaken research (Koundourou, 2007; 2006; Republic of Cyprus, 2001), the vast majority of parents within towns appear to be more educated and more concerned about their children's education than parents who live in the villages;

- Teachers in the school had experienced problems while supporting children with SEBD and were willing to support the needs of such children. Teachers who were already facing some problems in their attempts to teach children with SEBD tended to be more open to the idea of exploring and trying out new techniques in order to support those children's needs (Koundourou, 2007).

The second method to be employed was observations of young children (Y1+2+3 and aged between six and nine years). This was because their timetables were not as full as those of the older children and their teachers were likely to be more flexible in formulating the framework. In the first three years, some of the children's periods involve reading time (library time). Therefore, this could be a good opportunity for the teachers to implement the programme during that period, without interfering with their daily lesson plans. As for the children, they were not forced to see the programme as another lesson, as the programme was presented to them as a discussion period followed by a series of activities in the form of puzzles, drawing and crosswords. This way of working also aimed to engage their enthusiasm in order to teach them about some of the general concepts of the framework.

Extra attention was given to those who participated in the study in order to achieve greater reliability and validity with regard to the collected data (Cohen et al., 2000)

### 3.5 Establishing an Ethical Framework

Before designing data collection tools, it is essential to ensure that the research is to be conducted in accordance with ethical guidelines. The ethical framework was established bearing in mind the sample strategy that was to be used, and the methods for data collection. For the purposes of this research, taking into account its educational nature, with particular

reference to guidelines for qualitative research, attention was paid to the Ethical Guidelines of the British Educational Research Association (BERA, 2001).

It is the researcher's responsibility that all participants (teachers, children and the head teacher) are protected with regard to any kind of data collection tool being used, especially the children, since they were under ten years of age. Therefore, extra attention was required in order to protect them. Therefore establishing trust and confidentiality with the respondents was essential (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005).

### *Informed consent*

Informed consent forms were given to all prospective research participants prior to carrying out the study.

In order to achieve high standards within the research, the researcher ensured that all participants were fully aware and understood my main aim and objectives for undertaking this research (May, 2007; Bryman, 2008). Informed consent was achieved by giving all participants the appropriate written document to read and sign, signifying their acceptance of the terms and conditions of the research. The researcher disclosed and disseminated the purpose of undertaking the specific research to the participants, as well as informing them how the data was to be obtained and how it was going to be used in the future, highlighting the importance of their role in the study and also informing them of the possible future outcomes. Finally, all participants were also informed of their right to withdraw from the study whenever they felt like it (Participant Observation, 2008; BERA, 2002; Cohen et al., 2000; Bryman, 2008) and that they were free to refuse to answer any of the questions asked in the interview. They were also informed that all interviews would be audio-recorded, and that

nobody but myself and my supervisors would listen to the interviews. All interviews and information gathered from the observations were transcribed, but all identifying information was removed, as parts of the interviews might be used in the thesis. Prospective participants were then asked to sign a form to confirm their consent (Bryman, 2008; Peel, 2004) (see Appendices 6/7, p.389/390).

In line with the primary objectives of obtaining informed parental consent, it was decided to inform parents by sending a letter home. This letter explained in detail the main aims and objectives, and how this research was planning to involve their children, as well as informing them about ways in which their children could benefit (see Appendices 8/9, p. 391/393).

The majority of participant observations involved my long term presence with the participants. Therefore, the informed consent process had to be dynamic and continuous. Consequently, the project design continued all the way through the participant observation period by means of dialogue with the participants (Participant Observation, 2008).

In research it is of great importance to pay extra attention to implementing the principle of informed consent (Douglas, Lewis and Parsons, 2008). As Homan (1991, p.73) states, "...it is easier said than done" and goes on to highlight an important point. He argues that it is difficult to present prospective participants with all the necessary information that might be required for them to give their consent in terms of getting involved in the study. For this reason, participants were given the opportunity to ask any additional questions prior to deciding whether or not to sign the consent form.

### *Harm to Participants*

Some possible problems were as follows. Firstly, gender might have been a problem as some of the participants might not have felt confident enough to open up to someone of the opposite sex (Sapsford and Abbott, 1996). Secondly, receiving information from participants might have caused people considerable distress. Finally, reliving distressing and painful experiences might have been a traumatic experience that could also have caused distress (Sapsford et al., 1996).

All participants were also reassured that there would be no disruptions to the teachers' daily lesson plans and no negative consequences for either children or teachers as the main aim of this study was to find out ways of supporting teachers, and not criticising what and how they do their job.

### *Confidentiality and Anonymity*

It is important to recognise the participants' right to privacy along with their rights to confidentiality and anonymity. Confidentiality and anonymity were ensured by the researcher in keeping the records of the interviews to herself and avoiding mentioning the interviewees' names during the interviews (Cohen et al., 2000; Robson, 2002). Participants were assured that any data gathered would remain confidential and password-protected in a file on the researcher's laptop, and that only herself and her supervisors would have access to it (BERA, 2002).

The confidentiality of the participant observer's knowledge was made explicit to each informant as well as to the larger group of people involved in the research (BERA, 2002; Participant Observation, 2008).

### *Culturally sensitive and ethically informed questions - Deception*

All questions asked in the interview had to be as culturally sensitive and as ethically informed as possible. Therefore, the interviewer was required to pay attention to question wording so that cultural differences were respected in order to minimise the risk of causing offence. This also included attention to religious beliefs, social practices and the language used by the participants (Lankshear and Knobel, 2004).

“Formulating culturally sensitive questions also involves attending to research ethics” (Lankshear and Knobel, 2004, p.206). Therefore, questions that went beyond the scope of the study outlined in the consent form given to the participants were avoided. Attempting to ask these types of questions might have appeared to be threatening and might have been embarrassing to participants, unless they formed a major part of the study and they had given their consent to them (Lankshear and Knobel, 2004).

The research took place in a setting that I was not familiar with. Consequently, my presence within the observational setting might have been intrusive to the participants. For that reason, firstly, there was a need on my part to be sensitive to differences of age, gender, class, health, and culture that might have raised ethical issues during the course of the participant observation. Secondly, I had to be aware of possible conflict regarding ethical principles within the school, and had to provide primary ethical commitment to the people involved at any level during the implementation of my study (Participant Observation, 2008).

### 3.6 Discussing the Tools for Collecting Data

As previously mentioned in this chapter, two main tools were used to carry out the research - interviews and observations. The reason for the choice of these tools is included in Section



3.3.2 (p.99). These reasons are sometimes expressed through the advantages and disadvantages associated with these tools. Firstly, interviews were used with an emphasis on gaining as much information as possible with regard to the current situation regarding the education of children with SEBD, teachers' perceptions and the incidence of SEBD within the case study school. Secondly, observations were used to gather data concerning whether the SEAL programme could be effectively introduced into Greek-Cypriot mainstream primary schools. Brief definitions, advantages and disadvantages, and the use of these methodological tools as they relate to the research are described below.

### 3.6.1 Interviews

#### 3.6.1.1 Designing the Interview

The first phase of the research involved the construction and operation of interviews with three primary classroom teachers and the head teacher of the case study school. Information from the interviews helped me gain information on:

- ✓ the case study school and its teachers;
- ✓ the current provision that exists with regard to children with SEBD within the school;
- and
- ✓ teachers' awareness of the concept of SEBD.

As previously mentioned (Section 3.3.2, p.99), two kinds of interviews appear to be best suited for the purpose of the first phase of my research - semi-structured and unstructured interviews.

Semi-structured interviews were divided into two parts. Questions in Part A related to personal information and questions in Part B were based on the current situation regarding SEBD children's education within the school setting (see Appendices 10/11, p. 395/400).

The questions in Part A were asked as part of 'a warm up' conversation to build confidence on the part of the interviewees. This allowed substantial freedom of response as well as creating a friendly atmosphere in which the interview was carried out (Robson, 2002).

The first two questions in Part A involved the gathering of information about the participants themselves and their positions within the school. This enabled the researcher to address the different professions of the participants and how their profession impacted on the way they understood the concept of SEBD. In the literature review there is evidence to support the contention that both profession and experience can have either a positive or negative impact on attitudes, perceptions and teaching practices (Chazan, Laing and Davies, 1994; Kanakis, 1992; Koundourou, 2007; Angelides, 2005; Poulou, 2005). Negative impact can be a crucial factor threatening teachers' views of their capacity in the classroom and their ability to achieve their teaching goals for themselves and for their children (Chazan et al., 1994; Poulou, 2005). Therefore, information on the participants' specialism would enable me to gain a more explicit understanding of different views and perceptions that would be presented in the interviews.

Participants were asked to share their personal understanding, attitudes and feelings regarding the concept of SEBD. Depending on their understanding would allow me to identify different ways of approaching and dealing with those children's behaviour (Hadjiyiannakou, 2005; Phtiaka, 2007). From previous research (Koundourou, 2007), it was clear that the majority of

teachers do not fully understand the concept of SEBD. Therefore the way they perceive and understand those children varies a concern that is also highlighted by Hadyiannakou (2005).

Participants were asked to state whether they had received any training, had participated in seminars or had a higher qualification in enabling support for children with SEBD. This question aimed to address whether any support is offered to teachers by the MOEC and the school, and whether teachers take advantage of it to enhance their skills and become more aware when supporting children with SEBD. It also highlighted whether it is in their interest to gain any further qualifications or knowledge that would enable them to advance their teaching techniques with regard to those children to another level. In the literature there is evidence to support the contention that training and participation in different seminars or special lessons helps teachers to obtain and interpret knowledge, share experience and be advised on different issues/strategies that are available, and would enable them to support and enhance their teaching practice (Chazan et al., 1994, Pajares, 1992; Phtiaka, 2005). Information on this matter would provide me with evidence on whether or not participants were keen to support children with SEBD.

The last question of Part A seeks to clarify how teachers feel about teaching children with SEBD at the same time as teaching the rest of the children within their classroom. Based on the answers provided, it will become obvious to me whether or not teachers feel confident in terms of dealing with this behaviour. This question will highlight the proportion of teachers who are alert, care, are concerned and are willing to take further action to provide support for these children (Hoplarou, 2004; Phtiaka, 2005; 2007; Angelides, 2005; Hadjiyannakou, 2005).

Developing an understanding of attitudes and beliefs related to the concept of SEBD would reveal whether or not participants were in a position to handle these children, and support them accordingly (Kanakis, 1992; Chazan et al., 1994; Angelides, 2005; Poulou, 2005; Vlachou, 1997). This would help me to decide whether or not additional information should be offered to teachers so that they fully understand the concept. This was important as the more aware the teachers are of the concept, the better their understanding would be when it comes to understanding the main aims and objectives of the SEAL programme and the strategies that underpin it, and the better their chances of implementing it successfully. According to social researchers such as Cohen et al., (2000, p.268) and Fontana and Frey (2005), providing access to what is "...inside a person's head" makes it feasible to measure what a person knows, his or her values, attitudes and beliefs. This would enable me to gain a deeper understanding of the information collected and to perceive the whole picture through the eyes of the interviewees who were directly involved with SEBD children. Consequently, their participation and cooperation was greatly appreciated (Denscombe, 2002).

Questions asked in Part B aimed to gather information about the school. Interviewees were asked to evaluate the current educational system based on what is in place within their school, and the way the system supports them. From previous research (Koundourou, 2007), it was evident that within the Greek-Cypriot education system there is currently no provision in place for children with SEBD, and as MOEC states, teachers are considered capable of dealing with problems that occur with such children. Therefore this question aimed to address the consequences of this on teachers, and how it influences their teaching practices with regard to those children.

The above leads to the next question which aimed to address the particular provision that exists for supporting children with SEBD in the case study schools. The answers to this will inform the researcher as to whether the school has any strategies in place for teachers to follow, if there are any special educators and/or educational psychologists within the school to support teaching practices, and how teachers themselves support these children. Research highlights that each individual teacher uses different strategies, depending on their knowledge, beliefs and attitudes (Koundourou, 2007; Arxondakis and Kyriakou, 1992; Kanakis, 1992). Therefore, bearing in mind the teachers' knowledge, beliefs and attitudes with regard to the concept of SEBD, the researcher will be able to compare and link practices with individuals, and understand the way they work with children with SEBD.

The next question aimed to find out whether teachers educate "normal" children about children with SEBD, and to what extent. The answer depends once again on the way teachers perceive the concept of SEBD, as it can influence the way their children understand the concept, and the way they interact with such children. It is of great importance for children with SEBD to be educated in a place where they are accepted and feel welcome, where they are not judged for what they are and what they do, and where they are embraced into a positive and welcoming environment. Therefore, careful attention should be paid to the way the teachers structure and deliver the lessons and create a happy and caring atmosphere, where each individual is valued and respected (Newell and Jeffery, 2002).

Participants were then asked to address any gaps (if any) that they perceive to exist in the educational system regarding provision for children with SEBD. Previous research (Koundourou, 2007; Angelides, 2005; Hadyiannakou, 2005) has demonstrated that the government's failure to clarify and to explain the 1999 Law of Educating Children with SEN

to schools and teachers, has left teachers exposed to a myriad of questions and has made them feel isolated and unsupported. Therefore teachers are trying to move forward by providing support while seeking additional knowledge, training and guidance.

Participants were then asked to evaluate and reflect on practices used within the school in order to support children with SEBD and ensure progression at the same time. The answers to this question would provide the researcher with information on whether teachers, and the whole school as a community, were reflecting on their practices and evaluating their teaching practices. A reflective practitioner is in a position to plan thoughtfully and to make different decisions ahead of taking action, is capable of making honest self-observations and decision-making during the course of the children's actions, and analyses, evaluates and rethinks his/her behaviour and feelings after the course of action (Weiss 2006).

Participants were asked to identify the main incidents of inappropriate behaviour observed in their school by providing examples. A myriad of different incidents take place in Greek-Cypriot schools, such as physical and verbal abuse, shouting in the classroom, destroying other peoples' and schools' property, ignoring teachers' directions, throwing objects out of the window as children pass by, arguing with the teacher, talking out of turn, hyperactivity, attention seeking and poor concentration (Poulou and Norwich, 2000). Getting information on behaviour from the particular case study school would enable the researcher to choose the most common behaviour observed within that school, to use accordingly in the second phase of my research.

Finally participants were asked whether they are working as a multidisciplinary team in terms of implementing effective practices to overcome obstacles that emerge during their teaching. When multidisciplinary team-working is evident within schools, then communication between

staff is present. According to Wolferdale (1988, cited in Jordan, 1994), this is very important as all members of school provide a key role for each child with special needs, by assuming the responsibility for organising the curriculum and the different services the child has access to, and also by appraising the different outcomes. If multidisciplinary team work is evident within the case study school, that will mean that all teachers are working towards the same outcomes, sharing objectives sharing problem solving approaches and sharing positive solutions (Hadjyiannakou, 2005).

The questions in Part B were designed to inform the researcher with regard to the support for children with SEBD in the case study school. In the event of participants being aware of different strategies being used to promote the needs of these children, the researcher would be in a better position to explain the SEAL programme to them. In the event that participants were not familiar with any strategies, or that their knowledge related to this area was limited, then it would be essential to offer them some general information with regard to this area before attempting to explain the way SEAL works. To be able to achieve this, participants were encouraged to express their understanding and views in this field, as well as to share effective practice that they use, or have used in the past. This was risky as participants might not feel comfortable about showing a lack of knowledge (Lankshear and Knobel, 2004). To avoid this, firstly, questions were structured and presented in a way that encouraged participants to respond. Secondly, participants' trust was gained by reassuring them that they would not be judged on their knowledge or their experience. Failure to do could have influenced what the interviewees said in reply (Lankshear and Knobel, 2004). This could have caused bias in the participants' responses, and this could have had a negative impact on the way they understood and attempted to deliver the framework (Cohen et al., 2000).

At the end of the interview, interviewees were shown an example of how the SEAL programme works. The intention here was to provide them with an understanding of what the second part of the programme would be like, and how the framework could be used in the classroom. At the end, interviewees were asked to briefly evaluate the illustration of the framework, and to discuss whether or not they think this way of working could have a positive impact on children with SEBD.

With unstructured interviews, after presenting the general idea of the researched topic, it was up to the interviewee to determine the direction of the interview (Robson, 2002; Lankshear and Knobel, 2004). In the interview, the researcher had a rough guide with five questions to make sure that specific areas were covered (Lankshear and Knobel, 2004). Specific questions were aimed to “...gain as much information as possible without confining respondents to particular themes or topics” (Lankshear and Knobel, 2004, p.201) Interviews were open situations, “...having greater flexibility and freedom” (Cohen et al., 2000, p.273). Having said that, Patton (2002) argues that this type of interviewing possesses a number of weaknesses. Providing flexibility and freedom to the interviewee enables different information to be collected from different people with different questions. Therefore, interviews can become less systematic and comprehensive if certain questions do not come up during the process, something that could have caused problems in my attempt to analyze the data later on (Patton, 2002). Therefore, the list included simple and guided questions followed by appropriate hints to supply to interviewees during the interview.

Question in the unstructured interview included the following:

1. What is your current position within the school?
2. What do you understand by the term, SEBD?



3. What are the main incidents associated with SEBD that you have come across within the school?
4. How do you feel about teaching children with SEBD alongside other children in your class?
5. Can you provide me with some information regarding the current situation on children with SEBD within your school? (e.g. materials used, support from the government, strategies used in the school, communication and cooperation between staff).

The design of the interviews was based on a review of the existing qualitative literature on the topic, and by adding more to it (Warren, 2002). The design was influenced by key information that has been gathered from previous research (Koundourou, 2007), as well as from the SEAL Information Pack (DfES, 2003b) and from the book published by Hull Learning Services (2007).

Whether using semi-structured or unstructured interviews, interviews were approximately 30 to 40 minutes long. This amount of time was appropriate as both types of interviews were divided into two parts (A+B) where detailed information was required. Also, at the end of the interview, a draft illustration of a part of SEAL was included that required extra time since it had to be described and explained to the participants. According to Robson (2002):

“...anything under half an hour is likely to be valued (and that) anything much over an hour may be making unreasonable demands or busy interviewees” (Robson, 2002, p.229).

There was a risk of the participants being put off by the length of the interview. Therefore participants were informed about their length in advance, and they were explained the

necessity of spending that amount of time and the different steps that were to be followed during the interview process.

### *Open-ended questions*

Both semi-structured and unstructured interviews were made up of open-ended questions. Open-ended questions were chosen as they supply a frame of reference for respondents' answers (Kirlinger, 1979 in Cohen et al., 2000). They are flexible and they allowed me to initiate more in-depth discussions with interviewees (Cohen et al., 2000). Their flexible design also allowed me to break into the conversation at any point in order to clear up any misunderstandings, or provide additional information to the interviewees (Cohen et al., 2000). The use of open-ended questions also allowed the interviewees to offer a range of responses by expressing their own personal opinions and beliefs (Douglas et al., 2008; Lankshear and Knobel, 2004).

There was also the possibility that some of the interviewees might not be able to put into words what they thought, believed or felt with regard to what was being discussed in the interviews. It can therefore fairly be argued that data collected from interviews usually appears to be partial and incomplete (Lankshear and Knobel, 2004). For this reason, questions were inserted in a friendly, clear and unambiguous way to encourage the interviewees to fully engage in the process, and to feel comfortable and confident enough to express themselves (Cohen et al., 2000).

### *Recording interviews:*

All interviews were audio-taped to avoid failing to record important information, or facing the dilemma as to whether or not a piece of information was relevant to the research (Lankshear

and Knobel, 2004). This way of working enabled me to capture "...a good deal of the interviewee's intonation, voice quality, hesitations, self-corrections, and asides and so on" (Lankshear and Knobel, 2004, p.199). Recording the interviews also provided me with a permanent record of data and simultaneously allowed me to focus more closely on the interviews while analysing them.

There was a risk that the participants might have become unsettled when they knew that they were being recorded, or that they might sometimes have become self-conscious about what they were saying and how they were saying it (Lankshear and Knobel, 2004). Therefore, it was essential to establish a friendly atmosphere where the participant felt comfortable and were confident about talking freely (Cohen et al., 2000). This was achieved by translating the academic language the researcher used into the everyday language of the interviewee to facilitate rich descriptions and authentic data (Patton 2002).

#### *Transferring data from the voice-recorder onto paper*

There follows a procedure that was followed when encoding the interviews:

Step 1 – Listen to each interview once without taking any notes.

Step 2 – Listen to each interview for a second time, putting down only the answers that relate to each question asked.

Step 3 – Listen to each interview for a third time in order to highlight any other aspects that might have been identified or discussed during the interview.

Step 4 – Listen to each interview for a fourth time to make sure that all details have been transferred to my written copy of the interview and nothing had been missed out.

Step 5 –Analyze the data.

This method enabled the researcher to examine the interviewees' statements thoroughly, to repeat statements made to provide more explicit examination of the statements made, as well as to reuse data to support theoretical ideas and support analytical strategies (Bryman, 2008). As Robson (1993) advocates, a full record of the interview should be made by the interviewer. Silverman (2001) argues that it is very important to examine the nature of the conversation that takes place throughout the interview process, including different identities which the interviewees may be adopting because of different factors involved in the interview. These factors could be location, relative status, question content, etc. and this needs to be kept in mind by the researcher in order to minimise their adverse effects. The development of these skills enabled me to develop my skills and credibility as well as ensure the validity of the data that had been gathered.

Interviews were on a one-to-one basis and they began by asking a question to which the interviewee responded. This enabled the researcher to convey my interest in what the interviewees had to say and what could be learned from them (Lankshear and Knobel, 2004). With one-to-one interviews, interviewees were to commit to memory the focus of each question and the overall theme of the interview (Lankshear and Knobel, 2004). In this way, the researcher was able to remain flexible in asking questions, while ensuring that the data required for my study was generated over the course of the interview.

Interviewees might provide information in a designated 'place' rather than in the main setting. What they might say "...is always said at a particular point in time and within a contrived interaction" (Lankshear and Knobel, 2004, p.199). In other words, the interview might not capture everything that the interviewees think, feel and believe on particular subjects (Lankshear et al., 2004). This might have taken place in my attempt to extract specific

answers from the interviewees. This, on the other hand, could have caused bias in the responses and, on some occasions, interviewees might have obtained the impression that they were not being equally understood and being treated equally by the researcher. There was also a possibility that interviewees might misrepresent facts in order to satisfy me as the interviewer (Creswell, 2003). Therefore, at the beginning of the interview, it was highlighted to them how important it was to be honest and to present facts in the way that they occurred.

Interviews undertaken at the end of the second phase of the research had an informal character. All participants at the end of the second phase of the research were asked to evaluate the programme and comment on any future changes or improvements that could be made if the programme was to be delivered throughout the school. Once again questions included in this formal interview were open-ended to allow flexibility (Cohen et al., 2000).

Notwithstanding their limitations, interviews remain the best available means for accessing participants' opinions, beliefs, values and accounts of events at a particular point in time (Lankshear et al., 2004). Thus, it is the researchers believe that they enabled her to gather all the required data.

After having considered all the parameters relating to data that was gathered using interviews, it is pertinent to examine the use of the tool of content analysis as a means of further investigating the meaning of what was delivered through interviews.

### 3.6.1.2 Data collected through Content Analysis

Holsti (1968) described content analysis as:

“... a multipurpose research method developed specifically for investigating a broad spectrum of problems in which the content of communication serves as the basis of inference” (p.597).

Krippendorff (1980, p.21) defined content analysis as “...a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from data to their context”. Holsti (1968) then went on to argue that virtually all research within the social sciences depends fundamentally on the way researchers read and write materials. In an attempt to resolve dilemmas such as how to read written materials, Holsti (1968) identified three characteristics of content analysis - objectivity, system and generality - in order to achieve wide agreement in the literature. In this way, he attempts to interpret a careful reading of written materials. Thus, written materials always involve multiple meanings, and there is always some degree of interpretation when approaching it (Graneheim and Lundman, 2004). This appears to be an essential issue when discussing the trustworthiness of findings in qualitative content analysis.

The researcher has considered the unit of analysis for all the interviews. Parts of the text were considered as units of analysis. The meaning unit in the interviews is about obtaining information regarding the education of children with SEBD in a mainstream Greek-Cypriot primary school. Based on the central meaning of the interviews, three meaning units have been created - teachers' awareness of the concept of SEBD, kinds of SEBD behaviours observed within the classroom and the provision offered from the MOEC and the school in terms of support practices. These meaning units were condensed, abstracted and labelled with a code. The various codes were compared based on participant's answers on the different issues that were discussed, and they were sorted into further sub-categories, which include the

context. The categories were revised and discussed by two fellow researchers as recommended by Graneheim and Lundman (2004).

### 3.6.2 Observation

#### 3.6.2.1 Designing the observation paper

Observations were employed in a descriptive way to explore different situations and to develop an understanding of an inductive process (Rudi, 2006).

Classroom observations enabled me to:

- ✓ develop an understanding and provide evidence of whether or not it is feasible to implement the SEAL programme within the Greek-Cypriot setting;
- ✓ address the impact the programme had on children; and,
- ✓ address whether or not the programme supported teachers' work while working with children with SEBD.

Observations took place in the classroom setting and teachers that participated in the interview process were asked to deliver part of the SEAL programme to their children using a number of lesson plans that were provided.

To be able to produce lesson plans for each of the teachers, the following thinking took place. The SEAL programme is divided into seven themes, with each reflecting back on the five components it seeks to develop in children's - empathy, social skills, motivation, self-awareness and self-regulation (see Table 2.1, p.38).

For the purpose of this research the researcher chose to work with the theme of 'Changes', as it places emphasis in supporting children's behaviour. This was chosen because children's

behaviour appears to be the major problem that Greek teachers face in their attempts to support children with SEBD (Koundourou, 2007; Angelides, 2000). The specific theme aims to equip children with an understanding of different types of change, both positive and negative, and common human responses to such change. The theme seeks to develop the child's ability to understand and manage the feelings associated with change. It aims to develop knowledge, understanding and skills in three key social and emotional aspects of learning: motivation, social skills and managing feelings (DfES, 2005c).

Lesson plans were developed after carefully reading examples of lesson plans offered by SEAL's resource bank (DfES, 2003b; DfES, 2005c) and the way it approaches and analyses different issues, solely for the purpose of this research. Four lesson plans were produced for each year. The same lesson plans were produced for Years 1+2+3 with the plans for Years 2+3 having some extra activity sheets as children were able to write without their teacher's support. Even though all classes covered the same theme, each lesson plan was adequately managed in terms of the year group and the children's level of ability (Newell and Jeffery, 2002).

Observations aimed to see whether the frequency of particular behaviours observed on the part of children with SEBD had been reduced at the end of the implementation. For that reason, key characteristic behaviours that are the main cause of concern within the Greek-Cypriot mainstream primary education have been defined. Previous research (Koundourou, 2007) identified some of these behaviours: avoiding teachers' directions, shouting and talking loudly during the lesson, avoiding completing tasks, not concentrating during the lesson, messing around with things, interrupting the flow of the lesson, fighting with classmates,



being verbally and physically abusive towards teachers and classmates, destroying the schools' and other children's personal property.

From the above, only four categories were chosen:

- avoiding directions;
- causing distraction;
- being verbally abusive towards the teacher; and
- being verbally abusive towards classmates.

The reason for this is that the above four categories are the most predominant ones within Greek-Cypriot mainstream primary schools, and because they were also highlighted in the interviews. The next step was to find a way of tracking those behaviours during the lessons. Of necessity then, specific children with SEBD were observed during the lessons.

The question then arose as to how the researcher was going to know whether or not behaviours observed were presented by all children of the school and not just by children with SEBD. For that reason the researcher chose to observe a number of children with SEBD and a number of children without SEBD to be able to compare their behaviour patterns.

Each lesson was forty minutes long and was divided into four parts:

- introduction;
- main part A – delivering the new lesson;
- main part B – practice exercise on the delivered lesson;
- conclusion – summary of the lesson.

Ten minutes were spent observing the children in each section. As a result, ten children were observed for one minute during each part of the lesson, meaning that each child was observed four times. In these observations, my priority was to include all children with SEBD and, for the rest of the time include children without SEBD.

From the above it is obvious that structured observations take a good deal of time to be prepared. However, according to Cohen et al. (2000) their analysis is straightforward as the different categories chosen to be analyzed are built into the schedule itself. Having said this, it is also important to highlight that the researcher needed to practice completing the schedule until she became proficient and consistent when it came to entering data, as usually observations consist of many categories (Cohen et al., 2000), and to avoid making mistakes in the actual observation.

This decision for the criteria for choosing children with SEBD was made before the implementation of the programme, where the researcher was given time to observe children in order to identify which presented characteristics of problematic behaviour and therefore fitted into the criteria of children presenting SEBD.

Each class was observed eight times - twice at the beginning to identify target children and to gather together general characteristics regarding their behaviour within the classroom (Robson, 2002; Cohen et al., 2000), once before the implementation of the framework to address behaviours, four times during the implementation and once at the end, to enable me to compare the results in terms of the data gathered (see Appendix 12, p. 406).

Behaviours were observed and analyzed in a manageable way but, at the same time, the researcher tried not to ignore what might have been potentially important (Rudi, 2006).

Therefore clear boundaries were set, the researcher concentrated during the observation process, and tried to ignore external distractions during the implementation.

By providing boundaries, the researcher intended to have an explicit understanding of what it was that she wanted to observe, and to follow the same rules for all the observations. This provided the opportunity to gain a better understanding of different contexts, and to observe possible behaviours that teachers might have unconsciously missed.

As Malderez (2003) argues, observation is commonly used in education as a tool to sustain understanding and development. It is a common way of getting information which can help the researcher decode educational situations, measure the effectiveness of educational practices and endeavour to achieve improvement. Within the process of understanding observations, the researcher had to decide whether to stay as an ordinary participant, or whether to become a participant observer. Spradley (1980) offered a simple definition for each of these. The ordinary participant enters a social situation with only one purpose - to engage in the appropriate activities. On the other hand, the participant observer enters the social situation with two purposes - to engage in activities appropriate to the situation and to observe the activities, people, and physical aspects of the situation. The former is the adopted position of this research.

The participants experiences being both an insider and an outsider simultaneously. In other words, the researcher's experience of participating in the social situation of the classroom became meaningful and coherent when she took on the role of a participant who experienced what took place, instead of just experiencing it in an immediate, subjective manner (Spradley, 1980).

As a participant observer the researcher engaged in non-participation (acting solely as an observer) during the observations and found an 'observation post' from which to observe and record what went on (Spradley, 1980). As Breakwell et al. (2006) argue, the role of the observer is characterized by detachment from the group being studied. The advantages of this method include access to a wide range of materials, even private information, if it becomes known that the observer can ensure anonymity for the group members. As for the disadvantages, they include constraints on confidentiality when reporting, and a sense of marginality, since the observer is only a temporary part of the world of the group members. The researcher also had to be mindful of the need to maintain a degree of even-handedness or neutrality, relative to internal alliances and factions within the group (Rudi, 2006).

In this study, structured observations were used where the observational data was used to either confirm or refute the hypotheses set at the beginning (Cohen et al., 2000). This gave the researcher the chance to make comparisons between settings and situations. Structured observations also enabled the researcher to adopt a passive, non-intrusive role, simply by recording the incidence of the factors being studied. As Robson (2002, p.310) states, "Structured observations call for a heavy investment of time and effort and should not be used without careful consideration of their resource implications in real world research".

However, classroom observation is not without its disadvantages. One such disadvantage is the issue of the degree to which the observer directly influences the behaviours or the situations being observed. This may be considered particularly applicable to observations carried out in the classroom as, in this study, the researcher was in close proximity to the children. In situations such as this, it might have been more feasible and advantageous if a lower degree of participation had been adopted or, in other words, if the researcher had acted

as a passive participant observer (Spradley, 1980). In this situation the researcher would have played the part of a non-participant observer. Nevertheless, it is possible that the researcher might have become a marginal participant, always being uncertain of ever knowing what the behaviour would have been like (Robson, 2002). This influence was minimised by providing the chance for the participants to accustom themselves to my presence in the classroom. In this way, the presence of the researchers within the classroom during the actual observation was more likely to go unnoticed.

#### 3.6.2.2 Analyzing Data gathered from Observations

Observations were qualitatively analysed with the use of SPSS; and more specifically with the use of the Wilcoxon signed – rank test. The Wilcoxon signed – rank test is used in situations in which there are two sets of scores to compare, with these two scores coming from the same participants. This particular test is based on the differences between scores in the two conditions that are compared. Once these differences have been calculated, they are ranked, but the sign of the difference (positive or negative) is assigned to the rank. In this way behaviours before, during and after the implementation can be compared (Field, 2009).

#### 3.6.3 Establishing Trustworthiness

To persuade participants that the findings of the enquiry are worth taking seriously, as well as making this study believable and trustworthy, it was essential to establish a degree of trustworthiness. Trustworthiness is connected with the concepts of validity and reliability (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). It is about determining the quality to participants and secondly, enabling the researcher to obtain a good quality of recorded data (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). Trustworthiness refers to reliability (the consistency or stability of a measure; for example if

the study was to be repeated, would the same results be obtained?) and validity (whether the findings of this study are ‘really’ about what they appear to be about) (Robson, 2002; Fitzner, 2007).

### *Validity*

Each researcher that is about to carry out his/her research takes the risk that either the interviewer or the interviewee brings his/her own, often unconscious, experimental and biographical baggage with him/her into the interview situation (Cohen et al., 2000). Indeed Hitchcock and Hughes (1995 in Cohen et al., 2000, p.121) argue that:

“Because interviews are interpersonal, humans interacting with humans, it is inevitable that the researcher will have some influence on the interviewee and, thereby, on the data”.

Also, gender, status, social class and age in certain contexts can also be persuasive sources of bias in an interview setting (Sceurich, 1995).

To achieve greater validity, it is necessary to diminish the amount of bias on the part of the interviewer (Cohen et al., 2000). Therefore, to avoid this, the researcher needed to be able to see the interviewees in their own image, in other words to see interviewees for they really are, and to avoid judging them for what they might say in the interview. The researcher also needed to make sure that the questions asked of the interviewees would not cause any misunderstandings on their part in their attempt to understand the questions and to answer them (Cohen et al., 2000).

Another crucial issue that needed to be borne in mind was the issue of internal validity. Internal validity tends to include the following question: was the researcher able to receive the answers that she wanted with the use of interviews? (Fitzner, 2007). According to Bloor

(1978), this issue can be underpinned by using open-ended questions. This way enabled the researcher to examine all the potential relevant aspects of the research questions.

On questions concerning the validity of using observation-based research, there seems to be a debate between two aspects: the subjective and the idiosyncratic nature of the participants. When undertaking observations there is always a fear as to whether or not results gathered from a specific piece of research are going to be applicable to other situations. Also there is a fear of the possibility that judgments made by the researcher might affect the conclusions arrived at, as the researcher was the one who was responsible for carrying out the research (Cohen et al., 2000).

This is an issue that was highlighted earlier in this chapter while discussing the issues of generalisability and representation. Conclusions and results produced will reflect practices that will reflect on the population of the school being studied. Having said that, in Cyprus there is evidence to support the belief that children with SEBD generate problems for teaching practice. Each school may vary regarding the extent of this problem, the way practitioners perceive it, identify it and analyze it, the way they implement different teaching practices, and many other things. But what this study aims to do is to present findings based on the case study school and, in the end, after presenting the findings and conclusions, leaving it up to the research community and other readers to form their own conclusions, bearing in mind the current situation within the school.

As for the possibility that the researcher might affect findings as a result of the researcher's perspective she will try to eliminate this by presenting her findings in the exact way they were perceived, and ensuring that different judgments and conclusions that have been made were based on the setting and problems/findings that were encountered within the school.

There are authors who argue that validity is a useful criterion for guiding or assessing research, and they try to offer useful guidelines in order to achieve it (Fitzner, 2007; Denscombe, 2002; Robson, 2002, Cohen et al., 2000; Fraenkel et al., 2006). There are also authors such as Silverman (2000) who argue that the issue of validity is not important. Silverman (2000) does not accept validity as a valid criterion for guiding or judging work that has been undertaken, and poses the following questions in support of his argument: How can the researchers be sure that they measure what they have undertaken to measure? How do they know that they deal with issues of validity in the right way?

The researcher would argue that, by setting boundaries and following specific guidelines, the above questions can be ignored. In this research it has been important to try and present results that can be considered to be valid. In this way, the chances of getting wrong results are reduced. It is my responsibility to be specific about the tools used and the questions asked for data collecting purposes. To make sure that the results were valid, data gathering tools were piloted prior to the study being undertaken.

### *Reliability*

Reliability in this research was controlled with the use of highly structured interviews, using the same format and sequence of words and questions for each respondent (Silverman, 2001), even though Scheurich (1995, pp.241-9) suggests that:

“...this is to misread the infinite complexity and open-endedness of social interaction: controlling the wording is no guarantee of controlling the interview”.

Bearing this argument in mind, the researcher agrees with Scheurich (1995). In the researcher's attempt to control reliability within the interviews, the use of a highly structured



interview minimised the chances of controlling the interview, as well as of receiving desirable responses.

Nevertheless, Silverman (2001) presents a number of possible ways of overcoming problems with regard to reliability when using interviews. He suggests that reliability in interviews can be enhanced through a careful piloting of interview schedules; the training of interviewers; ensuring inter-rater reliability while coding participants' responses, as well as the extended use of closed questions. This is because some constructionists such as Glaser and Muller assume that people's cultural worlds are very complex. Therefore it is very important to 'pre-test' an interview schedule prior to the commencement of the study (Silverman, 2001). This way of working enables more reliable results to be gathered as part of the research.

Another way of establishing the reliability of observations is by ensuring the observer's consistency (Hops et al., 1995). Observer's consistency in this research was achieved by choosing the sample carefully, and being clear about what was observed. This enabled the researcher to obtain the same results while measuring the same behaviour on different occasions during the observation process.

Nevertheless, it is also important to ensure that data gathered from observations is reliable (Hops et al., 1995). Therefore it was considered essential for a second observer to be present during the observation process. In this way, while analyzing data from observations, the researcher was able to see whether inter-reliability had been successfully introduced (Robson, 2002).

According to Robson (2002), in the natural sciences, the essential test of reliability is whether or not it has been directly replicated by an independent investigator, an approach that is not

feasible in flexible designs. Identical circumstances cannot be re-created in order to attempt to replicate them. As Bloor (1978) puts it:

“ Social life contains elements which are generalizable across settings (thus providing for the possibility of social sciences) and other elements that are particular to given settings (thus forever limiting the predictive power of the social sciences)” (p.37)

However, attempting to re-create identical circumstances to ensure reliability might not be feasible in this research. This is because the way boundaries are set up may be differently understood by someone else. Also, within the school, most teachers arrive and leave by the end of the school year, and some children might change school. Therefore attempting to re-create the same circumstances might not be possible due to physical constraints.

Bearing everything that has been said with regard to validity and reliability in mind, in the researcher's attempt to produce consistent results, the researcher concentrated on ways of avoiding falling into the 'common pitfalls' while collecting data from observations (Mason, 1996). This was achieved by avoiding the pitfall of environmental distractions and the influences that this could have on the participants, in addition to the different interruptions that could occur while carrying out the observations (Easton et al., 2000). This pitfall was avoided by arranging, ahead of time, the place where the interview was to take place. That place was a quiet room away from the main flow of activity (Easton et al., 2000).

In terms of validity/reliability it is also important when setting up both interviews and observations, to state the length of time they will take, and the importance of being able to finish uninterrupted (Easton et al., 2000). This reinforces the importance of what the participant has to say to the researcher. It might be impossible to avoid all the pitfalls of

environmental hazards; however, researchers should make every effort to minimise the problems that can be caused by the environment (Easton et al., 2000).

The researcher also needed to seriously concern herself with being thorough, careful and honest in carrying out this research, something that was achieved by being ‘audit trailed’ (Robson, 2002). ‘Audit trailing’ is a way of keeping a full record of my activities while carrying out this study, including raw data (transcripts of data and field notes), research journal and details of the coding that were used as part of the data analysis (Robson, 2002). At the end of each visit, after leaving the school, the researcher could keep detailed notes of what happened throughout the lessons that were being observed. These notes can be kept at the bottom of each observation paper that will be used. The notes that can be kept could include notes regarding observed children’s behaviour, and some general notes on the different strategies and attitudes used by the teachers.

### 3.7 Piloting the research instruments

#### 3.7.1 The Importance of Piloting

“The choice of methods by a researcher turns on whether the intent is to specify the type of information to be collected in advance of the study or to allow it to emerge from participants in the project” (Creswell, 2003, p.17).

At this point it was essential to pilot the research tools to examine whether or not they measured what they were meant to measure (Teijlingen and Hundley, 2002). It provided the researcher with the chance to ‘pre-test’ or even ‘try-out’ particular research instruments that were chosen as part of the research (Baker, 1994), and to collect data on a narrow spectrum of the study’s analytical topics (Frankland and Bloor, 1999). In the case of the interviews,

piloting helped the researcher to decide as to which type would be most appropriate in collecting the required data. In the case of observations, through piloting, the researcher was able to see whether or not the observation paper measured what it was supposed to measure. The general idea behind sampling is that results can be generalised from the sample that is going to participate in the actual study, to the rest of the population (Hicks, 2004).

On the other hand, piloting does not always guarantee success in the main study, as it does not provide statistical evidence and, most of the time, it is based on a small-scale sample (Teijlingen and Hundley, 2002). However, it does increase the likelihood of success in the main study, as it enables the researcher to justify the research method or particular research tool being used (Teijlingen and Hundley, 2002).

### 3.7.2 Piloting interviews

#### 3.7.2.1 Implementing the Pilot

Three Greek-Cypriot primary school teachers who already had experience of working with children with SEBD took part in the pilot. This way of working enabled the researcher to gather information from people who had experience in working with children with SEBD and who were aware of the different problems that occur regarding their education (Koundourou, 2007).

#### 3.7.2.2 Description of the Pilot

Interviewees were first interviewed using an unstructured interview, and then using a semi-structured interview, to enable the researcher to see which of the two ways of interviewing appeared to be most effective for use in the actual research. The fact that the two types of interview schedules were used at the same time might have affected the responses provided

with regard to the second type of interviewing. Using an unstructured interview at the beginning had the advantage of allowing participants to be better prepared to answer the questions asked in the semi-structured interview. This way of working undoubtedly affected those participants when they responded to the second interview. Nevertheless, this showed that, in the real interview situation, if the interviewees were provided with the appropriate information before the start of the interview, they would be in a better position to answer the questions asked.

At the beginning of each interview, interviewees were thanked for agreeing to participate in the pilot study. Then the researcher introduced herself and explained the purpose of undertaking the research, clarifying the main aims and objectives as well as the possible outcomes of the interview. This enabled participants to give their informed consent. All participants were assured that they would remain anonymous and, even though they were going to be audio-taped, their names were not going to be mentioned while recording. Interviewees were assured that all responses would remain confidential, that they had the right to withdraw at any time, as well as the right to refuse to answer any questions they did not like.

After piloting the interviews, different issues came up regarding both unstructured and semi-structured interviews that needed to be taken into consideration. Interviewees appeared to be more comfortable with the use of semi-structured interviews as they were guided all the way through the interview towards particular aspects. The interviewees were also very keen on answering different questions where their personal opinion was required. Avoiding asking any personal questions in unstructured interviews sometimes made it complicated, in that when the interviewees attempted to explain something, they had to go back and clarify either their

position within the school, or reflect on their experiences to support what they were trying to say.

In the second part of the semi-structured interviews, the interviewees found it slightly difficult to fully reflect on the topic as, when the piloting was carried out, they were studying in England. Nevertheless, they answered these questions by reflecting on the schools where they had worked in the past. When they were asked to evaluate the situation as part of the interview, they claimed that some teachers might not feel comfortable providing all the necessary information, as they might not wish to say something negative about the school, because some of the teachers in the school would receive a copy of the final report. Therefore, some of the answers that participants might provide might not be as clear as the researcher would like them to be, or might even fail to present what is actually happening within the school. As to the above consideration, it might be worth attempting to simplify the questions so as to enable the interviewees to provide answers that will not reflect directly on other teachers, or on the head-teacher of the school. Participants will also be reassured that whatever had been recorded would remain private and confidential, and if data provided and presented within the study ever did come out in some form, then it would be in such a way that none of the school staff would be offended.

With regard to the semi-structured interview, interviewees also commented that some of the questions might have to be re-written in order to make them more explicit. The researcher found herself in agreement with this statement as, on occasions, the meaning of some of the questions was not clear and interviews had to provide key points to keep the discussion going. Not having clear questions might cause some degree of discomfort to interviewees and, at the same time, might allow them to lead the interview in an inappropriate direction. Therefore, it

was concluded that unstructured interviews were not the most appropriate way for collecting the data required for this study, as more detailed answers are required from interviewees and this was going to be more successfully provided with the use of semi-structured interviews, where more guidance is provided.

In conclusion, while piloting the data collection tools, it emerged that there was a need to talk to participants at their level of understanding, in order to be able to obtain useful answers (Rogers, 1980).

Semi-structured interviews enabled the interviewees to provide the researcher with answers that reflected the purpose of the study and for the interviewees to identify the initial focus of the inquiry. These questions reflected the aim, which was to achieve a depth of understanding with regard to the particular concepts being studied. This type of questioning also led to more focused sampling and information gathering as the study progressed (Fossey et al., 2002). On the other hand, unstructured questions appeared to be more difficult for the researcher to process as, most of the time, interviewees needed the researcher to be more specific.

The fact that the pilot study sample was small and the interviewees were not currently working in any mainstream primary schools in Cyprus, made it difficult for the researcher to make any assumptions with regard to the full-scale study. Nonetheless, through the responses the researcher received, the effectiveness and the relevance of the tools that were proposed to use were justified. Additionally, the feedback and the participants' responses justified the use of semi-structured interviews. Finally, piloting interviews provided the researcher with the opportunity to practice and gain experience in using them, and fostered some degree of confidence.

At the end of the pilot interviews, the interviewees participated in a draft implementation of the programme which they would be asked to implement at another stage of the study. Participants found it easy to follow and to take part. At the end they were able to evaluate it, and make some suggestions for improvements. The semi-structured type of interview was easy to follow and it engaged their enthusiasm and encouraged them to participate. Guidelines were clear and easy to follow.

### 3.7.3 Piloting Observations

#### 3.7.3.1 Implementation of the Pilot

Piloting observations took place in a Greek Community School in England. Observations took place at their school during the literacy lessons which were 40 minutes in length. Classes in Years 1 and 2 were observed. The class teachers informed their children of the researcher's intention to watch their lesson and see how they were progressing. During the observation, the researcher was seated at the back of the classroom to avoid interfering with the flow of the lesson. Their aim was to determine whether elements added to the observation paper would enable her to examine whether the structure of the specific observation paper would measure what it was designed to measure.

#### 3.7.3.2 Description of the pilots

The layout of the classroom was drawn and the number of the children who were going to be observed was highlighted. This is something that needs to be arranged before the commencement of the actual observation to avoid wasting any time numbering the participants. Another issue that came up was the need to spend some time with each class to familiarise the children with the researcher's presence, to reduce the likelihood of getting



mixed up with the children that were going to be observed. Also, the place where the researcher was going to be seated needed to be arranged in advance, so that all children would be visible to the researcher during the observation process.

If the observer observed behaviour that had been repeated two or three times within the minute each individual was observed, they would mark it with a number at the top (1, 2, 3 etc).

A limitation of the observation paper was that it was necessary to create a place on the observation paper to keep a note of the time, since the observation paper was divided into four parts based on the structure of the lesson. Another important issue was the need to be able to keep a close eye on the time, since each child in each part of the observation paper had to be observed for one minute. To achieve this, it was decided that the use of a stopwatch would be very helpful. Finally, to achieve greater reliability, a second observer was going to be required.

### 3.8 Brief summary

This chapter describes methodological tools for gathering data through semi-structured interviews and structured observation procedures relating to support offered to teachers at schools regarding support for children with behaviour problems and the analysis of behaviours observed before, during and after the implementation of the SEAL programme to address possible changes to children's behaviour. The philosophical paradigm that shaped the theoretical stance around the research methodology was also described. The two tools that were chosen to be used in the research were thoroughly examined. The choice of sample and the issue of trustworthiness is considered in depth. The relevant methodology for semi-

structured interviews and structured observations is described. Content analysis is used as a means of analysing quotes gathered from teachers during the interview process. A Wilcoxon signed – rank test is also used as means of analysing data gathered from the observation process. Therefore, what follows in the next chapter is a description of the fieldwork involved in collecting data.

## **CHAPTER 4 – THEORETICAL METHODS/FIELDWORK IN ACTION**

### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter is a description of the fieldwork involved in collecting data relating to whether the SEAL programme can be effectively introduced into mainstream Greek-Cypriot primary schools to support children with SEBD in order to improve their behaviour. There follows a description of the timetable that was followed with all the activities that took place during data collection. In this chapter there will also be a detailed presentation of how both interview and observation data were collected.

### **4.2 Timetable**

In order to obtain greater quality of data and to be able to answer the research questions more successfully, the fieldwork was designed in four phases, Phases One, Two, Three and Four. Phase One involved interviews with the teachers who were going to implement the framework. Phase Two involved the series of observations of the teachers. During this phase a seminar was also carried out. Phase Three involved a series of informal interviews after the implementation of the SEAL programme and Phase Four included informal interviews with participants a year after the implementation of the programme. The first three phases are set out in the timetable provided below, with data being collected over a five week period.

**Fieldwork / 5 Weeks Timetable**

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
<b>Week 1 (26/01/09)</b>	<p><b>- Ice Breaking</b> (meet head-teacher/teachers/children)</p> <p><b>- Observation Part A(i)</b></p> <p>Gather demographic data on the classrooms and decide which children to observe</p> <p>A1 – 6<sup>th</sup> period B2 – 4<sup>rd</sup> period C1 – 7<sup>th</sup> period</p>	<p><b>Interview</b> A1 teacher</p> <p><b>Interview</b> B1 teacher</p> <p><b>Interview</b> C1 teacher</p>	<p><b>Observation Part A(ii)</b></p> <p>Gather notes on behaviours observed with regard to the children</p> <p>A1 – 6<sup>th</sup> period B2 – 4<sup>rd</sup> period C1 – 7<sup>th</sup> period</p>	<p><b>Observation Part B</b></p> <p>A1 – 6<sup>th</sup> period B2 – 4<sup>rd</sup> period C1 – 7<sup>th</sup> period</p> <p>(observe target children before the implementation of the SEAL programme)</p>	HOLIDAY
<b>Week 2 (02/02/09)</b>	<p><b>Seminar on SEAL</b> (4<sup>th</sup> period)</p>		<p><b>Observation Part C(i)</b></p> <p>Observe behaviours during the implementation of the SEAL programme</p> <p>A1 – 6<sup>th</sup> period B2 – 4<sup>th</sup> period C1 – 7<sup>th</sup> period</p>		

<b>Week 3</b> <b>(09/02/09)</b>			<b>Observation Part C(ii)</b>  Observe behaviours during the implementation of the SEAL programme  A1 – 6 <sup>th</sup> period B2 – 4 <sup>th</sup> period C1 – 7 <sup>th</sup> period		
<b>Week 4</b> <b>(16/02/09)</b>			<b>Observation Part C(iii)</b>  Observe behaviours during the implementation of the SEAL programme  A1 – 6 <sup>th</sup> period B2 – 4 <sup>th</sup> period C1 – 7 <sup>th</sup> period		
<b>Week 5</b> <b>(23/02/09)</b>			<b>Observation Part C(iv)</b>  Observe behaviours during the implementation of the SEAL programme  A1 – 6 <sup>th</sup> period B2 – 4 <sup>th</sup> period C1 – 7 <sup>th</sup> period	<b>Observation Part D</b>  Observe behaviours after the implementation of the SEAL programme A1 – 6 <sup>th</sup> period B2 – 4 <sup>rd</sup> period C1 – 7 <sup>th</sup> period	<b>Informal interviews</b>  with the three teachers and the head-teacher after the implementation of the SEAL programme

*[table 4.1] 5 weeks Timetable*

Following the timetable above, the fieldwork for the implementation is described below.

### 4.3 Fieldwork

#### 4.3.1 Meeting the participants

After contacting the head teacher of the school, a meeting was arranged prior the study to sign the forms for obtaining permission to conduct the study on the school premises. The head teacher informed the teachers of the school about the project that the researcher intended to carry out by providing them with brief details of the main aims and objectives of the study and possible future outcomes this study could have on both teachers and children of the school. A letter was given to the group of teachers that was going to be selected (teachers from Y1+2+3) to inform them directly about who the researcher was and what were her intentions and expectations of them, i.e. to be interviewed, to take part in an illustration of the framework and, at the end, be interviewed once again (see Appendices 4/5, p. 387/388).

The teachers who were willing to take part in the study informed the head teacher by signing a formal agreement that was located in his office. Three teachers out of six who taught the first three years signed the forms. This part of the process was achieved without any difficulty.

Informed consent forms were also sent to the parents/guardians of the children who were going to participate. This appeared to be a less complicated procedure, as expected by the researcher, as the majority of the parents usually wait for their children outside their classroom to pick them up at the end of the day. On those occasions, the children's teachers took the opportunity to provide them with some information about the programme that the

researcher intended to implement. Parents/guardians who were willing to let their child participate in the research either signed the form straight away or returned it the following day. At this stage it is worth mentioning that the majority of the parents/guardians were very interested on the project, including the parents of those children who were presenting behavioural problems at home and at school. Most of the forms were signed and returned to the researcher. From the fifty forms given to parents/guardians of the children to sign, forty six came back positive and four were negative.

In terms of the children who were not going to participate in the study, there is a rule within the school that under no circumstances are children to be moved from their classroom to another lesson or class. Therefore, some extra activities (reading a book of their choice and be ready to discuss it at the end of the lesson) were arranged by their teachers to keep them busy during the implementation and to avoid causing any distractions.

At the beginning of the fieldwork, the researcher arranged to have face-to-face conversations with the participants (the head-teacher and the teachers), explaining to them in more detail her intentions regarding the study, and the procedure that was going to be followed. At the same time, they were reassured that their participation would not interfere with their daily work schedule. This way of working allowed me to create the right climate and to prepare and put at ease the participants with regard to the different kinds of questions they were going to be asked, as well as to have the chance to talk further about the study in detail (Roulston, de Marrais and Lewis, 2003; Warren, 2002).

It was emphasized to the teachers that the specific framework was not only going to benefit children with SEBD in terms of future practice, but also the whole class as well as their own

teaching practices. It was also made explicit to them that none of the children with SEBD was going to be stigmatized with regard to their difficulties/problems throughout the implementation of the programme. That is why all the activities to be included in the programme were to be introduced to the whole class.

In Chapter 3 – Methodology, it is explained why the researcher chose to work with just one school. This was to concentrate more precisely on the research aims and objectives. Therefore, obtaining a personal contact with the participants was highly important to ensuring their participation, and to convince them of the value of the future outcomes of this study on their teaching practice while working with children with SEBD. This procedure also provided teachers with the opportunity to share their personal experiences while working with children with SEBD with the researcher, and vice versa, and was an informal way to convince them that, in a practical way, and when there was willingness on their part alongside appropriate support and guidance, they could obtain better outcomes when working with children with SEBD.

During the face-to-face conversations, the researcher introduced herself as a SEN teacher and researcher studying the concept of SEBD. Participants were reassured that it was not the researcher's intention to judge them as practitioners, nor their practices, and the kind of support they offer to children with SEBD. Instead, they were reassured that the researcher's intentions were to illustrate the specific programme based on what already existed within the school context to help them while teaching children with SEBD. This process gave the researcher the opportunity to gain the participants' trust and, at the same time, to encourage them to open themselves to her. As recommended by many authors, such as Cohen et al. (2000), Robson (2002) and Denzin and Lincoln (2005), introducing myself, my current work,



and the reasons for conducting the study including my research aims and objectives prior to the data collection, would give the participants the chance to prepare themselves with regard to the theme for both interviews and observations. At the same time this process enabled them to become more conscious and, at the same time, more aware of what the researcher was hoping to examine through this research.

Face-to-face conversations also engaged the teachers' interest, participation and co-operation throughout the study. Teachers became more empowered and encouraged to create a multidisciplinary team that was going to co-operate with the researcher, over the period of the researchers stay at the school, for the implementation of the programme. As Reynolds and Fletcher-Janzen (2002) argue, the term 'multi-disciplinary' can be defined as an implementation unit that is set up which consists of different people with diverse and specialized training who coordinate their unique performances in order to provide different and appropriate services for children. This suggests and highlights the importance of working together as a team, with the aim of achieving the same goal which, in this case, was to support teachers in terms of their teaching practices with regard to children with SEBD, as well as helping individuals with SEBD improve their behaviour.

The researcher decided it was appropriate to undertake this study in the middle of January. This period was chosen because, after the Christmas break, teachers were less busy organising school performances, activities and exams for children. Children, on the other hand, were more settled down after the Christmas vacation.

#### 4.3.2 Phase One – Interviews

Interviews with teachers were carried out within their classrooms during their breaks, where they felt more comfortable. The head-teacher was interviewed in his office during his free period. The main objective of the interviews was to capture the different strategies that were in place in the school for supporting children with SEBD, as well as to capture the knowledge and understanding of the teachers around the concept of SEBD, and to support them adequately during the seminar. Before the commencement of the interviews, each participant signed an informed consent form and, at the same time, were reassured that their identity would remain anonymous and confidential throughout all the stages of the research. After their completion, all data was coded and transferred to paper following the procedure described in Chapter 3. The duration of the interviews was 30-35 minutes and all were voice recorded.

#### 4.3.3 Phase Two – Observations

Before undertaking the observations, the researcher arranged to spend some time with the children who were going to participate in the study, observing them to get to know them better and to become more familiar with the behaviours that they presented. These observations also enabled the children to get used to the presence of the researcher during their lessons, in order to avoid causing any distractions during the observation process. This process also enabled the gathered data to be more valid and reliable (Cohen et al., 2000). Lofland (1971) stated that if the researcher already has links with the target group, this may provide a 'pre-existing relationship of trust'. In that way the researcher was expecting the children to act naturally during the actual observations and that her presence would cause

fewer distractions. This enabled the researcher to avoid any bias, as the presence of the observer who was a stranger might lead to different behaviour on the part of the participants (children).

To ensure inter-reliability of findings, a second observer was also present during the observation process. The researcher chose the second observer as someone who was directly involved with primary children. Consequently, the second observer was a primary teacher. The researcher fully explained the different procedures that were to be followed to her, providing explicit details of the structure of the observation paper, which children were going to be observed, what behaviours the researcher was looking to identify, and how these behaviours should be noted on the observation paper.

Observations took place after the interviews, by which time a clear picture had been obtained with regard to how the school works in providing support to children with SEBD, and appropriate changes were made to the framework before the implementation, solely for the purposes of the research. Each classroom was observed eight times; twice at the beginning to gather general information about the target children and their behaviour, once prior the implementation of the programme to record behaviours before the implementation of the programme, four times during the implementation and once at the end to record children's behaviours after the SEAL programme has been removed.

Observations on Parts A and B took place during the first week and observations on Part C took place once a week for four weeks during reading/library time. This specific period was chosen because, during that time, children get the chance to read a book and practice their reading skills, improve their ability to summarize, and be able to answer questions regarding

what they have read. Therefore, it was going to be more flexible for teachers to skip reading/library periods instead of skipping literacy and numeracy. Therefore, there was no interruption in the teachers' daily timetable. Observation on Part D took place the day after the Part C observations had been completed.

Prior the implementation, it was essential that the teachers were fully informed with regard to what the researcher was aiming to get from the observations while they implemented the programme. To achieve this aim, a seminar took place aiming to inform teachers in detail about the concept of SEBD, as well as addressing the main aims and objectives of the framework that they were about to implement. The teachers were also introduced to the different concepts that underlie the SEAL programme, where they were given the opportunity to be introduced to the five components that, when used effectively within the lesson, can help children with SEBD deal with their social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. In the seminar the different steps that were going to be followed during the implementation of the framework were fully explained to the teachers. In addition, all the lesson plans that were going to be used by the teachers were fully explained.

Four lesson plans were produced for each year. The same lesson plans were produced for Years 1+2+3 (seven to ten years old) with the plans for Years 2+3 having some extra activity sheets as children were able to write without their teachers' support. Even though all classes covered the same theme, each lesson plan was adequately managed in terms of the year group and the children's level of ability (Newell and Jeffery, 2002). Materials and resources were prepared to be delivered to the children, alongside a detailed explanation of the nature of the programme (see Appendices 13/14/15/16/17/18/19/20, p. 408/410/412/413/415/417/418/419)

During the observations the researcher sat at the back of the classroom. This was away from the children but offered the researcher a clear view of each of the children who were being observed.

#### 4.3.4 Phase Three – Interviews after the implementation

After the implementation it was necessary to conduct informal interviews with each of the teachers to obtain their impressions and comments on the programme, and their impressions of the impact it had had on children with SEBD. The evaluation of the programme took place during the last day at the school, with all the teachers together in a group. The teachers were very cooperative in sharing their thoughts and feelings with the researcher.

#### 4.3.5 Phase Four – Interviews a year after the implementation

A year after the implementation, it was necessary to conduct informal interviews with the participants to obtain information regarding their current practices. Their aim was to find out whether teachers still use some of the teaching practices that they were introduced during the implementation, and whether there were any changes in the children's behaviour since the last time they were observed.

### 4.4 Brief Summary

What has been outlined in this chapter is the process that took place during data collection. In the next chapter, the data gathered from both interviews and observations will be presented analytically.

## **CHAPTER 5 – PRESENTATION OF DATA**

### **5.1 Demographic data of the school and the participants**

Information on the school's current situation regarding the education of children with SEBD could have been obtained from the school's policy papers that refer to the 1999 Law with regard to the Education and Training of Children with SEN in Cyprus (MOEC, 1999). Nevertheless, based on previous research (Koundourou, 2007), it was concluded that the law and the provision offered in Greek-Cypriote schools is far from what is actually happening in schools. Therefore, interviews were chosen as the primary research tool for data collection in order to gather relevant information.

The main sources of data for this study consisted of interviews conducted with three teachers and the head-teacher of the school, and observations of the participant teachers with their classroom children. Responses from the 4 participants are identified by the codes teacher A/B/C and the head-teacher. These codes are also used to identify their classes (Teacher A with Class A, etc). Details regarding the participants and the case study school are as follows. Children participated in the study are identified by the codes X1, X2, etc.

The case study school selected for this study was a mainstream Greek-Cypriot primary school located in a lower to middle class suburb in a Cyprus town. The breakdown of the number of children in each year group, the number of children with SEBD, details regarding observed children, as well as the number of teachers working within the school at the time of the data collection, is shown below in Tables 5.1/5.2/5.3/5.4/5.5/5.6.

<b>Number of children within the school: 260</b>		
Year 1 (age group 6-7 years old)	<b>A1 16 (8,8)</b>	A2 17 (8,9)
Year 2 (age group 7-8 years old)	B1 15 (7,6)	<b>B2 15 (8,7)</b>
Year 3 (age group 8-9 years old)	<b>C1 23 (12,11)</b>	C2 24 (14,10)
Year 4 (age group 9-10 years old)	D1 26 (13,13)	D2 27 (13,14)
Year 5 (age group 10-11 years old)	E1 27 (12,15)	E2 26 (14,12)
Year 6 (age group 11-12 years old)	F1 27 (14,13)	F2 27 (13,14)

Table 5.1 *Breakdown of year groups of children within the school (classes in bold are the ones that took part in this research).*

<b>Children with SEBD according to the school statistics</b>	
<b>A1 5</b>	A2 1
B1 1	<b>B2 3</b>
<b>C1 4</b>	C2 1
D1 3	D2 2
E1 2	E2 4
F1 5	F2 4

Table 5.2 *Breakdown of the number of children with SEBD within the school (numbers in bold are the number of children that were involved in this research)*

According to the head teacher of the school, 13.5% of the children are considered to have SEBD. Children with SEBD have been identified either by a specialist or by the teachers of the school. The head-teacher also added that the majority of the parents of children with SEBD appear to be divorced, with the child living with one of the parents. In some other families there is violence within the family. He stated that the children's parents in some situations appear to be aware of their child's problem. However, in most cases, parents are unable to offer any additional support due to a lack of knowledge and a lack of free time to spend with their child, as most of them appear to have more than one job.

The above paragraph leads to the conclusion that there is a possibility that teachers might be using the above factors as a means of identifying children with SEBD within their school. In this way children are stigmatized with the SEBD label, something that can have a negative impact on the teachers' attitudes towards those children. As it will be later on argued in Chapter 6, failing to identify the children's needs, can result in teachers having a wrong understanding on the problems these children might be presenting, teachers will fail to use the appropriate teaching strategies to support their needs, and at the same time teachers could influence those children's classmates based on the opinion they have on the particular group of children.

Once again, as previously mentioned in section 2.3 (p. 20) Cyprus lacks a solid definition regarding children with SEBD and therefore the head-teacher of the case study school gave the above percentage based on the number of children who come from problematic family backgrounds. Consequently, this percentage is particularly accurate.



Table 5.3/5.4/5.5 (p. 164/165/166) gives further details concerning the sample of children who participated in the study. Information on children characteristics in terms of behaviour are based on information gathered during the first part of the observation process.

	<b>Child</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age (at interview)</b>	<b>Characteristics of behaviour</b>	<b>Extra support offered by the school</b>
<b>Class A</b>	X1	m	6	Easily distracted, attention seeker, concentration problems	
	X2	m	7	Avoids directions, causes distractions	
	X3	F	7	Avoids directions, causes distractions	
	X4	m	7	Avoids directions, causes distractions	
	X5	m	6	Easily distracted, avoids directions, causes distractions, attention seeker	
	X6	f	6	Avoids directions, easily distracted, mind keeps wandering, avoids communicating with other children, sits quietly in her seat, talks to herself, when asked a question by her teacher avoids any eye contact with her and avoids answering.	
	X7	f	6		
	X8	m	7		
	X9	m	6		
	X10	f	7		

*Table 5.3 Details concerning the children who participated in the research during observation data collection – Class A*

Class B	Child	Gender	Age (at interview)	Characteristics of behaviour	Extra support offered by the school
	X1	m	7	Seeks the teacher's attention during the lesson. Tends to leave his seat and follows his teacher around the classroom	Speech and language support
	X2	m	7	Needs teacher's encouragement to participate in the lesson or complete his work. Mind wanders.	
	X3	m	7	Mind keeps wandering. Sits quietly in his seat, talks to himself, fidgets with his things (pens, pencils, etc.)	Speech and language support
	X4	f	8		
	X5	f	8		
	X6	f	7		
	X7	m	8		
	X8	f	7		
	X9	f	8		
	X10	m	8		

*Table 5.4 Details concerning the children who participated in the research during observation data collection – Class B*

Class C	Child	Gender	Age (at interview)	Characteristics of behaviour	Extra support offered by the school
	X1	m	8	Avoids directions, causes distractions	
	X2	f	8	Poor social skills (not communicating with other children), avoids directions, easily distracted	Support from SEN teacher
	X3	m	8	Avoids directions, causes distractions	
	X4	m	9	Fidgets, does not bring his books, distracts other children, wanders around the classroom, leaves and enters the school and classroom without permission	
	X5	m	9		
	X6	m	8		
	X7	m	9		
	X8	m	9		
	X9	f	8		
	X10	f	9		

*Table 5.5 Details concerning the children who participated in the research during observation data collection – Class C*

Classroom-teachers: 28
SEN teachers: 4
Speech and language therapists: 1
Children' accompanists: 3  (accompanist is the person employed by MOEC to look after particular individuals during the lessons and breaks)

*Table 5.6 Breakdown of the number of teachers working at the school at the time of the data collection*

Classroom teacher A: (f) 44 years old, degree in Primary Teaching, 20 years teaching in primary schools, 1<sup>st</sup> year as deputy head-teacher in a primary school, teacher A of Class A

Classroom teacher B: (f) 32 years old, degree in Primary Teaching, 10 years teaching in primary schools, teacher B of Class B

Classroom teacher C: (f) 36 years old, degree in Primary Teaching, 13 years teaching in primary schools, teacher C of Class C

Head-teacher: (m) 58 years old, degree in Primary Teaching, 30 years teaching in primary schools, 2<sup>nd</sup> year as head-teacher.

## 5.2 Data gathered from interviews

### 5.2.1 Teachers' awareness of the concept of SEBD

During the interviews with participants, they were asked to explain how they understood the concept of SEBD in order to evaluate their awareness of the concept of SEBD. The analysis will be presented in Chapter 6.

#### 5.2.1.1 How do teachers understand the concept of SEBD?

Responses from participants with regard to their understanding of the concept were as follows:

Teacher A:

*“We all have positive and negative feelings. When negative feelings such as jealousy, anger, frustration, being afraid etc., are excessive, they can have a negative impact on the behaviour and the emotions expressed by children. As a result, children exhibit distracting and sometimes dangerous behaviours that cause distraction and raise levels of anxiety on our part. Distracting behaviours can be overcome by reading books and through dialogue, as teachers attempt to engage with those children, either when they are on their own, or within the whole class. Threatening behaviour most of the times appear to arise within the family. It is therefore essential for a SEN teacher and/or an educational psychologist to be present within the school, to offer special and adequate support to those children, something that we as teachers are not trained for, as we do not have the necessary knowledge, skills and sometimes the free time.”*

Teacher B:

*“SEBD problems can be expressed by all children to a different degree and level. Mild problems can be overcome successfully by us, as teachers. However, severe problems cannot. This is why the presence of SEN teachers and educational psychologists within the school is very important and essential in order to provide those children with the adequate support and, at the same time, to advise us with regard to what can be done in order to support those children”.*

Teacher C:

*“Within the school we daily observe many different levels and degrees of distracting problems and behaviour on the part of the children. Most of these problems arise within the family (when one of the parents is of a different ethnic origin, when there is violence in the family, when parents are divorced, and when there is lack of communication within the family). Mild problems can be overcome with different strategies used by the teacher within the classroom. Severe problems need and require special support from a specialist (such as a SEN teacher or an educational psychologist) in order for those children to be approached and supported on an individual level and, at the same time, for them to offer us effective and practical guidelines in order to enhance our teaching practices with those children”.*

Head-teacher:

*“Children with SEBD present difficulties in settling down within the school society and the classroom. They present difficulties in getting along with their classmates, with other children and the teachers of the school. These difficulties require special support, not only from their*

*classroom teachers, but also from a specialist. These difficulties have a negative impact on the school. They put up barriers to the normal flow of school society and the daily timetabled activities. Many of these children are sent to my office because their classroom teacher sometimes cannot control them. On other occasions, their parents need to be called in, in order to discuss and inform them about their child's behaviour within the school. Sometimes these children get into trouble with other children and cause problems, not only for other individuals who behave inappropriately, but also they impact on the rest of the children and their teachers. These behaviours observed by SEBD children can have a negative impact on the school. They set barriers to the normal flow of the school community and the daily teaching timetables, something that prevents the school from obtaining high academic achievements."*

The presentation of results provides a comprehensive description of the range of perceptions and views of teachers with regard to the concept of SEBD. All participants claimed that their experiences enabled them to shape their own understanding of the concept of SEBD. They spoke particularly of their beliefs that almost all behaviours arise from the family background that each individual comes from. In particular, they highlighted that they believe that such behaviour arises because of the fact that the majority of the children come from different ethnic backgrounds and have different ethnicity, they speak more than one language, that some of the parents are divorced, and that there is no communication between the family members.



#### 5.2.1.2 Educate all children to enhance awareness of the concept of SEBS

Participants were asked to talk about whether they educate all children about individuals who present SEBD within their school/classroom.

In two cases the participants claimed that they preferred to inform their children about a specific classmate that presents some problems when the particular individual is not present in the classroom. They explain to their children the importance of supporting and helping specific individuals, avoiding humiliating them, as well as avoiding being ironic or confronting their actions. Teachers reinforce their children to be understanding, patient and try to back-down when those individuals challenge them, and be more empathetic with regard to such children.

The participants claimed that after these discussions had taken place, children become more sensitive towards those children. These conversations are very important and essential as most of the children often ask their teachers why specific individuals behave differently. This action clearly shows that children are aware of the fact that their classmates behave in a different and inappropriate way. Therefore, by providing clear explanations as to why these individuals behave inappropriately, they reinforce them/prohibit them from imitating their actions and behaviours.

On the other hand, teacher A claimed that she preferred to have these conversations with all the children present in the class, including the individual who presents the problems. In this way she is able to provide examples of good behaviour to the whole class by engaging all children, including the individuals with disruptive behaviour, with regard to how they should behave and treat other children and why particular inappropriate behaviours should be avoided. She also

claimed that this approach engages children's understanding with regard to the specific individual and, on most occasions, children try to support that individual. She also becomes closer to children, something that helped them open up to the teacher.

The head-teacher of the school indicated that he reinforces his teachers to educating all children in terms of the idea of having children with disruptive and/or problematic behaviour within their school. He highlights that teachers should try and persuade the rest of the children to show understanding, be more empathetic, and show acceptance towards them, something that appears to be effective, as some of the children became more alert and sensitive towards children with SEBD. He also added that he suggests to teachers the need to provide general guidelines to their children on how to approach and, at the same time, support those children, so that everyone is embraced and feels welcome in the school. Additionally, when he has to deal with inappropriate behaviour, he takes the individual into his office and he initiates a conversation regarding the reasons why particular behaviours have taken place, and what the individual can do to avoid similar behaviour being repeated in the future.

#### 5.2.2 Kinds of SEBD behaviours observed within the school

Each participant was asked to comment on the kinds of SEBD behaviours they had observed within the school, and how participants were feeling about teaching children who exhibited such behaviour. This question, as Chapter 6 will show, aimed to provide the researcher with details on what behaviours are evident within the school in order to know in advance what behaviours were going to be observed. Being also aware of the way teachers feel about teaching those children

would give the researcher different ideas about how she should present the framework to engage the children's full participation.

#### 5.2.2.1 Teachers' feelings about teaching children with SEBD along with the rest of the class.

Teacher A indicated that she tends to treat all children in the same way. When conflicts and inappropriate incidents take place in her classroom, and do not have any negative consequences for the rest of the children, she does not panic or become stressed. Instead, she tries to help the individual child overcome those conflicts and incidents in different ways (through dialogue most of the times). When this happens, she claimed that she feels motivated, confident, empowered and happy to help and support these children. However, when conflicts and incidents are severe and sometimes out of control and, at the same time, have negative consequences for the rest of the class, she then attempts to take appropriate actions with the help and support of the special educators and/or educational psychologists, in the sense that incidents are discussed and appropriate actions are taken. She also claimed that she attempts to contact the parents/guardians of the specific individual to discuss matters. In the case where she does not receive any support from either the specialist or the parents/guardians of the individual concerned, then she gets very frustrated and disappointed. She becomes increasingly stressed and feels unable to offer any support to the particular child.

Teacher B claimed that she accepts and embraces all children, regardless of the different problems they have. She shows them love, respect, acceptance and tries to be very empathetic

and supportive towards them. On the other hand, she sometimes feels sorry for them, and gets very frustrated because most of the times she cannot help them due to a lack of knowledge, support and free time, and argues that additional guidance and support is required from a specialist.

Teacher C claimed that she does not feel comfortable teaching children with SEBD along with the rest of the children. She claimed that she does not have the appropriate knowledge that will motivate her and make her feel more comfortable when entering the classroom and carrying out a lesson plan from which all children, including children with SEBD, will benefit. This lack of confidence causes a negative climate within the classroom towards her children. She also gets very frustrated when she comes across distractions and inappropriate behaviour on the part of problematic children, and does not know the most appropriate way to handle the problem. She tries to communicate with the parents of the child who is causing the problem to cooperate with her to support the individual with his/her problem. However, on most occasions, because of the parents' ignorance or lack of free time, all the work and effort she puts into those children is unsupported, un-noticed and is wasted.

The head-teacher claimed that educating children with SEBD was not an easy task. Most of the time he feels frustrated and puzzled as to which practices can or should be implemented, that will be effective and productive. He argues that this challenge is a big responsibility towards the children with problems and those without problems at the same time. To be able to support children with SEBD, their teachers need to be understanding and empathetic towards them. For these children to be able to adjust and live in harmony within school society, they need to be

praised and accepted by their teachers and classmates first, before attempting to provide support in distinguishing inappropriate behaviours.

#### 5.2.2.2 Main incidents of inappropriate behaviour observed within the school

All participants claimed to have observed a number of inappropriate behaviours among the children they taught. Teachers choose two terms to define and divide these behaviours into two main groups; mild and severe. Mild because when these behaviours take place teachers feel that they can control them with the use of different strategies. Severe because when these behaviours take place, teachers feel unable to control them.

Mild problems: In terms of these problems, teachers have observed problems with regard to discipline among the children. Children tend to be shy characters who are closed in themselves, and who have problems adjusting to the school and the classroom environment. They tend to avoid directions and fail to follow instructions, they refuse to participate in classroom and school activities, they are disruptive, and their homework tends to be poorly done. These behaviours are evident with regard to all children, regardless of their ethnic origin. These behaviours can be overcome with the teachers support.

Severe problems: In terms of these problems, teachers have observed non-stable behaviour and attitudes, and children who are verbally and physically abusive towards their teachers and classmates by destroying the school's, other children's and personal property. They are violent and aggressive. They fight among themselves, are hyperactive, and present speech and language problems. They have ADHD and they tend to leave the classroom and the school without

permission. Participants claimed that most of the times they feel unable to support these behaviours and therefore the support from a specialist is considered essential.

Later on, in Chapter 6, section 6.2.2.1, p.236, a critical analysis takes place regarding to reference to issues of appropriateness in terminology used by the teachers.

### 5.2.3 Provision offered within the school and from the government for children with SEBD.

In this section the researcher have dealt with responses to questions regarding the support and provision that SEBD children receive, the main aims and objectives of the Greek-Cypriot education system, and the strategies that have been put forward to provide support. Classroom teachers will also comment on possible gaps in the existing education system, what resources are available to provide support, and whether there is a multidisciplinary team working within the school with regard to providing support for these children.

#### 5.2.3.1 Received additional training/participated in seminars/have a degree or another higher qualification

All participants stated that during their employment in primary schools they had had the chance to participate in different seminars and workshops on intervention programmes organised by the Educational Institute of Cyprus and MOEC. These seminars and workshops had been organised on several occasions throughout the school year, and participants tried to attend them when possible. However, because they are organised in Nicosia, the capital of Cyprus, it is not always feasible for the teachers to travel there and to attend them.

Teachers B and C claimed that they had participated in seminars on ADHD. These were based on developing a better understanding of children's behaviour, along with presentations on different strategies that can be used to support teachers and children at the same time. Although these seminars were very informative, and lots of strategies had been presented to them, they found it very difficult to apply them with their children, due to time constraints, lack of equipment, resources and knowledge.

Teacher A stated that within the last five years she had participated in seminars on intervention programmes related to discipline, aggression and on emotional education (providing solutions to behavioural problems through dialogue). She also added that seminars were also organised by the Educational Institute of Cyprus, KΣA, Theofilidi, and the Cooperative Learning Association. She also added that these seminars and workshops had been very informative and that she had come across different techniques and strategies that could be used in the classroom. Although at the beginning she had many difficulties applying them, through exploration of what worked well with her children, and different attempts to discover the ways in which her children benefited the most, she was able to adapt them to her children's needs and, at the end, positive outcomes were appearing. However, this process was very time consuming and demanding.

As for the head-teacher, he claimed that he occasionally participated in different seminars to be able to update the teachers of his school and be able to provide them with useful guidelines and advice.

### 5.2.3.2 Provisions in place within the school with regard to children with SEBD

All the participants expressed their concern that, within the case study school, there was not a specific programme in place for supporting the needs of children with SEBD. They argued that, for a particular programme to be introduced, the school needed to apply to MOEC during the previous year, to receive approval for it. They also added that, since the majority of the teachers are moved to different schools each year, no one is actually interested in doing so. Finally, they highlighted that, for an educational programme to be approved, there is a lot of bureaucracy, and it might take up to a year for it to be approved by the government.

Despite the above arguments, teacher A added that she had tried to use different DVDs and stories to develop children's emotional skills. She also stated that the school is working closely with the amateur workshop theatre. Over there, children are given the opportunity to watch different theatrical activities, and are encouraged to participate in them, something that helps them express their inner emotions and feelings. Children appear to like this idea, and they show a lot of interest in participating, something that, in her opinion, helps them to express and develop their emotions.

Teacher B added that emotional development can be supported through the literature lessons. However, this is something that not all teachers follow as they have difficulties adjusting their lessons to it. Also, even though the educational psychologist occasionally visits the school, she attempts to offer support to teachers and children only when things come to a head, something



that is very frustrating. She also commented that, as teachers, they get the feeling that no one is listening or paying any attention to their complaints and problems, and are left alone to confront these problems.

#### 5.2.3.3 Reflecting on practices

Teacher A claimed that there are many strategies that she has used in the past with those children, and most of them appeared to be effective. Through the different discussions she has with her children, she tries to explain to them the different behaviours that take place, along with the different consequences that follow those behaviours and together they try to develop different solutions in order to reduce them. Through the different stories that they read in the classroom, she tries to develop children's emotional awareness by emphasising the different messages that come out of them, and she encourages children to follow them, something that has a positive impact on children with SEBD.

Teacher B and the head-teacher argued that showing acceptance and understanding to individuals has a positive impact on the children's behaviour. Also, being patient, showing love, respect, attention, reinforcing positive behaviour, praise and the fact that staff are willing to help them improve, can have a positive impact on children's relationships and levels of confidence and trust with regard to their teachers. All the above, when applied along with different interventions such as role play, discussions and storytelling, can have a positive impact on children's behaviour and reactions.

Teacher C argued that when the teacher manages to win a child's trust, then that child develops a sense of trust in their teacher that makes it easier for them to open themselves up to that teacher. At the same time, it allows children to appreciate their teacher's efforts to support them. This process reinforces the teacher when it comes to supporting the child and, at the same time, reinforces the child's desire to benefit from the teacher's support. When she shows to children that they are accepted and she is empathetic towards them and talks to them at their level of understanding, then children can benefit from it. Their positive behaviour is reinforced and it is more likely that they will improve in terms of such behaviour.

#### 5.2.3.4 Greek-Cypriot education system's aims, objectives and priorities regarding the education of children with SEBD

Participants claimed that MOEC's attention regarding the education of children with SEBD is very limited. It only exists to the extent that, if it is necessary, an educational psychologist's will be sent to visit the school once or twice each year. However, teachers argue that their presence should be more frequent to be able to provide support whenever it is required, instead of undertaking his/her visit only when things get out of control.

Also, the way the analytical programme has been structured and organised each year by MOEC, does not help teachers to support children with SEBD. It places more emphasis in enhancing all children's cognitive development and equalises all children. Also, there is nothing specific with regard to providing support for those children in terms of resources. On some occasions it enables teachers to differentiate lessons based on their children's needs, but this can only be

achieved for specific individuals and not for all the children in the class. It is therefore up to each teacher individually, and his/her enthusiasm and professionalism, as to whether or not he/she will support those children within the classroom.

MOEC might have advised teachers on how to develop and enhance their children's emotional world through literacy lessons (learning how to speak, express feelings and emotions). However, lack of free time, material, guidance and support prevents this.

The head-teacher of the school argued that the analytical programme places emphasis on inclusive education. However, there is nothing in particular within the school to support children with SEBD and their educational needs. It is very important to note that most of the problems arise from children who come from a different ethnic origin (75% of the children have Greek as their second language and face many problems with learning the Greek language).

#### 5.2.3.5 Gaps in the existing education system

In discussions concerning the gaps in the existing education system, all participants pointed out that the school had a good relationship with MOEC. However, there are many gaps regarding the education and support for children with SEBD. First of all, there is a need to increase the visits made by the educational psychologists and the special educators. This would provide teachers with more solid and effective strategies on how to handle and support those children, instead of having a SEN teacher only to provide support for such children with their Greek literature and maths. In this way, different strategies would be provided, step-by-step, with guidance and

support, and many problems would be prevented. Also, there is a need to build closer relationships between the classroom teachers and the SEN teacher. This would enable classroom teachers to share their concerns and problems with the SEN teacher, and for the SEN teacher to advise and support the teacher in terms of their teaching practices.

Secondly, there is a need to have specific educational programmes regarding the education of SEBD children within the school. Teachers need to be provided with practical solutions for handling incidents of inappropriate behaviour. More activities are required within the classroom, where teaching practices will be employed in an appropriate way with regard to teaching children how to behave appropriately, how to socialise and how to interact with other children.

Thirdly, there is a lot of bureaucracy that slows down many of the requests put forward regarding school improvements.

Finally, because there are many educational rearrangements that frequently take place, the aims and objectives have to be rearranged all the time. What MOEC should aim for is to focus on a solid educational arrangement that will enable creativity to develop within the schools.

#### 5.2.3.6 How is progress ensured with regard to children with SEBD?

The participants reported that progress is ensured by observing SEBD children's behaviour through their lessons, the way they react and behave when they come across different problems, and also through the daily contact and communication they have with them.

#### 5.2.3.7 Resources available at the school

All participants agreed that resources for educating children with SEBD specifically do not exist within the school.

Teacher A reported that she takes resources and materials that are available from the National Curriculum and adjust them to the needs of such children.

Teachers B and C added that teachers are advised to support SEBD children's emotional development through literacy lessons and by reading different stories. On some occasions, this is productive. However, on some other occasions this is not the case. Lack of free time, and the absent of solid educational programmes that offer support and guidance to teachers is absent from the schools, and this creates barriers with regard to taking different steps in terms of supporting such children. The teachers attempt to support them by reorganising their resources and tailoring their lesson to the needs of their children, whenever this is possible.

The resources that are available to teachers are limited, and it is not easy for a teacher to find them. It is up to each teacher individually to decide what and how support is going to be given to children.

#### 5.2.3.8 Working as a team and communication

All participants claimed that they take every opportunity to discuss their problems as a team, whenever it is feasible in the light of the workload. This enables them to share different ideas and possible solutions. Then they can go back to their classrooms and use this knowledge and, on most occasions, they see some results and improvements in their children's behaviour. This makes them feel more confident and more motivated to work with those children.

The head teacher claimed that he always encourages teachers to talk to each other about different issues and problems that trouble them and, whenever feasible, he also attends these meetings in order to share experiences with them and to encourage them. This is very helpful as different ideas, opinions and knowledge are exchanged and, consequently, teachers are emotionally supported.

#### 5.2.4 Feedback from the draft implementation of the programme

The participants argued that materials presented appear to be very useful and accessible in terms of working with children. The methods used seem to be very effective and productive. It is a different way of approaching the lesson and the different problems that take place within the classroom. It uses examples from everyday life that can be linked to all children's circumstances, and they believe it is going to increase children's enthusiasm. It will also give the chance for children to express their own emotions and experiences and engage in discussions with them and with other children and, all together, to attempt to find possible solutions to those problems.

### 5.3 Seminar

#### 5.3.1 Teachers' first impressions of the SEAL programme before implementing it

The head teacher of the school was very excited, and liked the themes suggested. He liked the fact that the framework did not stigmatise any of the children who were presenting SEBD. He also argued that, since teachers seek more support when it comes to supporting children with SEBD, this programme could be seen as an effective tool in terms of supporting their teaching practices.

The teachers were also excited, and showed a lot of enthusiasm. There was a friendly and co-operative environment, they felt free to open themselves up and describe the problems they face in their everyday practices. They emphasised their need for additional and professional support when working with children with behaviour problems. They also highlighted that it is very important for them to be able to manage these children because it will give them the chance to deliver their lesson plans in the way they want to.

### 5.4 Data gathered from observations

The second phase of my research was divided into four parts. In the first part, two primary observations took place. These two observations aimed to gather some demographic information on the target children and their classrooms prior to observation.

In the first observation, the layout of each of the classrooms was drawn on paper showing the place in which each child was sitting, and their gender. In this observation, the researcher also identified possible target children that they were presenting problems with their behaviour (See Appendices 21/22/23, p. 420-422).

In the second observation, the researcher concentrated on observing only the target children's behaviours to obtain a clear picture of the different behaviours observed, as well as to ensure that they fitted in the category of the children that the researcher wanted to observe. Each one of the target children was marked with a different symbol on the classroom layout, to be able to refer to them in my notes and remind myself of the particular individual when necessary.

At this stage, after spending some time observing the target children's behaviour during their lessons, it was essential to decide what behaviours would be included in each of the four categories that were going to observe.

- Avoiding directions: refusing to follow instructions when asked to, avoiding completing their work, fidgeting (playing with their books, pencils cases, etc.), mind wandering,
- Causing distraction: talking with other children on subjects that were not relevant to their lesson, wandering around the classroom, distracting other children during the lesson
- Verbal abuse: shouting and swearing at the teacher and other children,
- Physical abuse: destroying other children's, the school's and their own property

The above behaviours were also explained to the second observer who was going to be present during the following three parts of the second phase of this research. In this way it was ensured



that both the researcher and the second observer were going to be concentrating on observing the same behaviours, to obtain more reliable results.

Before the second phase of the observation process, a seminar took place. After the interviews with participants, the next step was to deliver a seminar to enhance teachers' awareness and understanding of the concept of SEBD as, based on the interview data, it appeared to be limited.

After that, the SEAL programme was introduced to them. Its aims and objectives were highlighted and explained in detail to the participants, along with prospective outcomes that the framework could have on their future teaching practices, and how they could solve difficulties presented by children with SEBD in their classrooms.

An introduction to the programme took place, based on the first lesson plan the teachers were going to deliver. As previously mentioned in Chapter 3 – Methodology, the teachers were going to be given all the lesson plans that were going to be used, along with all the resources that they were going to need.

During Parts B and D, teachers were going to carry out their normal lesson plans. Lesson plans for Part C were based on one of the SEAL's programmes themes. A particular part was translated, and adequate changes were made, solely for the purposes of this study, bearing in mind the children's ages and their levels of understanding.

In the second stage, each class was observed once, based on the selected criteria of the selected behaviours, prior to the implementation of the programme. In the third stage, each class was

observed four times during the implementation of the programme. In the final stage, each class was observed once more, after the programme had been implemented and normal lessons had been resumed. After that, all six observations of each class were put together and analysed by comparing behaviours before, during and after the implementation of the framework. This enabled me to obtain a clear picture of whether the children had benefited from the implementation of the SEAL programme, and whether there had been any improvements in their behaviour.

After comparing the results gathered by the second observer and myself, a good degree of inter-reliability was achieved. Jointly out of 18 observations, the main observer and the second observed agreed in 186 cases, and disagreed in 25 cases. Therefore, the same judgement was arrived at in 88% of the cases.

As was previously mentioned in the methodology Chapter 3, observations were going to be qualitatively analysed using SPSS, and more specifically with the use of the Wilcoxon signed – rank test. The Wilcoxon signed – rank test is used in situations in which there are two sets of scores to compare, with these two scores relating to the same participants. This particular test is based on the differences between scores in the two conditions that are compared. Once these differences have been calculated, they are ranked, but the sign of the difference (positive or negative) is assigned to the rank. In this way behaviours before, during and after the implementation can be compared (Field, 2009).

After data was analysed and presented with the use of the above test, the results suggested that there was no significant change in the children's behaviour at the end of the implementation of the SEAL programme. However, there is qualitative data which suggests that the SEAL programme did indeed have an impact on the majority of the behaviours observed by children with SEBD.

For this reason, detailed descriptions of the observations that were undertaken were provided, to determine whether or not improvement had taken place. Detailed observations were then carefully analysed and further analysis took place.

#### 5.4.1 Class A

##### 5.4.1.1 Detailed presentation of observations of the whole classroom

#### Lesson 1 – Observation 1 – Before the implementation

The lesson began with many of the children refusing to sit on their seats and be silent. After five minutes, however, the teacher managed to calm them down and hold their attention. The lesson began with a conversation initiated by the teacher; she asked the children to review what they had learned in the previous lesson. The teacher was asking questions and some of the children were replying by shouting the answers out loud; others were raising their hand and shouting 'Miss, Miss', to get their teacher's attention, and thus get the chance to talk. The teacher was constantly reminding them that this was not acceptable, providing examples of how they should participate. Next, the teacher delivered some activity instructions to children to complete. During the process, she was constantly interrupted by the children. After explaining the activity to the

children, the teacher left them to complete it. She then went around the classroom, making sure that everyone understood the activity and that they were completing it correctly.

### Lesson 2 – Observation 2 – During the implementation (1)

This lesson was the first with regard to the implementation of the programme. As soon as the teacher entered the classroom, she told children to put their books away and to sit still in their seats and look at her. She explained that this particular lesson was going to be different from the others, yet they still needed to focus and concentrate on the instructions. As soon as the children heard the words ‘different lesson’, they got very excited and enthusiastic and immediately followed her instructions. The lesson began with the teacher pointing out two children (a boy and a girl) and she then started asking questions on whether these two children were the same or whether there were some differences (as in sex, age, hair and eye colour, height, weight and clothing). All children seemed to be very keen to participate in the conversation, even those children with SEBD (who, in the previous lesson, had ignored the various questions asked, even when they were asked to participate). As the conversation went on, children got very enthusiastic and wanted to share their personal opinions, thoughts and experiences on the subject with the whole class.

### Lesson 3 – Observation 3 – During the implementation (2)

As soon as the bell sounded, all children came into the classroom. The first instructions the teacher gave to the children was to put their books away and listen to her. She then gave them a

quick overview of the structure of the day's lesson and initiated a conversation. She raised various points, such as:

- The different ways in which children learn help them to learn different things
- There are various changes that children can make within themselves
- Some of these changes can be quick, whilst others take more time
- To make changes, a lot of time and effort is required

During the first two parts of the lesson, some children appeared to be unsettled as they became disruptive, distracting their classmates. During the other half of the lesson most of them were concentrated on the lesson and they were following their teacher's instructions.

#### Lesson 4 – Observation 4 – During the implementation (3)

The main theme of the lesson was 'changing our behaviour' and this taught children about the differences between good and bad habits. The consequences of such habits, both to themselves and to those around them, were highlighted and, in contrast with the previous lessons, there was minimal distraction. All children participated, sharing their opinions and ideas, and the teacher was therefore able to instigate very effective conversations. In the last three minutes of the lesson, they did a plenary: this consisted of the teacher asking the children questions, and them answering in very short sentences. Questions asked included '*What was today's lesson about?*' and '*How behaviour can be changed?*'.

#### Lesson 5 – Observation 5 – During the implementation (4)

This lesson was the last with regard to the implementation of the framework. The aim of the lesson was to provide children with an understanding of the various changes that take place at different times in their lives, and how such changes can help them. As soon as the teacher entered the classroom, the children immediately put their books away and sat quietly in their seats. Throughout the whole lesson they sat quietly, listening carefully to their teacher, being keen to share their personal experiences. Key questions raised by the teacher included '*How has school changed their life?*' and '*How does change benefit them?*' It was evident that all the children enjoyed the lesson; this was displayed in their enthusiasm and the fact that they listened to their teacher while she was explaining all the ways in which the things they learn at school are going to help them, both at school and throughout life.

#### Lesson 6 – Observation 6 – After the implementation

This was the final observation session as part of my research and the first after the implementation of the programme. In this lesson, the teacher was going to deliver the normal lesson, as planned. It was reading/library time, so the teacher took out the book that they were going to talk about in the lesson: the book was about a child who was afraid of the bad weather but, as he grew up, he learned not to fear thunderstorms and strong winds. The teacher read and analysed the story in a particular way, relating the tale to personal experiences and things that children might be afraid of. Through the discussion, the teacher conveyed to her children the message that everyone has fears and that it is helpful to sit down and share experiences: in this

way, the children can support each other. The teacher developed the lesson plan on her own, and was influenced by the previous lessons based on the SEAL programme. All the children participated and seemed to be very confident in talking about their fears and sharing their experiences with the whole class. It was interesting to see that, when a child raised an issue, the rest of the children contributed to the conversation, thus supporting their classmate. The teacher had to intervene once or twice, to prevent them from all talking at the same time.

#### 5.4.1.2 Detailed presentation of the observations for each child

##### **X1**

Lesson 1: X1 was constantly fidgeting and demanding the teacher's attention. He was unsettled during the whole lesson, looking around to see what other children were doing, playing with his pencil case and books and refusing to follow the teacher's instructions. As a result of his disruptive behaviour, he upset the flow of the lesson and distracted his classmates. Throughout the whole lesson, the teacher was trying to tell the children not to imitate his behaviour, explaining why such behaviour was inappropriate. She also offered them some examples of good behaviour that they could use in class, to illustrate the point she was trying to make.

Lesson 2: X1 was very keen on the subject being discussed in class and wanted to share his personal experiences and opinions with the rest of the children. X1 was participating, but at the same time he was being disruptive by chatting loudly with his classmate (who was sitting next to him) and shouting his opinions and thoughts out loud. He failed to follow the teacher's instructions to wait for his turn to participate in the lesson.

Lesson 3: During the first two parts of the lesson, X1 was playing with his basketball, disrupting the children sitting next to him. However, he was very keen to follow the teacher's instructions and so he put his ball away and began listening and participating in the lesson. At one point he got very excited about the topic that was being discussed, and was shouting his opinions out loud, failing to wait for his turn to speak and denying other children the right to participate. On several occasions, the teacher stopped the lesson, to discipline him and tell him how he should behave within the classroom. The teacher was able to incorporate X1's disruptive behaviour into the lesson by bringing the whole class into the conversation, whilst at the same time trying to avoid embarrassing X1. She explained that this particular behaviour was observed all the time and that, together as a class, they were going to find a solution for it. This conversation also involved all children's opinions on why such behaviour was not appropriate, and the ways in which it might be eliminated. After his teacher's instruction in this, X1 was still avoiding the teacher's directions. However, he sat quietly, instead of being loud and destructive.

Lesson 4: X1 was concentrating on the lesson, following instructions and participating without causing any distractions. He was only caught talking with his classmate sitting next to him on one occasion, but he stopped immediately as soon as the teacher called his name.

Lesson 5: During the first part of the lesson, X1 was demanding the teacher's attention: as soon as she walked into the classroom, he wanted to show her his new pencil case. Upon the teacher complimented him on it, X1 went back to his seat and sat quietly. Once he had received his teacher's attention, he was able to concentrate throughout the whole lesson, without interrupting.



Lesson 6: X1 was only once caught talking to the child he was sitting next to. Upon hearing the teacher call his name, telling him to be quiet, he did so and concentrated on the lesson.

X1 clearly showed some improvement in his behaviour with the implementation of the framework. Looking at his behaviour during the first three observations, he was talking all the way through lessons, distracting both the teacher and his classmates. However, in the last three observations, he did not cause any disruption: he followed the teacher's instructions and, as soon as he was told to stop distracting others, he did so immediately.

## **X2**

Lesson 1: X2 and X3 were sitting together during the lesson. In the first part of this lesson, X2's mind was wandering. In the second part, he was talking loudly with X3, disrupting the flow of the lesson. However, he then sat quietly in his seat and followed the teacher's instructions. In the final part of the lesson, he was talking with X3 and both were ignoring their teacher's orders to complete their activity.

Lesson 2: During the first two parts of the lesson, X2 ignored her teacher's instructions, in that he failed to sit quietly in his seat and shouted the answers to the questions out loud. In the third and fourth parts of the lesson, however, he sat quietly in his seat, participating and following the instructions given by the teacher. He did not talk to X3 or cause any further disruption.

Lesson 3: During the third observation, X2 was following his teacher's instructions and did not cause any disruption, except when X3 was trying to attract X2's attention during the second part

of the lesson. X2 tried to ignore her; however, when X3 began playing with X2's hair, they both started laughing very loudly. After the teacher told them to stop messing around, both X2 and X3 concentrated on the lesson. They were more enthusiastic about their work and followed the teacher's instructions.

Lesson 4: X2 did not cause any trouble during the lesson. He sat quietly in his seat and raised his hand whenever he wanted to speak: he was eager to follow the teacher's instructions and complete his work.

Lesson 5: X2 concentrated and paid attention to his teacher. Throughout the majority of the lesson, he was raising his hand in order to participate, and was very keen on sharing his personal experiences with the rest of the class.

Lesson 6: During the final observation, X2 quietly went with the flow of the lesson, participating and sharing his opinions and experiences with his peers.

In first two observations, he was avoiding his teacher's directions, talking with X3 and thus being disruptive. In the last three lessons, however, he was very quiet, paying attention and following his teacher's instructions. It is apparent that X2's behaviour had improved and, as he was attempting to change his own behaviour, he may have positively influenced X3 (who was sitting beside him).

### **X3**

Lesson 1: In the first part of the lesson, X3 was shouting out the answers to the various questions asked by the teacher, instead of waiting for her turn. In the second part, she was talking loudly with X2, interrupting the flow of the lesson. At this point, the teacher advised them to stop talking, stating that such behaviour prevented her from delivering the lesson. In the third part of the lesson, both were quiet and participated in the lesson. However, in the fourth (and final) part of the lesson, they were talking again and ignoring their teacher's directions.

Lesson 2: During the second observation, X3 ignored the teacher's instructions; for instance, she was causing disruption by shouting the answers out loud. In the first two parts of the lesson, she was avoiding directions and becoming disruptive. At this point, the teacher asked both X2 and X3 to stop being disruptive by shouting out the answers to questions and she also took the opportunity to have a discussion with her children, explaining the good and the bad aspects of such behaviour and advising the class on how to avoid this kind of behaviour in the future. However, during the last two parts of the lesson, she was sitting quietly and participating.

Lesson 3: In the third observation, X3 ignored the teacher's instructions for the majority of the lesson, trying to attract his classmate's (X2's) attention. X2 was trying to ignore him: however, in the second part of the lesson, X3 started playing with X2's hair and, during the third part of the lesson, both X2 and X3 were laughing very loudly. After the teacher shouted at them, X2 and X3 stopped playing around, and concentrated on the remainder of the lesson. From this point, they were more enthusiastic about their work and eagerly followed the teacher's instructions.

Lesson 4: X3 did not cause any trouble today at all. She sat quietly in her seat, raising her hand, waited for her turn to contribute, and was willing to follow her teacher's instructions and complete her work.

Lesson 5: X3 concentrated throughout the lesson and paid attention to what the teacher was saying. For the duration of the entire lesson, she raised her hand to participate in the conversations that were taking place in the classroom. She was keen to share her personal experiences with the rest of the class.

Lesson 6: During the final observation, X3 sat quietly in her seat. She went with the flow of the lesson, participating, and sharing her opinions.

After the third lesson, X3 was transformed into a student who did not disrupt lessons by ignoring the teacher, did not talk to her classmates and avoided shouting out the answer to questions. Overall, it appears that X3's behaviour was influenced during the implementation. It is important to note that, after the implementation was removed, X3 did not repeat any of the behaviour she had displayed during the first three weeks.

#### **X4**

Lesson 1: In the first part of the lesson, X4's mind was wandering: he failed to open his books and follow the teacher's instructions. In the second and third parts of the lesson, he was sitting in his seat and listening to the conversation taking place; however, he did not attempt to participate.

In the final part of the lesson, he was talking to the children sitting next to him, distracting them from concentrating on the lesson.

Lesson 2: During the second observation, X4 was sitting quietly in his seat, listening to the conversations that were taking place, but not attempting to participate. When he was asked a question by the teacher, who was trying to engage him in the lesson, he refused to answer. During the final part of the lesson, his mind was wandering. His teacher tried praising him (thus enhancing his self esteem and motivation), to encourage him to take part in the lesson, but without any success.

Lesson 3: During the third part of the observation, X4 was paying attention throughout the lesson. He attempted to participate by replying to different questions asked by the teacher. Only in the last part of the lesson did his mind wander. His participation during this lesson may have been due to the fact that he was praised and encouraged to take part, and thus his confidence was boosted.

Lesson 4: During the fourth observation, X4 was sitting quietly in his seat. On some occasions he was paying attention to what the teacher was saying and, on one occasion, he raised his hand to participate. Nevertheless, on other occasions, his mind wandered. It was interesting to note that, whenever the teacher paid him attention, he was willing to participate in the lesson. However, when he was being ignored, he looked sad and was looking around the classroom.

Lesson 5: During the fifth observation, X4 was going with the flow of the lesson and, on two occasions, he raised his hand in participation. Throughout the rest of the lesson, X4 sat quietly

and it was evident that he was following the flow of the lesson, as he was making eye contact with whoever was speaking.

Lesson 6: X4 was sitting quietly in his seat, going with the flow of the lesson and participating by sharing his opinions and experiences with the whole class.

During the last two observations, it was apparent that there had been some improvement on X4's behaviour. He becomes more enthusiastic about what he was learning. He also felt more confident and was thus able to participate in the lesson. However, whenever he was not given the chance to participate, he was disappointed and his mind began to wander.

## **X5**

Lesson 1: X5 was constantly fidgeting and demanding the teacher's attention. As a result, he was interrupting both the flow of the lesson and his classmates. Throughout the whole lesson, the teacher was trying to reinforce that children should not imitate X5's behaviour. At the same time, she offered them examples of good behaviour that they could copy in the classroom, to illustrate the point she was trying to make. X5 was presenting unsettling behaviour from the beginning of the lesson. He was sitting some distance from X1, yet both were trying to communicate verbally with one another. X5 was refusing to follow the teacher's instructions and guidelines during the lesson: he was unsettled, looking around to see what other children were doing and playing with his pencil case and books.

Lesson 2: X5 was very keen on the subject that was being discussed and he was willing to participate. It was interesting to see that X5, who in the previous lesson had refused to follow the teacher's instructions, wanted to participate in the conversation. However, there were two occasions when X5 was being disruptive and ignoring the teacher's instructions. If the teacher did not give him the chance to talk, he got upset, and would start playing around with his pencil case. Compared to the previous lesson, X5 was very enthusiastic and wanted to take part in the class discussions. To achieve this he would loudly call out to the teacher, to let her know that he had his hand raised, or would leave his seat and go to the front to get her attention. When this happened, the teacher would advise him that everyone would get the chance to participate in the lesson and told him that it was not fair for him to answer all the questions. However, she rewarded his efforts in attempting to participate, and reassured him that she was aware of the fact that he wanted to contribute, and that he would be given the opportunity to do so.

Lesson 3: X5 appeared to be calmer. He was sitting quietly in his seat and, if he wanted to participate in the conversation, he raised his hand and waited for his turn to speak.

Lesson 4: During the first two parts of the lesson, X5 was sitting quietly in his seat. He was either participating in the lesson or quietly watching his classmates participating. It was evident that he enjoyed the subject of the lesson, as he would occasionally raise his hand to participate. However, during the final two parts of the lesson, he started playing with his pencil and, as a result, he knocked one of his teeth out, and was trying to find it. The teacher, unaware of the lost tooth, told X5 to get back on his chair and, as he was trying to explain the incident, the teacher was talking in a loud voice, demanding that he sit down and that they would find the tooth at the

end of the lesson. X5 went back to his seat and kept quiet. However, his mind was on his lost tooth and he was searching everywhere with his eyes in the different places where it might be.

Lesson 5: In the first and second parts of the lesson, X5 sat very quietly in his seat without interrupting either the lesson or his classmates. When he raised his hand to participate and was ignored by the teacher, he started shouting ‘Miss, Miss, me’. The teacher told him to sit quietly and that he would get a chance to speak, but as soon as the teacher moved on to the next subject for discussion without giving him the chance to talk about the previous subject, he got frustrated and started hitting the table with his hands. The teacher then allowed him to answer the previous question and, after this, X5 calmed down and his good behaviour continued for the rest of the lesson.

Lesson 6: During the final observation, X5 was twice caught ignoring the teacher’s instruction: in the first instance his mind was wandering and the second time he was playing with his pencil case. X5 did not attempt to participate in the lesson.

Upon the completion of the implementation, X5 once again began to ignore the teacher’s instructions. His mind began to wander and he played with his personal stuff; this behaviour was not evident during the implementation of the programme and thus raises the possibility that, as soon as the SEAL programme ceased to be delivered, children presented almost the same behaviour as in the first observation. It could be argued that the subjects discussed during the implementation caught the children’s attention. Also, it could be argued that the SEAL



programme may have taught the teacher how to approach problematic behaviour more effectively.

## **X6**

Lesson 1: X6's mind was constantly wandering: she avoided both verbal and visual communication with her teacher and her classmates. She continually played with her personal stuff (pens, books, etc.). When the teacher set a task to be completed, she would open her writing book and copy the work from the blackboard. But she would not attempt to complete any activity by herself and would avoid any instructions given by her teacher.

Lesson 2: X6's mind wandered throughout the whole lesson and she never raised her hand in order to participate. Whenever she was asked to participate, she would lower her eyes, avoid looking at the teacher, and play with her things. She also avoided any verbal communication with both her classmates and her teacher.

Lesson 3: Once again, X6's mind was wandering and she was fidgeting with her personal stuff. The teacher was constantly reminding her to put her stuff away and concentrate on the lesson, but X6 was ignoring her. She also avoided direct eye contact and verbal communication with the teacher.

Lesson 4: During the fourth observation, X6's mind was still wandering and she was playing with a pencil throughout the whole lesson, avoiding eye contact and verbal communication with the teacher. When the teacher tried to speak to her, she ignored her teacher, who then took the

pencil off her. X6 immediately grabbed another pencil and changed her posture by turning her back on the teacher.

Lesson 5: X6 once again spent the whole lesson avoiding any form of visual or verbal communication with the teacher, even though the teacher was trying to get her to participate in the lesson.

Lesson 6: X6's mind was wandering throughout the whole lesson. Once again, she avoided having any verbal or visual communication with her teacher.

Throughout the six observations, X6 did not respond differently to her teacher's behaviour and no changes have been made with her behaviour.

#### 5.4.2 Class B

##### 5.4.2.1 Detailed presentation of observations for the whole classroom

##### Lesson 1, Observation 1: Before Implementation

The lesson began with all children sitting at their desks, talking quietly amongst themselves. As soon as the teacher asked them to take out their books, the children obliged without making too much noise. The object of the lesson was to provide brief summaries of a book they had read, describing a scene in the story that they found interesting and explaining why. Almost everyone was listening and following their teacher's directions.

### Lesson 2, Observation 2: During Implementation (1)

As soon as the teacher entered the classroom, she told children to put their books away and listen carefully to her instructions. She informed them that this particular lesson, in addition to the next three lessons, was going to be different. The children got very excited about this. The teacher began the lesson by explaining its main aims and objectives, which was about the things that change as they grow up. The teacher chose two children to come and stand next to her (a boy and a girl) and she then asked the class whether these two children were the same or different, and in what way (in terms of age, sex, hair and eye colour, height, weight, etc.). The next step involved the children thinking about the different things that change as we grow up, and this activity was followed by the teacher giving two photographs to the children (the first was an adolescent child and the second an adult). The idea of these two photographs was to provide different hints to the children on what sort of answers their teacher was expecting. At the end of the discussion, the children were asked to complete an activity paper, listing the things that change and the things that do not change as we grow up. Everyone in the classroom enjoyed this lesson very much and they were keen to participate, making use of their own personal experiences.

### Lesson 3, Observation 3: During Implementation (2)

This lesson was the second involving the implementation of the SEAL programme. As soon as the teacher entered the classroom, all children put their books away. The lesson highlighted the different changes that children can make within themselves, focusing on the different ways in which they can do different things, and how they can achieve these changes. The aim was to gain

an understanding that some changes can take place easily and quickly, whilst others require a lot of effort. All the children became very excited about the theme and wanted to participate.

#### Lesson 4, Observation 4: During Implementation (3)

Everyone was following instructions and participating in the lesson without causing any distractions. The aim of the lesson was how children can change their behaviour, and this aim was achieved by enabling children to distinguish between good and bad habits. It was stated how bad habits prevent them from doing different things, such as being a good friend, listening and participating during the lessons, etc. By the end of the lesson, children should have been able to understand that the way they behave is down to themselves: no-one forces them to do anything.

#### Lesson 5, Observation 5: During Implementation (4)

The aim of this lesson was to enable children to understand that the different changes that take place in their lives can be good. For example, learning to read enables them to read various books and learning to write enables them to be able to write a letter to their friends, etc. At the end of the lesson, the children completed an activity sheet based on what had been discussed in the lesson. All the children found the theme of the lesson very interesting, and thus they were very keen to participate.

#### Lesson 6, Observation 6: After Implementation

This was the final lesson following the implementation of the SEAL programme. As soon as the teacher entered the classroom, she told children to take a book from the library and read it. Upon

hearing this, the children were very disappointed: they wanted to carry on with the lessons they had had during the implementation of the framework. Everyone started talking and fidgeting and the teacher had to shout at them, stating that if they did not calm down, she would remove the points from the board (at the end of each lesson, points had been given to those who were quiet and those who had followed the teacher's instructions). Thus, they all calmed down and followed her instructions.

#### 5.4.2.2 Detailed presentation of observations for each child

##### **X1**

Lesson 1: Throughout the majority of the lesson, X1 was looking around the classroom, finding excuses to not participate. On one occasion, he was caught following the teacher around the classroom, demanding her attention and her permission to play with a puzzle. His teacher let him borrow the puzzle, so that she could deliver the lesson without the distractions caused by X1. X1 did not participate in the lesson at all, yet he did not distract his classmates from completing their work or participating in the lesson. Towards the end of the lesson, when he wanted another puzzle, his teacher did not pay him any attention. Consequently, he started shouting loudly in the classroom, disrupting the flow of the lesson.

Lesson 2: X1 did not leave his seat throughout the lesson and he did not take any puzzles from the classroom. He was listening to what the teacher was saying and making regular eye contact with her. At one point, he also attempted to participate by raising his hand. He expressed himself in a very low voice, so that hardly anyone in the classroom could hear him. His teacher

immediately told him to speak up for everyone to listen to what he had to say. He remained silent for a couple of seconds and then his teacher asked him to repeat what he had said, praising his courage in sharing his experiences. Upon this, he repeated himself in a loud and clear voice and his teacher once again praised his efforts. During the third part of the lesson, while completing the activity sheet, he required his teacher's assistance to help him spell the correct answers. However, during the final part of the lesson, he was twice caught ignoring his teacher's instructions and playing with his pencil case.

Lesson 3: X1 did not cause any disruption during the lesson. In fact, he was raising his hand and was keen to participate in the lesson. When the teacher gave him the chance to participate, he once again responded in a very low voice. The teacher immediately reminded him of what she had said in the previous lesson. Upon this, X1 repeated his answer in a confident, loud and clear voice. At the end, he had a big smile on his face: a sign of satisfaction after the praise he received from his teacher. During the final part of the lesson, he was caught talking with the children sitting next to him, sharing his enthusiasm and excitement at being praised by the teacher. Nevertheless, as soon as the teacher reminded him of the rule regarding not talking during the lesson, he stopped talking immediately and sat quietly in his seat. X1 needed encouragement to participate in the discussion, and received a boost to his confidence at the same time.

Lesson 4: X1 was sitting quietly in his seat, concentrating and following his teacher's instructions. He twice attempted to participate in the lesson and his responses were loud and clear. On both occasions, he was praised by the teacher for having the courage to share his opinions and for taking her advice.

Lesson 5: X1 was only once caught talking to the classmates sitting next to him. During the remainder of the lesson, he sat quietly and followed the teacher's instructions about raising his hand, when he wanted to participate.

Lesson 6: X1 was only once caught talking during the first part of the lesson: this was in reaction to his teacher's announcement about the subject of the lesson. However, during the remainder of the lesson, he quietly followed instructions and did not cause any disruption; in addition to this, though, he avoided any kind of participation.

In these six weeks, there were some tremendous changes in X1's behaviour during lessons. At the beginning of lessons, he was running up to the teacher and screaming in class, to attract her attention. During the rest of the lessons, he needed his teacher's encouragement to speak out loud and share his opinion. After being encouraged and praised by the teacher, he was able to participate with confidence in the fourth lesson. During the final observation, X1 was sitting quietly in his seat avoiding any kind of participation. To the observer, this indicates that X1 was perhaps more interested in participating in those discussions that looked at everyday life: it was during these discussions that he was given the chance to talk about his feelings and personal experiences.

## **X2**

Lesson 1: X2's mind was wandering during the lesson and therefore he was not paying attention to what was being discussed. He simply opened the book to the page specified by the teacher, and copied what was written on the board in his exercise book. When X1 got permission from the teacher to get a puzzle, X2 was disappointed that X1 was able to do something different from the rest of the class.

The observer was able to see X2's disappointment: he pushed away his books and, pulled a sad face. Also, when X1 started shouting and demanding the teacher's attention, X2 stated that he also wanted to borrow a puzzle. His teacher told him to forget what X1 was doing and to concentrate on completing his task. From X2's reaction, it is apparent that he was jealous of the freedom X1 was being given to do whatever he wanted, whereas the rest of the class had to follow classroom rules. The teacher may have wanted to minimise the disruption caused by X1, but her actions had a negative impact on the rest of the children.

Lesson 2: X2 was following the teacher's instructions without causing any disruption. On two occasions, he raised his hand to participate in the lesson. However, during the last part of the lesson, when the teacher did not give him the chance to participate, his mind started wandering, and it was apparent that he was upset. During the final part of the lesson, he found the writing activity very exciting, and was able to complete it successfully.

Lesson 3: X2 followed the instructions and participated without causing any disruption. X2 did have some difficulty in completing an activity and, because of this, the rest of the children in the



group were making fun of him. The teacher immediately intervened and explained that it is OK to get confused: she also explained how, rather than laughing, X2's classmates should help him out when he is in difficulty. After that, they immediately asked X2 what he was having difficulty with. Then they advised him how to successfully complete the activity. During this time, the teacher was standing beside the group, advising them how they should support X2: X2 was carefully listening to what the rest of the group was saying, and was more than happy to follow their instructions.

Whilst discussing how children can change their behaviour with regard to their classmates, and maintain better friendships, X2 pointed out that he wished his classmates played with him during breaks. It was interesting to see that, once X2 had brought this up, the other children wanted to initiate conversation with him.

The discussion was not initiated by the teacher and, during the conversation, children were chatting without shouting or arguing. All children suggested that, if X2 wanted to be a part of their group, he had to improve his behaviour towards them. They suggested that he be more co-operative, learning to work and play as part of a group, without expecting everyone to follow his instructions all the time. X2 listened very carefully to what his classmates were saying, and agreed to try and change his behaviour.

Lesson 4: X2 sat quietly in his seat, following the lesson. On two occasions, he was seen raising his hand, in order to participate in the lesson.

Lesson 5: X2 was seen attempting to participate in the lesson, demonstrating a great deal of enthusiasm over the topic being discussed. However, during the final part of the lesson, he was caught talking in the classroom. This occurred after he was given the activity paper to complete: he was confused by the paper, and, as the teacher was not paying him any attention, he started looking around the classroom and doodling on the activity paper.

Lesson 6: After his teacher's announcement that they were going to return to their old lesson routines, X2 refused to participate in the first two parts of the lesson. During the other half of the lesson, he was looking at the book in front of him, but was not contributing to the lesson.

### **X3**

Lesson 1: X3's mind was wandering. Because he was sitting on his own, he was not able to look over and see what the rest of the class was doing, in order to catch up. When this happened, he would just take his cars out of his rucksack and play with them. The teacher would then come up to him and remove them, open his book on the right page and show him what he should be doing. However, as soon as the teacher left, he took another car from his rucksack and started playing with it.

Lesson 2: X3 was once again distracted throughout the majority of the lesson, fidgeting with his pencil case and books. He avoided having any direct eye contact with either his classmates or the teacher. When he was given the activity to complete, he was trying to have a look at the other children's answers. Upon the teacher reaching X3, she tried to help him complete the activity by asking him the same questions she had earlier asked the whole class. She also gave him hints,

with regard to the expected answers. After that, he was able to complete the activity without any problems. Perhaps X3 needs more attention and praise from the teacher, in order to become more motivated and enthusiastic about his work.

Lesson 3: X3 was sitting quietly in his seat, going with the flow of the lesson. However, when the teacher did not give him a chance to participate in the lesson, he started fidgeting with his pencil case and books. This incident happened twice during the lesson, and it was the first time he was observed raising his hand to participate in the conversation and being ignored by the teacher.

Lesson 4: X3 sat quietly in his seat. He was following the lesson, but did not attempt to participate. He was also caught twice playing with his pencil case and books.

Lesson 5: X3 was twice caught talking to children sitting on the table next to him. Also, when he was given the activity paper to complete, he started fidgeting, taking his bottle of water out of his bag. When the teacher came to him and asked why he was not completing the activity, he said that he did not know how to spell the words that he needed to put down on the paper.

Lesson 6: X3's mind was wandering throughout the lesson. He ignored the teacher's instructions and refused to participate in the lesson. He was only curious about finding out what the rest of the class was doing.

Overall, X3 is probably confused as to how he is supposed to behave during the lesson. His teacher encourages and praises him for participating in the lesson, but whenever he attempts to do so, he is ignored by the teacher.

### 5.4.3 Class C

#### 5.4.3.1 Detailed presentation of observations for the whole classroom

##### Lesson 1, Observation 1: Before Implementation

As soon as the bell rang, all children rushed into the class. Everyone was running around the classroom, shouting and talking loudly. As soon as the teacher came into the classroom, she told all children to sit quietly in their seats and take their library book and activity notebook out of their bags. She then briefly explained to them what the lesson was going to be about. The aim of the lesson was for the children to read a selection of summaries out loud to the whole class, and then answer various questions on the book they had read. Most of the children followed the instructions given by the teacher; however, there were a small number of children who disrupted the flow of the lesson.

##### Lesson 2, Observation 2: During Implementation (1)

This was the first lesson in which the SEAL programme was implemented. As soon as the teacher arrived in the classroom, she briefly explained the main aims and objectives of the lesson which were to understand that change can be good and that children are in a position to specify what changes they make. In addition, the children should be able to understand that change

enables us to become better at what we do. This aim was to be achieved by discussing what they understand about ‘good changes’, such as going to school and understanding how this has changed their lives (for example, how the school has helped them to read and write, etc. and how this has enabled them to write a letter to a friend, read a book and so many other things). At the end, the children had to complete an activity sheet, based on what had been discussed in the lesson. Almost all of the children seemed to enjoy the lesson: they got very excited and were keen to participate.

### Lesson 3, Observation 3: During Implementation (2)

The main aims of the lesson were to go through the different changes people experience in life, naming them, and then reflecting on how these changes affected their lives, and how they feel about them. These aims were to be achieved through discussion, with children comparing their experiences. The class seemed to enjoy both the lesson and the fact that they were given the chance to talk about themselves and to share their personal experiences.

### Lesson 4, Observation 4: During Implementation (3)

As soon as the teacher entered the classroom, all children immediately put their books away and were ready to follow their teacher’s instructions. The main aim of the lesson was to make the children aware that everyone goes through different changes, that these changes can either be good or bad, and that there are different ways that they can deal with such changes. These aims were to be achieved by having an in-depth, critical discussion, with the children comparing personal experiences. Almost all children were keen to participate in the discussion; only a few

refused to participate and to share their personal opinions and experiences with the rest of the class.

#### Lesson 5, Observation 5: During Implementation (4)

This was to be the final lesson with regard to the implementation of the SEAL programme. The main aims of the lesson were to become aware of the fact that the different changes that happen in life can be very good and that children are in a position to name them, in addition to explaining how these changes have changed their life. These aims were to be achieved through reflective and critical discussions, linked with each individual's personal experiences. All the children enjoyed the discussion, and this was evident from the way they wanted to participate in the various conversations.

#### Lesson 6, Observation 6: After Implementation

This was the final lesson of the observation process, based on the teacher's lesson plan. The children were disappointed when their teacher told them that they were going to revert to their old lesson routine. The lesson today involved choosing a story book from the library table, reading the first 4-5 pages and then writing a few lines about what they had read. In the first ten minutes, almost all the children were talking amongst themselves. In addition, they were arguing with the teacher, telling her that they preferred to talk about the subjects they talked about in the previous four lessons. The teacher ignored their protestations and demanded that they get on with their work.

#### 5.4.3.2 Detailed presentation of observations for each child

##### **X1**

Lesson 1: X1 was sitting by himself next to the teacher's desk. In the first two parts of the lesson, his mind was wandering, and he was looking around to see what his classmates were doing. During the other two parts of the lesson, he was talking with X3. Even though X1 and X3 were not sitting next to each other, they were sending written notes to each other and using eye contact to communicate and laugh amongst themselves. Furthermore, X1 was getting X3 to do different things in the classroom, such as imitating their teacher. X1 was consciously aware of their teacher keeping a close eye on what he was doing. For that reason, before attempting to communicate with X3, X1 looked at the teacher first, to see what she was doing.

Lesson 2: In the first part of the lesson, X1 was chatting with X3 and they were laughing quietly among themselves. During the second part of the lesson, X1 quietly followed the instructions given by the teacher. In the third part of the lesson, however, his mind was wandering. He ignored X3, who was trying to get his attention in various ways. In the final part of the lesson, he was sitting quietly in his seat, completing his activity paper. In the second observation, X1 ignored X3 and this was perhaps due to the fact that X1 was interested in the lesson and he was keen to complete the activity paper he had been given.

Lesson 3: X1 concentrated throughout the whole lesson. He was also keen to participate in the different conversations that were taking place, in addition to sharing his personal opinions and experiences with the rest of the class. On two occasions, X3 tried to distract him, but X1 simply

refused to pay him any attention. From this observation, it was obvious that X1 was interested in the lesson and was keen to participate in the discussions (something that had not occurred in the previous two observations).

Lesson 4: X1 was caught chatting with X3 at the beginning of the lesson. However, as soon as the teacher started talking, he simply maintained eye contact with X3. During the rest of the lesson, he concentrated and participated in the ongoing discussion and did not appear to pay X3 any attention.

Lesson 5: X1 was quiet throughout the majority of the lesson, following the various instructions and guidelines given by the teacher. On one occasion, he was seen attempting to participate in the conversation taking place between the teacher and his classmates and, on another, he was caught playing with his pencil case. He did not have eye contact with X3 or have any conversation with him.

Lesson 6: X1 was caught talking twice to the children seated next to him. During the rest of the lesson, he got on with completing the task set by the teacher and did not talk or let his mind wander.

From the above observations, it is obvious that X1 benefited from the programme, during the four observations, he avoided X3 and was following the flow of the lesson by interacting with his teacher and his classmates: he also completed the different activities set by the teacher and attempted to participate in the lesson.



## **X2**

Lesson 1: X2 was sitting alone, on a table next to X1. From the beginning of the lesson, she was playing with her workbook and pencil case and, when the teacher asked the children to complete an activity in their workbooks, she started looking around to see what the rest of the children were doing. She was demanding attention from the children sitting next to her; not by talking to them, but by going up to them, to see what they were doing. In this, she used eye contact and gentle physical communication to get their attention. Her classmates would show her what they were doing and then she would return to her seat and start drawing. The teacher did not interfere with this form of behaviour, either because she did not see it, or because she did not pay any attention to what X2 was doing. From her desk, the teacher asked X2 to stop drawing and to start completing the activity. But, once again, X2 ignored her teacher and continued drawing. From the above, it is obvious that X2 was seeking attention from her classmates and this may have been because she went unnoticed by the teacher. From behind her desk the teacher asked her to pay attention to the lesson, staying away from X2 and trying to uncover the reasons behind her behaviour.

Lesson 2: During the first two parts of the lesson, X2 was either daydreaming or drawing in her text book. In the third part of the lesson, she was trying to obtain some attention from the girls sitting next to her. She was trying to distract them by standing next to them during the lesson and attempting to look at their work. During the last part of the lesson, when the teacher gave the classroom the activity paper to complete, she received it with excitement. It is apparent that, when she received attention from the teacher, she completed her work without any problems or

distractions. X2 also attempted to ask the teacher to spell some words for her and, after this, she was more than happy to complete the activity sheet. From the above, and bearing in mind X2's behaviour, it is obvious that, when the teacher ignored X2, she turned to her classmates for support.

Lesson 3: X2 was sitting quietly in the new seat her teacher had put her in: she was now sitting with another girl at the back of the classroom. During the first part of the lesson, X2 seemed to be attempting to understand what the teacher was trying to say. However, in the second part of the lesson, she was distracting the girl who was sitting next to her. She was talking to her in another language, and her classmate was replying in Greek, providing examples as to what she was supposed to be doing in her work. From this action, it was evident to the observer that X2 was failing to understand the Greek language to the same degree and level as her classmates. This may be the reason for her drawing and looking around the classroom all the time. From the above observation, it seems obvious that X2's problems with the Greek language were preventing her from participating in the lesson.

Lesson 4: In the first part of the lesson, X2 was concentrating on what the teacher was saying. In the two middle parts of the lesson, she started drawing in her textbook. However, in the last part of the lesson, she was making eye contact with the teacher and following the discussion that was taking place. Once again, this kind of behaviour on the part of X2 may have been due to the fact that her Greek is limited; she therefore cannot understand what the teacher is saying and starts drawing.

Lesson 5: At the beginning of the lesson, X2 was talking to the classmate sitting next to her. As soon as the teacher told them to stop talking and to concentrate on the lesson, they both stopped talking, with X2 putting her books away and listening to the teacher. During the middle two parts of the lesson, she was sitting quietly in her seat and making eye contact with the teacher. X2 seemed to be following the discussion that was taking place, as she was attempting to make eye contact with the children participating in the conversation. However, at the end of the lesson, she started drawing in her text book.

Lesson 6: X2 was talking very quietly with the student sitting next to her. In the second part of the lesson, she was looking at the pictures in the book that she had to read and, from the way she was looking at the book's pages, she did not appear to be reading it: rather, she was interested in the pictures and the colours in the book. In the third part of the lesson, X2 put the book away and began to draw in her text book. During the final part of the lesson, she was listening to what the other children were saying about their stories, but did not attempt to participate in the lesson.

From the behaviour observed on the part of X2, it becomes obvious that her inability to understand the Greek language at the same level as her peers has caused her problems in concentrating during lessons, and in completing her activities. X2 was only able to complete the activity when the teacher spelt the different words that she needed to complete the sheet. Looking at X2's behaviour during the middle part of the implementation, it becomes obvious that she becomes more interested in the lesson. Perhaps the themes of the SEAL programme were more interesting to her, as opposed to the lessons based on the curriculum. However, she never attempted to participate in the lesson; she merely interacted with the girls sitting next to

her (perhaps her limited knowledge of the Greek vocabulary prevented her from doing so). Therefore, on this occasion, it can be argued that this study may have had an impact on X2. This was evident by the fact that she was listening to what the teacher was talking about in the classroom, and by the fact that she wanted to be part of the lesson as evidenced by her asking her classmates to explain things to her. However, her communication problems prevented her from doing so.

### **X3**

Lesson 1: X3 was constantly fidgeting in his seat. On two occasions, he was caught wandering around the classroom, distracting his classmates from completing their activities. The teacher would ask him to return in his seat, but he then started talking to the children sitting next to him. During the second half of the lesson, he was talking to X1, avoiding the teacher's order to stop talking and to focus on his work. He was sending and receiving written messages from X1 and was happy to do whatever X1 said, such as imitating their teacher. Most of the time his teacher did not pay any attention to his behaviour. When she attempted to do so, he ignored her, and kept distracting his classmates.

Lesson 2: In the first part of the lesson, X3 was trying to attract X1's attention, but without any success. In the second part of the lesson, as X1 was not paying him any attention, X3 started wandering around the classroom, distracting other children. His teacher asked him to go back to his seat and to stop distracting his classmates; she also asked him to try and participate in the

lesson. He went back to his seat, but, once again, (third and fourth parts of the lesson) he was caught wandering round the classroom.

Lesson 3: In the first part of the lesson, X3 was trying to attract X1's attention. During the second part of the lesson, he was keen to participate in the discussion that was taking place. In the third part of the lesson, his mind was wandering again, and he was once more attempting to get X1's attention; however, he was not successful. In the final part of the lesson, he sat quietly in his seat, completing the activity paper that he had been given by his teacher.

Lesson 4: Throughout the whole lesson, X3 refused to follow the guidelines set by the teacher. In the first part of the lesson, he was chatting with X1 and, when X1 stopped paying him any attention, he played with his books. In the third part of the lesson, he was distracting the child sitting next to him. This behaviour was still taking place during the fourth part, with him fidgeting with his books and pencil case.

Lesson 5: During the first two parts of the lesson, X3's mind was wandering. He was not paying attention to what the teacher was saying but, during the third part of the lesson, he joined in the conversation that was taking place. However, even though he was raising his hand in an attempt at participation, the teacher did not pay him any attention. Thus, he started shouting 'Miss, Miss' and getting up from his seat, in an attempt to get the teacher's attention. The teacher told him to sit down quietly and wait for his turn and X3 got very upset and disappointed, sitting quietly in his seat and playing with his books and pencils.

Lesson 6: X3 was talking with the children sitting next to him during the first part of the lesson. During the second part of the lesson, when everyone was reading their books, he was pretending to be reading, yet was looking around the classroom to see what everyone was doing. In the third part of the lesson, he was walking around the classroom, yet he did not distract any of the children who were working. During the last part of the lesson, he was playing around with his personal stuff and did not attempt to complete his activity. X3's behaviour, in distracting his classmates and avoiding his teacher's reaction, may have been due to the fact that his teacher did not afford him the appropriate attention during the lesson, even though he was attempting to participate.

#### **X4**

Lesson 1: At the beginning of the lesson, X4 was refused to take his book out of his bag and to follow the instructions given by the teacher. Instead, he was looking at what the rest of the class was doing. On three occasions, as soon as the teacher gave them some instructions to follow, he started fidgeting around and talking to the children sitting next to him.

Lesson 2: During the first part of the lesson, X4 refused to follow the instructions given by the teacher, and played with his pencils instead. However, he seemed to enjoy the rest of the lesson and was keen to participate in the various conversations that were taking place. He was also very keen to complete the activity paper that he was given. He got distracted towards the end of the lesson, when it was almost time for a break.

Lesson 3: During the first and second parts of the lesson, X4's mind was wandering but without causing any disruption. However, when he was given the chance to participate, he was more than happy to do so: he was also keen to complete the activity paper he was given. He requested some assistance, and his teacher was more than happy to support him.

Lesson 4: During the first part of the lesson, X4 was talking with the children sitting next to him and playing with his books, ignoring the conversation that was taking place within the classroom. In the second and third parts of the lesson, he was going with the flow, participating in the conversation that was taking place. However, in the last part of the lesson, he began talking to the children who were sitting next to him.

Lesson 5: X4 was <sup>absent</sup> from today's lesson. After a conversation with the teacher, the observer discovered that, after he had had an argument with another teacher, X4 got frustrated and left the school premises.

Lesson 6: During the first part of the lesson, X4 was sitting quietly at his sit. As soon as the teacher announced that they were going to return to their old lesson plans, he got upset, put his books in his rack sack, and left the classroom. The teacher did not reach to his behaviour, nor tried to stop him from leaving the classroom.

## 5.5 Feedback from interviews after the implementation of the SEAL programme

Teacher A emphasised that she was going to put different posters up in the classroom regarding emotional development. She was also going to make an 'Emotional Box'; this is where children are encouraged to write down any emotions they feel, and post the note in the box: for example,

they may write ‘Today I felt ...., (when .... and why....). She also added that she was going to bring books on emotional development into the classroom and that she would like to see this type of lesson plan included in her future teaching practice.

Teacher A enjoyed the lessons very much and found them useful in terms of managing to link the examples provided with the children’s personal experiences. She noticed that all the children were very enthusiastic about the new theme of the lesson: they all wanted to participate, something that usually requires a lot of effort on the part of the teacher. Teacher A also stated that she was going to incorporate some ideas into other lessons; e.g., getting children to talk and reflect on their personal experiences. This would enable her to bond with the children and support them, as and when required.

As for teachers B and C, they mentioned that the programme was very interesting and gave the chance to SEBD children to become involved in the lesson. They claimed that it would be good if the programme was implemented for a whole year in the school, as they believe that it would help SEBD children a great deal. At the same time, it would help their teaching as this programme, through its lesson plans, enabled them to include all the children in the class.

#### 5.6 Feedback from interviews a year after the implementation of the programme

A year after the implementation, Teachers A and B were still present at the school. Teacher C has been moved to another school in the same town. Teachers A and B were asked to comment on whether they still used any of the strategies they had used during the implementation of the programme. Teacher A stated that she was trying to use different stories to engage children in



terms of sharing their emotions and engaging in discussions about why they feel the way they do, and how they can improve on it. She also claimed that whenever an incident of inappropriate behaviour took place, she engaged in discussion with the whole classroom, analysing why a particular behaviour is inappropriate, what its consequences were, and offering examples of how they should be behaving instead.

Teacher B, on the other hand, claimed that she tried when possible to use those strategies with her children. However, due to time constraints, she was not been able to step back and reflect on inappropriate behaviours that take place.

## 5.7 Brief Summary

In many respects, the data recorded and presented in this chapter have been structured in a way that they allow conclusions to arise naturally. Nevertheless, further analysis in relation to current theory and the literature regarding teaching practices and changes in children's behaviours is necessary in order to uncover different messages and conclusions that will enable teachers to enhance their teaching practices and for children with behaviour problems to improve.

## **CHAPTER 6 – DISCUSSION**

### **6.1 Introduction**

The first primary aim of this study was to gain an understanding of the participants' perceptions around the concept of SEBD, the kinds of incidents of inappropriate behaviour that take place in their classroom, and what help is available from MOEC and from the school to support participants with those children. As can be seen from Chapter 5, the analysis of interviews held with participants yields data which is clustered around the above-mentioned significant issues. The issues raised are thoroughly examined in order to determine the extent to which they accord with what is recorded in the current literature concerning educational provision in place for children with SEBD, including the way they are identified and educational provision that is available to them, is related to the situation in Greek Cypriot schools.

The second primary aim of this study was to examine whether or not there were any improvements on SEBD children's behaviours after the implementation of the SEAL programme. Behaviours observed included: causing distraction, avoiding directions, being verbally and physically abusive. In Chapter 5, children's behaviours before, during and after the implementation of the programme were presented analytically. Discussion on the observations was organized around two main issues – the areas of improvement in terms of teaching practices and, areas of improvement on SEBD children's behaviour. Issues raised were carefully examined in order to determine the extent to which they accord with what is recorded in the current

literature concerning effective strategies used to support the educational needs of children with SEBD related to the situation in the case study school.

The following discussion draws on the literature reviewed in Chapter 2, as well as some additional material, leading to conclusions which challenge different aspects of the current mainstream Greek-Cypriot primary education, regarding the support offered to children with SEBD, and also the support offered to their teachers. It also identifies areas for further examination and research.

## 6.2 The concept and incidents of SEBD and the provisions available to children with SEBD

### 6.2.1 Teachers' awareness on the concept of SEBD

#### 6.2.1.1 Understanding the concept of SEBD

In the literature there is evidence to support the contention that both profession and experience can have either a positive or a negative impact on attitudes, perceptions and teaching practices (Chazan, Laing and Davies, 1994; Kanakis, 1992; Koundourou, 2007; Poulou, 2005). A negative impact can be a crucial factor threatening teachers' views of their capacity in the classroom, and their ability to realize their teaching goals for themselves and for their children (Chazan et al., 1994; Poulou, 2005).

Evidence gathered from the interviews shows that participants appeared to have more than ten years of experience in teaching children with SEBD in mainstream primary education. Their experiences that were gained throughout their years in teaching enabled them to shape their

attitudes, perceptions and teaching practices around different concepts, including the concept of SEBD. They used different examples from their teaching experience to explain their understanding and to internalise the concept of SEBD within their professional role, and their practice to express their understanding. The above findings are in agreement with Phtiaka (2005) who, in her research, argued that participants' experiences made them ideologically positioned in dealing with the different issues that they come across during their teaching. It is therefore important to find out how the participants' experiences and profession shaped their understanding and attitudes around the concept of SEBD.

The way each participant perceives and understands the concept is different; it might, therefore, be expected that each participant will have a different way of approaching those children's needs. The findings of this study revealed that three out of four participants failed to provide a solid definition to illustrate their understanding of the concept of SEBD. This is in agreement with previous research which argues that the majority of Greek-Cypriot teachers do not fully understand the concept of SEBD. Therefore the way they perceive and understand those children's needs and behaviours varies (Hadyiannakou, 2005; Koundourou, 2007).

Teacher A appeared to be in a confident position to analyse her understanding of the concept. She was able to give a description of how these problems occur and develop, along with the consequences they can have for the individuals who present SEBD characteristics. On the other hand, teachers B and C did not appear to be as confident expressing themselves. They argued only that SEBD problems can be expressed by all children, in different degrees and levels. The head-teacher of the school was able to provide the characteristics presented by those children.

Bearing in mind the Information Pack on Special Needs (MOEC, 1996) and the section referring to children's emotional and social competences which highlight the key areas that those children should be engaged in (Chapter 2, section 2.3.5, p. 25), from the answers received from the participants, it looks as if they are not familiar with most of them, as they fail to address these issues. This appears to support the theory noted in the review of the literature which highlighted an area of weakness, which is that Greek-Cypriot teachers seek more knowledge and training regarding their teaching practices with children with SEBD. A possible cause of this weakness might be the fact that the new 1999 legislation was enacted and sent to schools by MOEC in its official form, devoid of any further clarification. Evidence provided by Angelides (2005) and Koundourou (2006) shows that most teachers who read it, failed to fully understand its most important points. Davies (1996) also claimed that there have been many studies highlighting the difficulty of translating 'policy papers', whether curriculum- or behaviour-related, into realistic, child-focused actions. And as Burton et al., (2009) and Bennet (2006) add, lack of clarity in terms of government policy results in sustained dilemmas and inconsistencies in provision, practice and attitudes.

According to research carried out by Hadjiyiannakou (2005), teachers claimed that even though they were in a position to understand the aims and the objectives of the implementation of the 1999 Law, those aims and objectives were never fully explained to them. Teachers were left to apply the 1999 Law on their own, and to make it as inclusive as possible in everyday school life, and no one made any suggestions regarding its application, or even asked for feedback after its implementation (Hadjiyiannakou, 2005). Consequently, and as the participants in this research claimed, it is through their experiences of working with those children that they were able to

shape their understanding of the concept. Turner (2003) argued that when teachers' knowledge of a policy and its procedures is limited, this can lead to a lack of consistency in the implementation of the policy. Moreover, Turner (2003) claimed that when policies fail to provide appropriate guidance on different strategies that could be implemented to support children with SEBD, this could effect the way teachers view and understand the policy as being inadequate, and might result in them ignoring it altogether.

Consequently, lack of clarity and understanding of the 1999 Law does not allow teachers to fully understand the characteristics of the concept, and they relay on their personal experiences to do so. Therefore, if teachers fail to fully understand the concept of SEBD, how do they educate “normal” children about the concept of SEBD and the behaviours that children with SEBD present?

#### 6.2.1.2 Raising awareness on the part of ‘normal children’ of the concept of

#### SEBD

Evidence gathered indicates that all participants tended to educate ‘normal children’ about SEBD. The way they educate them depends on the way they perceive and understand the concept, as this can influence the way their children understand the concept and their relationships with those children who display SEBD.

Teachers B and C claimed that they preferred to inform children about specific individuals who present SEBD when individual is not present in the classroom, by raising awareness about the

individual's problem. They reinforce in children the need to be understanding, to offer support, to be patient and to try to back-down when those individuals challenge them. They encourage them to be more empathetic, and avoid confronting their actions. Children then become more sensitive towards those children and they acknowledge their needs.

On the other hand, teacher A claimed that she felt more confident having these conversations with all the children present in the classroom, including the individual who presents these problems. In this way she is given the chance to analyse undesirable behaviours, and is able to provide examples of good behaviour to the whole class by engaging all the children, including the individual presenting the disruptive behaviour. This approach has helped her to develop a positive relationship with all children and with individuals with SEBD.

Almog and Shechtman (2007) point out that entering into discussions with all the children, including individuals with SEBD, can lead to children with SEBD acquiring alternative forms of behaviour. This is something the head-teacher of the school reinforces. He stresses that teachers should talk to all children about SEBD children, and how important it is to try and maintain friendships with them, as well as to try and show some understanding, be more empathetic, show love, respect and acceptance.

Bearing in mind the participants' responses with regard to the concept, it becomes evident that the more teachers are aware of the concept, the easier it is for them to talk to all the children about inappropriate behaviours that can take place within the classroom, without having to

exclude particular individuals from these conversations. This is something that only teacher A felt comfortable doing.

On the one hand, if ‘normal children’ do not have any idea for the reasons behind particular behaviours, it is more likely that they will laugh because they do not understand why particular individuals behave in the way they do (De Monchy et al., 2004). When ‘normal children’ have a negative attitude towards children with SEBD, it can result in self-fulfilling prophecies about those children’s behaviour and their position within the school community (Soder, 1989 in De Monchy et al., 2004). Therefore, it is of great importance for children with SEBD to be educated in a place where they are accepted and feel welcome, where they are not judged for what they are and what they do, and where they are embraced within a positive and welcoming environment.

On the other hand, ‘normal children’s’ positive reactions to these ways of touching upon this sensitive issue takes place as children become more alert and aware of a particular problem that is occurring within the school. Young children have a tendency to ask questions if they observe something strange in terms of their classmate’s behaviour, or if they see that someone is acting in a different way from them. If they are offered a logical explanation about the possible reasons why a particular individual is acting in a different way from them, or has a different way of learning and way of behaving, then they start to appreciate the individual. Having some logical answers which justify observed behaviours, it is possible that they will treat the individual with care and respect, and be more empathetic and understanding (Phtiaka, 2005).



Having said that, Phtiaka (2005) in the same research pointed out that, ‘normal children’ might be accepting of these children. However, they accept them because they feel sorry for them. It is the researcher’s view that this might be happening as teachers themselves fail to fully understand the concept. Therefore the messages that are sent to ‘normal children’ may be problematic.

Also, teachers’ attitudes towards these children have been seen to be critical in influencing ‘normal children’ perceptions of those children (Martin and Short, 2005). These same authors reported that, in their study, the vast majority of teachers felt that they were lacking in knowledge of the concept of SEBD, and this prohibited them from putting into action a wide range of teaching approaches. As Dyson et al. (2007) argue, these approaches are necessary for children with SEBD in order to be included in the classroom and in the school community. In consequence, these children were seldom seen to be successful in lessons, required more assistance and it took more teacher time to manage them. As a result, they faced rejection by the rest of their classmates (Visser and Dubsky, 2009)

Overall, raising awareness with regard to the concept of SEBD might be taking place. However, teachers’ failure to understand it can push ‘normal children’ to sympathise rather than empathise with children with SEBD. Therefore, ‘normal children’ maintain good attitudes with those children because they are told to do so.

### 6.2.1.3 Brief Summary

The analysis so far highlighted that teachers fail to fully understand the concept of SEBD. This might be because the 1999 Law was never fully explained to them. Therefore, they use their own experiences to help shape their understanding of the concept. Therefore, it is reasonable for the majority of teachers not to feel comfortable when talking about SEBD in front of the whole classroom, especially with those children being present. Evidence of the opposite was teacher A, who was the only teacher to demonstrate a more complete understanding of the concept, something that made her feel confident to talk about it in front of the whole class. Failure on the part of the teachers to understand the concept could also reinforce the situation of “normal children” sympathising rather than empathising with them. Having said that, new questions arise. If teachers fail to fully understand the concept, how do they identify behaviours presented by those children in the classroom, and how do they feel about teaching those children along with the rest of the children?

## 6.2.2 Kinds of SEBD behaviours observed in the classroom

### 6.2.2.1 Teachers thoughts about incidents of inappropriate behaviour

A myriad of different behaviour incidents take place in mainstream Greek-Cypriot primary schools (Poulou and Norwich, 2000). All participants stated that all children present some kinds of behaviours with SEBD during their time at school, but at different levels and degrees. Participants divided the observed behaviours into two main groups; children presenting mild problems and those presenting severe problems. Mild problems can be excessive and can have a

negative impact on the behaviour and the emotions expressed by children. However the participants argued that mild problems can be overcome with the teachers' help. Teacher A added that these techniques include reading books and engaging individuals to participate in the lesson, initiate a conversation and, share their knowledge and experience with their classmates.

Participants claimed that when severe problems take place, most of the time they feel unable to help and support these children. Therefore, the support of a specialist such as a SEN teacher or an educational psychologist is essential within the school. The specialists will offer individual support for the children, something that their teacher cannot do, perhaps due to a lack of knowledge and experience in working with such children. At the same time, the specialist will offer them some advice, and offer effective guidelines on how to support and help these children.

The main reason for the participants dividing types of behaviour into these two groups (mild and severe) was to distinguish the fact that some behaviour's can be handled by them and some others need professional help. But these groups are quite vague. From time to time children can behave in an undesirable way. Nevertheless, different factors such as the age of the child, the context in which behaviours occur, as well as the frequency of displayed behaviour, can be decisive in whether observed behaviour is considered to be a normal part of growing up, or as problematic behaviour (Hull Learning Services, 2005). In DfE 9/94 it is stated that SEBD is part of a continuum. At one end there are children who are naughty and, at the other end, there are children and adolescents with mental illnesses. Children with SEBD tend to fall between the two ends. However, Gray, Miller and Noakes (1998, p.185), suggested that it is evident that there are some children who are extremely difficult to handle within the school. Hewett and Taylor (1980)

highlighted that emotional disturbance is mainly defined with orientation to the tolerance of the teacher. Consequently, what might be considered as unacceptable behaviour by some teachers might not be thought so by others, depending on their tolerance levels at that time. Based on the above, Hewett and Taylor (1980) suggested that the concept of SEBD, when defined with regard to educational purposes, should be concentrated on the learner him/herself and their potential within the learning context. In 1997, the DfEE stated that EBD as a term can be "...applied to a broad range of young people with a very wide spectrum of needs, from those with short-term emotional difficulties to those with extremely challenging behaviour or serious psychological difficulties" (DfEE, 1997, p.78).

Therefore, behaviours identified as being part of one category can easily be placed in the other one, depending on their frequency and their degree of severity. Didaskalou and Millward (2001), Birkett (2003) and Axup and Gersch (2008), in their research into Greek schools, highlighted that the above behaviours, instead of being divided into severe and mild, could be characterised as relatively low level disruptions and as high level disruptions within the classroom. These two categories of behaviours that take place can be used for the Greek-Cypriot context as well, as the authors highlight that Greek classrooms' are not significantly different from those elsewhere in Europe (Didaskalou and Millward, 2001).

The above experiences of SEBD were also highlighted by many researchers as the main characteristics of such children (Lambley, 1993; DfES, 2003; Hull Learning Services, 2005; Farrell and Polat, 2003; Pritchard, 2004). However, it was evident that when participants were asked to identify kinds of SEBD observed within the classroom, they mentioned that all

behaviours are related to SEBD. It did not occur to them that perhaps children might be presenting autism, ADD/HD, or that behaviour problems might be a result of a learning difficulty.

As previously mentioned in the review of the literature, in Cyprus for a child to have SEBD, that child needs to have a disability as well as a learning difficulty; otherwise no educational provision is available. As Goodman and Scott (1997) argued, the children may display problems in only one area or, as Campbell (1995) stated, they may have a variety of traits that fit different developmental disorders or syndromes.

Ogden (2002 in Knivsberg et al., 2007) argues that behaviours can affect the SEBS development of children. Therefore, knowledge about SEBD characteristics presented by these children, possible correlations between these, and between skills and behaviour, is consequently very important.

Getting information on behaviours from the particular case study school also enabled the researcher to choose the most common behaviour observed within that school to use in the second phase of the research (causing distraction, avoiding directions, verbally and physically abusive).

#### 6.2.2.2 Teachers' feelings about educating children with SEBD

Guskey and Passaro (1994) argue that teacher efficacy is defined as the teachers' belief or perception of their ability to influence their children with their practices, including children who

present SEBD. This perception reflects the extent to which teachers believe that the working environment can be controlled and modified at the same time. It has been argued that teachers with high-self efficacy perceive their children's difficulties as modifiable, and they believe in their ability to bring positive change on the part of their children, and act in order to achieve this (Bandura, 1997).

The participants' feelings about teaching children with SEBD at the same time as the rest of their class, were mixed. On the one hand, there is the situation in which they feel they have control over the SEBD children, and feel very enthusiastic and confident working with them. On the other hand, they may feel trapped and unable to help those children. Under these circumstances they can become frustrated and anxious.

Both teachers A and B claimed that they treat all their children equally, regardless of their problems. When conflicts and inappropriate behaviours take place, and they are in a position to support and handle them without having any negative consequences on their teaching and on the rest of the classroom, they feel motivated, confident and more empowered. Due to their personal experiences, training and psychological strength, they adapt their strategies so that they can fulfil the demands of the children with whom they work.

These teachers feel that they achieve a sense of satisfaction every time they succeed in handling inappropriate behaviour, and even when they are let down, they do not give up on these children. They see it as an everyday challenge that they have to meet, and that it is something that is worth fighting for. What counts more to them is the feeling of pleasure and satisfaction that ultimately

surrounds them (Chazan, Laing and Davies, 1994; Kanakis, 1992). However, a lot of patience is required.

However, teachers A and B stated that when behaviours and conflicts are out of control and have negative outcomes for the whole class, they do not consider themselves competent to handle them, due to a lack of knowledge. They therefore seek additional support and advice from the SEN teachers and the educational psychologists, who can provide them with useful guidelines and more psychological support. Arxondakis and Kuriakou (1992) also indicated a similar finding to that of a previously undertaken study, highlighting that the number of children who require support from a specialist appears to increase year by year. This is a view also supported by Angelides (2005), Layser and Kirk (2004).

On the other hand, teacher C and the head-teacher claimed that they felt uncomfortable, frustrated, and puzzled when it came to teaching and supporting children with SEBD children along with the rest of the class, due to an absence of knowledge and training that prevented them from handling difficult situations appropriately. This feeling harmed their motivation to work with those children, and consequently created a negative climate within the classroom and prevented them from delivering their lesson plans as they wanted.

Teacher C also noted “*I do not feel confident handling any inappropriate behaviour that occurs within the classroom due to bad experiences that I had in the past, as these behaviours tended to be unforeseen*”. This argument has been supported by previous researchers (Gray and Richer, 1995; Gray et al. 1996). The factors highlighted above appear to threaten the teachers’ view of

their capability in the classroom and their ability to achieve their teaching goals for themselves and for their children (Chazan et al., 1994; Leadbetter and Leadbetter 1993). As Almog and Shechtman (2007) argue, sometimes the gap between the teacher's knowledge and actual behaviour reinforces them not to apply their knowledge in real classroom situations. This might be because teachers respond spontaneously when it comes to supporting children with SEBD, without relating the incident to the different theories or previously acquired knowledge that was gained, as they seem to experience difficulties in bridging the gap between theory and practice (Almog and Shechtman, 2007). High levels of disruptive student behaviour can lead to low levels of teacher self-efficacy in terms of classroom management which, in turn, can lead to a higher level of teacher burn out. Furthermore, this can lead to a higher level of child disruptive behaviour, something that can reduce teachers' level of self-efficacy (Brouwers and Tomic, 1998). In other words, teachers play a significant role in the lives of children with SEBD.

Participants admitted that dealing with SEBD in the classroom can be tiring, frustrating, demanding and takes an undue proportion of their time, arguments supported by other researchers (Gray and Richer, 1995; Gray et al., 1996). Pajares (1992) argues that different studies that have been undertaken regarding teaching effectiveness rely on teachers' perceptions, attitudes and beliefs which directly influence their decision making and the way they behave in the classroom. Frustration can threaten teachers' views of their competence in the classroom and their ability to achieve their teaching goals for themselves and for their children (Chazan et al., 1994). Consequently, schools have to rely a great deal on teachers' management skills and competencies in relation to task orientation, classroom discipline and management with this category of children (Poulou, 2005). This is an argument that was put forwards in the Review of



the Literature. As Greenhalgh (1991) argues, where learning is impeded by feelings of distress, the child's relationships with teachers, peers and family, are often tense. The teacher's attitudes and skills in terms of interactive processes go a considerable way to either meeting, or negatively reinforcing, special needs.

In the case of Cyprus, Angelides (2004) and Phtiaka (2000) argue that a teacher's negative attitude might be the result of the historical, social and cultural context of special education in Cyprus. Angelides (2004) goes on to argue that a further reason behind this attitude lies in the limited training that teachers have received in terms of teaching children with special needs, and more specifically with SEBD. This point relates to the findings of Pijl (1995) who argues that teachers are afraid that their knowledge and skills are inadequate when it comes to supporting these children's needs, and a belief that having a child with special needs in their classroom will have a negative impact on the other children in the classroom. Vlachou (1997) supports this argument, adding that the teachers' lack of special training within the field can be considered as a reason for mainstream teachers in Cyprus feeling insecure about their involvement when teaching those children, although she later argues that the historical development of special education in the island has caused extra frustration for teachers. Even though UNESCO (1997) highlighted the lack of structure that was evident in Cyprus, very little has been done with regard to the professional development of teachers (Angelides, 2004), arguments which are still brought up by teachers in my research, as demonstrated by the teachers' attitudes presented above.

### *Setting barriers to school achievement*

From the head-teacher's statement, following the description of SEBD, it becomes evident that he is worrying about how these children create barriers to raising the school's learning standards and academic achievements. Achieving high learning standards and academic achievement has been an area of concern for many years, and continues to be felt by education professionals (Didaskalou and Millward, 2002; Burten et al., 2009). However, for this reason, schools fail to focus on how to support children with SEBD in order to decrease the number of incidents of inappropriate behaviour that take place in the school on a daily basis. Waddell (1998) argues that a school's reputation and financial viability depend on surface success, and children with disruptive behaviour or with learning difficulties, are seen as a liability rather than as children whose problematic behaviour is due to unmet needs, or who might have experienced a negative situation in the past. Teale (2000) suggests that schools which value personal development as well as academic skills, score at least 20% above the average in terms of grades, and have less behavioural problems within the school. Gardner (1997) also argues that children tend to go through the motions of education, and are unable to apply knowledge and skills to new situations. There is a need for children with children with SEBD to become active through group dialogue rather than be passive listeners during the process of learning. Research (Cohen et al., 1994; Parafray, 1995; Ainscow, 1999) has indicated that schools appear to be less tolerant of disruptive children who have a tendency to disrupt the education of others, and are potentially harmful to both the school's reputation and the school's position in examination league tables (Visser and Stokes, 2003).

### *Possible causes*

It can be claimed that it is essential to have some understanding of the cause of different behaviours exhibited by children with SEBD before attempting to support them, if interventions employed are to be successful in the long run. As Pritchard (2004) argues, it is not always easy for teachers to have a complete picture regarding the child's background, and for the majority of children it is not important for this information to be passed on. However, when a child's behaviour is causing concern and is interfering with his learning and with the teacher's work, it is important to have access to certain information on the child's background in order for teachers to be able to intervene in an adequate way. Having said that, this is something that highly concerned the participants in this study.

In addition to the different causes of SEBD, participants argued that almost all behaviours arise from the family background of the individual, such as different ethnic minority groups, children who are bilingual, children from families whose parents are divorced and from families where there is an absence of communication between the family members. The problems these families have in terms of their low levels of income as well as the fact that some of the parents do not speak the Greek language, can have a negative impact on their children and the way they adjust to the school environment.

As Mock (2005) states, the above arguments are understandable. Family characteristics appear to play a predominant role in terms of emotional and behavioural development in complex interactions with other factors such as the socioeconomic status of the family, sources of support

outside the family and the child's age, sex, and temperamental characteristics. When several risk factors such as poverty, parental antisocial behaviour, and community violence occur together, their effects appear to be multiplicative, rather than doubling the chances of a child developing SEBD characteristics (Kaufman, 2005).

There are a number of researchers who argue that teachers view parents and home circumstances as the cause of child misbehaviour that takes place in schools (Miller, 1995; Miller and Black, 2001; Pritchard, 2004). There is also evidence to support the view that children with SEBD tend to come from economically and socially disadvantaged families (Maras et al., 2006), who might have disliked school and therefore sometimes feel uneasy in the company of others who they feel are more educated, such as teachers and SEN teachers (Farrell, 1995; Farrell and Polat, 2003; Flouri and Buchanan, 2004). These parents might find it difficult to voice their hopes and fears for their children, or to pressurise the authorities for better services to be made available for their children (Farrell, 1995; Farrell and Polat, 2003; Koundourou, 2007). Some other parents may themselves have experienced problems during their childhood and, as adults, may have problems in coping with day-to-day life experiences, to the extent that there is little energy left to devote to being an effective and loving parent (Farrell, 1995; Fogell and Long, 1997).

However, there are not straightforward answers as to whether the family can be considered as the reason for children presenting SEBD, as this is not the case for every child who presents SEBD. Different factors can contribute to this, such as learning difficulties that prevent the child from learning in the same way as other children do. When a child presents learning difficulties, it is more likely that he/she will present SEBD. This will cause poor learning strategies and

inattention that can lead to academic failure and to low incident disorders such as motor co-ordination difficulties (Hull Learning Difficulties, 2003). As Tommerdahl (2009) argues, connections have been established, either direct or indirect, between speech and language difficulties, and SEBD.

“Although the direction of causality is most commonly assumed to move from core language problems to the plane of social and emotional development due to difficulty in communicating, several other possibilities exist” (Tommerdahl, 2009, p.21).

Cooper, Smith and Upton (1994) Fogell and Long (1997) Pritchard (2004) and Miller (2003) suggest that the school environment and the ethos that surrounds the children, the curriculum as well as the attitudes that teachers sometimes have towards children, can also play a significant role in influencing children’s behaviour. School factors supposedly are responsible for influencing outcomes. Attention should be paid, not only to the analysis and support of the children’s behaviour, but also to the operations and systems in the school which may cause or aggravate such behaviour. Therefore, paying attention to developing thinking skills is important (Thomas and Glenny, 2000).

Hyperactivity, injury and accidents can also be considered as causes of SEBD. These children could be characterised as being ‘mentally ill’ and, on most occasions, receive treatment from hospital (Farrell, 1995; Lovering et al., 2006). Hyperactivity might lead to impulsive behaviour, injuries, accidents and poor supervision due to the difficult home circumstances the child might be part of (Hull Learning Services, 2003).

Maras et al. (2006) also argue that there is convincing evidence that social factors are linked to SEBD. Poor social skills displayed by a child who might fail to cooperate and share information or competence and who might withhold information, encourages others to show their knowledge. Poor social skills can lead to low self-esteem and then to academic failure (Hull Learning Services, 2003).

It is important to mention that with SEBD, it is not impossible to attribute its causes to one factor alone, as there is almost always a large interaction between a range of factors (Farrell, 1995). Therefore, if teachers wish to introduce better practices, they need to accept the fact that the family is not the only source of the development of SEBD. Teachers also need to understand that the problem behaviours experienced by these students often serve as a defence mechanism to hide the difficulties they have, such as their inability to read, or operate as an alarm signal to the teacher that particular individuals require attention. These behaviours, whether as a result of primary or secondary disability, demand a special response from the teacher (Heirman and Margalit, 1998; Gorman, 1999).

Questioning participants on their understanding of the concept of SEBD helped the researcher to decide whether or not additional information and support should be offered to teachers to ensure that they fully understand the concept of SEBD (Hadjyiannakou, 2005; Phtiaka, 2007). This was important as the more aware the teachers are of the concept, the better their understanding would be when it comes to understanding the main aims and objectives of the SEAL programme, the strategies used, and the better their chances of implementing it successfully.

Providing access to what is “...inside a person’s head” makes it feasible to measure what a person knows, and what are his or her values, attitudes and beliefs (Cohen et al., 2000; Fontana and Frey 2005). This enabled me to gain a deeper understanding of the information collected, and to perceive the whole picture through the eyes of the interviewees who were directly involved with children with SEBD. Consequently, their participation and cooperation was greatly appreciated (Denscombe, 2002). Concluding from the above, providing more information to participants with regard to the concept of SEBD will be necessary. This will also help them become more open minded when it comes to identifying factors that lead children to present characteristics of SEBD, and be more flexible with regard to their future teaching practices.

#### 6.2.2.3 Brief Summary

Even though teachers were in a position to identify behaviours presented by children with SEBD within their classroom, their identification and the way they divided behaviours is not appropriate. All behaviours can take place in different forms and levels and can therefore be included in either of those two categories. As for their feelings, on teaching children with SEBD, along with the rest of the children, the more aware they are about the concept, the more confident they will be in dealing with those behaviours, and in adapting their teaching practices. The head teacher was also concerned that children with SEBD create barriers to school improvement, and all participants tend to blame those children’s parents for the difficulties these children have. This highlights once again that the absence of a solid definition which causes further problems. What is now important to look at are the provisions that MOEC and the school have to offer teachers when it comes to supporting these children’s needs.

### 6.2.3 Provision offered from MOEC and the school to support children with SEBD

#### 6.2.3.1 Receive additional training/ participated in seminars/have a degree or another higher qualification

In the literature there is evidence to support the contention that training and participation in different seminars or special lessons helps teachers to obtain and interpret knowledge, share experience and be advised on different issues/strategies that are available, and enables them to support and enhance their teaching practice (Chazan et al., 1994; Pajares, 1992; Poulou, 2005; Phtiaka, 2005).

All the participants stated that during their employment in primary schools, whenever possible they participated in different educational seminars and workshops on intervention programmes on discipline aggression and emotional education, organised by the Educational Institute of Cyprus, MOEC, the Educational Institute of Cyprus, KΣA, Theofilidi and the Cooperative Learning Association. These seminars and workshops were run by educational psychologists and SEN teachers, based on developing a better understanding of child behaviour, along with presentations on different strategies that can be used to support teachers and children working together in the classroom. However, they argued that although these seminars were very informative and offered lots of strategies and techniques, they found it very difficult to apply these strategies and techniques to their children due to time constraints, and a lack of equipment, resources and knowledge.



Nevertheless, teacher A argues that despite the difficulties she had at the beginning in terms of applying them, through the exploration of what worked well with her children, and different attempts to discover the ways in which her children benefited the most, she was able to adapt them to her children's needs and, at the end, positive outcomes were beginning to appear. However, this process was very time consuming and demanding. She was very enthusiastic about attending those seminars, and most importantly, she was attending them because she wanted to enhance her personal knowledge and be in a better position to support the needs of SEBD children. Bearing in mind that she was the only teacher who was confident enough to provide a better understanding for her children regarding the concept of SEBD, these seminars must have had a positive impact on her personal knowledge. This made her more confident with regard to working with SEBD children and to be more creative in developing and implementing different strategies in order to fulfil the needs of these children.

However, these seminars and workshops were on a voluntary basis, and therefore the onus was on the teacher to decide whether or not to attend them. Phtiaka (2005) and Hoplarou (2005) argued that there was no official training or in-service education for teachers in Cyprus, except for the specialist teachers who were trained in integration issues in a more organised way, something that agrees with the findings of this study. If teachers lack the knowledge as they say, why not take advantage of the voluntary educational seminars and workshops MOEC is organising for them?

Pre-service teachers' effectiveness has been related to their personal theories (Harrison et al., 1996) and teaching practice (Clement, 1999; Poulou and Spinthourakis, 1996), and therefore

different educational seminars are being offered to teachers to enable them to obtain and interpret knowledge, as well as to help them to organise their teaching skills and providing them with stronger indicators for predicting behaviours (Pajares, 1992).

In the past few years, the European Commission has laid emphasis on the issue of teachers' continuing professional development (CPD), given that it is included among the uppermost priorities for the strategic goals for 'Educational and Training 2010' (European Commission, 2004). Besides, CPD has been stressed as a means for improving quality in education, whereby numerous educational systems throughout the world have developed strategic plans, targeting the strengthening of the CPD procedures (European Commission, 2004).

CPD is considered to be a continuous process of individual and collective examination and the improvement of practice. It should empower individuals and communities of educators to make compound decisions, to identify and solve problems and to link theory with practice. Professional development should also enable teachers to offer children the learning opportunities that will prepare them adequately to meet world-class standards in given content areas, and to successfully assume adult responsibilities for citizenship and work (American Federation of Teachers, 2001; Duncombe and Armour, 2004).

In Cyprus, official in-service training for teachers is presently offered primarily by the Pedagogical Institute of Cyprus and secondarily by the Inspectorate. The Pedagogical Institute offers mainly professional training courses to educators of all levels, including pre-primary, primary, secondary and vocational, through a series of seminars. These optional seminars are made available after school hours in training centres in all five districts of the island (MOEC,

n.d). These seminars are prepared by the Pedagogical Institute and presented to consulting and interdepartmental committees for feedback. They aim to meet the needs of all teachers, as well as to focus on school subjects, social and psychological issues, educational research skills and information technology. In addition, school-based seminars are organized on topics of specific interest to the teachers, after agreements with the Pedagogical Institute (Karagiorgi and Symeou, 2006).

Having said this, a study by Charalambous and Michaelidou (2001) pointed out that the content and the organisational structures of the in-service training provided does not satisfy the needs of elementary primary school teachers to a great extent. Karagiorgi and Symeou (2006) argue that perhaps this is because in-service training is mainly made available outside teachers' working hours. If training becomes mandatory, it should be provided during the teachers' working hours, replacing teachers' periods of absence. Karagiorgi and Symeou, (2006) also argue that in-service issues are of concern as it appears to be an ambitious plan to train 11,000 educators and that it is impossible to rely on the services provided by only one institution, which is the case in Cyprus. Funding also appears to be an obstacle to teacher training.

Furthermore, the Greek-Cypriot educational system lacks the mechanisms for evaluating the impact of in-service training in terms of its objectives. At present, there are hardly any studies referring to this issue in terms of the transfer of skills to teachers. At present, teachers are currently asked to evaluate seminars through questionnaires with reference to the usefulness of the content. Nevertheless, organizers fail to consider whether the training has met its objectives and indeed whether these objectives were important in the first place. The deficiency of systems

for evaluating the effectiveness of programmes is a cause of concern. Expected training outcomes, in addition to the criteria used to evaluate the extent that outcomes are achieved, need to be outlined (Karagiorgi and Symeou, 2006). As McCready and Soloway (2010) argue, elementary teachers often quote SEBD, discipline and classroom management as areas of concern, consequently CPD should become one of teachers' main priorities.

#### 6.2.3.2 Provisions in place within the school regarding the education of children with SEBD.

##### *Educational programmes*

Findings of this study suggest that, within the case study school, there was not a specific educational programme in place for supporting the needs of children with SEBD. They argued that, for a particular programme to be introduced into the school, the school needs to apply to MOEC for permission. They also added that, since the majority of the teachers are moved to different schools each year, no one is actually interested in doing so. Additionally, they argued that, for an educational programme to be approved, there is a lot of bureaucracy, and it might take up to a year for it to be approved by the government.

##### SEN teachers and educational psychologists

All teachers agreed that support offered by the SEN teacher's was very useful (Arxondakis and Kuriakou, 1992). However, their relationship with teachers is problematic. There appears to be a gap between the two parties due to a lack of communication, and SEN teachers are not always

present in the school or available to support the teachers when they are needed. They denoted that the SEN teachers' presence in school is considered essential as they were aware of the different techniques and strategies that are available and could be used with certain children. They are also trained to observe, identify causes and offer appropriate support, as well as provide teachers with different guidelines and strategies to be used effectively in the classroom (Arxondakis and Kuriakou, 1992; Koundourou, 2007). One-to-one support offered to children in need enables them to increase their emotional competence, something the class-teachers may fail to do, and children may be given the chance to open up and communicate with them (Arhondakis and Kuriakou, 1992). Rogers (2004) put great emphasis on the relationship that develops between SEN teachers and children, as it was considered to be therapeutic. It was characterised by empathy and acceptance which reflects positively on the children. All teachers agreed that any kind of specialist support provided to those children was effective.

As for educational psychologists, they occasionally visits the school, they attempt to offer support to teachers and children only when things come to a head, something that is very frustrating. Participants also commented that, as teachers, they get the feeling that no one is listening or paying any attention to their complaints and problems, and that they are left alone to confront these problems.

### *Resources*

Statements regarding resources that are available within the school to support teaching practices with SEBD children indicate that they do not exist. Participants reported that they can use

resources and materials that are available to deliver the National Curriculum, and adjust them to the needs of those children, in order to support them accordingly. However, differentiation is not always feasible.

Teachers should have access to more material that is relevant to supporting the teaching of these children. There is a need for MOEC to suggest a more adaptable and beneficial education programme that can be implemented for children with SEBD. They should provide a better organised and structured education for them, as well as for the education of children with SEN in general. There should be a re-structuring of the education system, taking into account teachers' considerations regarding problems that they face in their everyday practice, something the Salamanca Statement strongly recommends (1994).

Having said that, teacher A uses what she has got hold off. She uses different DVDs and stories to develop children's emotional skills. The school was also working closely with an amateur workshop theatre where children are given the opportunity to watch different theatrical activities, and are encouraged to participate in them, something that helps them express their inner emotions and feelings.

#### 6.2.3.3 Brief summary

The previous two sections highlighted that both the provisions offered by MOEC and within the school are problematic and limited. Therefore, teachers are left on their own to come up within their own practices to deal with behaviours observed in the classroom, and in their attempts to

support these children. It is therefore interesting now to identify what strategies teachers have come up with, and how they evaluate them.

#### 6.2.3.4 Reflecting on teaching practices used by teachers

Previous research (Koundourou, 2007; Angelides, 2005; Hadyiannakou, 2005), demonstrated that the government's failure to clarify and to explain the 1999 Law of SEN to schools and teachers left teachers with a myriad of questions, leaving them with a feeling of isolation and of a lack of support. Therefore teachers are trying to move forward by providing support while seeking additional knowledge, training and guidance.

According to previously undertaken research (Koundourou, 2007; Arxondakis and Kyriakou, 1992; Kanakis, 1992), each individual uses different strategies, depending on their knowledge, beliefs and attitudes. Therefore bearing in mind the teachers' knowledge, beliefs and attitudes with regard to the concept of SEBD, the researcher was able to compare and link practices with individuals, and understand the way they work with those children.

Evidence from this study indicates that teachers tend to use some strategies in the classroom with SEBD children. Teacher A tends to use discussions to analyse behaviours that take place, along with their consequences. Through the different stories that they read in the classroom, she tries to develop children's emotional awareness by emphasising the different messages that come out of them, and she encourages children to follow them. This appears to have a very positive impact on SEBD children, as it gives them the chance to become personalities, who are ready to

communicate and be socially accepted, a claim also supported by Kanakis (1992) and Koundourou (2007).

The rest of the participants argued that showing acceptance and understanding to individuals, regardless of their problems, has a positive impact on the behaviour of children with SEBD. Also, being patient, reinforcing positive behaviour and using praise, can have a positive impact on children's relationships and levels of confidence and trust in terms of their teachers. All the above, when applied in conjunction with different interventions such as role play, discussions and storytelling, can have a positive impact on child behaviour and reactions. Based on previous research undertaken (Koundourou, 2007), this way of working with children supports Rogers' humanistic approach of counselling in terms of 'Person-Centre-Therapy'. The basic concepts of this therapy are genuineness, unconditional positive regard, and empathy (Rogers, 1980). According to Branwhite (1988, cited in Kyriakou, 1991), teachers' empathy is considered to be the most valued teaching quality with regard to children.

Despite the above practices used by the participants, they also claimed that these practices do not always work with children with SEBD, or even that sometimes they do not know how to approach individuals and employ these practices.

Evidence by McCall (2004) suggests that schools and teachers appear more effective when a common and consistent approach is in place. Any attempts to develop a 'holistic' (Booth et al., 2000) or 'whole school approach' (Lund, 1996) requires the school, as a whole community, to adopt sharing approaches in order to manage as many of the day-to-day transactions as is



possible, and to adopt complex behavioural principles to encourage this in areas such as discipline policy (Didaskalou and Millwards, 2007).

From the above, it becomes evident that, despite the absence of educational programmes and the limited support offered from SEN teachers, teachers tend to employ different strategies to support children with SEBD, something that shows that they reflect on and evaluate their teaching practices. According to Weiss (2006), a reflective practitioner is in a position to plan thoughtfully and to make different decisions ahead of taking action, is capable of making honest self-observations and decision-making during the course of the children's actions, and analyses, evaluates and rethinks his/her behaviour and feelings after the course of action.

Depending on teachers' understanding of the concept of SEBD and their feelings whilst teaching those with SEBD, each teacher used different strategies in practice. Based on the participants' statements, it was evident that their personal experiences enabled them to identify effective strategies for implementation. As Arxondakis and Kyriakou (1992) argue, the more experienced practitioners are, the more capable they consider themselves to be when dealing with those problems. Nevertheless, all of them highlighted the fact that they still sought additional specialist support, a consideration also indicated by Hoplarou (2005), the Head of Primary Education in Cyprus, Angelides (2005) and Phileleftheros Newspaper (November, 2006).

Effective teaching in mixed-ability classes, dictate much of the Cyprus government's agenda for educational improvement. Since the publication of the UNESCO (1997) Report indicating that classes in Cyprus are organised as mixed-ability groups with no clear policy regarding internal

grouping, with no policy on differentiation in terms of the curriculum, methodology or resource consumption, the MOEC began different operations for improving teaching practices in mixed-ability classes to provide equal participation in teaching for all children, giving particular emphasis on children who tend to be marginalised (Angelides, 2004).

Teachers do their best to support children with SEBD, but they fail in one respect. The absence of a solid definition, and the limited support offered by the school and MOEC, fail to provide whole school structure policies, support from specialists, as well as materials and resources to support their teaching of children with SEBD. Therefore, it becomes essential to consider the aims and the objectives that the education system puts in place for teachers to use when supporting children with SEBD, and for such children to be supported.

#### 6.2.3.5 Greek/Cypriot education system's aims and objectives with regard to supporting teaching practices associated with children with SEBD.

##### *SEN teachers and educational psychologists.*

Findings of this study also suggest that MOEC's attention regarding the education of children with SEBD was useful, but very limited. Teacher A argued that MOEC will provide some support to schools and teachers, but only to the extent that is necessary. For example, they will send an SEN teacher to visit a school once or twice each year when necessary. However, this is not enough. The SEN teacher should be present all the time within the school, to be able to provide support whenever necessary, instead of undertaking a visit only when things get out of control. Arxondakis and Kyriakou (1992) and Koundourou (2007) in previous research, argued

that the presence of a specialist is considered essential, as they are aware of different techniques that could be effective in the classroom. They are trained to observe, identify causes and offer appropriate support and, at the same time, provide teachers with different guidelines and strategies that could be used effectively in the classroom.

At this stage it is possible that perhaps a SENCO approach could be adopted within the Greek-Cypriot mainstream primary schools. According to the DfES in England,

“The SENCO is uniquely placed to support the behavior and attendance strand ... The strand makes clear that the full involvement of the SENCO is essential if standards in behaviour and attendance are to be improved” (DfES, 2003i, p. 11)

The presence of a SENCO within the school, could provide teachers with advice on how to support children with SEN children during the lesson; can assist teachers with training in order to enhance their knowledge around the area of SEN. The SENCO will also ensure that children's IEPs are focused on strategies promoted within the behavior and attendance training materials whenever it is possible, and at the same time to facilitate inclusive practices for all children. Finally, the SENCO can also take part in the evaluation of the strand's impact on SEN children (DfES, 2003). Having said that, as Davies and Lee (2001) would argue, the pressure of a SENCO varies from school to school. There will be schools where the pressure will be less, and there will be schools with a large number of pupils with SEN that the role of the SENCO will be most worked out.

Having said that, this is an issue that needs further consideration and investigation regarding the way this issue could be improved based on the Greek-Cypriot Education System, and take into consideration possible implications it could have on the school as a whole, something that makes this issue a possible area of research that could be undertaken by the researcher in the future.

Also other researchers argue that the educational psychologist's involvement in designing and developing whole-school behaviour policies and different strategies can be effective in increasing adaptive behaviours (Leadbetter and Tee, 1991; Loyd, Bennett and Gamman, 2000). Educational psychologists are required to work as multi-specialists within schools due to the different types of problems presented by children and organisational issues that they are dealing with. However, there is lack of role clarity and understanding amongst teachers and educational psychologists themselves, with studies highlighting that educational psychologists do not always agree with teachers on what comprises the activities of a school based support service (Thielking and Jimerson, 2010). Thielking and Jimerson (2010) also argue that teachers do not seem to fully understand the role and responsibilities of the educational psychologists within the schools and they expect certain practices from them to deem unethical. They also go on to highlight teachers arguments that the professional relationship between teachers and school psychologists cannot be overstated due to the countless hours teachers spend every day in the classroom interacting with children. Additionally, teachers often consider themselves as the primary source of referrals for educational psychologists' service for children. Having said that, Thielking and Jimerson (2010) argue that, a collaborative relationship with classroom teachers can facilitate the success of the educational psychologists in many aspects of their job in terms of information gathering, planning, implementing, and evaluating interventions. Hence, teachers' attitudes and perceptions

towards them are a significant factor influencing the effectiveness of educational psychologists. This might be happening due to teachers' unawareness of the different services educational psychologists can offer to teachers.

Having said that, Styles (1965) and Dean (1980) in their studies reported teachers' claims that in terms of supporting and assisting children with emotional and/or behavioural problems, the role of educational psychologists was considered to be highly effective. Consequently, it is important for teachers to value the role of the educational psychologists and the psychology underpinning collaborative consultation, as well as appreciate the knowledge and skills required to deal with different situations the educational psychologist are called to deal with in their practices. Sharing different experiences with educational psychologist can provide teachers the opportunity to practice different skills and equip them with adequate knowledge on how to deal with different situations they came across with the classroom (Doveston and Keenaghams, 2010).

In relation to this study, it is important for teachers to work collaboratively with educational psychologists in understanding and meeting children's needs. A shared understanding and articulation of knowledge can help both teachers and educational psychologists to be more responsive to the needs of the children (Doveston and Keenaghams, 2010). This leads the researcher to the conclusion that perhaps the SEAL programme works best where all the school staff sign up and are committed to its ethos.

### *National Curriculum*

The way the national curriculum has been structured and organised each year by MOEC does not help classroom teachers to support their children with SEBD. It enables teachers to differentiate lessons based on their children's needs, but this can only be done for specific individuals and not for all the children in the class. Therefore, adequate support cannot be offered to all children. In this way they feel that they push aside the rest of the children.

The National Curriculum also equalises all children, and tends to place more emphasis on enhancing the cognitive development of all children, and works negatively with regard to children with SEBD. There is nothing more specific when it comes to providing support to those children in terms of resources, and it is up to the teachers to construct material to fulfil the needs of these children. As teacher B mentioned, MOEC might have advised teachers on how to develop and enhance the children's emotional world through literacy lessons (learning how speak, express their feelings and emotions). However, she argued that a lack of free time, materials, guidance and support prevents teachers putting this into practice (Phtiaka, 2005; Angelides, 2005).

As already mentioned in Chapter 2, within the Greek-Cypriot education system, there is presently no provision in place for children with SEBD, and that teachers are considered to be capable of dealing with any problems that occur with such children. Therefore teachers are left on their own to arrange for materials to support their teaching of those children (Koundourou, 2007). Consequently, what are the main gaps in terms of the existing education system regarding support offered to children with SEBD?

#### 6.2.3.6 Gaps in the existing education system

From participants statements it appears that, first of all, there is a need to increase the visits made by the educational psychologist and the SEN teacher. This would provide teachers with more solid and effective strategies on how to handle and support these children, instead of having SEN teachers for supporting such children with literacy and numeracy. In this way, different strategies would be provided, step-by-step, with guidance and support, and many problems would be prevented. It was also highlighted that many children who present SEBD are not getting any additional support from the SEN teachers unless their observed behaviour appears to be severe, or if they have a learning difficulty. This point was also supported by Angelides (2005). Bearing in mind all the characteristics that SEBD children present, support to fulfil their needs was considered to be essential, regardless of the severity of the problem. In the researcher's experience, if children are to be supported, why not give them the chance to remedy their weaknesses? Previous research (Koundourou, 2007), argued that the SEN teachers mentioned that, in the time given to support children with SEBD, they are the ones who organise the materials given to the children, as well as the strategies that they are going to use. Therefore, their presence in the school can have a big impact on those children. By building closer relationships with the classroom teachers, the SEN teachers and the educational psychologist would enable classroom teachers to share their concerns and problems with them, and for the SEN teacher to advise and support the classroom teacher in terms of their teaching practices.

Secondly, there is a need to have specific educational programmes regarding the education of SEBD children within the school. Teachers need to be provided with practical solutions for

handling incidents of inappropriate behaviour. More activities are required within the classroom, and for teaching practices to be employed in an appropriate way with regard to teaching children how to behave appropriately, how to socialise and how to interact with other children. Previously in this chapter, it has been mentioned that teachers lack of material that could be used in the classroom to support their teaching practices with children with SEBD. A possible way of that could be used to support this need is to introduce computer-based technologies. Computer-based technologies, as Hasselbring and Glaser (2000) argue play an important role in the children's education. Computer technology can facilitate a broader range of educational activities that could be used in order to meet a variety of needs presented by children with SEN, enabling them to become active learners in the classroom alongside their peers who do not have disabilities. Hasselbring and Glaser (2000) also argue that technology has proven to be an effective method of giving children with SEN the opportunity to engage in basic practice, simulations, exploratory, or communication activities based on the level of their abilities and their individual unique needs. They also go on to argue that technology can enhance children's acquisition of skills and content knowledge when the computer is used in order to deliver well-designed and instruction based on their level of understanding, as well as to help them enhance their skills and knowledge that can be used in real world settings.

Thirdly, there is a lot of bureaucracy that slows down many of the requests put forward regarding school improvements. This was an argument that was also brought up by the Head of Primary Education in Cyprus, Mr. Hoplarou (2005), in a presentation that took place at the end of a research project carried out by a team employed by MOEC, with regard to their attempt to address the merits and limitations of the implementation of existing legislation.



Finally, because many educational rearrangements take place all the time, MOEC should aim for is to focus on solid educational arrangements that will enable creativity to develop within the schools.

So far, results show that teachers, since they are left on their own to support their teaching practices with SEBD children based on their experience, shape their understanding of the concept as a result. This is based on the understanding that they employ in terms of different strategies to support those children. So, how do they know when progress is taking place?

#### 6.2.3.7 How is progress ensured

The participants reported that progress is ensured by observing SEBD child behaviour through the different lessons they take part in, the way they react and behave when they come across different problems, and also through the daily contact and communication they have with children with SEBD. When children improve in terms of their behaviour, then the lessons will be delivered more smoothly and more cooperatively, without any particular problems emerging. Therefore, the teachers do not use any particular methods or tools to note children's improvements in terms of behaviour.

Instead, teachers should be using diaries in which the behaviours of children with SEBD are noted daily, along with the different strategies used to cope with them. This will enable the teacher to build a body of evidence, upon which they can develop strategies which can be

implemented, reviewed, and revised to meet the challenges and reduce incidences (Visser, 2000). This will provide evidence on children's improvements, and what strategies appear to be effective for each individual. Previous research by Koundourou (2007) argues that an effective way to acknowledge progress is by keeping a diary of a particular child's challenging behaviour at different times and occasions. This then enables the teacher to analyse the specific behaviour using different special activities or games, in an attempt of understanding and addressing what might be behind the challenging behaviour, thereby supporting the child appropriately and developing a stable relationship with that individual. After that, the teachers should meet with the rest of the teachers, including SEN teachers, to inform them about possible presented behaviours which might be exhibited, or even successful ways of decreasing challenging behaviour, as well as to compare and contrast procedures used by other teachers who obtained different results. Specific ways of estimating and dealing with behaviours were also brought up in previous research by Arhondakis and Kuriakou (1992). This way of working appears to be effective as evidence highlights that specific ways of working enable teachers to make comparisons of the child's behaviour at different stages. The details could be used by other teachers of that particular child, and then together they could compare the ratings of the same child and come to different conclusions (Scherer, 1990). As Pritchard (2004) argues, it is important to review and evaluate strategies regularly, and make them part of the procedures being used by teachers in order for their strategies to alter or amend in the light of new information and changes.

From the above it can be argued that teachers fail to use effective ways of keeping a record on evaluating their children's behaviour. Teachers are aware of all the gaps and problems observed while teaching such children, and the communication problems between themselves and the SEN

teacher. But how about communication between the teachers themselves? Do they work as a team to support each other?

#### 6.2.3.8 Do teachers work as a team?

All the classroom teachers interviewed suggested that they take every opportunity to discuss their problems and concerns regarding children with SEBD as a team, whenever it is feasible due to workload and time constraints. When the teachers work together as a team with regard to solving specific problems that exist in their school, then different ideas and possible solutions that have been effectively used in the classroom are proposed and exchanged. Then they can go back to their classrooms and use this knowledge and, on most occasions, they see some results and improvements in their children's behaviour. This makes them feel more confident and more motivated to work with those children. Also due to the fact that teacher A has a clear perception of the concept of SEBD, she was able to adjust these strategies and lessons plans effectively to meet the needs of the children with SEBD, something that made her more confident about sharing these ideas with the other teachers in the school. It is important for teacher to share ideas and expertise (Daniels, 2006). A collaboration approach to problem solving appears to be one of which teachers are encouraged to feel confident to share concerns about behavioural problems between them (Pritchard, 2004).

When teachers are working as a team within a school, then communication between staff is present. According to Wolferdale (1988, cited in Jordan, 1994), this is very important, as all

members of staff play a key role for each child with special needs, by assuming the responsibility for organising the curriculum and the different services the child has access to, and also by appraising the different outcomes. If everyone is working as a team within the case study school, this will mean that all teachers are working towards the same outcomes, sharing objectives sharing problem solving approaches, and sharing positive solutions (Hadjyiannakou, 2005).

Previous research (Koundourou, 2007) indicated that it is important for teachers to engage in communication with SEN teachers as well, sharing their problems and asking for advice and support. According to Rogers (2004), both parties should be able to communicate in order to be able to acknowledge each other's work and benefit from it.

Therefore, it is important for teachers to collaborate with SEN teachers. No individual teacher can be successful with all the children. Therefore, teachers and SEN teachers should work in partnership in order to organise their lessons, bearing in mind the needs of all the children in the class (a view supported by Ainscow, 2006).

Working environments can have a direct effect on the quality of learning for students and the conditions of work of their teachers (Blake and Monahan, 2007). In order to succeed in terms of school effectiveness, leadership is considered to be a key factor in a school that is determined to succeed, and therefore different incidents can threaten teachers' autonomy and professionalism and therefore influence teachers' effectiveness (Angelides, 2004).

Overall, the main tool that teachers have to overcome obstacles and support children with SEBD, is through the discussions they have amongst themselves. This approach is effective, and

teachers feel comfortable with it, as they come out of it more confident and more knowledgeable about a range of strategies that can be used with children with SEBD. Collaboration can bring teachers with a great deal of expertise together in mutually beneficial ways (Daniels, 2006).

#### 6.2.4 Feedback from the draft implementation of the programme

At the end of the interview, the interviewees were shown an example of how the SEAL programme works. The intention here was to provide them with an understanding of what the second part of the programme would be like, and how it might be used in the classroom. Interviewees were asked to evaluate briefly the illustration of the framework. In the literature, there is evidence to support the view that issues of discipline in the classroom influence teachers' effectiveness whilst teaching (Clement, 1999). Research by Hadjiannakou (2005) showed that teachers claim that they face difficulties in their attempts to offer extra support to children with SEBD, and that they feel that they fail to include children with SEBD in the classroom activities. For this reason, it is very important for teachers to make sure that they create the right climate for those children to function well, and to avoid causing extra distraction to the flow of the lesson.

Participants agreed that the materials presented appeared to be very useful and approachable for children. The methods used seemed to be very effective. They believed that this framework would be very productive and that children would like it very much. It is a different way of approaching the lesson and the different problems that take place within the classroom. It uses examples from everyday life that can be linked to all children's circumstances, and they believed that it would increase children's enthusiasm. It would also give the chance for children to

express their own emotions and experiences, and to engage in discussions with the teachers and with other children and, all together, to attempt to find possible solutions to those problems. The SEAL programme engaged their enthusiasm and allowed them to demonstrate confidence that the framework would have a positive impact on children with SEBD.

This process appeared to be rather essential. The teachers' enthusiasm for the programme was understandable, as they were glad to know that someone was interested and, at the same time, acknowledged the problems they were having and was willing to help them.

#### 6.2.5 Brief Summary

Overall evidence from interviews with participants of the school indicate that there are different gaps and limitations that prevent them from supporting children with SEBD within the classroom setting. First of all, the absence of a solid definition regarding the concept of SEBD leaves teachers exposed to the myriad of problems presented by those children. Since MOEC fails to provide them with a solid definition, they seek to obtain an understanding of the concept through their personal experiences. As results show, all teachers failed to provide a clear understanding of the concept. Consequently, in their attempt to enhance the awareness of the concept on the part of "normal children", they failed to provide a clear explanation. Therefore, "normal childrens'" understanding of the different difficulties presented by those children is problematic. Furthermore, the absence of a solid definition prevents teachers from picking on those behaviours observed within the classroom, as they tend to categorise the behaviours based on the ones they can handle on their own, and those for which additional support is required. However, they fail to understand that behaviours in each category can overlap, as they can exist in different

degrees and levels. Consequently, their insecurities when it comes to teaching these children along with the rest of the children are understandable. As for the provision offered by MOEC and the school with regard to supporting these children's needs, it is shown to be limited and, at the same time, problematic. Seminars and workshops organised are on voluntary basis, and access to them is not always possible. Consequently, teachers do not gain any advantage from this kind of support that is offered to them. Within the school, the absence of educational programmes to support teaching practices, limited support offered from SEN teachers and the absence of resources for children with SEBD, require teachers to form their own strategies. However, these strategies are based on their own understanding of the concept, and since that understanding is problematic, the strategies used are also problematic. Strategies could either be ineffective or even used in the wrong way, leaving teachers exposed to all the problems presented by all those children with tangible help.

So what should be in place for those children, bearing in mind the realities of the Greek-Cypriot education system? Educational psychologists are available but are sent to schools only when children's behaviours are out of control. SEN teachers are also available, but not on a frequent basis as through out the week they are visiting two to three schools, were the ministry has placed them. The National Curriculum places emphasis on approaches that support all children, something that disallows teachers to differentiate their lesson plans in order to fulfil the educational needs of children with SEBD. Therefore, instead of having SEN teachers and educational psychologists visiting two to three schools, they should be placed and be present only within one school, always available to support teachers when needed. MOEC should also

supply schools with educational programmes to support teachers' practices, instead of leaving them to their own devices.

Support offered by specialists and from educational programmes should also help teachers in different ways to evaluate children's behaviour in order to be in a position to identify improvements made with regard to such behaviour, instead of relying only on their observations during lessons.

Finally, since MOEC and the school fail to support them, they attempt to solve their problems by jointly discussing the problems they face. Sharing knowledge and experiences is always effective and productive. However, before attempting to implement different strategies, it is important to know that each individual is unique. Therefore, what might be effective and productive for some children, might not be so for some others. This proves once again how important it is to have a solid definition with regard to the concept, clear aims and objectives, support from SEN teachers and educational psychologists, and available resources and educational programmes in place.

For all the above reasons, the SEAL programme was chosen to be introduced and implemented within the school, in an attempt to support teachers with their teaching practices and, at the same time, to support children with SEBD in an attempt to meet their needs.

As previously mentioned in Chapter 3 – Methodology, information on interviews also indicated whether further advice should be given to participants in order to fully understand the concept before implementing the programme, in order to enable better practices to be introduced. Since



the participants did not seem to be fully aware of the concept, during the informative seminar that took place, participants were introduced to the concept based on the definition that was presented in Chapter 2 – Review of the Literature (p.12).

### 6.3 Improvements made after the implementation of the SEAL programme

#### 6.3.1 Brief introduction

Results obtained from the observations indicate improvements in two main categories; improvements in teachers' teaching practices, and improvements in SEBD children's behaviour.

#### 6.3.2 Improvements on teachers' teaching practices

##### 6.3.2.1 Attention to children's needs

After the implementation of the SEAL programme, teachers' teaching strategies seem to have improved, especially when dealing with inappropriate behaviour that occurs within the classroom.

During the first two observations of Phase A, teacher A was trying to explain to her children how to engage in good behaviour by offering examples of good behaviour for them to follow. However, these approaches appeared to be more effective after the teacher was advised on how to approach these issues (advice was offered to teachers based on the guidelines offered from the SEAL's resource bank that were presented to them through the seminar). For example, when the

issue of 'Good Behaviour' was being discussed in the lessons, the teacher began the conversation by discussing the good and the bad habits children have. With regard to those habits, the issue of 'behaving inappropriately' in the classroom was raised. The teacher asked the children to comment on why they think specific behaviours such as shouting out answers, not listening to the teacher while she is talking, avoiding following instructions, etc., are not examples of good behaviour. She asked them what each individual should be doing instead, as well as what advice they could give to their classmates who present these kinds of behaviour within the classroom.

Teacher A also followed the same work approach when individuals were behaving inappropriately during the implementation of the programme (X1 and X3). When such incidents were occurring, she engaged in discussion with the whole class, providing examples of good and bad behaviour, as well as giving children the responsibility for concluding how they could improve on their behaviour, instead of her providing all the solutions to different problems that took place in the classroom. In this way children were given the opportunity to reflect on their own behaviour and, at the same time, be advised on how they could improve on it. This approach appeared to have an impact on X1's and X3's behaviour. It was interesting to see that none of the above mentioned behaviours was observed in the case of X3 during the rest of the observations and that X1 was less interruptive during the implementation of the SEAL programme.

The children were very excited by this approach, and liked the idea that their teacher was paying attention to different problems that take place in the classroom. At the same time the children were given the opportunity to arrive at their own conclusions as to how they could change and improve on their behaviour. They sensed that their thoughts and beliefs were being valued by

their teacher, and that their teacher was prepared to listen to what they had to say. Preparing teachers to reflect on their teaching practices and to analyse authentic situations while considering theoretical principles and their applications to real-life classroom situations, is important (Almog and Shechtman, 2007). As these authors argue, comparing discussions with both the class and the teachers can help children with SEBD acquire alternative forms of behaviour. Talking through issues with children, allowing them to have their say and listening to what they have to say, are some of the effective ways to manage behavioural issues that take place in the classroom (Shelton and Brownhill, 2008).

After these discussions had taken place, it was evident that the children took into consideration what their teacher was trying to achieve through the different examples and advice she provided. There were not gradual changes in the children's behaviour during the implementation. However, after these discussions had taken place, children were less noisy in the classroom, and they were following the advice given. Occasionally, they were caught talking to one another or shouting the answers to various questions out loud. Nevertheless, as soon as the teacher reminded them of the discussion on the behaviours they had had in the previous lessons, they immediately changed their behaviour and concentrated on the lesson. Teacher A also appeared to be more confident discussing these issues with her children as she was approaching these issues differently from before.

It is evident that during the study, teacher A was able to discipline her children in a more effective and methodical way, regarding the way they should behave in the classroom on the one hand. On the other hand, the children saw their teacher using a different approach with them, as

well as with regard to the problem of discipline in the classroom. The children were keen on this approach as a way of dealing with these problems. This was evident from the way they were advising their classmates about it, the way they were sharing the consequences of those behaviours, and the impact that those behaviours could have on their learning and academic attainment.

The result of teacher A's way of approaching behavioural issues and, at the same time, being more confident discussing these issues with the children, led to a better relationship being created between the children and the teacher, enabling a strong bond to be created. This bonding on the one hand affected the way the teacher approached different issues regarding inappropriate behaviours that took place in the classroom. On the other hand, it allowed children to see these attitudes from a positive point of view and for them to understand that they are made for their own good, and that they should take them into consideration. Research on effective interventions that address challenging behaviours observed by children with SEBD highlight that positive teacher-child relationship appear to be a fundamental key (Watson and Ecken, 2003), and can influence SEBD children's motivation, performance and behaviour (Jones and Jones, 2001).

Hawkins (1997) argues that it is important for teachers to develop a supportive learning environment. This approach enables learning to take place in a safe, caring atmosphere, in which high expectations are expressed and opportunities for reinforcement are available. Thus, children can become more engaged in the lesson and feel more attachment, something that enables good communication to take place between the teacher and the children.

A closely related strategy involves the use of clear, simple instructions combined with clearly stated consequences. The consequences can be changed to fit whatever school/classroom policy is in place. The content of the consequences themselves are not so important. What is important is that every instruction is stated congruently. Congruence means ensuring that whatever the teacher is trying to say matches the words she is saying. If the teacher is stating an instruction, it must be delivered in a firm tone of voice, with good eye contact, a confident posture and a 100 percent belief that the instruction will be carried out (Mosses, 2005). The effectiveness of teachers in managing their classes is crucial to the success of integrating children with SEBD. The learning style the classroom teacher uses in the classroom is very important, as well as his/her skills in terms of adapting specific strategies to individual cases (Chazan, 1993).

Giving attention to SEBD children might be the key to the implementation of effective strategies being used in the classroom. In this research it was evident that children – especially those with SEBD – appeared to be more enthusiastic during the implementation of the SEAL programme. This might be because their teacher was interested in listening to them and providing them with advice about the different problems they were having (e.g. talking about misunderstandings, fights, worries, etc.) and, in that way, were involving them in the lesson. This is in contrast with the behaviours that were observed at the beginning of the study. At that time children were just sitting on their seats, fidgeting around with their personal stuff, interrupting the flow of the lesson, and their teacher. Evidence by Grossman (2004) suggests that this could be a way for the children to get their teacher's attention, perhaps because they have not adjusted to the structure and demands of school, and their teachers' expectations, and because they lack confidence in their own abilities. Also, it is sometimes important to pay attention to children by sitting them

down quietly and getting them to concentrate on the lesson. This can have a positive outcome (X1/X4 - Class A). It is the receiving of attention that gives the child satisfaction. Ignoring behaviour leads to the child finding something even more disruptive to do to gain attention. What teachers should do is to alter the type of attention they give them, and teach them that there are appropriate and inappropriate times to seek attention (Mosses, 2005) in order to control distractions.

Some effective classroom strategies were also observed with teacher B towards X3. During the first observation, she would just walk by X3, open his book to the right page and remove his toys. Nevertheless, in the second observation she sat next to him, explained the activity and helped him to complete it. After that X3 was able to complete the activity. Therefore, it can be argued that more individual attention should be given by their teachers to particular children such as X3, in order to enhance their enthusiasm and increase their motivation regarding their work.

Also the children's inability to follow their teacher during the lesson might be because children are unable to cope with what the teacher is trying to deliver. Therefore, talking to children at their level of understanding is crucial and very important. Sage (2002) also argues that communication opportunities offered to children appear to be a fundamental need, especially for children who fail to comprehend, have problems expressing themselves and who behave inadequately in different learning situations. Communication helps them develop formal language and thinking, and to increase their performance during the lesson.

Clarity in communication appears to be an important issue for teachers if children are to understand the expectations their teachers have of them (Visser, 2000). Teachers will usually believe that they have been totally clear with regard to what they have said; nevertheless children on the receiving end of the communication may receive a very different message because the received communication has not made sense to them. Consequently, the author argues that clarity in communication compels teachers to monitor how children receive and interpret what is said during the lesson. Furthermore, children's behaviour can be seen as a response to what they interpret their teachers to have said, instead of what the teacher believes he/she has communicated (Visser, 2000). The different communication strategies that teachers use while working with children with complex needs have been highlighted in previous studies. Interaction approaches tend to share more of the conversation between teachers and children with a wide range of language functions that are more likely to take place while including children initiations (Anderson, 2006). Furthermore, Ware and Evans (1986) found that teachers fail to respond to their children's communication attempts as well as allow them to initiate conversations. Having said that, Beveridge and Hurrell (1980) argue that teachers could maintain interactions with their children by responding either verbally or non-verbally, or by discouraging children by ignoring or not responding specifically to their communication initiations.

In contrast with the above, teacher C did not appear to be using any strategies regarding the behaviours exhibited by particular individuals in her classroom. She did not appear to pay any attention to the various behaviours X3 was presenting in the classroom. X3 was left to wander around in the classroom, distract children that were sitting next to him, even imitate his teacher's behaviour. Hence, when she attempted to discipline him, she did so in a very quiet voice,

standing behind her desk. When X3 refused to pay her any attention, she let him carry on with the same behaviour, without insisting that he listen to her. Linking teacher C's attitude to behaviour with information gathered from her interview, it can be argued that she is not comfortable at all dealing with those children who misbehave. Perhaps X3 already knows that his teacher is not going to react to his bad behaviour, therefore he keeps repeating this behaviour.

Children are aware when their teacher lacks confidence in the classroom or prefers to keep a distance from them. Consequently, they are more likely to take advantage of this. Teacher C was not attempting to discipline her children, instead she preferred to remain behind her desk or even to ignore bad behaviour that was taking place. Steel (2002) argues that teachers often struggle to admit their anxieties in a culture that fails to recognise that the need for support goes beyond staffroom scepticism. These feelings are contagious and can affect the working environment - negative teachers' expectations and attitudes have a profound effect on children's school issues. Furthermore, Jackson (2002) also emphasized that, instead of ignoring children's behaviour, teachers should pay close attention to it. These behaviours can sometimes offer teachers important information about what is going through a child's mind.

Pumfrey (2000) pointed out the important role of teachers' attitudes in the success/failure of including children with SEBD in the school and classroom community as these attitudes can influence their children. Mosses (2005) argues that it is more productive to enter the classroom without any negative expectations and with no assumptions as to how things might, or might not, turn out. This shift in perspective appears to be the keystone to an enjoyable lesson. It is important for the teacher not to think of herself as being the same as other teachers, and she



should not expect her experiences to be the same as those of the other teachers. It is also important that the teacher should not try to control unwanted behaviour that takes place in the classroom. If teachers think that they need to gain control, then their behaviour and language will indicate this to their children. In the case of children with SEBD, teachers should avoid putting themselves in any position that will make children refuse to do what they have been told to do. Children should be given the choice. For example: “You can go and stand outside, like I have told you, or I can send you off to one of the management team, and you will be in even more trouble”. In other words it is important to know how to phrase things. When giving children a choice, teachers are actually giving them what can be called a ‘false choice’. A false choice means that the child is in control because he is able to choose to respond or act, when in reality, whichever choice he chooses to follow leads to the teacher’s desired outcome.

Finally, as Avramides et al. (2000) and Batsiou et al. (2008) argue, teachers with experience and training in the field of SEN, appear to have significantly more positive attitudes towards including these children, an argument that can be put forward for teacher A, who appeared to be in a better position to teach children with SEBD, in contrast with the rest of the teachers. Therefore, it can be concluded that teachers who do not feel educationally equipped to support these children, tend to hold a negative attitude towards this issue, and find teaching practices with those children time-consuming and difficult to process. This argument is also in agreement with Batsiou et al. (2008).

#### 6.3.2.2 Promoting and rewarding good behaviour

The DfES (2007) in paragraph 3.5.3 asserts that “praise begins with frequent use of encouraging language and gestures in lessons ...”. Formal rewarding systems can be “...used to recognise and congratulate children when they set a good example or show improvements in their behaviour” (DfES, 2007, paragraph 3.5.3).

Characteristic examples were X1 and X3 from Class B. X1 was praised by his teacher for participating in the lesson and sharing his opinions with the rest of the class. After that he appeared to be more confident and he was able to participate in the lesson, as well as to express himself. However, he communicated in a very low voice that hardly anyone could hear. Therefore, his teacher encouraged him to talk more loudly, not to be embarrassed, and reassured him that his answer was correct but that he had to talk louder so that everyone in the classroom could hear his answer. After that X1 was able to communicate in the same way as the rest of his classmates, as his teacher praised him for his efforts. This affected X1’s motivation and enhanced his social skills as he was now in a position to interact with his classmates and to engage in discussions with them, a behaviour that was evident throughout the implementation of the programme.

X1 was intrinsically motivated to participate in the lesson, and his behaviour improved more after he was rewarded by his teacher for doing so. However, as already mentioned in the review of the literature, rewarding such behaviour excessively might discourage children and could lead to the opposite outcome. Consequently, teachers need to use such an approach carefully, and

engage children to understand the reasons behind the reward, and why it is important to carry on behaving in that particular way (Kohn, 1993; Grossman, 1990).

X3 from class B, who was also praised by his teacher for participating in the lesson, was able to raise his hand a couple of times during the implementation of the programme.

As already mentioned in the review of the literature, rewarding and praising are also very important elements when working with children with SEBD (Halliwell, 2003; Hymes, 1990). A possible consequence is a reward of some type, and a negative consequence is a sanction. Children need to be very clear about the consequences of keeping or breaking the classroom rules. When the consequences are clear, children feel ‘psychologically safer’ about the choices they make with respect to their behaviour. This can be achieved through the use of verbal reinforcement and positive body language. Effective teaching is about building relationships with the children. Positive verbal feedback is a simple yet very powerful motivation for most children. Even non-verbal cues such as a smile and an accompanying thumbs-up can be very effective (Craig, 2007).

It was very interesting to see that children with SEBD were excited after their successful attempts to participate in the lesson as a result of being praised. They felt overwhelmed that they had done something good, and were able to get a positive comment from their teacher. They showed their excitement by demanding to answer all the questions, not waiting for their turn, etc. However, this excitement can sometimes cause distractions in the classroom (an example was X1 from class B and X5 from class A). It is therefore important for teachers to develop and make

clear the classroom rules to the children. Rules, as Grossman (2004) puts it, tend to describe appropriate behaviour. Rules describe how children should relate to each other and to their teachers and, at the same time, how they should behave in certain situations. Regarding the behaviours that were observed, teachers need to clarify with their children the purpose of the rules. Without rules, children would not know how to behave appropriately, because expectations of acceptable behaviour in and outside of the classroom are different (Grossman, 2004). Children need to understand that rules are there to ensure that everyone's basic rights are protected, to enable effective learning to take place (Leoni, 2006). For this to happen, rules need to be consistent with regard to all the children and be enforced by all the teachers. This is essential if rules are to be accepted and followed by all children (Grossman, 2004). As Rogers (1961) claims rules give a 'yardstick' within which 'the right' can be explained and enforced. However, the sense of responsibility will always need to be taught, supported and encouraged for all children. It is important to use positive language when establishing and reminding the children of the rules. Rules and consequences also provide safe boundaries for talking and listening to occur (Leoni, 2006; MacGrath, 1998), for maximising on-task behaviour and minimizing off-task behaviour, avoiding disruptive behaviours and, at the same time, providing children with the chance to learn in a safe and comfortable environment (Cangelosi, 1986).

#### 6.3.2.3 Acceptance and empathy from teachers

Previously, in the discussion chapter (Section 6.2.3.4, p.257), it was highlighted that teachers should be in a position to reflect on behaviours that take place in the classroom (Weiss, 2006). Teachers should be in a position to ask the question 'Why is a particular individual acting in this

way?’ (Visser, 2005). Teacher A was in a position to identify behaviours that were taking place in her classroom, and individuals who were behaving in this way. Individuals were in a position to explain why they behaved in a particular way and teacher A was in a position to support them. This way of working, as Visser (2005) points out, provides an understanding for teachers of the reasons behind individuals’ behaviour, and provides the basis upon which an approach can adequately meet the needs of the child. At the same time, the individual child feels valued and understood.

Teacher A’s way of working appeared to have a positive impact on the children’s behaviour. Children felt valued, understood and appreciated by their teacher. As a result, this had a positive impact on the teacher, as she felt more confident about her work. It was evident that children started appreciating her more as they became more co-operative and were following her instructions. This enabled children to feel a greater attachment to their teacher, something that made teacher A more productive and meant that children were in a position to trust her more and to embrace the strategies that she used and, at the same time, seek help when they needed it (Hawkins, 1997).

When X2, from class B, was having some problems completing an activity, and his classmates started laughing at him because of that, the teacher intervened. She reinforced a good teaching strategy by persuading the group to change its attitude towards X2, to try to understand him and, at the same time, support him. In other words, she persuaded them to try to be more empathetic and to accept their classmate for what he is, and support him according to his needs, a very important way forward.

#### 6.3.2.4 Theoretical stance behind teaching practices

The results so far from the analysis of the observations, point at Rogers' theoretical stance which the researcher considers to be a possible model for explaining the above strategies observed on the part of the teachers.

##### *Supporting Carl Roger's theory of growth*

Teacher's strategies that were adopted, including acceptance, praise and empathy, had a positive impact on the children involved. The relationship that should be adopted within schools should be a teacher/child relationship which is based on certain theoretical principles. These principles could be the use of the act of listening, and Carl Rogers' three core conditions which he argues are necessary for growth. These are 'unconditional positive regard', the ability to 'be empathetic', and 'congruence' (Rogers, 1961).

Congruence: according to Rogers (1961, p.61) it is "...when relationship ... is genuine and without 'front or facade'". The teacher (who acts as a counsellor) does not deny to him/herself the feelings being experienced by the children, and he/she is willing both to express and be open about any enduring feelings that might exist in the relationship. Rogers and Sanford (1985 cited in Consini *et al.*, 2000) argue that it is about avoiding the enticement of hiding behind his/her professional mask, and instead, showing who he/she really is to the child. This will enable a strong relationship to develop between the child and the teacher, where teachers' real feelings are being uncovered and they will attempt to reduce and restore the children to a fully attending and empathetic stage (Consini *et al.*, 2000).

Unconditional positive regard: this is about warmth, acceptance, non-possessive caring, prizing and trust. It is when the teacher attempts to experience a positive, non-judgemental, accepting attitude towards whatever the child is feeling or experiencing (Rogers, 1961). This involves the teacher's willingness for the child to experience and understand whatever immediate feeling exist, such as confusion, resentment, fear, anger, courage, love or pride. It is evident that when the teacher praises the child in a total rather than a conditional way, development is more likely to take place (Rogers, 1986a, p.198 cited in Corsini *et al.*, 2000, p.148).

Empathy: this is considered as an active, immediate, continuous process where the teacher attempts to be able to "...live the attitudes expressed instead of observing them, diagnosing them, or thinking of ways to make the process go faster" (Corsini *et al.*, 2000, p:147). According to Rogers (1951, cited in Corsini *et al.*, 2000, p.147), "...such understanding must be acquired through intensive, continuous, and active attention to the feeling of others, to the exclusion of any other type of attention". It is about appreciating the world of emotions the child is in, and offering him/her understanding, with the willingness to be corrected. This will enable the teacher to get closer to an understanding of the world the child lives in, to understand his/her emotions and feelings, and to respect them at the same time (Corsini *et al.*, 2000).

The main hypothesis of this approach highlights '...children's native tendency towards growth and fulfilment of their potential, towards self-actualisation' (Corsini *et al.*, 2000, p.147). When children are being respected, shown empathy and genuineness from people who play an influential role in their lives, it enables them to become fully-functioning people, open to new experiences and with a high level of self-esteem. When the above conditions fail to be fulfilled,

children fail in terms of developing their self-actualisation, which reflects negatively on their self-esteem, which will then create further problems for the child.

Respect, empathy and genuineness are all considered fundamental for developing healthy relationships. These relationships are characterised by ‘...high self-esteem, internal locus of control, self-management, intrinsic values, social responsibility and competitive life skills’ (Cole, 1982 cited in Hornby *et al.*, 2003, p.45). Empirical studies (Gerwood, 1993, cited in Kensit, 2000) have portrayed it as an effective intervention that leads to positive outcomes, including personality change and child growth.

Mosley (1993) strongly believed that these three core conditions appear to be essential and should be included in all schools. Since children spend most of their time in schools, it highlights the significance of teachers being able to use these three core conditions to be able to help a considerable number of their students both emotionally and socially (Hornby *et al.*, 2003).

McLaughlin (1999) argued that teachers are in the ultimate position of providing support for children with regard to their social and emotional problems. They are in a position to identify those children’s needs and difficulties since they see them regularly over a long period of time. They then make use of the school’s pastoral care or guidance network to deal with those difficulties, either by helping those children by themselves and referring them on to others, or by using the school’s emotional and social education programme (Hornby *et al.*, 2003). This was evident after teacher B attempted to use the above three elements of Rogers’ theory, and evidently had a big impact on X1’s behaviour.



However, there are some obstacles that teachers come across while fulfilling this role. Firstly, almost all schools are mainly concerned with delivering an academic curriculum. Consequently, problems that arise regarding children's personal and social education tend to be ignored. This can lead to inadequate attention being given to those children's needs, and also to a lack of appreciation of the key role which teachers can play in meeting those needs (Hornby *et al.*, 2003). Secondly, Lane (1996) argued that there are general concerns regarding teachers' understanding of their role in meeting these needs, as they tend to use different helping skills with regard to directing and advising, rather than supporting. In addition to the above difficulties, it is important to bear in mind that children are more likely to open up to teachers whom they trust rather than to any other professionals such as SEN teachers or educational psychologists. Consequently, their role in the school's pastoral care system and/or guidance network becomes vital (Hornby *et al.*, 2003). Also, as was previously argued in Chapter 2 (Review of the Literature), when children are provided with too much praise this can lead to extrinsic motivation.

When teachers fail to receive appropriate support with regard to how to successfully meet and support these skills, the majority of children's problems tend to go unobserved (Kottler and Kottler, 1993). Therefore teachers should be trained to have at least a basic level of counselling skills (Lane, 1996). However, this can sometimes have some limitations with regard to different ethical issues such as the role of clarification, the role of conflict and making referrals, confidentiality, permission to record issues, warning and protecting third parties (Nelson-Jones, 2000).

When talking about training teachers, the aim is not to transform them into professional counsellors, but to supplement their skills and general knowledge about counselling in order to be able to help children more effectively, since most of the counselling and guidance that is offered in schools is already being carried out by teachers (Hornby *et al.*, 2003).

“Children with special educational needs have the same basic emotional needs as other children but they may require additional support to meet those needs” (Male and Thompson, 1985, cited in Bovair and McLaughlin, 1993, p.53). Lowe (1988 cited in Bovair and McLaughlin, 1993), highlighted the fact that counselling children can help them in dealing with a crisis, can provide a means of anticipating problems, explore them, consider the option of opening themselves to other students as well as escalating the likelihood of dealing more effectively with different situations that arise. Receiving additional counselling support will help them manage the secondary consequences of growing up with a learning problem that affects their daily school performance’ (Wetherley, 1985).

Counselling support offered to children with SEBD will vary, depending on the severity of their disability, their age and their ability to manage the changes that they experience in their education (Wetherley, 1985; Bovair and McLaughlin, 1993). In this instance, the role of counselling will aim to demonstrate some understanding, offer them support in coping with different situations and will also encourage them to build upon on their strengths and take part in different school activities that will enable them to experience success (Eisenberg and Patterson, 1979 cited in Wetherley, 1985).

Rogers' (1961) theory of empathy and unconditional positive regard is considered to be one of the most popular and frequently used approaches in these circumstances. Through his model "...the skill of reflection and facilitating empowers individuals to take responsibility for their actions in their lives. Teachers still use this approach to enhance the quality in relationships, which is the key to resolving many situations encountered in the educational setting" (Bovair and McLaughlin, 1993, p:58).

There is also evidence to support the view that when children are offered a mixture of listening to, and accepting feelings and projections, they have a lot of patience and understanding that can lead to changes in attitudes towards self and others (Pattison, 2000).

Children with SEBD should be encouraged to share stories with peers with similar or different disabilities. This way of working is considered "...a common thread for survival, restricted choices, enforced poverty and benign operation is found in all of them" (Piaastro, 1995, cited in Onken and Slater, 2000, p.109). Based on that, the teacher can bring together children with different social, emotional and behavioural problems. Sharing stories is considered to be a very powerful tool, as it enables common cultural experiences to bind people together and help them gain the power of being disabled (Onken and Slater, 2000). This was a goal that was achieved through the various discussions that took place within the different themes undertaken as part of the SEAL programme.

Rogers' three core conditions which he said were necessary for growth, are caught and not taught, therefore teachers need to model them and be encouraged to use them. Rogers also made

the point that it is not only important to feel that we are maintaining the core conditions within ourselves, but that we must also communicate them clearly to the child. How we listen is crucial to communicating this clearly (Leoni, 2006). This can be achieved through active listening skills (Egan, 1998), something that teachers were caught doing during the implementation of the SEAL programme.

Egan explained active listening as "...listening and understanding the client's verbal messages ... observing and reading the client's non verbal behaviour" (1998, p.66). Sometimes children would notice that their fists were clenched, or that they were tapping their feet or hugging themselves. When they are unaware of their body language, the teacher can just offer an observation. They could also summarise what the children has been saying as a way of checking that they had understood properly, but also to see if the child wanted to focus on something they said in more detail (Leoni, 2006).

Having the opportunity to be heard by listeners who model Rogers' core conditions allows children to experiment with revealing parts of their 'real self', and lessens the need for the constructed identity they normally present. Once children are able to let some of their 'real self' show, they can encourage other children to join them in dropping their identity. The more the process is evolved, the greater is the potential for attachment. Once attachment is developed, the effects of loss and the threat of loss will be lessened (Leoni, 2006). The sense of belonging which the attachment gives ensures that children build their self-esteem, and move nearer to self-actualisation (Maslow, 1968).

Listening skills communicate the core conditions and allow children to talk without being judged. The tighter the boundaries are, the safer the children feel about experimenting with new ways of communicating and behaving. This judgement is in agreement with Leoni (2006).

#### 6.3.2.5 Issues related to further improvements

##### *Limited Greek vocabulary*

Regarding children with limited Greek vocabulary, who already have problems at school such as communication problems, it became obvious that they were unable to follow the flow of the lesson. Due to their communication problems, they could not participate in the lesson. Different strategies used by their teachers might have had an impact on them. However, due to their communication problems, they were unable to show it, such as X2 from class C. It is possible that X2's limited Greek vocabulary did not allow her to fully understand the lesson or her teacher's instructions. Research by Law and Sivyver (2003) highlighted that a high percentage of children with SEBD also experience language and communication difficulties. Therefore X2's limited Greek vocabulary might have affected her concentration and her willingness to complete any given activities.

##### *Looking beyond observed behaviours*

Throughout the implementation of the programme, X6 in Class A was avoiding her teacher's directions by playing with her personal stuff, turning around when the teacher was talking to her, letting her mind wander, and refusing to engage in visual and verbal communication. Looking

closely at the way she was responding throughout the observation process, it was evident that different strategies used by her teacher were not having an impact on her behaviour, either on the way she was responding to instructions given by the teacher, or to the lesson that was being delivered. In X6's situation, the teacher should try and introduce some new teaching strategies in order to enable the child to open herself up to the teacher and to encourage her to participate in the lesson, to maintain regular eye contact with the teacher, and to start communicating in the lesson.

It is worth taking into consideration that perhaps in the case of some of the children who took part in the implementation, their inappropriate observed behaviour might be due to other internalised problems. According to Campbell (1995) internalised behaviours are difficult to diagnose, especially in young children, and as Godman and Scott (1997) suggested, this is especially true of the diagnosis of conduct, emotional and hyperactive difficulties. Nevertheless, the problem is still there, and the absence of a solid definition within the Greek-Cypriot education system makes the teachers' role more difficult and complicated. Therefore, teachers may fail to identify these problems and therefore adequate support to those children cannot be provided.

#### *Ignoring SEBD children's attempts to participate*

Teachers' ignorance of children's attempts to participate in the lesson was evident, and was causing frustration on the part of children with SEBD. In the situation of X3 and X2 (Class C), X1 (Class A), X3 and X2 (Class B), when they eventually decided to participate in the discussion

that was taking place in the classroom, they were ignored by their teachers, something that affected their self-esteem and self-confidence, and had a negative outcome on their behaviour.

X2, from class C, was seeking attention from her classmates. This behaviour might be due to the fact that she was being ignored by her teacher, as her teacher was standing behind her desk when providing her with instructions. As soon as X2 received the attention of her teacher, it was evident that she was attempting to complete her work.

When their teacher ignored them, or did not let them speak, or moved onto the next chapter without giving them the chance to talk, they were disappointed and would start playing around with their books or start distracting the rest of their classmates.

Also, when X3 (class C) decided to take part in the lesson, his teacher did not pay him any attention. In fact she told him to sit quietly in his seat and wait for his turn. After that, X3 started fidgeting. This behaviour on the part of the teacher harmed child X3's self-esteem and determination.

Once again the teacher ignored inappropriate behaviours that were taking place in the classroom. Even when X3 packed up his things and left the lesson, the teacher did not react at all. This kind of behaviour seems to be taking place quite frequently, especially when X4 from class C gets frustrated.

Previously, it was argued that when X3 received some attention from his teacher, he was able to complete his activities. However, there were some limitations in terms of his teacher's teaching

strategies. His teacher (Class C) encouraged him to participate in the lesson and complete his activities. Nevertheless, in the following lesson, X3 attempted to participate in the lesson and was ignored by his teacher. As a result, he started fidgeting. This teaching strategy that the teacher is using appears to be problematic, because while X3 gets praised for his work on one occasion, the following lesson he is ignored. So while initially he is encouraged, he then gets left out. X3 is probably confused as to how he is supposed to behave and participate in the lesson. This might be the reason for his attitude when it comes to concentrating in the lesson and completing his activities.

Angelides (2005) argues that it is the teacher's responsibility to spot and pay attention to certain details such as the above, since this can have a big impact on his/her efforts to provide equal opportunities, participation in the classroom, and learning for all children. There is a need for more critical thinking and detailed reflection on aspects of teachers' thinking and practice.

Consequently, it becomes apparent that teachers should receive additional training when it comes to supporting children with SEBD as part of their training. They should accordingly be advised with regard to how to reinforce and support their children's attempts to participate in the lesson. It is worth mentioning the example by X3's (Class C) situation. When he eventually decided to participate in the lesson after being praised by his teacher, his attempts went unnoticed. This had a negative outcome on his behaviour, and his teacher did not pay him any attention. Instead the teacher should have given him the chance to participate and should have praised him for his efforts.



### *Giving permission to avoid distractions*

Giving permission to children to do certain things in the classroom, when there are rules that should be followed, can cause disappointment and frustration on the part of the other children (e.g. X2 from class B was demanding attention and his teacher gave him permission to do as he wished in order for her to be able to carry on with the lesson). The teacher should have been in a position to explain the different action taken by her, and not try to avoid those children's questions about not getting permission. Otherwise, the teacher should stop being 'nice' to one particular individual (X1) and stop letting him do whatever he wanted to do, in order to let her carry on with the lesson, and should attempt to find ways to discipline him. In that way, everyone is treated equally and fairly. In this case, as was previously mentioned in p.282, rules need to be consistent and enforced with regard to everyone.

#### 6.3.2.6 What else could be done?

It is important for teachers to be able to use strategies that will enable them to support children with limited Greek vocabulary to ensure that they feel included in the lesson, to be able to look beyond behaviours observed by their children, to be in a position to provide opportunities for all children and avoid ignoring their attempts to participate in the lessons, as well as to be able to control children's habits such as distracting the lesson to get permission from their teacher to borrow a book or get a puzzle instead of completing their work. These problems prevent children from being equally included in the classroom setting. To overcome these problems requires the implementation of effective teaching strategies on the part of the teacher.

Having said that, it is worth looking at the way teachers plan and deliver lessons within the Greek-Cypriot classroom. Arxondakis and Kuriakou (1992) argue that Greek-Cypriot teachers, in their attempt to teach children with SEBD, tend to be influenced by demographic information (their gender, their personal working experiences, their education and training regarding handling children with SEN), the way they perceive and understand problems presented by SEN children, and the different internal/external factors that contribute to their teaching environment. These factors include the number of children in their classroom, the number of children with SEBD in their classroom, and the implementation or its absence on IEP's in the classroom. These factors will then lead teachers to decide on the different strategies they will use, the way they are going to deal with the problem, how to evaluate the effectiveness of the different strategies that were used and finally, how to make suggestions for improvement within the Greek-Cypriot educational system.

The extent to which the above theoretical framework is still being considered and used nowadays by teachers is questioned by the researcher. Furthermore, to date, there appears to be no published evidence to support the use of the above framework by teachers. Furthermore, evidence from the interviews also failed to provide evidence on this issue.

Despite this gap in the research, it is the view of the present researcher there is a need to raise awareness on the way teachers could deliver their lesson effectively, perhaps by considering differentiating their lesson plans in an attempt to minimise problems that emerge within their classroom. Research by Kyriakides *et al.* (2000) and Reynolds *et al.* (2002) highlighted that the value of classroom effectiveness and climate are very important in relation to teacher

effectiveness. However, the issue may not be how teachers relate to categories of children (eg. gender, race, etc.) but how teachers deal with differentiation by individual children.

According to Visser (1993) differentiation is:

the process whereby teachers meet the need for progress through the curriculum by selecting appropriate teaching methods to match an individual child's learning strategies, within a group situation

(Visser, 1993, p.15)

It is apparent that differentiation has taken place with regard to the key criteria for effective classroom practice, and teachers are expected to show a wide range of skills in differentiating the work given to children (Kerry and Kerry, 1997). Differentiation appears to have the potential for increasing the scores for children with SEN, children who are at-risk of school failure, 'normal children', and children labelled as gifted and talented (King-Sears, 2008). Authentic differentiated settings should aim to be responsive to the needs of children, not just children with SEN. The central principle for promoting differentiation is that the progress of children with diverse learning needs, when appropriately and adequately taught, can increase school scores on large-scale assessment (King-Sears, 2008).

Furthermore, Campbell *et al.* (2004) denote that differentiation in value orientation operates empirically, in order for an exclusively generic model of values would be inappropriate. Based on this assumption, they argue that there is a need for a 'teaching effectiveness model' to be created. This model will highlight the significant use of different teaching approaches in order to

respond appropriately to children with different levels of attainment. This model will reinforce the necessity to articulate and, at the same time, to accommodate within an effective model, the values that sustain it, for instance the commitment on behalf of the teacher to inclusiveness Campbell *et al.* (2004).

Without differentiation and subsequently the provision of attention to children's entry levels of instruction, as well as without adequately monitoring children's progress during the school year, children will be left behind (King-Sears, 2008). Ofsted (2005) also denotes that high levels of poor behaviour are found in all schools where the curriculum and differentiation is lacking, and as a result it affects negatively children's interest, motivation and involvement.

As Alexander *et al.* (1992, p.32) claim "...standards of education in primary schools will not rise until teachers expect more of their children, and, in particular, more of able and disadvantaged children"

Having said that, it is evident that teachers nowadays plan their lessons in a linear and structured way. Teachers tend to lay emphasis first on what they have to teach, as there appears to be a pressure on teachers to teach a finite quantity (Visser, 1998). Secondly, as Brown and McIntyre (1993) state, teachers tend to concentrate in their planning upon the resources available to them, rather than upon children's learning needs. Furthermore, Montgomery (1990) states that teachers are faced with a plethora of resources and materials, and there appears to be no particular connection in planning to meet individual children's learning needs. Finally, planning to meet children's individual needs comes after looking at the resources that are available to the teacher

(Visser, 1998). Hopkins (1997) states that when the availability of resources and materials come before attempts to identify children's learning needs, then the lessons become content driven and resources led, instead of letting resources and materials take second place after children's learning needs. Consequently, less attention is paid to the teaching strategies used in the classroom, the children's learning needs, and classroom management (Visser, 1998).

During the process of reflection, as Visser (1998) states, teachers tend to reflect on what worked well in their previous lessons and what children's responses were, while less attention is given to reflecting on what children have learned.

As McBeath et al. (2000) argue, self-evaluation as a method has been advocated as part of an approach to school effectiveness and improvement, wherein the possession of improvement can be embodied. Papoulia-Tzelepi (1996) and Korthagent and Vasalos (2005) also argue that effective teaching begins with reflection and a critique of personal experiences of self as a teacher, and the reasons why individual teachers decided to enter the particular profession.

Having said that, there appear to be different internal and external factors such as a lack of subject knowledge; lesson planning (poor preparation and lack of setting objectives for children to achieve); choosing the appropriate resources; and a lack understanding of children's diversity factors that prevent teachers from differentiating their lessons as part of providing effective teaching strategies (Visser, 1998).

Differentiation appears to be one of the main aims that MOEC is trying to reinforce teachers to consider (MOEC, 2009) However, the extent to which teachers use it within their lesson is questionable.

The above thinking leads the researcher to the conclusion that further research needs to take place which examines the way teachers organise and deliver their lessons, and to consider whether differentiation is being used, and what teacher make out of it. It is not the role of this research to seek answers to the above questions. However, since it is the researcher's interest to support teachers' practices with regard to SEBD, the above questions can be deemed to be the next piece of research for her to investigate.

### 6.3.3 Improvements on SEBD behaviours

#### 6.3.3.1 Excitement and participation

From the analysis of the interviews, it can be argued that perhaps the themes that were discussed as a result of the implementation of the SEAL programme caught the children's attention and created enthusiasm during the lessons. During the implementation, children appeared to be more confident, concentrated and their participation increased.

During the implementation of the programme, children with SEBD were more likely to be the first ones to initiate conversations, be keen to share their personal opinions and knowledge with the rest of the class, and were excited about completing their activities. After these conversations had taken place, the observer was able to see a sense of satisfaction in the children's eyes. Their

faces showed that they were happy to be able to share something with their classmates and, at the same time, know that everyone was listening carefully to what he/she was saying. In contrast, when these children with SEBD were first observed, they tended to avoid participation. They tended to daydream, fidget and avoided direct eye contact with their teacher. This suggests that perhaps, in order to participate in the lesson, these children needed to be sure of themselves before they answered a question, that they knew what to answer, and that they were not going to be humiliated in front of the whole class. This conclusion emerged from the fact that as soon as the SEAL programme was removed, most of the children returned to their old habits.

It is worth mentioning that some of these children became excited about the discussions that were taking place, and they wanted their teacher to know about it, as in the case of X5 from class A and X3 from class C. That is why X5 and X3 were caught jumping up and down in their seats, shouting out the answers or even calling the teacher's name in order to let the teacher know that they were aware of the answer to the particular questions that she had asked.

Consequently, it can be argued that the themes that were presented during the implementation of the programme perhaps captured their interest and gave them the chance to participate in the lessons. They were possible ways of overcoming different problems that had taken place, and which prevented the children from becoming the best they could be, and were something that perhaps they were not given the chance to do before.

The work of Abraham Maslow, and particularly his 'hierarchy of needs' is relevant to many aspects of practice as researcher try to strengthen self-esteem and confidence of children whose

experiences have not been positive. As Maslow (1968) argues, for individuals to be able to have a keen perception of reality, accept themselves and others, and appreciate what surrounds them, they need to become self-actualised. In order to achieve this, Maslow (1968) argued that there are a number of needs that have to be met. One of these needs is fulfilling a sense of belonging, to affiliate with other people, to be accepted by them and to sense that one belongs to a group. Based on evidence presented previously in Section 6.3.2 (p. 275), teachers have to be able to offer to these children the sense of belonging, something that was achieved through the different strategies they used with these children during the implementation of the SEAL programme. Consequently, these lead to the next level, to meeting esteem needs, to be competent, and to gain approval and recognition (Maslow, 1968). As argued in this section, children with SEBD need to be sure about their answers before attempting to express themselves, to have a need to feel confident. Once they received approval and recognition from their teacher, they were in a position to find self-fulfilment and to realise their own potential. In other words, they were able to achieve a degree of self-actualisation. At this point, children with SEBD were able to benefit from the themes that were discussed, to perceive reality, and to gain a strong sense of value and a strong sense of appreciation. This enabled children with SEBD to identify and discuss different issues, appreciate what they are being taught, and enhanced their willingness to improve.

The programme gave them the chance to share experiences and feelings with regard to a particular area of concern. This may highlight the possibility that there might be some comprehension problems in terms of the current curriculum, and that the level of communication during the lessons might be challenging for children with SEBD. Given the chance to talk about



everyday problems in the classroom might be a subject that captures SEBD children's attention more than the literacy and numeracy lessons that they usually have to follow.

The delivered lesson plans involved discussions on children's habits, interests and solving any personal problems that were troubling them. Consequently, these themes might have given children with SEBD the chance to open themselves up and be placed in a position that they are able to identify and understand different things about the way they behave, and which might persuade them to make some changes in their behaviour. Examples of the above can be seen in the case of X2 (Class A). Different discussions must have alerted X2 (class A) to the need to pay close attention to the teacher, appreciate all the good things the school has to offer, why it is important to behave in the right way, etc. The kind of behaviour that X2 adopted also influenced the children who were sitting next to him, as they attempted to imitate his behaviour.

Examples on how to avoid bad/unwanted behaviour such as shouting the answers to questions out loud, and talking and laughing during the lesson, were also given to X2 and X3 (Class A) through discussions that emerged during the implementation of the programme. Through these themes, teacher A was given an opportunity to discuss different discipline issues with the whole class, instead of picking on individuals (X2 and X3) and criticising their behaviour in front of their classmates. In this way no one was being stigmatised for his or her behaviour, and the teacher could also discipline all the children in equal ways. Towards the end of the implementation, it was interesting to see that neither X2 nor X3 had repeated any of the inappropriate behaviours that had been discussed.

X5, from class A, who at the beginning of the implementation was refusing to follow any instructions, and was playing around with his personal stuff, during the middle of the implementation of the programme wanted to participate in the conversations that were taking place in the classroom. However, as soon as the programme was removed from the lesson, X5 began avoiding his teacher's directions once more, and was day dreaming in the classroom.

Conversations that were taking place also had an impact on X1's (Class B) behaviour. At the beginning of the programme he was wandering around in the classroom, taking puzzles, and running behind his teacher in order to gain her attention. Nevertheless, during the implementation of the programme, he sat quietly on his seat, had regular eye contact with the teacher and was also attempting to participate in the lesson. However, when the programme was removed from the lesson, he stopped attempting to participate. From the above observations it was evident that X1 was more interested in participating in the discussions that had to do with everyday facts and issues from real life. These discussions challenged him to open himself up and to talk about his feelings and personal experiences, something that might not happen in other subjects.

Discussions that were taking place in X1's classroom (Class C) were also of interest. During the implementation of the programme he followed instructions, interacted with his teacher, participated in the conversations that were taking place, shared his personal opinions and, most importantly, ignored X3 during the whole lesson, even though X3 was trying to distract him in different ways.

The conversations also captured X4's and X3's attention in Class C, as during the second and third observations they were happy to participate in the lesson and complete the different activities given. This can be concluded from the fact that, after the implementation of the programme, as soon as the teacher announced the change of lesson themes, X4 packed up his bag and left the classroom and X3 continued to ignore his teacher's instructions.

Johnson (1999) argues that communication appears to be an ongoing process by which messages are being sent and received between individuals in order to share knowledge, skills and attitudes. It can therefore be argued that effective communication depends on successful communication. Johnson (1999) also goes on to argue that teachers should be in a position to be able to reach their children's level of understanding and transfer them to the standard level of understanding.

Overall, putting together the level of communication used in the classroom and the children's level of self-actualisation, it can be concluded that the SEAL programme enabled the children with SEBD to open-up, become more alert, engaged their interest and increased their participation. Furthermore, as Sieber and Hearnold-Kinney (2000) argue, engaging high levels of participation can increase SEN children's high levels of achievement. One of the main claims of approaches that include thinking skills, is that they promote children's motivation and engagement (Baumfield, 1995), and can have a significant impact on children with SEN (Baumfield and Devlin, 2005).

### 6.3.3.2 Ability to solve problems and express feelings

It was interesting to see that children in class B attempted to solve an issue that was taking place without their teacher being involved, something that was achieved through calm and honest conversations. Sharing knowledge and experiences with other children made it clear to them that there are other children who might be encountering the same problems as they are. This gave the chance to the teacher to explore different issues/topics with the whole class without stigmatising anyone and, at the same time, to offer the children the chance to develop an effective dialogue/discussion in order to analyse these problems and offer possible solutions. It was quite interesting to see that once a child had brought up a problem of concern, that the other children wanted to continue the conversation, without arguing or shouting. It was quite impressive to see this taking place when X2 raised a problem that was occurring within the school.

Student X2 (class B) ***“My classmates do not want to play with me”***

Children reply ***“We do not want to play with you because you always want things to be done in your way, and you don’t like playing in a team and play fair”***

After that discussion, the children agreed that if X2 tried to change his behaviour towards them, then they would be happy to be friends with him.

The above example provides a picture of a child who feels left out, in other words who is isolated. From the discussion that took place in the classroom, it becomes obvious that X2 needed to feel part of a group, to have a sense of belonging. Children need friends to help them

learn how to get on with people (Csoti, 2001). Therefore, it is important to place emphasis on a child's needs to develop his/her social skills. It is also important that they should learn how to maintain their friendships successfully. By increasing children's understanding of loneliness, they can help one another to avoid feeling isolated.

There were children in every classroom who found social relationships challenging, and who may be deemed 'unpopular' or actively disliked. These children are referred to as 'rejected' or 'rejectees' (Gronlund, 1970). Other children seem 'invisible' and tend to be ignored or left out by their peers. These are termed 'isolated' or 'isolates' (Slade, 2008). For many years researchers have acknowledged the importance of peer relationships and have explored the impact of peer rejection or isolation on individuals. Authors such as Kupersmidt, Cole and Dodge (1990) have identified links between social status and later mental health, while others, including Putallaz and Dunn (1990), note the relationship between poor social acceptance and behavioural, academic and psychological difficulties. The children identified as being at risk of peer rejection or isolation exhibited very different patterns of behaviour compared with the norms of the class. Typically these behaviours were non-social in nature, and included a significant amount of solitary play and on-looker. This has led to the conclusion that, for this group of children, there appears to be a significant connection between pro-social behaviours and high social status and, conversely, a link between negative nominations and non-social behaviours (Slade, 2008).

De Monchy *et al.* (2004) also added that when children with SEN become socially isolated, it can harm their social and emotional development, and they are more likely to become victims of bullying. Therefore, teachers should be in a position to identify these children and to support

them accordingly. This can be achieved through the support offered by the SEAL programme in terms of enhancing social interaction between children, something that will enhance these children's self-awareness. They may be able to manage their feelings and find different ways to be included in the school community.

Looking back at the conversation that took place between X2 and his classmates, it provides evidence that children with SEBD were able to open themselves up during the implementation of the programme. Perhaps the teacher should take this into consideration, and use it as a chance to bring up topics such as misbehaviour, fighting, lying, etc. and to discuss them in the classroom. These conversations will enable children to become more aware of different concepts, appropriate behaviours, ways of discipline, without the teacher needing to pick upon an individual who is performing inappropriately, to guide and discipline them about it. Introducing the topic as a theme for discussion will provide the chance for all children to paradigmatised from it, and SEBD children will not take it as a personal warning. At the same time, good examples and guidance will be provided, and there will be a chance for children to express their wants and needs, share their experiences, explain why they act in a particular way, and be offered support on how to overcome that problem (Massey and Burnard, 2006). Teachers must not take for granted any knowledge of the process involved in making an intelligent choice of actions. The skills of acting responsibly and behaving appropriately need to be taught, not only in theory, but also in practice. This can be achieved by asking children to imitate those good behaviours.

#### 6.3.3.3 Self-esteem

Evidence gathered from the observations confirms that during the implementation of the programme, children with SEBD enhanced their self-esteem.

Teacher A used praise strategies to enhance X5's (class A) self-esteem. She reassured him that she was aware of his efforts during the lesson, and that she was proud of him. She also encouraged him to participate in the lesson without shouting, or getting up from his seat.

Similarly, teacher B with X1 and X3 and teacher C with X1, used approaches such as positive reinforcement encouragement, something that boosted these children's confidence to take part in the lesson.

Focusing on the concept of self-esteem, Lawrence (1996, p.5) thought of it as "...an evaluation of the discrepancy between the self-concept and the ideal-self". It reflects on the way each individual sees him/herself as a whole person, taking into account different characteristic interactions with other people, and general and specific abilities, as well as physical self-image (Pier, 1994, cited in Gans *et al.*, 2003).

Cooley (1909, cited in Owens, 1995), referred to self-esteem as a "*looking glass*", since significant others are the social mirror into which we look for information that comes to define the self. Rogers (1983) referred to self-esteem as positive self-regard that is built from the different responses gathered from the environment surrounding the child, a theory concurring with Cooley's theory (1909, cited in Owens, 1995). He added that self-esteem is the difference

between the child's actual self and his/her ideal-self. In his theory he is attempting to "...understand a person through empathy and it is based on the premises that it is not the events which determine emotions but rather the persons interpretation of the event" (Lawrence, 1996, p.3). Without it, children fail to realise their full potential (Maslow, 1954, cited in Papalia *et al.*, 2001).

"Our self-esteem affects our behaviour and understanding of how the world works and where we fit into it..." (Meyers, 2006, p.2). Therefore, teachers should be in a position to address low self-esteem within children by simple observations that can be part of their daily teaching routine. Nevertheless, a number of teachers tend to have difficulty in identifying self-esteem issues and consequently those with low self-esteem go unnoticed (Miller & Moran, 2006).

Children with low self-esteem tend to explain any successes they have as a matter of luck. They are easily persuaded, communicate less, avoid taking risks in social encounters, speak hesitantly, lack confidence, are apathetic and most of the times feel unhappy about being at school, become easily distracted, may be unmotivated and are surrounded by negative feelings about what they do and think (Meyers, 2005; Reasoner and Dusa, 1991)

Conversely, children with high self-esteem tend to attribute their success to qualities within themselves. They communicate more, are more confident, speak fluently, are willing to take risks, admit it when they are wrong, encourage people to take the credit for positive behaviours, and feel confident both about their sense of self-worth and their self-competence (Meyers, 2005; Mruk, 1999, chapter 5 cited in Miller and Moran, 2006).



‘Within the school, in the presence of the one whom the child feels to be of important, he/she tends to enter into and adopt his/her judgement of him/herself’ (Cooley, 1902, p.175, cited in Humphrey, 2003). Peers appear to be a primary source of the development of self-esteem (Humphrey, 2003) particularly after the age of eight, “...when self-referential statements shift from the absolute to the comparative” (Gurney, 1988 in Humphrey, 2003, p.132).

Peer-relationships have been linked to peer treatment and self-concept (Buhs, 2005). When children are being abused, it reinforces their negative self-evaluation (Harter, 1998, cited in Buhs, 2005). Juvonen and colleagues “...found empirical support for linkages between victimization, global self-worth and school adjustment” (Juvonen *et al.*, cited in Buhs, 2005, p.410).

Teachers play a significant role in the development of children’s self-esteem. Nevertheless, some teachers affect children’s self esteem by their use of labels (Reasoner and Dusa, 1999). Children with SEBD, in contrast to their classmates, tend to receive more negative attention from their teachers as they are more frequently off-task, which may cause behavioural problems and might affect their social standing within the classroom. They might also come across arrogant teachers who might be ignoring the children’s level of difficulty (Humphrey, 2002).

To enable learning to be maintained effectively, there are three elements related to motivation that need to be considered - the attitude that each one has towards learning; the way they think and feel about themselves as learners; and the ability to overcome the different problems they come across (Burden and Burdett, 2005).

When children begin to have a realistic idea with regard to what they can or cannot do, they become successful (Reasoner and Dusa 1991). There are occasions when children become overwhelmed by their mistakes and so tend to associate mistakes with failure. Therefore they see themselves as failures and so lose all their motivation when it comes to trying to achieve different goals (Reasoner & Dusa 1999; Buhs, 2005).

Enhancing self-esteem is a good opportunity for children to overcome their fears and problems and to improve on skills that they are strong at. Nevertheless, when too much attention is given to children, through reward and feedback, it can lead to over enhancement of self-esteem. This may transform them into an “attention seeking child”. One way that children seek to receive feedback is by trying out different roles.

“Sometimes children behave in unexpected ways in their search for identity. As they receive approval or recognition for their performances, they begin to feel more comfortable in those roles – even when such behaviours results in negative attention. Children typically cannot accept being ignored. They demand attention, even if it results in scolding, frowns, or punishment. Some children thus feel more comfortable being in trouble or being failures than they do feeling successful. They are merely acting in a manner consistent with their self-perceptions” (Reason and Dusa 1999, p.20).

It is important to help children with SEBD to overcome their problems by enhancing their self-esteem. However, teachers need to be aware of when to draw the line to avoid any additional problems from developing. Numerous arguments have been presented with regard to praising children less to enhance self-esteem. Looking more closely at the way teachers praise their children in the UK, it was shown that they tended to give over-positive messages to their

children (Elliot, 2002, cited in Miller and Moran, 2006). This has its own consequences, and when children are being over praised, they tended to react differently to praise (Miller *et al.*, 2006).

#### 6.3.3.4 Make and maintain friendships

Research carried out by De Monchy, Pijl and Zandberg (2004) argues that children with behaviour problems appear to be less socially included. That is a crucial finding, because a lack of perceived social integration is possible, resulting in children developing negative self-concept and feelings of loneliness (Vaux, 1988). A possible explanation might be because peers in the classroom hold negative attitudes towards children with SEBD resulting in self-fulfilling prophecies regarding their behaviour and social position in the group (Soder, 1989). It might also be possible that the peer group might find it difficult to get on with children with serious behaviour problems (Flem and Keller, 2000).

This was the situation that appears to be the case with X2 from class B and X5 from class C. X2, as already mentioned in Section 6.3.3.2 (p. 309) was in a position to express his feelings with regard to his classmates behaviour towards him. He was feeling isolated during the lesson and his classmates did not want to play with him during the breaks. In this case, all children were able to share their concerns with X2, and X2 showed good intentions with regard to changing his behaviour, in order to be included. This approach showed X2 that, in order to make and maintain friendships, there was a need to improve his behaviour. After this discussion, his classmates' attitudes towards him improved, and during the lessons they were happy to support him and co-

operate with him during activities. However, this was not the case with X5. X5, even though his behaviour improved during the lesson, found that none of his classmates was willing to associate with him during the lesson.

Without a doubt, friendships are considered to be dynamic and developmental. The nature of friendships, as well as the different expectations held for friendships, tends to vary considerably through childhood and adolescence (Carr, 1985).

According to Rubin (1980), children are in a position to provide certain specific resources to each other which cannot be supplied by adults to the same degree. They provide opportunities for the learning of social skills (communication, dealing with conflict), facilitate social comparisons by allowing self evaluations and the development of sense of identity, and foster a sense of group belonging.

The development of the above functions of friendship is considered essential because of their expansion through childhood and later on into adulthood. Bearing in mind the different characteristics displayed by children experiencing shame, shyness, isolation, etc. (Thomson, 2007), plus the fact that they experience SEBD, this automatically prevents them from developing good social skills in terms of other children, and therefore from maintaining friendships. Children, who fail to develop their own sense of identity and also experience a sense of shame, consequently fail when it comes to facilitating different social comparisons, which is another important function of friendship. Also, the fact that children with SEBD are aware of what makes them different from other children makes them sense that difference and feel

ashamed about it. This can have a negative impact on fostering their sense of belonging and can harm their social-emotional development. In addition, it can result in negative side effects such as becoming a victim of bullying. In particular, children who are afraid, physically weak, who lack confidence and who have low status in the group can be considered as potential victims of bullying (Junger-Tas and Van Kesteren, 1999).

Friendships can have many functions. Friends are there to provide security, and to be partners in different activities where a partner is essential to provide companionship (Roffey, Tarrant and Majors, 1994). Previous studies have documented that children tend to choose to be with friends of the same sex and race, same size and who have the same degree of physical maturity, as well as having the same age and similar levels of intelligence. This is supported by Foot *et al.* (1980) who stated that children also tend to select same age peers, with the same cognitive abilities and social skills, to be their friends

There is evidence to support the view that children's physical attractiveness is related both to popularity within their peer group as well as to peer perceptions of their social behaviour. Therefore, children with SEBD are less socially accepted by other children (Carr, 1985).

Rejected children, especially during the early stages of adolescence, can experience isolation from the surrounding environment, feel a reduction in their self-esteem and tend to present poor conversation skills, exhibit anxiety, have poor co-ordination, and have difficulties in relating socially with others (Carr, 1985). Children with Special Educational Needs (SEN), "...have intellectual limitations and, in addition, many will experience at least one of the other

characteristics outlined above” (Carr, 1985, p.51). They have limited chances of forming effective interpersonal relationships, especially when additional support is not provided for them.

Self-concept is the “...organised collection of attitudes, opinions and beliefs an individual holds about him/herself” (Carr, 1985, p.11). According to Colman (1995), self-concept is considered to be a fundamental concept on which children can build their interaction skills. This concept can also be equated to Erikson’s theory of identity.

Research has shown that it is essential for children to adopt some basic social skills before their entry to school when they have to meet other children and become friends with them based on their own initiative (Carr, 1985). When such skills are absent, their entry to school can only cause harm to their perception of self-concept. This will consequently expose them to a wide range of social learning experiences that, most of the time, will tend to lead to failure (Carr, 1985).

Children who experience SEBD can find that their friendships may be limited as they find difficulties in making friends and sustaining friendships (Jobling, Moni and Nolan, 2000). They appear to be less attractive and more rejected by their peers. Such rejection might be a consequence of a label (e.g. SEN or disruptive child), a personal characteristic, or even the child’s difficulties in school (Bryan, 1985). Therefore, their teachers should be the first ones to notice if a child becomes isolated or is being bullied, and should act accordingly (De Monchy, Pijl and Zandberg, 2004).

According to Rogers (1951, cited in Fordham and Stevenson-Hinde, 1999), a lack of positive regard from significant others results in a sense of worthlessness, and Weiss (1974, cited in Fordham and Stevenson-Hinde, 1999), argued that not having anyone to whom to reveal personal aspects of oneself evokes a sense of loneliness and isolation. According to Fine and Sullivan (1981, in Fordham and Stevenson-Hinde, 1999), this fact is considered important if we remind ourselves that pre-adolescent friendships are seen as a justification of self-worth, and provide a stable base for developing a child's interpersonal confidence.

#### 6.3.3.5 Brief summary

The above four areas of development on SEBD children's behaviours, are also areas that have been highlighted in the literature. But what actually reinforces children with SEBD when it comes to improving on their behaviour? Was it the SEAL programme or the teachers' strategies that have been improved? Or was it just the fact that something different was happening in the classroom?

### 6.3.4 What helped children with SEBD improve on their behaviour.

#### 6.3.4.1 SEAL programme vs. improvement on teaching practices

It is the view of the present researcher that the results of this research point out that the main reason that enabled a change in SEBD children's behaviours was the different teaching strategies used by their teachers. Possible factors that also contributed to this change could be the different themes that were used during the implementation of the programme. These themes might have

been part of the SEAL programme. However, the way teachers presented them, along with their teaching practices, seemed to have an impact on the children's behaviours. The themes used touched the children's enthusiasm and interest as they were based on issues that occur in real life, and problems that trouble them or interest them. This leads to the conclusion that the Cypriot national curriculum needs to reconstruct the way lessons are delivered to schools and reinforce the need for teachers to link their lesson plans with real life events in order to develop children's enthusiasm and participation, as such an approach also seems to have a positive impact on children with SEBD.

Having said that, is there a possibility that perhaps teachers' teaching practices have been improved because they knew that they were taking part in a study, and wanted to help the researcher obtain a desirable outcome?

#### 6.3.4.2 Possible bias to the research

In the field of research, researchers have been arguing that participants may change their behaviour during the study, simply because they know that they are being observed. This theory was presented by Roethlisberger and Dickson (1939). These authors argued in their research that participants increased their work levels due to the attention they received from the research team, and felt satisfied that their ideas had been heard. As Mayo (1993) argues, participants of that study felt better because the observers showed interest in their work and indicated that they were sympathetic. This effect on the part of participants is known as the "Hawthorne Effect". (Roethlisberger and Dickson, 1939).



However, the findings of their study have been criticized by many researchers in subsequent years. An article presented in 'Light of Work' (2009) argue that perhaps the original results from the experiment might have been overestimated, and that the effect originally described was weak at best. Sutton et al. (1994), in an experiment examining the "Hawthorne Effect", reported no evidence of the effect. However, they argued that their research was underpowered due to the small population size effect. Braverman (1974) also pointed out that the educational effects can be expected to be the same.

It is the researcher's understanding, based on the different evaluations carried out by other researchers, that perhaps the "Hawthorne Effect" did not lead to the extended outcomes as described by its original authors. Having said that, these evaluations did not show that the "Hawthorne Effect" had a small impact on outcomes (Fincham and Phodes, 2005; Adair, Shape and Huynh, 1989; O'Sullivan *et al.* 2004). Therefore, this study could be criticized in terms of the fact that participants might have improved on their teaching practices simply because they knew they were being observed.

However, the researcher believes that something else contributed to teachers enhancing their teaching strategies. Looking back at the feedback obtained after the draft implementation of the SEAL programme by participants, the participants claimed that they felt good that a researcher was interested in hearing their problems regarding children with SEBD, and was willing to support them. Consequently, their enthusiasm for delivering this programme was increased as were the teaching practices they were employing.

Therefore, it can be argued that teachers were motivated and determined to use this support offered to them effectively, and to bring about the desirable outcomes. However, it is the researcher's belief that something else might have captured the participants' interest in this study. At this stage it is important to inform the reader that, within Cyprus, there is a tendency on the part of MOEC to ask researchers who obtained permission to carry out research within the Greek-Cypriot schools to present their work to them after they have completed it. These presentations are taken seriously, and there have been many cases in which researchers were asked by MOEC to pilot their research on more than one schools in Cyprus for one to three years, with the possibility of using their programme within the curriculum in the future.

Consequently, teachers used this study as an attempt to show to MOEC the extent of the problem regarding educating children with SEBD, and that they wanted to be offered a strategy, or a simple programme on which to base their lesson plans, in order to support their teaching practices with those children and, at the same time, support those children's needs. Thus, it can be argued that the teachers biased the results of this study.

Nevertheless, what teachers succeeded in achieving from this study, perhaps without realizing it, is that by developing their teaching practices, they were actually able to help children with SEBD improve on their behaviour, engaged their enthusiasm, and increased their participation. Teachers were so desperate to be heard and finally for MOEC to support them, that they failed to see that children actually showed improvements regarding their behaviour. This statement was evident in the study. As soon as the programme was removed from the study, teachers returned to their old teaching strategies and SEBD children's unacceptable behaviours increased once

more. The greatest impact regarding the implementation of the SEAL programme within English practices, was that teachers' attitudes and their understanding how to develop children's SEBS systematically within subject lessons has been developed. Consequently, they argue that some of the teachers were able improve their skills on how to develop the competencies (Ofsted, 2007; Tew, 2007).

Therefore, the evidence of this research points to the possibility that, when teachers teaching strategies are improved, they can actually have a positive impact on the behaviour of children with SEBD.

#### 6.3.5 Limitations of the research

No research is without limitations. In this research there have been a number of limitations that have prevented it being implemented in the way that it was planned and organised by the researcher.

##### 6.3.5.1 Transferring the SEAL programme from one country to another

The SEAL programme was designed and implemented to meet the needs of teachers and SEBD children within the education sector in England. Even though Cyprus is a country that has been directly influenced by England, it is still a different country, with a different culture, ways of thinking and, most importantly, a differently organised and functioning education system. The concept of SEN in Cyprus is a fairly new one that, even though it is in its early stages, has developed rapidly. New research has been constantly undertaken in recent years in Cyprus with

the help of people qualified in the area of SEN, working closely with MOEC, which aim to develop a better environment and to improve on existing legislation in order to meet the needs of children with SEN. Therefore transferring a framework from a country with a solid fundamental background such as England, to a country where there is still a lot of work to be undertaken regarding the education of children with SEBD, was not going to be implemented smoothly without any problems, and was not going to lead to the same results.

From the results gathered, it is evident that during the implementation of the programme there were some changes on the behaviour of children with SEBD. These changes were not gradual, but they were evident.

#### 6.3.5.2 The absence of a solid definition

As already mentioned in the review of the literature (Section 2.3, p.20), participants are unaware of the main aims and objectives of the 1999 Law on Special Needs, and they do not fully understand how support should be best offered to children with SEBD.

The absence of a solid definition of the concept of SEBD in Cyprus has pushed participants to present their own understanding of the concept of SEBD, something that might have influenced the implementation of the programme and consequently the different results that were obtained.

#### 6.3.5.3 Limited amount of time spent implementing the SEAL programme.

In the case of this research, it would have been more beneficial if the programme had been implemented for three months or more. This would have enabled the researcher to see the bigger

impact that the programme might have had on SEBD children's behaviour. Within the four week period involved, the researcher was able to observe some changes in such behaviour. Perhaps this was a starting point for providing adequate support for these children. However, it was not just their behaviour that improved. SEBD children were keen to participate in the lesson. They were very excited with regard to the different issues that were discussed in the lesson, and they were happy to share their personal knowledge and experiences with the rest of the class, something that was not taking place during the first phase of the study. Therefore, in future, this programme should be implemented for a longer period of time in order to be able to see more gradual changes in SEBD children's behaviour. Lack of time was the main reason for carrying out the research project in just six weeks.

#### 6.3.5.4 The researcher's presence in the classroom

In the research the researcher acted as a non-participating observer (acting solely as an observer), in order to enter social situations with only one purpose; to record behaviours observed by children with SEBD. The researcher, as a participant observer, had to be mindful of the need to maintain a degree of even-handedness or neutrality relative to internal alliances and factions within the group (Rudi, 2006). Having said that, the researcher's presence in the classroom during the implementation of the SEAL programme might have influenced the outcomes of the research. During the implementation, some of the children were turning to have a look at what the researcher was doing and, on one occasion, a child came up to the researcher to show the work that she had completed.

#### 6.3.5.5 External factors

In a classroom, the first two or three minutes after the bell rings are used to calm children down and to ensure that they are in their seats, so they will not avoid directions and cause a distraction. It is the time when they take out their books and other materials required for the lesson. The same thing happens in the last five minutes of the lesson, in that children get excited as the session comes to an end, and they look forward to the break.

Also, if an incident between children takes place during the break, they will need to share it with their teacher, and this may take up the first five minutes of the lesson. So, if they enter the classroom feeling upset, they will not be able to follow instructions for the first couple of minutes until they calm down. This behaviour will affect their participation in the classroom. For these reasons, it is the researcher's opinion, that children are particularly prone to not following instructions and to cause distractions during the first few minutes of the lesson.

#### 6.3.5.6 Translation Issues

When conducting cross-cultural research, problems often arise in the translation of the study instruments (Weeks, Swerissen and Belfrage, 2007). The majority of the problems are encountered when translating data collection tools from the source language into the target language, as this can result in differences in words, idioms and colloquialisms that are generally understood in English, but which, in another language, do not have the same meaning or do not mean anything (Brislin, 1970; Guillemin, 1995 all cited in Weeks *et al.*, 2007). The above appeared to be the main problem in the researcher's attempt to translate the data collection tools

from English to Greek and, in terms of the data that was gathered, from Greek to English. As Weeks *et al.* (2007) argue, problems such as the above can be a cause of data contamination in many cross-cultural research studies. Comparable measures are therefore needed in order to ensure that the level of data contamination is minimised and that the reliability and validity of the data collected is maximized.

Different steps have been suggested by different researchers, and different guidelines have been created, in order to help the researcher obtain the best out of translating data from one context to another. As a PhD student, the researcher has come across this issue twice before; once when she was writing her final dissertation for her undergraduate programme and once during her MA course. The procedure that she came against in the past enabled her to ensure both reliability and validity in terms of her data collection. The same process has been followed this time, and it is described below.

For the writing up and translation of the interviews, the following procedure was used:

- Step 1: Since the studies took place in the UK, the researcher felt more confident writing up the structure of both interviews and questions in English;
- Step 2: Questions included in the interview process were then given to a native English speaker to read through, in order to correct any grammatical and structural mistakes;
- Step 3: The researcher translated the interview questions into Greek, bearing in mind the participants, their level of understanding, and different cultural issues that might arise, and the environment in which they work;

- Step 4: After the translation, the interview questions were given to an educator from Cyprus to read through, to ascertain whether or not the questions would be understood by the participants, whether they were written at their level of understanding, and whether any of the questions were offensive or could be seen as being discriminating. As part of this process, when questions were confusing or unclear to the educator, the researcher attempted to explain the purpose of that question, and together we rephrased the question, and;
- Step 5: Interviews were piloted with Greek primary teachers to examine whether or not the questions asked were clear and well understood, were at their level of understanding and were not offensive. This step was also proposed by Mitchell (1996, in Weeks *et al.*, 2007).

Translating the interviews from English to Greek was a relatively easy task. However, the challenge was in translating the gathered data from Greek to English. Once again the researcher has followed the procedure that she used in previous research. This was as follows:

Step 1: Gather data in Greek

Step 2: Gather together all the points that were discussed, and divide them into different sections for later use as part of the analysis and the discussion.

Step 3: Identify and highlight the main points of each section.

Step 4: Translate the main points into English



This procedure allowed the researcher to emphasise the meanings of the study rather than concentrate on a literal translation, and enabled her to arrive at conclusions regarding translation quality (Weeks *et al.*, 2007). However, there were some limitations that the researcher encountered during this process in terms of her attempt to translate data from Greek to English. The transfer of cultural meanings, embedded in linguistic expressions, from Greek to English, constituted one of the most challenging tasks in the translation process (Muller, 2006). The problem of equivalence is most pressing when the meaning of a word in the source language is much richer than can be conveyed by the corresponding word(s) in the target language (Muller, 2006). This is an important argument that, if not considered carefully, can erase differences in meaning. This is because the vocabulary and the words do not match up neatly across cultures (Willgerodt *et al.*, 2005).

Writing up the observations was an easier job, as the researcher did not have to translate the observation papers that were going to be used. The observation papers contained only a few words in English and she was able to complete them by marking the correct column.

#### 6.4 Evaluating the methodology used

Open-ended interviews enabled the real picture to emerge on the way teachers feel, understand and embrace the concept of SEBD, their relationships with the children concerned and the existing educational arrangements in place for supporting the needs of such children within a whole school setting. On the other hand, observations enabled different teaching practices to support children with behaviour problems to come to light, as well as different procedures the

teachers used within the classroom in order to enhance their teaching practices and relationships with those children. Regardless of the different problems the teachers came across, such as the absence of a solid definition, and the lack of support in teaching children with behaviour problems, they were able to implement the SEAL framework effectively within their classrooms. After the implementation of the SEAL programme, and through the analysis, it was evident that children with behaviour problems can benefit a great deal from the SEAL themes and the five components it emphasises, in order to support children's SEBS.

## **CHAPTER 7 CONCLUSIONS**

### **7.1 Relevance of research findings**

This study aimed to investigate whether a programme used in England to support children with SEBD can be effectively introduced into Greek-Cypriot mainstream primary education to change undesirable behaviours that take place in the classroom. I hope that this programme will support teachers' teaching practices in their attempt to deal with behaviour problems on the one hand. On the other hand, through this programme, the appropriate opportunities will be provided to children with SEBD always to be adequately supported, depending on their educational needs.

Whilst acknowledging my concern regarding current issues that relate to the concept of SEBD, I aimed to produce a study which highlights the different concerns that surround children with SEBD, in terms of effectively implementing different strategies that could improve teaching strategies for dealing with those children that, at the same time, fulfil those children's educational needs. The uniqueness I claim for this study is that it provides qualitative evidence. Firstly, it does this by highlighting a crucial gap in terms of the support offered to SEBD children by their teachers within the school. Secondly, it highlights the impact that the SEAL programme had on teachers' teaching practices while working with SEBD children. Finally, it provides evidence of improvement on SEBD children's behaviour within the classroom. These results are unique in contrast to other studies within the Greek-Cypriot educational context as they fail to provide evidence of effective strategies used by teachers while teaching children with SEBD, instead they only highlight different issues of concern to the government. In contrast, previous

Greek-Cypriot studies only succeeded in highlighting the gaps that exist within the Education System. This study also provided a definition of SEBD that could be used in Greek-Cypriot mainstream education.

The value of a small qualitative study such as this is that it not only provides ultimate answers to key research questions, but also raises issues which might then be the subject of wider and deeper research. In its capacity as a local study in Cyprus, there are unambiguous conclusions regarding teaching practices and support which might be of more direct use to mainstream primary teachers and children with SEBD. This study did not aim to evaluate the SEAL programme itself as a whole, in that emphasis is laid only on one aspect of the programme that helps children to develop; behaviour. Effective learning, positive attendance, emotional health and well-being, positive relationships, and the issue of a whole school approach also needs to be thoroughly examined if an evaluation of the SEAL programme is to take place in Cyprus, and a consideration made of many other issues that contribute to its implementation.

Within the last few years, different strategies and policies regarding the concept of SEN, including SEBD, have changed rapidly, as teachers highlight weaknesses in this particular area. Therefore, the Greek-Cypriot government is working very conscientiously on this issue and is trying to support both teachers and children in the best possible way.

Taking into account the comments made above, the findings of this study highlight different issues regarding children presenting SEBD. Evidence gathered from the interviews with teachers and from observations carried out with children with SEBD, highlights gaps in the existing

educational support of those children. The SEAL programme that was used in the study, even though implemented only for a short period of time with a small number of children, has brought to light different issues of concern that MOEC need to take carefully into consideration.

## 7.2 Conclusions and implications for further research

### *Teaching practices in Cyprus*

This study found, in common with other research, that within mainstream Greek-Cypriot primary schools, there is lack of effective teaching practices when it comes to supporting children with SEBD within the classroom setting. Absence of a solid definition of the concept of SEBD, a lack of knowledge and training in this field does not allow teachers, on the one hand, to fully understand the concept of SEBD. On the other hand it does not allow them to identify and group different SEBD characteristic that take place in their classroom and identify possible causes. Teachers do not feel confident in supporting those children's needs adequately and, at the same time, the situation does not allow them to educate 'normal children' appropriately with regard to the issue of SEBD. The participants' experiences in teaching, their education in the field, as well as their perceptions with regard to the concept, appear to be the main factors that help them shape their attitudes and beliefs in terms of the concept and to identify different strategies to deal with SEBD when they occur.

Nevertheless, after the implementation of the SEAL programme, almost all participants appeared to be more confident when dealing with different SEBD incidents that took place in their

classrooms. They were able to identify the problematic behaviour as well as to confront it in the most appropriate way, using different strategies that were offered by the SEAL programme.

From the results that I gathered during the implementation of the SEAL programme, it is my view that different strategies put forward by teachers appear to support Carl Rogers' theoretical stand. These strategies include providing attention to the needs of children with SEBD, the effective promotion and rewarding of good behaviour by the teachers, and teachers showing acceptance and empathy towards SEBD children. The above elements appear to be the three core conditions that Rogers (1961) argues are necessary for growth.

This indicates that teachers need to become more aware of the different strategies that they use when it comes to supporting the needs of children with SEBD. These core conditions are familiar to almost all teachers. However, they need to be reminded of them and of the need to use them more methodically with children with behaviour problems. Teachers need to acknowledge how the effective use of strategies addressing these core conditions can have a big impact on children's behaviour within the classroom. Further research needs to be carried out to address the impact that this approach can have on children within Greek-Cypriot mainstream primary schools, as well as introducing different approaches to teachers that they can use along with the above three core conditions, in order to be able to obtain more effective outcomes in terms of children's behaviour.

This study also highlights the importance for teachers of being able to support children with limited Greek vocabulary in such a way that they feel included in the lesson, look beyond

behaviours observed in terms of children with SEBD, be in a position to provide opportunities to all children and avoid ignoring their attempts at participation and, at the same time, be able to control children's habits which lead to distraction during the lesson. It is my opinion that perhaps teachers should consider the issue of differentiation. Differentiating their lesson plans will provide teachers with the opportunity to reduce problems that take place in the classroom and, at the same time, to include all children in the lessons.

Nonetheless, it is my opinion that teachers can use this study to bring forward and highlight the main areas of concern regarding the obstacles they come across while teaching children with SEBD and that, in fact, a solid programme such as the one they used (SEAL), can help them enhance their practices. Having said that, I believe that in the teachers' attempts examined in this research, they failed to consciously identify that, in fact, the strategies that they used actually had an impact on SEBD children's behaviour. Therefore, I would argue that teachers were unconsciously supported throughout the SEAL programme.

This indicates that there is an urgent need for teachers to be offered a solid definition when it comes to supporting children with SEBD. They need to be aware of the different factors that can influence those children's behaviour, and be supported by the use of more effective interventions and strategies when it comes to supporting those children's needs. Enhancing their knowledge, understanding and confidence when working with children SEBD, will allow them to view those SEBD that arise within the classroom more realistically, and be in a position to deal with them more effectively.

Further research should therefore be conducted between teachers and MOEC, whereby the 1999 Law should be reviewed, explained, and should provide an explicit understanding of the term SEBD. In addition, different patterns of behaviour should be explained along with a consideration of different effective strategies that could be used effectively within the schools.

### *Reinforce reflective teaching practices*

This study highlighted the need for teachers to reflect on their teaching practices. A reflective teacher is in a position to plan thoughtfully and to make different decisions ahead of taking action, is capable of making honest self-observations and to engage in decision-making in response to the children's actions, and analyses, evaluates and rethinks his/her behaviour and feelings after the action has taken place.

It is my belief that teachers should be encouraged to use diaries in which particular SEBD children's challenging behaviours at different times and occasions are noted daily, along with the different strategies used to cope with them. This would enable the teachers to build a body of evidence upon which they could develop strategies which could be implemented, reviewed, and revised to meet the challenges and to reduce the incidence of such behaviour.

This study has showed that teachers take every opportunity as a team to discuss their problems and concerns regarding children with behaviour problems whenever this is feasible due to work load and time constraints. Working in an environment where multi-disciplinary team working takes place, will enable teachers, including SEN teachers and educational psychologists, to share successful ways of decreasing challenging behaviour, and to compare and contrast procedures



and the results obtained. Collaboration can bring a great deal of expertise together, and will enable teachers to become more confident and more knowledgeable about the range of strategies that can be used with children with SEBD.

Future practices and support should be offered by the Greek-Cypriot government to encourage this process. This will also result in building a closer relationship between the government and the teachers.

### *Reconstructing the Greek-Cypriot education system*

This study highlights that the Greek-Cypriot education system is currently failing to provide a solid definition of the concept of behaviour within the educational setting, and has failed to explain the aims and objectives of the 1999 Law of Special Needs to the teachers. These are crucial reasons for teachers feeling puzzled regarding the identification of, and support for, children with behaviour problems.

This research indicates that this failure can lead to varying practices, and children with behaviour problems not being supported adequately. Future research needs to be undertaken on the part of the MOEC suggesting a more adequate and beneficial education system being implemented for children with behaviour problems, as well as to provide a better organised and more structured education for them, with more general structures within the education of SEN, offering useful guidelines that could easily be adapted to each classroom. There should be provision for that extra something that the child needs e.g. SEN teachers, educational psychologists, available resources, special teaching that is organised and presented in a specific way in order to be able to

fulfil his/her needs. The MOEC should also increase the number of SEN teacher and educational psychologist visits to schools in order to provide teachers with more effective practices and advice. The MOEC should also be in a position to offer adequate material and resources, as well as to introduce different educational programmes that would support teachers' practices when working with children with SEBD.

Furthermore, teachers need to be offered more training seminars from the MOEC in order to enrich their knowledge. It is my belief that teachers should be encouraged to consider the issue of CPD. CPD will enable them to undertake a continuous process of individual and collective examination and would lead to an improvement of practice. CPD empowers educators to make compound decisions, to identify and solve problems, enables teachers to offer children the learning opportunities that will prepare them adequately to match world-class standards in given content areas, and to successfully assume adult responsibilities for citizenship and work.

If CPD is to take place effectively in Cyprus, the MOEC should consider making seminars offered to teachers mandatory, instead of voluntary, and should provide them during their working hours. In addition, it should place great emphasis on evaluating whether or not these training services meet their objectives and should finally evaluate the extended outcomes.

The MOEC should aim to transform all schools into effective ones for all children, which will accept and meet the needs of all children regardless of these needs, where schools are prepared to re-examine and review not only their curriculum and framework, but also each and every aspect of their policy and organisation.

### *Evidence regarding improvements in children's behaviour*

Evidence gathered from this study indicates improvements in SEBD children's behaviour. Children appeared to be more excited and their participation was increased during the implementation of the SEAL programme. Children also showed that they were able to solve their problems on their own, without their teachers' involvement, and that they were able to express and share their feelings with the rest of their classmates. Findings also suggest that SEBD children's self-esteem was improved and that they acknowledged the importance of making and maintaining friendships. These behaviours were achieved because teachers' teaching practices were improved and included acceptance, empathy and the praise of good behaviour on the part of the children with SEBD.

The above findings indicate that perhaps the different themes and discussions that were taking place in the classroom must have captured the SEBD children's enthusiasm. The fact that these children were the first ones to attempt to participate in the different topics explored, indicates that children with SEBD need to be sure of themselves before answering a question, that they know what to answer, and they are not going to humiliate themselves in front of the whole class.

It was also observed that as soon as the SEAL programme was removed, some of the children with behaviour problems stopped attempting to participate and wanting to share their personal experiences with the rest of the class. This leads to the conclusion that perhaps the SEAL programme may have given those children the chance to participate in the lesson because the themes of the lessons captured their interest, they were at their level of understanding, and gave

them the chance to share their experiences and feelings with regard to a particular area of concern.

Further research should therefore be conducted in schools aimed at addressing whether the different subjects taught are of interest to the children, and whether children show signs of disappointment with regard to the subjects being delivered. An attempt should also be made to find different ways to deliver particular lessons in order to raise the level of enthusiasm and excitement, and to look for ways that allow children to participate in the lesson.

Through the different discussions that were taking place, children with SEBD were given the chance to share different concerns they have with their classmates. An example of this was X2 from Class B who shared with the rest of his classmates that he wanted to be included with the rest of the children during the breaks, and to play with them. His classmates engaged in a friendly conversation with him, without arguing and without having their teacher interfering. They explained the reasons why they were avoiding him and offered him the chance to be part of their group if he changed his attitude. Conversations that were entered into with regard to different issues that take place in the classroom, gave the chance for the teachers to explain why different behaviours such as shouting in the class, distracting the flow of the lesson, fighting, etc. were considered to be undesirable behaviour, and the different outcomes they could have on individuals and the rest of the children.

The above finding suggests that the SEAL programme provided the opportunity for children with behaviour problems to open up and express the different problems they came across. It allowed

them to be in a position to discuss them with the rest of their classmates, as well as to be prepared to change their behaviour. Through the different discussions that emerged from the themes of the SEAL programme, teachers found good opportunities to discuss discipline issues with their children, and to provide examples of good behaviour that could take place. As proved by the observations, these discussions were very effective.

What teachers should aim for in their future practices is to be able to bring different issues they have with their children as examples within the different lessons they undertake. In this way none of the children gets picked on because of their behaviour. Teachers should also encourage children to have various conversations between themselves, in order to be confident enough to share possible problems they might be having, and to look for solutions by discussing these issues as a group.

### 7.3 Final Comments

The SEAL programme could be of value for schools and teachers in terms of understanding and supporting children with SEBD. It is a programme that, when applied effectively, can prevent the development and increase of inappropriate behaviours observed by teachers. For the programme to be implemented, practitioners and policy makers need to try and add it to the national curriculum, even though this does sound complicated. It is important to think of all the positive outcomes that the implementation of this programme could bring about, and the impact it could have on future teaching practices. Nevertheless, it needs to be acknowledged that this programme does not provide a recipe for dealing with incidents of inappropriate behaviour and

other problems observed for children with SEBD, but rather provides the foundations for developing a programme that can be used by teachers effectively in order to enhance their teaching practices with children with SEBD. Simultaneously, it provides effective strategies for teachers supporting children with SEBD, allowing such children to gain the most from their stay in school. It can also be used to try and overcome their problems, problems that, if left untreated, could cause them further problems throughout their education. Therefore teachers in Cyprus who argue that they lack support and knowledge on how to effectively support children with behaviour problems, can use this programme within their lesson planning, and engage it to support these children more effectively.

When teachers aim to identify different ways of supporting the needs of children with SEBD, and feel more positive about themselves when entering the classroom to teach and confront these children in a positive way, improvements will occur within the classroom. Children will be engaged in participating in the lessons, and they will be more confident about themselves. This can have a big outcome on their educational and work success, and will raise their learning standards.

The MOEC's aim should be to support the system and embrace individuals who work towards making the legal requirements effective, and trying to offer the best that they can for the children, especially those with behaviour problems.

It is true to say that children presenting SEBD in schools are not a new phenomenon. Throughout history, there has been reference to children causing trepidation to authorities and teachers.

Despite the fact that teachers might have some difficulties in terms of getting used to including it in the curriculum and due to its limitations, the SEAL programme is worth attempting to implement throughout a whole academic year for the whole school.

Teachers' positive attitudes towards it, its simplicity in use, the way children with SEBD acted during its implementation, and the confidence that it generated and which allowed these children to open themselves and their emotions up to the world, are enough to influence practitioners and policy makers with regard to implementing it within Greek-Cypriot mainstream primary schools.

*“Για να γυρίσει ο ήλιος θέλει δουλειά πολλή”*

*“(It needs a lot of work and effort to make the sun go on)”* from a Greek song by Mikis Theodorakis.

It is not enough just to keep improving the law, educate teachers, and arrange provision. It is also up to every individual to attempt to support children with SEBD in every possible way, in order to succeed in obtaining a clear understanding of the different concepts involved, which will then enable us to work in a positive environment with teachers in order to fulfil the needs of children with SEBD.

Teachers are the voice of change and the most crucial factor for integration to succeed (Panteliadou et al., 1996), but they need support. It is everyone's duty and responsibility.

Rogers (2004) argued that teachers are better served working with, encouraging, and supporting their ~~our~~ students in any way for the short time they are with them. To succeed, teachers need to

have faith and courage, accept advice, and engage in communication with professionals, if they are to offer children a better future with regard to their education.



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## **APPENDICES**

## **Appendix 4 - Letter to Participants**

October 2008

Dear participant,

I am a Special Needs Teacher and I am in my second year of my PhD in Social Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (SEBD) at the University of Birmingham, and have chosen to research for my Thesis whether the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) Framework can be effectively introduced within the Greek-Cypriot mainstream primary education system in order to support pupils with (SEBD).

I intend to interview willing participants for half an hour to a maximum of a forty-five minutes, using a semi-structured interview format. This will allow for flexibility in that I want to focus upon the current educational provision that exists within the school in order to fulfil the needs of pupils with SEBD, as well as go through a brief illustration of the Framework that you going to be asked later on to undertake with your class. You will also be given the opportunity to raise any issues regarding the education of those pupils. Throughout the implementation of the Framework, a series of observations are going to take place in order to address different issues regarding the implementation of the Framework.

I intent to interview willing participants in January/February 2009. I will follow this letter up with a phone call in the month of November in order to determine whether or not you are interested in taking part in my research and to clarify any possible questions you may have. It is my intention to arrange a short pre-interview meeting at the beginning of January to explain your rights as a participant as well as to explain my research to you in a more detailed way and you will also be given the opportunity to ask any relevant questions about the study.

May I take this opportunity to assure you of confidentiality in that if you agree to take part in my research, neither your school nor yourself will be named in any part of the research report.

I will be in touch and do hope that you will agree. In meantime have any queries please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours Faithfully,

Christiana Koundourou

## Appendix 5 - Letter to Participants in Greek

Αγαπητέ συμμετέχοντα,

Είμαι ειδική εκπαιδευτικός και φοιτώ στο δεύτερο έτος του διδακτορικού μου με θέμα: « οι κοινωνικές - συναισθηματικές δυσκολίες καθώς και τα προβλήματα συμπεριφοράς των μαθητών » στο πανεπιστήμιο του Birmingham της Μεγάλης Βρετανίας. Έχω επιλέξει να κάνω έρευνα στα πλαίσια της διατριβής μου κατά πόσον μπορούν οι κοινωνικές - συναισθηματικές πλευρές του εκπαιδευτικού πλαισίου (SEAL) μπορούν να εισαχθούν αποτελεσματικά μέσα στο ελληνοκυπριακό σύστημα πρωτοβάθμιας εκπαίδευσης με σκοπό την ενίσχυση μαθητών με κοινωνικές συναισθηματικές δυσκολίες και προβλήματα συμπεριφοράς (SEBD).

Αποσκοπώ στη διεξαγωγή συνεντεύξεων εθελοντών συμμετεχόντων διάρκειας μισής ώρας με σαράντα πέντε λεπτά, χρησιμοποιώντας μια ημι-δομημένη φόρμα συνέντευξης. Η πιο πάνω δομή θα επιτρέψει μια ελαστικότητα όσον αφορά την επικέντρωση πάνω στην υπάρχουσα εκπαιδευτική υποστήριξη με σκοπό την εκπλήρωση των μαθησιακών αναγκών των παιδιών με κοινωνικές - συναισθηματικές δυσκολίες και προβλήματα συμπεριφοράς (SEBD), καθώς και την προσομοίωση μιας σύντομης παρουσίασης του πλαισίου που θα σας ζητηθεί αργότερα να εφαρμόσετε μέσα στην τάξη σας. Επιπλέον, θα σας δοθεί η δυνατότητα να συζητήσετε οποιαδήποτε θέματα σχετικά με την εκπαίδευση των μαθητών αυτών. Κατά τη διάρκεια της υλοποίησης του πλαισίου, θα γίνει μια σειρά παρακολούθησεων μέσα στην τάξη με σκοπό την επίλυση διαφόρων προβλημάτων που θα προκύψουν σχετικών με την υλοποίηση του πλαισίου.

Οι συνεντεύξεις θα γίνουν τον Ιανουάριο και Φεβρουάριο του 2009. Θα ακολουθήσει και τηλεφωνική επικοινωνία το μήνα Ιανουάριο για να δηλώσετε ενδιαφέρον ή όχι να λάβετε μέρος στην έρευνα και να αποσαφηνίσετε τυχόν απορίες σας. Πρόθεσή μου είναι να οριστεί μια σύντομη φιλική συνάντηση πριν την συνέντευξη, στις αρχές Ιανουαρίου για να σας εξηγήσω τα δικαιώματά σας ως συμμετέχοντες καθώς και για να σας εξηγήσω το πλαίσιο της έρευνάς μου με περισσότερες λεπτομέρειες. Επιπλέον θα σας δοθεί η δυνατότητα να υποβάλετε οποιεσδήποτε ερωτήσεις σχετικές με τη διεξαγωγή της έρευνας.

Με αυτήν την ευκαιρία θα ήθελα να σας διαβεβαιώσω ότι, αν συμφωνήσετε να λάβετε μέρος στην έρευνά μου, ούτε το όνομα του σχολείου στο οποίο εργάζεστε ούτε το όνομα σας θα αναφερθούν στην ερευνητική εργασία.

Θα έρθω σε επαφή μαζί σας και ευελπιστώ να δηλώσετε συμμετοχή. Εν τω μεταξύ, σε περίπτωση που έχετε οποιεσδήποτε απορίες μη διστάσετε να επικοινωνήσετε μαζί μου στα τηλέφωνα: κιν1: [REDACTED]

Με εκτίμηση Χριστιάνα Κούνδουρου

## Appendix 6 - Informed Consent from teachers

### *INFORMED CONSENT*

My name is Christiana Koundourou. I am doing a research on a project entitled 'Can Social Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) Framework be effectively introduced within the Greek-Cypriot mainstream primary education system in order to support pupils with Social Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (SEBD)? I can be contact at: Tel: [REDACTED] [REDACTED] should you have any questions.

Thank you for agreeing to take part in the project. Before we start I would like to emphasise that:

- Your participation is entirely voluntary;
- You are free to refuse to answer any question;
- You are free to withdraw at any time;

Both interviews and observations will be kept strictly confidential. Excerpts from the interview and observation results may be made part of the final research report, but under no circumstances will your name or any identifying characteristics be included in the report.

Please sign this form that you have read the contents

..... (signed)

..... (printed)

..... (date)

Please send a report on the results of the project:

Yes ☐

No ☐

## Appendix 7 - Informed Consent from teachers in Greek

### ΕΝΗΜΕΡΗ ΕΓΚΡΙΣΗ

Ονομάζομαι Χριστιάνα Κούνδουρου και κάνω μια ερευνητική εργασία στα πλαίσια του διδακτορικού μου με τίτλο: «Μπορούν οι κοινωνικές - συναισθηματικές πλευρές του εκπαιδευτικού πλαισίου (SEAL) να εισαχθούν αποτελεσματικά μέσα στο ελληνοκυπριακό σύστημα πρωτοβάθμιας εκπαίδευσης με σκοπό την ενίσχυση μαθητών με κοινωνικές - συναισθηματικές δυσκολίες και προβλήματα συμπεριφοράς (SEBD);» Για περαιτέρω πληροφορίες και τυχόν ερωτήσεις μπορείτε να επικοινωνήσετε στα τηλέφωνα: κιν1: [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

Σας Ευχαριστώ, που συμφωνείτε να πάρετε μέρος στην ερευνητική εργασία. Πριν ξεκινήσουμε θα ήθελα να δώσω έμφαση στο ότι:

- Η συμμετοχή σας είναι εθελοντική
- Έχετε δικαίωμα να αρνηθείτε να απαντήσετε σε οποιαδήποτε ερώτηση επιθυμείτε
- Έχετε δικαίωμα να αποσυρθείτε από την έρευνα οποιαδήποτε στιγμή

Τόσο οι συνεντεύξεις όσο και οι παρακολουθήσεις των μαθημάτων θα κρατηθούν αυστηρά εμπιστευτικές. Τα συμπεράσματα των αποτελεσμάτων από τις συνεντεύξεις και τις παρακολουθήσεις μπορούν να είναι μέρος της τελικής ερευνητικής δημοσίευσης αλλά σε καμία των περιπτώσεων το όνομά σας ή οτιδήποτε μπορεί να οδηγήσει στην αναγνώριση της ταυτότητάς σας δεν θα συμπεριληφθούν στην δημοσίευση.

Παρακαλώ υπογράψτε αυτό το έντυπο το περιεχόμενο του οποίου έχετε ήδη διαβάσει:

.....(Υπογραφή)

.....(Ονοματεπώνυμο)

.....(Ημερομηνία)

Εάν επιθυμείτε να σας αποσταλούν τα αποτελέσματα της έρευνας δηλώστε το πιο κάτω:

NAI      OXI

## Appendix 8 - Informed Consent for children's parents

January 2009

Dear Parents

I am a research student at the University of Birmingham studying towards a doctorate. My work is examining aspects of a programme developed in the UK which aims to enhance children's social, emotional development and learning skills.

As part of this study I will be examining a programme called Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL). SEAL aims to provide schools and settings with an explicit, structured, whole curriculum framework for developing all children's social, emotional and behavioural skills. I shall be examining how effective it could be in a Greek-Cypriot mainstream primary school particularly looking at how it will support children in their learning. I am to examine the extent to which teachers can effectively deliver this framework to their pupils and the extent to which the children benefit from it.

During February and March I will be observing the classes and teachers involved in this new programme. Your child will be in these classes. These observations will give data which will form part of the study. In using this data no individual child or teacher will be identified, nor will the school involved. The raw data will not be published and will only be seen by myself and my University supervisors.

The pupils' classroom- teachers who are going to participate in my study will receive adequate training by myself before attempting to implement the SEAL Framework. Observations will take place once a week for 6 weeks. During the observations I will be sitting at the back of the classroom quietly and watch the flow of the lesson. The framework will be delivered during 'Library' period only and will not interfere with any other lessons. During those periods your child will have the chance to develop their concentration skills, understanding and following guidelines and working co-operatively with his/her teacher and the rest of his/her classmate.

I need your consent for your child to be a part of my observations. Please could you sign the appropriate section of the attached form and return it to me via the school as soon as possible. If you require any further information please contact me at: mob [REDACTED]

Thank you in advance for your co-operation.

Yours sincerely,

Christiana Koundourou

BA (Hons) Special Education Studies

MA in Professional Development in Special Needs

Doctoral candidate at the University of Birmingham

**As parent/guardian of ..... (name of child) give my permission for my child to be a part of the observations involved in this study**

..... (signed)

..... (printed)

..... (date)

.....

**As parent/guardian of ..... (name of child) do not give my permission for my child to be a part of the observations involved in this study**

..... (signed)

..... (printed)

..... (date)

**Please return this form to your child's classroom teacher as soon as possible.**



## Appendix 9 - Informed Consent for children's parents in Greek

Ιανουάριος, 2009

Αγαπητοί γονείς,

Είμαι ειδική εκπαιδευτικός και φοιτώ στο δεύτερο έτος του διδακτορικού μου στο πανεπιστήμιο του Birmingham της Μεγάλης Βρετανίας. Η ερευνά μου αποσκοπεί στο να εξετάσει κατά πόσο μπορούν τα χαρακτηριστικά ενός προγράμματος που χρησιμοποιείτε στην Αγγλία να βοηθήσει τα παιδιά να αναπτυχθούν κοινωνικά, συναισθηματικά και να αναπτύξουν τις ικανότητες μάθησης τους.

Μέρος της έρευνας μου αποσκοπεί στο να μελετήσει ένα εκπαιδευτικό πλαίσιο που ονομάζεται SEAL. Το SEAL έχει ως στόχο να παρέχει στα σχολεία με σαφή, δομημένα, ολόκληρο το πλαίσιο για ανάπτυξη κοινωνικών, συναισθηματικών και συμπεριφορικών δεξιοτήτων σε όλα τα παιδιά. Σκοπός μου είναι να εξετάσω κατά πόσο αυτό το εκπαιδευτικό πλαίσιο μπορεί να βοηθήσει τα παιδιά που φοιτούν σε ένα ελληνο-κυπριακό δημοτικό σχολείο όσον αφορά τον τρόπο που εκπαιδεύονται. Θα εξετάσω τον βαθμό με τον οποίο οι δασκάλοι των παιδιών αυτών που θα λάβουν μέρος στην έρευνα μπορούν να εκπληρώσουν αποτελεσματικά αυτό το εκπαιδευτικό πλαίσιο στα παιδιά, και σε ποιο βαθμό επωφελοπνυνται τα ίδια τα παιδιά από αυτό.

Κατά τη διάρκεια του Φεβρουαρίου και του Μαρτίου θα είμαι βρίσκομαι στο σχολείο παρατηρώντας τις τάξεις και τους δασκάλους που θα συμμετέχουν σε αυτό το νέο πρόγραμμα. Το παιδί σας θα είναι σε αυτές τις κατηγορίες. Οι παρατηρήσεις αυτές θα δώσουν στοιχεία που θα αποτελέσουν μέρος της μελέτης. Κατά τη χρησιμοποίηση αυτής της επεξεργασίας κανένα από τα ονόματα των παιδιών αλλά και των δασκάλων δεν θα προσδιορισθεί, όπως ούτε και το όνομα του σχολείου που θα συμμετέχει. Τα δεδομένα της έρευνας αυτής δεν θα δημοσιευθούν και πρόσβαση σε αυτά θα έχουν μόνο οι πανεπιστήμιακοί επόπτες μου και εγώ.

Οι δασκάλοι των παιδιών που θα συμμετάσχουν στη μελέτη μου, θα λάβουν την κατάλληλη εκπαίδευση από εμένα πριν επιχειρήσουν να εφαρμόσουν το SEAL. Οι παρατηρήσεις θα γίνονται μια φορά την εβδομάδα για 6 εβδομάδες. Κατά τη διάρκεια των παρατηρήσεων θα κάθομαι στο πίσω μέρος της τάξης αθόρυβα και θα παρακολουθώ τη ροή του μαθήματος. Το πλαίσιο θα πρέπει να παρουσιαστεί κατά τη διάρκεια της περιόδου «Βιβλιοθήκη» μόνο και δεν θα παρεμβαίνει με οποιαδήποτε άλλα μαθήματα. Κατά τη διάρκεια αυτών των περιόδων το παιδί σας θα έχει την ευκαιρία να αναπτύξει τις δεξιότητές συγκέντρωσής, κατανόησης και πώς να εργάζεται συνεργατικά με το/ην δασκάλο/α του και τους υπόλοιπους συμμαθητές του.

Χρειάζομαι τη συναίνεσή σας για το παιδί σας για να μπορέσει να λάβει μέρος στις παρατηρήσεις μου. Θα σας παρακαλούσα αν μπορούσατε να υπογράψετε το σχετικό τμήμα του

στο συνημμένο έντυπο και να το επιστρέψετε σε μένα, μέσω του σχολείου το συντομότερο δυνατόν.

Αν επιθυμείτε περισσότερες πληροφορίες παρακαλώ επικοινωνήστε μαζί μου στο: κιν [REDACTED]

Σας ευχαριστώ εκ των προτέρων για τη συνεργασία σας.

Με εκτίμηση,  
Κούνδουρου Χριστιάνα

Ειδική Εκπαιδευτικός

BA (Hons) Special Education Studies University of Essex

Ma in Professional Development in Special Needs University of Nottingham

PhD Candidate at the University of Birmingham specialising in the field of Social Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (SEBD)

.....

Ως γονέας / κηδεμόνας του ..... (το όνομα του παιδιού) δίνω την άδειά μου  
για το παιδί μου να είναι ένα μέρος των παρατηρήσεων που εμπλέκονται σε αυτή τη μελέτη  
..... (υπογραφή)  
..... (έντυπο)  
..... (ημερομηνία)

Ως γονέας / κηδεμόνας του ..... (το όνομα του παιδιού) δεν δίνω την άδειά μου  
για το παιδί μου να είναι ένα μέρος των παρατηρήσεων που εμπλέκονται σε αυτή τη μελέτη

..... (υπογραφή)  
..... (έντυπο)  
..... (ημερομηνία)

**Παρακαλείστε να επιστρέψετε το παρόν έντυπο δάσκαλο της τάξης του παιδιού σας το συντομότερο δυνατό.**

## Appendix 10 - Interview

### INTERVIEW

---

Hello and welcome. First of all I would like to thank you for agreeing to participate in my study. As I have already informed you the main area of my study is to examine whether SEAL Framework can be effectively introduced within the Cypriot primary mainstream education system in order to support pupils with SEBD. From previous undertaken research it became obvious to me that teachers seek for support and guidance when teaching and supporting those pupils. My main aim is to try to offer a framework within the school in order to help pupils with SEBD to improve on this area of weakness and at the same time to provide to you as a teacher/special needs teacher and to the school as a whole unit an effective framework that will enable you to offer appropriate support to those children which will then enable you to organise and deliver your lesson plans in a more effective way including children with SEBD.

Before getting started with the interview, I would like to remind you that all information provided in the interviews will remain confidential and data provided will only be used for the purpose of this study. Your name or the names of other staff of the school as well as your children, for the purpose of confidentiality and anonymity will remain confidential and will not be included in any part of this study.

## PART A (i) Personal Information

---

In the first part of the interview I would like you to provide me with some details about the school that you work alongside with some information about SEBD.

1. What is your current position within the school?
2. How long have you been in this position?
3. What do you understand by the term SEBD?
4. Have you taken any special lessons/seminar/degree/master degree regarding teaching and supporting children with SEBD?
5. If (YES), When and where?
6. How do you feel while teaching children with SEBD alongside with the rest of the children

## (ii) Information regarding the current situation of your school

---

In order to be able to formulate and present the framework it is necessary for me to gain a general understanding of the current existing situation that exists in the school regarding SEBD children and provision available to them.

1. What are your needs and priorities in the area of SEBD? (Taking into consideration the unique character of your school or setting and local geographical area?)
2. What provision is in place for SEBD children at your school?
3. What are children already learning about SEBD and are they learning this?
4. What seems to be working well for the school in this area?

2/5

5. In your opinion what are the main gaps in current practice?
6. How progress is secured and addressed in this area?
7. What resources are available to you in order to support children with SEBD?
8. Do you find them useful and in what way?
9. Do you think more resources should be available to you from the school?
10. What are the main incidents you often come across with while teaching?
11. Do you discuss some of the problems that your facing with the rest of the staff?

#### PART B (i) A draft illustration of the framework

---

In this part I am going to provide you with a brief implementation of the framework that I am going to ask from you in a later stage to implement with your class.

First I am going to put in front of you a photograph and together we are going to discuss it:

(Feeling on the photograph: **frustrated**)(Key stage 2)

- What do you think is happening in the photograph?
- Have you ever been in a situation like this?
- What do you think this person is feeling like?

(encourage the interviewee to say as many words as he/she can by adding the focus word alongside with other relevant ones)

- Have you ever felt like that?
- When have you felt like that?

(at this stage it is a good opportunity to reinforce the idea that not everyone will have the same feelings in the same situation)

- If you feel like that what would your:
  - + face look like? (encourage them to show me either by modelling it or by drawing)
  - + body look like?
- If you are feeling like this what might you do?
- If you are feeling like this how does your body feel like on the inside?
- Can you think of any other words that might describe the feeling?
- What do you think a person who felt like that would do?

To summarise the thinking that has taken place we can agree to a definition of the specific feeling and display it.

*Someone feels frustrated when they are prevented from doing or can't do something they want to be able to do, or have to do.*

*e.g. Mark felt very frustrated when he could not complete his activity given.*

Now I am going to give you an activity sheet in order to practice and provide a better understanding to the feeling that we have been working with

#### (ii) Evaluation

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- How easy did you find the material that I have just provided to you?
- How useful did you find the material?
- How successful do you think these materials are going to be with the children?

Thank you very much for you time and cooperation

## Appendix 11 - Interview in Greek

### ΣΥΝΕΤΕΥΞΗ

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Καλημέρα σας και καλωσορίσατε. Πρώτα απ' όλα θα ήθελα να σας ευχαριστήσω που δεχτήκατε να συμμετάσχετε στην έρευνά μου αυτή. Όπως σας έχω ήδη πληροφορήσει η έρευνά μου αποσκοπεί στο να εξετάσει κατά πόσο μπορούν οι κοινωνικές συναισθηματικές πλευρές του εκπαιδευτικού πλαισίου (SEAL) να εισαχθούν αποτελεσματικά μέσα στο ελληνοκυπριακό σύστημα πρωτοβάθμιας εκπαίδευσης με σκοπό την ενίσχυση μαθητών με κοινωνικές συναισθηματικές δυσκολίες και προβλήματα συμπεριφοράς (SEBD). Από προηγούμενη προσωπική μου μελέτη διαπίστωσα ότι οι δάσκαλοι στα σχολεία μας ζητούν όπως τους παρέχετε καλύτερη καθοδήγηση και συμπαράσταση στη προσπάθειά τους να διδάξουν σε παιδιά που αντιμετωπίζουν κοινωνικά και συναισθηματικά προβλήματα καθώς και προβλήματα συμπεριφοράς. Σκοπός και στόχος αυτής της έρευνάς μου είναι να παρουσιάσω ένα πλαίσιο στο σχολείο σας με σκοπό να βοηθηθούν τα παιδιά αυτά στο να βελτιωθούν πάνω σε αυτόν τον τομέα που παρουσιάζουν δυσκολίες και ταυτόχρονα να παραχωρηθεί στους δασκάλους, στους ειδικούς εκπαιδευτικούς και στο σχολείο ένα αποτελεσματικό και καρποφόρο πλαίσιο που θα προσφέρει την απαιτούμενη βοήθεια σε αυτά τα παιδιά ούτως ώστε στο μέλλον να μπορούν να οργανωθούν καλύτερα τα σχέδια μαθήματος για να ανταποκρίνονται και στις ικανότητες των παιδιών αυτών.

Πριν ξεκινήσω τη συνέντευξή μου, θα ήθελα να σας υπενθυμίσω πως όλες οι πληροφορίες που θα πάρω μέσα από τις συνεντεύξεις θα παραμείνουν εμπιστευτικές και μόνο σχετικές 1/6



πληροφορίες θα χρησιμοποιηθούν για το σκοπό της έρευνας αυτής. Σας διαβεβαιώνω ότι δε θα γίνει χρήση των προσωπικών σας στοιχείων, θα τηρηθεί η ανωνυμία και η αξιολόγηση των δεδομένων θα γίνει με απόλυτη εμπιστευτικότητα.

## Μέρος Α– Προσωπικές Πληροφορίες

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Στο πρώτο μέρος της συνέντευξης αυτής θα ήθελα να μου δώσετε πληροφορίες που αφορούν τις γνώσεις σας και τις προσωπικές απόψεις σχετικά με το θέμα αυτό .

7. Ποια είναι η θέση σας στο συγκεκριμένο σχολείο;
8. Πόσα χρόνια είστε σε αυτήν τη θέση;
9. Πώς αντιλαμβάνεστε τον όρο κοινωνικά – συναισθηματικά προβλήματα και προβλήματα συμπεριφοράς;
10. Είχατε ποτέ την ευκαιρία να παρακολουθήσετε κάποια ειδικά μαθήματα/σεμινάρια/μεταπτυχιακό σχετικά με τη διδασκαλία των παιδιών αυτών και διάφορους τρόπους αντιμετώπισής τους;
11. Αν ΝΑΙ, πού και πότε;
12. Πώς αισθάνεστε που πρέπει να διδάξετε σε παιδιά με κοινωνικά – συναισθηματικά προβλήματα και προβλήματα συμπεριφοράς ταυτόχρονα με τα υπόλοιπα παιδιά της τάξης σας; Δικαιολογήστε την θέση σας;

2/6

Προτού σας δοθεί η ευκαιρία να υλοποιήσετε το συγκεκριμένο πλαίσιο, είναι σημαντικό για μένα να έχω στα χέρια μου κάποια σημαντικά στοιχεία σχετικά με την εκπαίδευση των παιδιών αυτών στο παρόν στάδιο της εκπαίδευσής τους καθώς και τη βοήθεια δίδεται σ' αυτά. Στοχεύω επίσης και στην καταγραφή των δικών σας προτάσεων και θέσεων.

12. Πού δίνει σήμερα προτεραιότητα το εκπαιδευτικό μας σύστημα όσο αφορά την εκπαίδευση των παιδιών με κοινωνικά - συναισθηματικά προβλήματα και με προβλήματα συμπεριφοράς; (λαμβάνοντας υπόψη το χαρακτήρα του σχολείου στο οποίο εργάζεστε, τον τρόπο λειτουργίας του , τη τοποθεσία στην οποία βρίσκεται )
13. Ποιο εκπαιδευτικό πρόγραμμα εφαρμόζεται στο σχολείο σας σχετικά με την διδασκαλία και ενίσχυση των παιδιών αυτών;
14. Προσφέρεται καθόλου επιμόρφωση στα υπόλοιπα παιδιά του σχολείου σχετικά με το πώς θα πρέπει να είναι η συμπεριφορά τους απέναντι στα παιδιά αυτά; Γίνονται κατανοητές οι πληροφορίες από τα παιδιά αυτά;
15. Εσείς, ως δάσκαλος/ ειδικός εκπαιδευτικός/ εκπαιδευτικός ψυχολόγος/ διευθυντής, ποιος τρόπος μαθήματος, συμπεριφοράς, αντιμετώπισης πιστεύεται ότι έχει καλύτερα αποτελέσματα;

16. Κατά τη δική σας γνώμη πιστεύετε ότι υπάρχουν κενά στο υπάρχον εκπαιδευτικό σύστημα σχετικά με τη διδασκαλία και εκπαιδευτική βοήθεια που παρέχεται στα παιδιά αυτά; Εάν ναι, τι προτείνετε για να βελτιωθεί το υπάρχον εκπαιδευτικό σύστημα όσο αφορά το θέμα αυτό;
17. Με ποιους τρόπους παρακολουθείτε και σημειώνετε την πρόοδο των παιδιών αυτών είτε εσείς είτε το εκπαιδευτικό σύστημα ;
18. Τι εκπαιδευτικό υλικό (βιβλία, ενισχυτικά φυλλάδια ασκήσεων ....) είναι διαθέσιμο σε σας με σκοπό την ενίσχυση της διδασκαλίας σας με τα παιδιά αυτά;
19. Το βρίσκετε εποικοδομητικό και με ποιο τρόπο;
20. Πιστεύετε πώς θα έπρεπε να υπάρχει περισσότερο εκπαιδευτικό υλικό διαθέσιμο στο σχολείο σας για την ενίσχυση της διδασκαλίας των παιδιών αυτών; Εάν ναι, τι υλικό προτείνετε;
21. Ποια είναι τα κυριότερα προβλήματα συμπεριφοράς που αντιμετωπίσατε στα πλαίσια της εργασίας σας με τα παιδιά αυτά;
22. Έχετε τη δυνατότητα να συζητάτε τα προβλήματα που αντιμετωπίζετε με τα παιδιά αυτά μαζί με τους υπόλοιπους συναδέλφους σας;

Σε αυτό το μέρος θα σας παρουσιάσω ένα προσχέδιο του πλαισίου που θα σας ζητηθεί αργότερα να εφαρμόσετε μέσα στην τάξη σας. Σήμερα θα σας παρακαλέσω να το εφαρμόσουμε μαζί παίζοντας το ρόλο των μαθητών εσείς .

Πρώτα θα σας δείξω μια εικόνα/φωτογραφία, και μαζί θα τη συζητήσουμε:

(Συναίσθημα που εικονίζεται στη φωτογραφία: αγανάκτηση, θυμός )(Α τάξη)

- Τι νομίζετε ότι συμβαίνει στη φωτογραφία;
- Έχετε βρεθεί ποτέ στην κατάσταση αυτή;
- Πώς νομίζετε ότι νιώθει το πρόσωπο στη φωτογραφία αυτή;

(ενθάρρυνση δασκάλων να πούνε όσα πιο πολλά χαρακτηριστικά επίθετα μπορούν πάνω στη συγκεκριμένη φωτογραφία)

- Έχετε ποτέ βρεθεί σε κατάσταση θυμού ή αγανάκτησης;
- Πότε και γιατί;

(σε αυτό το στάδιο είναι σημαντικό να τονιστεί ότι όλοι μπορούμε να βρεθούμε σε αυτήν την κατάσταση οδηγημένοι από διάφορους παράγοντες)

- Όταν αισθάνεστε έτσι:
  - + πώς είναι η έκφραση του προσώπου σας; (ενθάρρυνση να δείξουν το πώς αισθάνονται με μίμηση προσώπου είτε ζωγραφίζοντας )
  - + ποίες σωματικές αντιδράσεις παρατηρείτε;
- Όταν νιώθετε έτσι, τι κάνετε;

5/6

- Μπορείτε να σκεφτείτε και να μου πείτε άλλες πιθανές λέξεις που να ανταποκρίνονται στο συγκεκριμένο συναίσθημα;
- Τι νομίζετε ότι πρέπει να κάνει ένας άνθρωπος, που νιώθει έτσι;

Γενικεύοντας όλα τα παραπάνω, μπορούμε να συμφωνήσουμε μαζί και να δώσουμε έναν κοινό ορισμό.

*Κάποιος νιώθει αγανάκτηση, θυμό όταν νιώθει αδικημένος για κάτι.*

*π.χ. Ο Μάρκος ένιωσε αγανακτισμένος όταν η Μαρία του πήρε τα χρωματιστά του χωρίς να τον ρωτήσει.*

Τώρα θα σας δώσω ορισμένες ασκήσεις, για να εξασκηθούμε πάνω στο συγκεκριμένο επίθετο και ταυτόχρονα να κατανοήσουμε και τη σημασία του.

#### Μέρος Δ – Αξιολόγηση

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- Πόσο εύχρηστα βρήκατε τα μέσα-υλικά που χρησιμοποιήθηκαν
- Πόσο χρήσιμη σας φάνηκε η μέθοδος αυτή;
- Πόσο εποικοδομητική πιστεύετε ότι θα είναι η μέθοδος αυτή κατά τη διάρκεια υλοποίησης της από εσάς στους μαθητές σας?

**Θα ήθελα να σας ευχαριστήσω για τη συνεργασία και το χρόνο που αφιερώσατε για να**

**ολοκληρωθεί η συνέντευξη αυτή –**

**Καλή σας μέρα.**

## Appendix 12 - Observation **Observation**

Date of Observation:

Time commenced:

Number of Observation:

Time Completed:

Lesson:

Teacher:

### **Background information of the classroom:**

Number of students:

Boys:      Girls:

Number of students with SEBD:

Ages:

### **Aims & Objectives of the lesson**

Aims:

Objectives:

Pupils Activity		Pupils Interaction																																													
		Start of the lesson										1 <sup>st</sup> half of the lesson										2 <sup>nd</sup> half of the lesson										End of the lesson															
		Time:										Time:										Time:										Time:															
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10						
	Avoiding Directions																																														
	Causing Distractions																																														
	Verbally abusive																																														
	Physically abusive																																														
Comments																																															

## Appendix 13 – Lesson Plan 1 Class A & B in Greek

### Σχέδιο μαθήματος (1) A1 + B2

Στόχος μαθήματος: Πως αλλάζει κάποιος μεγαλώνοντας

Άσκηση: Πως αλλάζει κάποιος μεγαλώνοντας

- Ξεκινώ το μάθημα βγάζοντας 2 παιδιά και ρωτώ την υπόλοιπη τάξη αν τα παιδιά αυτά είναι τα ίδια. Συζητούμε ποιες διαφορές έχουν
- Ρωτώ τα παιδιά να μου πουν διάφορα πράγματα που αλλάζουν σε ένα άνθρωπο (μπορούν να σκεφτούν πως ήταν όταν ήταν μικροί κ πως άλλαξαν τώρα
- Τους δείχνω 2 φωτογραφίες ενός παιδιού κ ενός ενήλικα για να καταλάβουν καλύτερα πως αλλάζει κάποιος με τον καιρό
- Στη συνέχεια ρωτώ να μου πουν ποια πράγματα που δεν αλλάζουν σε ένα άνθρωπο
- Σε κάθε ομάδα δίνω 2 φωτογραφίες, μια με ένα παιδί κ μια με ένα ενήλικα
- Ζητώ από τα παιδιά να κοιτάζουν την εικόνα προσεκτικά
- Ζητώ να μου περιγράψουν τι βλέπουν σε κάθε εικόνα με σκοπό να καταλάβουν ότι είναι ο ίδιος άνθρωπος σε 2 φάσεις
- Βλέποντας τις εικόνες συζητούν με τις ομάδες τους πράγματα που αλλάζουν και πράγματα που δεν αλλάζουν και τα συμπληρώνουν στο φύλο εργασίας

#### Πράγματα που αλλάζουν αλλάζουν

Χρώμα μαλλιών

Χρώμα ματιών

Χρώμα δέρματος

Το όνομα μας

Ημερομηνία γέννησης

Τόπος γέννησης

#### Πράγματα που δεν

Ύψος

Ηλικία

Ωριμάζω

Η παλάμη του χεριού μας

Το νούμερο παπουτσιών

Τα συναισθήματα μας



Πως αλλάζει κάποιος με τον καιρό.

Πράγματα που αλλάζουν σε ένα άνθρωπο με τον καιρό:



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Πράγματα που δεν αλλάζουν σε ένα άνθρωπο με τον καιρό:

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## Appendix 14 – Lesson Plan 2 Class A & B in Greek

### Σχέδιο μαθήματος (2) A1 + B2

Στόχος μαθήματος: Αλλαγές που μπορώ να κάνω στον εαυτό μου

Άσκηση: Αλλαγές που μπορώ να κάνω στον εαυτό μου

- Συζήτηση και συμπλήρωση φύλου εργασίας με τις παρακάτω ερώτησης
  - A. Ξέρω διαφόρους τρόπους που με βοηθούν να μάθω να κάνω διάφορα πράγματα  
Ακούω τους γονείς μου και τη δασκάλα μου που με συμβουλεύουν  
Διαβάζω βιβλία  
Βλέπω επιμορφωτικά προγράμματα στην τηλεόραση  
Μιμούμαι τους συμμαθητές μου που συμπεριφέρονται σωστά  
  
(μπορούν να προστεθούν και αλλά ... )
  - B. Μπορώ να μιλήσω για αλλαγές που μπορώ να κάνω εγώ  
Να βελτιώσω την εμφάνιση μου  
Να βελτιώσω την συμπεριφορά προς τη δασκάλα και τους συμμαθητές μου  
Να βελτιώσω την επίδοση μου στα μαθήματα  
  
(μπορούν να προστεθούν και αλλά ... )
  - Γ. Μπορώ να κάνω κάποιες αλλαγές εύκολα και γρήγορα  
Από το A + B ποια μπορούν να γίνουν εύκολα και με ποιο τρόπο
  - Δ. Ξέρω ότι για να αλλάξω κάποια πράγματα χρειάζεται σκληρή δουλειά και χρόνος  
  
Από το A + B ποια χρειάζονται σκληρή δουλειά και χρόνο και με ποιο τρόπο μπορώ να βελτιωθώ

Αλλαγές που μπορώ να κάνω στον εαυτό μου



Ξέρω διάφορους τρόπους που με βοηθούν να μάθω να κάνω διάφορα πράγματα

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Μπορώ να μιλήσω για αλλαγές που μπορώ να κάνω εγώ

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Μπορώ να κάνω κάποιες αλλαγές εύκολα και γρήγορα

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Ξέρω ότι για να αλλάξω κάποια πράγματα χρειάζεται σκληρή δουλειά και χρόνος

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## Appendix 15 – Lesson Plan 3 Class A & B in Greek

### Σχέδιο μαθήματος (3) A1 + B2

Στόχος μαθήματος: Αλλάζουμε την συμπεριφορά μας

1. Κατανόηση του όρου συνήθεια
  2. Κατανόηση σωστών και λάθος πράξεων που γίνονται από εμάς
  3. Γνωρίζω ότι ο τρόπος συμπεριφοράς μου είναι δική μου επιλογή
- Συζήτηση στην τάξη:

1. Τι εννοούμε με τον όρο συνήθεια?
2. Πέστε μου κάποιες από τις συνήθειες σας?

Καλές (να πηγαίνω σχολείο, να βλέπω τηλεόραση, να διαβάζω βιβλία, να βοηθώ τους φίλους μου ... )

Κακές (να τσακώνομαι με τους συμμαθητές μου, να μην ακούω τη δασκάλα μου, να διακόπτω το μάθημα, να ενοχλώ τους συμμαθητές μου όταν διαβάζουν, ... )

(κατανόηση γιατί οι πιο πάνω συνήθειες θεωρούνται καλές/κακές)

3. Οι κακές συνήθειες δεν με αφήνουν να γίνω καλός μαθητής, να παρακολουθήσω μέσα στην τάξη, ενοχλώ τους συμμαθητές μου που προσέχουν στο μάθημα ...
4. Κατανόηση ότι ο τρόπος συμπεριφοράς μας είναι δική μας επιλογή
  - Μπορώ να αλλάξω τη συμπεριφορά μου αυτή φτάνει να το θέλω πραγματικά
  - Αναφορά στο πως μπορεί κάποιος να καλυτερεύσει την συμπεριφορά του

## Appendix 16– Lesson Plan 4 Class A & B in Greek

### Σχέδιο μαθήματος (4) A1 + B2

Στόχος μαθήματος:

1. Ξέρω ότι οι αλλαγές που γίνονται στη ζωή μας μπορεί να είναι παρά πολύ καλές.
2. Μπορώ να ονομάσω κάποιες αλλαγές που έχουν καλυτερεύσει τη ζωή μου.

Άσκηση: **Οι διάφορες αλλαγές που γίνονται στη ζωή μας μπορεί να είναι παρά πολύ καλές**

- Συζήτηση με τα παιδιά – πως άλλαξε τη ζωή μου το σχολείο?  
Λέξεις κλειδιά για τον πίνακα:

Έμαθα να διαβάζω

Έμαθα να γράφω

Έκανα πολλούς φίλους

Έμαθα να συνεργάζομαι

Έμαθα να σέβομαι τη δασκάλα μου και τους συμμαθητές μου

Έμαθα να συμπεριφέρομαι σωστά

Έμαθα να μην κάνω διακρίσεις

Έμαθα να ζητώ βοήθεια όταν τη χρειάζομαι

Έμαθα να βοηθώ τους άλλους όταν χρειάζονται βοήθεια

- Τα παιδιά ανά δυάδες καταγράφουν τα παραπάνω στο φύλλο εργασίας
- Στη συνέχεια συζητούμε πως αυτές οι αλλαγές έχουν καλυτερέψει τη ζωή τους
- Συμπληρώνετε το φύλλο εργασίας



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## Appendix 17 – Lesson Plan 1 Class C in Greek

### Σχέδιο μαθήματος (1) Γ1

Στόχος μαθήματος:

1. Ξέρω ότι οι αλλαγές που γίνονται στη ζωή μας μπορεί να είναι παρά πολύ καλές.
2. Μπορώ να ονομάσω κάποιες αλλαγές που έχουν καλυτερεύσει τη ζωή μου.

Άσκηση: **Οι διάφορες αλλαγές που γίνονται στη ζωή μας μπορεί να είναι παρά πολύ καλές**

- Συζήτηση με τα παιδιά – πως άλλαξε τη ζωή μου το σχολείο?  
Λέξεις κλειδιά για τον πίνακα:

Έμαθα να διαβάζω

Έμαθα να γράφω

Έκανα πολλούς φίλους

Έμαθα να συνεργάζομαι

Έμαθα να σέβομαι τη δασκάλα μου και τους συμμαθητές μου

Έμαθα να συμπεριφέρομαι σωστά

Έμαθα να μην κάνω διακρίσεις

Έμαθα να ζητώ βοήθεια όταν τη χρειάζομαι

Έμαθα να βοηθώ τους άλλους όταν χρειάζονται βοήθεια

- Τα παιδιά ανά δυάδες καταγράφουν τα παραπάνω στο φύλλο εργασίας
- Στη συνέχεια συζητούμε πως αυτές οι αλλαγές έχουν καλυτερέψει τη ζωή τους
- Συμπληρώνετε το φύλλο εργασίας



Πως το σχολείο έχει αλλάξει τη ζωή μου...

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## Appendix 18 – Lesson Plan 2 Class C in Greek

### Σχέδιο μαθήματος (2) Γ1

Στόχος μαθήματος:

1. ξέρω ότι όλοι μας περνάμε διάφορες αλλαγές όλη την ώρα
2. μπορώ να ονομάσω κάποιες από αυτές τις αλλαγές
3. αναγνωρίζω ότι αυτές οι αλλαγές μου έχουν αλλάξει τη ζωή
4. μπορώ να πω πως αυτές οι αλλαγές με κάνουν να νιώθω και γιατί

Άσκηση:

- Συζήτηση με τα παιδιά – κατανόηση ότι στη ζωή όλων μας μπορούν να συμβούν διάφορες αλλαγές
- ποιες μπορεί να είναι αυτές οι διάφορες αλλαγές που παίρνουν μέρος στη ζωή μας?

Μετακόμιση σε καινούργιο σπίτι

Αλλαγή σχολείου – από το νηπιαγωγείο στο δημοτικό

Γινόμαστε πιο ψήλοι

Αλλάζουμε δάσκαλους

Γινόμαστε καλύτεροι στα μαθηματικά, στην επιστήμη, στα ελληνικά, μαθαίνουμε καινούργια πράγματα καθημερινά

- Πως τις αντιλαμβανόμαστε?
- Πως έχουν αλλάξει τη ζωή μου οι διάφορες αυτές αλλαγές?
- Πως με κάνουν να νιώθω οι αλλαγές αυτές?

Χαρά, λύπη, θυμό, ενθουσιασμό ...

Γιατί νιώθω έτσι?

## Appendix 19 – Lesson Plan 3 Class C in Greek

### Σχέδιο μαθήματος (3) Γ1

Στόχος μαθήματος:

1. ξέρω ότι στη ζωή μας γίνονται διάφορες αλλαγές
2. αυτές οι αλλαγές μπορεί να είναι καλές μπορεί να μην είναι κακές
3. ξέρω διάφορους τρόπους να αντιμετωπίζω τις διάφορες αλλαγές που γίνονται στη ζωή μου

Άσκηση:

Συζήτηση με τα παιδιά

- όπως είπαμε και στο προηγούμενο μάθημα στη ζωή μας γίνονται ορισμένες αλλαγές
- αυτές μπορεί να είναι καλές, μπορεί να είναι και κακές  
καλές – να διαβάζω, να μετρώ να σκέπτομαι σωστά, να συμπεριφέρομαι σωστά, να σέβομαι, να εκτιμώ

κακές – να με κάνουν να μην συμπεριφέρομαι σωστά, να αντιδρώ απότομα και επιπόλαιο,

- υπάρχουν πολλοί τρόποι όμως που μπορούν να με βοηθήσουν να ξεπεράσω τις αλλαγές αυτές όπως  
συζητώντας με τους μεγαλύτερου μου τι με προβληματίζει  
μοιράζομαι τις σκέψεις μου και τους συλλογισμούς μου ...

## Appendix 20 – Lesson Plan 4 Class C in Greek

### Σχέδιο μαθήματος (4) Γ1

Στόχος μαθήματος:

1. μπορώ να μιλήσω για ένα πλάνο που έχω για το πώς μπορώ να αλλάξω τη συμπεριφορά μου
2. μπορώ να σκεφτώ για ένα πλάνο που έχω στο μυαλό για να ξεπεράσω ένα πρόβλημα μου

Άσκηση: Συζήτηση με τα παιδιά

- μπορώ να μιλήσω για ένα πλάνο που έχω για το πώς μπορώ να αλλάξω τη συμπεριφορά μου, να δουλεύω πιο σκληρά μέσα στη τάξη, να ακλουθώ τις οδηγίες τις δασκάλας μου  
να σέβομαι και να εκτιμώ τη δασκάλα μου και τους συμμαθητές μου, να προσπαθώ να έρχομαι στην ώρα μου στο σχολείο, να μην διακόπτω τη δασκάλα μου ή τον συμμαθητή μου όταν μου μιλά, να μην τσακώνομαι με τους συμμαθητές μου
- μπορώ να σκεφτώ για ένα πλάνο που έχω στο μυαλό για να ξεπεράσω ένα πρόβλημα μου  
τι θέλω να επιτύχω στη ζωή μου,

τι θέλω να επιτύχω μέσα από το σχολείο

πώς μπορώ να επιτύχω τον στόχο μου αυτό?

Τι πρέπει να κάνω να επιτύχω τον στόχο μου?

Με τι πιθανά εμπόδια μπορεί να βρεθώ αντιμέτωπος κατά την προσπάθεια μου αυτή?

Σε ποιον μπορώ να τρέξω για βοήθεια?

Με ποιο τρόπο σκοπεύω να επιβραβεύσω τις πράξεις μου όταν καταφέρω να υλοποιήσω τον στόχο μου?

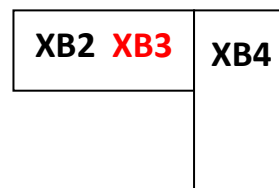
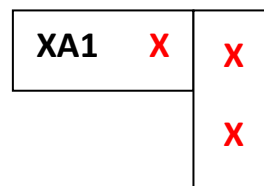
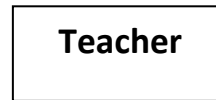
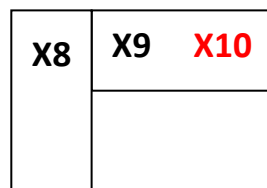
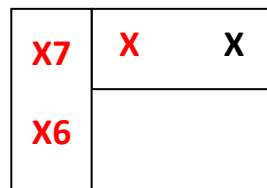
## Appendix 21 – Classroom Layout, Class A

Number of students: **16**

Number of students with SEBD: **5**

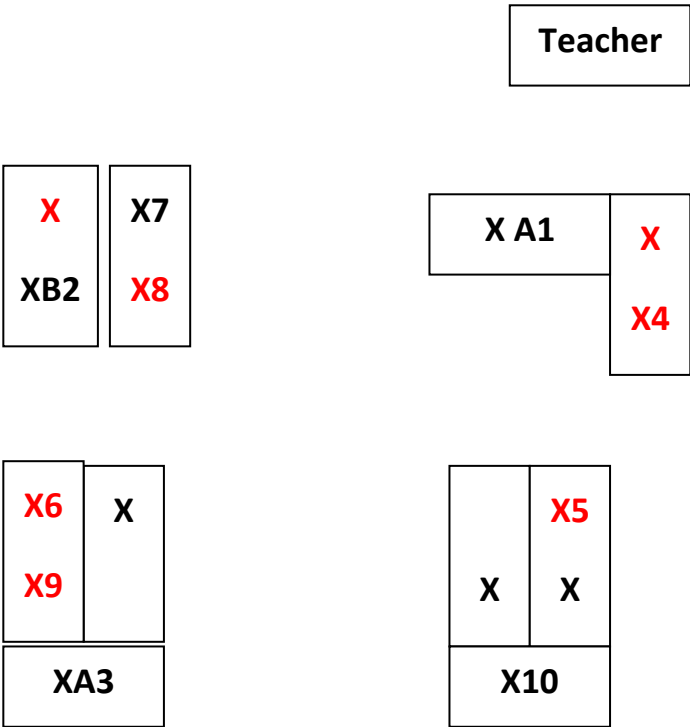
Number of boys: **8**

Number of girls: **8**



**Appendix 22 – Classroom Layout, Class B**

Number of students: **15**  
 Number of students with SEBD: **3**  
 Number of boys: **8**  
 Number of girls: **7**



## Appendix 23 – Classroom Layout, Class C

Number of students: **23**

Number of students with SEBD: **4**

Number of boys: **12**

Number of girls: **11**

