The Impact of Classroom Practice on Secondary School Children with Statements of Special Educational Needs

By

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Abstract

The intention of this case study is to evaluate the impact of classroom practice on the learning of pupils with statements of special educational needs in a mainstream secondary school and to consider the degree to which specialised teaching is required to enable such pupils to learn. A discussion of educational developments over the past thirty years, particularly with regard to provision for pupils with special educational needs, sets the context and explores the relevance of an increasing emphasis on teaching approaches and strategies as a means of meeting the needs of all pupils, including those with the most complex needs. The developing role of the teaching assistant particularly as it relates to the research is also discussed and evaluated. The study gathers qualitative data from classroom observations, interviews and questionnaires and reviews documentary evidence to examine classroom practice (particularly focusing on the work of teaching assistants) as it affects a cohort of pupils with special educational needs. This evidence is used to examine the extent to which pupils with learning difficulties need distinct educational provision – including distinctive teaching strategies – and whether the use of teaching assistants is an effective means of supporting these pupils' learning.

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Acknowledgements

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Chapter 1: Introduction

When I started my teaching career as a Music teacher 25 years ago I very soon realised that some pupils found it harder to learn than others and that in order to support them to learn the same things as their peers, I had to adapt my teaching to enable them to make sense of concepts others found easy. Skills that most children picked up easily had to be broken down into smaller tasks and practised more before they were able to achieve mastery. Soon I found this aspect of my work more interesting than teaching class music lessons. I wanted to understand why certain children found it difficult to learn and make progress, and develop skills to support them. I persuaded my head teacher to allow me to work part of my time in what was then called the remedial department providing additional Maths and English lessons to children who were withdrawn from other areas of the curriculum. This experience influenced my decision, many years later, to work full-time in special needs education.

Since then developments in education have brought us the National Curriculum (DES, 1988); the SEN Code of Practice (DfE, 1994) and Revised Code of Practice (DfES, 2001); the SEN Disability Discrimination Act, 2001 and any number of National Strategies (DCSF, 2008a, 2008b) to support teachers to identify pupils who have more difficulties than most in acquiring concepts and skills, and to use appropriate teaching strategies and approaches to meet the needs of these pupils. There is an explicit expectation that even pupils with profound and severe learning difficulties will achieve and make progress, albeit at a slower rate which might encompass

lateral rather than linear development (DCSF, 2008b). There is also an expectation that all teachers will develop strategies and approaches that enable them to teach all the pupils in their classrooms, as set out in the Inclusion Statement contained in the Revised National Curriculum (DfEE, 1999).

Despite this we are still grappling with how to provide appropriate educational opportunities for our more challenged children, particularly if we are to educate them alongside their peers in mainstream schools. One 'solution' has been to move away from the model of one teacher to one class, with teaching assistants employed in many schools to support pupils, particularly those with statements of special educational needs. My own experience as a special needs teacher who became a SENCO in 2001 led me to question how effectively teaching assistants can work when they are allocated to support specific pupils with statements of special needs, and additionally to consider the extent to which their support enables the inclusion of pupils with statements in the mainstream classroom.

A number of issues began to concern me. At a senior leadership level there did not appear to be a commitment to changing anything structurally within the school to support the use of this new group of professionals. I think this was partly because there was no tradition of using teaching assistants within the school other than to cover a few hours support a week as specified on individual children's statements, provided externally by the Education Support Service (ESS). When the head teacher decided to buy out of this service to employ our own staff (both teaching assistants and specialist teachers) to reflect changes in the way the Local Authority funded statements,

newly appointed teaching assistants were employed to work within the special needs department. Although information from the assistant head for inclusion, my line manager, suggested that part of the reason for buying out of the ESS was to enable more flexible working patterns and to allow us to ensure quality of staff, no thought appeared to have been given as to how teaching assistants might most effectively be deployed, nor to whether particular training was needed for teachers to ensure they could use the support effectively.

In my conversations and work with subject colleagues across the school it became evident to me that the allocation of an additional adult to a classroom is not necessarily beneficial in itself. This was confirmed when meeting with teaching assistants. An increase in the number of children with statements of SEN in the school seemed to be causing many teachers concern, as they struggled with how to differentiate the curriculum to meet the needs of pupils with a high level of difficulty, while continuing to strive for high academic standards with the majority of pupils. Although generally welcoming the addition of teaching assistants to support pupils with statements of SEN, many expressed the concern that they were not sure of the teaching assistant's role. Teaching assistants similarly complained that teachers did not communicate effectively with them, and that quite often they were not sure of what they were able to do within the classroom. Teaching assistants also commented that some teachers left it up to them to work with the pupil who they were supporting, and did not adapt their teaching or teaching materials to account for that pupil's difficulties. This meant that they were being left to adapt and differentiate work 'on the spot' without prior planning.

As SENCO I began to feel that part of the problem might be connected to the way that we deployed teaching assistants to work with specific pupils. Although this meant that teaching assistants got to know their key pupils very well, it also meant that they had to support them in a number of different curriculum areas – sometimes all curriculum areas – and also to work with a number of different teachers with whom they were not able to communicate and plan in advance. I also became interested in looking at the ways in which teaching assistants actually worked in class, and finding out whether they were able to contribute to teaching that could facilitate pupils with statements of SEN access to the curriculum.

This interest was connected to questions of pedagogy. I had always believed that it was possible to differentiate the curriculum sufficiently to enable all pupils to learn and progress. The Revised National Curriculum makes it clear in its inclusion statement that all teachers are expected to adapt their teaching to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs and learning difficulties and disabilities. Nevertheless many of the teachers with whom I spoke regularly were worried that they could not do this. For them the gap between the ability of the majority and those with significant difficulties was seen as being too great to bridge. I became concerned to find out whether indeed these children need a distinctive SEN pedagogy, or whether the teaching approaches used by the best teachers simply need to be applied more rigorously and consistently – whether what Lewis and Norwich call a continuum of teaching approaches and strategies could be effective (Lewis and Norwich, 2000, 2001, 2005, 2007).

This suggested I needed to consider two particular areas of practice. Firstly, do pupils with learning difficulties need distinct educational provision – including distinctive pedagogic strategies and maybe different curriculum objectives? Secondly, is the use of teaching assistants in class an effective means of supporting these pupils' learning? The second question relates to the first question and, by implication, the pedagogic model adopted by the teacher. For example, if distinct pedagogic strategies are needed can these be provided by teaching assistants; if simply more intensive teaching is needed how can teaching assistants contribute to this?

It seemed to me that in order to look at this effectively a number of issues concerned with pedagogy and teaching had to be considered. How specialised does teaching need to be? Can differences between learners according to particular special educational needs be identified and systematically linked with learners' needs for differential teaching? What are the key criteria for identifying pedagogically useful learner groups? Do pupils need distinct kinds of teaching to learn the same content as others without learning difficulties?

With regard to teaching assistants it seemed important to look at whether teaching assistants can increase pupils' inclusion by enabling increased access to the curriculum and if so how this can be achieved (by adopting distinct kinds of teaching approaches; by increasing the intensity of teaching; by freeing up teacher time to enable teachers to increase the intensity of their teaching?) This would include considering whether teaching assistants might actually restrict pupils' independence and social

opportunities, and possibly prevent teachers from engaging with pupils with special educational needs.

I saw that these issues as being connected. If teaching assistants were able to work effectively with teachers, having an understanding of a range of teaching strategies and approaches, then there might be a possibility that the sort of high density teaching that might be needed for many pupils with special educational needs and disabilities could become a reality. I decided to try to find out how effectively teaching assistants in class support teachers to provide appropriate teaching strategies and approaches that enable pupils with statements of special educational needs to access the curriculum, learn and make progress.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction and Context

In order to consider the research questions suggested in the previous chapter regarding special educational needs (SEN) pedagogy and the deployment of teaching assistants, it is important to look at the context within which these are framed. Before moving on to look at the way I designed my piece of research, I want to examine the developments and debate within UK education around the provision for children with special educational needs and disabilities. From there I want to consider the questions that arise from this regarding pedagogy and the evidence for a distinct SEN pedagogy, and to look at research around the use of teaching assistants to support the teaching of children with difficulties and disabilities in mainstream schools. To engage with these issues I considered relevant developments reflected in the literature around inclusive education; pedagogy – taking pedagogy to mean *the cluster of decisions and actions that promote school learning* (Lewis and Norwich, 2001, p.3) and teaching assistants.

2.1   Inclusive Education

In this section I will consider developments in the UK regarding inclusive education. This will include considering the legislation that influenced the education of pupils with special educational needs including the 1994 Code of Practice (DfE, 1994) the Revised Code of Practice (DfES, 2001), the government Green Paper Excellence for All Children (DfEE, 1997) and those

that affected the education *system*, notably the 1988 Education Act (DES, 1988) which established the National Curriculum. Additionally I will consider the effects of the Revised National Curriculum (DfEE, 1999) and subsequent National Curriculum Strategies (DCSF, 2008a, 2008b) that have contributed to a more explicit consideration of the way in which the curriculum may be delivered, particularly with regard to those pupils with special educational needs.

Developments in education in the UK over the last 30 years have focused heavily on inclusion, specifically in terms of how children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities can be educated with their peers. The Warnock Report (DES, 1978), which provided the basis for the 1981 Education Act, established the principle of educating the majority of pupils in mainstream schools, stating that mainstream education is the best setting for the majority of pupils. This was with three qualifications based on the severity or complexity of a child's difficulty, disruption of others' education or failure in the mainstream. For the purposes of this study, however, I intend to explore documents from the 1990s onwards to consider the impact and influence of developments since the introduction of the National Curriculum (DES 1988) and the SEN Code of Practice (DfE, 1994) and the subsequent Revised Code of Practice (DfES, 2001). These deal explicitly with both the entitlement of children with special educational needs and the ways in which schools must respond to those pupils. I will then look at how developments since then move from a description of what should be provided to examining and specifying appropriate responses and strategies.

In 1997 the Government published its Green Paper *Excellence for all Children* (DfEE, 1997). Although this expressed a commitment to educating most children together, its emphasis on the importance of meeting individual children's needs means that the correspondent need for special schools remains. While it might be argued that this document formally committed the government to an inclusive education for all children (Dyson, Farrell, Polat, Hutcheson and Gallanaugh, 2004), government thinking and the ensuing legislation (DfE, 1994; DfEE, 1997; DfES, 2001) appears to have been primarily concerned with the assessment and identification of pupils with special educational needs and their placement into the mainstream where possible. It could be argued, as indeed many educational theorists and practitioners have (Bailey, 1998; Florian, 1998; Mittler, 1995, 2000), that in itself location does not constitute inclusion and that assimilation into existing structures actually implies integration (Ainscow, 1995; Barton, 1999; Sebba and Ainscow, 1996). Inclusion, if seen to be more than integration, implies an attempt by schools to respond to all pupils as individuals (Sebba and Ainscow, 1996).

Nevertheless, the principles enshrined in the Green Paper (DfEE, 1997) did make explicit the government's commitment to providing what it saw as inclusive education in the mainstream for the majority of pupils, which was further strengthened by the explicit requirement contained in the Inclusion Statement in the Revised National Curriculum (DfEE, 1999), to be discussed later in the context of developments after the introduction of the National Curriculum (DES, 1988).

2.1.1 The National Curriculum

Just as government thinking and legislation during the 1990s appears to have emphasised placement as the means by which to provide an inclusive education, concurrent developments in education appeared more concerned with *what* should be taught than the provision of teaching experiences or responses to individuals. This was embodied in the introduction of the National Curriculum following the1988 Education Act (DES, 1988) which for the first time in the UK specified what children should study, with a requirement that all children were assessed according to national standards. However, although subject to much criticism, both at the time and since, as a '…*"bureaucratic" curriculum concerned primarily with efficiency and the need to obtain precise information through testing to demonstrate it'* (Chitty, 2008, p.343) it did emphasise the importance of entitlement:

> *The government now wishes…to secure for all pupils in maintained schools a curriculum which equips them with the knowledge, skills and understanding that they need for adult life and employment…Pupils should be entitled to the same opportunities wherever they go to school. (A national curriculum) ensuring that all pupils regardless of sex, ethic origin and geographical location have access to broadly the same good and relevant curriculum and programmes of study…* (DES, 1987, paras. 7 and 8).

This was interpreted in the subsequent DES document From Policy to Practice (DES, 1989) as entitling every pupil in maintained schools to a curriculum which is balanced and broadly based, with the right to this breadth and balance established in law. It was not enough for such a curriculum to be *offered*, each individual child must take this up, and the curriculum had to promote development in all the main areas of learning and experience widely accepted as important, and also serve to develop the pupil as an individual member of society and future adult member of the community.

This in itself was of huge significance in that for the first time *all* pupils were seen to have an *entitlement* to a broad and balanced curriculum, and crucially to have an entitlement to receive learning and experience considered to be important, with that entitlement enshrined in law. It should be remembered, however, that the National Curriculum is not *a* curriculum in that it sets out what teachers should teach; it does not specify how they should teach, what form teaching should take or the amount of time allocated (Colwill and Peacey, 2001), which are all features of a curriculum. Therefore, because it was content rather than process led the focus was on *what* was taught rather than *how* it was taught.

2.1.2 The SEN Code of Practice

The SEN Code of Practice (DfE, 1994) was the first explicit model of *how* schools should respond to the needs of those not prospering in class, although it was an approach that Peacey (2005, p.3) characterises as 'assess and provide for the individual'. By this I think that Peacey means that the focus in 1994 was on the identification of those pupils who were not making progress, assessment to see how far 'behind' they were, the nature of these difficulties and then the provision of quantified support. In other words the Code of Practice (DfE, 1994) was designed to ensure that children identified as having SEN remained as far as possible in the mainstream, receiving a range of *compensatory* measures to support them. The emphasis, however, was on quantifying these measures in terms of *how much* children might need to compensate them for their difficulties, rather on the sorts of teaching strategies and approaches that might support the measures.

2.1.3 The Revised National Curriculum

The review of the National Curriculum between 1998 and 2000 sought to strengthen the rationale for the curriculum and articulated for the first time the purposes of a national curriculum framework (Colwill and Peacey, 2001) and also explicitly acknowledged and presented as an expectation the requirement to meet the needs of pupils, with a strong inclusion statement that provided clear signposts for teachers as to how these expectations might be achieved. Teachers were required to set suitable learning challenges, whereby teachers should give every pupil the opportunity to experience success in learning and to achieve as high a standard as possible. This might include choosing skills, knowledge and understanding from earlier/later stages of the curriculum so that individual children could make progress and show they could achieve. For pupils whose attainments fell significantly below the expected levels of a particular key stage, a much greater degree of differentiation would be necessary.

The requirement to respond to pupils' diverse learning needs meant setting high expectations and providing opportunities for all pupils to achieve; creating effective learning environments; securing motivation and concentration; providing equality of opportunity and setting targets for learning. Finally teachers were expected to overcome potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of pupils. A minority of pupils, it stated, would have particular learning and assessment requirements which went beyond the provisions described and if not addressed would create barriers to learning. These requirements were likely to arise as a consequence of a pupil having special educational needs or disabilities.

Teachers were required to take account of these requirements and make provision where necessary to support individuals or groups of pupils to participate effectively in the curriculum and assessment activities. Their curriculum planning should therefore take into account the type and extent of the difficulty experienced by the pupils – these needs could be met through greater differentiation of tasks and materials consistent with school based intervention as set out in the SEN Code of Practice (DfE, 1994).

This was significant as the principle of this statement signalled a clear shift from the 1994 'assess and provide' model (Peacey, 2005) and made it explicit that teachers must assume they would be working with a range of diversity and difference in their classes, including teaching pupils who were experiencing learning difficulties. It made it clear that teachers should prepare for this as a matter of '*normal provision'*. It did not, however, at this point explicitly guide teachers in terms of specific and tangible strategies which might be used in order to ensure that they were able to work with the range of diversity they might encounter. For instance the statement that '*for pupils whose attainments fell significantly below the expected levels of a particular key stage, a much greater degree of differentiation would be necessary'* (DfEE, 1999), tells teachers of an expectation – without giving strategies – for *how* teachers can differentiate their work to the level necessary. This could be because the focus was still at that time on refining the content of the curriculum which had proved to be too unwieldy in its first conception.

Following the review and publication of the Revised National Curriculum (DfEE, 1999), QCA/DfES guidelines were published in 2001 (QCA/DfES, 2001) to reflect the changing focus in the review of the National

Curriculum and subsequently the Revised National Curriculum. These guidelines consisted of 15 booklets designed to develop an inclusive curriculum that meets and challenges the needs and abilities of all pupils, and in particular pupils with learning difficulties (Colwill and Peacey, 2001, p.120). The 2001 Revised Code of Practice (DfES, 2001) suggests that students with SEN pursue activities which are 'additional to' and 'different from' the things others are doing (Peacey, 2005).

Despite these developments and a move towards explicitly setting out strategies, by 2004 Ofsted found that most schools had *not* taken appropriate steps to ensure that disabled pupils with SEN are included effective in mainstream schools. It reported that:

> *Few of the schools visited had made substantial adaptations to the curriculum they offer. Nearly all schools felt restricted by the National Curriculum, despite the inclusion statement and were reluctant to disapply elements of the curriculum in relation to pupils with SEN. Although some changes had been made to remove barriers to inclusion, there is much to do to achieve the aim of providing a full range of opportunities tailored to individual needs. (*Ofsted, 2004, *p.53*)

This failure of schools to make adaptations was addressed in the 2004 strategy document *Removing Barriers to Achievement* (DfES, 2004) which attempted to examine how schools could tackle the question of ensuring all pupils were enabled to learn and make progress. It asserted:

> *Inclusion is about much more than the type of school that children attend: it is about the quality of their experience, how they are helped to learn, achieve and participate fully in the life of the school. (*DfES, 2004, p.*2)*

From being concerned with the placement of pupils into the mainstream and changes at school level, the failure of schools to respond appropriately prompted a realisation at government level that attention needed to be given

to teaching approaches and strategies (Ofsted, 2004; Dyson et al, 2004; Davis and Florian, 2004).

It seems clear from consideration of these reports that despite an apparent commitment to inclusion (DfEE, 1997) the actual position within schools by 2004, ten years after the publication of the first SEN Code of Practice (DfE, 1994), many pupils with SEN were not receiving their entitlement to an education appropriate to meet their needs, and many schools were not meeting their responsibility to provide an appropriate educational experience for pupils with special educational needs that enabled them to progress and achieve (Ofsted, 2004).

2.1.4 Research Report 516 and the National Strategies

One of the government's responses was to commission a study (Davis and Florian, 2004) around pedagogy and practice to consider how evidence found might inform future practice. This included the consideration of whether pupils with special educational needs require a specific SEN pedagogy or whether good teaching is good teaching for all. I will discuss this in more depth in the next section of this chapter.

The introduction to the report, which sets out its purpose, suggests that the government recognised that the key to raising achievement of pupils with special educational needs was to build the capacity of teachers and schools to teach pupils with a diverse range of needs (Davis and Florian, 2004). The intention of the report is to provide an overview of training strategies and approaches for pupils with special educational needs, the theoretical underpinnings of these strategies and approaches and the role of specialist

knowledge in teaching these pupils. The report also considers how the

findings of the scoping study might become embedded in every day practice.

Among other suggestions, it was proposed that action was needed to

ensure that all teachers had a set of core skills, while some teachers would

gain advanced skills and in some local schools there would be some teachers

with specialist skills (Davis and Florian, 2004). A wider discussion also looked

at the question of pedagogy, which will be discussed later in this chapter. With

the ongoing development of the National Curriculum and National Strategies

to address teaching issues, a National Strategy for teaching and learning for

pupils with special educational needs and learning difficulties and disabilities

(SEN/LDD) was produced which drew on the DfES report Teaching Strategies

and Approaches for Pupils with Special Educational Needs (Davis and

Florian, 2004). The focus of the strategies and the report was on presence,

participation and achievement for every child and was seen to apply equally to

all pupils with SEN/LDD including those with severe and complex needs.

Additional guidance was provided to teachers in the form of Pedagogy and

Personalisation (DCSF, 2007). This report and the guidance following it

recognised that teachers need on-going support to respond effectively to the

wider range of needs in the classroom and access to specialist advice and

expertise where necessary. Equally important, however, is the explicit

recognition that pupils with special educational needs or learning difficulties

and disabilities are able to achieve:

> *Most pupils with special educational needs, learning difficulties and*
> *disabilities (SEN/LDD) including those in special schools, are able to*
> *reach national expected levels. For the majority of those who do not,*
> *National Curriculum levels and sub-levels still offer a suitable*
> *framework for assessment, planning and the evaluation of attainment*

and progress. For a much smaller number of pupils working below level 1 of the National Curriculum, the use of P levels…enables schools to measure progress, set targets and evaluate the impact of their provision for these pupils…The drive to improve the rates of progress made by all children and young people is inclusive of those with SEN/LDD working at the lower levels of the National Curriculum and P Levels. (DCSF, 2008b)

The commitment was backed up by a programme for action. The Training and Development Agency (TDA) undertook a programme of work designed to build the capacity of teachers and other staff to meet the needs of children with SEN and or disabilities, for example SEN and disability modules were developed for use in primary undergraduate teacher training programmes from September 2008. Additionally professional networks such as those led and managed by the NCSL and GTCE specifically explored the new development of new pedagogy' (Davis and Florian, 2004).

The QCA document Learning Difficulties; General Guidance (QCA/DfES, 2001) drew on effective practice across a range of schools and settings to support the planning, development and implementation of the curriculum for pupils with SEN. This considers a broad range of attainment which it ranked as encounter; awareness; attention and response; participation; involvement and gaining skills. Teachers were expected to implement the National Curriculum Inclusion Statement (DfEE, 1999) and use models such as the Circles of Inclusion to help (DCSF, 2008a, 2008b). This model considered provision in terms of 'Waves' – with Quality First Wave teaching available to all children. Additional and different provision to be offered to children with SEN was conceptualised as being Wave 2 and for children with the most significant needs, Wave 3. This builds on the conclusions of Research Report 516 (Davis and Florian, 2004) which

concludes that questions about whether there is a separate special education pedagogy are unhelpful given the current policy context, and that the more important agenda is about how to adopt a pedagogy that is inclusive to all learners. This will be discussed further below.

2.2   SEN Pedagogy

The discussion above, particularly regarding SEN pedagogy (Davis and Florian, 2004), suggests an assumption underlying UK government documents and guidance that an effective curriculum is broadly a common curriculum for all pupils (Lewis and Norwich, 2001; Norwich and Lewis, 2005). However, the question of whether children with special educational needs require significantly different teaching approaches and strategies bears further examination (Lewis and Norwich, 2001; Norwich and Lewis, 2005; Davis and Florian, 2004; Florian, 2005). To some degree this is at the crux of the divide between those who believe it is possible to include learners with difficulties and disabilities in the mainstream, and those who maintain the need for special provision (Florian, 2005).

2.2.1 Unique versus general differences

Two key questions appear central to this debate regarding effective inclusion: can differences between learners (by particular special educational needs groups) be identified and systematically linked with learners' needs for differentiated teaching, and what are the key criteria for identifying pedagogically useful learner groups? (Lewis and Norwich, 2001)

To put this in its conceptual framework, Norwich (1996) argues that there are three broad types of teaching need: needs common to all learners; needs specific or distinct to groups of learners and needs unique to individual learners. If it is assumed that teaching decisions can be influenced by all three types of needs, there are two relevant and contrasting positions to 'difference' which can be identified using a three-dimensional view about needs. Lewis and Norwich call this the general difference and unique difference positions (Lewis and Norwich 2001; Norwich and Lewis, 2005).

Teaching decisions and strategies are informed by needs that are common to all learners as well as by needs that are unique to individuals; however, in the general differences position teaching is also informed by needs which are specific or distinct to a group which shares common characteristics. In this position the distinctive needs of a sub-group of those with disabilities and difficulties are in the foreground; needs that are common to all and unique to individuals, although important, are in the background (Lewis and Norwich, 2007, p.7).

This view is one favoured by those who recognise general categories such as those classifications used currently for schools census returns, as relevant to pedagogic decisions. In England where the focus is on meeting 'special educational needs' (Florian, 2005) there is no assumption of hard and fast categories (DfE, 1994). The Special Needs Code of Practice recognises that each child is unique and that there is a wide spectrum of special educational needs that are frequently inter-related, although there are also specific needs that usually relate directly to particular types of impairment – the areas of need being communication and interaction, cognition and

learning, behaviour, emotional and social development and sensory and/or physical (DfE, 1994). However, these and historical classifications reflect administrative placement and resource allocation decision making, and are not necessarily categories of learner characteristics that have teaching relevance (Norwich and Lewis, 2005, p.4). The relevance of categories of cognitive learning difficulties, for example, might also depend on their association with other kinds of difficulties e.g. sensory, motor, emotional or behavioural; however, it may be that there are more appropriate categories, some still to be identified, that are more pedagogically relevant (Lewis and Norwich, 2007, p.9). It should be remembered too that the classification of disabilities, as opposed to difficulties, is problematic in terms of whether having a disability is considered to be a Special Educational Need – this may be dependent on the type of disability.

Where pedagogic decisions and strategies are informed only by common and individual needs, i.e. the unique differences position, these unique differences are in the foreground, with common needs in the background. In this position general specific needs are not recognised. The assumption is that while *all* learners are in one general sense the same (in that as learners, simply by the nature of what learning has in common for all, learners *are* the same) they are also different – and it is these differences that define them. Particular teaching strategies are therefore relevant for all pupils no matter what their gender, race, class, social background or disability. Within this position the uniqueness of individual needs and their dependence on the social context accommodates differences between individuals. Common teaching needs must therefore be considered in terms of principles

which are general and flexible enough to enable wide variations to be possible within a common framework (Lewis and Norwich, 2007, p.21).

Lewis and Norwich (2000) carried out a review of research in the field looking at three broad groups of research: studies located in a whole group perspective, where a special needs perspective might be applied retrospectively; studies that start from a specific special educational needs subgroup and studies in which some subgroup differences are examined within the whole group perspective. They were open to evidence based on both quantitative and qualitative research paradigms.

They found that common teaching approaches need to be applied in a more intensive and careful way for pupils with low attainment in literacy; that although common teaching principles and strategies are relevant to the subgroups that have been considered, more intensive and explicit teaching is also relevant to pupils with different patterns and degrees of difficulty in learning. Available research, they concluded at that time, does not favour the general differences position but shows some support for the argument that what works for most pupils works for all pupils (Lewis and Norwich, 2000).

A later review of research conducted by Davis and Florian as part of the scoping study carried out in 2004 (Davis and Florian, 2004) came to similar conclusions. This review covered national and international publications. An investigation of teaching strategies and approaches with pupils having needs as defined in 2001 Revised Code of Practice (DfEE, 2001) – communication and interaction; cognition and learning; behaviour, emotional and social development and sensory and/or physical development – found that teaching strategies are associated with but not necessarily

related to direct categories of SEN. A range of theoretical perspectives underpins research in each of these areas: however, they found considerable overlap, with behavioural, social constructivist and ecological approaches dominating the intervention literature. They also found an increasing understanding of psychological and educational connections between different theoretical approaches to teaching and learning and between social, emotional and cognitive aspects of educational experience (Davis and Florian, 2004).

The authors concluded that the teaching approaches and strategies identified during the review were not sufficiently differentiated from those which are used to teach all children to justify a distinctive SEN pedagogy. This does not diminish the importance of special education but highlights that it is an essential component of pedagogy. It goes on to suggest that questions about whether there is a separate special education pedagogy are unhelpful given the current policy context and that the more important agenda is about how to develop a pedagogy that is inclusive to all learners. The research found that there is a great deal of literature they considered might be construed as special education knowledge, but that sound practices in teaching and learning in mainstream and special education literature were often informed by the same basic research (Davis and Florian. 2004).

2.2.2 Teaching approaches and strategies

Norwich and Lewis (2005) suggest that it would be helpful to conceptualise pedagogic strategies in relation to a wider model of teaching which needs to incorporate strategies pertaining to knowledge about teaching and the curriculum as well as knowledge about learners and the learning process.

They suggest that what is specialist about teaching exceptional children might be the teacher's knowledge rather than, or as well as, strategies and skills.

They believe a notion of continua of teaching approaches is useful to capture the appropriateness of more intensive and explicit teaching for pupils with different patterns and degrees of learning difficulties, by which they mean the various strategies and procedures which make up teaching can be considered in terms of whether they are used more or less in practice (Lewis and Norwich, 2001). They believe that this would help to distinguish the 'normal' adaptations in class teaching for most pupils (what the National Strategy (DCSF, 2008a) calls Quality First Wave teaching) and the greater degree of adaptations required for those with more significant learning difficulties (Wave 2 and Wave 3 teaching in the National Strategy (DCSF, 2008a). They call this high density teaching.

Lewis and Norwich (2001) and Norwich and Lewis (2005) suggest, that the tendency to want to split the continua into distinct types, especially for programmes of teaching pupils at both ends of the continua have been reinforced by the historical separation of pupils with significant difficulties in separate settings and schools. Florian goes further (2005) and suggests that it is actually the tendency to split the continua that reinforces and perpetuates the belief in the general differences position that some learners are qualitatively different by virtue of their low incidence and therefore need distinctive approaches despite evidence to the contrary that leads to the enduring and pernicious effect of fixed beliefs.

Examples along the continua – i.e. facets of teaching where additional emphasis on common teaching approaches is required depending on the

individual learning needs of those with special educational needs – include more practice to achieve mastery; more examples to learn concepts; more experience of transfer; more explicit teaching of learning strategies and reinforcement of them; more frequent and more explicit assessment of learning; more time to solve problems; more careful checking for preparedness for the next stage of learning. None of these, it is suggested (Lewis and Norwich 2001) are qualitatively different from approaches with less emphasis. The concept of a continuum of teaching approaches, they argue, would be helpful in setting out a coherent and common framework of teaching skills which is inclusive and could make it possible for differences in the degree of intensity and explicitness in teaching to be recognised.

If there is any justification for separate learning settings for pupils with learning difficulties, this is not necessarily because there are distinctive teaching approaches but better opportunities to provide appropriate adaptations to common approaches to meet unusual learning needs. Florian (2005) extends this idea to argue that it is not the differences among children, their characteristics or upbringing that is problematic, but when the magnitude of these difficulties exceeds what schools can accommodate that children are considered to have special educational needs. In other words, when children with complex needs require support to a degree beyond that typically required by their peer group, this is called special education. The process of providing this support is the provision of something *additional to* or *different from*. This provision, or accommodation, (either by differentiated teaching or the use of high intensity strategies) in and of itself does not constitute pedagogy but is an element of it. It does not diminish the importance of special education

knowledge but highlights it as an essential component of pedagogy (Florian, 2005).

The findings reported above (Davis and Florian, 2004; Florian, 2005; Lewis and Norwich, 2000, 2001, 2005,) then seem to indicate that while children with special educational needs might require teaching that is at the 'high density' end of a continua of approaches (in other words pupils may require more practice to gain skills; need more examples to learn concepts and more explicit teaching and time for reinforcement) this is a difference of degree rather than of substance. Nor does grouping children according to type of special educational need appear to provide evidence that it is helpful to think in terms of general differences.

If we accept the evidence that the majority of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities require teaching approaches that, while not distinctly different from good teaching pedagogy, are at the further end of the continua of teaching approaches as described by Lewis and Norwich (2001, 2005) and to some extent Florian (2005), the implication is that such pupils require additional input from the teacher and additional time to develop concepts and acquire skills. Clearly this may pose challenges for schools that have to balance the needs of individual pupils with the demands of attaining high standards of achievement for the majority. Even when teaching is of a high quality, it may be necessary to supplement the conventional one teacher to one class model with additional staff, both inside and outside of general lessons (Lewis and Norwich, 2001). It would seem that a high level of knowledge and skill is needed to adapt common teaching approaches to enable pupils with the need for teaching at the high density end of the

continua and might indicate a tension between this need and the provision of (possibly) less skilled professionals as a means of supporting the access of pupils with SEN to the curriculum. This will form part of the discussion below.

2.3   Teaching Assistants

The Revised Code of Practice (DfES, 2001) specifies that pupils identified as having special educational needs require provision that is *'additional to'* or *'different from'* that which is offered to the majority of children. The National Strategy for Teaching and Learning for pupils with SEN/LDD (DCSF, 2008a) conceptualises this in terms of the Three Circles of Inclusion with Wave 2 and Wave 3 Provision in this model comprising the *'additional to'* and *'different from'* referred to in the Revised Code of Practice (DfES, 2001). Provision at Wave 3 might equate with what Lewis and Norwich (2001) and Norwich and Lewis (2005) define as the high density end of continua of approaches, whereby teaching strategies and approaches used might be those used less commonly, but would be the most intensive.

As discussed above, Lewis and Norwich (2001) suggest that the traditional model of one teacher to one class may not be sufficient, even in a successful school, to meet the needs of pupils with severe and/or complex learning difficulties. That is to say, to provide opportunities for more practice of skills, for errorless teaching and learning and for skills and concepts to be broken down.

One way in which schools have chosen to 'square this circle' is by the deployment of teaching assistants to support pupils with special educational needs in mainstream schools. Indeed provision on pupils' statements may

specify the number of hours of support from a teaching assistant considered

necessary to meet a child's needs. This has led to a rapid increase in the

numbers of teaching assistants working alongside teachers in classrooms

from 61 000 in 1998 (Times On-line, June 23, 2008) to 103, 393.2 in 2002

(DfES, 2002) to 176,900 in January 2008 (DCSF, 2008c). Yet despite this

rise and the increasing recognition of their crucial role (Moran and Abbott,

2002) the question as to the nature of the 'support' provided continues to be a

matter for debate (Armstrong, 2008). Indeed research carried out by Cremin,

Thomas and Vincett (2005) pointed out that there is:

> …*widespread acceptance of the central role that support assistants*
> *play in meeting children's needs, yet little research has examined*
> *the changes that might occur when these extra people move into*
> *the domain of the teacher and how their potential contribution might*
> *be maximised.*(p.415)

Blatchford, Russell, Bassett, Brown and Martin (2007) also point out that

although it is widely assumed that an increasing number of adults in a

classroom is beneficial to children, there are significant gaps in what is known

about many aspects of the impact and effectiveness of teaching assistants.

This is a crucial consideration. Given that the deployment of teaching

assistants as outlined above is part of the way in which additional support for

pupils with special educational needs is provided, to enable them to receive

the sort of range of teaching approaches and strategies that will enable them

to access the curriculum, it is important to consider the sorts of expertise that

both teachers and teaching assistants might need in order to ensure their

contribution is indeed maximised.

2.3.1 Teaching assistants' role and the nature of support

One implication is the need for a clear understanding of the role of the teaching assistant – both by the teaching assistant him or herself and on the part of the class teacher. When Thomas (1992) looked at this issue he suggested that in fact many teachers found teaching with support staff more of a hindrance than a help, as lack of time for teachers and assistants to talk and plan meant that communication was often poor and collaboration underdeveloped. This meant that rather than freeing the teacher to spend more time with pupils, the teaching assistant's presence in fact resulted in the 'host' teacher spending more of her time without pupils. These findings are echoed by Lacey (2001) in findings from her research around teaching assistant support for pupils with severe and profound learning difficulties.

More positive evidence regarding the impact of teaching assistants on pupils' participation was found in a systematic review of literature, with evidence from 35 relevant studies carried out by Alborz, Pearson, Farrell and Howes (2009). Of five studies examining the impact of teaching assistants on the participation of pupils, four found that the presence of teaching assistants helped pupils to engage in tasks and activities. The fifth study reported mixed findings.

Interestingly, although Blatchford et al (2007) found evidence that teaching assistants have an indirect effect on teaching whereby the presence of a teaching assistant in the classroom helped maximise pupils' and teachers' attention to work, the study found little evidence to suggest that the presence of teaching assistants, or any characteristic of teaching assistants

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(for example training or experience), had a measurable effect on pupil attainment in the school class where they were deployed.

The DfES's Good Practice guidelines (DfES, 2001) suggest that the essence of successful deployment of teaching assistants lies in understanding the nature of the support they can provide – for the pupil, for the teacher, for the curriculum and for the school. Support for the pupil, it is suggested, is support for all pupils with whom the teaching assistant comes into contact. Indeed, Alborz et al (2009) found that the use of teaching assistants allows teachers to engage pupils in more creative and practical activities and to spend more time working with small groups and individuals.

Many teaching assistants are employed with specific responsibilities to work with children with special educational needs. Even those who work mainly with a child will come into regular and close contact with other children, indeed it is central to the whole principle of inclusion that a child who has physical or learning difficulties should be helped to work in the company of other children and often in tandem with them (DfES, 2001, p.9).

The guidelines go on to outline the school's responsibility to support the teaching assistant to fulfil the expectations of the role, and point out that this support is for the teaching assistant and is an obligation that calls for consideration of how teaching assistants work and of their professional development needs. Managerial support should enable teaching assistants to perform the role to the best of their ability, and encourage teaching assistants to develop their skills and potential (DfES, 2001, p.9).

2.3.2 Management, expectations and training of teaching assistants

It may not be simply a matter of lack of clarity around roles however.

Research by Farrell, Balshaw and Polat (1999) into the use and management

of teaching assistants, which fed into the good practice guide (QCA/DFES,

2001), found evidence that suggested a clearly understood distinction

between the role of the teacher and that of the teaching assistant. The

teachers were responsible for planning the teaching programmes, including

monitoring and evaluating their effectiveness, while the LSA (Learning

Support Assistant) was responsible for the implementation of the programmes

under the guidance of the teacher. Nevertheless, during the course of the

research LSAs were observed on many occasions to be taking a more pivotal

role, and indeed it was found that they took on a variety of complex and

challenging tasks, but that there was no consistent pattern to the support

activities they undertook.

Blatchford et al (2007) found that while teaching assistants provided a

level of support for teachers in the form of handling materials, administration,

supporting activities related to teaching (for example marking) and a range of

general activities such as playground duty, they are largely engaged in a

'direct interactive role in the classrooms, involving face-to-face interactions

with pupils in support of learning' (p.13).

This suggests something more complex going on than simply a lack of

clarity regarding roles. Rather there may be a need for more clear

management of teaching assistants by teachers, and therefore a need for

teachers to be given training. In 2001, it was pointed out (QCA/DfES, 2001)

that teacher training had only recently begun to address the issue of teachers

needing to manage other adults in the classroom. Alborz et al (2009) suggest

that there is a need within teacher training policy to emphasise the necessary

collaborative working required to gain effective teaching assistant support.

For example teachers need to be appropriately trained in team-working

approaches during initial or postgraduate training programmes.

At a school level QCA and the DfES identified the need for teaching

assistants' responsibilities to be clearly defined – which could be done

effectively through clear school policies, well-written job descriptions, teaching

assistants' contracts, thorough induction, well conducted line management

and on-going training (continued professional development). In 1999, one of

the issues identified by Farrell et al (1999) was that although most LSAs had

job descriptions many did not refer to them, and that in non-resourced

mainstream schools in particular they often undertook work completely

unrelated to their job description. Similarly, the issue of contracts and pay

remained a source of concern, with levels of pay seen as far too low when

looked at against the work undertaken by and responsibilities given to LSAs.

Additionally many contracts were temporary and tied to a pupil with a

statement, while in some schools LSAs were on different pay scales while

doing very similar, sometimes identical jobs.

2.3.3 Planning

Planning was consistently identified as being a key element of ensuring

teaching assistant effectiveness:

> *At all key stages, the most influential factor in the effectiveness of in-class support is the quality of joint planning of the work between class/subject teacher and the support teacher or…assistant.* (Ofsted, 2006, p.5)

This is supported by QCA and the DfES (2001) who suggest that schools need to ensure that teaching assistants are given the wider picture with regard to the pupils with whom they work – they need to know the teachers' aims for the lesson and their expectations of pupils' progress; what pupils are expected to learn in any particular class and how any pupils with special needs with whom the teaching assistants are assigned fit in. Wilson, Schlapp and Davidson (2003), in the research looking at Classroom Assistants in Scottish Primary Schools, found that teachers described communication as being 'rushed and lacking in depth' (p201). They believe that far more could be achieved if there was time for in-depth discussion and planning. Alborz et al (2009) also found that evidence emphasised the importance of allocated time for teachers and teaching assistants to plan programmes of work becoming standard practice.

Lorenz (1998) asserts that dedicated planning time is essential if support is to be effective. Schools need to create a climate that encourages effective teaching assistant input.

Gerschel (2005) who conducted a piece of research around the role of the SENCO in working with teaching assistants in the London Borough of Greenwich suggests that at the least teaching assistants need plans in advance and a clear structure in their classroom work. Ideally they would discuss plans with the teacher in the light of their shared experiences. This she says is not by any means the rule as not all teachers do plan with their teaching assistants – and not all teaching assistants feel confident enough to

approach teachers and ask for lesson plans. She is clear that allocated time for planning is necessary.

2.3.4 Allocation of support and teaching assistant deployment

It may be too, that the concentration of attention on students who have been identified as having special educational needs, rather than working in a more holistic way as part of a coherent classroom team, actually encourages social, academic and physical dependence. It may also prevent interaction between students and therefore lead to isolation of the supported student and create negative perceptions (Cremin et al, 2005). Gerschel (2005) backs this up and additionally points out that a teaching assistant who is 'attached' to a child may also become possessive of the pupil – and also be economically dependent on the child's presence. These findings are supported by Alborz et al's research evidence (Alborz et al, 2007), with seven of 14 studies examining the impact of teaching assistants on pupils with SEN reporting that too much reliance on teaching assistant support can 'hinder SEN pupils' interaction with peers and teachers, undermine opportunities for self determination and may lead to these pupils feeling stigmatised' (p.2).

Armstrong (2008) suggested that in order for teaching assistants to work effectively and comfortably with other adults and young people, their work and diverse wider role had to be recognised, but the role of those working in a 'support' role had been marginalised both in schools and in research. She asks whether support for learning should be provided on an individual basis or whether this encourages dependency and a lack of motivation among pupils as well as creating barriers to social interaction with other learners. Like Lacey (2001) she concludes that the most effective

practices in developing 'inclusive learning' come in allowing opportunities for social interaction to take place between students, making time available for teaching assistants and teachers to plan together and supporting groups of children rather than individuals.

This is not a view that was entirely borne out by Farrell et al's, (1999) research which suggested a general awareness among teachers, learning support staff, pupils and researchers that the practice of individual support presents a number of difficulties and barriers to inclusion; also that LSAs tended to support pupils in mainstream classes by keeping in regular contact with those who need help but that in general they did not sit with a pupil throughout a lesson unless they were working on a different activity.

2.3.5 Benefits of using teaching assistant support and implications for good practice

Despite the publications of the guidelines to support good practice following Farrell's research, other research published since then continues not to suggest unequivocal benefits. In America Gerber, Finn, Achilles and Boyd-Zaharias (2001) found no difference in the outcomes of students with aides in Grades K-3 and those in classes without them, while in the UK, Blatchford, Martin, Moriarty, Bassett and Goldstein (2002) followed 11 000 students over 2 years and found no clear effects of teaching assistant employment on students' attainment. Clearly the presence of additional people in class does not improve the situation for pupils per se (Cremin et al 2005).

> *…the provision of additional resources to pupils – such as support from teaching assistants – did not ensure good quality intervention or adequate progress by pupils. There was a misconception that provision of additional resources was the key requirement for individual*

pupils, whereas the survey findings showed that key factors for good progress were: the involvement of a specialist teacher; good assessment; work tailored to challenge pupils sufficiently; and commitment from school leaders to ensure good progress for all pupils. (Ofsted, 2006, p.2)

Where teaching assistants provided good support they had often received high quality training and had relevant qualifications (Ofsted, 2006). Teaching assistants were found to be effective when they were trained and supported to deliver specific interventions, which were robust, delivered appropriately and implemented over sufficient time (Alborz et al, 2009).

In 1999, one of the key findings of Farrell et al's (1999) report into the management, role and training of learning support assistants was that while LSAs valued training which had direct practical application – whether accredited or not – they were keen to emphasise that this had little impact on pay and career progression. A further issue identified (Farrell et al, 1999) was the variation in the induction of LSAs and that although some examples of good practice were observed there was scope for schools and LEAs to make further improvements in this area.

Research carried out by Cremin et al (2005) following up findings reported by Thomas (1992) and Cremin (2000) sought to look at alternative models that might prove effective. The first of these models they called 'room management', and this identifies and divides teacher tasks and responsibilities and then attributes specific roles and activities to people working in the room. 'Zoning', the second model allocated roles in the classroom according to the classroom geography and groups within this. The third model they called 'reflective teamwork' where staff working together

discuss thoroughly and develop ways in which they will work together as a team in advance.

The researchers (Cremin et al, 2005) looked at the effect on the children of each model when adopted and asked how staff members assessed the consequences of adopting the model. They found that room management encouraged independence in the children as they were not seen as the only recipients of support. Zoning was found to promote mixed ability teaching, while reflective teamwork helped equalise relationships between teachers and the teaching assistants who reported increased feelings of empowerment. This model also appeared to encourage a problem solving approach. Participants in this model were most positive, but pointed out the time consuming nature of such an approach. This does however indicate the importance of a model that enables teachers and teaching assistants to plan and collaborate, and the need to consider teaching assistants' development as professionals who are empowered to problem solve.

The use and deployment of teaching assistants then, as a way of responding to the need to provide additional resources to support pupils with special needs, is not unproblematic. Clearly there are issues regarding clarity of their roles; their relationship with teachers and position within a school and classroom. Different models, other than the 'velcro' model of support, may be more appropriate if they are to be deployed effectively. Training and professional development, along with changes in school culture need to be considered.

Additional key factors were identified by Sorsby (2004) that sum up the need for a shift in cultures of values of the school; understanding that barriers

to participation are created by policies, practices and attitudes rather than by something that is wrong with the child; with a problem solving approach to creating a curriculum for success rather than one that highlights failure; a recognition of each person's strengths and learning styles as well as recognising difference and diversity and providing a rich and responsive learning environment for all; joint professional development opportunities for teachers and teaching assistants and others involved in learning and teaching; a time for discussion and joint preparation; and a whole school commitment to bringing about change.

2.4   Conclusion

Issues raised above had particular resonance for me. I had identified that the provision offered to many of our pupils with statements of special educational needs did not enable them to access the curriculum. Additionally their inclusion was seen as problematic by many of my colleagues, in terms of their ability to meet the needs of these young people. Evidence from this reading suggested the need to examine both our use and deployment of teaching assistants, but also to consider our teaching approaches and strategies.

Developments in education over the past thirty years have seen questions around inclusion moving from those predominantly concerned with the placement of pupils in the mainstream (DES, 1978; DfEE, 1997), and the identification of those with special needs and quantified provision to meet these (DfE, 1994; DfES, 2001) to grappling with teaching approaches and strategies that might enable all pupils to learn and make progress within the mainstream (Davis and Florian, 2004; DCSF, 2008a; DCSF, 2008b)

The debate around specific SEN pedagogies has particular relevance. It is held that teaching approaches lie on continua, which increase in intensity but are in essence the same. The question becomes one of how teachers are enabled to organise their learning environment to facilitate differences in the approaches they are able to deliver. The allocation, training and use of teaching assistants may, in this analysis, prove crucial to the ability of schools to meet the needs of pupils who need a range of 'high density' teaching approaches that may not be appropriate in delivering the curriculum to children of average or above average ability (Lewis and Norwich, 2007).

The focus of this research study then is to examine the current practice regarding teaching assistants within the school in question to see how they contribute to the inclusion of pupils with statements of special educational needs and whether teaching approaches and strategies used in class enable pupils with a range of difficulties to access the curriculum. In other words to ask the questions: how do teaching assistants within this context support the learning of pupils with statements of special educational needs and do children with special educational needs require special teaching, or simply better teaching?

Chapter 3:

Research Design, Ethical Considerations, School Context

Introduction

In the previous chapter I discussed developments in education over the past 30 years with particular regard to inclusion and pedagogy. These indicated a trend towards understanding the important contribution teaching approaches and strategies make towards pupils' learning and progress, particularly with regard to those pupils with special educational needs or learning difficulties and disabilities.

I was particularly interested in the question of whether pupils with special educational needs require a distinctive SEN pedagogy, or whether in fact it is more useful to look at pedagogy as being on a continua of teaching approaches, with those at the 'far end' of the continua differing only in the degree of their intensity and precision (Lewis and Norwich, 2000, 2001, Norwich and Lewis, 2005, 2007; Davis and Florian, 2004; Florian 2005). The need for special provision may still exist in this analysis, since the difficulty of meeting the needs of pupils requiring 'high density' teaching may be seen by schools as too great a challenge in the gap between the needs of a few pupils as compared to the needs of the majority (Florian, 2005).

Along with the consideration of pedagogy, I looked too at the developments in the use of additional adults as a means of including pupils with special educational needs into mainstream classes, and research around

the effective deployment of teaching assistants. Evidence suggested that in order to be effective teaching assistants and teachers need to understand their roles, have time for planning and collaboration and receive training. This evidence in turn suggests the need for commitment at the highest levels within schools to ensuring effective practice.

Discussion of these issues clarified for me what I needed to consider when proceeding with the study, and therefore clarified my research question: how effectively do teaching assistants in class support teachers to provide appropriate teaching strategies and approaches that will enable pupils with statements of special educational needs to access the curriculum, learn and make progress?

In this chapter I intend to set out my research design. This includes consideration of the choice of research design; ethical considerations and finally presents the context and outlines the procedure of the research

3.1   Research Design: Case Study

3.1.1 The rationale

While there was a range of other ways in which I could have chosen to conduct this research, the focus of the research and the sorts of questions I intended to address influenced my decision to conduct a case study. I hoped that carrying out this study which was to focus on a particular group of professionals within a particular school context, working with a particular group of pupils (those with statements of SEN in year 7 in 2005) would enable me to improve existing practice. Hitchcock and Hughes (1995) argue that case studies can be of particular value where research aims to provide

practitioners with better or alternative ways of doing things. The qualitative or ethnographic, they suggest, is beneficial for teachers because its principal rationale is to reproduce social action in its natural setting – i.e. the classroom – and that it can be used to test existing theory or practice, develop new theory or *improve and evaluate existing professional practice* (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1995, p.323, my italics). I also believed the case study to be an effective method of enquiry because I intended to ask '*how*' and '*why*' questions rather than '*how many*' or '*how much*'. Additionally, I would have little control over events and would be focusing on contemporary events (Yin, 2009).

Bassey's (1999) suggestion that an educational case study is an empirical enquiry conducted within a localised boundary of space and time, i.e. a singularity, that looks into interesting aspects of an educational activity or programme, or institutions or systems is also useful. He asserts that an educational case study exists mainly in its natural context and within an ethic of respect for persons. Its purpose is to inform the judgements and decisions of practitioners or theoreticians working to these ends.

3.1.2 Disadvantages of the case study method

Before carrying out the study, it was important to consider some of the possible drawbacks of using case study to ensure that I recognised potential pitfalls before beginning the research and considered ways in which I would act to counter them. Access and ethical considerations will be discussed at more length in the next section of this chapter; however, other issues also need to be discussed.

A significant concern that has been expressed about the case study method is a possible lack of rigour (Yin, 2009). While other methods also have flaws, to some extent they are protected by methodological texts which give investigators specific procedures to be followed (Yin, 2009). This means that it is crucial for the investigator to build in systematic procedures, review evidence carefully to ensure that equivocal evidence is not admitted and to examine the possibility that their own views and those of others may be biased (Specific issues concerned with observational bias will be raised in Chapter 4). Additionally, while quantitative research studies tend to present 'raw' data, the presentation of processed information in the guise of 'facts' can mean that writers' biases or errors in judgements are not easy to detect (Guba and Lincoln, 1981).

Hitchcock and Hughes (1995) discuss this in terms of internal validity. They suggest that while in quantitative research validity must ensure that findings capture the *reality* (my italics) of the situation under investigation, in the qualitative research paradigm we are dealing with people's constructions of the world and therefore what *seems to be true* for the subjects may be more important than what is true in the researcher's frame of reference. This echoes Bassey's (1999) suggestion that at times the researcher in this paradigm may be called to make value judgements. It is important that the researcher acknowledges this and is explicit in how she or he believes these value judgements colour any evidence presented.

To counter possible criticisms regarding internal validity, 'triangulation' may be used. Denzin (1970) talks of four ways in which triangulation can help the researcher to increase the validity of evidence. Of these four I considered

that 'data triangulation', using data collected over a period of time from a variety of contexts, and 'methodological triangulation', using more than one method of obtaining information, were realistic ways in which I could ensure increased validity of my research findings. Additionally I decided that I needed to take the advice of Hitchcock and Hughes (1995) and consider and acknowledge my own biases explicitly at the outset.

A frequent concern expressed in the criticism of case study is the lack of opportunities for generalisation. Hitchcock and Hughes (1989) point out that it would be very difficult for teachers to engage in a large enough study to make generalisations. They suggest that most qualitative ethnographic research in schools and classrooms is actually not concerned with the production of generalisations, but rather to produce adequate descriptions of educational contexts and analyses which highlight and explain the social processes that shape and influence teaching and learning in schools. The intention of my research was to consider a particular set of cases which might *generate* theory rather than *test* hypotheses. This reflects Yin's proposition that case studies can be generalised to theoretical *propositions* not to populations or universes. Therefore the case study does not represent a 'sample'. In doing a case study the goal is to expand and generalise theories (analytic generalisation) rather than to enumerate frequencies (statistical generalisation) (Yin, 2009).

3.2   Ethical Considerations

Since by its nature, research is an intrusive process, the effect on those participating, in the instance of this study, pupils, teaching assistants, teachers and indirectly parents, could vary. Before considering the meaning of ethics

and looking at a range of other ethical consideration I want to examine the question of access, since this was an important element as I started to embark on my research.

3.2.1 Ethics and the ethical conduct of school based research

Hitchcock and Hughes (1995) suggest that the very subject of educational enquiry, i.e. education, is in itself a moral enterprise. Education takes place in a socio-cultural, historical, political and economic context and is seen in terms of being for the good of society and the individual. Education therefore is intimately concerned with judgements, assumptions, values and beliefs about what is right and wrong, good and bad, appropriate and inappropriate and cannot therefore be value free. This increases the importance of understanding what is meant by '*ethical*' or '*unethical*' conduct. The ethics of research therefore are concerned with the criteria which, if they are met, enable the researcher to do what is right and which will enable him or her to discharge the sorts of responsibilities discussed above.

This is particularly crucial in the case of qualitative research, since in its quest to systematically use non-quantitative methodologies to facilitate an understanding of educational processes and institutions it explores ideas. Ideas necessarily contain values, which in turn involve assumptions about what is right or wrong, good or bad. In this position it is very difficult to maintain the stance of ethical neutrality, which leads inevitably to the need to particularly consider the ethical conduct of school-based research (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1995).

It may be considered that the teacher-researcher is a 'moral agent' with views, opinions, values and attitudes, and that when conducting research in

schools, this 'moral agent' is faced with ethical and moral dilemmas (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1995). For example I needed to consider what lengths I could go to in my research and think about the rights of participants taking part, including the right to confidentiality or anonymity. Being so close to the subject of the research, one of the main ethical questions posed by qualitative educational or teacher research is the teacher's responsibility towards the pupils and teachers whom they are using as subjects – this needed to be considered from the outset.

Ethical problems start at the very beginning of the study (Robson, 1993) with the selection of the research focus. I needed to consider whether what I intended to research might exacerbate an existing situation – in the case of my research it was important to think about how I would respond if it created difficulties between teachers and teaching assistants. I needed to consider whether individuals had the right not to take part, and if they did not take part how I would ensure this did not affect my relationship with them. It was important to think about whether the participants knew what they would be letting themselves in for. For instance, whether they had given fully informed consent and would be protected from direct effects of intervention, and whether I had protected their confidentiality. Some of these issues bear further consideration.

3.2.2 Access

Clearly the problem of gaining access to a research setting is less of an issue when the researcher is already, as in my case, part of the organisation (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000). This does not however guarantee cooperation – schools as organisations have a power structure and

knowledge that is not equally distributed, but is socially constructed. Relationships inside and outside the school therefore may change as might sensitivities and priorities (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1995). These may affect the willingness or otherwise of those with authority to allow the research to go ahead. Other considerations around being an 'insider' are contained in the discussion below. This focuses on the need for clear boundaries between the role of researcher and the role within the organisation, and an understanding of how these roles could get confused

An important concern around access is the ability of the researcher to develop a reasonable argument for doing a piece of research to gain acceptance and cooperation from those concerned (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1995). Certain issues should be considered from the very beginning if the researcher wants to maximise the chance of a successful research project. (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1995). These include considering who the relevant individuals are from whom to gain permission, and establishing what is going to be observed and what documents examined. It is also helpful to clarify the demands that are likely to be made on individuals and groups involved.

In the case of my research study I approached the head teacher for overall permission to conduct the study, making it clear what my purpose was for carrying out the research and the activities, groups and individuals and documentation this would involve. The issue of gaining consent from those participating will be discussed later.

Hitchcock and Hughes (1995) point out that it is also worthwhile anticipating any potentially sensitive areas and to explain in advance how these are likely to be dealt with in the research. I believed that on the whole

the research I would be carrying out would not be particularly sensitive, but that it might reveal tensions between some teaching assistants and teachers regarding the support offered in classes. As this was partly the point of the research however, I felt that this could be dealt with by explaining that the research itself aimed to try to resolve tensions and look for solutions that would support both the teaching and teaching assistant staff.

Other considerations had to be thought about. I needed to consider in advance whether there might be a conflict between my role as SENCO and my role as teacher-researcher. Hitchcock and Hughes (1995) suggest that it is important to think about how a teacher-researcher's management role, for example, might conflict with their role as researcher. I needed to consider whether it was possible that classroom observations of teaching assistants, who I was responsible for line managing, might reveal issues that would normally be addressed through performance management. I needed to decide whether this could be treated as a separate issue. Ethically I did not feel that I could ignore poor practice or lateness, for example, on the other hand teaching assistants may not have been willing to allow me to include the results of observations where they thought I was confusing my role as researcher with that of manager. I decided that if this issue arose, I would arrange to observe the particular teaching assistant in class on another occasion purely with my SENCO 'hat' on.

Although I did not have time or the capacity to conduct a pilot study, I decided to heed the advice of Hitchcock and Hughes (1995) and discuss the study openly with all the people concerned, including the pupils.

3.2.3 Informed consent

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000) suggest that the principle of informed consent arises from the subjects' right to freedom and self-determination. Since much research in education includes children, consideration must be given to the process of gaining their consent to participate. Lindsay (2000) suggests that there are three components to consider: the research participant, the research task and the interface between them. He suggests that the status of the child will vary with respect to age, general cognitive ability, emotional status and the child's specific knowledge at the time of the research itself, and that these will interact with each other and with the task. In addition there should be a consideration of the nature of the task and the degree of exposure of the child, from low or minimal exposure to high exposure. Lindsay (2000) points out too that the practical element of a study may actually be similar to that which will occur as part of the child's educational life experience. As well questions of 'informed consent', this raises the issue of the ethical interface between 'research' and 'practice' (Lindsay, 2000).

When the researcher is also a teacher within the school other elements need to be taken into account. Those involved need to know where the boundaries between formal and informal observation lie. For example if the researcher goes into a class in his or her role as teacher, will what is seen be used as research? The researcher must think about whether he or she can be open with some colleagues and not others and how much the pupils should be told about the research. It should be clear to participants when casual conversations are part of the research topic and when not (Hitchcock

and Hughes, 1995). Without this, informed consent is not meaningful.

Hitchcock and Hughes (1995) suggest that the key to resolving this lies in

establishing good relations so that a rapport develops between the

researchers and his or her subjects which leads to feelings of trust and mutual

confidence.

3.2.4 Anonymity/confidentiality

Anonymity means that information that participants provide does not reveal

their identity. The principal means of ensuring anonymity is not using the

names of the participants or any other personal means of identification.

Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias (1992) assert the importance of protecting

the anonymity of research participants and of keeping research data

confidential at all costs unless arrangements with the participants are made in

advance. Sometimes, however, anonymity is difficult to maintain. For

example categorisation of data may uniquely identify an individual or

institution. Participants' right to privacy can also be protected, however,

through the promise of confidentiality. Here researchers know who has

provided information, or can identify participants from the information given,

but will not make the information public. This should be made clear at the

access stage (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000) so that those who are

participating will know from the outset the meaning and limits of confidentiality

in relation to the research study. Where records or reports of individual

children are concerned, it is essential to maintain anonymity to safeguard the

children involved. This might be done through the use of pseudonyms

(Hitchcock and Hughes, 1995). Guba and Lincoln point out that promises of

anonymity are hard to keep and suggest that a researcher can act on the

principle that each subject 'owns' the data that relates to him or her. This data, therefore cannot be used without their express consent. Again, the researchers' relationships with their subjects carries rights, but also responsibilities and obligations.

3.2.5 Ethical rules for class-based research

When considering the ethical conduct of my own piece of research, rules laid out by Hitchcock and Hughes, citing the British Sociological Association, 1973, seemed to present a good base from which to work (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1995).

3.2.5.1 Professional integrity

Researchers are required to ensure that their proposed research is viable and that an adequate research design has been established and appropriate data collection techniques chosen. Researchers should explain as clearly as possible the aims, objectives and methods of research to all parties concerned. If using confidential documents, researchers should ensure that anonymity is maintained by eliminating any kinds of material or information that could lead others to identify the subject or subjects involved.

3.2.5.2 Interests of the subjects

The researcher must allow the subjects the right to refuse to take part in the research and must demonstrate how confidentiality is built into the research. If any part of the research is to be published the teacher may need to gain the permission of the parties involved. If the teacher is involved in joint or collaborative research then it is important to ensure that all researchers adhere to the same set of ethical principles.

3.2.5.3 Responsibilities and relationships with sponsors, outside agencies, academic institutions and management

Although this did not apply to my research it is worthwhile to remember that if the research is sponsored, the researcher must be clear on the terms of reference and their own and their subjects' rights in relation to the finished research. The teacher needs to be aware of the possible uses to which the research may be put.

3.3 Context for the Research Study

The decision to conduct a piece of research to investigate the practices of teaching assistants and their contribution to the inclusion of pupils with statements of special educational needs (SEN) into mainstream classrooms arose out of concerns I had about the effectiveness of practice within the school where I was SENCO (see Chapter 1). Daily interactions in that role with fellow special needs practitioners (including teaching assistants) and colleagues across the school convinced me that teachers were struggling to meet the needs of many of the pupils with statements of SEN. This impression was confirmed by experiences I had working in class to support pupils and in lesson observations arranged in preparation to conduct pupils' annual reviews.

The school in question was a large (1600 pupils), mixed, neighbourhood comprehensive school in an affluent suburb of a city. The admissions were controlled by the local Authority and based on (in order of priority):

1. Special need – where pupils have a statement of special educational needs

2. Siblings – where a pupil has a sibling in the school (including at 6th form)

3. Proximity to the school

In the 2005 intake, pupils living 0.6 miles or less from the school gained admission in the first round of offers, while those living 0.8 miles or less gained admission in the final round of offers. The circle around the school continues to narrow year on year.

These criteria caused consternation among parents and some governors of the school, and encouraged complaints that the system prioritises children with special needs above those of local children. Of the 15 children with statements who were admitted to year 7 at the beginning of 2005, eight lived outside the 'catchment' area, with four living at least a 30 minutes bus ride away (information gained from addresses on pupil's files). Although this actually accounted for less than 4% of the total intake, the perception among some parties was that 'inclusion' was responsible for denying local children a place (in the summer of 2006 governors asked the SENCO to provide them with the addresses of all students with statements of SEN at the school and wrote to the Local Authority to complain that the school was being 'swamped' with such students at the expense of other local children who had a 'right' to attend the school, and that this was changing the character of the school).

The school was high achieving, with an average of 70–75% of its students achieving 5 or more A*–C grades at GCSE, and with 50% of its 'A' level candidates achieving A or B grades (in a 6th form of some 400 students). It had a lower than average number of pupils without a statement on the special needs register – around 10%, with the majority of these being at

School Action. In the year in question, 2005–2006, the percentage of pupils in the school with a statement of SEN was 4.06% – above the national average for secondary schools of 2.2% (DfES, SFR 09, 2006). The school's Ofsted Report in 2001 shows that the number of pupils eligible for free school meals was average.

Until 2001, provision for students with a statement of SEN was supplied by the Local Authority's Education Support Service (ESS) in the form of peripatetic teachers and teaching assistants who worked with target students according to the provision on their statements. In 2001 the head teacher and governors of the school decided to take up the Local Authority's offer to opt out of this service and take control of the budget. This would enable the school to control the employment and deployment of teaching assistants and teachers, and enable them to work within the Learning Support Department of the school, and therefore be accountable to the school and Learning Support Department. Four teaching assistants and 1.6 full time equivalent additional teachers were employed, with the numbers of teaching assistants employed being increased each year since then to meet the needs of increased numbers of students with statements of SEN.

By 2005 the number of students at the school with a statement of SEN had risen from around 20 in July 2001 to 65, with the range and complexity of special educational needs (SEN) having expanded from being mainly dyslexia. In 2000, of 15 pupils with a statement of SEN, 11 had statements for Dyslexia, one for visual impairment, one for hearing impairment and two for Asperger's Syndrome. In 2005 there were children with Down Syndrome (one pupil), children with a range of Autistic Spectrum Disorders (11 pupils),

significant Speech Language and Communication Difficulties (12 pupils), Moderate Learning Difficulties (four pupils), physical needs (two pupils), Prada Willi Syndrome (one pupil) and Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (five pupils). This information is gleaned from the SEN register.

At the same time, however, there were no real structural changes within the school (including within the curriculum) to accommodate these new challenges, other than in an enlarged and every growing Special Needs Department, led by the SENCO and line managed by the Assistant Head teacher, one of whose responsibilities was Inclusion. For example GCSEs continued to be the only accreditation at KS4, while at KS5 the only non-A level run was the GNVQ in Art. Nor were changes made to the structure of the curriculum lower down the school.

This mirrors the situation found by Ofsted (2004) who noted that few of the schools visited had made substantial adaptations to the curriculum, and that at Key Stage 3 very few specific curriculum adaptations of developments relevant to pupils with SEN were seen

> *Schools tended to see their main strategy as being a combination of specialist support for literacy and numeracy and forming sets of lower attaining pupils, including most of these with SEN, for the teaching of core subjects and some foundation subjects. 'Catch up' programmes in literacy and numeracy, using KS3 strategy materials were fairly common; the organisation of them was sometimes problematic. (Ofsted, 2004, p.13)*

Allocation of time to subjects was usually identical for children in different ability sets, and subject material and the sequence of work used with lower attaining sets were often more or less the same as those used with higher attaining sets (Ofsted, 2004, p.14).

Within the context of this school this differed only in that the majority of teaching within the school was mixed-ability, with Maths being set from year 8 and Modern Languages loosely setting students into higher or lower tiers in year 10. Science had four foundation groups at year 10 and above. At year 7, however, all groups were mixed ability, with students who had statements of SEN being allocated forms across the year group, with a maximum of three students with a statement in one form – the number more usually being one or two. Therefore differentiation of work for these students had to be carried out within the context of a mixed-ability classroom.

A number of concerns around the way in which teaching assistants were deployed and managed seemed particularly pertinent. Having decided (as stated earlier) to buy out of the Local Authority's Support Service, the Senior Leadership team decided that learning support teachers and teaching assistants employed by the school would be part of the Special Needs Department, to be managed by the SENCO. As I was not part of this team I do not know if this was a conscious decision. It may have been taken for granted that this was the way 'support' should work.

Many pupils with statements of SEN at the school had a large number of 'hours' allocated through their statements. In other words, the support that was allocated through the statements was quantified in terms of the number of hours of support from a teaching assistant to be provided each week to ensure the needs expressed on the statement were met. Of the 15 year 7 pupils who started at the school in 2005, five had full-time support of at least 25 hours per week, while a further seven had in excess of 15 hours. Because of the need to ensure such a high level of support, I made the decision (in my

capacity as SENCO) to continue with the practice of allocating teaching assistants to work with particular pupils rather than to work with subject areas.

Although this meant that teaching assistants got to know their key pupils very well, they had to work across a number of curriculum areas (sometimes all curriculum areas) and work with a number of different teachers. Moreover at this time teaching assistants did not have preparation and assessment time in which to plan and prepare work. Nor was there time for teachers and assistants to plan together.

Training for subject staff and teaching assistants was provided in the form of one in-service training (INSET) day in 2004 where a range of disabilities and special educational needs were introduced to the staff, who could choose two workshops to attend and report back on to their department. This was not repeated annually. No INSET training was provided with regard to the use and deployment of teaching assistants, nor was there whole school training on differentiation (as recorded in the school's training and CPD log). Despite the rapid increase in the numbers of children with statements, and the challenges of meeting the needs of difficulties not yet encountered, the School Development Plan indicated that priorities identified by the school did not include strategic planning for the increase in numbers of pupils with significant special needs. This meant that no substantial debate was held at a school level on either a philosophical or practical level – teachers were left, along with the Special Needs Department, to adapt their practice (or not) to the changing circumstances.

One concern I had, therefore, was around the way in which we deployed teaching assistants, particularly given the lack of additional training

available for teaching assistants within the school. Research discussed in the previous chapter indicates that planning, collaboration and clarity of roles are all key issues, as is school culture and commitment to the provision of effective support. I wanted, therefore, to examine how effectively our use and deployment of teaching assistants contributed to what might be called Wave 3 provision, i.e. the *'additional to'* and *'different from'* as specified in the Revised SEN Code of Practice (DfES, 2001), of our pupils with statements of SEN.

A second and linked concern was whether teaching offered across the school, together with support from teaching assistants was specialised enough to ensure that pupils with statements of SEN could learn and access the curriculum. I wanted to find out what strategies and approaches were being used and whether there was evidence of success, or whether even with a range of teaching strategies, there was evidence that some pupils with SEN need a more distinctive SEN pedagogy.

Research evidence discussed in the previous chapter suggests that it may be helpful to consider teaching approaches and strategies on a continuum, whereby children with the more severe and/or complex special educational needs require teaching at the far end of the continuum – what Lewis and Norwich termed 'high density' teaching (2001, 2005), but not in essence anything that is different from good teaching – the difference lying in the degree of intensity. The question here is one around the contribution that teaching assistants make to this continuum of teaching.

3.3.1 The 'participants'

Before considering the process of the research, there follows a short description of the cohort of pupils involved in the study – i.e. those pupils with

a statement of special educational need admitted to year 7 in September
2005, and of the teaching assistants who worked with them.

Table 1: Numbers of pupils with statements of SEN per year 7 form group (2005)

7i	7ii	7iii	7iv	7v	7vi	7vii	7viii	7ix
2	2	3	2	1	1	2	2	1

Table 2: Profile of pupils in year 7 (2005) with a statement of SEN

Student	Male/female	SEN
Peter	Male	ASD – autistic
Ricardo	Male	PI – Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy
Lesley	Female	MLD & SLC difficulties
Robbie	Male	SpLD/dyspraxia
Terry	Male	ASD – non-verbal learning disorder
Jake	Male	ASD – autistic, Med – epileptic on medication
Tony	Male	SEBD
Kerry	Female	SEBD – some language impairment
Joseph	Male	ASD – Asperger's, non-verbal learning disorder
Sally	Female	SLC difficulties
Richard	Male	MLD & SLC difficulties
Louise	Female	ASD – autistic
Murray	Male	Prader Willi Syndrome
Mary	Female	ASD – Pathological Demand Avoidance
Hugo	Male	Hearing Impairment

(For information about pupils' provision, see Appendix 1)

The profile of the teaching assistants was mixed. One of the teaching assistants had worked for four years at the school. Of the other nine, none were new at the beginning of the academic year, but none had worked at the school for more than a year. The most long-standing teaching assistant did not have a degree, but had been a teaching assistant at another secondary school and was therefore highly experienced. Of the other nine, one did not have a degree, but had been a teaching assistant previously at a local primary school. One other teaching assistant had been previously employed as a teaching assistant. Of the other seven teaching assistants observed, two were qualified teachers in other European countries, two had come straight from university and the remaining three had come from unrelated occupations. All but one was female.

Table 3: Profile of participating teaching assistants

Teaching Assistant	M/F	Previous teaching assistant/teaching experience	Degree	UK/ Non UK
Sally	F	Secondary TA, 1 year	Yes	Non UK
Josie	F	Primary TA >4 years	No	UK
Sheila	F	Non UK Trained teacher, NQ	Yes	Non UK
Imogen	F	Non UK Trained teacher, NQ	Yes	Non UK
Seema	F	None	Yes	Non UK
Kelly	F	None	Yes	UK
Monica	F	Primary TA >5 years	No	UK
Susan	F	None	Yes	UK
Karen	F	None	Yes	UK
Simon	M	None	Yes	UK

3.3.2 The research schedule

I started to conduct the research in the third week of the academic year. I had decided to look only at the year 7 cohort of 15 pupils who had statements of special educational need starting in the autumn of 2005. The decision to limit the research to this year group was to ensure that all the teaching assistants and teachers working with the group were starting from the same baseline of not knowing the pupils. This was important as I wanted to see the strategies and approaches teachers and teaching assistants used before they had got to know the pupils and whether these approaches were modified once they knew the pupils better. The research schedule is laid out in the table below.

Table 4: Schedule of research

Time	Research	Participants	Product	
Sept 05 Weeks 3/4 autumn term	In class semi-structured observation	Researcher Teaching assistant Teacher Key pupil Class	Transcribed notes	**Ongoing –**
Jan 06 Weeks 3/4 spring term	In class semi-structured observation	Researcher Teaching assistant Key pupil Class	Transcribed notes	**review of** **documentary**
Feb 06	Teaching assistant questionnaire	Researcher (introduces/ 'trials') Teaching assistants	Completed questionnaires	**evidence –** **Assessments/**
March 06	Teaching assistant interviews	Researcher Teaching assistants	Tape recording Transcribed notes	**records of**
April 06	In class semi-structured observation	Researcher Teaching assistant Teacher Key pupil Class	Observation form – tick sheet Transcribed notes	**progress**

3.3.2.1   First set of observations

The first set of observations took place during the third and fourth week of the academic year. This was to allow a few lessons for teachers and teaching assistants to get the first few 'chores' of the year, such as handing out books, introducing themselves and the subject, but before they had got to know the pupils on anything more than a superficial level. Teachers and teaching assistants were informed in advance that I would be observing in their lesson and that in addition to observing in my customary role as SENCO I would also be using the findings of my observations to inform work I was doing for a piece of research around the inclusion of children with statements of SEN.

I made the decision to use a semi-structured format, whereby I would look at specific elements of the lesson and approaches for each pupil. This was to ensure that I approached each lesson with a very specific set of questions to answer to attempt to mitigate the effects of observer bias and observer drift (see following chapter) and also to ensure that I was focused on the issues I had decided were important at this point in my investigation. In each lesson, therefore, I considered whether there was a seating plan, and if so the apparent rationale of the plan and whether there was a teaching assistant present. I wanted to observe lessons that both did and did not have teaching assistants present to see whether there was any evidence that teachers organised lessons differently if they did not have teaching assistant support. I focused on the language used by the teacher – whether or not it was complex or simple or a mixture of both to accommodate differences within the class. I then considered the content of the lesson and the degree to

which this was differentiated and the pace of the lesson. Homework was

considered as was communication between the teacher and the teaching

assistant and the teaching assistant's input.

To conduct the research I ensured that I was sitting in an appropriate

place to see the interaction between the teaching assistant and the pupil and

the teacher and the pupil, and was able to keep notes without them being

read by another pupil. I used a form with headings in order to prompt me to

consider each area of the observation. These were transcribed as soon after

the observation as I was able to complete them in order to ensure that I

remembered what I had seen and what I had written.

3.3.2.2   Second set of observations

The second set of observations was carried out in the first few weeks of the

spring term. The reason for waiting until this time was to ensure that teachers

and teaching assistants had had the opportunity to get to know the pupils

properly and to read the relevant information about the pupils concerned. For

these observations I extrapolated the provision set out on pupils' statements

that related to work being done in class – for example in Mary's statement:

> *Work differentiated to meet Mary's needs ensuring that work is*
> *carefully graded and consolidated to ensure success*
>
> *Strategies that will encourage her to join in whole class discussions*
> *Structure and visual support in the classroom, with opportunities for*
> *over-learning and for her to consolidate concepts and skills,*
> *experiencing success at each stage, including verbal instructions with a*
> *brief written summary on the board so that Mary has something to refer*
> *back to and help with Mary's organisational skills*
>
> *Support to help her focus on tasks and to monitor and check what she*
> *has learnt in the short and long term*

This was to focus on the specific kinds of approaches and strategies specified in pupils' statements and to consider whether either the teachers or teaching assistants, or both, were using these in their teaching and support of pupils with statements of SEN.

As for the previous set of observations, teachers and teaching assistants were told in advance that I would be observing in class and the reason for the observations. Again I found an unobtrusive place within the classroom to observe and take notes and transcribed my notes as soon as possible afterwards. In neither of these sets of observations did I trial the procedure, although they were based on the observations I routinely carry out at the beginning of each term in my role as SENCO.

3.3.2.3 Questionnaires, interviews and the third set of observations

After I had considered the results of the two sets of observations I constructed a questionnaire, based on issues which had arisen during the observations, which was designed to be completed by teaching assistants. The teaching assistants asked to complete the questionnaire were only those working with children who had been observed. In each case the teaching assistant who worked solely or mainly (for more than ¾ of their total teaching assistant provision) with a pupil was asked to complete the questionnaire with specific regard to their support of the particular pupil.

Teaching assistants were asked if they were willing to complete a questionnaire and were allocated a time slot for me to go through the questionnaire with them and for them to fill out the questionnaire. I went through the questionnaire with the teaching assistants using a child from a different year group as an example of how to use the scoring system of

between zero and ten. Teaching assistants present also completed the questionnaire at the same time using a child with whom they worked in a different year as an example whose record could then be discussed as part of the preliminary work. The importance of confidentiality was discussed and teaching assistants were asked to agree that their answers to the questionnaire would remain confidential.

Teaching assistants were then given time to complete the form for the children in the study with whom they worked. We remained in the room so that no questionnaires could accidentally be left where others could see them, and so that they could be completed and given back for analysis immediately. Teaching assistants were asked not to communicate with each other during this exercise so that the responses they made were their response only. I was present to answer questions relating to clarification, but made it clear that I could not answer questions as to my opinion of their response.   When teaching assistants finished the questionnaires they handed them to me and left the room.

The questionnaires were followed up by one-to-one interviews during which I had the opportunity to seek clarification regarding answers given and probing further. Before conducting these post-questionnaire interviews I went through all the questionnaires to identify key issues that emerged; for example, whether the teaching assistant identified that a pupil needed a high degree of differentiation in order to access the curriculum; which areas of the curriculum the teaching assistant believed were most problematic and why. This enabled me to decide on the questions I wanted to ask in the interview.

These were general issues that appeared to be identified by a number of teaching assistants as a concern or consideration.

Each interview was audio-recorded (with the agreement of the teaching assistant concerned) and lasted around half an hour. The tapes were transcribed verbatim as soon as possible after the interview.   A respondent validation process was then employed whereby the teaching assistants were asked to read the transcript to ensure (i) that they were satisfied I had transcribed accurately and (ii) that they felt that what they meant had been adequately expressed.

In order to be able to discuss the findings of the interviews and to identify the elements of pupil, teacher and teaching assistant behaviour I wanted to observe in the final set of observations, I tried to identify whether there were concerns, beliefs and opinions common to all or most of the teaching assistants in question. To do this I (literally) used scissors and glue and physically grouped the pieces together thematically. This enabled me to identify common issues, which both informed the discussion related to this data, and also the final set of observations. While I could have used a computer-based package such as Nvivo for this process, it did not seem to be offering substantially more than could be obtained through this 'old fashioned' cut and paste method.

This final set of observations was more structured than the first two sets of observations, and relied on my recording particular behaviours that related to observations around pupils' level of independence and interaction with the teacher and teaching assistant (issues identified through analysis of

answers to the questionnaires and in the subsequent interviews). Again teachers were advised of these observations beforehand.

3.3.2.4   Documentary evidence

Throughout the whole period I also carried out a review of documentary evidence relating to the school's use of data to inform target setting and monitoring and evaluating pupil progress. This involved looking at pupils' SATs (Standard Attainment Tests), reading and spelling test data and Records of Progress to look at how this impacted on expectations around pupils' abilities and attainments.

3.4   The Next Steps

Detailed descriptions and evaluations of the three strands of research: observations, teaching assistant questionnaires and interviews, and documentary evidence as set out above are presented in the following three chapters.

Chapter 4: Strand 1 Observation of Teaching Assistants and Teachers in Mainstream Classrooms

4.1   Aims and Research Questions for Strand 1

The overall aim of the case study was to consider how effectively teaching assistants in class support teachers to provide appropriate strategies and approaches to enable pupils with statements of SEN to access the curriculum, learn and make progress. In this chapter I intend to describe and evaluate the first strand of the research, which took the form of three sets of classroom observations. This was to interrogate the contribution of teaching assistants to teaching and learning within class and to see how they supported the class teacher with regards to the provision of teaching strategies and approaches that would enable pupils with special educational needs to access the curriculum to address the research questions set out in Chapter 2. Specifically I wanted to ask: how do teaching assistants work in class with teachers to support pupils? Do they provide what might be described as Wave 3 provision as described in the National Strategies on Attainment for pupils with SEN/LDD (DCSF, 2008b)? Is there evidence that teaching approaches and strategies used by teachers and teaching assistants are effective in meeting the needs of children with SEN? Is there evidence that teaching approaches on a continuum as defined by Lewis and Norwich (2000, 2001, 2005, 2007) are used, and if so are these distinctive enough to enable pupils with SEN to learn and make progress?

4.2   Methods

I chose to carry out sets of observations at three intervals during the year and with slightly different purposes, each subsequent observation aiming to build upon evidence already gained. The decision to gather evidence regarding classroom practice by carrying out observations was on the basis that observational data enables the researcher to enter and understand a situation (Patton, 1990, p.202). It is a direct method which enables a researcher to watch what people do and listen to what they say (Robson, 1993). Because they cover reality observations cover events in real time and are contextual (Yin, 2009).

As SENCO in the school my role had always included an element of observation, so I decided that an appropriate way of carrying out these observations was as a participant observer (Robson, 1993; Hitchcock and Hughes, 1995). My status as an observer was known to the participants – the teachers and teaching assistants being observed, and the children whose lessons I attended. The teachers and teaching assistants were aware that I would be using the observations to inform research on the effects of classroom practice on the inclusion of pupils with statements of SEN, specifically with regard to whether they were able to access the curriculum. In making this decision it was also important that I was aware of the possible pitfalls, both in observations generally, but also in participant observation particularly.

4.2.1 Participant observation

While a 'complete' observer stands outside the 'action' being observed, in participant observation the observer seeks to become a member of the observed group (Robson, 1993). The participant observer is fully engaged in experiencing the setting through personal experience (Patton, 1980). At the far end of the continuum, where observers take on a complete participant role, observers may conceal the fact they are carrying out an enquiry and try to become a full member of the group (Robson, 1993). Apart from the ethical implications of deception this may raise, there are issues of how reliable the evidence obtained might be when an observer becomes immersed in a group (Guba and Lincoln, 1981). There is also a possibility within this tradition to take situational advantage that enables information to be gathered (Robson, 1993). In my case, being SENCO gave me a role within which I was able to observe while not actively participating in the action, but with nevertheless a legitimate membership of the group. This in itself has dangers which will be discussed below.

4.2.2 Observational biases

As stated above, observation as a research tool has the advantage that it is direct and contextual (Guba and Lincoln, 1981; Patton, 1980; Robson, 1993); however, it is also important that as the *"instrument" for the observational study*, it is '*almost impossible to guard against the intrusion of one's own biases, attitudes, prejudices and assumptions'* (Patton, 1980, p.208). This is particularly pertinent when carrying out participant observation within a group of which the observer is already a member, where objectivity is much harder

to attain (Robson, 1993). This highlighted to me the importance of considering what might distort my observation or what biases might influence me and to think how to avoid them.

4.2.2.1   Selective attention

Observing any situation involves us in exposure to a vast array of information – visual and oral. The way in which we process this is prone to bias (Robson, 1993). Guba and Lincoln (1980) suggest that the observer *has* to be selective in data collection; however, that can also lead to selective perception and selective memory. They also warn that there may be a tendency to concentrate on the most 'exotic' data, as being that which will end up in the final report (Guba and Lincoln, 1981). Clearly as a researcher using observation I need therefore to be aware of the way in which I choose to select data, and how I pay attention – being aware that what I am likely to concentrate on will be affected by my interests, experiences and expectations. Additionally some events or features of a situation will probably stand out more than others. To avoid this I need to ensure that I make a conscious effort to distribute my attention.

4.2.2.2   Selective encoding

Because observation has a tendency to be unsystematic, made up of what

Guba and Lincoln describe as a *'melange of methods'* with a *'general absence*

of standard operating procedures and guidelines' (Guba and Lincoln, 1981,

p.208) there is a need to be particularly aware of the effect our expectations,

experiences and interests also have on the way we encode and interpret

events, and to attempt to start observations with an open mind (Robson,

1993).

4.2.2.3   Selective memory

Once an event has been observed it is important that any notes made during

the observation are written up as soon as possible. Robson suggests that if

there is a delay there is an increasing tendency for the report to be in line with

the observer's pre-existing expectations. Patton believes that field notes

should contain everything the observer thinks is worth noting – nothing should

be left to *'future recall'* (Patton, 1980).

4.2.2.4   Interpersonal factors

It is important for the observer to consider whether his or her presence in

some way disturbs what Guba and Lincoln (1981) call the '*natural situation'*.

Even in the situation I would find myself in, where I have a 'rationale' for

observing, it will be important to consider whether staff and/or pupils will

behave differently because they know they are being observed (Patton, 1980).

4.3   The Observations

The purpose of the first set of observations was to look at how teachers organised their lessons before they had an opportunity to get to know their pupils (including those with SENs), and the degree to which they used the teaching assistant as part of this process. This included looking at any teaching strategies and approaches to support the learning of those pupils with statements of SEN.

In the first set of observations I chose to focus on eight specified areas which I believed would help me identify how teachers had organised their lessons with (or possibly without) regard for the different abilities of children that were in their classes, and also how they had (or had not) planned for the presence of a teaching assistant in the lesson. I wanted to see whether there was a seating plan, and if so on what it appeared to be based. This was to see whether teachers had thought about the possibility that certain children needed to be seated where they would be accessible to a teaching assistant; whether all children with statements were seated together; whether a seating plan had been used to control the possibility of poor behaviour or was simply used to enable teachers to remember unfamiliar children (see Appendix 2).

In terms of the content of the lesson, I wanted to consider the level and complexity of language used by the teacher, to see whether there had been any accommodation for the different levels of understanding within the class; whether the content of the lesson was the same for all pupils and whether any homework given was differentiated. In terms of other features I wanted to consider the pace of delivery and any obvious ways in which teachers accounted for the ability of different pupils to take in information and whether

there was any communication between the teaching assistant and the teacher and, of course, any input by the teaching assistant.

To do this I used headings to note down comments and observations on each area as the lesson proceeded. This was to avoid the possibility of selective memory, so I ensured that everything was recorded at the time. I chose an unobtrusive area of the classroom which meant I could observe the relevant pupil or pupils without distracting them or other pupils. I was able to do this with relative ease because, as mentioned earlier, it was common practice for both the SENCO and other members of the SEN Department to observe pupils in class as a way of monitoring their learning. The presence of the researcher was not therefore considered unusual by any of the pupils. Although no formal pilot was carried out, these observations were based on the observations carried out annually to monitor the progress of pupils with a statement in their first term in school.

In the second set of observations I was interested to see whether the teachers, knowing the needs and abilities of their pupils, used the teaching assistants to assist them to deliver the needs and provision expressed on pupils' statements, and whether there was a difference in lessons in which there were no teaching assistants present. These observations sought to find out whether teaching strategies and approaches of teachers, supported by teaching assistants reflected the suggestions contained in pupils' statements and whether these were effective as part of the schools Wave 3 provision.

The focus of the second set of observations was the provision on pupils' statements. This was in order to consider whether after getting to know all pupils, teachers were organising their lessons, both in terms of

content and delivery, to meet the particular needs of pupils with statements of SEN, and whether they appeared to be consciously using the support of the teaching assistants to ensure that the needs and provision were met. In order to do this I noted down in advance provisions on each pupil's statement and focused on these in each observation. This meant that I looked at everything with a view to how it contributed to the identified provision. As the lesson proceeded notes were made in a narrative form, to note down the content, delivery, use of teaching assistant, questions asked, pace of delivery, questioning, materials used and so on in the lesson; I interrogated these notes to see the extent to which provision had met the requirements of the statements (see Appendix 3).

Finally in the third set of observations I looked at particular elements of organisation and delivery flagged up by teaching assistants themselves in the questionnaire and follow up interviews I carried out with them (see Chapter 3 on Research Design and School Context , Chapter 5 for a description and analysis of teaching assistant questionnaires and interviews and Appendices 4,5 and 6).

This final set of observations was somewhat more structured, in that I intended to look for information to back up answers and points raised by the teaching assistants in their questionnaire returns (see Chapter 5) and post observation interviews (see Chapter 5). I did not use a formal coding system, rather I chose to pick out a range of possible interactions that might happen between the teacher and the pupil, and the teaching assistant and the pupil and to record the number of times these interactions occurred. This more structured 'tick box' approach was supported by comments and questions that

occurred to me during the observations (see Appendix 7). The purpose of these observations was particularly to consider the level of independence of the pupil and the level of interaction between pupil and teacher and pupil and teaching assistant.

4.4   Choice of Teaching Assistants Observed

The work of 10 different teaching assistants was observed. The choice of teaching assistant was random, in that the criterion for observing the lesson was the presence of a pupil or pupils with a statement. The 10 teaching assistants observed were those who worked solely or predominantly with one or more pupil with a statement of SEN in year 7. The purpose of the observations was not to look at the way particular teaching assistants work with the aim of comparing this, but rather to look at the way in which teaching assistants appeared to be used by subject teachers in class to facilitate the learning and access to the curriculum of the pupils. Where there is more than one pupil with a statement in a class the same teaching assistant worked with both or (in one case) all three pupils in the form. The exception to this was in the case of Ricardo and Peter, where Ricardo's physical disability meant that he was not always able to learn in class and had a teaching assistant solely allocated to work with him. More details about the teaching assistants are contained in Chapter 3, in the section describing school context.

4.5   Procedures

The first set of observations was carried out in the second and third week of the year. This followed the pattern of observations I habitually carried out at the beginning of a new academic year, when allocation of support made is

provisional. This was in order to decide whether the support being offered was appropriate. Teaching assistants and subject teachers were made aware that this year (2005), in addition to the usual purpose, the observations would form part of work I was doing towards research on teaching inclusion, teaching strategies and classroom practice, and the contribution made to this by, in particular, teaching assistants.

For the first set of observations I made field notes throughout the lesson using headings to describe the specific areas on which I wanted to focus: whether there was a seating plan and the apparent rationale for this; whether there was a teaching assistant present; the input of that teaching assistant; the language used by the teacher; the content of the lesson; the pace of the lesson and whether there was homework set. As the lesson proceeded I made detailed notes, particularly on specific examples of the language used by the teacher; any interaction between the teacher and the teaching assistant and between the teaching assistant and the pupil; the content of the lesson and on any additional features of the lesson – for example if the seating plan was changed for any reason. These notes are summarised in the results below and further summarised in table form in Appendix 2. .

The second set of observations also followed my general schedule of observations, although they were more specifically focused than usual. As before, class teachers and teaching assistants were informed of the contribution these would make to my research, with brief details given as explanation. It was also made clear to both groups that these observations would be focusing on the provision on pupils' statements and how this

translated to work in class. I took into class with me details of the provision specified on pupils' statements that specifically advised teachers – for example described the way information or material should be presented, resources that should be used and so on. I made notes throughout the lesson detailing the tasks given; how they were presented; what resources were used and noted whether the approaches, strategies and resources specified in the statement were in evidence. Summaries of these lessons appear in the results below.

The final observations were the only additional observations made, although it was quite common for me to observe throughout the year on an informal basis, to continue with my monitoring of pupils with statements of SEN. The specific and more structured format of these observations, however, was different, and again both subject teachers and teaching assistants were informed of their purpose, and were asked for permission to observe. In order to assess how much interaction pupils were experiencing in class and how much of this was direct support in the form of individual help and differentiated work, I used an observation checklist. Each time a particular interaction or behaviour occurred it was marked. Where further elucidation was needed I annotated the sheet. A copy of the observation checklist was available for staff to consider (see Appendix 7). The results of these observations have been written up in narrative form below.

In all sets of observations lessons were chosen to ensure that each form was observed once. This covered all pupils with statements of SEN in year 7 although some forms contained up to three pupils with a statement (see Chapter 3, School Context). No particular subject areas were chosen,

other than to ensure a range of subjects were observed, and that each observed lesson would be taught by a different subject teacher to get as much of a spread of practice as possible. Additionally I decided that not all would have a teaching assistant present, so as to enable a comparison of organisation within a classroom where statemented pupils presented without support. I arrived just before a lesson, to ensure that I could watch pupils' entering the room, and remained for the entire lesson – 55 minutes.

4.6   Results of Observations

4.6.1 Observations: set 1 (see Appendix 2 for summaries of the findings of observations)

Lesson 1: English: To answer questions on Great Expectations – Peter

The class was seated according to a seating plan where pupils were sitting in alphabetical order. There was a teaching assistant present, sitting next to the pupil, who throughout the lesson was relying on her for information, cues and reassurance. A work sheet was being used posing questions around the text of 'Great Expectations', for example, 'what is the narrative voice like in this passage' and 'what genre is this text?'

Pupils were first asked to check in their planners that they had written down the homework with handing in dates. The teaching assistant supported Peter to do this. The discussion continued looking at a sheet of questions and answers about the novel. The class then took turns to read aloud. During this Peter appeared to be following the text, although he was very fidgety and was redirected by his teaching assistant.

After about ten minutes of reading the teacher asked a series of questions about the text. Her language, and the language used by most of

the pupils was sophisticated. Terms like 'genre' and 'narrative voice' were used. Although pupils were questioned to elicit explanations of the language there was no support put onto the board to act as a visual reminder. Peter was asked who was telling the story and was able to say that it was Pip.

The class was then asked to look for pairs of words in the text of the worksheet and asked to highlight pairs of negative and positive words in different colours. Peter found this very difficult and actually became more preoccupied with the different highlighter pens. To assist him his teaching assistant pointed out the words they were looking for and wrote them on a small whiteboard. This was the only example of differentiation and appeared to be led by the teaching assistant without reference to the teacher. There was no obvious differentiation. All pupils received the same homework question and answer sheet, and all were asked to find the same sorts of words using Dickens' original text. The pace of the lesson was fast. I did not observe any accommodation for slower workers, and many pupils including Peter did not finish the final exercise.

By the end of the lesson Peter was very distracted and unfocused. He was mostly interested to know why Pip's brothers were dead. I did not observe any obvious communication between the teaching assistant and the subject teacher. The teaching assistant constantly prompted and explained the work to Peter, but there was no evidence of prior planning between the teaching assistant and the teacher, nor of any prior knowledge of the content of the lesson.

Lesson 2: PSHE – Kerry and Joseph

Again in this lesson the teaching assistant was present. There was a seating plan that put the two pupils with a statement sitting together, accessible to the teaching assistant and near to, but not at the front of the room. The teacher began by congratulating some of the class, including Joseph, on work that they had done on 'Inclusion Day'. These children were given a chocolate.

This session was a follow up to the day, with the task being to finish poems they had been writing, and to write them out neatly with illustrations if they wished. Before this there was a starter activity which focused on a discussion of what pupils are good at and what they need to improve on. The teacher gave an example relating to herself. Throughout the lesson her explanations and mode of discussion were very clear, and she used questions appropriately to clarify pupils' answers, which she repeated back to ensure that everyone had heard or understood. She also made sure that she explained difficult or unfamiliar words in more simple language.

After the starter activity pupils were asked to continue with their poems. Joseph had lots of ideas and worked steadily, however his writing was almost completely illegible. Kerry found it very difficult to think of ideas and was continually prompted by the teaching assistant. Even when they had discussed the ideas, Kerry found it difficult to put them down on paper coherently, but was able to use spelling strategies, with support from her teaching assistant, to write unfamiliar words. The teaching assistant had been present at the previous lesson and so knew the purpose of the lesson, but did not noticeably communicate with the teacher. She mainly worked with Kerry,

who found the concept of poetry writing was problematic, but left Joseph to his own devices, and therefore was not able to support him to write more legibly.

Lesson 3: English: speaking and listening activity – Lesley and Robbie

In this lesson there was no teaching assistant present. There was a seating plan that put the pupils with statements near to, but not next to each other. Each pupil with a statement was working with a pupil selected by the subject teacher. The seating plan appeared to have been constructed to distribute boys and girls and possible 'trouble makers' across the class. The pupils had been set homework to prepare a talk about an incident from their past.

As a starter activity, pupils were asked to work in pairs and speak to each other face-to-face. The teacher's instructions were very clear, and throughout the lesson she repeated words and explained them, using questions to establish what they meant, and repeated answers. Both Lesley and Robbie were able to listen and speak appropriately in the starter activity. The listener was asked to show s/he was not listening through body language – again both Lesley and Robbie were able to do this.

Pupils then worked in pairs to tell the story they had prepared for homework. Robbie was able to do this, however his account was very short. Lesley was also able to complete this exercise, however her story, while very animated showed a very restricted vocabulary. Both pupils were willing to talk in front of the class as well as to their partner.

Lesson 4: English: reading and storyboarding activity – Terry, Jake and Tony (Jake was absent)

No teaching assistant was present. Pupils were seated in a seating plan that placed pupils with statements apart and appeared to be done on the basis of pupils' ability to focus and behave appropriately. Boys and girls were mainly seated next to each other. Initially pupils were expected to come into the room and get out their reading book, or to choose a reading book from a box in the room and begin to read silently. The teacher used this time to check that pupils had their equipment and had done their homework.

They then completed a starter activity on pronouns, using the whiteboard as a prompt. Tony was very unfocused during this, looking away from the board and banging on the table, while Terry seemed to find the activity very difficult to follow. He appeared confused and did not offer to contribute answers. The teacher did not pick up on this and check his understanding.

They then moved on to the main activity working on chapter one of Great Expectations, highlighting the parts of the first chapter that would be good for a film, which they would then go on to storyboard. The teacher did not differentiate the activity – all pupils used the original Dickens text. The highlighting activity had mostly taken place in a previous lesson, so it was impossible to tell how much support had been given to pupils who found it difficult to highlight 'filmic' passages. Both Terry and Tony apparently worked well, but it appeared that Terry's progress to actually completing the storyboard was very slow.

Lesson 5: Science, completion of a worksheet – Ricardo

Pupils in this lesson were seated according to a seating plan, but this did not include Ricardo as he was not always able to get to lessons. When he did, he needed a lower table to enable him to sit in his wheelchair. No attempt had been made to clear a space for him at the front of the room so he could see the board, or to ensure he was sitting with other pupils.

On this occasion Ricardo arrived late because he had to be brought across the walkway in a wheelchair as the previous lesson had been in the other wing. As the room had not been prepared for him, his arrival created disruption as a lower table had to be found. This table was placed at the back, meaning that Ricardo could not sit with other pupils, nor could he see the subject teacher or demonstrations adequately. As a result of his lateness he had also missed the introduction to the lesson. Other pupils were completing a worksheet related to an experiment carried out in a previous lesson that he had missed.

One of his teaching assistants talked through the worksheet with him and helped him write the answers. The teacher did not go through the worksheet with the form, merely told them that it related to the previous experiment. She did not come and go over the worksheet with Ricardo, nor did she discuss it with the teaching assistant. Her only communication was to hand over the worksheet for the teaching assistant to do with Ricardo. No key words had been put on the board to assist with the scientific language used on the worksheet. The same worksheet had been given to all pupils. Ricardo (and a number of other pupils) were not able to complete the worksheet by the end of the lesson, and there was no evidence that they would be given time to

complete it on another occasion. The teaching assistant who went through the sheet with Ricardo used questions and prompts, but additionally needed to spell many of the words for him and formulate sentences for him.

Lesson 6: English library lesson – Richard

This lesson took place in the library, and pupils were allowed to sit where they chose. There was a teaching assistant present who initially stood at the side of the room until Richard had chosen where he wanted to sit, and had settled down. The focus of the lesson was on changing library books for books that the pupils chose to read and to spend some time reading. At the beginning the teacher's explanation was clear, with an attempt made to explain words like genre.

Richard was very distracted at the beginning of the lesson and both the teacher and the teaching assistant needed to refocus him. Pupils were asked to change their books and to look for a new book that would interest them. There was some discussion as to how they would go about looking for these – would they choose fiction or non-fiction, choose by author, by subject or by series. Pupils were encouraged to talk about what sorts of books they enjoyed reading. Richard found this very difficult to focus on and showed little interest. He did not contribute, and when asked for a contribution was not able to say what sort of book he enjoyed reading.

Once the activity began he spent a long time wandering aimlessly around the library, reluctant to accept advice or help from either the teaching assistant or the teacher. Eventually the teacher selected a book and suggested Richard should try this as he seemed unable to make a decision. The teaching assistant then sat next to Richard and encouraged him to read

aloud, which he was able to do. He then appeared to enjoy the story and was willing to read to himself. During the lesson the teacher and teaching assistant discussed the sorts of books they thought might be appropriate, and appeared to work together to encourage and guide Richard.

Lesson 7: English: descriptive writing – Louise and Murray

For this lesson pupils were seated according to a seating plan with the two pupils with statements easily accessible to the teaching assistant, but not next to each other. The teaching assistant chose to sit next to Murray, but was in reach of Louise. The activity was to write a description of a place in their home that they particularly like – relating to a book studied in class, and was follow up work to something begun in the previous lesson.

The teacher's language varied in its sophistication. She explained the work more than once to ensure that all pupils had understood, and explained difficult words, however no key words were put on the board, and no visual cues were provided. The pupils were reminded of the task at the beginning of the lesson and told again the objective of the exercise.

The written exercise was beyond Murray's capabilities. He was encouraged to describe some particular parts of a place to the teaching assistant, who then supported him to write down simple sentences. Louise was able to work alone without apparent difficulty.

The teacher had not differentiated the activity other than by outcome, where pupils' work varied in its sophistication and length according to their ability. She had not prepared any writing frames for any of the children, nor was the work scaffolded in any other apparent way.

Some communication took place between the teaching assistant and the teacher, with the teaching assistant clarifying the activity with the teacher to ensure that what he was doing with Murray was appropriate. He differentiated the work as the lesson progressed, sometimes scribing for Murray so he was able to finish the lesson having completed some work. He checked Louise's work, which she had produced independently. There was no evidence that he had prior knowledge of the activity – the modifications he provided for Murray were done on the spot.

Lesson 8: Maths: understanding of 2 decimal places – Sally

There was no teaching assistant present in this lesson. Pupils were sitting according to alphabetical order – seemingly to enable the teacher to learn names and faces. The purpose of the lesson was to establish understanding of decimal place. The lesson began with a whole class starter activity using a function machine. Sally was very quiet, appeared attentive, but did not put up her hand to answer and was not selected by the teacher to answer.

After the starter activity there was a brief recap of the previous lesson's work on decimals which seemed based on an assumption that the concept of 'decimal' was understood. The teacher went through a couple of examples on the board with contributions from the pupils. Sally seemed attentive. She looked at the board and did not fidget, however she did not contribute, nor did the teacher question her. Pupils were then directed to the exercise which they were to complete in their book, and they began work.

Sally spent a long time writing the date and title in her book, and began to work very hesitantly. The teacher went round the class to check on work being done and stopped to ask Sally questions. The teacher explained the

problem which Sally had been working on, but been unable to tackle. Sally then began to work again, very slowly. By the end of the lesson she had only completed two of the problems and had not asked for more help either by putting up her hand, or by behaving in a way that might attract attention.

Lesson 9: History: to complete a worksheet on primary and secondary sources – Mary

In this lesson pupils were seated according to a seating plan, with boys and girls sitting next to each other. Mary was seated at the front of the room, with the teaching assistant sitting near to her on the other side of the aisle. The lesson objective was for pupils to show their understanding of primary and secondary sources by completing a worksheet.

At the beginning of the lesson relevant historical terms, including primary and secondary source were explained by the teacher, who asked questions of the pupils and used repetition of their answers to explain the terms and concepts. Nothing was written on the board to support this. The teacher additionally used an artefact to illustrate his meaning. Mary appeared to be focused and attentive. She put up her hand to answer some of the questions, but was not chosen.

The worksheets given out were not differentiated, although there appeared to be an expectation from the teacher that some pupils would not complete as much of the worksheet as others, as pupils were told to complete as much of the sheet as they could. The other differentiation appeared to be in the amount that pupils were expected to write, and the depth of their writing. All were being encouraged to use PECS (Point, Evidence, Comment, Supporting Evidence).

The teacher did not provide any writing frames or cloze procedure support. The pace of the lesson was brisk enough to keep pupils' interest but clear enough to ensure that most of the pupils were able to start the task. Homework was given, which was to complete the sheet. This meant that those pupils who were slower and/or found the task difficult ended up with more homework than the more able pupils, many of whom had completed the sheet by the end of the lesson.

During the lesson there was little communication between the teacher and the teaching assistant. At one point the teaching assistant approached the teacher to clarify a task so she could support Mary. Mary was anxious to complete the work on her own and reluctant to allow the teaching assistant to offer her help. She nodded impatiently at what the teaching assistant was saying and bent over her work to ensure that the teaching assistant could not look at what she was doing. Having established that Mary appeared to be able to complete the work independently, the teaching assistant backed off, and supported other pupils. It was clear the teaching assistant had no prior knowledge of the content or intention of the lesson, and had not had the opportunity to see the worksheet previously.

Lesson 10: Spanish: to learn numbers to 20 – Hugo

No teaching assistant was present in this lesson. The pupils were sitting in alphabetical order; however, Hugo, who has a hearing impairment, was seated at the front of the room, out of order. The purpose of the lesson was for pupils to learn and consolidate numbers to 20, and was mostly in the target language (i.e. Spanish). Some of the explanation was repeated in English.

When Spanish was used the language was simple and the teacher used strong gestures.

The lesson began with a recap of numbers to 10, with a large number held up and pupils pointed at to shout out the number. The whole class then recited the numbers together. New numbers were introduced using repetition. Hugo joined in with this well. As the lesson proceeded the teacher used a variety of ways to ensure that pupils would remember the number – varying the speed and volume used, and finishing with pupils making their own 'bingo' board and playing bingo. Hugo appeared to be able to keep up with this and joined in well.

Although the pace was brisk there was constant repetition and over-learning. No check was made by the teacher to ensure that Hugo had heard everything, but the teacher engaged all pupils and checked on learning by going back constantly to those pupils who had not answered correctly the first time he asked them for an answer. The pupils were set homework to thoroughly learn numbers to 20 in Spanish, for testing the next lesson. The teacher expected all pupils to be able to do this.

4.6.2 Observations: set 2 (see Appendix 3 for summaries of the findings of observations)

The second set of observations took place at the beginning of the spring term, in January, when teachers and teaching assistants had had the opportunity to get to know the pupils, and therefore to get to know the pupils with statements of SEN. They had also had time to familiarise themselves with the provision on pupils' statements. These observations concentrated on looking at the provision on pupils' statements and the ways in which these were met by

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either the teacher or the teaching assistant, or by both the teacher and the teaching assistant.

Second Observation of Robbie:

Differentiated provision outlined on Robbie's statement:

> *A broad and balanced curriculum with methods, approaches and resources differentiated to meet a child with specific learning difficulties ensuring that work is carefully graded and consolidated to ensure success*
>
> *…having instructions broken down into small units and the use of visual prompts*
>
> *Structured opportunities to interact and learn with mainstream peers*

Lesson: History – To construct a timeline to scale

There was no seating plan in place and Robbie chose to sit with a friend with whom he had arrived late. The teaching assistant was present and chose to sit next to the pupil at the end of his desk. The teacher explained the concept of a timeline, but offered very little visual material other than a crude line that was sketched on the board. The idea of drawing this line to scale was then introduced and pupils were instructed to make a timeline in their book, working out themselves how to fit this onto a page. The teacher did not offer any additional help, nor did he offer any pupils the opportunity of having a pre-drawn timeline to stick in their book.

Robbie did not complete this activity and was also very reluctant to accept help from the teaching assistant, preferring instead to 'fool about' with his friend. Most of the pupils were finding it difficult to construct the timeline, so the teacher stopped the form to go over the idea of scale again. Robbie was not paying attention to this, and continued to talk to his friend. This

meant that he was still unable to complete the activity. The teacher did not

prompt him to stop talking nor did he offer him any additional explanation or

help. By the end of the lesson the teaching assistant had given up attempting

to help and Robbie did not finish the activity.

In terms of meeting the provision on Robbie's statement, the teacher

made no effort to differentiate the activity. The teaching assistant had no prior

knowledge of the lesson and therefore had no means of bringing suitable

material. Because Robbie was unwilling to engage with her she was not able

to differentiate 'on the spot'. The teacher did not make any attempt to break

down the content of the work, nor to use visual prompts other than the crudely

sketched line. The teaching assistant's attempts to break down the task were

met with indifference by Robbie. In terms of opportunities to interact with

mainstream peers, Robbie was sitting with someone who appeared to provide

a negative model in terms of behaviour and learning, and was not encouraged

by his teacher to sit somewhere more helpful. The teaching assistant did not

appear to feel that she had the authority to redirect Robbie away from the

unhelpful peer.

Second observation of Terry, Jake and Tony

Differentiated provision outlined on Terry's statement:

> *…access to differentiated curriculum with the use of visual and verbal*
> *supports and regular opportunities to talk through problems,*
> *information should be presented in a concrete way wherever possible*
>
> *Terry should be given support to stay on task with regular prompting at*
> *short intervals*

Differentiated provision outlined on Jake's statement:

> *Work should be differentiated to meet Jake's needs ensuring that work*
> *is carefully graded and consolidated to ensure success*

Access to a curriculum modified by method to include modified learning

Materials, instruction and explanations should be given in clear simple language and supported visually

Regular opportunities for repetition and over-learning in order to become secure with new learning and concepts

Differentiated provision outlined on Tony's statement:

…differentiated to meet Tony's needs ensuring that work is carefully graded and consolidated to ensure success

Being taught to use writing frames to support extended pieces of

writing

A system of rewards for on task behaviours, with a clear plan to be established for times when the classroom strategies break down. It is important that Tony is made aware of the consequences of his behaviours in advance. The plan should incorporate a clear warning system

Lesson: Geography – to find out what pupils know about Australia

The lesson began with a starter activity. Pupils were asked to draw a simple spider diagram putting down things they knew about Australia – this was for the teacher to use to fill in an information map. The teaching assistant present was sitting next to Jake, while Terry and Tony were sitting together in a different part of the room. The teaching assistant wrote down the lesson objective for Jake on a small whiteboard that she had brought with her, and began to talk through the task – what did he know about Australia? She then scribed for him on his spider diagram.

Terry and Tony completed the spider diagram independently, although Tony made a great deal of fuss while doing this. Pupils had about 10 minutes to do this, and were then stopped by the teacher who held a class discussion.

This was very fast paced and did not include Jake, who seemed bewildered by the discussion and was at no time directly addressed by the teacher. Terry and Tony were able to participate in the discussion although some of Tony's comments were inappropriate. At one time he became fixated on the idea of giant and poisonous spiders killing visitors to Australia, and kept on shouting this out – particularly warning a classmate not to visit Australia in case he was killed by a giant spider. The teacher handled this largely by moving on the lesson and not giving Tony attention for shouting out.

The teacher then used an interactive whiteboard to show a map of Australia that needed labelling. This was done verbally by pupils and did not enable Jake to participate as it was too fast paced for him. The teacher then gave out sheets with the map for pupils to label, completing missing areas themselves. No differentiated sheets were provided (e.g. giving the words needed, so a pupil could choose words to complete labels). The teaching assistant helped Jake to complete the sheet – although this help was mostly in the form of telling Jake what to write and spelling out the word for him. Terry was able to attempt the activity but did not have time to complete it, while Tony could have completed the activity but was very distracted and did not do so.

In terms of meeting the provision expressed on their statements, there was no differentiation of the activity by the teacher, and the only visual prompt used was the interactive whiteboard. Information was presented in a concrete way. The teaching assistant attempted to differentiate the activity for Jake, but had not had prior information to enable her to bring visual cues or prepare word lists. Some of the differentiation consisted of her telling Jake what to

write and spelling words. Learning materials were not modified by the teacher – all the pupils received the same worksheet. Any simplification of instructions and explanations was carried out by the teaching assistant. Tony's behaviour did not become such that normal classroom strategies were not working. The teacher used a strategy of ignoring poor behaviour from Tony to good effect.

Second observation of Lesley

Differentiated provision outlined in Lesley's statement:

> *A broad and balanced curriculum, including the National Curriculum, with methods, approaches and resources differentiated to meet Lesley's needs. Ensuring that work is carefully graded and consolidated to ensure success*

> *A teaching approach that builds upon structured and consistent steps within a learning programme to support her language and literacy skills*

Lesson: Maths – to work out which shapes will tessellate

This was a practical lesson where pupils were asked to cut out shapes and work out whether they will tessellate – i.e. can they cut out the shapes given and arrange them onto other shapes so they will fit? A teaching assistant was present and worked with Lesley, who was very focused and determined to work out the way to fit shapes onto those given. She did not appear to have any strategies other than trial and error, however she did managed to complete most of the work with prompting from the teaching assistant.

The teacher interacted very little with Lesley, having seen that she was being supported by her teaching assistant. The teaching assistant did not have prior knowledge of the lesson, and spent a few minutes after the initial explanation asking the teacher for a further explanation of the activity so she

was able to work with Lesley. There was no differentiation of the activity, but success was achieved because the practical nature of the task appeared to suit Lesley. There was no evidence of a structured and small steps approach to teaching from this single lesson.

Second observation of Sally

Differentiated provision outlined in Sally's statement:

> *Explanations of tasks on an individual level with opportunities for learning through practical demonstrations and visual aids*

> *Simplified verbal communication in the classroom accompanied by non-verbal cues such as gesture, mime and visual materials – comprehension will need to be monitored and tasks broken down accordingly*

> *Individualised instruction and additional prompts and encouragement with increased opportunities to be listened to and have appropriate language modelled for her to repeat*

Lesson: Science – topic reproduction: to identify which are male or female sexual organs and to label and colour them accordingly

The teacher had written the lesson objectives on the board and gave the introduction verbally. She did not use any visual cues. The pace of the introduction was very fast, with the instruction being to use a particular page in the text book; the worksheets were then given out at speed. No differentiated worksheets were provided, nor were additional instructions or explanations given. The teaching assistant who was present had not been given any prior information about the task. She sat on the same table as Sally and helped her by questioning her about each picture and asking her which word was the appropriate label, whether each was a male or female organ and so on. Sally was able to complete the task by giving each answer in a tentative,

questioning fashion and gauging from the teaching assistant's response whether she was on the right lines or not.

The teacher did not give any individual explanation to Sally – this came only from the teaching assistant. There were no visual aids or practical demonstrations, and again any simplified verbal communication came from the teaching assistant. The teacher did not break down the tasks – this was left for the teaching assistant, who did this on the spot. There was nothing prepared by the teacher to give to the teaching assistant. The teacher did not address Sally herself, but left her learning to the teaching assistant.

Second observation of Richard

Differentiated provision outlined in Richard's statement:

> *A broad and balanced curriculum, including the National Curriculum, with methods, approaches and resources differentiated to meet Richard's needs. Ensuring that work is carefully graded and consolidated to ensure success*

> *An approach that reinforces verbal information with visual supports. Differentiated homework tasks with clear instructions and timescales and access to a homework cub where appropriate*

Lesson: Science – revision for a midyear test

Richard's teaching assistant was present and sat next to him. The teacher asked her to go through the differentiated revision sheets provided. Other pupils were going through revision sheets too. The revision sheets provided for Richard consisted mainly of cloze procedure exercises with some picture clues. Richard clearly enjoyed working on these and he was able to complete them after talking each question through with the teaching assistant. The teaching assistant had brought a small whiteboard with her to assist Richard with his spellings.

Approaches and resources for this lesson had been differentiated by the teacher to meet Richard's needs, supported by input from the teaching assistant directed by the teacher. The differentiated worksheets were supported by a degree of visual support. Richard was able to achieve success in this lesson and consequently behaved well. He was focused and gained approval from both his teacher and teaching assistant, which appeared to please him.

Second observation of Louise and Murray

Differentiated provision outlined on Louise's statement:

> *Opportunities to practise and explore appropriate social skills, with teacher intervention where necessary*

> *Careful management of activities and change in the classroom and school activities, including prior warnings*

Differentiated provision outlined on Murray's statement:

> *Short clear instructions with visual prompts to aid poor memory*
> *Visual cues, repetition of instructions and constant refocusing to support understanding and ensure completion of tasks*

> *Strategies to assist Murray to maintain concentration, attention and listening skills*

Lesson: Drama – to build up to a whole group improvisation

The lesson began with a warm up game. The teaching assistant sat with Murray. The game was fast paced, and had obviously been played before. Murray found it difficult to join in, although he was encouraged by both the teaching assistant and teacher. Louise was able to take part.

The pupils were then asked to complete a mime of an action and then to say how they felt doing this action. Murray worked with the teaching

assistant, and copied her. Louise completed the activity and was able to say how she felt. The task was followed by group work. Murray was not able to join a group, and stayed with his teaching assistant. It became clear that Louise was very isolated as no other pupils invited her to join their group, and when she approached any children they drew themselves inward to discourage her from joining them. The teacher did not obviously intervene to start with, but eventually put Louise into a group. During the work, however, they were obviously 'shunning' her. It was not clear that Louise was aware of this. The teacher did not seem to realise what was happening at this point.

Murray did not join a group himself, but was brought into a group by other pupils. His teaching assistant remained with him to support him, but it was not clear that he understood any of the tasks. The teacher made a constant effort to support and include both pupils, although she did not always appear aware of the extent to which Louise was being ostracised by other members of the class. In the final piece the class worked on a whole class scene, where Louise took a very active role encouraged by the teacher.

In terms of her opportunities to practise social skills with teacher intervention, there did not appear to be enough awareness by the teacher of Louise's very restricted social skills repertoire, and the effect that that had already had among her peers, who clearly did not want to include her. Louise did not herself appear to find the change of activities in the lesson to be problematic. In Murray's case, he was supported by his teaching assistant, who repeated and simplified instructions. None of the verbal instructions were supported by visual prompts. The teaching assistant took the responsibility of refocusing Murray and simplifying instructions to enable him to complete

tasks. Despite this however, there was little evidence that Murray understood either the purpose of the tasks, or what he needed to do. He appeared to rely on mimicking the teaching assistant and his peers. The teacher did not get involved in any of the strategies, although encouraged Murray to get involved in all activities.

Second observation of Mary

Provision outlined in Mary's statement:

> *A broad and balanced curriculum, including the National Curriculum, with methods, approaches and resources differentiated to meet Mary's needs. Ensuring that work is carefully graded and consolidated to ensure success*

> *Strategies that will encourage her to join in whole class discussions Structure and visual support in the classroom with opportunities for over-learning and for her to consolidate concepts and skills, experiencing success at each stage, including verbal instructions with a brief summary on the board so that Mary has something to refer back to and help her with her organisational skills*

> *Differentiated homework tasks with clear instructions and timescales and access to a homework club where appropriate*

> *Support to help her focus on tasks and to monitor and check what she has learnt in the short and long term*

Lesson: Science – to carry out an experiment and draw a table of results

The learning objectives for the lesson were on the board when pupils came into the room. The teaching assistant present sat near but not next to Mary. The teacher introduced the lesson with a question and answer session. She gave clear information, and the session was lively and enjoyable, but no visual prompts were used and the pace was fast. There was nothing additional to act as a cue on the board.

For the experiment pupils were asked to work in pairs. Mary was prompted by her teaching assistant to join up with another pupil and was able to carry out the experiment, although there was very little evidence of any meaningful interaction between her and the other pupil. The teacher did not intervene or approach Mary to ensure she had understood the task. The teaching assistant took a very low key approach, as Mary appeared not to welcome very much support or assistance from her.

After the experiment was completed pupils were required to draw a table to fill in the results. No additional support or resource was available for pupils from the teacher to complete this – for example there were no pre-drawn tables or half-completed tables to support those pupils for whom drawing tables is difficult. Mary found this activity particularly difficult and spent a long time drawing the table and then completing it. Because of this she missed some of the follow up discussion. She was reluctant to accept help from her teaching assistant, but was prepared to listen to her go over some of the discussion she had missed.

No differentiation was evident, nor of grading work to ensure Mary's success. The teacher did not do anything to encourage Mary to join in with the whole class discussion, but her teaching assistant did prompt her to put up her hand when she knew an answer. No additional structure or visual support was put into place to support Mary, and she was expected to draw and complete the same table as all other pupils. She had particular difficulties with working out how to draw the table. The teacher did not spend any time supporting Mary to focus on her tasks and did not check that she had learnt

anything, this was done by the teaching assistant, but Mary was clearly

uncomfortable with her support and reluctant to engage with her.

Second observation of Hugo

Differentiated provision outlined in Hugo's statement:

> *A broad and balanced curriculum, including the National Curriculum, with methods, approaches and resources differentiated to meet Hugo's needs. Ensuring that work is carefully graded and consolidated to ensure success*
>
> *Provide acoustic conditions and radio aid systems in all learning*
>
> *situations*

Lesson: Science: to discuss the effects of acid rain and label a diagram

There was no teaching assistant present in this lesson. Hugo was seated at

the front of the room; however, for some parts of the discussion he was turned

away from the teacher and therefore missed some parts of the initial

discussion. The teacher did not prompt Hugo to look, or go to face Hugo.

Hugo was not using his radio aids and was not questioned by the teacher and

told to wear them. Nor did the teacher ask for the radio aids from Hugo to

enable their use.

The work provided was a diagram of a building, with clouds, rain and

so on for pupils to label and to write accompanying short explanations. The

teacher did not give any additional explanation or information to Hugo, nor

check that he had heard everything. Hugo did not seek any additional

information and appeared to be able to complete the work without difficulty.

The only accommodation to Hugo's hearing loss was to seat him at the

front of the room. No additional work or key words were put on the board to

support Hugo if he had not heard everything. The teacher did not appear

aware of the need to check that Hugo had heard, despite the fact that Hugo is

profoundly deaf. The required acoustic conditions and radio aid system which could have been used was not, nor was any comment made about this. Although Hugo did not appear to need any support with his work, no check was made by the teacher that he had in fact heard and understood the task.

Second observation of Peter

Differentiated provision in Peter's statement:

> *Appropriate ICT programmes and opportunities to use such programmes to assist in recording written work across the curriculum*
>
> *…support and direction to improve Peter's interaction with peers*
>
> *…techniques and strategies to assist in enhancing Peter's concentration and focus on tasks*

Lesson: History – to construct a timeline of Mediaeval Britain

During this lesson Peter was sitting next to his teaching assistant. The task was for pupils to construct a timeline of Mediaeval Britain, copying the line from the board and putting in key social and political events. During the question and answer session at the beginning of the lesson, which was held at a fast pace, Peter was distracted and spent much of the discussion playing with equipment. Nothing additional was provided for Peter – for example an already constructed timeline with space to add key events. While pupils constructed the timeline, Peter sat quietly with his teaching assistant. She drew the line, asking him to help by counting in 10s for her – which he was able to do. Information in boxes was available on the board to assist pupils to select information. With a great deal of support from his teaching assistant Peter was able to put the correct information on the timeline in the correct places. She used a small whiteboard to support him to copy information into the right place. Although Peter worked at this, he spent much of the time

making faces and sticking out his tongue. His teaching assistant used cards she had brought with her, which had visual prompts to refocus Peter. As he was working so slowly, she decided to cut out the list of events, which were also on a worksheet, and give them to Peter to stick into his book. He seemed to prefer this way of working and began to work well to complete the task.

The teacher did not give any support to Peter to enable him to record his work, nor did he provide the teaching assistant with any additional materials or resources. The teaching assistant enabled Peter to record his work by adapting the activity 'on the spot'. Peter did not interact with his peers. He was sitting by the teaching assistant and completely focused on her. Visual cues were used by the teaching assistant, but not the teacher, to refocus Peter. She had clearly developed this system, because these were brought by her and used with no reference to the teacher. They did appear to refocus Peter, redirect inappropriate behaviour and enable him to get on with the lesson without disturbing or distracting his peers.

Second observation of Kerry and Joseph

Differentiated provision in Kerry's statement:

> *…continued support in larger class situations through visual support to encourage good focusing*

Differentiated provision in Joseph's statement:

> *…continued support to comply with academic and social expectations of a school environment*

> *…support to produce written work which reflects his underlying ability*

Lesson: Maths – to work on exercises relating to probability

A teaching assistant was present in this lesson, but was finding it hard to share her attention between Kerry and Joseph, who in their own different ways were both distracted and distracting. Initially Joseph was very enthusiastic and joined in with the starter activity. He clearly found the answers easy. He did not sit appropriately however, kneeling up on his chair rather than sitting. Kerry was very distressed that she did not know the answers to the starter activity and responded by leaving the room, followed by the teacher. Joseph by this point had become very distracted and began to lie on his desk. The teaching assistant prompted him gently to refocus and to concentrate.

After several minutes, Kerry returned to the classroom with the teacher and began to sort out her things. The teacher began to give the class feedback from the starter activity, while Joseph responded by making noises and becoming distracted again. Kerry appeared preoccupied with her Maths text book and was not paying attention to the teacher. Joseph meanwhile had started to fiddle with his pen, talk to himself and play with his fingers. Kerry became upset that she was sitting on her own and began to have a tantrum, which involved knocking her book onto the floor and crying loudly. She then crouched on her chair facing the wall away from the lesson and refused to do any more work.

Written work was started, which engaged Joseph who began to complete the work. He clearly found the standard of the Maths very easy, but his writing was completely illegible. Orally he could answer all the questions and raced through the work on his own. Unfortunately the recording of this would not enable him to go back and see what he had done, nor would it allow

his teacher to assess his ability, as it was not possible to read what he had written. Kerry did not complete any work despite the perseverance of her teaching assistant who continued to try to engage her throughout the lesson.

Joseph benefited from the teaching assistants prompts to remind him how to sit appropriately and was able to become very engaged in his work. Neither his teaching assistant nor his teacher provided additional support or technologies to assist him to record his work legibly. Kerry was unable to benefit from any support that was offered as she was unwilling to attempt anything – using her tantrum very successfully to avoid work. Initial visual support that might have enabled her to participate in the starter lesson with a modicum of success was not provided.

4.6.3 Third lesson observations

The third set of lesson observations were carried out after looking at the results of the questionnaires completed by teaching assistants and their follow up interviews (see Chapter 5). These observations focused on the level of interaction between the teacher and pupil and teaching assistant and pupil; the level of differentiation carried out by the teacher and the teaching assistant, and whether this was prepared before the lesson or modified on the spot; whether this was concerned with the modification of materials or came through additional explanations; and considered how much work was completed. 23 lessons were observed, 21 of which were supported by a teaching assistant (see Appendix 8 for tables of results).

Very little active participation by pupils with statements of SEN was seen over 23 lessons. Of the six unprompted occasions when pupils answered a question, four came in the same lesson from the same pupil.

Over 23 lessons there was very little direct interaction between the subject teacher and the target pupils. Out of the nine occasions when a teacher addressed the pupil at random, four were in the same lesson with the same teacher and pupil.

There was very little evidence of differentiated material being provided. In four lessons observed the teacher provided materials already prepared. For example in one English lesson a differentiated word list had been prepared specifically by the teacher for the target pupil. In the lessons observed there was far less differentiation carried out by teaching assistants than might have been expected given the views expressed by the teaching assistants on differentiation in their interviews. Differentiation in the form of additional explanation, however, was mainly provided by teaching assistants.

In two cases where no work was completed this was because pupils had been removed from or left the classroom. In the other case the pupil would not participate in the Dance lesson despite coaxing and support from the teaching assistant. Where very little work was done there appeared to be a variety of reasons.

One reason was pupils' lack of focus – comments from one lesson read *'…very distracted, lack of effort, needed prompting from both the teaching assistant and teacher'.* In this case the teaching assistant provided additional explanation that was not welcomed by the pupil who wanted to chat to a friend. In another case the pupil was given pre-prepared differentiated work and additional explanations from the teacher and teaching assistant, but was unfocused and slow to start and complete work. In another lesson, the pupil

arrived in a distressed state, and despite differentiation of both the material and the activity was not in a fit state to work, and completed very little.

Sometimes there was no actual teaching, for example in one lesson a cover teacher taking the lesson gave out work with no explanation, nor was there a teaching assistant present. The pupil was therefore not able to tackle the work set and therefore completed almost none of the activity.

At times the concepts were too difficult. In one lesson the video shown was 'over the head' of the child concerned, who despite asking constant questions throughout the video, was unable to complete the follow up work. In another lesson, despite differentiation and teaching assistant support, the pupil was unable to understand the activity and lacked the confidence to start work. In a third lesson the worksheets provided were not differentiated and too difficult for the pupil. The teaching assistant supporting the pupil also found the worksheets difficult and had to ask the teacher for additional explanation.

On occasions all the work was completed. One lesson was well structured with a well-planned activity, and although the pupil was reluctant to work, he was able to complete the task set. In two cases involving the same pupil, this pupil concentrated and focused well, asked questions and engaged in the lessons and had the conceptual ability to access the lesson. One lesson was a very well structured Drama lesson where the pupil was well supported by other pupils as well as the teacher and the teaching assistant, and the activity was set up to enable all pupils to participate. One lesson involved very good work by a teaching assistant and teacher, who together

provided additional explanations and good questioning, with support for the pupil who was herself well focused on the activity, to complete the task set.

4.7 Overview of Findings from Strand 1

4.7.1 First set of observations

The first set of observations, taking place as they did at the start of the school year, focused on looking at organisational features of lessons where neither teachers nor teaching assistants had very much knowledge of any of the children they were teaching. Teachers did know which pupils were on the special needs register and which had a statement, and they had some knowledge of the needs of pupils with statements of SEN, having been provided with a sheet of information about each pupil with a statement. Teaching assistants may have had some time to read through their target children's statements, but would not have had very much face-to-face experience of them. The findings that follow are based on the observations above and concentrate on the predetermined areas I outlined.

Generally, teachers did use seating plans, with pupils mainly sitting in alphabetical order at this point to enable teachers to learn names. In some cases, teachers had considered how to place pupils with statements to enable the teaching assistant to work effectively with them. For example, in the PHSCE lesson where Kerry and Joseph were observed they had been seated to enable the teaching assistant to work with both pupils without them being seated next to each other. This was by no means universal. There was little evidence that on the whole seating plans were being consistently used to

enable effective teaching assistant/pupil working. Most observations showed that teaching assistants sat next to their target pupil, and that where there was more than one pupil with a statement in a class they tended to sit next to the child they perceived to be needier – as in the case of Tony, Terry and Jake where the teaching assistant chose to sit next to Jake, although Tony's behavioural challenge was such that he might have benefited from her proximity to offer some gentle prompting about appropriateness. In the case of Lesley and Robbie, despite Lesley's greater academic needs, the teaching assistant chose to sit next to Robbie because of his inability to concentrate and refrain from 'playing about' with his peers.

On the whole the language used by the teacher was sophisticated. Words such as genre in English were used, often with no additional explanation. Where language was modified and explained thoroughly it appeared to be embedded in the teacher's practice, rather than being specifically targeted at particular pupils with statements. For example, in the PHSCE lesson which began by focusing on pupils looking at their strengths and weaknesses, questioning was clear and each pupil's answers reported back to the class to ensure clarity. Clarity of language and the use of additional explanations by teachers appeared to correspond to the quality of teaching generally. Where teachers adapted their language this was in the context of a constant awareness of the need to explain and clarify themselves to ensure all pupils were able to access the lesson. In many of the lessons observed teachers did not as a matter of course explain or modify language.

There was very little evidence of deliberate and planned use of differentiation by teachers, nor by teaching assistants. There was no

differentiation seen in terms of prepared modification of materials, although on occasions enterprising teaching assistants modified materials on the spot. Those pupils studying Great Expectations, for example, were all expected to use the original text. There was more evidence that teachers differentiated by outcome, where pupils were expected to produce work of a different quality, or to produce less work. For example Tony was not expected to finish the storyboard activity in the lesson observed. There was no reduction in the amount of work he was given, for example a reduced number of 'frames' to complete, but no consequence for the fact he had only completed about a sixth of the task. This meant that for some of the children observed there was an acceptance that they would produce little or no work, and that it would not be of a high quality. In some cases it led to teaching assistants supporting pupils by telling them the answers.

The pace of lessons was normally very brisk, with very few opportunities for children to revise or over-learn. This meant that on some occasions the time given for a task was not sufficient for them to finish before the work was discussed. The child would then either fail to complete the task, or would miss the discussion. Some pupils completed very little work as a result of this.

Little homework was set in the lessons observed, so little evidence was collected with regard to this. Observations showed that some work had been completed for homework with no evidence of differentiated tasks or materials, but there was evidence of differentiation by outcome. For example in the English lesson observed, Robbie and Lesley had been set homework to prepare a talk about themselves. Both of them were able to produce a talk,

but these were considerably shorter than their peers' talks and in Lesley's case the use of language was very simple and restricted.

Communication between the teacher and the teaching assistant appeared to be very limited. There was no evidence of prior working or conversations and very little discussion or interaction was seen in lessons. Where it was seen, it was usually initiated by the teaching assistant. Nothing was seen that suggested partnership working, or direction by teachers. Teaching assistants spent much of their time focusing and refocusing pupils. Additionally they reiterated explanations of concepts and instructions and reminded pupils what to do. Where necessary some teaching assistants modified materials – 'on the hoof', with a number of teaching assistants using small whiteboards that they had brought with them. Sometimes teaching assistants appeared to do the work for the pupils. Where teaching assistants were not present, there was no evidence that teachers accounted for this by preparing different work for the target pupils.

4.7.2 Second set of observations

The second set of observations took place after Christmas at the beginning of the spring term at a time when teachers and teaching assistants had had four months to get to know their pupils; time to read their statements and time to assess their work and progress. This time the focus of the observations was on the provision as expressed on their statement and whether there was evidence of this being accounted for by teachers and teaching assistants in their planning and work in the classroom. Findings as outlined below relate to what was seen in class relating to the specific provisions on statements.

These observations revealed little progression from the preliminary observations when teachers did not know their pupils with statements of SEN and were feeling their way. There was little evidence of any increased awareness of the provision on pupils' statements and what this meant for classroom planning and teaching. For example Joseph was very able, but had almost completely illegible writing and needed support to produce written work that reflected his level of ability. In the lesson observed the written work he produced was almost completely illegible, despite his obvious understanding of the work being covered. However, no attempt was made either by the subject teacher or the teaching assistant to enable Joseph to record his work on the computer so it could be read – or for the teaching assistant to act as scribe. There was no evidence that the class teacher was aware of his responsibility to provide such an alternative tool, and that it was clearly outlined as a need in Joseph's statement.

All the pupils' statements outlined a need for differentiation of the curriculum. Some went into great detail regarding the levels of this and the sorts of differentiation needed, others more broadly outlining the need for teachers to think about the way information is presented to enable the pupil to access the curriculum. As in the first round of observations there was little evidence of differentiation of materials or content. A number of lessons were observed where worksheets were provided. In only one lesson was a differentiated sheet provided.

Most pupils required some sort of restructuring of tasks into small sequential steps with the support of visual cues. There was little evidence of this. On occasions teaching assistants restructured the tasks by breaking

them down for pupils who were struggling. Visual clues or cues were very rarely used. Key words were not routinely put on the board, and even when initial explanations were clear and simple they were very rarely supported by visual reminders. Where visual cues were used they were provided by a number of the teaching assistants who brought their own small whiteboards to the lessons to support their target pupils. Again there was little evidence of teachers and teaching assistants taking a joint approach to differentiation, provision of visual supports or preparation of materials. On the whole the evidence seemed to suggest that the provision outlined on pupils' statements was not being met on a regular basis. The evidence also suggested that teachers were not aware of their responsibility towards meeting the provision on statements.

4.7.3 Third set of observations

The third set of observations was more structured that the first two in that I was looking for evidence of particular behaviour and interaction between the teacher and pupil, and teaching assistant and pupil, and for evidence of work completed during the lesson. Apart from recording incidences of the behaviour being targeted, I also made comments regarding the pupils and teachers to provide me with supporting information around this behaviour. The focus was on the degree of interaction between the pupil and teacher and/or teaching assistant and the amount of work being completed by the target pupil.

The evidence of the 23 lessons observed pointed to very little active participation on the part of the target pupils (see Appendix 8), as could be measured by the level at which they put up their hands and asked or

answered questions, both prompted and unprompted. Very little direct interaction was observed between the subject teacher and the target pupils. Although interaction took place between the teaching assistants and pupils very little planned differentiation took place, and surprising little unplanned differentiation.

4.8   Discussion of Strand 1

Observations carried out as part of Strand 1 of the research focused on looking at classroom practice specifically with reference to how this practice impacts on those pupils with statements of SEN and on the contribution of teaching assistants to this. Although the focus of each set of observations differed slightly, in essence all were looking at the ways in which teachers and teaching assistants addressed the learning of pupils with SEN. A number of interesting impressions of practice were gained which suggest avenues for future exploration. These impressions are considered in the discussion below.

Firstly in terms of access to the curriculum very little differentiation of material was in evidence. On the whole observations indicated that all pupils were given the same text books and worksheets to use, and in English the same texts were studied with no simplification of works by, for example Charles Dickens. On the few occasions when differentiated material was provided, for example when Richard was presented with a differentiated revision booklet, pupils showed increased motivation and were able to complete the work set. Where undifferentiated material was provided that

was too difficult for pupils the result was that pupils did not complete work and on occasions this had a detrimental effect on their behaviour and motivation.

Linked to this issue is the question of appropriate learning challenges. Although there was little evidence of differentiation of materials, there was evidence that teachers differentiated by outcome. When this was used appropriately it could be effective. For example in the History lesson observed on primary and secondary sources the History teacher made it clear what he expected from different pupils. For less able pupils he expected simple sentences showing they had some understanding, while for more able pupils there was an expectation that their explanations would be more detailed. This strategy enabled less able pupils to succeed and to develop understanding of the concepts at a level appropriate to them.

However as shown above, on more than one occasion when pupils were expected to complete less work than their peers at a lower standard, they had been set an inappropriate challenge and were then expected to fail. There was little evidence of teachers setting the pupils under consideration realistic, achievable but also challenging learning targets, and giving them time to practise the skills that they were obtaining.

In terms of the teaching observed, it was noticeable how few teachers used a variety of materials to support their teaching, with very few using visual cues. Where visual cues were used (in the case of Richard's revision booklet) there was evidence that this supported pupils to understand the task, and therefore to gain success. Also there was surprising little evidence of teachers explaining difficult subject-specific vocabulary. Where this was seen it appeared to be in the context of 'good teaching' – for example as observed

in the PHSE lesson, where the teacher used questioning and reiteration effectively to ensure all pupils had understood an activity and were able to participate.

The contribution of teaching assistants to classroom practice, as suggested by the observations, appeared to be almost a role of what I would call 'interpreter' whereby on the whole teaching assistants sat next to a pupil and restated what the teacher had told the class. It was noticeable that there was very little interaction observed between the teacher and the teaching assistant and little evidence that any pre-planning had occurred. Similarly during the lessons there were few occasions when the teacher and teaching assistant communicated other than at a very basic level.

With pupils who had severe difficulties and were clearly finding it very difficult to tackle the work, evidence from the observations suggested that teachers left the teaching assistant to work with the pupil. Some teaching assistants showed evidence of skill in simplifying work and concepts to enable pupils to access the work, for example in the case of the History lesson when Peter was asked to complete a timeline. His main difficulty was writing in the events so his teaching assistant enabled him to show his understanding by cutting out the events and allowing Peter to put them in the appropriate place. In the case of some less skilled teaching assistants, however, when faced with a pupil who did not understand the work, there was some evidence that they simply solved the problem by telling the pupil what to write or how to complete the task. The apparent abrogation of responsibility shown by some teachers was not substituted by their giving any adequate tools to these teaching assistants to support these pupils effectively. This meant that at

times teaching assistants began to complete work for pupils as they did not have sufficient understanding of the task to assist the pupil without doing the work – or indeed doing the work for the pupil, because the task was actually beyond the competence of the pupil.

There was some evidence from the observations that pupils had different attitudes to their teaching assistant. Some were very dependent on the teaching assistant and had little interaction with their peers as a result of this, while a number of other pupils, namely Robbie and Mary, preferred (albeit for apparently different reasons) not to be supported by an assistant, and actively tried to disengage from their support.

The second set of observations indicated that teachers did not fully understand the requirements of pupils' statements, nor account for them in their planning. Evidence from the observations indicated that although teachers had been working with these children for the previous four months, they did not have a great deal of knowledge of the extent of their difficulties, which meant that they were still not able to set realistic learning challenges. Nor could they effectively assess progress.

Although the pupils observed were included in lessons in the sense they were sitting in class with their peers, I would question whether on the evidence of what I observed the teaching strategies and approaches used offered them suitable opportunities to practise their skills and develop concepts at a level appropriate to their need. I suggest this because not only did much of the work set appear to be inaccessible but also the learning challenges set were often not appropriate. For example, in the case of lessons where pupils were expected to complete less work than their peers at

a lower standard, as was observed on more than one occasion, pupils were being set an inappropriate challenge and then expected to fail it. It could be argued that the teaching strategies and approaches being used failed to fulfil the expectations of the Inclusion Statement in the Revised National Curriculum (DfEE, 1999) in failing to account for the needs of pupils for whom learning is more difficult. Additionally I would argue that teaching approaches, at what Lewis and Norwich (2000, 2001, 2005, 2007) would deem to be the high density end of a continuum of approaches, were not generally in evidence.

The effectiveness of teaching assistants' contribution is also questionable on the evidence of observations. The observations carried out suggested that teaching assistants and teachers were not working together to provide the optimum learning opportunities for the pupils. The level of communication between the teachers and teaching assistants was very low. Sometimes teaching assistants asked teachers for clarification to enable them to support pupils, but there was almost no evidence of teachers and teaching assistants having worked together prior to the lesson to ensure that materials and resources provided would meet the needs of particular pupils, nor was there evidence that teachers had planned their lessons with regard to using a teaching assistant effectively. Where a pupil had a high level of teaching assistant support there appeared to be evidence that the teacher left the teaching of that pupil to the teaching assistant, and in many cases did not appear to engage with the pupil at all.

A critical finding was the indication that it was very difficult for teachers or teaching assistants to attempt to accurately measure pupil progress as

there were no clear expectations of what they ought to be achieving according to their ability. This will be interrogated further in Chapter 6 when I review documentary evidence, and will form part of the concluding discussion in Chapter 7 when all three strands of research are brought together.

Chapter 5: Strand 2 – Teaching Assistant Questionnaires and Interviews

5.1 Aims and Research Questions for Strand 2

In order to investigate and interrogate further findings suggested from observations, I wanted also to find out how teaching assistants perceived the difficulties faced by their target pupils and their opinions regarding the effectiveness of classroom practice – both in terms of their contribution and that of the teachers with whom they worked. In particular I was interested to find out whether my experiences and perceptions of practice over a limited number of lessons corresponded with the perceptions of teaching assistants who were working constantly in class with a number of teachers across a number of subjects. This I hoped would provide evidence with which to evaluate the question of whether one-to-one teaching support allocated to pupils enabled teaching assistants to contribute effectively to provision offered in class. Additionally I hoped that by asking questions about pupils' need for differentiation; progress in different subjects with and without differentiation; and the effects of interaction with teachers and teaching assistants I would begin to gather evidence to answer the questions of whether pupils with significant educational needs require teaching strategies and approaches that are markedly distinct, or whether indeed they simply need these approaches to be more explicit and precise.

5.2　Methods

I chose to gather data regarding teaching assistants' perceptions of their and classroom teacher practice, by asking them to complete a questionnaire, followed by a one-to-one interview.

5.2.1 Questionnaires

Questionnaires are a tool used widely for collecting survey information. My decision to use this as one of the ways in which to collect data was to gather information that would inform the interviews that I intended to carry out. As this was a very small scale questionnaire I was able to use a semistructured, open and partially word-based design. The advantage of using a semistructured questionnaire was being able to present questions and statements which provided a focus and structure for the teaching assistants, while enabling them to add their own comments (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000). One disadvantage in using the semi-structured questionnaire format that I chose is the potential for misunderstanding due to the way that different people may interpret language, and the need to consider that the structured questions determined the possible answers (Scott and Usher, 1999). The opportunities for respondents to add their own comments intended to enable elaboration might also be constrained by the respondents' writing ability and willingness to make an increased effort (Patton, 1980), but would be probed further in the follow-up interviews. Additionally I had to consider how open questions should be worded to ensure the answers had some authenticity, while not discouraging respondents from completing the questions because they were imprecise or complex (Cohen, Manion and

Morrison, 2000; Scott and Usher, 1999). A possible solution, which I chose

not to take due to time pressures, is to carry out a pilot beforehand to iron out

potential problems with questions and question formats. Instead I chose to go

through the questionnaire with the respondents first, using other children as

examples (this is outlined in more detail in section 5.3 of this chapter).

5.2.2 Interviews

Interviews can vary in their formality, and can have a number of purposes,

from being the principal means of gathering information to testing or

suggesting hypotheses, or acting as an explanatory device, for example to

follow up unexpected results, or delve deeper into the motivations of

respondents (Kerlinger, 1970). *'We interview people to find out things we*

cannot directly observe' (Patton, 1980, p.196). When interviews are less

formal or unstructured, what Dexter calls elite (Dexter, 1970), they enable the

researcher to modify his or her enquiry to follow up interesting responses or

investigate underlying motives (Robson, 1993).

> *…in the standardized interview…a deviation is ordinarily handled*
> *statistically; but in an elite interview…an unusual interpretation may*
> *suggest a revision, a reinterpretation, an extension, a new approach.*
> (Dexter, 1970, p.6)

It is important however, when using the unstructured approach to

recognise that subjectivity and bias may influence the line of questions

pursued by the researcher and by what they interpret from the answers.

Patton points out that the purpose of interviewing is *not* to put things in

someone's mind, but rather '*to access the perspective of the person being*

interviewed' (Patton, 1980, p.196). Hitchcock and Hughes (1989) suggest that

the interpersonal nature of interviews make it inevitable that the researcher

will have some influence on the interviewee and therefore on the data. In the case of my research, I need to bear in mind my relationship with the teaching assistants. As the SENCO I am responsible for managing their work.

Just as field notes are important tools in observation and need to be written up with little delay, responses made in interviews need to be recorded and notes transcribed as soon as possible after the interview to ensure accuracy (Robson, 1993). It is important to be aware that this is a very time consuming process, particularly when tape recorded interviews are transcribed verbatim.

5.3   Context and Procedures

Following the first two sets of classroom observations but before the third set, the ten teaching assistants who had been observed (i.e. those providing the principal support for the 15 pupils over nine classes) were invited to complete questionnaires about their perceptions of (a) the teaching and support needs of their target pupils, and (b) those pupils' needs, attitudes, learning and social abilities (see section 5.2 for further details of the questionnaire foci and format). The questionnaires (see copy in Appendix 4) were intended to follow up issues that had arisen as a result of classroom observations as well as forming the basis for discussion with the teaching assistants individually, and were therefore constructed after I had conducted the first two sets of observations and transcribed and analysed the results.

In order to ensure that all those taking part in the questionnaire understood the 'scoring', teaching assistants were invited to a preparatory meeting. All the teaching assistants invited knew that I was conducting

research involving the cohort of year 7 pupils with statements (see Chapter 3) and had previously agreed to information gained from the two sets of in-class observations being used in the study. At this meeting I outlined the purpose of the questionnaire and talked through the ethics involved in completing it (see also Chapter 3). All the parents of those children involved had been asked for their consent (see Appendix 9) and had agreed in writing or (in the case of two parents) agreed verbally. All teachers within the school had been informed of the research and asked to send any concerns or objections to me in writing if they did not wish to be observed. This questionnaire would be completed in confidence and teaching assistants were told these should not be discussed outside the room, nor among colleagues. Although I would be able to identify the respondent, all their answers would be confidential to me and not relayed other than as anonymised data. As a preliminary exercise I went through each question and applied this to pupils in a different year group with whom they currently worked. This pre-questionnaire process, while not a full pilot procedure, included informing teaching assistants of how I intended the numbering system, whereby 0 means not at all and 10 means completely, to be completed.

The ten teaching assistants were then given the questionnaires to complete. As we had the use of a large room they were able to spread out and complete the questionnaires without being overlooked by colleagues. As part of their instructions they were asked to complete this without any collaboration. I was available to answer procedural questions only – for example if they wanted more clarification as to the numbering system, however I was careful to make it clear that I could not tell them what I thought

about a particular question. If they were unsure they were told they should leave a blank or clarify their thoughts in writing. I had negotiated up to two hours for them to complete these questionnaires if necessary, but informed them that if they were unable to finish in the time allocated I would take in their answers and find an alternative time for them to come back and finish. In the event all the questionnaires were finished within the time allocated.

Following this meeting I reviewed the completed questionnaires and pinpointed answers on each individual questionnaire that I wanted to probe. Additionally I identified general areas on the questionnaire that I wanted to explore, for example differentiation came up as an issue for all respondents; motivation was only asked about indirectly and as such needed following up in the subsequent interviews. Each teaching assistant was asked whether they would be prepared to participate in a follow-up interview to discuss their answers. Again I had been allocated time to complete these during the teaching assistants' working hours and could inform them that the interview should last no longer than half an hour and that what they said would remain confidential, with only anonymised comments being used within the research study. I also asked each teaching assistant if they were happy for me to record the session. This permission was given by all ten teaching assistants concerned. To carry out the recording I used a Dictaphone and as the interviews were relatively short, I transcribed the session verbatim as soon after the session (within 48 hours) as I was able. These were carried out over a two week period to ensure that I could transcribe one interview before I carried out the next interview. These post-questionnaire interviews were semistructured, to the extent that having begun with answers given in their

questionnaires I followed the leads that these answers suggested. In order to gain some respondent validation I met again with interviewees and asked them to read the transcript to ensure they felt it was accurate. (see also Chapter 3 and Appendix 6).

5.4   The Foci and Formats of the Questionnaire and Interview

The items in the questionnaire reflected the findings from the classroom observations (see Chapter 4). Teaching assistants were asked to make a judgement about the level of differentiation that they felt was necessary to enable their target pupils to access the curriculum. They were also asked to identify those school subjects in which the lessons seemed to be most or least problematic for their pupils and what they believed to be the reasons for these lessons being more or less successful.

Having judged which lessons they felt to be the most and least problematic they were asked to make a judgement about the progress pupils had made in their subjects, and what they felt affected this. As part of this, they were asked to judge the amount of interaction, both positive and negative, that took place in different subjects that they had supported. Teaching assistants were then asked to comment on their target pupils' behaviour, independence and social ability and finally on the degree to which teaching assistants felt they were included by their peers, their subject teacher and their form tutor.

The format of the questionnaire used a rating scale to elicit an initial response and gave space for comments and qualifications. A more comprehensive discussion of this can be found in Chapter 7; however, when

reviewing the answers, I found that while the format chosen for the questionnaire enabled me to gain a broad understanding of the perceptions of teaching assistants, the interpretation within the scale was not necessarily consistent from respondent to respondent. The qualifying comments made were helpful in clarifying views, however not all respondents made comments, or made only brief comments.

Teaching assistants' perceptions as evidenced by their questionnaire responses were then interrogated during the interviews. These were semistructured in that I started from the evidence gained within the questionnaire that I wanted to follow up – for example if particular answers had been unclear or if there were some anomalies that I had identified – and then took up points from the answers to explore further. This had the advantage that some of the issues that had been unclear in their questionnaire were clarified and comments they had made could be expanded. A problem which I became aware of was the danger of leading questions which might elicit the answer I expected, and which I tried to avoid by asking open rather than closed questions, reiterating what they had actually written and asking them to expand.

5.5   Results

In order to move from the data to analysis I made a grid to chart findings from the questionnaire (Appendix 5). These made it possible to extrapolate data in terms of numbers and to look at a number of variables – for example in looking at pupils' progress in subjects against the degree of interaction they had with their subject teachers I charted information regarding the different

levels of interaction they had in subjects against the subjects where they had made the most or least progress (see Appendix 10). Using the transcriptions from the interviews I went through each one and grouped comments – so I grouped comments about differentiation; independence; teacher – pupil interaction etc., to enable me to see repeated patterns.

The following sections looking at what emerged combines the findings from both the questionnaires and interviews.

5.5.1 Differentiation

All ten (100%) teaching assistants felt that the pupils they worked with (all 15 pupils in year 7 with a statement of SEN) needed differentiation to access the curriculum and in the case of 13 of the 15 pupils, that even when there was differentiation these pupils still did not have full access to the curriculum. When this was followed up during the interviews, all the teaching assistants felt that there were a number of factors that were affecting pupils' access to the curriculum, including differentiation (or lack of it). Of the 15 pupils under consideration, three (20%) were thought to need the curriculum to be totally differentiated in order to gain any curriculum access, while a further ten pupils (66%) were thought to need some degree of differentiation. Only two pupils were not seen as needing more differentiation than would have been expected in the usual classroom situation.

All ten teaching assistants felt that there was very little differentiation done by teachers in terms of presentation of different materials or modified materials. However, when subject teachers did differentiate teaching materials this had a great impact on all of the pupils' ability to access the curriculum, produce work and make progress, including those three identified

as needing 'total' differentiation. For example Murray, one of the three pupils

for whom it was felt that the curriculum needed to be completely differentiated,

had a Spanish teacher who provided simple structured work, broken down

into small steps using visual clues, which enabled him to make real progress

in the subject. His teaching assistant commented that '*…his Spanish teacher*

always has something prepared – I can just turn up and not have to improvise

on the spot – there's always lots of equipment (sic) I can use'.

This was notably in a subject in which his teaching assistant felt he had

real motivation to succeed, an opinion that was backed up by the report from

the Spanish teacher in Murray's record of progress (Appendix11). This could

be contrasted with Murray's lack of progress and motivation in Science, where

it was observed that his teacher not only did not provide any differentiated

materials, but also did not engage with or interact with Murray on any level,

and seemed not to expect Murray to be able to make progress. His teaching

assistant said:

> *Science – well the teacher there…does nothing at all – a complete*
> *waste of time – he's in there just copying things down – when I've had*
> *him down here using BBC Bitesize, interactive stuff, he can engage*
> *with things and he's stimulated by it – he's actually gaining.*

All ten teaching assistants interviewed expressed the view that

differentiation mainly occurred by outcome, in that teachers set work which

they did not expect certain pupils to complete, and therefore they accepted

incomplete work, work to a poor standard or even no work at all, rather than

setting appropriate tasks with clear expectations. All ten teaching assistants

felt that this meant that, in turn, many of their target pupils (13 out of 15) did

not expect to be able to complete work or produce work of a high standard.

Seven (70%) of the teaching assistants reported that sometimes it felt that they ended up 'doing' work for pupils, telling them what to write. This was partly because the tasks were often too challenging, but also because they had little or no time to discuss work with subject teachers. They did not know enough about the topic to differentiate the task themselves.

5.5.1.1 Summary

To sum up then, all ten teaching assistants supported a strong degree of differentiation as being necessary if classes were to be effectively inclusive. Despite there being three pupils for whom totally differentiated work was seen as appropriate there was some evidence to support the view that even for those pupils good differentiation could enable the pupil to make progress, even in subjects which might be considered problematic for pupils with SEN (as in the case for Murray in Spanish). In teaching assistants' views there was little differentiation other than by outcome and this affected pupils' motivation. Because of the lack of effective differentiation more than two thirds of the teaching assistants felt they sometimes 'did' the work for pupils.

5.5.2 Problematic lessons and their causes

There were a range of lessons seen by the teaching assistants as problematic for their target pupils, with English having five mentions, History, Maths and Geography with four each. These were seen as being the most problematic. A small range of subjects causing fewer problems were mentioned, with only Maths (cited five times) featuring significantly. This meant that Maths, while problematic for four pupils was also the least problematic for four other pupils. This may have been because of differences from teacher to teacher.

Teaching style was identified by six (60%) teaching assistants as a contributory fact to a pupil's progress. This was followed up during the teaching assistant interviews. Teaching style was seen as significant for seven pupils, of these as highly significant for two. Literacy, numeracy skills and conceptual difficulties were all seen by all teaching assistants as significant, with literacy skills being particularly significant for nine pupils. As there was no explicit question regarding motivation, this was followed up in the discussion, but also looked at in the context of teaching assistants' perception of the level of interaction between pupils with a statement of SEN and their subject teachers.

In their interviews eight (80%) teaching assistants suggested that for a significant number of pupils – nine in all – low literacy levels prevented or impeded access to the curriculum (Appendix 12). The eight teaching assistants concerned felt that there was little evidence that subject teachers acknowledged this in their choice of materials or lesson planning, and also little evidence that subject teachers really appreciated the degree to which these pupils' literacy levels were poor. Seven of the pupils had reading ages in excess of four years behind their chronological age, with one pupil being functionally unable to read at all (see Chapter 3 and Appendix 12).

Despite this, the eight teaching assistants concerned reported that few teachers provided alternative texts, which was borne out by the evidence of classroom observations, when the only alternative text that was seen was a differentiated Science booklet. Observations in English, where the text for the current year seven was Great Expectations, showed all pupils working on the original text. Targets set for the end of Key Stage 3 (see

Appendix 13) back up the eight teaching assistants who asserted that teachers failed to appreciate the degree to which pupils' literacy levels may hinder their achievement.

For 11 of the 15 pupils access to the curriculum was seen as being impeded by their difficulties with understanding concepts, either because of cognitive impairment or because of speech and language difficulties. For these 11 pupils, the eight teaching assistants working with them believed that concepts needed to be introduced in a concrete way with visual cues, but that this was not often forthcoming. All these eight teaching assistants also believed that this was because most subject teachers either did not understand or were unaware of the nature of the difficulties experienced by pupils. This was despite the information made available to all teachers at the beginning of the year about each pupil with a statement of special educational needs.

Concentration and focus was also felt to be a particular issue for seven of the pupils and the four teaching assistants who worked with these pupils said they dealt with it in terms of refocusing them. At least two pupils needed constant one-to-one support to enable them to stay on task. Hugo's teaching assistant also felt that there was cause for concern because she felt that although he concentrated, he missed a lot of the teaching in every lesson. She commented '…*he just gets on and there's always someone there, so they (teachers) don't realise how much he misses…they treat him just the same as other students…they know to speak to his face but forget very easily*'.

Despite his profound hearing loss, teachers perceived him as being 'normal' and made few if any allowances for the fact that he may have been

missing much of what was being said – both by them and by other pupils. Hugo himself was reluctant to draw the teachers' attention to his difficulties. His teaching assistant said *'…he will never say the background noise is affecting him, but I know it is'.* For two pupils, the issue of focus related to their distractibility and wish to socialise rather than concentrate. Unlike the majority of the target pupils, these two pupils were reluctant to accept or use support. Of Robbie, his teaching assistant commented, '*I don't think he finds the work difficult, he just wants to talk and enjoy himself, he makes no effort he doesn't want to do it.'*

5.5.2.1   Summary

Apart from the need for differentiation there was a strong feeling from the teaching assistants that pupils' access to the curriculum was also affected by a number of other factors, the most significant being down to ability in literacy and conceptual difficulties, with focusing and concentration difficulties and teachers' teaching styles also having what teaching assistants believed to be a significant effect. Additionally those teaching assistants working with pupils for whom low levels of literacy were a significant barrier to learning did not believe that on the whole teachers were fully aware of the barrier this presented, nor as a matter of course were different reading materials provided. They also believed that not enough account was taken of conceptual difficulties and the need to provide concrete examples and visual support, but interestingly appeared to feel that it was their role to refocus pupils when they were not accessing the curriculum because of lack of concentration.

5.5.3 Progress and motivation

There was a range of subjects in which pupils were seen to have made most or least progress, with Maths standing out as the subject where pupils had made most progress (in five cases). Eight of the ten teaching assistants expressed an opinion as to why this was and all believed that progress was somewhat affected by teaching style and differentiation, but all felt that the most important factor was pupils' motivation, skills and attitude(Appendix 5).

All bar two of the pupils were thought by their teaching assistants to have a positive to very positive attitude to support, with many of them actively seeking it. There was a large variety of subjects in which pupils were thought to show most motivation, with Maths being significantly mentioned (six times) and fewer subjects where pupils showed least motivation, with History (five times) and Geography (four times) being significantly mentioned (Appendix 5).

In follow up interviews nine of the ten teaching assistants were concerned that some of their pupils were not motivated to work independently (14 out of 15) and showed little initiative. All ten felt that most of the target pupils (13 out of 15) liked having support and six expressed concern that pupils (7 out of the 15) had become too dependent on this support. Teaching assistants who expressed this opinion also felt that this was exacerbated by the willingness of many subject teachers to relinquish their role in educating particularly those pupils with a high level of support, and that they had inadvertently encouraged pupils to depend on the teaching assistant. Such teachers were seen as actually depending on the teaching assistant presence. Two of the teaching assistants felt that they themselves to some degree colluded in this, but felt this was unavoidable in a situation where they

were given little or no opportunity to plan with subject teachers or a role other than that of working closely with a particular pupil.

During the interviews, all ten teaching assistants expressed the view that, naturally enough, pupils' motivation was affected by achieving success and was strongly related to the level of interaction with the subject teacher (see Appendix 10). Teaching assistants working with those five pupils who needed a high level of support – up to full time – expressed a concern that many teachers left the work and interaction with the pupil to the teaching assistant and often went for whole lessons without addressing the pupil or sometimes even acknowledging the pupil, as if the pupil was not their responsibility. Two of the teaching assistants thought that this was partly because teachers genuinely were not sure about their responsibilities towards such pupils. These two teaching assistants spoke to teachers to let them know it would be helpful if they would ask the pupil questions and reported that they found this made a difference to pupils' motivation and attitude towards the subject. Peter's teaching assistant reported that she spoke to his Religious Studies teacher '*I said it would be helpful if he could ask (Peter) questions and say his name when he speaks and he's been doing that, so he's improved a lot in RS.*'

5.5.3.1   Summary

Teaching assistants felt that most pupils had a positive attitude towards support and were motivated to do well, however most were not motivated to work independently. There was concern among the teaching assistants that teachers did not engage actively with the least able pupils and that there was a perception among teachers that teaching of the most challenged pupils was

the responsibility of the teaching assistants. It was felt by the teaching assistants that this led some pupils to be dependent on the teaching assistants.

5.5.4 Interaction between teachers and pupils

Substantial differences were seen by nine of the ten teaching assistants in terms of the amount of interaction that took place between pupils and different subject teachers (see Appendix 10). Only three pupils were seen by their teaching assistants as being treated the same as other pupils without statements. Of these, one, Hugo, had a hearing impairment. His teaching assistant felt that teachers did not recognise that this caused him difficulties and therefore thought of him as they did all the other pupils. Of the other two, Louise was on the autistic spectrum and her difficulties were less noticeable as a learner in the class than they were to her peers on a social level, while Robbie's teaching assistant felt that he had developed many strategies for concealing his difficulties and was perceived by his teachers (his teaching assistant thought) as being the same as many other 'typical' 12 year old boys.

For the remaining 12 pupils the picture was mixed, with three of the pupils for example receiving much less input than their peers without statements in at least one subject area. Six pupils (including one of the three already cited) received less help and support in at least one subject than their peers without statements. Six pupils (including two of those pupils who received less help in at least one subject area) were asked for fewer contributions by teachers in one or more subject areas. Four pupils (including three of the pupils offered less help than their peers without statements in at least one subject area and including three of the pupils who were asked for

fewer contributions than peers without statements in at least one subject area) were offered more help in at least one subject area. One pupil was not able to access all his lessons, but when he did so was seen by his teaching assistant as being completely left to work with them. One pupil was addressed more in virtually all subjects than his peers. His teaching assistant perceived that this was because of his poor behaviour.

Nine of the ten teaching assistants, and therefore those who worked with pupils for whom the level of interaction with their teachers was perceived to be different to those of their peers expressed the view that this had an impact on pupils' progress and motivation in those subjects. For example, Murray's teaching assistant had noted that the subject in which Murray had made the least progress was Science, and that this was the subject in which the teacher addressed him much less than she did other pupils, asked him for contributions or answers much less than his peers and offered him less help than she did his peers. In Spanish, where he had made most progress, the Spanish teacher offered him much more help and advice. Mary, who had particular difficulties in Maths and Geography and of her subjects had made the least progress in Geography and shown the least motivation in Geography, was addressed by her teachers much less in Maths and Geography than her peers and asked for contributions much less than she was her peers. This is presented in more detail in table form in Appendix 10.

5.5.4.1 Summary

Teaching assistants had a perception that levels of interaction between those pupils with statements and their teachers often differed to the level of interaction experienced by most pupils, with significant numbers of pupils

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receiving less help or being asked for fewer contributions than their peers without statements. This varied across subjects and among teachers of the same subject. Where pupils were treated in the same way as other pupils this did not necessarily indicate that pupils were accessing the curriculum equally, nor that they did not have difficulties that might necessitate additional support. Because this question was not asked of teaching assistants in conjunction with the question on pupil progress, any connection between the levels of interaction in particular subjects and progress made by pupils was made as part of the analysis of teaching assistants' response to the questionnaire, and as such will contribute to the final discussion chapter, but not be a subject of further discussion at this point.

5.5.5 Behaviour

Eight pupils were seen by their teaching assistants as always or usually behaving appropriately, while seven were seen as sometimes or rarely behaving appropriately. When poor behaviour was seen, all but one of the teaching assistants believed that most teachers reacted more leniently with these pupils than they would with other pupils. However, a comparison of the average number of positive and negative incidents recorded for statemented pupils compared with the average for other pupils did not appear to support that perception (see Appendix 14). This may be because one particular statemented pupil's high negative tariff may have skewed these results, and also that with only 15 pupils any figures can only provide a rough indication.

Interviews show that although eight pupils in this cohort were almost always well-behaved, some (including two of those who usually behaved well) exhibited 'odd' or 'unusual' behaviour. Two of the 15 had significant

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behaviour difficulties. The consensus on the whole among the ten teaching assistants was that teachers generally reacted more leniently to pupils with a statement of special educational needs, particularly if their behaviour was 'odd' and associated with a diagnosis – e.g. of autism. The exception to this was in the case of one of the two pupils with behavioural difficulties, whose behaviour was generally poor and attention seeking. Although his statement was for Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties, he did not have a label such as Autistic or ADHD, and his teaching assistant believed that many teachers felt his bad behaviour was deliberate and something he could control. She had gained this perception from her observations when working in class and in conversation with his teachers. Four of the teaching assistants said they felt that teachers did not always know how to deal with pupils, and in the case for example of autistic pupils felt that they were not sure of how much they should expect the behaviour to change and how much they could challenge it. Again this was something that, reportedly (by five teaching assistants), many teachers left up to the teaching assistants to manage. One teaching assistant said that a number of teachers had told her that they thought that they should not do anything about a particular pupil's behaviour because he had a statement.

A comparison of pupils' average number of recorded positive and negative incidents showed that the average number of recorded negative incidents was higher for this cohort of pupils with a statement of SEN than the average number recorded for pupils without a statement in the cohort, but also that the average number of recorded *positive* incidents was *lower*. Although again the extreme behaviour of one pupil with a statement in particular, and

the low numbers of pupils with a statement in comparison with the pupils without a statement means the results are not statistically significant. One teaching assistant felt that this suggested that teachers did not feel responsibility for the behaviour of many of particularly those pupils with a high level of support on their statement – and therefore did not acknowledge positive behaviour any more than they dealt with negative behaviour (see Appendix 14).

5.5.5.1 Summary

Although the behaviour of pupils with statements in the cohort studied was fairly evenly matched between being nearly always good (eight pupils) and nearly always inappropriate (seven pupils) teaching assistants felt that teachers tolerated poor or odd behaviour when they believed it was part of the pupil's SEN (e.g. in the case of pupils with autism), but were less tolerant when it came to a pupil they saw as being simply 'naughty' (as in the case of Tony). Teachers were not perceived as dealing with the behaviour of pupils with a statement in the way they would other pupils either because they left it to the teaching assistants, or because they were not sure whether a pupil's difficulties meant that they should not challenge the behaviour. There was some evidence to suggest that teachers did not fully engage with the pupils concerned, since given the number of pupils who always behaved well, it might be expected that the percentage of positive incidents might be equal or better than for other pupils without statements.

5.5.6 Pupils' independence, social ability and inclusion

All the pupils except one could find their way round the school on their own and were able, if necessary to get to lessons independently. The pupil unable to do so needed assistance because of his mobility. All pupils except one brought the correct equipment to school and were able to organise their belongings. The one pupil with little equipment was thought by his teaching assistant to have made a conscious decision not to bring any, since he had told her on a number of occasions that he couldn't be bothered.

Generally, with the exception of Kerry and Hugo, teaching assistants working with the remaining 13 pupils felt that their social ability was poor (Appendix 15 and see Chapter 3). All but three pupils were seen as experiencing particular difficulties in joining in with unstructured group activities, with only Terry, Kerry and Hugo fully able, while Peter, Ricardo, Josh, Tony, Sally, Richard, Louise, Murray and Mary were seen by their teaching assistants as having significant difficulties. Initiating contact with teachers, particularly unfamiliar teachers and other unfamiliar adults was also seen as causing 12 of the pupils' difficulty. Their teaching assistants believed that Peter, Ricardo, Jake and Richard all had significant difficulties with this, while again only Terry, Kerry and Hugo, found this unproblematic. For a number of children, Peter, Jake and Ricardo, initiating contact with their peers and even with friends was also seen by their teaching assistant to be difficult.

The degree to which teaching assistants felt that their target pupils were included varied. Tony, Richard and Louise were not felt by their teaching assistants to be included by their peers into their form, although it was felt that Tony was included to a large degree by his form tutor and to a

fair degree by subject teachers. Only Hugo was felt to be fully included by his peers, subject teachers and form teacher. Where teaching assistants felt they had the information, form tutors seemed to make most effort to include pupils, while subject teachers also made some effort to include most of the pupils in terms of greeting them, making sure they had somewhere to sit and were acknowledged by other pupils.

Follow up interviews revealed that nine of the teaching assistants generally felt that their pupils (14 out of the 15) were not included by teachers as much as they should be. Some gave examples which they felt showed an extreme lack of thought. For example, one form teacher did not include Murray in his form's assembly, which meant that Murray sat on his own in the hall with his teaching assistant while the rest of the form were performing on stage. The teaching assistant felt that the initial thoughtlessness of this was compounded when she told the form teacher of her omission, only to be told that it was too late to do anything about it.

Where tutors had worked to include pupils, two teaching assistants felt there had been positive results. For example one form tutor felt that the behaviour of the pupil with autism in his form was beginning to elicit negative responses from the rest of the class, and asked the SENCO to join him to talk to the form about why Peter had these difficulties and to give Peter's classmates a better understanding of his difficulties and the reasons for his behaviour. The tutor hoped that this would encourage greater understanding and therefore tolerance and support from the form. The result was indeed very positive, with many members of the form starting to take care of Peter and making moves to befriend and support him.

Ironically, where pupils were seen as being well to very well included – perhaps because they were perceived by teachers as 'normal', their difficulties tended to get overlooked. In the case of Hugo, who had a hearing impairment, his teaching assistant reported that generally teachers forgot about his difficulties, and therefore did not make the necessary accommodations for them. For example few of his teachers remembered to check he was wearing his hearing aids allowing him to sit at the back of the room, not using the radio aids which were stipulated as being essential on his statement. His teaching assistant commented that she was concerned that Hugo was not achieving to his potential because he actually missed crucial parts of the lesson, and any piece of work he produced was seen as being the result of a great effort and was rewarded by praise.

Louise, a girl with autism, appeared to be doing very well, and was certainly progressing academically, but her teaching assistant talked about how isolated she was in her form group, something that her form teacher had not picked up – again because in many ways she appeared to be so 'normal'. Robbie, who had quite significant difficulties in terms of dyslexia and dyspraxia, was so socially included by his peers, teachers tended to dismiss his difficulties as naughtiness and laziness. His teaching assistant reported that Robbie preferred to be picked on by teachers as being 'naughty' rather than standing out as having learning difficulties.

All the teaching assistants felt however, that despite these difficulties, on the whole most pupils were better included socially than academically, with form teachers (with one exception) concerned to include pupils in the form and encourage friendships. Academically, teaching assistants felt that for all

the reasons cited above pupils, particularly those with greater degrees of difficulty, were not well included. The work set was generally too difficult for them with very little differentiation and there was too little direct interaction with the pupils for teachers to gain a good understanding of their difficulties. This, it was felt led to problems when assessing pupils' progress and knowing how they had actually improved and performed. All the teaching assistants reported that they felt this was very ad hoc and dependent on individual teachers, while more consistency was needed across the school.

5.5.6.1 Summary

Teaching assistants expressed a concern that although pupils were able to cope at a superficial level most of the pupils under consideration lacked social skills and experienced difficulties, sometimes considerable difficulties with initiating appropriate contacts with adults, particularly unfamiliar adults and with dealing with unstructured situations. Despite this they felt that pupils' form tutors made an effort to include them in the form, although there was sometimes a lack of awareness among the teachers as to the degree to which pupils had difficulties with their peers. The main concern was that although pupils were relatively well included into the social fabric of the classroom they were not included academically. Possible implications of this will be discussed in Chapter 7.

5.6   Discussion of Strand 2

Evidence in strand 2 focuses on the perceptions of teaching assistants as revealed in their answers to a questionnaire (with questions based on issues that arose as a result of classroom observations) and follow up interviews. The discussion that follows will look at what these findings suggest about the impact of classroom practice, particularly with regard to the contribution of teaching assistants on pupils with statements of SEN and their ability to access the curriculum. Additionally they will be viewed in the context of interrogating the need for different teaching strategies and approaches and/or a different curriculum.

Teaching assistants' answers revealed their concern at the low level of differentiation provided for their pupils and believed that most of their pupils depended on adequate differentiation for access to the curriculum. Even with differentiation, it was generally felt that most of these pupils would still not have full access to the curriculum. In the few cases cited where good differentiation was in place there appeared to be evidence that this was an effective way of ensuring a pupil accessed the curriculum at a level appropriate to his ability and enabling him to make progress, albeit at a lower rate than his peers.

This suggests a need to question possible causes for teachers' lack of differentiation. Was this due to teachers' inadequate knowledge of how to differentiate, their lack of time to differentiate or little commitment to differentiate? Was it actually representative of work going on throughout the school? Given that teaching assistants believed that even *with* differentiation

most of the target pupils would still have inadequate access to the curriculum, it would seem that the curriculum offered, or the teaching approaches and strategies used to deliver the curriculum, may be problematic. On the other hand, as mentioned, one pupil with a high level of difficulty and dependency was able, with good differentiation, to access the curriculum in Spanish and make progress. It may be that what is offered (in terms of subjects) is not problematic, rather the way in which it is offered.

This supports suggestions from Lewis and Norwich (2001) that a continuum of teaching approaches is needed, with pupils having the most difficulty needing approaches and strategies for example that give pupils more opportunities to practise skills. Additionally the difficulty teachers seemed to have in adapting their teaching style to meeting the needs of this group of pupils resonates with Florian's (2005) assertion that the difficulty with inclusion into the mainstream of particular children is more to do with the gap between what is generally provided for the majority of pupils and the measures that need to be taken to support those pupils with learning difficulties that require more 'high density' approaches (Lewis and Norwich, 2001).

It would appear that pupils experienced problems in lessons for a variety of reasons which were often to do with their levels of literacy and numeracy, their lack of other basic skills and their attitude and motivation. For some of the pupils it was crucial that lessons were structured and well organised, while for some it was important that clear boundaries had been established. Teaching assistants were clear, however, that in all cases a major factor influencing pupil progress was the interaction between the subject teacher and the pupil. Predictably pupils were found to make less

progress when they were not well motivated, and again teaching assistants felt that the attitude and expectations of the subject teachers had a great influence on pupils' motivation, particularly when they did not make the effort to interact with the pupils themselves, but handed the responsibility for their teaching to the teaching assistant. This seems to support research carried out by Cremin et al (2005) who looked at different models of teaching assistant deployment, which found that when teachers and teaching assistants planned before their lessons and collaborated within their lessons they were able to provide more effectively for pupils.

Pupils' motivation to work independently was felt to be low but on the whole teaching assistants believed that most pupils wanted to work when they had support. The problem with this, however, seemed to be that a high level of support contributed towards making pupils more dependent and less inclined to work when there was not constant one-to-one attention. Additionally they felt that a high level of teaching assistant support enabled and encouraged teachers to take less responsibility for pupils' learning, behaviour and interactions, and even to abdicate responsibility completely. This seems reminiscent of, for example Armstrong (2008), Gerschel (2005) and Thomas (1992), as discussed in Chapter 2.

This suggests the need to look at the impact of teaching assistants and even whether having teaching assistants attached to individual children may militate against inclusion. Teaching assistant support and attention may encourage pupils to be dependent and also allow teachers to rely on them rather than planning for and teaching all pupils.

Some pupils with great degrees of difficulty were seen as making progress in subjects in which the teacher specifically planned for pupils with SEN and particularly where there was seen to be an understanding of a pupil's level and what was needed for them to progress. Murray, for example, made good progress in Spanish despite having a high degree of difficulty. In this subject he was able to make small steps and was motivated to do so because of the specific planning of the subject teacher who had begun her planning by looking at Murray's starting point and what would constitute good progress for him. This raises the question of how such success could be applied to work done throughout the school, and suggests the need for teachers to consider approaches and strategies set out in the National Strategy Documents on Teaching and Learning for Pupils with SEN/LDD (DCSF, 2008a, DCSF, 2008b).

Teaching assistants felt that low expectations of pupils caused problems and hindered achievement. In terms of differentiation, rather than adapting work to ensure a challenging task was set for pupils, many teachers seemed to think that differentiation by outcome was satisfactory, so that pupils were not expected to complete work. This suggests that teachers possibly do not know what progress pupils with SEN should make and therefore what they might be able to achieve. Teaching assistants felt these low expectations should be challenged.

These low expectations appear to cross over into the level of expectation around behaviour, with teaching assistants believing that teachers were more lenient towards pupils with statements of special educational need, particularly when they felt that inappropriate behaviour was related to or

caused by the 'special' need – e.g. those children who had autism were seen as not being able to 'help' their behaviour. Ironically, where pupils had Social, Emotional and Behavioural difficulties without the label of autism, no such tolerance existed. When a pupil was perceived as 'normal', the behaviour in fact often became a teacher's focus, for instance in the case of Robbie and Tony (whose statement was written on account of his SEBD). Teaching assistants felt that leniency was also partly symptomatic of teachers' abdication of responsibility and their lack of knowledge about the extent to which particular pupils should be expected to behave appropriately and strategies for exacting appropriate behaviour. This leads to questions about what teachers understand their roles to be with regard to pupils with special educational needs.

In terms of their inclusion into school life, the feeling that pupils were included better socially than academically (particularly by their form tutors) suggests that pupils with SEN were not being given their entitlement to a broad and balanced curriculum, suited to their needs and aptitudes and giving them the chance to fulfil their potential. Teaching assistants felt that many individual teachers could do more to include pupils with special educational needs, but that this should be embedded in the ethos of the school.

This is further interrogated in Chapter 6 with an examination of how the school used both the available on-entry data and data collected by the school to inform teaching and planning for pupils with statements of SEN, and how this influenced classroom practice.

Chapter 6: Strand 3 – Documentary Evidence

The third strand of research was to examine documentary evidence of the data and documentation available to the school and collected by the school. I did this to look at what this documentation told me about provision, and how this informed practice. This was in terms of placement of pupils, and particularly pupils with statements of SEN into teaching groups; provision of support to pupils with statements and the use of data to analyse pupil progress and set targets – specifically how this was used with regard to pupils with statements of SEN. This strand of research was also to consider whether documentary evidence appeared to support the impressions gained from observations, teaching assistant questionnaires and interviews.

6.1   Data on Entry to the School at Year 7

6.1.1 Allocation of pupils to teaching groups

I looked first at how pupils were initially allocated to form groups, as this grouping was additionally a pupil's teaching group for all subjects in year 7, and would remain the teaching group for most of the curriculum (excluding Maths in year 8 and Maths and Modern Languages in year 9) until the end of Key Stage 3, to see whether the groups were truly mixed in terms of ability, or whether there was some form of inexplicit ability grouping taking place, either deliberately or unconsciously.

The make up of the form groups was decided by the Assistant Head with responsibility for secondary transfer and the incumbent Head of Year 7.

Some advice was sought from the SENCO regarding pupils with statements of SEN, many of whom came from schools not normally in the catchment area. In 2005 this was true of eight of the 15 pupils. The secondary transfer form completed by primary schools for all pupils was the first set of information used. This included the basic details of pupils' ethnic group; results of Standard Attainment Tasks (SATS) tests in Mathematics, English and Science (where known) and their SATS teacher assessments; whether pupils have a special educational need and the level of this need (School Action, School Action Plus or a Statement of SEN); any medical need and whether the pupil had English as an Additional Language. Alongside this form, friendship preferences were taken into account when allocating pupils to form groups. Prior to admission and once an offer of a place was made, parents were given the opportunity to inform the school of up to four other pupils with whom their son or daughter would like to be placed. Generally pupils were then allocated to a form with at least one other preferred peer from their primary school. This did, however, mean that some pupils with statements of SEN would be the only child in a form who did not have a peer they had known from primary school. This was because pupils with statements often came from schools not normally in the catchment area of this secondary school and who had received placements as a result of parental preference. This applied to eight of the 15 pupils under consideration in this study. An effort was also made to ensure that pupils from the same primary school were spread across different classes, as a rule with no more than four pupils from one school in the same class.

A discussion with the Assistant Head and Head of Year 7 revealed that they made a conscious effort to allocate forms to ensure a spread of ethnicity, gender, ability, special need and socio-economic status. In the case of the pupils under consideration an effort was made to spread them out across the year group to ensure that no one form became a 'special needs' class. Of the fifteen pupils, one form was allocated three of these pupils because only one of these pupils had significant cognitive difficulties. Five forms were allocated two pupils with statements of SEN and two classes were allocated one statemented pupil each. The school had a low number of pupils at School Action Plus; of the nine year 7 forms only four had children at this level of special educational need (one in each), while the remaining 35 pupils on School Action were spread more or less evenly across the nine classes. Similarly those children considered as Gifted and Talented (defined by the school as those pupils with 3 National Curriculum Level 5's in their SATS tests at the end of Key Stage 2) – some 25 pupils – were also spread across the nine forms. This information was found using the SEN and Gifted and Talented Registers.

As stated above, all teaching in year 7 took place in form groups and all teaching was therefore in mixed ability groups, which on the basis of information considered were (in the intention at least) truly mixed. Practical subjects – Art and Design and Technology were taught in smaller groups made by dividing two groups into three, or three groups into four at random, not according to ability. P.E. was taught to boys and girls separately and again in smaller groups, but unrelated to ability. Those pupils with statements of SEN were therefore taught in the most part (excluding specialist withdrawal

groups – to be explored later) in their form groups, with their peers, by specialist subject teachers – on average for between 92 and 96% of the week.

6.1.2 Effects of this method of allocation

From considering the way in which forms were allocated, it was interesting to consider the effect of this method of grouping pupils. This method meant that classes in year 7 were truly diverse, but equally meant that teachers were teaching pupils with a wide spread of ability. This had consequences for teachers' preparation and teaching, including the level of differentiation needed. A review of preceding chapters indicates that teaching assistants believed that the level of differentiation offered by the majority of teachers they encountered was insufficient to completely meet the needs of any of the 15 pupils under consideration, with two of these 15 pupils being unable to access more than a tiny proportion of the curriculum. Classroom observations suggest that this may be an accurate picture, as very little differentiation other than differentiation by outcome, was seen. It would be interesting to consider whether this lack of differentiation affected other pupils in the class apart from those with statements of SEN and this will be discussed in Chapter 7.

Because of the practice of allocating teaching assistants to pupils, the effect of allocating pupils with statements across the year meant that to cover the hours of teaching assistant support specified on pupils' statements a large number of assistants were needed. The numbers of pupils with statements in each class varied from four classes which had one pupil with a statement, four which had two pupils with statement and one class which had three pupils with a statement (see Chapter 3, School Context). These teaching assistants were required to work across the curriculum, thereby working with a large

number of different teachers, in a wide range of subject areas. This meant that there was little opportunity for them to build up expertise in a particular subject area, build up knowledge of the curriculum in a particular subject area or develop a strong working relationship with a particular teacher or group of teachers. They did, however, get to know their key pupils and their abilities and difficulties, and form a strong relationship with them.

Additionally this practice of spreading out pupils with statements also meant that although the hours on each pupil's statement were met, if more than one pupil with a statement were in one class, the hours of support would add up to the larger figure, but not add up to the total hours on both statements (e.g. if one pupil had ten hours of teaching assistant support and the second pupil 15 hours, the allocation in the class would be for 15 hours, not 25). In the class where three pupils had a statement of SEN, one pupil had virtually full-time support allocated, but because this pupil's difficulties meant he found it almost impossible to work independently, the teaching assistant input and attention was mainly directed at supporting him. This was thought by his teaching assistant to be at the expense of the other two pupils who could access the work independently but for different reasons would have benefited from more additional support.

6.2   Statements of Special Educational Need

All pupils under consideration in this piece of research had a statement of special educational needs. This is a legal document that is issued after a formal assessment of need has been conducted by the Local Authority, usually as a result of a pupil not making sufficient progress with support at

School Action and subsequently School Action Plus. Such pupils will normally have literacy and/or numeracy levels that are significantly (usually four years) below their chronological age; or significant Speech, Language and Communication difficulties; or a recognised need such as Autism/Asperger's Syndrome/Down Syndrome that affects them to the degree it prevents them from accessing the curriculum without additional support.

The Statement is written in a number of parts. Part 1 gives basic personal details, such as name, address and religion; Part 2 describes the special educational needs of the pupils while Part 3 lists the objectives that need to be worked on to address these educational needs, and the (matching) provision that will support the achievement of the objectives. Provision must be quantified, explicit and measurable. Part 4 names the placement – this must only be done after the statement is finalised, as the needs should drive the placement. Parts 5 and 6 describe any additional (for example medical) non-educational needs and provision to meet these.

On transfer to secondary schools, pupils' statements are sent to the head teacher of the new school. In law it is the responsibility of the head teacher to ensure that the statements are met. In practice, at the school under consideration, this is delegated to the SENCO. A copy of a pupil's statement was placed in his or her personal file, with additional copies being provided to the SENCO. These were placed in a pupil's Special Needs File, as would be any subsequent, amended statements.

6.2.1 Use of the statements of SEN

The major piece of information available to the school with regard to pupils with statements of SEN was the actual statement itself. A statement

describes the special educational needs of a child, specifies the objectives needed to address these special educational needs and the provision required to support meeting the objectives. As part of my examination of the data available to the school to support practice, I looked at the way in which the statement was used, particularly with regard to who used it and how and whether it informed classroom practice.

Although my Head Teacher received a copy of the pupils' statements, I found that they were not used outside the SEN Department, and that the responsibility for ensuring the provision on each statement was met was delegated to me (as SENCO). Although the Head Teacher signed the Annual Review paperwork he did not attend any reviews, nor did I know whether he read the paperwork or simply signed off the review. No one in school other than me checked that what was specified on the statement was actually provided, nor that the hours of support were offered. Local Authority attendance at pupils' Annual Reviews was low. Of the year 7 cohort of statemented pupils, only Ricardo and Kerry's reviews were attended by a representative from the Local Authority.

The arrangement for additional provision as set out in the statement regarding specialist literacy or numeracy support, small group teaching etc, was also delegated to the SENCO to organise. No system external to the SEN department existed to ensure quality control, or ensure the provision made was appropriate or fulfilled the requirements of a statement.

It was my role as SENCO to ensure that teaching assistants were provided with copies of the statements for those pupils with whom they

worked, but subject teachers did not receive a copy of pupils' statements unless they requested one.

Decisions regarding the provision on the statement were left to the SENCO – this included the allocation of teaching assistants, when they would support pupils (which subjects, balance of subjects etc), provision of withdrawal support etc. (see Appendix 1). At the time, there were sufficient resources to enable the SENCO to allocate the provision of teaching assistant hours that was specified on each statement, although when there was more than one pupil with a statement in a form, the number of hours provided was the higher of the two. The subjects where support was provided might not always be the subjects critical to supporting the needs of the pupils however, as the allocation of support was constrained by physical possibilities and a timetable that had not been constructed with the needs of additional support in mind.

Other provision on the statement was met through the allocation of pupils to specialist withdrawal groups according to their levels of need, e.g. literacy withdrawal, numeracy withdrawal, social skills groups and so on. The size and frequency of the groups varied according to the degree of difficulty experienced by the pupils. Grouping included pupils without statements, but who had an identified need that would enable a rational group to be formed.

The disadvantage of such a system was that in order to gain access to such a group, pupils had to miss other curriculum activities. For example they might access their specialist literacy group at the expense of a History lesson or a Drama lesson. In order to ensure that groups were based on the needs of pupils, they were made up of pupils from different classes, who had similar

learning profiles – but who had different timetables. To organise a group of four pupils might mean they each missed a different subject, and because of the two week timetable, potentially eight different subjects had to be taken into account. Organisationally this was very difficult, but more importantly it also meant that the SENCO had to make decisions regarding which lessons pupils missed. The Heads of the Maths and Science Departments insisted that as core subjects it was important that pupils did not miss these subjects. Art, Drama, P.E. and Music, however were subjects which the most of the pupils themselves were reluctant to miss – and which were often subjects they could access and achieve in. Also these were subjects where pupils only had three lessons per fortnight, and to miss one of these meant missing a third of all lessons in that subject.

For the least able pupils, who had levels of cognitive/conceptual difficulties or levels of reading and writing that meant they were unable to access much of the work set in, for example, Science or Maths, it could be argued that to improve a pupil's level of literacy was a higher priority than the pupil attending Science. However the SENCO was aware that in those Science or Maths lessons (this also applied to History, Geography etc.) the pupils did attend they were at even more of a disadvantage if they missed one out of every three or four lessons. Despite the significance of this, the issue was never resolved. Pupils continued to miss a range of lessons in order to access their different, specialist provision.

Other provision on the statement was addressed through pupils' Individual Education Plans (IEPs), which were written shortly after half term in the autumn, to reflect needs addressed on pupils' statements (see Appendix

16). For example where a statement specified that a pupil's work needed to be delivered in small chunks with visual clues, this would be written as part of their IEP which was then circulated to all of a pupil's subject teachers. The intention was that each subject teacher should be able to read the IEPs and take account of them in their planning and teaching.

Some provision specified on statements was particularly difficult to provide in the context of a mainstream secondary school where responsibility for the provision rested solely with the SENCO and Learning Support Department. Such provision was found in statements which specified, for example, that there should be 'daily opportunities for teaching in small groups'. Where such provision was specified the provision on the statement was not met to the letter, as there was no facility in the school for daily teaching unless this was provided by teaching assistants. At this time it was not the practice within the school for teaching assistants to lead groups or teach individuals.

6.2.2 Evidence practice that the use of statements informs classroom

There is little to suggest that the information on pupils' statements, neither in the form of the statement itself nor in the disseminated information and Individual Education Plans, systematically informed classroom practice. This was true at the school level and the day to day classroom level. At the school level it can be seen that nobody on the senior leadership team was responsible for checking that the provision made on pupils' statements was met, nor was any analysis done of whether the needs of pupils with statements and the provision required to meet their objectives suggested

changes at a structural level. Despite the assertion in the Revised Code of Practice (DfES, 2001) that every teacher is a special needs teacher, the responsibility for pupils in the school with special educational needs was put very much in the hands of the special needs department and in particular the SENCO. It could be argued that this very much affected the contribution made by teaching assistants and their ability to provide effective support in class, since there was no school commitment to ensuring that they were able to provide what was specified on the statements either through the school providing specific training for the teaching assistants, or through the provision of planning time for teachers and teaching assistants to work together. This supports impressions gained during the research process.

At a classroom level observations and information from teaching assistants suggests that IEPs were not used consistently to inform practice and that in many cases teaching assistants were being used almost in the role of interpreters, being expected to interpret what the teacher was delivering to enable the pupil to complete a task. Evidence obtained from observations and teaching assistants' responses indicate that suggestions contained in IEPs – for example providing visual clues, writing up key vocabulary on the whiteboard and explaining it, breaking down tasks into small steps – were not routinely followed, and certainly did not form part of teachers' usual practice. Nor was there any evidence that teaching assistants independently were *routinely* able to put these suggested strategies into action themselves.

6.3   Standard Attainment Tasks (SATs) Data

Evidence gained in the previous two chapters suggested that many teachers had no clear understanding of the level of ability of many of the pupils under consideration, this being particularly true of those of the cohort with particularly low cognitive ability (three of the 15). The knock-on effect of this seemed to be that target setting was not realistic; teachers did not know what would constitute good progress for particular children and that teachers did not adjust their teaching to account for the pupils' level of ability, particularly in the case of the least cognitively able. In order to find out whether this was backed up by the use and analysis of the SATs data that was received I looked at the data received by the school and the way in which this was used to inform planning and to set targets.

Either on transfer or shortly afterwards, secondary schools receive data regarding the results of their new cohort's year 6 SATs tests and teacher assessments in the core subjects of Maths, English and Science. The expected standards for pupils at the age of 11 at the end of Key Stage 2, is National Curriculum Level 4. Pupils who achieve lower than National Curriculum Level 2 in the Maths and Science tests and National Curriculum Level 3 in the English test are awarded level B (meaning the standard attained is below the minimum level of the test). Pupils not entered for the test on the basis that teacher assessments indicate they will not attain the minimum level are awarded N (not entered). Those pupils who are not able to gain a level at National Curriculum level 1 should be assessed using the P levels. At the time of the research however, reporting to these was not mandatory, and pupils who arrived with these levels from mainstream schools were often assessed as *working towards* National Curriculum Level 1. This meant that

there was no reliable baseline from which to assess progress. This finding

reflects Ofsted (2006) which found that many schools had an insufficient

understanding of what constitutes good progress for pupils with special

educational needs.

6.3.1 Use of the SATs data

Because of the mixed ability groupings within form groups in year 7, the SATs

data was used in the allocation of form groups only to ensure a spread of

ability across the year. By the end of the first term, however, the data was

used to set targets for pupils at the end of Key Stage 3 (year 9) when the

expected standard for pupils is National Curriculum Levels 5-6. English,

Maths and Science SATs test results were used to set minimum targets for

the end of Key Stage 3, with predicted targets set to take into account

performance in the first term of year 7.

The results of SATs tests of the pupils under consideration shows a

range of achievements (see Appendix 13), from a number of pupils performing

at or above the expected standard – one pupil achieved beyond the expected

level (at level 5) in all three subjects, one pupil achieved above the expected

level (at level 5) in Science, while four pupils achieved the expected standard

in English, five in Maths and three in Science. At the other end of the scale,

six pupils achieved below the minimum expected standard in English, six in

Maths and four in Science, of these four pupils achieved below the minimum

standard in all three subjects. One pupil was not entered for any of the three.

Where pupils achieved within the test standards, teacher assessments were

accurate. For those pupils who did not achieve the minimum standard in the

tests, teachers' assessments generally over-estimated their attainment.

Consideration of the minimum and adjusted, predicted targets set for the end of Key Stage 3 showed that there was no consistent use of prior knowledge given by these results in the setting of new targets for those pupils in year 7 with a statement of SEN (see Appendix 13). An obvious example of mismatch is shown when looking at Peter's targets. Peter was assessed by his teacher as being at National Curriculum Level 3 in English, but failed to achieve this in his test, where he received B. He was given a Key Stage 3 target of National Curriculum Level 6 – an expected gain of more than three levels. The expected gain for pupils without learning difficulties from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3 is two levels (DfES, 2007), i.e. A pupil who reaches a good level 4 at KS2 (i.e. National Curriculum level 4A) would be expected to reach National Curriculum Level 6. In Science, Peter gained a National Curriculum Level 3B in his test at KS2. His minimum target of Level 5B seems appropriate; however, he has a *predicted* target grade of National curriculum level 7A – an increase of four levels. Examination of the target pupils' SATs results and targets reveals a number of other similar anomalies (see Appendix 13).

6.4   Reading and Spelling Test Ability

At the beginning of each school year, the Learning Support Department administered spelling and reading tests to the entire year 7 cohort. This was intended to get baseline data for all pupils, to identify pupils who should receive additional literacy support and to pick up any pupils who hadn't been identified by their primary schools as having special educational needs. The tests used were the NFER group reading test C – a comprehension test rather

than a single word reading test – and Young's Parallel Spelling Test (see Appendix 12 for results of 15 pupils). These tests were selected because of their suitability for use with large groups, thus enabling the Learning Support Department to test the whole year. A drawback to these tests however, was that they did not show levels below the age of 6 years 8 months in the case of the reading test, and 6.8 in the case of the spelling test.

I examined the results of these tests to see whether teaching assistants' perceptions that pupils' inability to make progress in many areas of the curriculum was due to their low levels of literacy were borne out, and also that many teachers did not take this into account in their use of teaching and learning materials.

6.4.1 Reading and spelling test results

Reading and spelling ages of the target group indicate that literacy was generally a problematic area for even those of the target group identified as cognitively more able, as indicated by their statements and SATs results (see Appendix 13). Ricardo, Lesley, Jake, Sally and Murray in particular, had very low levels of literacy, with reading ages in excess of four years below their chronological age.

6.4.2 Use of reading and spelling test results

The results of these tests were used by the SEN department primarily to allocate pupils' specialist withdrawal provision. Literacy difficulties were tackled mainly in withdrawal settings. The size and frequency of withdrawal groups was based on the level of difficulty experienced by pupils – and also the type of difficulty. For example those pupils with literacy levels of eight and

below received two sessions (two hours) per week of withdrawal group taught by a teacher from the Learning Support Department. These groups would consist of between two and four pupils. Where pupils had reading ages of below seven the group would be no bigger than two. Pupils with a statement were grouped with other pupils according to their levels of literacy. As no pupil in the target group had more than two hours of teaching time on their statement (and out of the 15, four had only teaching assistant hours specified), pupils received in excess of what was specified in terms of hours.

Results were also supplied to teachers and in the case of pupils with statements formed part of their IEPs. Evidence gathered from observation and teaching assistant responses suggests that the data was not used effectively in day-to-day planning and differentiation, since the reading material used routinely in class was not simplified for those pupils with reading difficulties. For example all year 7 pupils studied Great Expectations and were provided with the original Dickens text. Reading material provided in History, Geography and Science, to name just three subjects was in text books aimed at pupils aged 11, with age appropriate reading ability. Differentiated worksheets were rarely provided (see Appendix 2, showing summarised results of the first set of observations).

In terms of target setting, there was evidence that teachers did not account for reading difficulty when setting end of Key Stage 3 targets. Murray for example had a reading age of below 6 years 8 months – in other words he was functionally unable to read, but was set predicted targets in Geography and History of National Curriculum Level 4. Although at Key Stage 3 this would be a level below that expected for a year 9 pupil, it was not set with

consideration that to achieve a National Curriculum Level 4 a pupil would need to have functional reading skills – and that if a pupil aged 11 had not learnt to read at the level of a six and a half year old, he would be unlikely to progress at the same rate as a 'typically developing' 11 year old.

6.5   Records of Progress

Towards the end of the first year at secondary school the pupils received a Record of Progress written by their subject teachers, to inform parents of their progress. This is written in the form of a comment about a pupil's attitude, progress and attainment and generally gives targets to be achieved by the pupil over the next year. I reviewed the Records of Progress of all 15 pupils to see whether there was evidence in these of an understanding of pupils' difficulties; evidence that teachers had addressed these and/or evidence that teachers were aware of what they, the child and the teaching assistant needed to do for the pupil to make progress. I was also interested to see whether there was evidence that the contribution of the teaching assistant was understood and formed part of the teaching process.

6.5.1 Review of the Records of Progress for the 15 pupils under consideration

The specific information given to parents regarding their child's skills and abilities varied substantially, with some evidence that particular subject areas were more rigorous in this aspect of reporting than others, and with further variation among teachers. Only teachers reporting on Modern Foreign Languages, for example, consistently noted pupils' National Curriculum Level (Appendix 16). Where pupils experienced difficulties in a subject there were

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very few occasions when these were linked, by the reporting teacher, to their identified special educational needs, nor were explicit references made to pupils' statements of SEN or to their IEP targets. Little understanding of pupils' reading and spelling levels was in evidence. For example, Peter, who has autism, had a report for ICT which stated: *'Peter is making slow progress in ICT although he still has difficulty completing simple tasks…his discussion with other pupils can cause a distraction at times.'* Ricardo's report stated that he *'struggles with certain texts and relative comprehension',*
this with a reading age of less than 6 years 8 months is not surprising.

When pupils' behaviour was poor this was generally found to be the focus for the report, with very little comment made about the pupils' academic progress, skills or ability. Nor was there recognition that this was an identified need on their statement. Tony's statement, for example, was for emotional, social and behavioural difficulties, and yet comments on his Record of Progress do not indicate an understanding of this:

> *My concern with Tony is his distractions and the effect this has on other students. Tony must learn to focus and try to avoid confrontational situations.*
>
> *Tony's behaviour is totally inappropriate when he does attempt to join in…*
>
> *Tony must try to concentrate more on the task in hand in class. Listening carefully to instructions would make a huge difference to his success and achievement.*

Very little reference was made to a pupil's support and whether this was effective. Suggestions as to how support could be used to support the difficulties identified were not in evidence. On one or two occasions the support was acknowledged as being helpful, although in one case the teacher believed that the key worker was a teaching assistant rather than a teacher.

Only four reports – two P.E. reports (from the same teacher) one Spanish and one Food Technology report showed evidence of a high degree of understanding of a pupil's difficulties, strategies to support this and work with a teaching assistant (see Appendix 11).

6.6   Discussion

6.6.1 The effect on pupils with statements of SEN of placement in mixed ability groups with allocated teaching assistant support

The data used to inform allocation of teaching groups appeared to support the school's assertion that they used mixed ability teaching. Teaching groups did appear to be genuinely heterogeneous. The question here is possibly not one of data use, but rather of the effects of having mixed teaching groups. In terms of social inclusion the fact that pupils were placed squarely within a form group with which they became identified and with which they identified enabled them to be part of the 'mainstream'. Work done by form tutors on the whole ensured that they were genuinely part of their form, particularly when form tutors made the effort to encourage other pupils to understand their difficulties.

Whether or not mixed ability teaching is effective is a separate discussion and not one for this study; however, the effect of spacing pupils with statements out across the year and allocating teaching assistants to pupils, while being intended to ensure that no class became a 'special needs class' seemed to have the unintended consequence that teaching assistant time was dispersed across a large number of subjects and teachers and did not promote the development of expertise and knowledge on the part of the

teaching assistant, nor the development of a productive working relationship between teaching assistant and teacher. It also seemed to ensure that the teaching assistant role was that of an 'interpreter' – whereby s/he interpreted to the pupil/s what the teacher was delivering. When there was more than one pupil with a statement in the class that support was diluted, and the needier pupil seemed to gain at the expense of the other pupil or pupils, in that this needy pupil was more in need of an interpreter than the other/s.

6.6.2 The use of statements of SEN

The information on statements should be at the very heart of informing provision for pupils with SEN. However, although core information was disseminated to subject teachers, evidence gained in the previous chapter that this information was not used effectively was backed up when the use of statements was reviewed. Because the statements remained very much in the ownership of the Learning Support Department there was no recognition across the school that this information should be at the heart of all teachers' planning and that actually it provided clear guidance as to how the curriculum could be made accessible to the pupil concerned.

Because the school leadership team did not engage with the statements there was no consistent message to teachers that informed them that they had a legal obligation to provide what was on the statement, nor any commitment from the school leadership team to review practice in the light of what was contained in the statements to ensure that provision *could* be met. The main preoccupation was that the number of teaching assistants provided by the school could cover the hours on the statement in face-to-face contact, rather than an examination of whether this method of support was actually

achieving its purpose – namely that of ensuring pupils with SEN accessed the curriculum in a meaningful way. As long as the hours were covered there seemed to be an assumption that the school had fulfilled its part of the bargain. Much of the provision on pupils' statements, particularly those that were well written, set out the sorts of teaching strategies and approaches that might have supported teachers in their planning and execution of lessons.

6.6.3 The use of SATs data to inform target setting

The use of SATs data to inform target setting appeared problematic in a number of ways. Although there is an expectation that children without special educational needs will make around two level's progress during Key Stage 3 (DfES, 2007), no advice appeared to have been given to teachers as to the expected rate of progress that pupils with special educational needs might make. It appeared from looking at the data that some teachers used this expectation to set targets for some of the pupils under consideration (see Appendix 13), whereby those pupils who achieved National Curriculum level 3 were given a target of National Curriculum Level 5 at year 9. This assumption that pupils who achieve at this level at Key Stage 2 will make progress at the same rate as other pupils achieving the standard, was not interrogated.

Another issue was that those pupils who did not attain the minimum standard in the test or tests at the end of Key Stage 2 did not have accurate baseline data upon which to base target setting, particularly in English. If teachers had assessed them as being at level 3 in English, and they did not achieve a standard in the test, there is no accurate way of knowing whether they reached a National Curriculum level 2 (nearly at the standard), or a Level 1 – significantly below the test levels. This meant that any targets set for

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these pupils were set on less than reliable data, and there was no evidence

that other testing was *consistently* informing teachers when setting end of Key

Stage targets.

Targets were also set in all other subjects according to the results

gained in English, Maths and Science. It is difficult to see how performance in

Art, Music, Drama or P.E. can be accurately linked (for any pupils) to

performance in English, Maths and Science. It is also difficult to see how

predicted targets could be accurately based on the performance of a pupil

over one term. Although MidYis (Middle Years Information System) was

administered by the Assistant Head for Assessment, the results of this were

not disseminated to subject staff nor used to inform planning.

6.6.4 The use of reading and spelling data

Evidence gathered from observations and teaching assistants' responses do

not suggest that the results of these tests were used consistently to inform

planning, or indeed to predict grades. Some of the predictions for National

Curriculum Levels actually appeared to ignore the evidence of pupils' reading

ages. Peter for example had a reading age of 8 years and 6 months – over

three years behind his chronological age, yet was given a predicted National

Curriculum Level of 6 in Geography, French and English.

Texts used in class were frequently very demanding, and there was no

evidence seen that alternative texts were provided to those students with low

levels of reading ability. Sometimes teachers did not even read through a

passage, relying instead on pupils reading the text independently. Just as the

decoding levels demanded by many texts were too difficult, the level of

comprehension needed was above that of at least ten of the pupils across

areas of the curriculum such as History, Science and Geography, as well as in English.

Reading and spelling tests were used effectively to determine provision of specialist teaching in small groups and to ensure that children were grouped appropriately according to need. Unfortunately the need for such provision to take place against other areas of the curriculum meant that pupils then missed lessons in subjects and were in a position of having to catch up with work that was already problematic for them. There was no system in place for specialist provision to take place at a time when other pupils were accessing areas of the curriculum that had been deemed inappropriate for some pupils – i.e. there had been no analysis of alternative curriculum models to ensure that pupils were genuinely following a curriculum appropriate to meeting their needs.

Although gains in reading and spelling were made over the course of the year (the final figures took place after the end of the research period) there was no real interrogation of whether this was indeed the most effective means of improving pupils' literacy, nor of other ways which might have been effective.

6.6.5 The use of Records of Progress to inform parents of their child's attainment, attitude and progress

Records of Progress rarely acknowledged the difficulties faced by pupils, nor specified what teachers had done to support pupils' learning needs. Often reports were phrased in terms of what the pupil needed to do in order to improve – often citing the very areas of difficulty experienced by the pupil. The recognition of the role of the support teacher or teaching assistant was

generally not acknowledged, nor was there evidence of joint working. The information given to parents was very general and non-specific, and in the case of pupils who were generally compliant, a false impression of a pupil's progress may have been given, as many records of progress focused on pupil behaviour and attitude. Also, when the pupil had made good progress in terms of their own capability, the reports did not make it clear that the progress made was in this context, and that the pupil was not attaining at the level of his or her peers. This ran the risk of raising unrealistic expectations and minimising the work that still needed to be done to support the pupil.

6.7   Conclusion

An examination of documents and data available to and collected by the school, how this is used and the effects of how it is used, seems to some extent to back up impressions gained during classroom observations and from teaching assistants that teaching practice within the school was not effectively meeting the needs of some of the pupils with statements of SEN, either in terms of effective teaching assistant support, or in terms of using teaching approaches and strategies that would enable all children to learn and make progress. Documentation that should have been helpful, such as pupils' statements of SEN, which might be used to inform teaching approaches and strategies were not used as a tool but as a means of ensuring the quantity of provision on offer was met. Pupils' Individual Education Plans were written and circulated, but not used as a tool to inform teaching strategies, even by the majority of the teaching assistants.

A lack of knowledge of what constitutes good progress and therefore a lack of consistent expectations appeared to result in a lack of strategy when it came to target setting and at the classroom level to a lack of engagement with meeting pupils' needs. A lot of the data collected did not appear to be used effectively at a class level. For example information about pupils' reading and spelling levels did not appear to be used by teachers to inform the material they used or to adapt resources for pupils.

These issues will be debated at more length in the following chapter which will pull together the three strands of research in the context of answering the research question: how effectively do teaching assistants in class support teachers to provide appropriate strategies and approaches to enable pupils with statements of SEN to access the curriculum, learn and make progress? This will be considered with regard to asking whether pupils with SEN require distinctive Special Educational Needs teaching, or whether a recognition of differences in the degree of intensity and explicitness in teaching (the concept of a continuum of teaching approaches) would lead to a coherent and common framework of teaching skills appropriate to meet the needs of all pupils (Lewis and Norwich, 2001).

Chapter 7: Concluding Discussion and Suggestions for Future Research

I started this piece of research with the intention of investigating how effectively teaching assistants in class support teachers to provide appropriate strategies and approaches to enable pupils with statements of SEN to access the curriculum, learn and make progress. Additionally I wanted to look at the teaching strategies and approaches used by teachers to meet the needs of pupils with statements of SEN to consider whether these need to be distinctly different from those found to be effective with the majority of children. In this final chapter I intend to consider the implications of the findings of my study and the extent to which the research design and methods were effective in revealing these findings and to propose possible suggestions for future action or research. My particular interest in conducting the research was to evaluate practice within my school with regard to the work of teaching assistants, whom I managed and for whose work I was responsible, and to see how existing practice could be improved.

7.1   Initial Thoughts

Classroom observations, teaching assistant questionnaires and teaching assistant interviews all appeared to indicate that the deployment of an additional adult to work in class does not in itself benefit pupils' with statements of SEN learning and access to the curriculum (Cremin et al, 2005). Moreover the same evidence appeared to suggest that many teachers were

struggling to adapt their teaching to meet the needs of many of those children who had statements of SEN.

Of course this evidence must be viewed with some caution. I was mindful from the outset of the possible difficulties associated with observing in classes where I knew the research participants – namely the teachers and teaching assistants, and had worked with many of them. I had attempted to militate against this by ensuring that my observations had a structure that would ensure that I focused on particular aspects of each lesson. This was so I avoided, as much as possible, selective encoding. Nevertheless the number of lessons observed was fairly small as it was constrained by the time I was able to give to the research and by my decision to consider the entire cohort of year 7 pupils with statements of SEN. In retrospect it might have been more effective to select a fewer number of pupils but to observe in a wider range of lessons, and to go into the same subject more than once. This would have enabled a deeper insight into whether the teacher's practice and relationship with the teaching assistant was consistently as I observed. It would also have enabled me to focus on pupils with specific difficulties which could then have formed part of the investigation. For example I could have focused on those pupils in that cohort with Autistic Spectrum Disorders.

Nevertheless, evidence gained from the teaching assistant questionnaires and surveys did appear to back up evidence gained in observations. If I was designing the questionnaire again however, I would ensure that I piloted the questions first, and would think again about using the rating scale of 0-10, which on considering the responses made by the teaching assistants, was not as clear to all of them as it should have been.

Because teaching assistants felt confident that their responses would be kept confidential however, their responses indicated that they had been honest and thoughtful about the questions.

The use of interviews to explore evidence gained in the questionnaires was productive, in that I was able to clarify what teaching assistants had meant in their responses and to explore further any issues which had been raised or seemed worth pursuing. As all of the teaching assistants agreed to having their interview taped, I was able to transcribe the interviews verbatim – and also to check with teaching assistants afterwards that I had accurately transcribed their interview. Again because they were confident that these interviews were confidential – and because they were kept separate from any of the performance management or business of the Special Needs Department, all respondents were very candid and open in what they said. Also, because they were confident that I was not interviewing the subject teachers they were not apprehensive that I would be getting a different 'side of the story'. This had the advantage of encouraging teaching assistants to respond honestly, but clearly the disadvantage that I did not check the validity of their responses by getting the perspective of teachers. However the documentary evidence I reviewed, particularly the Records of Progress, and my own observations did appear to back up teaching assistants' beliefs.

7.2 Implications for Future Practice

When considering how this research might affect decisions about future practice, I would suggest that while there are things that I, as the SENCO, might be able to change to improve the impact of teaching assistants' work in

school a fundamental shift in the school's culture and priorities is needed to truly enable effective practice with regard to supporting the learning of pupils with statements of special educational needs. This relates to the deployment of the teaching assistants, but also I would argue is inextricably related to teaching and learning within the school, and to the need for the school to understand that '*barriers to participation are created by practices and attitudes, rather than something wrong with the child'* (Sorsby, 2004). This is discussed below.

7.2.1 Implications around the employment and deployment of teaching assistants and suggestions for future practice within the school

As stated earlier, when the school took the decision to employ its own teaching assistants there was an assumption that they would be part of the SEN department and would continue to work with identified pupils, based on provision made through their statements. This focus on the *pupils* as driving the need for the provision of teaching assistants meant that no apparent thought was given to the need for teaching assistants to be part of the wider school staff, sharing in the planning of teaching and learning.

The effects of this lack of planning time for teachers and teaching assistants were seen in observations and reflected in the comments made by teaching assistants as discussed in Chapters 4 and 5. In effect teaching assistants were put in the same position as the pupils, with no additional knowledge of the purpose of the lesson or time to digest the content and plan activities. This resulted both in limiting the effectiveness of the teaching assistants, but also of disempowering them, as they were constantly in a disadvantaged position in the classroom, particularly if they were working in a

subject area where they were less confident. Additionally, because teaching assistants were not linked to subjects or subject areas they were not involved in departmental planning and had to work with a large number of different adults, making it even more difficult for them to build up good working relationships.

Although as SENCO I could address this issue by allocating teaching assistants to subject areas, this would not address the fundamental issue of preparation and planning time. This could only be addressed through allocation of preparation and planning (PPA) time for teaching assistants, and being prepared to pay for them to stay at school after 3.30 to participate in departmental meetings. In other words, for teaching assistants to be treated in the same way as the teaching staff.

It could be argued that in effect the school was operating two tiers of staff, with teaching assistants being treated as 'add-ons' whose role was tied up with the placement of particular children rather than as essential members of the staff team contributing to teaching and learning throughout the school. Although teaching assistants did not have the opportunity to build up relationships with all the teachers with whom they were working, observations, questionnaires and interviews did indicate that many had built up strong relationships with the pupils with whom they worked, and often gained a good understanding of that pupil's learning styles and difficulties.

This was shown particularly during observations of Peter, Murray and Jake, all of whom had a high level of support and, for different reasons, a high level of need. Teaching assistants working with these pupils in particular demonstrated an ability to support these pupils' learning using teaching

strategies and approaches they had developed in response to the pupils'
needs.

Because of the lack of time for planning and collaboration however,
these skills could not be effectively shared with the subject teachers who
could have benefited from using similar approaches and strategies – both with
these pupils and with others. In the case of pupils such as Peter, Jake and
Murray who had full time support, rather than the expertise of the teaching
assistant being shared with the teacher, evidence from the observations and
subsequent questionnaires and interviews suggests that teachers left the
teaching assistants to deal with the children, backing up Thomas's suggestion
that rather than teachers having more time to spend with children, teaching
assistants' presence could simply mean teachers having fewer children
(Thomas, 1992). This seems to be an example both of lost opportunities, but
also shows the way that linking teaching assistants to particular pupils rather
than viewing them as a teaching resource limits their effectiveness.

The lack of planning and collaboration between teachers and teaching
assistants also appeared to lead to a lack of clarity with regard to the role of
teaching assistants. In most of the classes observed I was surprised to see
that the teaching assistant and teacher barely communicated. This was partly
to do with the lack of time within a lesson for teachers to communicate as they
were busy teaching, but partly because it seemed that teachers generally
assumed that teaching assistants could only do work with their target children,
or at least only work with children with learning difficulties. This was
something I had not previously realised to be the case. For example I only
saw one lesson in which a teacher allocated a group of children to work with

the teaching assistant. Generally the way in which children sat (mainly in rows) did not support teaching assistants being able to work with a small group. As SENCO I could address that through In-service training (INSET) for staff, in as far as it would be possible to suggest different strategies for teachers and teaching assistants. At a deeper level however, if teachers are using didactic methods – addressing the class from the front, with few opportunities for children to work in groups and with most learning being evidenced through responding in writing – the possibilities for teaching assistants to develop a meaningful role within the classroom are slim.

A significant issue also arose around timetabling. Often, because of the need to fit teaching assistants into a number of pupils' timetables (particularly when they supported two or three different pupils) the lessons they could physically attend were dictated by when a teaching assistant was available. This meant that lessons supported were not always in the areas of most need for the pupil. Similarly when pupils were withdrawn for additional work in groups, they had to miss other subjects to do so. Were teaching assistants to work within subject areas, this might alleviate this problem, but would not address the fundamental issue of teaching assistants having to work around a timetable that has not been devised to take into account their presence in class.

In their research study, Cremin et al (2005) looked at different models of teaching assistant practice, and found that the model they called reflective teamwork which involved teaching assistants and teachers planning and problem solving together was the one which gained the most favourable response from teachers and teaching assistants. This however was found to

be time consuming and therefore considered unrealistic, and yet unless teaching assistants become part of the process of teaching and learning it is hard to see how they can be effective.

7.2.2 Teaching approaches and strategies

I made the suggestion earlier that a culture shift is needed within the school to alter the way in which teaching assistants are viewed. To view teaching assistants' presence in school as being linked with the needs of particular pupils assumes that they are additional staff, solely required to enable a particular group of pupils to be accommodated. I suggest that focusing on teaching approaches and strategies could propose an alternative and much more effective conceptualisation of teaching assistant practice.

Classroom observations indicated that few of the teachers observed were using differentiated strategies and approaches in their teaching to address the needs of pupils with learning difficulties. Not only was there very little use of differentiated resources, the pace of lessons was fast and many of the least able pupils were not expected (or able) to complete tasks. Although not surprised by the fast pace of lessons, I had expected to see significantly more differentiation.

Nor did teachers' use of documentation, including the statements of SEN and pupils' IEPs as well as evidence of data such as reading and spelling ages and SATs tests appear always to inform their teaching or target setting with regard to children with statements of SEN. One reason appeared to be a lack of agreement, both at the classroom level and at a school level as to what would constitute good progress for a child with learning difficulties, and as to how realistic target setting could be used to inform planning and

teaching. To some degree there may have been an assumption that pupils

with statements were somehow the province of the SEN department,

somewhat outside the remit of subject teachers.

This meant that of those teachers observed, the expectations of pupils

with statements of SEN were often low. Rather than setting tasks which were

challenging but achievable, many were set the same challenges as their peers

but not expected to succeed. This meant that many of the pupils observed

constantly attempted tasks that were never finished. Sometimes this was

simply because of a lack of additional time – sometimes it was as a result of

the task being simply unachievable in any time frame.

Where there was evidence of good differentiation and realistic

outcomes this appeared to be in the framework of good general teaching and

an acknowledgement on the part of the teacher that each child had unique

learning needs. For example in the PHSE lesson that was observed the

teacher used language thoughtfully and used feedback from all the pupils to

ensure that everyone understood the words she was using. Additional time

was built in to enable pupils who worked more slowly to achieve the task. In

P.E. lessons where Murray was able to achieve his targets, this was in the

context of each pupil having individualised targets built on their prior

knowledge to provide a realistic challenge. Indeed, I had expected to see

more of this kind of practice which was not apparent in most of my

observations.

This suggests the need for the school to consider more carefully

policies regarding teaching and learning. Rather than focusing on the needs

of an identified group of pupils with SEN, it might be suggested that there

should be a focus on the range of teaching approaches and strategies that might be used to address the needs of all learners. A helpful way forward might lie within the 'unique differences' position as expounded by Lewis and Norwich (2007). If we assume that all learners in one sense are the same, simply because of the nature of what learning has in common for all, but also that they are also different and it is these differences that define them (Lewis and Norwich, 2007) then particular teaching strategies are relevant for all pupils. Within this position the school could then consider teaching needs in terms of '…*principles which are general and flexible enough to enable wide variations to be possible within a common framework'* (Lewis and Norwich, 2007, p.21). This might present a way forward with regard to the role of teaching assistants and how they work effectively with teachers.

If we consider that those pupils with special educational needs require more explicit *'high density teaching, using approaches that are less commonly used – for example explicit teaching of learning strategies; more frequent and explicit assessment of learning to ensure readiness to move on; higher levels of practice to mastery and more error free learning – all strategies that are time consuming and not necessarily appropriate for the majority of children'* (Lewis, and Norwich, 2001), then the need for an *effective* additional adult becomes more apparent.

Observations in class showed few examples of 'high density' teaching, however when teachers were able to break down tasks, set achievable targets and give time for more practice evidence appeared to suggest that pupils with even a high level of difficulty were able to achieve and make progress. For example Murray's teaching assistant reported that he had progressed in

Spanish and P.E. due to the structured tasks he was given to complete and practise with his teaching.

In both these cases, the planning and the choice of activities were teacher led, both teachers having used their subject and pedagogic expertise to set realistic targets and plan appropriate activities. The teaching assistant was able to carry out the delivery, providing an appropriate level of support and guidance that would enable Murray to complete and master tasks and skills. Because the teaching assistant was given a specific role in the process he was able to effectively support Murray and also support the teacher, who would otherwise have been struggling to deal with the high level of supervision and repetition needed for Murray to achieve, while moving on the majority of pupils who were able to master skills with much less practice.

In this analysis, the role of the teaching assistant could become distinct and specific. Rather than attempting to interpret the lesson, careful planning could ensure that the teaching assistant is providing adaptations to common approaches to meet unusual learner needs (Lewis and Norwich, 2007). With good use of data to inform prior learning, realistic targets might be set so that teachers and teaching assistants, planning together, are able to decide on realistic learning outcomes for pupils.

For example, if the task within a History lesson is to identify primary and secondary sources on a worksheet and to write about each one, the *teacher* may decide that a less able pupil is not able to distinguish between primary and secondary sources as they have not gained that concept. The pupil may need an opportunity to gain this concept through sorting a range of actual objects. This task might then be given to a *teaching assistant* who has

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been involved in the planning for the topic and is able to use a range of high density teaching approaches that are not needed to teach the majority of children within the class.

Rather than specific 'SEN training' explicit training could be delivered to extend teachers' knowledge and skills around identifying, planning and delivering the less common, high density teaching approaches and strategies needed to teach pupils who find aspects of learning or skills acquisition difficult. Teachers might then be better equipped to work effectively with teaching assistants.

If we take Florian's (2005) analysis that it is not the differences among children that is problematic, but rather the magnitude of the difficulties exceeding what a school can accommodate, the deployment of skilled teaching assistants working collaboratively with knowledgeable teachers could offer a solution to the dilemma that adaptations to common teaching approaches – i.e. 'high density' teaching may be impossible to deliver when the responsibility lies with the teacher alone (Lewis and Norwich, 2001).

7.3   Limitations of the Study and Suggestions for Further Research

When I started this research it was with the express purpose of looking at practice within my own context with particular interest in gaining evidence with which to evaluate practice and to look at how it might be improved. This meant that I took on the role of researcher, but I remained the SENCO and continued to carry out my job. While this gave me access to the research context and a role as a participant observer, it also meant that I was time limited in what I was able to do. Additionally I am aware that as an

inexperienced researcher I made certain decisions which in retrospect mean that some of the evidence collected is less robust than I would wish.

This is mainly around the quantity and extent of the evidence. Although I observed each pupil in class on three different occasions, in hindsight the evidence might have been even more compelling had I spent a block of time observing in the class of a more limited number of pupils to observe the same teachers and teaching assistants working together over a more prolonged period of time. This would also have enabled me to watch the same teachers working with and without support. Nevertheless, I do believe that over the three observations what I saw was consistent enough to make tentative assumptions as explored above.

Consideration of the evidence given by teaching assistants through their responses to the questionnaire and follow-up interviews has to be viewed with some degree of caution, since these were made in the knowledge that they would be received by their Head of Department. While I believe their content indicates that this knowledge did not make them over-cautious in what they said, they were only corroborated in so far as they seemed to back up evidence gained from observations. Were I to conduct a similar study in the future I would ensure that I piloted any questionnaire done first, and be inclined to make the structure rather more open-ended. Although useful as a means of gaining information about questions I *knew* I wanted answering, it did limit the information gained to what I had asked. Similarly, although I believe the information elicited during the interviews was useful and supported information gained in observations, longer, less structured interviews, with

fewer questions and more opportunities for teaching assistants to lead the direction of the material might have elicited more unexpected information.

Additionally I recognise that to some extent the 'holistic' nature of a case study has not been achieved, as in order to form a more complete picture of the 'case' being presented, the perspective of other stakeholders, particularly the teachers and possibly parents would be explored. This additional evidence would add weight to the evidence gathered and provide a more rounded picture, and were I to conduct such a study again I would consider more carefully the importance of involving all the appropriate participants. However given the pragmatic constraints and that any case study data will be partial, even if a wide range of stakeholders are involved, this was a reasonable compromise in the circumstances.

It is also questionable how much can be generalised from such a small scale study, but despite its limitations I do believe that in terms of improving practice within my own context, the study did reveal issues that I could personally address (such as changing teaching assistant allocation to work in departments) and issues that I would wish to raise with the school's leadership team, such as the possibility of allocating time for teachers and teaching assistants to collaborate and the need to more fully integrate (dare I say include?) teaching assistants into the school staffing structure.

To consider whether pupils with statements of SEN need special teaching further research is needed into the whole issue of whether there *are* pedagogically relevant groups who can be identified in terms of learning styles or thinking styles (Lewis and Norwich, 2001) and would therefore need to be considered as having general differences which would be addressed by a

distinctive SEN pedagogy (Lewis and Norwich, 2001). Evidence supporting this would have an impact on the sorts of educational provision that might be appropriate. There is so far limited evidence that this is the case (Davis and Florian, 2004; Lewis and Norwich, 2007) but that is not to say it does not exist. Similarly, further research into learners' differences – in both the general and unique differences position – might also suggest a rethink around the whole process of identifying children as having SEN.

7.4   Conclusions

At the beginning of the study I wanted to consider how effectively teaching assistants in class support teachers to provide appropriate teaching strategies and approaches that enable pupils with statements of special educational needs to access the curriculum, learn and make progress. While I am not trying to suggest that my research study reflects the situation in any other school than my own, I do believe that the issues emerging during the course of the research highlight possible areas for scrutiny that may be applicable to other school contexts, and are worth consideration.

The overall impression I gained from conducting the research was the marginal position of the teaching assistants. By that I mean that they were not regarded as part of the school's overall teaching resource, but rather as a group of people employed to deal with a particular section of the school community. This was evident in their conditions of service whereby they were paid pro rata 40 weeks of the year rather than 52 weeks, only paid to work during school hours and not allocated PPA time. Not only did these conditions limit the possibilities of collaboration and training, they reinforced

their position as somehow outside of the main body of the staff. Additionally it highlights what I suggest is at the heart of the matter – the positioning of children with learning difficulties as problematic, rather than a recognition that all learners have individual needs which need to be addressed.

If teaching assistants are to be effective as a means for supporting teachers to provide appropriate educational experiences for pupils with special educational needs, they must have a distinct and understood role and an opportunity to plan and collaborate with the teachers with whom they work. They need to be completely embedded in the school's staffing structure, working within departments as part of their staffing resource, with the opportunity to collaborate and plan with teachers. Consideration should be given to the way efficient timetabling that takes account of a variety of learners' needs can be used flexibly to support the use of additional adults. Rather than specific SEN training, the focus would be on teaching strategies and approaches, and on increasing the ability of all professionals to understand the strategies and methods which enhance learning.

A useful way of conceptualising this process is to consider the sorts of teaching approaches needed for pupils with special educational needs to access the curriculum. If pupils with SEN are regarded as learners with uncommon learning needs rather than as 'being' SEN, teachers can use their knowledge of a pupil's prior attainment to set realistic targets and decide on suitable learning objectives, and on the sorts of high density approaches which might support them to achieve their target. Teaching assistants could then support teachers, either by delivering some of the high density teaching approaches necessary, or by freeing up the teacher to provide these.

To conclude, I believe that the most important issue raised and one that bears more research and closer examination is the whole area of learning and teaching. As well as considering the continua of teaching approaches and strategies needed to address learners' needs is the importance of building on existing knowledge of how people learn, to enable us to successfully evaluate the effectiveness of teaching. It is possible that by focusing attention on teaching and learning rather than on the perceived deficits of a group of pupils, we, as educationalists, can provide appropriate educational experiences for every learner and thereby address the learning needs of *all* children.

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Appendix 1 – Table to Show Provision on the Statements of the Cohort and Withdrawal Support (italicised) Offered as Part of the Package by Learning Support Department to Reflect Needs

	T Hrs	TA Hrs	*Withdrawal*	Lunch super-vision
Peter		Full time	*2x1 hour basic literacy* *1x1 hour, 6 hours per term, Speech/language*	Yes
Ricardo		Full time	*In-class for English, French, Drama, D&T,Science* *Withdrawn for rest – classrooms inaccessible*	Yes
Lesley	1 hr	10 hours	*2x1 hour basic literacy per week* *1x1 hour, 6 hours per term* *Speech/language*	No
Robbie	1 hr	10 hours	*1x1 hour cognitive skills group per week*	No
Terry		Full time	*1x1 hour literacy group per week* *1x1 hour phonological skills group, 6 hours for 2 terms*	No
Jake	1 hr	20 hours	*2 x 1 hour basic literacy group per week* *1 x 1 hour 1-1 with teacher per week*	Yes
Tony	1 hr	10 hours	*1 x 1 hour 1-1 with teacher per week*	No
Kerry		Full time	*2 x 1 hour basic literacy group per week* *1 x 1 hour, 6 hours per term speech and language group*	Yes
Joseph		Full time	*1 x 1 hour phonological skills group, 6 hours for 2 terms*	Yes
Sally		19 hours	*2 x 1 hour basic literacy group per week* *1x1 hour, 6 hours per term speech and language group*	No
Richard		10 hours	*2 x 1 hour basic literacy group per week* *1 x 1 hour 1-1 with teacher per week*	No
Louise	1 hr	17 hours	*Nothing additional*	No
Murray		Full time	*2 x 1 hour basic literacy 1-1 per week* *2 x 1 hour social skills group per week* *1x1 hour 1-1 Maths with teacher per week*	Yes
Mary	1 hr	10 hours	*1 x 1 hour phonological skills group per week, 6 hours per two terms*	No
Hugo	1 hr	10 hours	*1 x 1 hour literacy group per week*	No

Appendix 2 – Summary of Findings in the First Lesson Observation

Lesson 1: English – Great Expectations (Peter)

Table to show a summary of the findings of observation of Peter

Seating Plan	Yes – alphabetical order
Teaching assistant presence	Yes – sitting next to pupil who was relying on her for information, cues and reassurance
Language	Sophisticated Examples: genre, narrative voice Questioning and answers from pupils to explain language No support on the board to remind pupils to make it explicit
Content	No differentiation All pupils received same homework, question and answer sheet All asked to find same sorts of words using Dickens' original text
Pace	Fast No accommodation for slower workers Many unable to complete final exercise
Homework	Undifferentiated Pupils asked to check they had written down homework and were given time to do so
Communication	No obvious communication took place between the teaching assistant and subject teacher
Teaching assistant input	The teaching assistant constantly prompting and explaining work to the target pupil No evidence of prior planning between the teaching assistant and subject teacher or prior knowledge of the lesson

Lesson 2: PHSE (Kerry and Joseph)

Table to show a summary of the findings of observation of Kerry and Joseph

Seating Plan	Yes – two statemented pupils sitting together, accessible to the teaching assistant, near to but not at front of the room
Teaching assistant presence	Sitting next to both pupils Got up frequently to support other pupils requesting help
Language	Teacher's explanations and mode of discussion very clear Questions used appropriately to clarify Pupils' answers were repeated back to ensure everyone had heard and understood Difficult or unfamiliar words explained in more simple language
Content	To some degree content differentiated to the degree pupils able to write a poem Much of the work been done previously on 'Inclusion day' so not possible to say to what degree pupils had received support with their initial ideas
Pace	During discussion this was varied to accommodate those children who needed time to assimilate ideas. The rest of the lesson, pace was dictated by the pupils themselves.
Homework	None set, although if the pupils chose to, they could finish their decorated poems at home, the incentive being a prize for the best ones
Communication	There was little communication between the teacher and the teaching assistant
Teaching assistant input	Mainly worked with target pupil (H) to support her to come up with more ideas. She refocused pupil (I) when necessary. She had been in the previous lesson and appeared to have a good understanding of the activity.

Lesson 3: English (Lesley and Robbie)

Table to show a summary of the findings of observation of Lesley and Robbie

Seating Plan	Yes
	The statemented pupils sat near to, but not next to each other, and were working with pupil selected by the subject teacher
Teaching assistant presence	No teaching assistant present
Language	Teacher used very clear language
	She repeated words and explained them when difficult
	Used questions to establish what they meant and repeated answers
Content	Differentiated in so far as it relied on what the pupils themselves had been able to produce as homework – no written work had to be produced as long as the pupils could remember what they wanted to say, so they were not limited by what they were able to write down
Pace	Reasonably fast, as paired work was timed – pupils were given a set time to talk. This modified by the teacher in that she took her cue to stop pupils from what she saw them doing.
Homework	Work being completed in the lesson was result of homework
	Differentiated in the sense that pupils' stories could be as detailed as they were able to manage, and as they did not have to be written down, was not limited by what the pupils could write
Communication	No teaching assistant present
Teaching assistant input	No teaching assistant present

Lesson 4: English (Terry, Jake and Tony)

Table to show a summary of the findings of observation of Terry and Tony (Jake was absent)

Seating Plan	Yes
	Statemented pupils sat apart
	Plan seemed to have been done on basis of pupils' focus and behaviour with boys seated next to girls
Teaching assistant presence	No teaching assistant present
Language	Teacher used a variety of language of varying degrees of sophistication to coax answers from pupils
	In the work done on pronouns she clarified technical terms
Content	Not differentiated.
	All pupils were using the same original Dickens text.
	The highlighting activity had taken place previously so it was impossible to tell how much support was given to pupils with difficulties to find the 'filmic' passages
Pace	The starter activity was fast paced and appeared too fast for a number of pupils – particularly target pupil (E) to follow
Homework	No homework was set
Communication	No teaching assistant present
Teaching assistant input	No teaching assistant present

Lesson 5: Science (Ricardo)

Table to show a summary of the findings of observation of Ricardo

Seating Plan	Pupils were seated according to a seating plan but this did not include the target pupil, who is not always able to get to lessons. When he does he needs a lower table, because he has to sit in his wheelchair.
	No attempt had been made to clear a space for him at the front of the room so he could see, or to ensure he was sitting with other pupils
Teaching assistant Presence	Two teaching assistants were sitting with the target pupil
Language	Not modified by the teacher
	Target pupil missed introduction to the lesson, and the worksheet given out was written in scientific language
	No key words/specific definitions had been written on the board to support work done
Content	Not differentiated
	No differentiated worksheets provided
	Worksheet not gradated
Pace	Very fast
	Pupils expected to complete the worksheet before the end of the lesson
	Pupils who did not do so ended up with incomplete piece of work with no opportunity to complete it
	Little consolidation
Homework	No homework set
Communication	No communication between the teacher and teaching assistants other than to give the worksheet to one of the teaching assistants
Teaching assistant input	The teaching assistants worked with the target pupil to complete the worksheet using questioning and prompts
	They did not appear to have prior knowledge of the content of the lesson, nor prior sight of the worksheet
	They additionally helped the target pupil to spell words and to formulate sentences where needed

Lesson 6: English Library Lesson (Richard)

Table to show a summary of the findings of observation of Richard

Seating Plan	No – pupils were allowed to choose where to sit
Teaching assistant presence	Initially she stood at the side of the room
	Then spent some time talking to the target pupil and sat with him to him read
	Once pupil reading to himself, teaching assistant moved away to watch from a distance
Language	Used carefully at the beginning of the lesson – explanations for words like genre were given and repeated
Content	Differentiated to the degree that pupils could choose the books they wanted to read for themselves. In case of the target pupil, support was given for him to find a suitable book, one that was not too easy, but that he would be able to tackle and enjoy.
Pace	Discussion at the beginning of the lesson was brisk enough to keep pupils' interest, but accommodated pupils who needed more explanation and support
Homework	No homework set
Communication	Some communication took place between the teaching assistant and the teacher in considering which books would be appropriate and enjoyable for the target pupil
Teaching assistant input	Teaching assistant stepped in when it was clear that the target pupil was finding it difficult to find a book, and listened to the beginning of the book to ensure that the target pupil was able to read and enjoy the book

Lesson 7: English (Louise and Murray)

Table to show a summary of the findings of observation of Louise and Murray

Seating Plan	Pupils were sitting in a seating plan, with target pupil (M) sitting in the middle of a row, easily accessible to the teaching assistant and the other target pupil sitting nearby so the teaching assistant was able, if necessary, to prompt her
Teaching assistant presence	Sitting next to target pupil (M) in reach of the other target pupil
Language	Varied in its sophistication, with the work being explained more than once to ensure that all pupils had understood Difficult words were explained No key words were put on the board, nor were visual cues used
Content	Only differentiated by outcome, in that the sophistication of pupils' description varied according to the ability of the pupil No writing frames had been supplied Work done by target pupil (M) was being differentiated by the teaching assistant, but had not been done before the lesson
Pace	Varied so that the initial discussion allowed for pupils who needed additional time and explanation
Homework	No homework was set
Communication	A degree of communication between the teaching assistant and teacher, with the teaching assistant clarifying the activity with the teacher and ensuring that what he was doing was appropriate
Teaching assistant input	Teaching assistant differentiated the work as the lesson progressed using prompting, questioning and some scribing to enable target pupil (M) to complete the work. He was able to check the work done by target pupil (L) who was able to complete it independently. There was no evidence of prior knowledge of the activity, with modification being done 'on the spot'

Lesson 8: Maths (Sally)

Table to show a summary of the findings of observation of Sally

Seating Plan	Alphabetical order
Teaching assistant presence	No teaching assistant present
Language	Mathematical language used with some explanation, although the term decimal is not really re-explained
Content	Not differentiated – all pupils are using the same textbook and are expected to work through this as a class
Pace	Fast, particularly the starter activity
	The explanation of the day's task is done at a brisk pace, with the examples being gone through quickly without additional explanations
Homework	To complete exercise – no differentiation
Communication	No teaching assistant present
Teaching assistant input	No teaching assistant present

Lesson 9: History (Mary)

Table to show a summary of the findings of observation of Mary

Seating Plan	Yes – boy/girl with target pupil sitting at the front of the room
Teaching assistant presence	Teaching assistant standing near the target pupil, who is sitting next to the aisle
Language	Historical terms like primary and secondary source explained – pupils answers repeated and explained
Content	Not differentiated. All pupils given the same worksheets to complete – differentiation by outcome in terms of the number of artefacts that pupils are able to write about, and depth of their writing. No writing frames, supporting 'cloze procedure' provided
Pace	Brisk enough to engage pupils, but introduction clear with time given to consider points made by pupils
Homework	To complete work done in lesson – which meant that slower pupils end up with more homework, as the expectation is that the sheet is completed
Communication	Little communication between teaching assistant and teacher, although the teaching assistant did speak to the teacher to clarify task for herself
Teaching assistant input	Teaching assistant prompted target pupil who was anxious to get on with the work on her own and reluctant to allow the teaching assistant to support her. Target pupil nodded impatiently at what the teaching assistant was saying and bent over her work to ensure teaching assistant could not look at what she was doing. Teaching assistant backed off and supported other pupils

Lesson 10: Spanish (Hugo)

Table to show a summary of the findings of observation of Hugo

Seating Plan	Yes, alphabetical, but with target pupil (who has hearing impairment) at front of the room
Teaching assistant presence	No teaching assistant present
Language	Mostly in target language with some explanation repeated in English – simple language using strong gestures
Content	Differentiated in the sense that there was constant repetition and all pupils engaged and chosen to participate again if they were unable to answer correctly the first time
Pace	Brisk – but with constant repetition and over-learning
Homework	To learn numbers to 20 in Spanish so can show knowledge in next lesson – no differentiation in that all pupils expected to be able to do this
Communication	No teaching assistant present
Teaching assistant input	No teaching assistant present

Appendix 3 – Summary of Findings in the Second Lesson Observation

2nd Lesson Observation 1

Table to show a summary of the 2nd lesson observation of Robbie

…differentiated to meet a child with specific learning difficulties ensuring that work is carefully graded and consolidated to ensure success	No differentiation
…having instructions broken down into small units and the use of visual prompts	Teacher did not break down work into small units
	Teaching assistant attempted to do this
	Visual prompt very basic – not integral to lesson
Structured opportunities to interact and learn with mainstream peers;	D was interacting with his peers – but in an inappropriate way, learning with TA rather than being encouraged to work with a peer

2nd Lesson Observation 2 (3 pupils)

Table to show a summary of the 2nd lesson observation of Terry

…access to differentiated curriculum with the use of visual and verbal supports and regular opportunities to talk through problems, information should be presented in a concrete way wherever possible	No differentiation as such
	Visual supports used with interactive whiteboard
	Information presented in concrete way
Should be given support to stay on task with regular prompting at short intervals	No support given to stay on task – in this instance did not appear to need this

Table to show a summary of the 2nd lesson observation of Jake

…differentiated to meet F's needs ensuring that work is carefully graded and consolidated to ensure success	No differentiation by teacher Teaching assistant used small whiteboard to write down key words
Access to a curriculum modified by method to include modified learning materials Instructions and explanations given in clear simple language and supported visually	Learning materials not modified by teacher Instructions and explanations simplified by teaching assistant
Regular opportunities for repetition and over-learning in order to become secure with new learning and concepts	No opportunities in lesson for repetition – pace too fast Work done by teaching assistant on simplifying and re-explaining concepts covered during discussion

Table to show a summary of the 2nd lesson observation of Tony

…differentiated to meet G's needs ensuring that work is carefully graded and consolidated to ensure success	No differentiation by teacher
Being taught to use writing fames to support extended pieces of writing	Not applicable to this lesson
A system of rewards for on-task behaviours, with a clear plan to be established for times when the classroom strategies break down. It is important that G is made aware of the consequences of his behaviours in advance. The plan should incorporate a clear warning system.	When G called out he was given a warning – his behaviour did not become such that normal classroom strategies were not working. The teacher ignored his poor behaviour to good effect.

2nd Lesson Observation 3 – 2 pupils

Table to show a summary of the 2nd lesson observation of Lesley

…differentiated to meet C's needs ensuring that work is carefully graded and consolidated to ensure success	No differentiation of the activity. No obvious grading of the work, but success is achieved as the practical and kinaesthetic nature of the task suit C's leaning style
A teaching approach that builds upon structured and consistent small steps within a learning programme to support her language and literacy skills	No evidence from a one off lesson whether this is part of a structured approach

Table to show a summary of the 2nd lesson observation of Robbie

…differentiated to meet D's needs ensuring that work is carefully graded and consolidated to ensure success	No differentiation of the activity. No obvious grading of the work. Success was not achieved due to distraction of D
…having instructions broken down into small units and the use of visual prompts	TA attempted to break down instructions, however pupil D not paying attention. Teacher did not break down activity – prompts in form of cutting out shapes.
Structured opportunities to interact and learn with mainstream peers	No structured interaction as D had chosen who to sit next to and it was not a productive pairing

2nd Lesson Observation 4

Table to show a summary of the 2nd lesson observation of Sally

Explanations of tasks on any individual level with opportunities for learning through practical demonstrations and visual aids	Individual explanations all came from the teaching assistant There were no visual aids or practical demonstrations
Simplified verbal communication in the classroom accompanied by non-verbal clues such as gesture, mime and visual materials	Simplified verbal communication all came from the teaching assistant
Comprehension will need to be monitored and tasks broken down accordingly	The tasks were broken down by the teaching assistant
Individualised instruction and additional prompts and encouragement with increased opportunities to be listened to and have appropriate language modelled for her to repeat	Individualised instruction with additional prompts and encouragement came from the teaching assistant There were no opportunities for J to be listened to by the teacher

2nd Lesson Observation 5 – 1 pupil

Table to show a summary of the 2nd lesson observation of Richard

…differentiated to meet K's needs ensuring that work is carefully graded and consolidated to ensure success	Work tailored to K He was able to achieve success because he could tackle each short sheet and get everything right
An approach that reinforces verbal information with visual supports	Little visual support on the revision sheets

2nd Lesson Observation 6 – 2 pupils

Table to show a summary of the 2nd lesson observation of Louise

Opportunities to practise and explore appropriate social skills, with teacher intervention where necessary	Little teacher intervention to assist L in this lesson where at times she was quite isolated
Careful management of activities and change in the classroom and other school activities, including prior warnings	L did not appear to find the change of activities in this lesson a problem

Table to show a summary of the 2nd lesson observation of Murray

Short clear instructions with visual prompts to aid poor memory	Teaching assistant repeated and simplified instructions – no visual prompts used
Visual cues, repetition of instructions and constant refocusing to support understanding and ensure completion of tasks	Teaching assistant refocused M – needed to simplify instructions and work with M for him to complete the tasks
Strategies to assist M to maintain concentration, attention and listening skills	The teaching assistant used simple strategies, such as use of M's name and hand gestures to refocus him Teacher not involved in this to any degree

2nd Lesson Observation 7

2nd Lesson Observation 7

Table to show a summary of the 2nd lesson observation of Mary

…differentiated to meet N's needs ensuring that work is carefully graded and consolidated to ensure success	No differentiation evident No evidence of grading of work
Strategies that will encourage her to join in whole class discussions	Subject teacher does not attempt to encourage N to join in with the whole class discussion Teaching assistant prompts N to put up her hand when she knows an answer
Structure and visual support in the classroom, with opportunities for over-learning and for her to consolidate concepts and skills, experiencing success at each stage, including verbal instructions with a brief written summary on the board so that N has something to refer back to and help with N's organisational skills	No evidence of structure or visual support put into place. Table that needs filling in is the same for each pupil. No visual clues on board to support the work
Support to help her focus on tasks and to monitor and check what she has learnt in the short and long term	Teaching assistant supports N to focus on the tasks and to check what she has learnt

2nd Lesson Observation 8

Table to show a summary of the 2nd lesson observation of Hugo

…differentiated to meet needs of a child with a hearing impairment	P is sitting at the front of the room. No additional work put on board to support P if he has not heard something
Provide acoustic conditions and radio aid system in all learning situations	This was not in place during this lesson

2nd Lesson Observation 9

Table to show a summary of the 2nd lesson observation of Peter

Appropriate ICT programmes and opportunities to use such programmes to assist in recording written work across the curriculum	No support given by teacher to record work. Teaching assistant adapted activity to enable Peter to stick on rather than copy information.
……support and direction to improve A's interaction with peers	Peter next to and focused on teaching assistant – no interaction with peers possible
…techniques and strategies to assist in enhancing A's concentration and focus on tasks	Teaching assistant used visual cues to refocus Peter and aid his concentration on the task

2nd Lesson Observation 10 – 2 pupils

Table to show a summary of the 2nd lesson observation of Kerry

kerry needs continued support in larger class situations through visual support to encourage good focusing	Pupil unable to benefit from any support during this lesson as was unwilling/unable to focus – mainly because of belief that she could not do the work

Table to show a summary of the 2nd lesson observation of Joseph

…continued support to comply with academic and social expectations of a school environment	Pupil I benefited from prompts from teaching assistant to remind him to sit appropriately, get down to work etc., but was very engaged throughout, as his ability in Maths is high and he was able to participate in the task
…support to produce written work which reflects his underlying ability	Pupil was able to record his work, but his writing was totally illegible. No additional support was offered to him in this regard during this lesson

Appendix 4 – Example of the Teaching Assistant Questionnaire

Student: Form: Total Hours Support: Provision:	
Teaching Assistant: Hours of support per fortnight: Subjects support, hours per fortnight:	

ACADEMIC
Achievement/progress

To what extent do you feel pupil is able to access the curriculum? –

Without differentiation

|_____|_____|
0   5   10

With differentiation

|_____|_____|
0   5   10
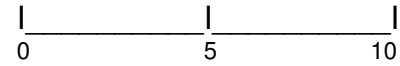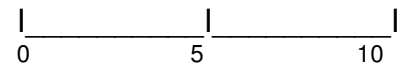
Comments?

…………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………

Are there differences from subject to subject?

Yes   No   (Please circle as appropriate)

If yes, which are

Most problematic?
…………………………………………………………………………….

Least problematic?
……………………………………………………………………………

What, in your opinion contributes to problems in these subject areas?

Teaching style:

|_____|_____|
0   5   10
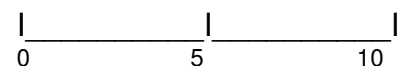
Level of literacy required:

|_____|_____|
0   5   10
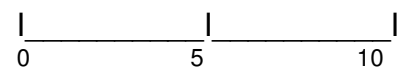
Level of numeracy required:

|_____|_____|
0   5   10

Conceptual difficulties:

|_____|_____|
0   5   10
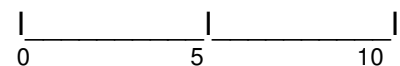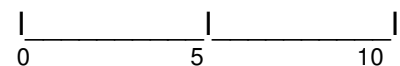
Level of skills needed:

|_____|_____|
0   5   10
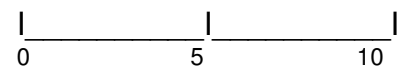
Any comments?

…………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………

....

....

....

In which of the subjects you support do you feel the student has made:

Most progress ……………………………………………………….

Least progress ……………………………………………………….

Why?

Teaching style:

```
I_____I_____I
0            5            10
```

Differentiation:

```
I_____I_____I
0            5            10
```
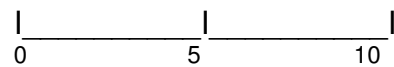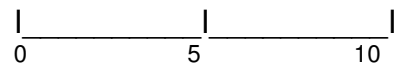
Student's skill in the subject:

```
I_____I_____I
0            5            10
```
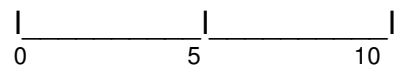
Student's attitude to the subject:

```
I_____I_____I
0            5            10
```
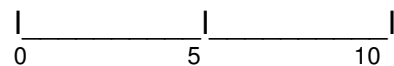
Have you any evidence to support your opinion? (Test results, work produced, contributions in class, etc.)

....

....

....

....

Attitude to learning:

To what degree does the student independently show motivation to learn (shown by his/her (unprompted) listening, asking questions, contribution to discussions, putting up hand)?

```
I_____I_____I
0          5          10
```
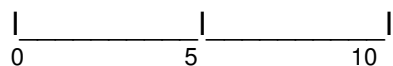
To what extent is the student's attitude to support positive?

```
I_____I_____I
0          5          10
```
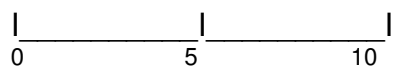
To what extent does the student seek your support?

```
I_____I_____I
0          5         10
Not at all           Always
```
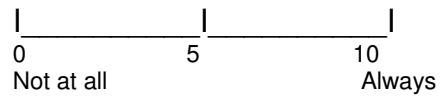
In which subjects does the student show

Most motivation

………………………………………………………………………….

Least motivation

………………………………………………………………………....

Does that correspond to progress made, and comments above?

Yes   No   (please circle as appropriate)

Comments?

………………………………………………………………………………………………

……

………………………………………………………………………………………………

………..

Teacher-student relationships:

Do subject teachers address the student

Much more than

………………………………………………………………….

More than

………………………………………………………………….

About the same as

………………………………………………………………….

Less than

………………………………………………………………….

Much less than

………………………………………………………………….

other students

Not at all

………………………………………………………………….

(Please note subjects as appropriate next to each)

Do subject teachers ask student for answers/contributions

Much more than

………………………………………………………………………

More than

………………………………………………………………………

About the same as

………………………………………………………………………

Less than

………………………………………………………………………

Much less than

……………………………………………………………………….

other students

Not at all

……………………………………………………………………….

(Please note subjects as appropriate next to each)

Do subject teachers offer the student help/support

Much more than

……………………………………………………………………….

More than

……………………………………………………………………….

About the same as

……………………………………………………………………….

Less than

……………………………………………………………………….

Much less than

……………………………………………………………………….

other students

Not at all

……………………………………………………………………….

(Please note subjects as appropriate next to each)

Behaviour/social relationships:

Is the student's behaviour in class appropriate

always   usually   sometimes   rarely   never

(Please circle as appropriate)

If rarely/never appropriate, please give examples of most frequent inappropriate behaviour

……………………………………………………………………………………………….

……………………………………………………………………………………………….

……………………………………………………………………………………………….

……………………………………………………………………………………………….

Do subject teachers react to this

In the same way as to other students?
…………………………………………………….

In a more lenient way?
……………………………………………………………………..

In a harsher way?

……………………………………………………………………..

Is the student's behaviour at break/lunchtimes/unstructured times appropriate

always   usually   sometimes   rarely   never

(Please circle as appropriate – or circle **don't know**)

Can the student independently

Find his/her way round school?

|_____|_____|
0   5   10

Get to lessons on time?

|_____|_____|
0   5   10

Sit still appropriately?

|_____|_____|
0   5   10

Follow basic instructions?

|_____|_____|
0   5   10

Get out correct equipment?

|_____|_____|
0   5   10

Respond appropriately
to question from subject teacher?

```
I_____I_____I
0          5          10
```
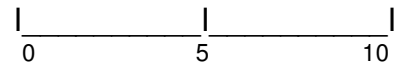
Social:

Can the student independently

Greet teacher/adult?

```
I_____I_____I
0          5          10
```
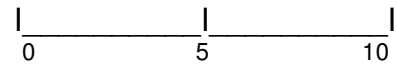
Make eye contact with teacher/adult?

```
I_____I_____I
0          5          10
```

Greet friends/peers?

```
I_____I_____I
0          5          10
```
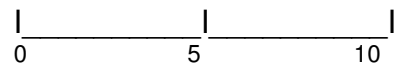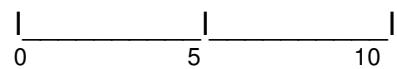
Make eye contact with friends/peers?

```
I_____I_____I
0          5          10
```
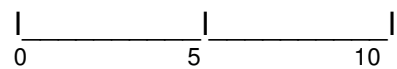
Ask for his/her lunch?

```
I_____I_____I
0          5          10
```

Eat lunch appropriately?

```
I_____I_____I
0          5          10
```
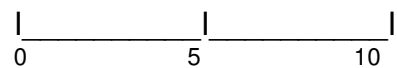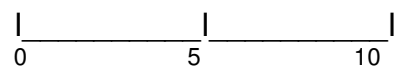
Join in with structured group activities?

```
I_____I_____I
0          5          10
```
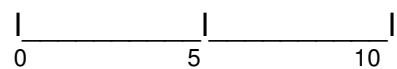
Join in with unstructured group activities?

```
I_____I_____I
0          5          10
```
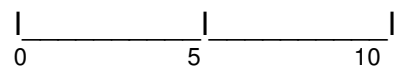
Initiate contact with familiar teachers?

```
I_____I_____I
0          5          10
```
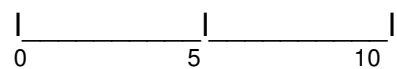
Initiate contact with unfamiliar teachers?

```
I_____I_____I
0          5          10
```
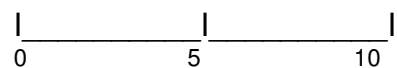
Initiate contact with other familiar adults?

```
I_____I_____I
0          5          10
```
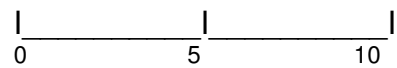
Initiate contact with other unfamiliar adults?

```
I_____I_____I
0          5          10
```
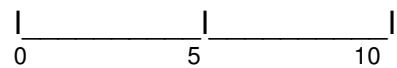
Initiate contact with friends?

```
I_____I_____I
0          5          10
```

Initiate contact with other peers?

```
I_____I_____I
0          5          10
```
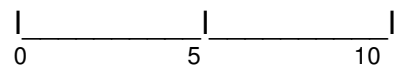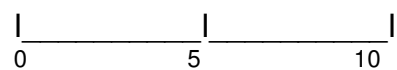
Comments/examples?

……………………………………………………………………………………………………
…..

……………………………………………………………………………………………………
………

……………………………………………………………………………………………………
………

……………………………………………………………………………………………………
……...

To what extent do other students include the student in the form?

I_____I_____I
  0   5   10
not at all   completely
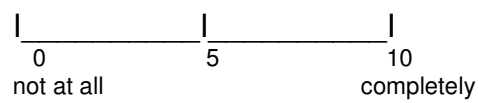
Comments/examples?

……………………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………………

To what extent do subject teachers include student?

I_____I_____I
0   5   10
not at all   completely
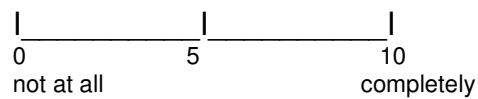
Comments/examples?

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………………
………

To what extent does the form teacher include the student?

|_____|_____|
0   5   10
not at all   completely
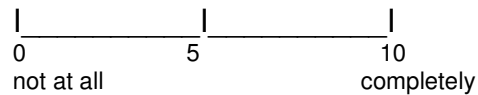
Has the form teacher done anything to increase/promote the inclusion of the student?

…………………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

If so, how successful has this been?

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

Is there anything else you would like to add?

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………………..

Appendix 5 – Teaching Assistant Questionnaire Analysis

Table to show 15 statemented pupils' degree of access to the curriculum with and without differentiation

Degree of access to the curriculum	(Where 0 is no access and 10 is full access)										
	0	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**
	No of pupils ↓	No of pupils ↓	No of pupils ↓	No of pupils ↓	No of pupils ↓	No of pupils ↓	No of pupils ↓	No of pupils ↓	No of pupils ↓	No of pupils ↓	No of pupils ↓
Aw/od	1	1	1	2	1	3	1	1	1	1	2
aw/d			1	1			2	8		1	2

(aw/od – access to curriculum without differentiation)
(awd – access to curriculum with differentiation)

Table to show most and least problematic lessons where teaching assistants were asked to identify the most and least problematic lessons for each pupil (15 pupils) with no limit on the numbers of subjects identified

Most problematic	Responses	Least Problematic	Responses
English	5	English	1
History	4	History	0
RS	2	RS	0
DT	1	DT	2
Geography	3	Geography	1
Maths	4	Maths	5
German	1	German	0
Science	1	Science	2
Art	0	Art	1
P.E.	0	P.E.	1
In addition to particular lessons, these were also identified as most or least problematic for specific pupils			
Structured lessons	0	Structured lessons	1
Unstructured lessons	1	Unstructured lessons	0
Interactive lessons	1	Interactive lessons	0
Problem solving activities	0	Problem solving activities	1

Table to show subjects where most/least progress have been made where teaching assistants were asked to identify where most and least progress has been made for each pupil (15 pupils) with no limit on the numbers of subjects identified

Most progress	Responses	Least progress	Responses
English	2	English	4
History	0	History	2
RS	0	RS	1
DT	2	DT	1
Geography	0	Geography	3
Maths	5	Maths	1
German	0	German	0
Science	3	Science	1
Art	0	Art	0
P.E.	0	P.E.	0
Spanish	1	Spanish	0
I.T.	1	I.T.	0
Drama	2	Drama	1
French	1	French	1
Dance	0	Dance	1
Most lessons	1	Most lessons	1

Table to show subjects where pupils showed most/least motivation where teaching assistants were asked to identify where pupils showed most and least motivation with no limit on the numbers of subjects identified

Most motivation	Responses	Least motivation	Responses
English	1	English	2
History	1	History	5
RS	0	RS	1
DT	3	DT	1
Geography	0	Geography	3
Maths	6	Maths	0
German	0	German	1
Science	2	Science	0
Art	1	Art	1
P.E.	1	P.E.	0
Spanish	1	Spanish	0
Music	1	Music	0
Drama	1	Drama	0
French	1	French	0
Dance	1	Dance	1

Table to show contributory factors to a pupil's progress where teaching assistants were asked to identify contributory factors to a pupil's progress, being able to choose all or none of these

Factor	With 0 as not being seen as contributory, to 10 being seen as highly contributory										
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	No of pupils ↓	No of pupils ↓	No of pupils ↓	No of pupils ↓	No of pupils ↓	No of pupils ↓	No of pupils ↓	No of pupils ↓	No of pupils ↓	No of pupils ↓	No of pupils ↓
Teaching style	8	1				2		1	1	2	
Literacy	4	1				2			4	3	1
Numeracy	3	4					3		3		2
Concept-ual diffs	3			1		2			5	2	2
Skills	2	1	1			2		3	2	2	2

The above tables relate to information gathered about 15 pupils, whereby teaching assistants filled in a questionnaire about pupils with whom they worked. There were ten teaching assistants. One worked with three of the pupils, three worked with two pupils each, while the remaining six worked with one pupil.

Appendix 6 – Example Transcript of a Teaching Assistant Interview

SJ re Murray:

Murray…at the beginning of your questionnaire…to what extent can he access the curriculum – without differentiation? What sort of differentiation does he need?

Without differentiation, not at all. Differentiation needs to be really simplistic stuff broken down…visual stuff (sic) works really well…the Spanish teacher always has something prepared…it's easy when I turn up not just improvising on the spot…she has lots of equipment I can use.

You say Science and Maths are most problematic, why? Are these the most difficult subjects or is it lack of differentiation?

Maths – he finds concepts very difficult, differentiated material – the Beginning Teacher he was with prepared something for him every lesson, S (Maths teacher) will say you pick something and just work on this, just have work sheets and stuff (sic) – concepts with Maths are difficult – but I feel all the TAs who work with him do cover the lessons with him, so he's not doing his Maths down here (the SEN department)… Science, well the teacher there you know, does nothing at all … a complete waste of time …he's in there just copying things down – when I've had him down here using BBC Bitesize, interactive stuff he can engage with stuff and he's stimulated by it -he's actually gaining skills.

In terms of subjects where he made progress – in Spanish for example – is he still making progress?

I said Spanish because he enjoys it and he's got someone in there who helps him – for someone with his difficulties he's progressed really well – he's always coming out with new words.

That's good – so I asked whether his attitude to support is positive – is it a personal thing at times?

When he's…change of routine quite important to him – if you let him know in the morning he's fine – it's quite good for him, because he's getting used to changes in routine – but yes his attitude is personal to who is with him.

You say most motivation in Spanish – I've asked about how much teachers address the students – some were addressing him the same as other pupils, but in Maths and History it's less, and much less in Science.

History – teachers see that because I'm specifically with him it's like they don't know what their responsibilities are – but even so, some of the other subject teachers still make the effort. The Science teacher doesn't at all.

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Does it affect the way Murray is in lessons?

I think so – I can see he always addresses the teacher, when the teacher comes in and gives him that interaction – the interaction with the teacher gives him a sense of being a member of the class.

Some of the subject teachers give him more attention in terms of questions and answers – I've been into Spanish and I thought he was very included in that – Ms D made a great attempt to ask him questions – he can respond to it – what do you think?

The teachers will ask me if they are concerned rather than asking him.

With subject teachers again – is it the same people who offer help? I asked about behaviour in class – is his behaviour usually appropriate or better than when he is in the SEN department?

About the same I think.

You feel subject teachers react more leniently to Murray – do the students? Do they think it's not fair?

Because that class is used to Murray they just go with it. They just think it's the way Murray is…teachers certainly react more leniently.

In respect to his independence – it seems quite limited – he's not getting to lessons on time if he's on his own – has his independence improved?

He's still at the same level – you are coaxing him along to the lessons all the time – his concentration is so poor he wouldn't be listening to any of the instructions.

With all the comments you have made about teachers and his need for differentiation, do you feel if he hadn't got support he would have any hope of surviving?

Without support I just don't think so – most lessons are so intense and he cannot follow them himself.

In terms of differentiation I get the impression very few teachers differentiate at all – do they think they need to explain things more to Murray or do they leave that to you?

It varies from lesson to lesson with different teachers – but yes many of them leave it all to me.

What about form teachers including Murray

We had an incident with assembly when it was their turn to do assembly – he wasn't in assembly – whether we should have said to her about Murray – possibly we could have done, because she forgot about him.

Has she done anything to promote Murray's inclusion?

No

From your personal viewpoint – how included do you think he is?

I do think people, teachers and pupils know him, say hello to him, head of year and previous heads of year ask about him – he's socially included.

What about in terms of work?

Within work – this varies from lesson to lesson – a lot more could be done

Is he making progress?

I have this constant conversation with myself – and sometimes have a hallelujah moment, for example when he's done something you don't think he could – then I think – is he not letting on he knows more?

I wonder in terms of his progress is part of the problem that we don't use the right sort of measures, using the same sorts of progress as other students – need P levels, looking more regularly at what he is doing and whether he is doing more – what do you think?

Something structured like P levels would be helpful – we could work on where he's having difficulties – it would be easier to monitor.

Appendix 7 – Example of the Structured Observation Form

Student arrives	On time	
	< 5 minutes late	
	> 5 minutes late	
Student takes off coat	Unprompted	
	Prompted by the teacher	
	Prompted by the teaching assistant	
	Prompted by peer	
If TA is present they sit	Next to the student	
	Near to the student	
	Away from the student	
Student has	Pen	
	Pencil (if needed)	
	Ruler (if needed)	
	Homework diary	
Student (appears to) listen to teacher	Without talking	
	Without fidgeting	
	Unprompted by TA	
	Prompted by TA	
Student puts up hand to ask question	Unprompted by TA	
	Prompted by TA	
Student puts up hand to answer question	Unprompted by TA	
	Prompted by TA	
Teacher addresses student	In response to hand being up	
	At random	
Teacher provides differentiated material		
Teacher differentiates material on the spot		
TA provides differentiated material		
TA differentiates material on the spot		
Teacher provides additional explanation	Unprompted	
	In response to pupil request	
	In response to TA request	
TA provides additional explanation	Unprompted	
	In response to pupil request	
	In response to teacher request	
Student completes	All work	`
	Some work	
	Very little work	
	No work	
Student writes down homework	Independently unprompted	
	Independently prompted by teacher	
	Independently prompted by TA	
	Helped (done) by teacher	
	Helped (done) by TA	
	HW not recorded	
Homework is differentiated	By teacher	
	By TA	
	Not differentiated	

Appendix 8 – Summary of Findings in the Third Lesson Observation

Table to show teaching assistant presence in structured observations of 23 lessons

Teaching assistant present	21
Sitting next to pupil	7
Sitting near to pupil	5
Sitting away from the pupil	9

Table to show pupil participation in structured observations of 23 lessons

Pupil asks question	Unprompted	4
	Prompted by TA	1
Pupil answers question	Unprompted	6
	Prompted by TA	0

Table to show teacher interaction (in whole class situation) in structured observations of 23 lessons

Teacher addresses pupil	In response to hand up	3
	at random	9

Table to show differentiation of materials in structured observations of 23 lessons

Teacher provides differentiated materials	Pre-prepared	4
	On the spot	1
Teaching assistant provides differentiated materials	Pre-prepared	4
	On the spot	3

Table to show differentiation in terms of additional explanation in structured observations of 23 lessons

Teacher provides additional explanation	Unprompted	9
	At pupil request	0
	At TA request	0
Teaching assistant provides additional explanation	Unprompted	20
	At pupil request	0
	At teacher request	1

Table to show work completed in structured observations of 23 lessons

All work	8
Some work	4
Very little work	8
No work	3

Appendix 9 – Copy of Consent Letter Sent to Parents of Pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Needs in Year 7, 2005

Dear parent/carer

I am writing to you regarding a piece of research I am currently engaged in concerning the inclusion of students with statements of SEN in mainstream education.

For the past four years I have been studying at Birmingham University towards a Doctorate in Education, focusing on Special Educational Needs and Disadvantage, and am now at the stage of beginning to carry out my research.

I am interested in looking at how successful we are at including children with statements of special educational needs at (Name of School) and looking at ways in which we might improve this. The focus of my research is to be how the present cohort of year 7 students with statements are included into (Name of School); to look at the way teaching assistants contribute to provision; what sort of progress students make, both academically and socially, friendships; issues that arise and so on.

For this reason I am writing to you for your consent to include your son/daughter in my research. I will not be doing anything different or additional with your son/daughter, since the point of the research is to examine our current practice and evaluate it, with the aim of identifying areas where we are successful and things that may hinder inclusion and should be
changed.

The thesis that will be written as a result of the research

- will not identify the school;
- will not identify its location;
- will not identify children, teachers, teaching assistants or any other involved parties.

After publication, the thesis will only be available from the University Library, and will be used primarily to support or add to research in education.

As stated the primary purpose of this research is to improve practice – both within (Name of School), and hopefully may be applied to practice in other mainstream settings. **If you would like to discuss this further, please contact me, via the school office on (telephone number).** I enclose a 'permission' and s.a.e. for your response.

Yours sincerely

Appendix 10 – Comparison of the Different Levels of Interaction Pupils had in Subjects Where they had Made the Most or Least Progress

Table to show comparison of responses regarding Peter's progress/motivation and teacher-pupil interaction

Pupil	Areas of difficulty		Areas of strength	
Peter	**Most problematic**	English, History, RS, D&T	**Least problematic**	Maths, Science, French Geography
	Least progress	RS, History, D&T	**Most progress**	French, Music, English, Drama Maths
	Least motivation	English, History, D&T, Art	**Most motivation**	Maths, French, Dance
	Do the teachers address the pupil			
	Much less/less than	D&T, Science, IT, Geography, RS	**Much more/more than**	
	Not at all		**About the same as**	Maths, French, English, Drama, Music, Art
	Do the teachers ask for contributions/answers			
	Much less/less than	D&T, English, ICT, Geography, RS, Art	**Much more/more than**	
	Not at all		**About the same as**	Maths, French, Drama, Music
	Do the teachers offer help/advice			
	Much less/less than	Most subjects	**Much more/more than**	
	Not at all		**About the same as**	French

There is no table for Ricardo as he spends much of his time out of class in the END department because of his severe physical difficulties and the difficulties caused by the physical arrangements of the site

Table to show comparison of responses regarding Lesley's progress/motivation and teacher-pupil interaction

Pupil	Areas of difficulty		Areas of strength	
Lesley	**Most problematic**	English	**Least problematic**	Maths
	Least progress	English	**Most progress**	Science
	Least motivation	History	**Most motivation**	Maths
	Do the teachers address the pupil			
	Much less/less than	English, Science, Music, PHSE	**Much more/more than**	
	Not at all	History	**About the same as**	ICT, German, Maths, RS, D&T, Art
	Do the teachers ask for contributions/answers			
	Much less/less than	English, Science, Music, PHSE	**Much more/more than**	
	Not at all	History	**About the same as**	ICT, German, Maths, RS, D&T, Art
	Do the teachers offer help/advice			
	Much less/less than	History	**Much more/more than**	English, Geography, German, Maths
	Not at all		**About the same as**	ICT, Music, RS, Science, PHSE, French

Table to show comparison of responses regarding Robbie's progress/motivation and teacher-pupil interaction

Pupil	Areas of difficulty		Areas of strength	
Robbie	**Most problematic**	History, Geography, English	**Least problematic**	D&T, Maths
	Least progress	History, Geography	**Most progress**	Maths, Science
	Least motivation	Generally lacks motivation	**Most motivation**	
	Do the teachers address the pupil			
	Much less/less than		**Much more/more than**	
	Not at all		**About the same as**	All subjects treated as other pupils
	Do the teachers ask for contributions/answers			
	Much less/less than		**Much more/more than**	
	Not at all		**About the same as**	All subjects treated as other pupils
	Do the teachers offer help/advice			
	Much less/less than		**Much more/more than**	
	Not at all		**About the same as**	All subjects treated as other pupils

Table to show comparison of responses regarding Terry's progress/motivation and teacher-pupil interaction

Pupil	Areas of difficulty		Areas of strength	
Terry	**Most problematic**	History	**Least problematic**	Maths
	Least progress	Geography	**Most progress**	Maths
	Least motivation	History, geography	**Most motivation**	Maths
	Do the teachers address the pupil			
	Much less/less than		**Much more/more than**	Science, maths, PHSE, French
	Not at all		**About the same as**	English, History, Geography
	Do the teachers ask for contributions/answers			
	Much less/less than		**Much more/more than**	
	Not at all		**About the same as**	All subjects treated as other pupils
	Do the teachers offer help/advice			
	Much less/less than		**Much more/more than**	
	Not at all		**About the same as**	All subjects treated as other pupils

Table to show comparison of responses regarding Jake's progress/motivation and teacher-pupil interaction

Pupil	Areas of difficulty		Areas of strength	
Jake	**Most problematic**	Maths, Geography, English	**Least problematic**	D&T
	Least progress	English, dance	**Most progress**	D&T
	Least motivation	Dance	**Most motivation**	D&T
	Do the teachers address the pupil			
	Much less/less than	History, Geography, Drama	**Much more/more than**	
	Not at all		**About the same as**	Maths, English, D&T
	Do the teachers ask for contributions/answers			
	Much less/less than	Science, most other subjects	**Much more/more than**	
	Not at all		**About the same as**	English
	Do the teachers offer help/advice			
	Much less/less than	Geography	**Much more/more than**	History, English, D&T
	Not at all		**About the same as**	Maths, Science

Table to show comparison of responses regarding Tony's progress/motivation and teacher-pupil interaction

Pupil	Areas of difficulty		Areas of strength	
Tony	**Most problematic**	Where poor classroom management	**Least problematic**	Structured lessons good classroom management
	Least progress	Maths, Drama	**Most progress**	Science, ICT, D&T, English
	Least motivation	History, Geography	**Most motivation**	P.E., Music
	Do the teachers address the pupil			
	Much less/less than		**Much more/more than**	Maths, History, Geography (for poor behaviour)
	Not at all		**About the same as**	English, Science, most subjects
	Do the teachers ask for contributions/answers			
	Much less/less than	Maths, Geography	**Much more/more than**	
	Not at all		**About the same as**	English, Science
	Do the teachers offer help/advice			
	Much less/less than		**Much more/more than**	
	Not at all		**About the same as**	All subjects

Table to show comparison of responses regarding Kerry's progress/motivation and teacher-pupil interaction

Pupil	Areas of difficulty		Areas of strength	
Kerry	**Most problematic**	German, English, History	**Least problematic**	Science, Dance, Art
	Least progress		**Most progress**	
	Least motivation	German, History	**Most motivation**	Science, Maths, Art
	Do the teachers address the pupil			
	Much less/less than	German, Science, Geography, History	**Much more/more than**	
	Not at all		**About the same as**	Maths, RS, English, PHSE
	Do the teachers ask for contributions/answers			
	Much less/less than	German, Science, History	**Much more/more than**	
	Not at all		**About the same as**	Maths, RS, English, PHSE
	Do the teachers offer help/advice			
	Much less/less than	German, Geography	**Much more/more than**	
	Not at all		**About the same as**	Maths, RS, Science, Art, PHSE

Table to show comparison of responses regarding Joseph's progress/motivation and teacher-pupil interaction

Pupil	Areas of difficulty		Areas of strength	
Joseph	**Most problematic**	Interactive lessons	**Least problematic**	Problem solving lessons
	Least progress	English	**Most progress**	Maths, Drama
	Least motivation	English	**Most motivation**	Drama, History, Maths
	Do the teachers address the pupil			
	Much less/less than	German, Science, Dance, ICT	**Much more/more than**	History, Drama
	Not at all		**About the same as**	English, Maths
	Do the teachers ask for contributions/answers			
	Much less/less than	Science, Drama, Dance, Maths, English, German, History, ICT	**Much more/more than**	
	Not at all		**About the same as**	
	Do the teachers offer help/advice			
	Much less/less than	Science, English, History	**Much more/more than**	Drama, Maths
	Not at all		**About the same as**	German, Dance

Table to show comparison of responses regarding Sally's progress/motivation and teacher-pupil interaction

Pupil	Areas of difficulty		Areas of strength	
Sally	**Most problematic**	English	**Least problematic**	Maths
	Least progress	English	**Most progress**	Science
	Least motivation	History	**Most motivation**	Maths
	Do the teachers address the pupil			
	Much less/less than	English, Science, Music, PSE	**Much more/more than**	
	Not at all	History	**About the same as**	IT, Geography, German, Maths, RS, D&T, Art
	Do the teachers ask for contributions/answers			
	Much less/less than	English, Science, Music, PHSE	**Much more/more than**	
	Not at all	History	**About the same as**	IT, Geography, German, Maths, TS, D&T, Art
	Do the teachers offer help/advice			
	Much less/less than	History	**Much more/more than**	English, Geography, German, Maths
	Not at all		**About the same as**	Music, RS, Science, PHSE, D&T

Table to show comparison of responses regarding Richard's progress/motivation and teacher-pupil interaction

Pupil	Areas of difficulty		Areas of strength	
Richard	**Most problematic**	Unstructured lessons	**Least problematic**	Structured lessons
	Least progress	Most subjects	**Most progress**	No area of curriculum
	Least motivation	Any subject involving writing	**Most motivation**	D&T – food technology
	Do the teachers address the pupil			
	Much less/less than		**Much more/more than**	
	Not at all		**About the same as**	Most subjects – mainly because disruptive
	Do the teachers ask for contributions/answers			
	Much less/less than	Most teachers – do not expect him to be able to do much	**Much more/more than**	
	Not at all		**About the same as**	
	Do the teachers offer help/advice			
	Much less/less than		**Much more/more than**	
	Not at all		**About the same as**	Most of the teachers

Table to show comparison of responses regarding Louise's progress/motivation and teacher-pupil interaction

Pupil	Areas of difficulty		Areas of strength	
Louise	**Most problematic**	English, History	**Least problematic**	All other subjects
	Least progress	Good progress made across board	**Most progress**	Science, Maths, English
	Least motivation	Well motivated	**Most motivation**	Highly motivated all subjects
	Do the teachers address the pupil			
	Much less/less than		**Much more/more than**	
	Not at all		**About the same as**	All subjects treated as other pupils
	Do the teachers ask for contributions/answers			
	Much less/less than		**Much more/more than**	
	Not at all		**About the same as**	All subjects treated as other pupils
	Do the teachers offer help/advice			
	Much less/less than		**Much more/more than**	
	Not at all		**About the same as**	All subjects treated as other pupils

Table to show comparison of responses regarding Murray's progress/motivation and teacher-pupil interaction

Pupil	Areas of difficulty		Areas of strength	
Murray	**Most problematic**	Science, Maths	**Least problematic**	Dance, P.E.
	Least progress	Science	**Most progress**	Spanish
	Least motivation	Well motivated	**Most motivation**	Spanish
	Do the teachers address the pupil			
	Much less/less than	Science	**Much more/more than**	
	Not at all		**About the same as**	P.E., RS, Dance, English, Geography, Music
	Do the teachers ask for contributions/answers			
	Much less/less than	Science	**Much more/more than**	
	Not at all		**About the same as**	P.E., RS, Dance, English, Geography, Music
	Do the teachers offer help/advice			
	Much less/less than	Science	**Much more/more than**	Spanish
	Not at all		**About the same as**	P.E., RS, Dance, English, Geography, Music

Table to show comparison of responses regarding Mary's progress/motivation and teacher-pupil interaction

Pupil	Areas of difficulty		Areas of strength	
Mary	**Most problematic**	Geography, Maths	**Least problematic**	English
	Least progress	Geography	**Most progress**	Maths
	Least motivation	Geography	**Most motivation**	English
	Do the teachers address the pupil			
	Much less/less than	Maths, Geography	**Much more/more than**	Science
	Not at all		**About the same as**	English
	Do the teachers ask for contributions/answers			
	Much less/less than	Maths, Geography	**Much more/more than**	Science
	Not at all		**About the same as**	English
	Do the teachers offer help/advice			
	Much less/less than	English	**Much more/more than**	Science
	Not at all		**About the same as**	Maths

Table to show comparison of responses regarding Hugo's progress/motivation and teacher-pupil interaction

Pupil	Areas of difficulty		Areas of strength	
Hugo	**Most problematic**	RS	**Least problematic**	Maths
	Least progress		**Most progress**	Good in all subjects
	Least motivation	RS	**Most motivation**	Maths, Science, D&T
	Do the teachers address the pupil			
	Much less/less than		**Much more/more than**	
	Not at all		**About the same as**	All subjects treated as other pupils
	Do the teachers ask for contributions/answers			
	Much less/less than		**Much more/more than**	
	Not at all		**About the same as**	All subjects treated as other pupils
	Do the teachers offer help/advice			
	Much less/less than		**Much more/more than**	
	Not at all		**About the same as**	All subjects treated as other pupils

Appendix 11 – Teacher Reports Demonstrating a High Level of Understanding of Pupils' Difficulties

Murray's progress in P.E. this year has been slow but extremely significant. In terms of his own performance I would say that he has improved his unit skills the most in badminton and hockey. In hockey he is able to push and hit the ball towards a goal and can dribble the ball through cones. In badminton Murray found hitting the shuttle extremely difficult but with practice was able to serve on the forehand and backhand. He was also able to return a serve using an overhead shot. On some occasions he was able to link these skills and play a 3 shot rally. In rugby Murray learnt basic passing and running with the ball. In basketball he learnt how to dribble and pass the ball. Murray has made great strides this year and I would also like to thank Mr J (TA) who has done some excellent work with Murray.

Murray has made some exceptional progress in Food Technology with the assistance of his TA. He is able to identify equipment and use it appropriately. He has demonstrated some manipulation skills e.g. rubbing fat into flour. He works in a team but independently. His TA sets up the design work and he is able to attempt some simple colouring in.

Murray is extremely motivated in the Spanish class. He works well with his assistant and stays on task throughout the lesson. He enjoys copying out new words and writing their translation in English. He is able to do gap fill exercises, connection exercises and memory games. His work is neat and accurate. He enjoys speaking Spanish and always makes an effort to greet me in Spanish, even outside the classroom.

Appendix 12 – Table to Show Initial Reading and Spelling Ages of Target Pupils

Pupil	R.A.	C.A.	S.A.	C.A.
Peter	8y6m	12y	9.8	12y
Ricardo	Below	11y1m	Below	11y1
Lesley	<6y 8	11y9m	<6.8	11y9m
Robbie	Absent		Absent	
Terry	11y3m	11y10m	9.4	11y10m
Jake	7y1m	11y8m	9.3	11y8m
Tony	13y9m	11y7m	12.3	11y7m
Kerry	8y3m	11y9m	8.6	11y9m
Joseph	15+	11y	13.2	11y
Sally	7y1m	11y8m	7.9	11y8m
Richard	8y9m	11y1m	7.9	11y1m
Louise	9y10m	11y6m	13.4	11y6m
Murray	Below	11y4m	Below	11y4m
Mary	11y3m	11y10m	10.1	11y10m
Hugo	11y1m	11y6m	7.9	11y6

(C.A. = chronological age)

Appendix 13 – Table to Show 2005-6 Statemented Pupils' KS2 SATs Results – Teacher Assessment and Test Results

Pupil	English		Mathematics		Science	
	TA	**Test**	**TA**	**Test**	**TA**	**Test**
Peter	3	B	4	4A	3	3B
Ricardo	2	N	2	N	2	N
Lesley	1	B	1	B	2	B
Robbie		3A				3C
Terry	2	B	2	B	2	B
Jake	2	B	1	B	1	Absent
Tony	4	4C	4	4C	4	4A
Kerry	3	3B	4	4C	4	5C
Joseph	5	5C	5	5A	5	5A
Sally	2	B	3	B	2	B
Richard	2	B	2	B	2	3C
Louise	4	4B	4	4A	4	4B
Murray	1	B	1	B	1	B
Mary	4	4B	3	3C	3	3B
Hugo	4	4B	4	4B	4	4C

N = Not entered for the test; B = Below the level of the test

Table to show minimum targets and predicted targets for year 7 pupils with a Statement of SEN 2005-6 in Art, D+T, Dance, Drama & English

Pupil	Art		D&T		Dance		Drama		English	
	Min Tgt	Pred-iction	Min Tgt	Pred-iction	Min Tgt	Pred-iction	Min Tgt	Pred-iction	Min Tgt	Pred-iction
A	5B	5	5B	5		6		5		6
B	3	6	3	4	3		3	5	3	3
C		6		6		7		7		4
D	5C	6	5C	6	5A	6	5A	6	5A	5
E		6		7		6		6		5C
F	3	4	3		4	4	4	5	4	4
G	6A	6	6A	6	6C	6	6C	6	6C	6C
H	7C	5	7C	6	5B	6	5B	B	5B	5
I	7A	5	7A	6	7C	6	7C	4	7C	5
J	4	5	4	6	4	8	4	5	4	4
K	5C	5	5C	5		5		5	4C	4B
L	6B	6	6B	6	6B	6	6A	6	6B	6A
M	3	5	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3C
N	5B	5	5B	5	6B	6	6B	6	6B	6
O	6C	6	6C	5	6C	7	6C	6	6C	5

Table to show minimum targets and predicted targets for year 7 pupils with a Statement of SEN 2005-6 in Geography, History, Maths and MFL

Pupil	Geography		History		ICT		Maths		MFL	
	Min Tgt	Pred-iction	Min Tgt	Pred-iction	Min Tgt	Pred-iction	Min Tgt	Pred-iction	Min Tgt	Pred-iction
A	5B	5			5B	5	6A	7		5
B	3		3		3	3	4	2	3	4
C		3		4				4		
D	5A	6	5A	5A	5C	5	4	4	5A	
E		7		7		6		6		5C
F	4	4	4		3	3	3	3	4	4
G	6C	4	6C	5C	6A	6	6C	6	6C	4
H	5B	5	5B	5C	6A	6	6C	6	6C	4
I	7C	6	7C	7C	7A	7	7A	8	7C	7
J	4	5	4	4A	4	4	4	4	4	4
K		3			5C	5		5		3
L	6B	7	6B	7C	6B	7	6A	7	6B	7
M	3	4	3	4	3	4	3	3	3	3
N	6B	6	4C	6B	6C	6	6B	7	5C	5
O	6C	6	6C	5	6C	7	6C	6	6C	5

Table to show minimum targets and predicted targets for year 7 pupils with a Statement of SEN 2005-6 in Music, PE, RS and Science

Pupil	Music		P.E.		RS		Science	
	Min Tgt	Pred-iction	Min Tgt	Pred-iction	Min Tgt	Pred-iction	Min Tgt	Pred-iction
A	5A	6	5B	4		6	5B	7
B	3		3		3		3	4
C		7	6A	6		7		5
D	5C	6	5C	6	5A	6	5C	C
E	6C	6				7	6A	6
F	4A	5	3		4	5	3A	5
G	7C	7	6A		6C	7	6A	6
H	7C	7	7C	6	5B	5	7C	6
I	7A	7	7A		7C	6	7A	7
J	4	5	4	5	4		4	5
K	4A	5	5A	6			5C	4
L	6C	6	6B	5	6B	7	6B	5
M	4A	5	3	3	3	3	3	3
N	5B	6	7C	6	6C	7	6C	6
O	6C	6	6C	6	6C	7	6C	6

Table to show minimum targets and predictions for pupils in year 7 who gained 5C, 5A, 5A in KS2 SATs, including Pupil I in Art, D&T, Dance, Drama and English

Pupil	Art		D&T		Dance		Drama		English	
	Min Tgt	Pred-iction	Min Tgt	Pred-iction	Min Tgt	Pred-iction	Min Tgt	Pred-iction	Min Tgt	Pred-iction
1	7A	7	7A	7	7C	7	7C	7	7C	7
2	7A	7	7A	6	7C	7	7C	7	7C	7
3	7A	7	7A	6	7C	8	7C	7	7C	7
4	7A	6	6B	6	7C	7	7C	8	7C	7
5	7A	6	7A	6	7C	7	7C	7	7C	7
6	7A	6	7A	6	7C	7	7C	7	7C	7
I	**7A**	**5**	**7A**	**6**	**7C**	**6**	**7C**	**4**	**7C**	**5**

Table to show minimum targets and predictions for pupils in year 7 who gained 5C, 5A, 5A in KS2 SATs, including Pupil I in Geography, History, ICT, Maths and MFL

Pupil	Geography		History		ICT		Maths		MFL	
	Min Tgt	Pred-iction	Min Tgt	Pred-iction	Min Tgt	Pred-iction	Min Tgt	Pred-iction	Min Tgt	Pred-iction
1	7C	8	7C	7B	7A	7	7A	8	5A	7
2	7C	7	7C	7C	7A	7	7A	8	7C	7
3	7C	7	7C	7A	7A	7	7A	8	7A	6
4	7C	8	7C	7A	7A	7	7A	8	7C	7
5	7C	8	7C	7A	7A	7	7A	8	7C	7
6	7C	7	7C	7C	7A	7	7A	8	7C	7
I	**7C**	**6**	**7C**	**7C**	**7A**	**7**	**7A**	**8**	**7C**	**7**

Appendix 14 – Table to Show Average Number of Positive and Negative Incidents Recorded Over 9 Months for Statemented and Non-statemented Pupils in Year 7

Average number recorded per pupil over 9 months	Non-Statemented	Statemented
Positive (+) incidents	4.1	3.6
Negative (-) incidents	1.19	5.67

Appendix 15 – Table to Show Teaching Assistants' Perceptions of Individual Pupils' Social Ability

(with 10 as good and 0 as poor)

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O
Greet teacher/adult	5	0	7	4	10	2	5	10	2	7	5	9	7	10	10
Make eye cont teach/adult	2	5	6	4	10	2	5	10	2	7	7	6	7	5	10
Greet friends/peers	2	1	7	6	10	2	9	10	2	8	7	7	6	5	10
Make eye cont friends/peers	2	1	7	7	10	2	9	10	2	8	7	4	6	5	10
Ask for lunch appropriately	9	1	7	9	10	5	8	10	2	5	9	10	10	?	10
Eat lunch appropriately	10	1	7	9	10	10	?	10	3	8	?	10	7	?	10
Join in structured group activities	5	5	8	7	10	2	2	10	5	3	3	10	5	10	10
Join in unstructured group activities	2	1	6	4	10	2	2	10	4	2	1	2	3	3	10
Initiate contact with fam teacher	1	1	7	6	10	4	6	10	6	6	3	9	7	3	10
Initiate contact with unfam teacher	1	0	4	4	10	0	5	10	3	4	2	8	6	?	10
Initiate contact other fam adult	2	1	6	6	10	2	5	10	5	6	2	8	7	0	10
Initiate contact other unfam adult	1	1	4	4	10	0	4	10	4	4	1	5	6	0	10
Initiate contact with friends	2	1	7	7	10	2	7	10	5	7	6	5	7	?	10
Initiate contact with other peers	2	1	6	6	10	2	6	10	5	6	4	3	6	?	10
Included by peers into form	6	5	7	8	5	8	3	7	7	4	3	3	8	5	10
Included by subject teacher	8	4	8	9	10	9	6	7	5	5	7	10	7	5	10
Included by form tutor	10	7	9	9	?	8	8	10	10	3	?	?	6	?	10

Appendix 16 – Example of a Key Stage 3 Individual Education Plan

Name: Robbie   Form: 7ii   Stage: Statement

Summary of student's needs:
Robbie has transferred from (name of school), a specialist school for dyslexics where the class size was 12. He may find the transition to a large school more difficult than his peers. He has speech and language difficulties and finds it difficult to understand the curriculum without advance preparation and additional support.

Literacy		KS2		
Reading	**Spelling**	**English**	**Maths**	**Science**
Missed September test		B	3	3
Date:	Date:	May 05	May 05	May 05

Targets for the student:
- To learn subject specific language
- To develop language skills and to ask for clarification
- To answer questions in class
- To complete all homework

Strategies

The student needs to:

1. Make sure that he lets his teachers and teaching assistant know when he has not understood
2. Keep a record of subject specific words and learn them at home
3. Attend homework club in the library at least once a week (Tuesday or Friday)

The teacher needs to:

1. Seat Robbie so that he is not distracted and ensure that the teaching assistant has easy access to him in lessons
2. Let the teaching assistant know in advance topics to be covered each half term so that Robbie can be prepared so he is helped to work independently
3. Give key subject words at the beginning of each lesson
4. Check that Robbie has understood and encourage him to take an active part in lessons

The support teacher/teaching assistant needs to:

1. Make sure that Robbie is aware that the support is available to him and agree with him how he can unobtrusively access support in lessons
2. Get Robbie to write down the key words in each lesson and check in subsequent lessons that he is retaining this information
3. Liaise with subject teachers and prepare Robbie for new topics

Resources and Provision

One hour teacher support and ten hours teaching assistant. Input from a

Speech and Language Therapist

Review Arrangements: ROPs, Parents' Evenings, Learning Review, Annual Review, IEP review June 2006

Appendix 17 – Table to Show Numbers of Records of Progress (out of 15) Giving National Curriculum Levels to Year 7 Statemented Pupils (2005/6)

Subject	ROPs
Modern foreign languages	10
Maths	8
English	7
Dance	5
Geography	4
History	4
Science	4
P.E.	3
D&T	3
Drama	2
Music	1