University of Reading

Hidden voices: the influence of the inclusion of visually impaired pupils on the teaching and learning of others.

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Abstract

Amidst the complexity of research in the areas of inclusion and special educational needs (SEN) there is a widely held view that what is good practice for SEN pupils is beneficial for all learners. However, there is little empirical evidence relating to the influence of addressing the inclusion of SEN pupils on the teaching and learning of others. This thesis contributes evidence to address this gap in understanding through a focus on a specific SEN, visual impairment (VI), where there are no studies yet found on the influence of strategies designed for a VI pupil on the learning and experiences of others. VI is an under-reported, sometimes unrecognised, condition and one which can affect learning when present even in a mild form. Therefore, although school and teacher experience of pupils with VI as an identified need can be minimal, greater awareness of VI is desirable.

The research takes a case study approach to allow for a depth of understanding and to promote ecological validity and transferability of findings. Data were gathered from three schools, two primary and one secondary, across a September-January period. Initial and end-of-study surveys were undertaken with teaching (n=13) and support staff (n=7) who would be working with a VIP pupil for the first time. Classroom observations and end-of-study interviews were then undertaken with teachers in Key Stage 2 (n=2) and Key Stage 3 (n=5). The research has identified triggers for changes to teaching and learning activities and to teachers' working practices. It considers issues of teacher acceptance and response to drivers of change in order to determine not only whether addressing VI inclusion brings changes that are both sustained and sustainable but also whether it promotes any changes in teachers' conceptualisations of SEN and inclusion.

The research provides empirical evidence to support schools in inclusive curricula and pedagogical decision-making and to support discussions in the literature as to the desirability and effectiveness of inclusive educational policies more broadly.

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Declaration of original authorship

I confirm that this is my own work and the use of all material from other sources has been properly and fully acknowledged.

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Glossary

ASD	autism spectrum disorder
EHCP	education health and care plan
LA	local authority
LSA	learning support assistant
QTVI	qualified teacher of the visually impaired
SEN	special educational needs
SENCO	special educational needs co-ordinator
SEND	special educational needs and disability
VI	visual impairment
VIP	visually impaired pupil

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Outlining the problem

Amidst the complexity of research in the areas of inclusion and special educational needs (SEN) there is a widely held view that what is good practice for SEN pupils is beneficial for all learners. However, there is little empirical evidence relating to the influence of addressing the inclusion of SEN pupils on the teaching and learning of others. Rather, the vast majority of studies in the literature on the influence of inclusive practices are concerned with the participation and progress of those with SEN and understanding a given SEN and how to accommodate it in the classroom. Meta-analyses of studies that have investigated the impact of SEN inclusion on mainstream pupils (Dell'Anna, Pellegrini, & Ianes, 2019; Kalambouka, Farrell, Dyson, & Kaplan, 2007; Szumski, Smogorzewska, & Karwowski, 2017) indicate no overall adverse effects. However, these studies are described as involving 'minimum effort inclusion' (Frederickson & Cline, 2015, p. 89), where no specific effort or changes were made (see full discussion in Chapter 3). This study will go beyond broad descriptions of inclusive practice and provide more detailed and situated data.

This thesis contributes evidence to address this gap in understanding through a focus on a specific SEN, visual impairment (VI). Here again, the overwhelming majority of the literature is concerned with how to adapt the physical and social environments and provide personalised teaching strategies and curriculum activities to include VI pupils (VIPs) in the school community as fully as possible. My literature searches have yet to find studies on the influence of strategies designed for a VIP on the learning and experiences of others. VI is a low-incidence but often under-reported SEN (see section 2.4.2 below) and one which can affect learning when present even in a mild form yet may go undetected. Therefore, although

school and teacher experience of pupils with VI as an identified need can be minimal, greater awareness of VI is desirable.

1.2 Context for the thesis

The concept of inclusion in education has been broadly advocated by government policies since the Warnock Report (DES, 1978) and has been reflected in changing societal attitudes. However, in the current neoliberal performativity climate there are pressures on the pursuit of inclusion from school standards agendas, league tables, academisation, pupil placement decisions and funding constraints, and there is an increasing percentage of pupils being taught in special schools at secondary age. Nevertheless, current policies require that teachers have a broad repertoire of pedagogies that will respond to the needs of all learners (see Chapter 3, section 3.1).

The change of emphasis in the current school inspection framework (OFSTED, 2019a) requires teachers to fully address the participation and progress of all pupils. Thus the effectiveness of SEN provision is bound up with overall school effectiveness. However, this presents dilemmas and paradoxes. Identification and labelling can lead to a *discourse of expertism* (Avramidis, 2006); a belief that SEN pupils require different or specialised provision. However, a preoccupation with individualised responses can deflect attention away from structures and pedagogies that are conducive to meeting the needs of all pupils. If a normative model of education dominates then SEN will be viewed as extra and different, potentially marginalising pupils with difficulties or differences. A culture of standardised curricula and an emphasis on results and standards can create pressures on addressing differentiation and individuality. Arguably, the more inclusive the school the less additionality is required, a position that aligns with Skrtic's (1991a) advocacy of an *adhocracy*; a setting centred on innovation and problem-solving.

Schools arguably have a breadth of expertise already to teach all learners. However, whilst effective teaching is situated at the adaptive level of individual pupils, policy can appear detached from and unresponsive to the uniqueness of a classroom situation. Over the past decade the inclusion debate has centred on the accommodation of SEN and the management of the political agenda without inclusion being detrimental to school standards. The current national policy position arguably does not reflect a strength of commitment to inclusion as expressed in the sequence of legislation and policies since Warnock (see Chapter 2). These have increasingly required teachers to take responsibility for meeting the needs of all pupils, as is reflected in the change of emphasis in the current school inspection framework (OFSTED, 2019a). However, it is argued that some policy changes have given rise to perverse incentives for schools not to meet the needs of SEN pupils (Daniels, Thompson, & Tawell, 2019).

1.3 Research aims & methodology

The research was guided by three core questions (see full table section 4.5.1):

> RQ1 To what extent is the inclusion of a VIP a trigger for practical change?
>
> RQ2 To what extent is there any change in teacher knowledge and their conceptualisation of SEN and inclusion?
>
> RQ3 To what extent is any change sustained and sustainable?

A range of sub-questions sought to identify triggers for change in practical terms: to the classroom environment and resources, to teaching and learning activities and interactions and to teachers' working practices. Sub-questions also considered issues of teacher acceptance and response to the need to address VI inclusion in order to determine not only the sustainability of any changes made but also whether VI inclusion promotes any changes in

teachers' conceptualisation of and attitudes towards SEN and inclusion more broadly.

Within an over-arching interpretivist paradigm, the research was exploratory in nature, not least because my literature searches had yet to discover any existing research in this field. It was best suited to an inductive approach, valuing a variety of data sources and collection methods to ensure that all perspectives and actions could be explored and that their credibility was not neglected or denied. This was important as change might present as entrenchment as well as difference, with participants unwilling to change or maintaining a genuine belief in the efficacy of their current practice. A case study approach allowed for a depth of understanding of comparative cases to promote ecological validity and transferability of findings.

Data were gathered from three schools, two primary and one secondary, across a September-January period. Initial and end-of-study surveys were undertaken with teaching (n=13) and support staff (n=7) who would be working with a VIP for the first time. Classroom observations and end-of-study interviews were then undertaken with teachers in Key Stage 2 (n=2) and Key Stage 3 (n=5). The research sought to identify triggers for change in practical terms (such as changes to the classroom environment and resources), to teaching and learning activities and to teachers' working practices. It also addresses issues of teacher acceptance and response to drivers of change in order to determine not only whether the inclusion of a VIP brings changes that are both sustained and sustainable but also whether it promotes any changes in teachers' conceptualisations of SEN and inclusion.

1.4 Researcher background and position

Presenting relevant details of my career experience is an acknowledgement of the potential for subjective assumptions to influence the ontological and epistemological positions of this social constructionist case study research.

My career experience has led me to align with the argument that 'what's good for SEN pupils is good for all'. I was a teacher for 30 years: 13 years in mainstream settings and 17 years in a special school for pupils with moderate learning difficulties. It is my experience over the past seven years in particular, through training as a qualified teacher of the visually impaired (QTVI) and assuming direct responsibility for maximising learning for VIPs, that has generated my interest in researching this field. In 2013 the special school took in its first blind pupil. Seeking to meet the pupil's needs across all aspects of school life presented challenges which were difficult to anticipate with any certainty as none of the staff had any prior experience in working with a pupil with low or no vision. The placement challenged staff preconceptions of a VIP's capabilities and triggered the reappraisal of teachers' practices across the curriculum. However, many anticipated difficulties proved to be readily resolved and, through supporting staff in addressing how to teach a blind pupil inclusively, I became increasingly aware of the value of an effective VI strategy when extended for the benefit of others. This thesis will pursue these ideas in depth by researching other settings and teachers similarly working with a pupil with low or no vision for the first time. It will seek to provide empirical evidence as to the ease and value of extending VI-inclusive approaches.

1.5 Significance and outcomes

This thesis is contributing knowledge and insight to the field of inclusion through the under-researched perspective of how SEN pupils may influence wider teaching and learning. Findings support the view that what constitutes *special* is less a need for specific pedagogical strategies but rather teacher knowledge about SEN such that they deepen their understanding of differentiation and adaptation. By considering inclusion through the lens of VI, the research has highlighted the potential of the extension of VI strategies to enrich practice as well as to draw attention to current weaknesses. These strategies have been shown to support

pupils with needs that might not otherwise have been recognised, whether a mild VI whose impact is as yet undetected or not fully realised or pupils who might benefit from a different mode of learning for a given learning objective.

The research provides empirical evidence to support schools in inclusive curricula and pedagogical decision-making, class composition and staffing. Similarly, findings may be helpful in informing the decisions of school leaders in accepting a VIP on roll or local authorities (LAs) in placing a VIP in a particular setting. It is hoped that they will support discussions in the literature as to the desirability and effectiveness of inclusive educational policies more broadly. Although situated, the richness of data and strength of participant voice allows those who engage with the findings to identify consonant and dissonant aspects and have them hold a mirror up to their own practice and settings.

In strengthening the evidence base for the arguments in the literature and through providing empirical evidence to link policy, theory and practice in inclusion and SEN, this thesis addresses the possibility raised by Ainscow:

> Rather than simply problems that have to be overcome or, possibly, referred elsewhere for separate attention, [SEN] pupils may be perceived as providing feedback on existing classroom arrangements… a source of understanding as to how these arrangements might be improved in ways that would be of benefit to all pupils.
>
> (Ainscow, 1995, p. 74)

1.6 Overview of the thesis

Having provided an overview of the research in this introductory chapter, Chapters 2, 3, and 4 explore the literature to provide the conceptual framework for the research. Chapter 2 describes conceptualisations of inclusive education and SEN in current and recent policy contexts and with reference to prevailing theoretical positions. It evaluates factors identified as promoting and hindering such inclusion effectively with specific reference to VI, key

amongst these being debates around the identification and labelling of pupils as having SEN and the impact this has on provision for these pupils, both in terms of school placement and on school and teacher attitudes towards pupils with an identified educational need. Chapter 3 expands the conceptual framework discussion to explore issues around the nature of an inclusive curriculum and inclusive pedagogy and includes a discussion of VI-specific approaches. Chapter 4 considers teacher change processes and the influence of policy and context on teachers professional and personal self-concept and the significance this may have for their receptiveness to making inclusive changes.

Chapter 5 discusses the paradigm rationale and research methodology. Data collection and analysis methods are described and the ethical considerations of the research process are addressed. Chapters 6, 7 and 8 present the research findings. Chapter 6 presents the school contexts and participants and also gives the baseline positions of staff, presenting data gathered in the first survey. Chapter 7 is centred on practical changes in the classroom, with lesson observation data at the heart of descriptions of how addressing VI inclusion influenced learning environments, working practices, learning activities, and language and social interactions. Chapter 8 present teachers' reflections in interview and survey responses on changed knowledge and understanding, their reappraisal of practice and the affective influence of addressing VI inclusion.

Findings are examined in relation to each research question in Chapter 9, and the discussion related to the key themes and concepts identified in Chapters 2, 3 and 4. Finally, Chapter 10 summarises the research conclusions, outlining the original contribution to knowledge, and considers the limitations of the research and possible next steps.

1.7 An exposition on terminology

Special educational needs

There is a large degree of overlap between current legal definitions of disability and SEN, with both terms being open to a degree of subjectivity in their interpretation and application. Disability (for children or adults) is defined in the Equality Act 2010 as a physical or mental impairment that has 'long-term' or 'substantial' impact on a person's ability to undertake normal day-to-day activities. Under the Children and Families Act 2014 and allied SEND Code of Practice (DfE & DoH, 2015, p. 15), a child is considered to have SEN if they have 'a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her'. Thus a child may have an impairment or disability that does not affect their ability to learn: a child with a SEN may not have a disability.

This thesis stems from a consideration of VI but is investigating how educational provision intended to ameliorate any resulting disability may influence the teaching and learning of others. The majority of the literature I draw upon uses the acronym SEN so this will be the term used in this thesis unless citing from a source that uses SEND (SEN and disability).

Visual impairment

Disability and impairment are typically described from either a person-first or identity-first perspective. Person-first language seeks to disassociate the person from the condition by focusing on the person, rather than their impairment. However, this distancing can sometimes intensify the implication that there is something 'wrong' with the person. Identity-first language seeks to counter negativity, with the intention that less euphemistic terms will allow for honest discussion and for the person to 'own' their condition.

There is no clear preference amongst VI interest groups and those who work with children with VI as to whether to use person-first or identity-first language: child/young

person with visual impairment (CYPVI) or visually impaired person (VIP). The leading UK sight loss charity, the RNIB, refers to itself as the *Royal National Institute of Blind People* but in their 2018 rebranding campaign asked that people "see the person, not the sight loss" (RNIB, 2020). The RSBC is the identity-first *Royal Society for Blind Children* (RSBC, 2020). Two key professional associations for sight or sensory impairment in education, VIEW (VIEW, 2020) and NatSIP (NatSIP, 2020), use person-first language, CYPVI.

In writing this thesis I have chosen to use the language and terminology which the youngsters I met used themselves. Therefore, in recognition of their important contribution as well as their condition, they will be VIPs.

CHAPTER 2 Literature on Policy and Contexts

This chapter will examine the literature to situate the argument of this thesis within the wider debate on inclusive education. It will contextualise current conceptualisations of inclusive education and SEN in current and recent policy contexts and with reference to prevailing theoretical positions. It will evaluate factors identified in the literature as promoting and hindering such inclusion effectively with specific reference to VIPs, key amongst these being debates around the identification and labelling of pupils as having SEN, and the impact this has on provision for pupils, both in terms of school placement and on school and teacher attitudes towards pupils with an identified educational need.

2.1 Routes to inclusion

It can be argued that, in the past 25 years, philosophy and policy development have outpaced practice (Hodkinson, 2010) such that the concept of SEN may ultimately be considered a paradox to inclusion. Despite an ostensible convergence of international policy and regulation around the inclusion agenda (eg: DfE & DoH, 2015; UNESCO, 2005, 2016), there is still much debate around definitions and meanings and so defining best practice is not straightforward. Inclusion encompasses equality of access and of opportunity, through which all pupils can maximise their potential. However, the argument that 'the idea of simple equality, whereby everyone receives the same education in the same form, is neither achievable, as pupils have varying capacities, or desirable, as pupils have varying needs' (Rizvi & Lingard, 1996, p. 22) remains in current debates (eg: Lewin, 2011; Thomas, 2013).

Recognition of pupil individuality has featured in the UK education agenda since at least the Plowden Report, which states that 'individual differences between children of the same age are so great that any class, however homogeneous it seems, must always be treated

as a body of children needing individual and different treatment' (CACE, 1967, p. 25). The context for the current position is best outlined by a review of key legislation and policy in the areas of SEN, inclusion and disability over the past 40 years as listed in figure 2.1.

1978 Warnock Report (DES, 1978) – introduced the term SEN to identify any pupil requiring different provision or additional support. Whilst stating that 20% of children might have some degree of SEN at some stage of their school career, the Committee believed 2% might require ongoing specialist provision over and above what mainstream schools could provide.

1981 Education Act – introduced the Statement of educational need, establishing the statutory duty of LAs to identify pupils who may require additional provision and make necessary provision for them.

1988 Education Act – created the National Curriculum. It also established the ground for league tables, with no concessions stated for SEN pupils.

1994 Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994) – the UK was one of 92 governments who signed up to a rights-based perspective of education for all regardless of individual differences.

1994 Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Children with SEN (DfE, 1994) – established the role of the school SENCO and set out a 5-stage model of assessment of SEN.

2001 Special Educational Needs and Disability Act – a revised Code of Practice replaced the 5-stage model with two graduated levels of support – School Action and School Action Plus – before a full statement.

2004 Children Act – established a requirement for multi-agency co-operation between LAs, the police and health service providers in promoting the safeguarding and wellbeing of children, arising from the Every Child Matters report (DfES, 2003).

2005 Disability Discrimination Act – schools were required to make reasonable adjustments to help all pupils access and participate in all aspects of school life, including admission, learning activities and resources, and any necessary help and support.

2008 Personalised Learning: A Practical Guide (DCSF, 2008b) – stated that *quality first teaching* would address may issues surrounding SEN provision without need for additional provision.

2010 Equality Act – strengthened the 2005 Disability Discrimination Act, stating that it would be illegal for any education provider to discriminate in relation to admission, exclusion or provision of teaching on the grounds of 9 'protected characteristics' that included disability, race, gender and religion.

2010 Academies Act – academies were to be free from LA control, funded directly from central government and were given significant autonomy in diverging from the National Curriculum. Pupils with SEN remained the responsibility of the LA.

2014 National Curriculum Inclusion Statement (DfE, 2014a: section 4) – states that teaching which recognises individual needs should mean that only a minority of pupils will need access to specialist resources and different approaches. Teachers' planning should anticipate areas of difficulty, respond to pupils' diverse learning needs and set suitable challenges.

2014 Children and Families Act – this extended SEND to cover the 0-25 age range and replaced the statement with the EHCP, intending this to be a more holistic approach to assessment and monitoring of provision. SEN provision was to be one graduated approach – SEN Support – breaking down artificial barriers through schools making anticipatory adjustments and providing highly targeted teaching and seeking external advice only when these fail.

2015 SEND Code of Practice (DfE & DoH, 2015) – outlines four categories of need: communication and interaction; cognition and learning; social, mental and emotional health; sensory and/or physical needs.

2019 OFSTED Inspection Framework (OFSTED, 2019a) – schools must demonstrate that SEN and inclusion are addressed strategically and the progress of SEN pupils thoroughly evaluated.

Figure 2.1 Key legislation and policy in SEN, inclusion and disability

The 1981 Education Act was rooted in the recommendations of the Warnock Report (DES, 1978), the most far reaching of which was the recommendation to remove the categorising of children in terms of a *handicap*, replacing this with the concept of *special educational needs*. However, as figure 1.1 shows, much of the legislation and policy which followed has been somewhat contradictory. The1988 Education Act sought to raise standards by establishing a National Curriculum and increasing schools' accountability to parents. However, it also established the basis for competition between schools (not least for recruitment of pupils and staff) by the setting up of league tables of school performance, with no concession for SEN pupils, thereby laying the foundations for the framing of education as a commodity. The Academies Act (2010) extended the marketplace ideology. The resulting potential for increased autonomy, combined with the competition between schools, was intended to improve academic standards and a school's ability to respond to the local community. However, responsibility for pupils with SEN remained with the LA though they had little influence over academies. Whilst no school can refuse to admit a pupil under the

current School Admissions Code (DfE, 2014b section 1.6) if it is named on their Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP), nevertheless individual schools are able to set their own admissions criteria, although these must not discriminate against or disadvantage a child with an SEN or disability (DfE, 2014b secions 1.8, 1.9h).

Current policy supports the principle of including as many children with SEN as possible in mainstream education whilst maintaining a continuum of SEN provision. The 2015 SEND Code of Practice argues that 'high quality teaching that is differentiated and personalised will meet the individual needs of the majority of children and young people.' (DfE & DoH, 2015: section 1.24). Nevertheless, this has proved difficult to balance in the educational climate that has developed over the past 20 years.

2.2 Tensions within the current position

The current national policy position arguably does not reflect a strength of commitment to inclusion as outlined in the sequence of legislation and policies above. The argument is made that tensions between raising academic achievement and social inclusion arising from an over-prescriptive curriculum, targets and league tables and a market-place philosophy have distorted inclusive principles (Norwich, 2013; Winter & O'Raw, 2010) even giving rise to perverse incentives for schools not to meet the needs of SEN pupils (Daniels et al., 2019).

The standardisation of curricula and a performativity culture emphasising standards and attainment, arguably central to currently prevalent neoliberal education policies, place pressure on responding to individuality (Hedegaard-Soerensen & Grumloese, 2018; Slee, 2013). Moreover, the imposition of or over-reliance on guidelines originating in politically-backed policy and research can reduce opportunities for flexibility and teachers' ability to follow their own professional judgment (Hammersley, 2013a). Judging school success on

academic results alone may run counter to concepts of inclusion and can discourage pedagogies that allow for pupil diversity (Winter & O'Raw, 2010) or frame inclusion as a 'strategic transgression' (Schlessinger, 2018, p. 280) against an audit culture. By contrast, the central theme of this thesis is that a greater awareness of universally beneficial strategies makes inclusion more possible and more palatable.

2.2.1 Tensions centred on school provision and pupil placement

School census data (DfE, 2010, 2020) showing trends in identification and placement of pupils over the past 10 years is given in figure 2.2. Numbers of pupils with an EHCP (formerly statements) remained broadly static at 2.8% of the total pupil population from 2007-17 but there has been a recent rising trend, with the figure for 2020 standing at 3.3%. Numbers on SEN Support (formerly School Action Plus) have reduced by 6%. This may be explained in part by OFSTED's (2010) criticism of an over-identification of pupils as having SEN when they in fact require better teaching and pastoral support.

The number of pupils with a statement/EHCP in primary schools has stayed broadly constant but has decreased 8% in secondary schools over this 10 year period. Numbers placed in special schools has increased by 5.3% in the past year, continuing a trend seen since 2006.

Recent analysis of data on SEN and academies suggests that academisation has a small negative impact on inclusion. This impact is statistically more apparent in sponsored academies (schools required to convert due to poor performance) than converter academies (typically previously high-performing schools), where research found negligible effects (Black, Norwich, Bessudnov, & Liu, 2019). Further, this data shows that conversion to sponsored academy status leads to schools taking in fewer pupils on SEN support and a reduction of classifying pupils as being SEN support.

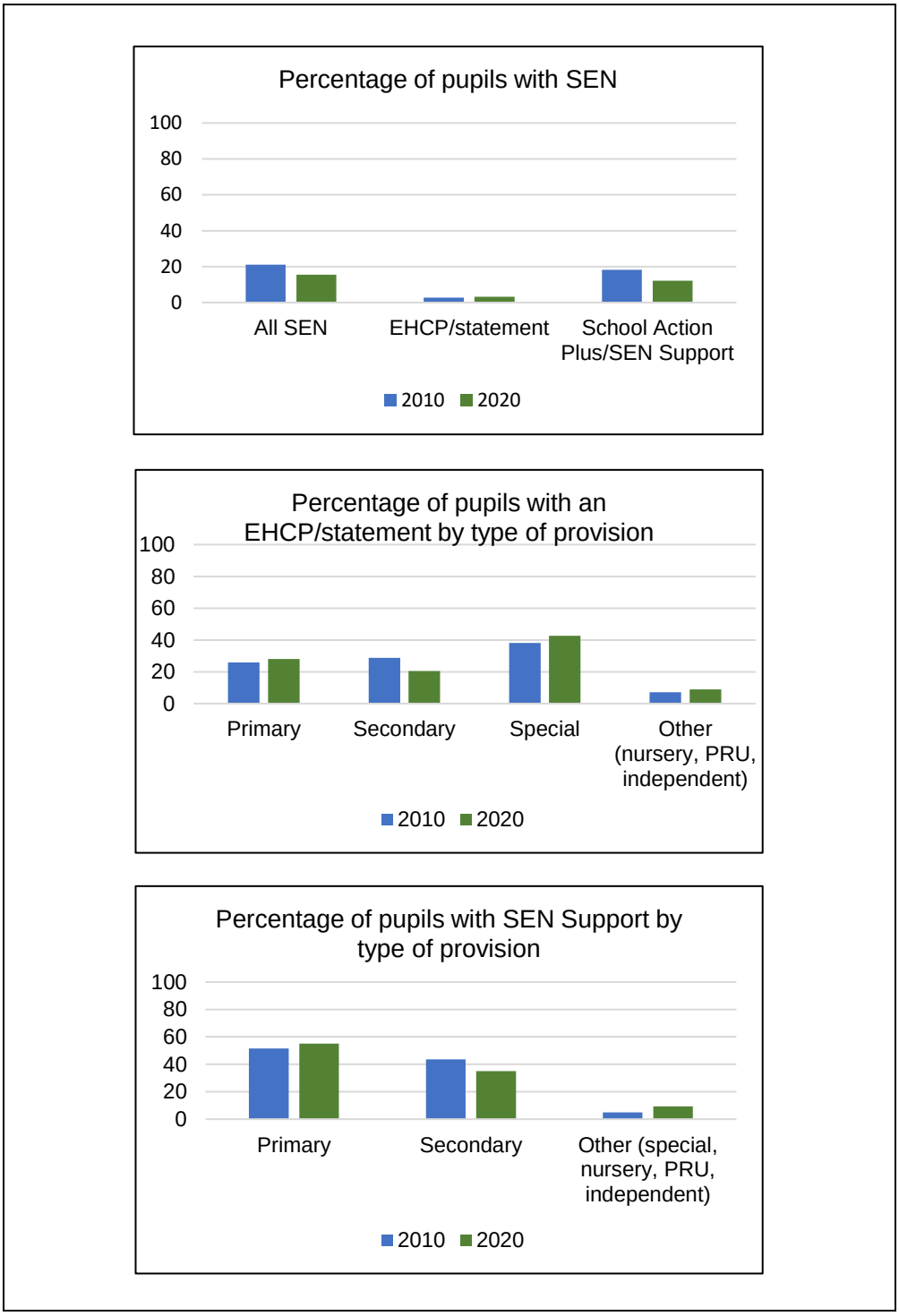


Figure 2.2 Trends in pupil identification and placement

Changes in the number of pupils in special schools may be partly explained by parental choice or because of a change in the prevalence of more complex needs. Nevertheless, it has been suggested that the demand for special school places is growing because the current system incentivises mainstream schools to be less inclusive. In 2019 the

government approved the setting up of 37 new special schools (UK government, 2019, 2020a). Budgetary pressures are identified as one reason why mainstream schools can be reluctant to admit or keep pupils with SEN (National Audit Office, 2019). It is also argued that there has been a negative impact on inclusion from accountability measures and school inspection approaches (eg: Galton & MacBeath, 2015). However, the current inspection framework (OFSTED, 2019a) states that inspectors will evaluate the extent to which a school can demonstrate that SEN and inclusion are addressed strategically, that pupils across the full ability range show progress and that the impact of SEN provision is thoroughly evaluated. In 2018 the parliamentary Education Select Committee expressed concerns over exclusions and off-rolling, where schools encourage parents to remove their child primarily for the school's benefit. Their report stated that SEN pupils were 7% more likely to be excluded from school, believing this to be 'an unfortunate and unintended consequence' of the focus on standards (House of Commons Education Committee, 2018 para 36).

2.2.2 Tension within staffing and budgetary considerations

These changes have occurred in parallel with staffing and budgeting pressures. There has been a 8% reduction in funding for SEN pupils for the period 2015-2020 despite rising numbers of pupils (IFS/Nuffield Foundation, 2018), with 81% of LAs reporting overspends on their SEN budgets (National Audit Office, 2019). An NAHT survey (2018) found that 94% of headteachers expressed that it was becoming harder to fund EHCPs adequately. Funding pressures have seen a reduction in the numbers of teaching assistants (Sutton Trust, 2019) and teacher retention issues have seen many experienced staff leaving the profession (DfE, 2019a). Funding changes have led to reduced access to advisory/support services. Of significance for this thesis, one third of LAs reduced their budget for VI services and reduced their number of QTVIs between 2016/17 and 2017/18 (RNIB, 2019b).

The diversification of schools (eg: LA maintained, academy) has been accompanied by a diversification of teacher training pathways. It has been recommended that better initial

teacher training for SEN should be a priority and that variability insufficiently prepares new teachers to address SEN (DfE, 2015; Mintz, Mulholland, & Peacey, 2015). Although all teachers must meet common Teachers' Standards (DfE, 2012), current legislation and guidance is not prescriptive on pedagogy. Nevertheless, as will be discussed more fully below (Chapter 3) there is much debate as to the need for a specialist SEN pedagogy, with implications here for any generalist-specialist balance in teacher training programmes (Lawson, 2015). It is a statutory requirement for all mainstream schools to have a SENCO (Special Needs Co-ordinator) (DCSF, 2008a), with the role requiring a mandatory qualification, and there is protected specialist training for advisory teachers of pupils with sensory impairment.

The discussion above reflects how policies and school structures have evolved on the basis that children develop and learn in 'normal' ways. It will be helpful now to outline the theoretical positions which have held significance and prominence in the inclusion debate and generation of policy in the past 20 years and clarify what is generally accepted and understood by the concepts key to this thesis: inclusion, SEN and visual impairment.

2.3 Theoretical positions on inclusion and SEN

2.3.1 Definitions and interpretations of inclusion

Across the literature inclusion is described as being concerned with social justice, equity and choice for all and the identification and removal of educational and social barriers for vulnerable learners. It is rooted in principles of providing a challenging education to all, differentiated to respond to individual capabilities and requiring reflective practice and collaboration between school, home and external agencies (Salend, 2011). Nevertheless, it is argued that conceptualisations of inclusion may not reflect a shared meaning as the heritage and context in which the term is used may differ (Rix, 2020). Norwich cautions that

‘inclusion as a concept and value is now recognised as complex with multiple meanings’ (Norwich, 2014a, p. 16), and that if it denotes different things to different people there is a danger of it becoming meaningless. However, an inherent danger in over-simplifying any definition of inclusion is that it becomes a binary concept (inclusion does or does not happen) and the underlying values are lost (Mitchell, 2015).

Inclusion is regarded as an ideal and a process rather than a fixed reality (eg: Booth & Ainscow, 2016; UNESCO, 2020); a challenge to the stereotype of the ‘normal’ (McDonnell, 2000). By contrast, the argument is made that inclusion sacrifices the results of everyone for the sake of misplaced ideology and that its idealism is impractical, creating conflicts of values. Booth (1996), for example, has criticised concepts of inclusive education which purport to describe an ideal state or aim and where ‘good practice’ can be readily identified. Rather, his view of inclusion concerns the principled enacting of values so that everyone is included, rather than a concern with any one group of students, a position germane to this thesis.

Warnock (DES, 1978) outlined three types of inclusion; location, social and functional. This has been expended upon by Florian et al (2017) in their *Framework for Participation*, which describes participation as access, as collaboration and as diversity. Location and access are considered in terms of joining and remaining in a school and free movement around the building as well as access to learning. However, physical presence in the classroom may constitute little more than integration if the pupil is being expected to adapt to the climate of the class. Social inclusion can be inhibited by curricular adaptations and support strategies, such as different resources, the learning support assistant (LSA) becoming an intermediary or barrier, or pupils working in a separate group (in or out of class). Together with an insensitive or stigmatising use of labels rather than recognition and acceptance of diversity, this can deny a pupil the status of being ordinary.

Warnock (2005) later reframed inclusion to mean allowing children to pursue common goals of education in an environment best conducive to their teaching and learning. This aligns with ideas of a growth mindset (Dweck, 2000) and a rejection of determinist beliefs about ability (S. Hart, Dixon, Drummond, & McIntyre, 2004), such that learning activities are offered in ways that make them accessible and engaging for all, rather than allocating different tasks according to pupils' perceived capabilities, a central premise of the research of this thesis. Nevertheless, 'there can be conflict over the implication of values for upholding the rights of different individuals; for example, when the participation of one interferes with the participation of another' (Ainscow, Booth, & Dyson 2006, p. 3).

Different theoretical positions, which we can now consider, can serve as a lens through which to view different aspects of inclusion, in preference to contending that one held perspective invalidates the others. These will be discussed under the broad categories of organisational and dilemmatic perspectives (C. Clark, Dyson, Millward, & Robson, 1999; Dyson & Millward, 2000). The argument will then be made that this thesis aligns most closely with a capability perspective.

2.3.1.1 *Organisational perspective*

Ainscow, Booth, Dyson and Skrtic have all written on the organisational perspective of educational inclusion, whereby SEN are artefacts of practices, stemming from inflexible structures and routines, a narrowness of expertise or inappropriate responses to pupil differences. Pupils' overarching learning objectives should be the same: it is the optimal routes to achieve these that may differ. They highlight dangers of a 'technology' of inclusion (Dyson, 2000); the implementation of external systems and procedures aimed at a 'right' response. This can lead to teachers filtering out diversity rather than accommodating it, either by trying to assimilate pupils into standard practices, by devolving responsibility in the classroom to an LSA or by the involvement of a specialist teacher. In this way, specialist provision preserves the status quo of the mainstream, removing the perceived problem

without having to destabilise existing routines. Whilst this may be expedient or efficient in the short term, for Skrtic (1991b) this does not serve the best interests of a pupil with SEN in the broader sense. However, the complexities of school development, rooted in its history, together with the local context, are also arguably significant in a school's capacity to minimise exclusionary structures and practices (Skidmore, 2004).

An organisational perspective runs counter to the notion of inclusion as an ongoing process with no finite or perfect end point. Rather, Skrtic (1991b, 2005) advocates an 'adhocracy'; a setting rooted in innovation and problem-solving, an organisation that seeks to learn and move forward by deconstructing and reconstructing conventional understandings, practices and relationships. This is of relevance to the research for this thesis given that participants are staff who have no prior experience of working with a VIP. Even with training prior to pupil placement, existing knowledge and practices will need to be adjusted, whether fine-tuning or altering radically, in order to address VI inclusion. Skrtic argues that success here will depend on divergent thinking, inductive reasoning and the ability of staff to adapt, thereby valuing a development of expertise through experience over additional experts.

Ainscow (1994, 1999, 2020) values a transformative approach to inclusion, moving away from individualised planning and towards strategies that are sufficiently flexible to enable wide individual variations within a common framework, enhancing learning opportunities for all rather than targeting particular 'special' groups. Corbett (2001) describes a pupil-led 'connective pedagogy', drawing on approaches from mainstream or special provision, primary or secondary phases, according to suitability, connecting individual needs to meaningful learning within a community. Ainscow argues that competing vested interests arise from over-fragmentation, whereas connecting these perspectives to teacher development and school improvement would generate a more responsive system. The Index for Inclusion (Booth & Ainscow, 2002, 2016), a self-evaluation resource for education settings, seeks to replace the concept of SEN to account for educational difficulties, focusing instead on barriers

to learning and on how a restructuring of school cultures and practices could support increased participation in the these.

Hart et al (2004) outline a ‘principle of everybody’ whereby a school should value diversity as an asset, with systems positively affecting everyone and a teacher’s efforts applied fairly and equally to all. However, there is arguably a contradiction between ‘an intention to treat all learners as essentially the same and an equal and opposite intention to treat them as different’ (Dyson, 2001:25).

2.3.1.2 *Dilemmatic perspectives*

The pursuit of inclusive policies has been linked to broader societal aims of fairness, respect, participation, equality of opportunity and the nature of one’s social capital (eg: Reindal, 2016; Slee, 2013; Thomas & Loxley, 2007). Critical theorists have argued that a dual system of mainstream and special education can be regarded as a reflection of societal attitudes and as a system through which educational inequalities are reproduced and persist (S. Tomlinson, 1988, 2019). The counter-argument is that rather than being an instrument of selective mobility, inclusive schools should be seen as a tool for learner empowerment (Lupart, 1999).

Ethical aspects of inclusion such as these can create dilemmas at all levels of educational provision. Layers of policy may conflict with each other and their interpretation by LAs, school leaders and teachers can dilute or compromise the intent behind them. It has been argued that policy can legitimise the categorising of pupils, in turn becoming a signifier of power relations (Thomas & Loxley, 2007), whereas placing the well-being and agency of pupils centrally in considerations of fair provision can offer significant insights towards a reconsideration of policy, curricula and teaching (Terzi, 2014).

As already noted, an over-emphasis on results and standards, such as through UK school league tables or international comparisons such as PISA tests (OECD, n.d.), can create pressures on addressing differentiation and individuality, at both school and wider policy

level. Inclusion has to address the *equity-excellence dilemma* (Florian et al., 2017, p. 14), a term most commonly applied at the level of systems and policy-making rather than school level and which refers to the balancing of achievement and inclusion: achievement in terms of raising academic standards, inclusion in terms of mainstream and specialist provision. The pursuit of equity at systems level, a desire for 'quality educational access, participation, learning processes and outcomes, and to ensure that all learners are valued and engaged equally' (UNESCO, 2017, p. 10) need not be met in an overarching, uniform school system. Rather, it requires an understanding of how policies and systems may be creating educational barriers.

The *equity-excellence dilemma* as reflected in systems of mainstream and special schools is one of balancing the right to education for all against the marginalisation of some through pre-judgments on pupils' capacity and potential for development and learning (Florian, 2019). Placing children with similar educational abilities in different schools (special school, grammar school, faith school or specialist school (eg: performing arts)) can result in them being segregated from the full breadth of their peer group as well as narrowing or restricting access to educational opportunities (Frederickson & Cline, 2015). However, whilst placing children with particular needs in a general classroom may reduce social and educational exclusion, it may reduce access to specialist facilities or services (Norwich, 2008).

Ainscow (2020) considers the implications of equity to be a concern with fairness that can rest not only at wider social, economic and policy contexts and between schools (see section 2.2) but within schools, here including how they respond to diversity and organise teaching and learning. It follows that equity does not equate to treating everyone the same: rather, it involves the provision of equality of opportunities for achieving excellence. The responsibilities of schools according to current policy and the tensions and difficulties that they can face in addressing inclusion have been discussed in section 2.2.

There is broad agreement in the literature that the more the generally provided teaching and curriculum suits an SEN child, the less additionality is required. Nevertheless, individual differences must be taken into account in order to address the diversity within a class, giving rise to a *dilemma of difference* (Norwich, 2002, 2013), distilled as:

> When does treating people differently emphasize their differences and stigmatise or hinder them on that basis? And when does treating people the same become insensitive to their difference and likely to stigmatise or hinder them on that basis?
>
> (Minow, 1990, p. 20)

Lewis & Norwich (2005a) describe two contrasting positions; individual differences and general differences. The individual differences position takes the view that there are needs common to all pupils and needs unique to individuals. The general differences position considers that there can be a third kind of educational need, specific to a group of pupils. The individual differences position requires a pedagogy sufficiently flexible to enable a breadth of diversity within a common framework. However, tensions between participation and protection, general or specialised provision (at class or school level) give rise to an 'ideological impurity'(Norwich, 2013) with inevitable compromises between multiple values. Further, it may be difficult to determine which groups of pupils are pedagogically relevant where there are co-occurring labels (eg: a pupil with Down syndrome and hearing impairment) or when one is closely connected to another (eg: autistic spectrum disorder (ASD) and social communication difficulties). This thesis will explore Florian's view (2005) that, in order to move beyond the dilemma of difference, new understandings of how to respond to pupils who experience difficulties with their learning are needed. Equally it will add empirical evidence to the discussion as to whether the presence of pupils with SEN distorts existing school provision or whether it is the responsiveness to individual differences that characterises an inclusive setting (Dyson, Farrell, Polat, & Hutcheson, 2004).

2.3.1.3 *Capability perspective*

The premise of this thesis arguably aligns closely with the capability perspective (Sen, 1992) where the intention is to go beyond equality of opportunity and to maximise agency and the extent to which an individual has freedom of choice in their functionings (Nussbaum, 2011; Reindal, 2016; Terzi, 2014). A functioning can be described as an achieved outcome of doing or being: being able to read, to self-regulate, to enjoy an educational experience. A capability is the potential, through opportunity and choice, to achieve this functioning: having been taught to read, having ready access to books, having a stress-free classroom environment. The value of the capability approach for SEN and disability lies in the recognition and understanding of difference as a specific variable of classroom diversity (Reindal, 2016). In recognising each learner's individuality, it follows that teachers should take into account that not all learners will engage, respond or learn from an activity in the same way. Viewing the classroom from a capability perspective requires considerations of equity rather than equality; equity being equality of opportunity to achieve and be an agentive learner rather than being sameness of provision or equality of outcomes.

A capability perspective supports a move away from some of the binary opposites in the dilemmas position, from the potential for fragmentation of organisational systems (eg: individualised planning) and from typical/atypical representations (see section 2.4.1 below). Rather than thinking in terms of the medical and social models polarities of SEN, the capability perspective more readily acknowledges individual differences and represents SEN and disability in relational terms, as the interaction of personal characteristics, available resources and contexts surrounding the individual (Florian, 2005; Terzi, 2005, 2010). This approach aligns well with the view of inclusion as process and with ideas of a continuum of differences, rather than normative frameworks and categories of SEN.

A capability approach has clear links to ideas regarding fixed/growth mindset and challenges determinist beliefs about ability. Pupils' self-efficacy and belief in their capacity to

learn may be influenced positively through the provision of diverse means of engagement with learning and the degree of agency afforded, rather than conformity to a narrow pathway of task modalities and expected outcomes (Dweck, 2000; Quigley, Muijs, & Stringer, 2018). Although a capability perspective may challenge teacher assumptions or judgments about pupils' capabilities and behaviours, Hart et al (2004) identify a paradox here as, by definition, inherent ability is beyond a teacher's influence or control. In turn this can discourage teachers from questioning what in their practice may be contributing to pupil difficulties.

Under a *prophetic pedagogy* (Linklater, Swann, & Yarker, 2016), learners can become an array of data used to decide groupings, interventions, curricula or school placements, with teaching focusing on how to respond to difficulties rather than what might be creating them. This aligns with McDermott (1993), writing of 'the acquisition of a child by a learning disability' when he argues that the focus should be on the nature, purpose and circumstances of learning as opposed to measuring the extent to which every pupil learns. The discussion of labelling below (section 2.4) shows that this can still be a focus and is a view that has relevance 25 years on. Hart et al's (2004) *learning without limits* philosophy exemplifies this. This approach seeks to eradicate ceilings imposed by prophetic pedagogy or fixed ability thinking by freeing the organisation of schools and classroom learning from ability-focused practices. It advocates working from principles of trust, co-agency and decisions that are taken in the interests of all, not simply to address the needs of the majority or to safeguard a minority. However, it is argued that teacher capacity to be non-determinist can be constrained by the degree of support from school leaders, which in turn can be affected by external pressures from educational policy (Drummond, Hart, & Swann, 2013).

Further, what are intended as inclusive practices and environments may not be so for everyone in all scenarios. The school structure, environment, curriculum and resources can inhibit as much as contribute to the development of capabilities, both academically and socially, as will be discussed in Chapter 3. A teacher will be making judgments on if and how

a child is developing a capability and under what conditions (Walker & Unterhalter, 2007). Similarly, what pupils are allowed to do may be subject to an adult's judgment as to their maturity or their understanding of the consequences of their choices or actions (C. Hart & Brando, 2018). Norwich (2014b) is uncertain that capability and functioning can be readily delineated, nor that a capability perspective can resolve the dilemmas in inclusive education identified above. He argues that it is an oversimplification to talk of the removal of barriers to learning as in his view it is not the case that all external barriers are alterable (eg: it is difficult to avoid the need for functional literacy) any more than internal factors are immutable (eg: ASD youngsters can benefit from social skills training) (Norwich, 2000, 2013).

2.4 SEN and arguments of identification and labelling

SEN are arguably a relative concept. All children have educational needs in common and needs unique to them. However, the latter often become a matter of professional judgments based on normative assumptions about cognitive or behavioural development and the values placed on certain skills and abilities, or involve interpretative measures that can be value-laden (eg: what constitutes 'poor' co-ordination or 'weak' phonological awareness). Theories and descriptions that rely too heavily on medical or psychological models, locating the root of an SEN or disability within the child, fail to place a pupil's individual challenges in the wider social and political context. Viewing SEN or disability through an individual rather than a curriculum lens can emphasise within-child over school-based factors (Dyson, 2001). Bioecological or individual-environment models (eg: World Health Organisation, 2007), arguably of most significance for VI, consider disability and functioning as the product of reflexive interactions between health conditions, cognition and contextual factors. The socio-relational model (Reindal, 2008) aligns with the capability perspective and the premise of this thesis in attributing disability to environmental and social inequalities. Diagnosis and interventions can be superficial and one-sided (Skrtic, 1991a) and labelling can lead to

stereotyping and a lowering of expectations (S. Hart, Drummond, & McIntrye, 2014; Lauchlan & Boyle, 2007).

Warnock (DES, 1978) recognised a continuum of needs and it can be argued that there is an increasing blurring of the distinctions between SEN and non-SEN pupils, not least from more nuanced diagnoses and the acceptance of new disorders (eg: social pragmatic communication disorder (American Psychiatric Association, 2013)). Some SEN can vary according to context (eg: pupil groupings), within-child variables (eg: tiredness) or, arguably, teaching style. Rather, SEN can be defined as those to which school does not currently respond or which are beyond its capacity to respond (Florian et al., 2017) especially significant for the low-incidence of VI on which this research is centred. Nevertheless, a discourse of 'need' places the onus on the setting to devise ways to meet it.

However, legislation and policy documents make repeated reference to categories and labels of SEN and disability, creating a paradox around inclusion: 'how can policies be designed to celebrate differences and specifically differences related to impairment and disability, in the absence of any specification of the concept of difference?' (Terzi, 2007, p. 97).

2.4.1 Considerations of identification and labelling

A paradox exists concerning categories and labels of SEN. Perspectives that emphasise a child's limitations can eclipse the role of school systems in creating or perpetuating an SEN: a focus on school factors can neglect the role of individual characteristics (Lauchlan & Boyle, 2007; Messiou, 2017; Terzi, 2007). Any concept of SEN and associated labelling can reify differences, establishing categories and hierarchies such that interpretations and perceptions become self-reinforcing (S. Hart et al., 2004). This has the potential to lead to determinist attitudes towards ability, where a technology of inclusion becomes a technology of segregation (Dyson & Millward, 2000), or a 'psychology of difference' (Thomas & Loxley, 2007, p. 153) that connects the way a child feels about

themselves to how they learn. Warnock (DES, 1978) sought a continuum rather than polarising categories which, she worried, would exclude some children from getting relevant support, of significance for this thesis when allied to the debates over fixed ability and growth mindset. An emphasis on disability, rather than needs, can lead to passivity on the part of educators or a devolving of responsibility onto specialists or support staff, whereas framing discussion in terms of needs arguably leads to devising ways to meet them (Evans & Lunt, 2002; Thomas & Vaughan, 2004). By contrast, a capability perspective (Sen, 1992) can avoid negative labelling by recognising the relational aspects of personal characteristics, the classroom setting and the curriculum (Florian, 2015; Terzi, 2010).

The SEND Code of Practice (DfE & DoH, 2015) describes four broad areas of need and support: communication and interaction; cognition and learning; social, emotional and mental health; sensory and/or physical needs. These are arguably no different qualitatively to the needs of all children and the Code recognises that individual children may have needs that extend across these areas and/or change over time. Nevertheless an EHCP assessment risks perpetuating the idea that needs are situated within the child, who will consequently need distinct educational provision, even though the Code also states that 'the purpose of identification is to work out what action the school needs to take, not to fit a pupil into a category' (DfE & DoH, 2015 section 6.27). Whilst not directly addressing the assessment of SEN, this thesis may contribute to arguments over the subjectivity in recognising perceived difficulties, especially those that exist on a continuum.

Labelling arguably brings with it assumptions, linked to concerns by teachers that there is a right way to teach pupils with an identified learning difficulty. Labels can create expectations, which could over-or under-estimate pupil's capacities: that blind youngsters have good hearing, that an ASD child cannot respond to humour. Categories and frameworks can make teachers lose confidence in their capabilities. Privileged knowledge distracts from humanity and common sense (Thomas & Loxley, 2007), something this thesis may help to

address. Too broad or diverse a category has little, if any, pedagogic significance. Conversely, it can be argued that in trying to address subdivisions of labels, teachers can lose sight or run scared of perfectly effective whole-class approaches, a concept central to the research of this thesis. It should not be assumed that an identified SEN is always at the root of a failure to grasp a particular learning point at a particular moment, especially if an identified SEN is considered to exist on a spectrum of severity. Nevertheless, the visibility that a label brings can develop understanding and acceptance in the school (and wider) community and open doors to provision just as much as it can be stigmatising.

Lunt (2007) argues that pupils' needs are relative to others when framed in curricular and pedagogical terms and interactive when considered against the social environment. For example, teachers will have varying ideas about what constitutes a learning difficulty depending on their particular setting (eg: grammar school or comprehensive). Class size may also determine the extent to which an individual pupil's needs may be readily addressed. Of significance for this study, a teacher's overall career experience, prior experience of a labelled need and their skill set and confidence at dealing with an identified SEN will determine whether they see it as a significant concern or merely something to work through.

2.4.2 Definitions and identification of pupils with visual impairment

Visual impairment exists on a continuum ranging from reduced or partial vision that cannot be corrected by spectacles to blindness. At the milder end of the continuum difficulties may not be recognised. A pupil's vision is normal for them unless and until a disparity with others is realised. Some aspects can be considered socially constructed. For example, low levels of ambient lighting add to the difficulties of reading a café menu in small print or swirly font. There are implications here for different curriculum subjects and school experiences. A white chopping board provides poor contrast for a VIP required to slice an onion. For a standard Maths exercise book it can be difficult to differentiate between the printed squares and one's own notation (+, = , ÷) if required to write in pencil. Interpreting

the verbal instructions and interactions in a busy classroom can be more difficult for a VIP. Visual scanning may take more time if information has to be appraised sequentially rather than holistically, creating demands on short-term memory. There may be less redundancy in information a VIP has access to (figure 2.3) and more confusion in reading text (eg: *cl* and *d* can appear similar).

Figure 2.3 Example of redundancy in printed text.

VIPs may have reduced opportunities for incidental learning: from exposure to examples of social interactions on TV, or from exposure to words on packaging or posters, for example.

VI is a low-incidence SEN (see figure 2.4). School and teacher experience in working with VIPs can, therefore, be minimal.

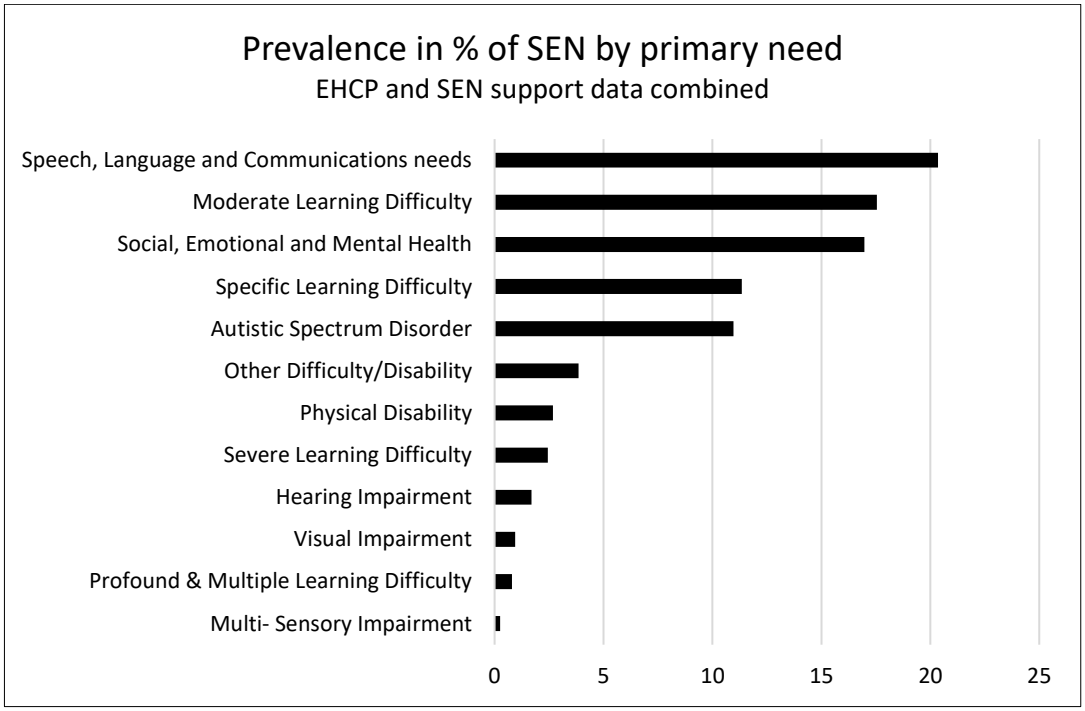


Figure 2.4 Percentage prevalence of SEN by primary need (DfE, 2020)

DfE data (DfE, 2020) states that 1.2% of pupils with an EHCP have VI as their primary need. However, the RNIB annual surveys of all local authorities (eg: Keil, 2012; RNIB, 2019a) highlight consistently that VI can often be under-reported in educational data, not least if VI is 'lost' at the bottom of an alphabetical list of pupil needs.

Vignette 2.1 Difficulties in determining differences in visual acuity

A person with vision loss may not realise they are experiencing difficulties as their sensory world is 'normal' for them.

VI can be hard to determine in the young or the less articulate. Stating that one can 'see' the ladybirds in the right-hand image does not give an indication of the depth of detail perceived.

(CVI Scotland, 2020b)

A young child with reduced visual acuity may not make full sense of a story from the pictures and may not be able to articulate this.

(CVI Scotland, 2020b)

A declaration of "I can't read that" could stem equally from poor acuity or an inability to decode the text. It may take time to uncover misconceptions (eg: that there are 3 not 6 ladybirds). It can require strength of character for a VIP to declare their confusion whilst a classroom demonstration or teacher explanation is underway. Equally they may be using sophisticated coping strategies so as not to betray a weakness.

Vignette 2.1 Difficulties in determining differences in visual acuity

Recognising that a child may be affected by a VI is not always a straightforward process (see Vignette 2.1). It has been estimated that almost half of all children with learning disabilities have a problem with their vision (SeeAbility, 2018). Linked to this is an increasing number of children with cerebral visual impairment (CVI), where the VI stems from conditions which affect the structure or function of the brain, not the eye, and how someone 'sees' (CVI Project, 2020). CVI is not straightforward to diagnose, not least because acuity may be unaffected (ie: the person may be able to read a full eye test chart). Of significance for this research, CVI characteristics are often attributed wrongly to poor motor skills, social anxiety/shyness or cognitive delays and are shared with other conditions, most notably autism. Pupils with hidden disabilities can be more vulnerable to being wrongly challenged for not following expectations of performance or behaviour (Cook, 2001).

With minimal or non-existent frames of reference for working with VIPs, staff preconceptions of what VI might entail may affect their perceptions of a child's capacity to be involved in all aspects of school life. Peers would similarly be influenced in their initial attitudes and interactions with a VIP in class. In the absence of lived experience, impressions may have been formed from cultural references to VI, which often perpetuate or contribute to misconceptions. Some of these relate to daily functionings, such as the erroneous belief that blind people have enhanced hearing or compensatory senses. Others are more value-laden, whereby VI is a source of comedy (eg: the character Destiny in Disney's 'Finding Dory'), tragedy (Mr Rochester in 'Jane Eyre'), foolishness or helplessness (Gloucester in 'King Lear') or is portrayed as a punishment (Greek myths; Arya Stark in 'Game of Thrones'). One aspect of the QTVI role is to redress any misconceptions and present a realistic and balanced picture of how VI affects daily life and learning (DfE, 2014c section 8.11).

In consideration of the above, greater awareness of VI in educational settings is arguably desirable and potentially beneficial to many.

Having contextualised arguments involved in the identification and placement of SEN pupils we can now examine pedagogical and curricular issues surrounding effective provision for SEN pupils within these contexts.

2.4.3 Considerations of location

Accountability for SEN provision, whether at school, LA or national level can be assessed in terms of quality, access and outcomes. The dilemma here is the need to balance access to specialist support and services with inclusion as belonging in a general classroom, and the extent to which the provision of the additional or the different perpetuates apartness (Norwich, 2002). Mixed-ability classes may heighten awareness or relative levels of attainment (S. Hart et al., 2004) but part-time attendance or adult in-class support acting as an intermediary risk an imbalance of peer acceptance and the child with SEN being regarded as a visitor or someone to be looked after rather than full-class member (Janney & Snell, 2006). Moreover, 'feeling different for long periods at school is a disabling experience' (Cigman, 2007, p. xxv).

Despite findings that SEN pupils achieve equally in all types of provision and that *quality first teaching* not specialist pedagogy, is key (DCSF, 2008b; OFSTED, 2010), the accommodation of extremes can undermine school systems that have developed with largely implicit expectations that children learn and develop in a broadly similar way (Gerber, 1996). However, it can be argued that a teacher is not a jack-of-all-trades and that one's ideas about what constitutes an educational need will vary according to one's setting, career experience, skill set and confidence. Thus there is a need to balance inclusive practice with access to specialist advice and support, requiring LA and whole-school approaches to staffing, resourcing and planning to avoid duplication of effort and achieve economies of scale.

The discussion of the current position regarding pupil identification and placement in section 2.2.1 above presents an unclear picture. Numbers of SEN pupils in primary schools do not filter through into mainstream secondary schools. Rather, the raw data suggests these

pupils are being placed in special schools (DfE, 2019b, 2020). It is beyond the scope of this thesis to determine the extent to which this stems from large-scale policy decisions, parental choice or individual schools' concerns over their capacity to meet pupil needs or any performativity concerns. However, any empirical data uncovered on the impact of accepting VI pupils into school might inform pupil placement decisions.

Importantly, the presentation and interpretation of information on an EHCP can obfuscate pupil placement and provision made for them. A need at the milder end of a spectrum may not be noted explicitly or recognised as needing to be addressed. Some needs may be overlooked if they come at the bottom of an alphabetical listing which is taken as a hierarchy. DfE census data consistently under-represents the number of pupils with VI as a primary or secondary SEN compared to data from LA VI services (RNIB, 2019a).

Provision for VIPs sits within a wider SEN framework based on graduated levels of support: specialist VI provision, resourced provision within mainstream schools or support from LA Sensory Services. RNIB surveys (Keil, 2012, 2016; RNIB, 2019a) reveal a gradual loss of specialist staff and that support is being withdrawn for pupils with milder VI, pupils with complex needs and post-16 students. Whilst the government strongly encourages qualified advisory teachers of the visually impaired (QTVIs) to work with the full range of children and young people with VI, the qualification is only a statutory requirement in an educational setting for those teaching whole classes of VIPs. Therefore, school and teacher access to advice and support can be inconsistent.

2.5 Summary

This chapter has highlighted some of the complexities and dilemmas as educational policy has moved away from integration and segregation over the past 40 years. Tensions have emerged between reforms that stress school accountability in terms of quantitative

performance measures and those which require that general class teachers take full responsibility for addressing the individual needs of every child. Combined with staffing and budgetary pressures, these tensions have placed pressure on schools' desire and capacity to maintain or develop their inclusivity.

Inclusion can be considered from a range of practical and philosophical perspectives and interpretations, linked in turn to understandings of what constitutes SEN and disability. The identification and labelling of pupils with additional needs can be contentious, open to subjectivity and influenced by external pressures on schools, creating paradoxes and difficult balancing acts for schools.

A lack of sufficient empirical evidence has led to an uncertain relationship between policy and theory in inclusive education. Without empirical evidence there is little to reassure schools that it may not be problematic, or indeed that there may be a benefit, in having pupils with additional needs on roll. This thesis will consider whether addressing VI inclusion has the potential to influence, even improve, the educational provision for the wider class. It will also provide evidence of the extent to which addressing a previously unencountered SEN (VI) changes teachers' conceptions of SEN and inclusion more broadly by challenging their frames of reference.

Policy developments have aimed to transform the education of pupils with SEN from the outside in, through broad codes of practice and statements of intent. However, as is argued succinctly here:

> Policy contexts within which inclusive values and principles have to be enacted are always likely to be complex, contradictory and, in some respects at least, inimical to inclusion. So too are institutions and classrooms, where multiple priorities, competing values, practical difficulties and personal relations interact.
>
> (Ainscow et al., 2006:4)

This thesis will be examining how change may spread from the inside out, as findings may help to show the extent to which the daily vicissitudes of the classroom and the impact of addressing inclusion can be reconciled with policy.

CHAPTER 3 Literature on Inclusion in the Classroom

This chapter will examine the literature on theoretical perspectives on inclusive curricula and inclusive pedagogy and how these can play out in the classroom situation.

3.1 Context provided by current policy directives

Current legislation and guidance is not prescriptive on pedagogy. However, the three key documents currently in place to support and direct teachers' practice serve slightly different purposes and, it can be argued, do not completely align in their stance on inclusion.

The Teachers' Standards (DfE, 2012) make minimal reference to SEN, with arguably only three sections of particular relevance, as listed in figure 3.1. Further, the requirement for teachers to address SEN and disabilities though 'distinctive teaching approaches' need not be met through inclusive practices. The National Curriculum Inclusion Statement requires that teachers should set suitable learning challenges, respond to pupils' diverse learning needs and overcome potential barriers to learning (DfE, 2014a: section 4).

TEACHERS' STANDARDS

A teacher must:

- have a secure understanding of how a range of factors can inhibit pupils' ability to learn, and how best to overcome these.
- demonstrate an awareness of the physical, social and intellectual development of children, and know how to adapt teaching to support pupils' education at different stages of development.
- have a clear understanding of the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs; those of high ability; those with English as an additional language; those with disabilities; and be able to use and evaluate distinctive teaching approaches to engage and support them.

(DfE, 2012: sections 5.2, 5.3, 5.4).

Figure 3.1 DfE Teachers' Standards

The SEND Code of Practice (DfE & DoH, 2015) aims to break down artificial barriers and to foster a graduated approach to the inclusion of pupils with SEN, centred on ensuring high quality teaching and assessment of progress before the involvement of a SENCO and, later, external professionals if a child still fail to make expected progress. However, the Code of Practice has some conflicts with National Curriculum Inclusion Statement (Hodkinson, 2016). The Code states that within-child factors should be the initial focus and places value on the teacher's personal knowledge of the child and an understanding of their diagnostic category to better ascertain the action required in order to teach them effectively. The National Curriculum places importance on external factors, such as the learning environment and teachers' aspirational target-setting.

The following sections will discuss concepts of inclusive and specialist pedagogy and curricula and the extent to which these can present a paradox to inclusion.

3.2 The inclusive curriculum

An inclusive curriculum is one that responds to pupil diversity with creative strategies and content that allow for the same goal to be achieved through different means. The dilemma of planning an inclusive curriculum is that offering the same learning experiences to all pupils may deny those with SEN experiences relevant to their individual needs, whilst individual programmes can lead to segregation. An inclusive curriculum can encompass broader concepts (eg: moving beyond literacy as being print-based and rooted in standard English) and giving equal value to different kinds of achievement (progress over raw attainment scores; parity of status between oral and written responses, academic and practical/technical subjects). However, bureaucratic boundaries between subjects can militate against this

(Skidmore, 2004), especially in the secondary model, with implications for the transfer of learning from one context to another.

Planning based on sequences of objectives can potentially lead to narrowing of the curriculum and there is a danger in modifying the curriculum that content is reduced or diluted, which could in turn increase the attainment gap between pupils (OFSTED, 2019b; Westwood, 2005). By contrast, aligning content to curriculum design is supportive of considering what the most effective form of teaching might be to achieve specific outcomes (Lewis & Norwich, 2005a). If individual plans are presented as a 'science of instruction' then teachers can feel inadequate if little value is given to their expertise, with such planning placing pupils in a passive role (Ainscow, 1992). Curricular and psychological aspects of education are arguably inseparable (Rodney, 2003) but tensions between a whole-school or individual approach are manifest in the 'false dichotomies' (Norwich, 2013, p. 68) of rationalising a knowledge-centred approach with social constructionist outcomes that address the fulfilment of individual potential.

Skrtic (1991c) considers SEN to be de facto an artefact of traditional curricula, arguing that it is the arbitrarily constructed task that can create the difficulty. Restrictions on time, modality and resources can all make a task that is readily accomplished in daily life seem more complex in a classroom learning situation. An inclusive curriculum should address accommodations and alternative modalities, such as digital technology for someone who struggles with penmanship. For pupils with SEN, some curriculum areas may have to be omitted in order to allocate time to ensure mastery of essential skills, but this requires careful judgment as to what constitutes these basics, which need to be rooted in the needs of the individual now and for their future. This in turn may raise significant implications for teacher, parent and/or pupil expectations of future capabilities.

3.3 Inclusive pedagogy

3.3.1 The value of generalist approaches

Traditionally, pupil differences have been seen as needing a technical response, the 'right' teaching method, thereby aligning their difficulties to the medical/psychological model of disability. Many voices, however, believe there is no overarching SEN pedagogy, and place importance on an inclusive pedagogy over special practices (see systemtic reviews by EASNIE, 2019; Finkelstein, Sharma, & Furlonger, 2019; Rix, Hall, Nind, Sheehy, & Wearmouth, 2009). The argument is made to loosen the hold of theoretical knowledge and prescriptive methods and to place more reliance on teachers' insights and understandings of learning built up through career experience. Finkelstein et al's scoping study (2019) states that this can be achieved through competence in five areas: pedagogy; classroom organisation; creating an environment supportive of social/emotional/behavioural well-being; assessment and monitoring of learning; collaboration with colleagues and parents. For Avramidis (2006) this requires that teachers are challenged as to how they conceptualise difference and education failure.

It is widely agreed in the literature that the more varied a pedagogy, the better the learning for everyone and that one model of learning does not inform or justify one model of teaching (eg: Cullen et al., 2020; Lewis & Norwich, 2005b; C. Tomlinson, 2014). Equally, it is agreed that there is nothing inherently good or bad about any strategy; it just has to fit given learner at given time. Thus this thesis will not argue that inclusion will be strengthened merely by transplanting and embedding VI practices into the mainstream. The key current policy guidance (Teachers Standards, SEND Code of Practice and the National Curriculum) states that successful teaching methods should not be devised or implemented in a vacuum but should stem from perceptions about learning and learners. Differentiation at the level of the individual should, by definition, address different profiles of attainment across different areas of the curriculum. Good teachers respond intuitively to individual pupil needs by determining

how they respond best and challenging them to adapt in different ways (eg: Davies & Henderson, 2020), thereby supporting the 'principle of everybody' where 'teachers' efforts to strengthen & transform learning capacity are applied fairly & equally to everyone' (S. Hart et al., 2004, p. 187).

SEN STRATEGIES	VI STRATEGIES
• flexible pupil grouping • cognitive & metacognitive strategies - memorisation techniques, mind maps • explicit instruction – teach skills in small steps, offer plenty of examples, use clear/unambiguous language, highlight essential content, remove distracting information • scaffolding – checklists, writing frames, graphic organisers • assistive technology – note-taking and speech recognition software, learning apps. (Davies & Henderson, 2020) • simplify instructional language • pre-teach new vocabulary • provide clear illustrations/diagrams • improve print legibility & layout • remove unnecessary detail • provide small blocks of text rather than dense paragraphs • use bullet points/lists rather than paragraphs • use simple questions and instructions • offer cues and prompts • highlight important parts of printed materials • consider sentence construction – eg: use active rather than passive voice (Westwood, 2005:150)	• provide individual copies of materials support learning with use of real objects • ensure materials have clear contrast • offer a writing slope allow more time to process information • reduced clutter in images • remove non-essential information, diagrams and images • amend response method (eg; verbal over writing) • use the pupil's name when you address them • use clear language • read out what is on the board (Salisbury, 2008)

Table 3.1 Teaching strategies for SEN and VI pupils

In the same way that effective strategies stemming from mainstream classroom have relevance to SEN (Hattie, 2009, 2018), it is argued that those found to be effective for SEN

pupils or classes can be used for all pupils (Mitchell & Sutherland, 2020), an argument at the heart of this thesis. Table 3.1 lists strategies found to be most successful for SEN pupils and which the authors believe, if not in the ordinary repertoire of a mainstream teacher, can be added relatively easily. Good practice for any teaching arguably uses multi-sensory and multi-modal activities to reinforce the same learning outcome and better support the retention and recall of information (eg: Hattie & Yates, 2014). There are clear links here to aspects of cognitive load theory, which states that the way a task is constructed can add to the intrinsic demands (Sweller, 1988), dual coding/channel theory, which states that memory is improved by receiving a stimulus verbally and visually rather than in one modality (J. Clark & Paivio, 1991) and metacognition research (eg: de Jong, 2010; Quigley et al., 2018) and how pedagogy and task design can affect demands placed on learning.

3.3.2 The value of specialist approaches

The discussion above is not to deny the place of specialised approaches (eg: TEACCH for autistic pupils, sign supported learning for the hearing impaired) and a dismissal of particular knowledge or understanding about specific diagnostic categories could have significant influence on provision for these pupils (Mintz & Wyse, 2015; Rouse & Florian, 2012). In light of the issues around labelling raised in Chapter 2, it will be recognised that some categories can be pedagogically relevant, not least VI and hearing impairment, where there are mandatory qualifications for specialist teachers. Nevertheless, there are highlighted many strategies for teaching a VIP that would constitute good practice for any classroom. There are shared aims with effective approaches for neurodiverse pupils; the development of expressive/receptive language, self-advocacy, personal organisation and social skills (Gense & Gense, 2005). The TEACCH approach, originally developed for ASD pupils, has proved to be effective with some VIPs (Howley & Preece 2003, Taylor & Preece 2010), being designed to promote autonomy and minimise sensory distractions.

It is an over-preoccupation with specialised approaches for specific needs that can deflect attention from developing pedagogies that can extend to all pupils in a class and the creation of conditions that will encourage such developments, potentially marginalising pupils with SEN or disabilities (Lewis & Norwich, 2005a; Mintz & Wyse, 2015). Similarly it is argued that an emphasis on expert knowledge can reduce levels of self-efficacy in teachers (Ekins, Savolainen, & Engelbrecht, 2016), whereas the more responsibility a teacher takes for all pupils, the better the teacher-pupil interactions (Rix, Hall, Nind, Sheehy, & Wearmouth, 2006).

3.3.3 The value of VI approaches

The examples in Table 3.1 of good practice from general inclusion and VI inclusion literature show the high degree of commonality: for example, addressing the clarity of diagrams by removing unnecessary detail; presenting text in readily-identifiable sections; the use of unambiguous language for explanations and instructions. These strategies are all rooted in the learning objective, not lesson activities; *how* pupils will learn, not *what* they will do.

An orderly and predictable environment has a key role to play in the promotion of independence and provision of effective learning opportunities for a VIP and is also helpful for pupils with ASD. A VIP can struggle when looking into bright light but arguably all pupils find it hard to focus on a teacher standing in front of a window surrounded by glare. Uncluttered classroom displays help all pupils to focus on the information they contain, not just the VIP who struggles to scan. Interpreting the aural environment of a busy classroom can be challenging for a VIP. Again, whilst an environment where pupils can distinguish information and aural cues efficiently is imperative for VIPs (eg: Davis, 2003), a calm aural environment is arguably helpful to pupils with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder or those with ASD, who can struggle to filter out unessential stimuli. Handling objects is particularly valuable for a VIP as this often provides a direct replacement for visual information. However, as tactile information is processed sequentially, not holistically, and takes more

time than visual scanning, there are implications for working memory, motor skills and spatial awareness. Nevertheless, the use of real objects over images could arguably engage all pupils more fully. However, whilst language acquisition for VIPs is best supported with rich, interpretative verbal descriptions that link concepts to experiences, this conflicts with the clarity of language recommended for other SEN (eg: Dockrell, Ricketts, Palikara, Charman, & Lindsay, 2019).

There are, nevertheless, additional understandings and insights into how VIPs access the world around them that are supportive of effective teaching and learning for them. It is generally accepted that fully-sighted people receive approximately 80% of information through vision, either directly or in support of other modes (Best, 1992; Farrell, 2012). Information derived from the other senses can be inconsistent (eg: objects do not always make a sound/smell) or passive (ie: not under one's control) and without a visual element can be diminished in quality and quantity. A lack of visual feedback can also reduce interest and motivation for an activity. Pupils with very low vision learn inductively rather than deductively, which can result in unpredictable gaps in their knowledge and conceptual development. Establishing the concept of *spoon,* for example, requires repeated direct exposure to wooden and plastic varieties, teaspoons and tablespoons. Difficulties arise when direct interaction is impossible (moon), too big/small (island, insect), dangerous (fire), or fragile (cobweb).

Although Webster and Roe (1998) speak for many in the VI literature when they assert that there are different rather than special routes and styles of development for a VIP, there will be some within-child aspects that will always be relevant (eg: braille learning for blind pupils). However, these are arguably not incompatible with the social model of disability. Nevertheless, some modes of learning for VIPs unavoidably tend towards the socially exclusive (eg: large-print resources that take up a whole table, the noise made by talking calculators) though adaptations can also be made that accept rather than circumvent

(eg: providing all pupils with the same enlarged-font worksheet). This thesis has sought to determine the extent to which additional needs of VIPs can be embedded in the core curriculum without detriment and, ideally, with benefit, to all learners; for example left/right and compass points in Geography as well as VIP orientation/mobility skills (McLinden, Douglas, Cobb, Hewett, & Ravenscroft, 2016).

3.4 The role of additional adults in inclusive classrooms

The discussion above on inclusive pedagogy and curricula is not to negate the role of the specialist or additional adult, but here there can be ambiguities that can lead to segregation rather than inclusion (eg: Blatchford et al., 2009; R. Webster & Blatchford, 2017). It can be argued that specialists contribute to the perpetuation of SEN labels or a perceived lack of knowledge in classroom teachers' self- appraisal. A consideration of the role and influence of additional adults at both ends of the specialist continuum (QTVI and LSA) will form part of this thesis.

Ainscow (1999) identifies three roles for a specialist: developmental, modifying and maintenance. It would be hard to argue against the provision of specialist advice in any capacity as a school takes in a pupil with an SEN not previously encountered. The QTVI can ameliorate concerns over inclusion by highlighting existing staff skills and classroom practices that are VI-friendly, raise awareness of aspects that may need further consideration (curricular or social), as well as provide specialist training (eg: how to adapt resources and activities). This thesis may help determine the legacy/maintenance aspect of the QTVI's role: the extent to which changes are sustained, the degree to which ongoing input is required (to encourage or to remind), possibly even the extent to which a school devolves responsibility onto the specialist rather than embracing the inclusion of a VIP.

The role of the LSA in school can be more problematic for effective inclusion if not managed effectively. It has been identified that the more support pupils receive from an LSA the less individual attention they tend to get from the teacher and that an over-reliance on in-class support leads to dependency and reinforces apartness (Blatchford & Webster, 2018; Sharples, Webster, & Blatchford, 2018). This is stated to be true of special and mainstream settings. This dependency could be on the part of the teacher just as much as the pupil. However, an additional adult, LSA, SENCO or specialist teacher can sometimes team teach alongside the class teacher to allow her/him extra time with the SEN pupil, thereby off-setting any SEN 'ghetto'.

The presence of an additional adult can be socially isolating if the adult becomes the conduit for communication and can lead to a loss of personal control on the part of the pupil. Pupils may well attribute any successes to the adult and not themselves (eg: Graham & Williams, 2009). Teachers may also abdicate the responsibility for differentiation of work to the LSA, whose role here, as defined by the SEND Code of Practice (DfE & DoH, 2015) should be one only of fine-tuning. The LSA can play a crucial role in highlighting things the teacher would not otherwise notice, positives and negatives. However, this relies on there being a collaborative working relationship whereby the LSA feels able to make observations and suggestions. Thus, if it is accepted that '[A]n inclusive school is one where there is an assumption amongst staff (*shared by students*) that all staff share in the contribution they make to children's learning' (Thomas, Walker, & Webb, 1998, p. 17 italics added) then the role of additional adults should be viewed positively.

All staff can play a key role in the development of positive relationships in the school environment, fostering a SEN pupil's connectedness to school life as well as classroom learning. We can now turn to a discussion of the influence of the presence of an SEN pupil on the social and academic development of others and its potential significance for this thesis.

3.5 The influence of inclusive practices on all pupils

3.5.1 Social impact

It could equally appear a logical conclusion or a simplistic assumption that 'inclusive education increases the opportunities for peer interactions and the formation of close friendships between learners with and without disabilities' (EASNIE, 2018, p. 7). Certainly parental perceptions of a breadth of opportunities for social development can be central in their wish for their child with SEN to attend a mainstream school. However, research is equivocal as to the effects of such opportunities, both in terms of pupil self-perceptions and the way that peers and adults respond to perceived differences. Koster et al (2007), for example, state that teachers and parents have a more positive impression of the social standing of SEN pupils than do their mainstream peers.

The predominant view is that social outcomes for SEN youngsters compared with typically-developing peers are poorer, often through being over-protected or the subject of unhelpful or unsatisfactory discourses of difference, unless social inclusion is actively supported, addressing staff practices and school structures as well as the attitudes of peers (see scoping review Edwards, Cameron, King, & McPherson, 2019). It is generally agreed that physical inclusion does not automatically lead to social inclusion. Rather, a child can be included in different degrees in structured or unstructured situations, which in turn are influenced by everyday cultural practices of peers and adults (Qvortrup & Qvortrup, 2017; Watson & Davis, 2001). Avramidis (2009) contrasts the homophily and contact hypotheses. Under the former, youngsters are more likely to form friendships with those who share similar backgrounds and experiences. By contrast, the contact hypothesis argues that attitudes towards those less like oneself become more positive with increased interaction, of significance for SEN pupils placed in withdrawal groups or specialist settings.

Negotiations of social identity, as well as relative ability, are integral to all classroom interactions (S. Hart et al., 2004). Nevertheless, the extent to which these relationships have parity and are meaningful is open to question. Pupils with SEN are reported to have fewer friends and lower status in social networks and to be at risk of experiencing social difficulties (Avramidis, 2009; Koster, Nakken, Pijl, & van Houten, 2009; Pijl & Frostad, 2010). It is reported that SEN pupils have more interactions with adults than peers (Koster, Pijl, Nakken, & Van Houten, 2010) and that peer-to-peer support and collaboration is more prevalent in mainstream than SEN classes (Kelly & Norwich, 2004). However, this is arguably in part because typically-developing peers may have better-developed social skills. Nevertheless, research has suggested that interactions from mainstream peers are often assistive in nature and decline as the school year progresses (Salend & Duhaney, 1999) with SEN pupils being seen by peers as less co-operative (Kuhne & Wiener, 2000). Cognitive delays often have parallels with social difficulties, such as those that stem from weaknesses in semantic/pragmatic language skills, such that SEN pupils can have difficulties initiating or maintaining conversations or interpreting social cues.

Low social positions are found to be linked with low self-concepts in SEN pupils (eg: Pijl & Frostad, 2010). However, Nowicki (2003) concludes that an appreciable proportion of pupils with SEN often do not have accurate perceptions of their social acceptance, and Kelly & Norwich (2004) find them sensitive to negative perceptions. It is not a straightforward matter to determine whether SEN pupils are disliked by their typically-developing peers and thus experiencing genuine feelings of rejection, or that their social relationships have the same ups and downs as their peers such that their feelings of rejection are largely a misconception on their part (Pavri & Luftig, 2000). Similarly, the literature reveals higher levels of bullying and victimisation of SEN youngsters than of their mainstream peers, whether from self, peer or teacher report (Frederickson, Simmonds, Evans, & Soulsby, 2007). Again, it is not straightforward to determine whether SEN pupils are teased or bullied because of any

perceived differences or because they have fewer friends and so are less socially integrated and protected.

(CVI Scotland, 2020a)

Subtleties of facial expressions are lost with reduced acuity. The image on the right appears more neutral or could be misconstrued (as a smirk or impatient gritted teeth perhaps).

Figure 3.2 Impact of visual acuity in determining facial expression

Genuine friendships amongst children develop in natural, not forced, situations but nevertheless may need a degree of scaffolding or adult mediation. Recommendations from the authors in this section that social skills work be generalised to all pupils align with the premise of this thesis. Limited vision inhibits access to the subtle non-verbal cues that support the reading and understanding of people and social situations (see figure 3.2) and also affects the ease, spontaneity and frequency of social interactions (Farrell, 2012; Tobin, 2008; A. Webster & Roe, 1998). Sensitivity to rhythms of speaking, turn-taking and intonation often need to be explicitly taught to ASD youngsters as well as VIPs and are a feature of early years curricula for all pupils. VI-ASD parallels can also be made with the development of a theory of mind. Similarly, fostering an understanding of humour may need direct support for a VIP

(Pagliano, Zambone, & Kelley, 2007), but its influence on self-esteem, friendships, attention-getting and its role as a stress-reliever make actively promoting the development of humour valuable to any child with language difficulties.

3.5.2 Influence of inclusion on academic performance

Studies into the impact of the presence of SEN pupils on the academic performance of others do not offer conclusive indications of any relationship. Ruijs et al's (2010) large-scale study of 27,745 mainstream primary-age pupils in The Netherlands found no significant differences in attainment of the highest or lowest-ability pupils between inclusive and non-inclusive classes.

	STUDY	FINDINGS
Kalambouka, Farrell, Dyson & Kaplan (2007) 26 studies	21 American, 2 Australia, 1 Canada, 1 Ireland 5 studies pre-1990 15 studies 1990-99 5 studies 2000 onwards 21 primary schools	No adverse effects 81% positive or neutral
Szumski, Smogorewska & Karwowski (2017) 47 studies	USA, Western Europe & Canada 16 studies 1987-1999 31 studies 2000 onwards Equal mix of primary and secondary phases	Weak but positive benefit to academic achievement (d = 0.12)
Dell'Anna, Pellegrini & Ianes (2019) 37 studies	Studies from 2008-18 Predominantly USA, Canada & Western Europe Equal mix of primary and secondary phases	Positive impact on social attitudes Academic impact contradictory – largely neutral but lower in Maths if SEMH† pupil present
Overlap of studies included in these meta-analyses: Szumski and Dell'Anna – 3 studies in common Szumski and Kalambouka – 9 studies in common Kalambouka and Dell-Anna – no studies in common † social, emotional and mental health		

Table 3.2 Comparison of 3 meta-analyses of inclusion studies

Three significant meta-analyses of other studies (see table 3.2) similarly show inconclusive findings. However, none of the studies included in these focused on the presence or inclusion of pupils with a specific SEN. Further, they are multi-national and were conducted prior to the implementation of most current UK policy initiatives. Importantly, the authors state that there was no common definition of inclusion in the studies they were comparing or that could be used in their search strategies.

The absence of a relationship in general between inclusion and attainment is not to say that there are not links in particular cases. This may have significance for this thesis. Given that VI is low-incidence condition it may be that VI simply has not featured as a particular case in a study, as current literature searches suggest.

CHAPTER 4 Literature on Inclusion and Teachers: challenges, conceptualisations and change

The various dilemmas described in Chapters 2 and 3 can create a complex situation for teachers. Despite the findings and arguments in the literature on inclusive policies and practices, Florian (2015) states that many teachers consider these do not fully address their apprehensions about how to create inclusive classrooms and provide effective teaching and learning for all. An understanding of teacher change processes is therefore necessary in preparation for researching the extent to which the presence of a VIP influences practical or philosophical change in the classroom and in considering the extent to which any change is sustained and is sustainable. The chapter will begin by examining the main models of teacher change presented in the literature. It will then consider how change can influence a teacher's professional and personal self-concept before a final section will consider the policy and school contexts for teachers in managing change.

4.1 The teacher change process

Daily practice sits within the differing agendas of wider theoretical contexts and structures and the pragmatic realities of the classroom. These interact with teacher self-belief and self-efficacy in a reciprocal triad (in alignment with *reciprocal determinism* (Bandura, 1986)) such that it is not straightforward to isolate triggers or influences on change. The literature shows progression in teacher attitudes from negative to positive regarding the inclusion of pupils with disabilities within mainstream education over the last five decades (ia: Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; Garrad, Rayner, & Pedersen, 2018; Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996). However, the nature and severity of need influences teacher understanding and willingness to be inclusive. There are also indications that attitudes towards inclusion can

vary between subject areas in secondary schools (Ellins & Porter, 2005) and that in primary settings training and experience are key influencers on attitude (de Boer, Pijl, & Minnaert, 2011). Arguably, teachers who choose to work in special schools are more motivated to address individual pupil needs than in mainstream settings (Farrell, 1996), although it does not follow that this would be done inclusively.

Kaasila et al (2008) propose that teacher change follows a five-stage model. Having identified a problem in existing practice or philosophy, one must become aware of and then test out alternatives and reflectively analyse these before changing one's views and practices. Loh and Tam (2017) offer a similar model but recognise that denial and defence can be salient before an acceptance of the need for change. Reio (2005) argues that there are individual similarities and differences in the response to change but that an environment of uncertainty and the associated emotional experiences affect a teacher's capacity to take risks and develop. In conducting this research due weight was paid to teachers' genuine belief in the efficacy of their current practice. This was especially significant given my status as a QTVI as there was the potential for participants to feel their competence in working with a VIP was being assessed during any classroom observations.

Fullan (2016) states that traditional teacher development often attempts to change teachers' beliefs and attitudes, with the expectation that this will lead to changes in classroom practices. This has significance for this thesis as the placement of a VIP is often a *fait accompli* for the classroom teacher. However, it is argued that teachers' practices are deeply ingrained through life and career experiences, such that exposure to inclusive classrooms is unlikely to cause any sudden attitude change (Savolainen, Malinen, & Schwab, 2020; Sharma & George, 2016) and that a simple transfer of techniques is likely to be superficial and leave the ingrained undisturbed (D. Hargreaves, 2003). Rather, initiatives are only assimilated when teachers perceive their benefits to pupils (Guskey, 1986, 2002), with Loh & Tam (2017) placing value on collaboration to further embed it. This has relevance for this thesis as it was

seeking teachers' views on the wider worth of VI strategies. Huberman (1992, 1995) argues that teacher development is more cyclical in nature: changes in attitudes are likely to trigger changes in practice that in turn lead to further change in pupils' learning. This aligns with the valuing of reflective practice to identify barriers, regarding difference as opportunities as opposed to problems, leading to a degree of risk-taking (Ainscow, 1999; Booth & Ainscow, 2016).

The role of emotions in the enactment of change should not be underestimated (see 4.2 below). Other than any neutral acceptance, the emotions that underpin any changes may be positive or negative (confidence, pride, satisfaction, irritation, frustration, resentment) and it is quite possible for contrasts to co-exist (eg: apprehension as both excitement and insecurity). Importantly, it should be recognised that change can manifest as deeper entrenchment just as much as the creation of difference. It should also be recognised that situational and emotional factors that contribute to teachers' perceptions of their effectiveness can vary across short timeframes, an important consideration for framing the interviews that were conducted for this research.

4.2 Professional and personal self-concept

Teachers' professional self-concept is an important factor in how inclusion is managed. Across the literature it is argued that teachers cannot develop passively; that they need agency, to be involved in the decisions and process of their own learning and to see their relevance (Reio, 2005; Schon, 1983). Teachers' beliefs regarding their self-efficacy are considered significant in their motivation for and perseverance with change, with mastery experiences considered the strongest source of self-efficacy and beliefs also being shaped by the influence of emotional states and social factors (Bandura, 1997; Subban, Round, & Sharma, 2018).

Research reveals teachers' insecurities regarding a lack of expertise in SEN, not least a presupposition that there are special teaching methods required (ia: Connor & Ferri, 2007; Materechera, 2018; Westwood, 2013). However, there is evidence that teacher uncertainty over how to respond to particular pupil difficulties does not equate to a lack of teaching ability and skills (Florian & Linklater, 2010). Nevertheless, surveys of newly qualified teachers indicate that a significant number do not feel sufficiently well prepared for working with pupils with SEN and disabilities (see figure 4.1). Paradoxically, it can be argued that discrete modules on SEN or inclusion in teacher training courses contribute to artificial distinctions and non-inclusive boundaries (EASNIE, 2019; Forlin, 2010). Nevertheless, teaching in inclusive classrooms may require unique skills not acquired during initial training, potentially significant for this study given the low incidence of VI as a formally identified SEN in the pupil population.

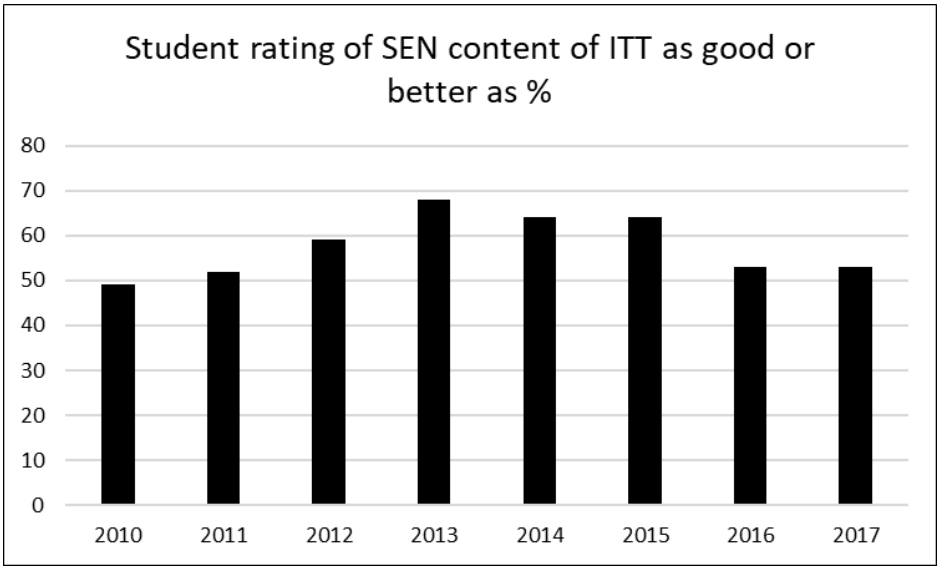


Figure 4.1 Student ratings of SEN content of initial teacher training

Data from Mintz et al (2015) and DfE (DfE, 2016, 2018b)

Higher levels of self-efficacy have been linked to less negative assumptions and predictions regarding pupil ability (Sharma & George, 2016) such that it is the meaning that a

teacher invests into the identified need, not the disability itself, that creates exclusion (Hansen, 2012). An over-emphasis or over-reliance on labelling (as discussed in Chapter 2) can lead to convergent thinking, whereby pupil needs are framed in terms of capabilities the teacher considers they currently have. This can arguably lead to pupil conformity to teacher practice or the teacher seeking input from a specialist (Skrtic, 1999). It is argued that self-efficacy is influenced strongly by teachers' perceptions of the whole-school climate and efficacy in managing inclusion (Wilson, Marks Woolfson, & Durkin, 2018). The more highly a teacher rates the capabilities of colleagues as a group, the stronger the belief in their own ability to teach children with SEN. Similarly, attitudinal change is arguably more marked when the argument is built from a consensus of multiple sources (Constantinescu, 2013).

There is consensus in the literature that, perhaps unsurprisingly, older teachers are more concerned with the effect of change on their professional stability and status and that they are more comfortable on a known path than experiencing the new, viewing the time, effort and acquisition of new knowledge involved in change with circumspection (ia: Anghelache & Benţea, 2012). Change arguably involves risk and relinquishing control. Teachers can be wary of using children as guinea pigs in the manner of a control-trial and may not want to put at risk the proven learning from current practice (Goldacre, 2013). Day et al (2007) state that performativity agendas and monitoring can negatively affect teachers' substantive identities and their capacity to maintain motivation, commitment and resilience and caution against uncritical compliance with change. Accountability pressures can militate against collaborative working and shared responsibility for all pupils (Curcic, Gabel, Zeitlin, Cribaro-DiFatta, & Glarner, 2011) and SEN can be viewed as a threat to overall school performance (Runswick-Cole, 2011; Slee, 2006).

Hargreaves (1998) suggests that teaching is a form of emotional labour, and that emotions, shaped by one's degree of situational control, play an important part. Weiss et al (2019) report that inclusion is equated with stress and excessive personal commitment by

teachers with little or no experience of SEN pupils or inclusive classrooms. Rather, research indicates that experience with inclusion correlates with positive attitudes towards it (ia: Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; Hind, Larkin, & Dunn, 2019; Varcoe & Boyle, 2014). True change can be an act of faith, involving 'loss, anxiety and struggle' (Fullan, 2016, p. 19). Change requires honest self-appraisal, otherwise teachers can think they have changed, through altering practice in a mechanical way, when their underlying beliefs have not. Thus it was valuable for this thesis to have classroom observation data to compare with staff survey and interview responses.

4.3 Influence of policy and school context

Although the focus of the research for this thesis is at classroom level it should nevertheless be recognised that any changes in attitude or practice sit within the wider school context. The requirements of current policy and potential contradictions within recent legislation and directives have been discussed in Chapter 2. Whilst there has been a growing focus on inclusive practice and on teachers taking responsibility for all learners, there is the potential for this to be undermined. The SEND Code of Practice (DfE & DoH, 2015) does not define any explicit role or duties of a headteacher, only of 'the school'. Thus, although responsibilities for pupils with SEN or disabilities may be shared throughout the school, aligning with inclusive principles, there is a risk identified (Cullen et al., 2020) that pupils become nobody's responsibility in practice. This risk is arguably amplified by there being no requirement for the SENCO to be part of the school leadership team, such that their specialised knowledge and understandings may not directly influence whole-school decision-making around the issues of SEN and inclusion. Changes through the development of the SENCO role (to include a mandatory qualification from 2009 (DCSF, 2009)) and the responsibilities placed on support staff have the potential to make a teacher consider that meeting the needs of a pupil with SEN or disabilities is not their direct responsibility (Ekins et

al., 2016). However, the recently-revised inspection framework (OFSTED, 2019a) requires schools to demonstrate that SEN and inclusion are addressed strategically and the progress of SEN pupils thoroughly evaluated.

It is widely recognised that support staff often play a key role in the facilitation of the inclusion of pupils with SEN or disabilities (eg: Sharples et al., 2018) and their deployment similarly has potential significance for teacher's acceptance and management of change. There has been much debate in recent years about the efficacy of LSA deployment, with some studies suggesting that LSA support can impact negatively on pupil progress and capacity for independent learning through lower quality learning interactions and if LSAs are untrained or insufficiently supervised (Radford, Bosanquet, Webster, & Blatchford, 2015; Sharples et al., 2018). On a day-to-day level, a lack of opportunity for teachers and LSAs to meet, plan and discuss pupil progress can be a key barrier to effective collaboration in the classroom (Butt, 2016; R. Webster & Blatchford, 2017). Although beyond the scope of this study, it should also be recognised that teachers may feel under pressure to reconcile parental expectations around LSA support for their child (DfE, 2018a).

Notwithstanding the potential for devolvement of responsibility and the potential increased workload if the teacher has to closely supervise an additional adult, a mutually-supportive working partnership can provide a sounding-board for ideas and scope for the work involved in the development and management of inclusive practices to be shared. It is also argued that collaboration can reveal and challenge tacit beliefs (Kaasila & Lauriala, 2010; Meirink, Meijer, & Verloop, 2007), especially if rooted in authentic, everyday situations, a consideration under examination in this research.

It is recognised that the character of school leadership affects teachers' belief in change. Fullan (2016) argues that the headteacher is the gatekeeper of change; critical in initiating, developing and facilitating positive attitudes towards it. Equally, school leaders need to be closely involved in innovations from the standpoint of accountability. It has been

recognised that the strategic importance given to SEN and disability can be frustrated if priority is given to what are perceived as more pressing external policies (Lehane, 2017; R. Webster & Blatchford, 2017). However, priorities may alter with the renewed emphasis on SEN and disability in the current OFSTED inspection framework (OFSTED, 2019a).

Access to professional development and training, the degree of encouragement to experiment with new ideas, and the degree to which school systems can flex to accommodate and support the maintenance of new ideas can all impinge on a teachers' professional growth (Clarke & Hollingsworth, 2002). School leaders need to encourage and support teachers to believe that they have the necessary efficacy to cope with change (Kin, Kareem, Nordin, & Bing, 2017), as it is argued that teachers who feel supported are more inclined to embrace and accommodate change than those who do not (Cullen et al., 2020; Tiernan, Casserly, & Maguire, 2018). Schools can be complex and rarely static organisations, where reforms can unsettle or disrupt teachers' beliefs and self-efficacy as well as their practices if poorly managed (Day, 1999). Collaboration in such environment could arguably lead to the cementing and reinforcing of existing practices. Leadership that is open to new ideas from whatever origin is likely to prove more supportive for the teacher who is asked to move away from a belief that there is only one correct pedagogy or one common solution (Drummond et al., 2013).

4.3 Summary

The pragmatic realities of daily practice often place pressure on teachers' capacity to think and act reflectively (Schon, 1983). Beyond a teacher's own perspectives on learning outcomes and the parameters of the curriculum, the wider school context can impinge on a teacher's professional growth and self-concept; supporting or discouraging experimentation with new ideas and strategies at the level of daily practice or through administrative systems that inhibit change in the longer term (Clarke & Hollingsworth, 2002). Values and practices

are unlikely to be uniform across all staff and so leadership has a key role in creating a culture for staff to reappraise and share aspects of their practice and to take risks. Teachers participating in this study may well have been starting from a position of knowledge and/or experience and with a positive disposition towards inclusion. However, they were selected because of their lack of knowledge and experience in working with VIPs and so it is important to understand change process in order to assess the significance of any change in their conceptualisation of VI, SEN and inclusion.

4.4 Summary of literature and presentation of research questions

> [F]ew injustices [can be] deeper than the denial of an opportunity to strive or even to hope, by a limit imposed from without, but falsely identified as lying within.
>
> (Gould, 1996, p. 60)

There is increasing recognition in the literature that more SEN pupils could be taught alongside mainstream peers in an inclusive environment than happens at present, though this is not to negate or devalue the value of specialist provision for some children. It is argued that a concern for improving the whole learning environment and using pedagogies and learning activities that can extend to all should serve to avoid identifying some children as having SEN: 'extend what is ordinarily available to reduce the need to mark people as different' (Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011, p. 814). Similarly, an understanding and removal of barriers to participation for the most vulnerable pupils can improve provision in ways that are beneficial for all (eg: Messiou, 2017). Pupils categorised as mainstream can still feel excluded by a 'restricted curriculum, inflexible pedagogy and hierarchical ethos' (Corbett, 2001, p. 1),

an aspect that this thesis may help to illuminate through the strength of the ecological validity of findings.

Nevertheless, not all researchers agree that it is practicable to educate all pupils together, and even where there is agreement, there are differing views about how this could be achieved or should be managed (Florian, 2015; Warnock, Norwich, & Terzi, 2010). It is argued that pupils are disadvantaged by narrow interpretations of inclusion, rooted in deficit-models and settings centred on how to work with a specific child or condition, rather than those which take a broader approach, aiming to do things well for everyone (Finkelstein et al., 2019). Equally, an emphasis on standards underpinned by a normal distribution of ability marginalises those at either end of the bell curve and standardised curricula or teaching approaches can make it more difficult to flex to respond to individuality.

Ainscow (1998, 2020) declares that inclusion offers benefits to all pupils provided major changes occur in how difficulties are viewed. It is broadly agreed in the literature that change imposed from without is less sustainable and valuable than change that stems from personal growth, awareness and beliefs. Similarly, research suggests that teachers' self-efficacy predicts their attitudes towards inclusive education (ia: Savolainen, Malinen, & Schwab, 2020). Motivation for change affects success, linked to ownership and perceptions of benefit. Positive teacher attitudes towards pupils with SEN and disabilities lead to better attitudes towards all and improved pupil self-concept. If it is accepted that an inclusive pedagogy is formed from a teacher's skills and knowledge (Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011) then it ultimately resides with the teacher to make inclusion work.

The literature reflects specific staff concerns over the inclusion of a VIP; health and safety, how other pupils will react, how a VIP will learn in an existing classroom environment and the additional time required to provide the necessary level of provision (eg: Davis, 2003; Wall, 2002). However, schools and staff do not have an infinite repertoire of practices and strategies. If addressing VI will bring wider benefits then teachers will arguably be more

receptive to investing time and resources in making changes and integrating VI strategies sustainably into their general skill set. Addressing the needs of a VIP should mirror the change domains identified in the literature, most notably in knowledge, practice and emotions.

4.5 Research questions

Given the gap in knowledge identified in Chapters 2, 3 and 4, the overarching research question is:

- What is the influence of the inclusion of visually impaired pupils on the teaching and learning of others?

The research was guided by three core questions (see Table 4.1). The associated sub-questions sought to identify triggers for change in practical terms: to the classroom environment and resources, to teaching and learning activities and to teachers' working practices. Sub-questions also address issues of teacher acceptance and response to drivers of change in order to determine not only whether the inclusion of a VIP brings changes that are both sustained and sustainable but also whether it promoted any changes in teachers' conceptualisation of and attitudes towards SEN and inclusion more broadly.

Overarching research question: What is the influence of the inclusion of a VIP on the teaching and learning of others?	
RQ1 To what extent is the inclusion of a VIP a trigger for practical change?	a) How readily can VI-friendly strategies be generalised? b) What is the influence on pupils' learning and social interactions? c) Are there any pupil age or subject-specific considerations related to the need or capacity for change? d) What is the perceived and reported role of additional adults in effecting change – LSAs or specialists?
RQ2 To what extent is there any change in teacher knowledge and their conceptualisation of SEN and inclusion	e) What assumptions are made by teachers and LSAs about perceived difficulties, pedagogy and privileged knowledge in addressing the teaching of a VIP? f) To what extent does the presence & inclusion of a VIP make tacit assumptions by staff explicit g) What new understandings are needed for the successful inclusion of a VIP? h) To what extent does the presence of a VIP trigger teacher reflection on current practice?
RQ3 To what extent is any change sustained and sustainable?	i) Does greater awareness of universally beneficial strategies make inclusion more possible and palatable? j) Are there any barriers to change at policy or practical level?

Table 4.1 Core research questions and sub-questions.

CHAPTER 5 Methodology

This chapter will first show how the methodology for the research links ontologically and epistemologically to the research questions. After describing the context and settings of the research, it then discusses the suitability and efficacy of the data collection tools selected and of the methods of data analysis. Issues of rigour, internal validity, transferability and researcher involvement, additional to those threaded through the discussions on data, will then be addressed, followed by a discussion of the ethical considerations involved in the planning and conduct of all stages of the research. Possible limitations of the research are also threaded through this chapter and will be interrogated further in Chapters 9 and 10 (Discussion and Conclusion).

The names of all settings and participants have been changed to preserve anonymity. Schools, staff and pupils will be referred to by pseudonyms throughout.

5.1 Paradigm rationale

Inclusive education research cannot be ideology-free, given that it is concerned with inequality, people's differing views and people's different perceptions of the same experiences (Allan & Slee, 2008). Teachers, support staff, VIPs and other pupils may all view inclusion differently and the position that VI occupies on the continuum of the social and medical models of disability. Exploring these meanings arguably alters the relationship between the researcher and the researched and the researcher's position may influence findings, here possibly diluting, even deconstructing, aspects of VI as a category of SEN. Therefore, transparency of ontological and epistemological positioning is important for the proposed research.

All knowledge is from a point of view (Russell, 1912) whether one frames the self in Humean terms (a determinist, inductive, passive observer) or Kantian (developing meaning through an active synthesis of experiences). 'To represent a scene to yourself is to represent yourself as experiencing it one way or another' (Blackburn, 1999, p. 140). Polarization between scientific and social paradigms bears little relation to the complexity of human interactions in educational settings which cannot, in my view, be isolated into any kind of laboratory purity. In school settings, teachers are continually balancing their professional, process, personal and value knowledge (Eraut, 1994) in a context of complex variables that are difficult to control or to measure objectively and where non-linearity means one cannot predict the ongoing dynamic effect of one element on another (Pring, 2015). Rather, avenues to effective praxis are best served by a phronetic approach, interpreting values and judgments derived from thick descriptions of current and historic everyday practice (Flyvbjerg, 2011). The behaviourist view, that only behaviour that can be observed objectively can be studied scientifically, loses the agentive angle of the individual and the significances of their inner life and emotions. Recognition of peoples' voice and appreciation of their point of view counterbalances speculative interpretation on the part of the researcher. Thus this research is best suited to a relativist ontology and dialectical methodology given that the research questions are rooted in the primacy of practical knowing, living knowledge and critical subjectivity.

The research questions were best served with contextualised, context-dependent data, especially if one agrees that SEN and VI are socially constructed (as argued in Chapter 2) and that one's frameworks of how the world is built from experiences and social and historical contexts (Pring, 2015) whereby behaviours and interactions generate a culture (Berger & Luckman, 1966). The discourses of inclusion and VI are particular and situated, with shared language and social rules that form subjective understandings. Language is an active medium from constructing meaning: 'words give birth to things just as things give birth to words'

(Barnes, 1984, p. 88). Observations do not come independent of concepts and theories, situated apart from the prejudices and preferences we bring to the observing. Intentions and mental states can only be truly known by the person undergoing the experience and any inference drawn from outward displays will be subjective, imbued with the observer's preconceptions and interpretations. Consequently, accounts of behaviour must address intentions and understandings, which are both filtered through shared social rules and language (Pring, 2015).

Educational research is arguably rooted in the political, persuasive and purposive: who undertakes it, whose experiences are researched, how these are categorised, what is deemed valuable and, ultimately, what gains currency. For Clough and Nutbrown (2012) the researcher's perspective renders it positional, an aspect vital if analysis is not to comprise merely a directory of data. If findings are co-generated during the research process this dissolves the conventional distinctions between ontology and epistemology (Waring, 2012).

Within an over-arching interpretivist paradigm, the research was exploratory in nature, not least because my literature searches had yet to discover any existing research in this field. It was best suited to an inductive approach, valuing a variety of data sources and collection methods to ensure that all perspectives and actions could be explored and that their credibility was not neglected or denied. If methods were modified during the study this would reflect that reality is constantly changing. Further, acceptance of the view that an interpretivist approach allows for multiple truths but a social constructionist approach 'actively explores multiple *beliefs*' (Porter & Lacey, 2005, p. x italics in original) implies rejection of a positivist stance, which would insufficiently recognise the importance of context and social processes. A socially constructed research process thus matches well with a disability (VI) that has many socially constructed aspects. The research has not been positioned within a Critical Research paradigm, though it may generate findings that could redress inequality.

The research sought to capture a plurality of voices and identities connected to inclusion. Indeed, an individual participant might relate multiple representations of their reality (eg: according to the severity of VI in a pupil being taught, the age of pupils or the curriculum area being taught). Further, the research was seeking to reflect the reality of lived experience and social interactions. This further justified a methodical pluralism. Blackburn's (1999) television analogy is useful here. With the wrong equipment, not properly tuned in, all that is received from a signal objectively being broadcast is a snowstorm. Equally, there are parallels with Cubism in art. Although trying to represent the same object from all angles at the same time can make identification of the subject challenging, it nevertheless reveals facets that might have gone unnoticed and makes one reappraise the subject. If the research findings are going to enhance practice then there is a need to balance empirical evidence of change (positive or negative) or entrenchment and the reader being able to identify with people, events and settings. A positivist approach would, in my view, sacrifice responsiveness for replicability. By contrast, a case study approach should give a sufficiently nuanced representation through its closeness to the reality of the schools being studied. It will be helpful here to critique case study as an approach in more detail.

5.2 Case study as a methodology

The research for this thesis comprises a *multiple* or *collective* case study (Thomas, 2016), the *case* being the influence of addressing VI inclusion.

Case study is best considered as an overarching design frame, comprising a holistic focus on processes, interactions and relationships in natural settings (Denscombe, 2017) and providing a rich picture of many insights from many angles and sources (Thomas, 2016). Case study should preserve the different, possibly contradictory, views of what is happening in multiple realities of subjects or participants (Stake, 1995) and in events over which the

researcher has little or no control (Yin, 2014). It is a methodology suited to understanding a school as a working institution and the key processes within it. A teacher's professional knowledge is not practised in isolation but is dependent variously on a child, the class, LSA support, school policy and school ethos.

Tight (2010) advocates a focus in qualitative research on how data were created, collected and analysed and on the strengths and weaknesses of the procedures involved, arguing that 'by adding the label "case study" and references to Stake, Yin and others [researchers can claim] that there is more to our research than a small-sample, in-depth study' (Tight, 2010, p. 338). Nevertheless, being able to position this research within widely-used typologies arguably strengthens the soundness of the design.

In view of the lack of existing empirical evidence it was arguably wise to look at several cases to determine the influence of addressing VI inclusion. This aligns with Stake's (2006) *multiple* or *collective* case study, or Hamilton and Corbett-Whittier's (2013) *cumulative* case study. Multicase studies offer 'a collection of situated case activities in a binding of larger research questions' (Stake, 2006, p. 90), here to better explore the influence of the inclusion of VIPs in different situations, with multiple sources of evidence making findings more compelling. One function of the pilot study, although only involving two VIPs and four teachers/subject areas across two settings, was to determine whether there would be greater value in considering each setting intrinsically, in the manner of a sequential exploratory study (Cresswell, 2013), or in making any comparison between them, thereby aligning with Stake's multicase process; 'study cases in terms of their own situational issues, interpret patterns within each case, then analyse cross-case findings to make assertions' (Stake, 2006, p. 10).

As there was no empirical evidence yet found in the literature, the research was discovery- rather than theory-led, valuing description, exploration, comparison and explanation (Denscombe, 2017). This aligns with Stake's (2006) view that the interest in

multicase study is primarily instrumental: to explore, explain, evaluate and provide insight (Thomas, 2016). The research questions were seeking to understand real-life contexts and to generate in-depth understanding of issues and of the perceptions of actors through an empathetic and non-interventionist methodology (Hamilton & Corbett-Whittier, 2013; Woodside, 2010).

A comparative approach could compensate for any lack of variability due to a small number of cases. However, it would not be known at the outset if any of the cases would be sufficiently similar to support direct comparison, nor would it be desirable in an exploratory qualitative study to decide what might be similar or dissimilar if aiming to study each case inductively in sequence. The research is not seeking an exemplar case to represent the inclusion of VIPs, arguably not possible, given the arguments made in the literature review chapters and paradigm rationale section above. Rather, it is seeking data that will help build a fuller picture of the issues surrounding VI inclusion. An atypical case could be more thought-provoking, challenging preconceptions, whereas a typical case might confirm them. Too rigid a design could miss or discount something unexpected, thereby reducing the richness of the data.

In recognising the idiosyncratic nature of each setting explored in this study, ‘key cases’ (Thomas, 2016) or ‘informative cases’ (Swanborn, 2010), were chosen to provide examples of the influence of VIP inclusion rather than for intrinsic or localised interest. Each arguably constituted an *instrumental* case (Stake, 1995), being an examination of a case in order to gain insights into a broader phenomenon. Surveys, interviews and classroom observations were planned to reflect the exploratory, evaluative and explanatory potential of case study. There would be an exploration of what was happening as a result of the placement of a VIP in class, an evaluation of the changes that had occurred and possible explanations offered, all built from a breadth of sources of daily practice. Thick descriptions can ‘clarify

with specificity' (Thomas, 2016, p. 7); 'small questions often lead to big answers' (Flyvbjerg, 2011, p. 40).

Presenting experiences and insights of real people was important for the ethical position of this research: there was a need to represent VI fairly and to consider the impact on VIPs and their school placement. The research methodology also needed to address any potential for bias and personal subjectivity in the selection of cases as well as in the conduct of research activities.

5.3 Settings and participants

Requests for information on potential settings to use for the research were made to heads of LA Sensory Services within practicable travelling distance from my location and to QTVI colleagues within my own LA. It was not possible to determine the motivations for a setting's positive response prior to my commencing the research. They may have already been positively disposed towards inclusion, they may have been a 'hero school', reluctant to reveal any weaknesses and keen to show how successfully they managed inclusion, or they may have seen participation as an opportunity to benefit from extra support from a VI specialist. Access to and within settings may not have been readily granted as settings and individuals might have been concerned about being identifiable.

The identification and selection of settings needed to address the potential constraint of researching what could be accessed rather than accessing what can be researched, of significance given that VI is a low-incidence SEN. Additionally, sensitivity had to be shown to the possibility over-researching a VI setting or individual (eg: a 'beacon' school often used as an exemplar) and the process becoming intrusive. Ethical considerations also extended to the fair treatment of all volunteers.

SCHOOL IDENTIFIED	ROLE IN THE STUDY
1. Junior school (Y3)	VIP did not take up their school place.
2. Primary School (Y4)	Class teacher indicated she would be taking maternity leave at some point before Christmas and so chose to withdraw.
3. Secondary School (Y7)	Headteacher agreed to participate via phone call but did not return consent forms after two follow-up requests.
4. Post-16 college (Y13)	Used for pilot. VIP (blind) was an ex-pupil from my own school and I was involved in her transition planning. Familiarity might taint researcher objectivity.
5. Primary School (Y5)	Used for pilot. Setting was feeder school for my own school so informal links with staff existed.
6. Primary School (Y4)	Discounted from observation and interview visits because a child with significant physical needs transferred into class from a parallel class a couple of weeks into term. A pre-visit suggested that it would be too difficult to determine which adaptations were being done for whose benefit and the influence that this pupil might have on class dynamics. Responses from the 1st survey were still considered of value as they were made before considerations of the very specific additional changes and health and safety considerations that arose when other pupil joined the class.
7. Burwood Primary (Y3)	Used in main study.
8. Milburn Junior (Y5)	Used in main study.
9. Tadfield Secondary (Y7/8)	Used in main study.

Table 5.1 Role in study of potential settings identified

Eleven potential settings were identified where the class teacher (primary/junior) or whole school (secondary) would be taking in their first VIP. Two were discounted as outliers. One of these would have centred on a Y1 class and it was considered that there were too many variables at play to reliably discern VI as a trigger for change over other factors, not least pupil inculturation into formal schooling. The other was a sixth form college and here the opposite end of maturity was significant. As A-level students, it was considered that the

VIP and their peers might be sufficiently self-directed self-advocates that issues of inclusion might be negotiated between student and staff to some extent a feature that had been observed during the pilot study (see 5.4.1 below). Nine schools were contacted and decisions made as detailed in table 5.1.

The final selection of cases aimed to balance the potential for learning about the interactivity of VI and inclusion with diversity across a range of contexts. Commonalities and variations would be better revealed by studying VI inclusion in a range of settings, each comprising an *instrumental* case. These might offer insights into broader themes not yet recognised (Stake, 2006), of significance here given the lack of empirical data and literature on the research question. Equally, it can be argued that findings emerging from heterogeneous settings should be more transferable than those from similar ones (Schofield, 2000). Issues of validity and transferability are discussed in depth below (section 5.6).

When planning the research and defining the scope, the decision was made to confine active participation to staff and to not involve pupils in any surveys, focus groups or interviews. As an exploration of the influence of a low-incidence SEN, it was not straightforward to determine how the full ethical considerations pertaining to pupils' involvement could be reliably predicted. It would be undesirable to act in any way that would position VI as something other than unremarkable to the other pupils, such as by drawing attention to subtle differences and positioning VI as the source. Equally important, the VIP might not be fully aware of the nature or implications of their VI themselves. Sensitivity to the VIP as well as to the influence of their presence in class should be shown in all activities.

It would be difficult to achieve consistency of questioning or of trustworthy recording of conversations without some degree of formality. As I would be observing classes of 25-30 pupils there would be a need to select a sample and determine the criteria for doing so. In Tadfield secondary school I would be potentially observing 12 classes with varying degrees of commonality of composition (ie: each VIP (n=3) was in an ability group for English, Maths

and Science and their tutor group for Humanities and IT). It might prove possible to build relationships with pupils in the primary classes, as a participant-observer for half-days at a time rather than the shorter lesson length of secondary classes. However, the potential remained to include pupil voice if something salient did come up during the course of my time in class, noting the issues of potential bias as described below (section 5.4.4).

5.4 Pilot Study

A pilot study was undertaken in order to determine a suitable time-frame for the study and to trial data collection tools and analysis processes. No data from the pilot was incorporated into findings from the main study with the exception of a referral back to the codes generated when analysing pilot survey and interview responses in coding the main study's findings (see section 5.5.1).

The pilot study was undertaken with four teachers working in a junior school (n=1) and post-16 college (n=3) which I considered would not be well-suited to the main study as I had a degree of familiarity with staff and two of the VIPs (see table 5.1). Further, findings in the college suggested that the maturity of post-16 students might be a significant factor in the extent of any influence of a VIP, given that the two VI students' demonstrated agency in obviating need for change to teacher's practice, and supported the decision to use KS2 and KS3 settings for the main study (see section 5.3).

5.4.1 Role of pilot study in determining time-frame

The pilot study helped in establishing the time-frame for the main study. The timeline adopted is shown in figure 5.1 The research required that a baseline position was established for each setting in order to determine if, how and to what extent any changes occurred. The study then had to allow sufficient time for any changes to become embedded, natural and for the novelty of VI to wear off. Too long a period would risk participants accuracy in recalling the baseline position and their undervaluing or under-reporting changes that had become

second nature, thereby placing demands on their self-reflection. Too short a period and staff might still be on high alert to having a VIP in their class. Observations would ideally take place over a period of time, rather than being a one-off visit, in order to understand the dynamics of situations, context of activities and any similarities and differences. Ethically, however, it was undesirable for staff to be made to feel under the spotlight if I was going to make overly-frequent visits.

The introduction of some VI-friendly strategies would have immediate impact (eg: providing all pupils with the same resource to avoid identifying a VIP as different). The influence of others might develop over time (eg: social interactions). Therefore the choice of timespan for the research needed to address the ability to make judgments on the long-term durability of a strategy. However, the ease or difficulty in maintaining a strategy is arguably a reflection on its impact. Further, there might be issues of maturation. Some social change in younger children could be attributable to growing up over the period of the study, inculturation into the school system or settling into their new class.

The pilot study indicated that one school term provided a good balance between all these considerations.

5.4.2 Role of pilot study in data collection/analysis decisions

The pilot study was also used to determine the efficacy of data collection tools. In trialling these, it allowed an indication of the time involved in completing surveys and participating in interviews to be included in the information letters given to Headteachers, teachers and LSAs, supportive of the consideration that research activities should pay due regard to additional participant workload (BERA, 2018). I was able to hold informal conversations to determine the extent to which participants had interpreted survey questions in the way intended. In combination with a review of responses, such conversations suggested that participants had felt able to express everything they had thought to say. Tick boxes, for example, did not appear to have closed down any desire to add free-written text comments. I

was also able to develop my confidence and skills in conducting semi-structured interviews. Analysis of transcripts suggested that, whilst the planned question schedule did not constrain participant responses or the themes they raised, I should be mindful of the balance between offering prompts to draw out their thinking and allowing them time to reflect before answering.

The pilot study was used to test the value of giving participants the interview schedule in advance. Initial reactions to questions are arguably indicative of what participants think is significant but knowing the question schedule might mean they give more considered answers. Conversely, they could prepare themselves to avoid certain issues or prepare what they believe is a 'right' response. That they had recently completed the end-of-study survey and I had recently been undertaking observations in their classroom was deemed sufficient to have brought thoughts of VI and inclusion to the forefront of their minds in preparation for interview. Therefore the indicative question schedule was not given to participants ahead of their interview.

For classroom observations, both the pilot study and a supplementary rehearsal of general observation techniques in my own setting helped to refine my ability to observe and make notes and to determine the value of focusing on a specific aspect over maintaining awareness of the breadth of themes identified (Appendices 6 and 7). The variability in the primary class supported the decision to plan at least three observation visits (I was able to make only one as part of the pilot) and the need to balance the role of participant- or detached-observer according to the moment. Two visits to the college, extending across three teachers and five lessons, supported the planned decision not to make direct comparisons between teachers and study them sequentially but to consider emergent themes, in alignment with Stakes' multicase process (see 5.2 above).

A thorough trialling of nVivo analysis software was undertaken as part of the pilot study. However, my preference remained to analyse and code by hand. I felt more immersed

in and connected to the data through repeated re-readings. I believe that I was more alert to the emergence and cross-pollination of ideas than when relying on software to run matching searches and test out possible cross-references. For example, open-ended survey comments (typically short statements rather than fulsome paragraphs) could be readily compared with associated rating questions to better discern meanings.

Codes and themes from analysis of pilot study data did not result in changes to the format of the first survey as used in the main study. However, they were used to support perspective and nuance in coding the main study's findings and to support reflective thinking (see Chapter 6).

5.5 Data collection methods

The research questions required a holistic approach, using a variety of tools to capture a depth of detail and unique features from the minutiae of daily practices, enabling an understanding of what is happening in the context in which it occurred that might otherwise be lost in a reduction to bald data. In keeping with a flexible methodology, it was necessary to fine tune research tools to best suit the ethos and organisation of a setting, whether for ethical or practical reasons. A setting may have been too small, for example, to be able to secure anonymity of responses. However, I believe this to be acceptable given that the research was seeking to find experiences and effects and not to make comparisons between settings. Iterations were planned in order to better link the conceptual framework to the data and vice versa.

DATA COLLECTION TOOL	PARTICIPANTS
1st SURVEY	13 teachers 7 LSAs
OBSERVATION	Y3 Burwood Primary School (n=4 half days) Y5 Milburn Junior School (n=4 half days) Y7 and Y8 Tadfield Secondary (n = 3-4 per teacher) (visited sequentially – listed in order)

2nd SURVEY	10 teachers 8 LSAs
INTERVIEW	6 teachers (all had responded to 2nd survey) - Y3 - 5 x secondary
PUPILS	Y3 low vision Y5 low vision Y7 blind Y8 blind Y8 low vision

Table 5.2 Data collection by participants

5.5.1 Establishing a time frame for research activities

The research required that a baseline position was established for each setting in order to determine if, how and to what extent any changes occurred. The study then had to allow sufficient time for any changes to become embedded, natural and for the novelty of VI to wear off. Too long a period would risk participants accuracy in recalling the baseline position and their undervaluing or under-reporting changes that had become second nature, thereby placing demands on their self-reflection. Too short a period and staff might still be on high alert to having a VIP in their class. Observations would ideally take place over a period of time, rather than being a one-off visit, in order to understand the dynamics of situations, context of activities and any similarities and differences. Ethically, however, it was undesirable for staff to be made to feel under the spotlight if I was going to make overly-frequent visits.

The introduction of some VI-friendly strategies would have immediate impact (eg: providing all pupils with the same resource to avoid identifying a VIP as different). The influence of others might develop over time (eg: social interactions). Therefore the choice of timespan for the research needed to address the ability to make judgments on the long-term durability of a strategy. However, the ease or difficulty in maintaining a strategy is arguably a

reflection on its impact. Further, there might be issues of maturation. Some social change in younger children could be attributable to growing up over the period of the study, inculturation into the school system or settling into their new class.

The pilot study suggested that one school term provided a good balance between all these considerations. The timeline adopted is shown in figure 5.1

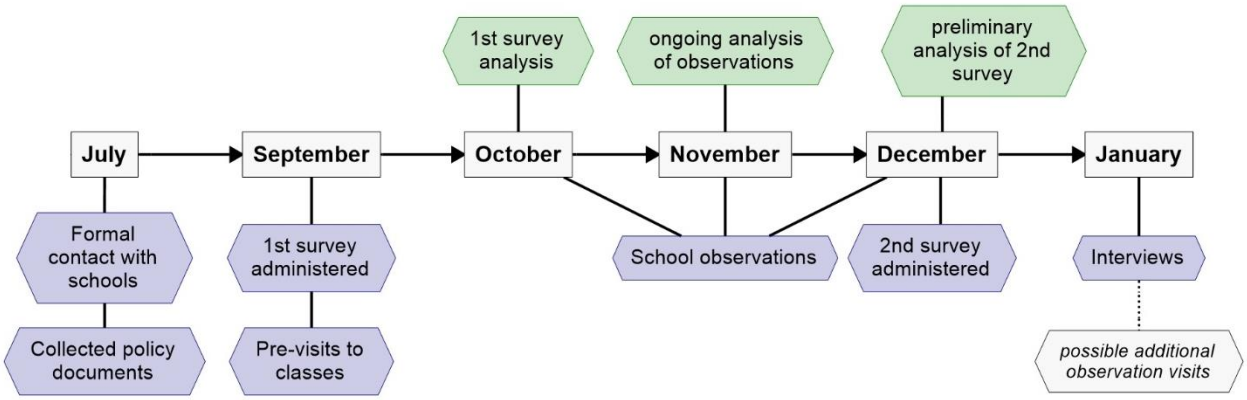


Figure 5.1 Timeline of data collection

5.5.2 Online surveys

After obtaining ethical consent, two online surveys (Appendices 1 and 2) were administered to all teachers new to working with a VIP and their linked support staff. The initial survey sought to establish their existing experience of and skill in working with VIPs and their perspectives of the influence of inclusion of a VIP. A second survey (Appendices 3 and 4) was administered at the end of the research period to the same staff in order to determine any changes of practice and perspectives having worked with a VIP.

The survey was provided online for the convenience of respondents as they could complete it at any time and on any device. It can be argued that this allows for greater participant comfort than an interview situation for taking time to reflect and give more thoughtful answers. However, there was no control over when the survey might be completed, potentially affecting the trustworthiness of responses (Robson & McCartan, 2016). For

example, respondents might have a different perspective on school issues if completing the survey at home or at the weekend, on a PC at their desk or on a mobile device amid the distractions of a railway carriage. Nevertheless it was unlikely that it was completed by someone other than the target subject given that it was sent to a school email address. The online format provided an additional reassurance over anonymity of responses, which might better encourage the expression of concerns, insecurities or dissatisfactions, thereby enhancing the trustworthiness of such data (Fowler, 2014).

The impersonal nature of the online format removed any researcher effects on trustworthiness with respect to how questions were interpreted or answered (Fink, 2003). Nevertheless, how participants answered some questions might be influenced by knowledge of other questions (Kumar, 2014). In recognition of the difficulty of measuring attitudes without alluding to them in the first place, the options provided for tick box/Likert scale responses arguably served as prompts for thinking in supplementary open-ended comments boxes, where participants could provide additional information to explain an answer (eg: to changes they anticipated in resources, lesson activities, pedagogy, classroom management, their own skills). Questions asking for open-ended comments (eg: abilities or skills staff considered a VIP might have; difficulties a VIP might have in the school) were included to better reveal any stereotypes or pre-judgments. Comments boxes also allowed for unanticipated responses, important given the exploratory nature of the research and lack of previous studies upon which to draw (Fink, 2003).

A brief clarification of the term VI was given to support commonality in respondents' frames of reference (ie: that VIP was not taken to include any pupil who wears spectacles). Care was taken in both the wording and ordering of questions to minimise prejudicing respondents against VIPs or putting thoughts into their heads regarding potential issues (eg: reference to *changes to* rather than *increased* workload). A response of 'negligible' was an option provided when asking about changes respondents might need to make, as they might

be disinclined to say ‘none’ if it made them appear unwilling to make changes or if it suggested ignorance of issues.

5.5.3 Interviews

Interviews with staff interrogated further the themes and issues arising from survey responses. They were conducted at a time and location of each participant’s choosing. A degree of rapport had already been established through informal conversations during observation visits. This was supportive of the view that interviews are co-constructed by the interviewer and interviewee (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009) and helped overcome any passivity, which would render the interview little different to a questionnaire (Silverman, 2011). Arguably, however, the artificiality of an interview situation cannot be removed completely without risking a reduction in the robustness of the data gathered.

A semi-structured format (Appendix 5) was therefore chosen, having the potential for producing rich data and a better understanding of what participants thought important than a highly structured question schedule (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009) and having the potential to examine how and why participants framed their ideas and made connections between values, events and opinions (Mears, 2017; Seidman, 2019). It was possible to ask for clarifications and examples, to check inconsistencies and contradictions and to seek opinions. It provided the opportunity to gather data that might have seemed too trivial or been too difficult to express in a written survey comment.

A flexible format was better suited to responding to contextual factors that might affect mood, such as the interview taking place at the end of a tiring day or if the participant had just been involved in a particularly successful or disappointing lesson. The pilot study helped highlight the potential for revealing new insights if respondents digressed or interpreted questions in an unanticipated way, which an inflexible question schedule would not allow for. Reflections during the course of the interview might constitute a source of

participant analysis (Hammersley, 2013b), and a semi-structured format could respond to this without losing the focus of the interview entirely.

My insider position (from having spent time in class and/or from my QTVI status) could reveal sources of bias, rather than believing that as an outsider I could nullify them. Researcher inferences could be an indirect source of evidence on attitudes and perspectives (Hammersley, 2013b). Equally, if participants felt uncomfortable reflecting on an issue, a light-touch approach could be used, thereby introducing a degree of interpretation on the researcher's part as to which areas to minimise or avoid. I was also able to tailor the language of questions to match participants, such as experienced teachers well-versed in educational discourse or those new to working in schools. As a lone researcher, I could be reasonably confident that I would be covering the same ground with all participants and that the intention behind questions remained the same.

Nevertheless, criticisms of interviews as being individualistic and focused on thoughts rather than being embedded in social interactions (Kvale, 2007) raise additional considerations of trustworthiness. Arguably, in all qualitative research validity is a matter of the degree to which information is reliable and the degree to which an individual's experience is typical of the time and place (Silverman, 2017), significant here as an interview is a fixed-point measure. Therefore it was important to be able to compare interview responses with data derived from classroom observations.

5.5.4 Lesson observations

Lesson observations were planned in order to follow up and observe in action themes from surveys and the literature, with an iterative process helping to build towards the teacher interviews (Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011). Themes included the appropriateness and influence of any VI-specific strategies on other pupils, conceptualisations and re-conceptualisations of the role of the teacher and LSA, adult-pupil and pupil-pupil interactions and the deployment and role of specialist and support staff.

Having established a relationship with settings through pre-visits, many teachers in Tadfield Secondary School expressed a willingness to have me in class at any times of my choosing. However, formal observation data were only gathered from the five teachers who had given express written consent. For Burwood and Milburn schools, two iterations were agreed, each comprising a Wednesday and Friday pairing. For Tadfield secondary, visits were planned on 6 days spread across three weeks. Schools were visited sequentially to better allow deep reflection on broader contextual and social considerations within each setting before visiting the next, though being mindful of *observer drift* (how work in one setting might influence how I approached the next). However, within Tadfield Secondary, observations were made across different teachers and subject areas on the same day. Visits were scheduled for whole- or half-day sessions to allow familiarity and trust to develop between researcher, staff and pupils. In Tadfield school timings were guided by the school timetable and the aim to observe each teacher and VIP equally. In the KS2 classes, two cycles of observation and reflection/writing-up of notes were conducted on each visit, each observation comprising a single topic/teaching session (typically 45 minute duration). The remaining time in situ was used to enrich my reflections or pursue themes arising with additional time in class and/or through conversations with staff.

Given the exploratory nature of the research and the need to keep an open eye for unexpected events, it was arguably not desirable to approach any observation with a pre-determined checklist of things I expected to find. As there was limited literature on which to base such a list there was a danger of subjectivity, reflecting the assertion that 'we all have a tendency to see what we are looking for and to look for only what we know about' (Fawcett, 2009, p. 17). A checklist might aid focus but it might not be sufficiently responsive to actual events (Wragg, 1999). Arguably it was not possible to have a pre-prepared list that would cover everything that might occur. Therefore a 'nudge sheet' of possible themes was prepared (Appendix 6).

The rationale for conducting observations was to build up a picture, to nuances of social life of classrooms and the meanings that actors give. Therefore a note-taking pro-forma was used (Appendix 7) rather than a rigid checklist or time-on-task tool. Individuals will have different responses to the same lesson, some not always intended by the teacher, so observations needed to be alert to all learning opportunities and outcomes. It was important to be able to identify the interesting and salient but also what might be missing. Equally, it was important to be alert to the danger of focusing on the new and the different whilst neglecting the expected and the routine (Silverman, 2017). Non-impact and the absence of changes would be as noteworthy as changes, for example, in indicating that the VIP had not reduced or restricted classroom activities. The frequency of instances of an event or use of a strategy might or might not prove to be significant. The same would be true for time spent on a task.

An observer may be passive (sit in, do nothing), active (do what others do) or a complete and natural participant, such as working with pupils in the manner of a LSA (Blatchford & Webster, 2018). A detached observer might misinterpret the unfamiliar or find it difficult to look beneath the surface of a situation: an insider might find it difficult to detach themselves from their own beliefs derived from situations that resonate with prior experience or understandings (Wragg, 1999).

Sensitivity to the setting and to the moment needed to be shown, balancing distance and proximity in order to preserve objectivity (Braitch, 2018). Therefore, it proved necessary to move between roles. As a lone researcher, I believe this did not greatly affect the credibility of findings. However, being a lone researcher created an inevitable degree of selectivity as all actions occurred in real time and real contexts. It was also important to consider the degree to which any researcher presence or participation might affect a situation (Wragg, 1999). Arguably any such influence would be lessened through familiarity gained through repeated visits to the same teacher or group of pupils.

Judgments based on single observations can only ever be a snapshot (Tilstone, 1998), open to variation because of mood (observer or target), context or type of activity, for example. Therefore discussions of observations, important for comparisons between findings, took place as soon after the event as practicable. Adults' views not only added to the richness of data but provided clarification of context and motivations to better support interpretations of observations made. For example, I might not realise why the teacher has chosen a given course of action if I have not seen the previous day's lesson or the interactions at break time. Importantly, such discussions played a vital role in the ethical provision of a 'right to reply'.

5.5.5 Policy and curriculum documents

School mission statements and SEN policies were consulted at the pre-visit stage, before any formal data collection, to provide an indication of the ethos in which teachers would be working, additional to impressions which might be sourced from conversations with staff and my own observations. The most recent OFSTED reports for each school were examined for any references to SEND provision or inclusive practice in case this might give an indication as to school development priorities. Policy documents were not considered neutral as, by definition, they were written to reflect a school's aims and vision. Themes in OFSTED reports would have been dictated by the inspection framework and handbook.

Policies and OFSTED reports were not analysed by detailed coding given that the study would not be looking at how well teachers enacted school policy but rather at how they were addressing VI inclusion, it was not planned to use policy documents as any kind of filter through which to analyse staff responses in interviews or surveys. The research was intending to compare themes, not settings, remembering that schools were not the cases for the study (see 5.2). Each policy would be enacted differently in the three school contexts. Further, understanding how a policy had been developed would be speculative as it was beyond the scope of study to go seek out the authors and determine their decision-making processes.

Schemes of work and topic plans were examined to determine the extent to which they detailed any differentiation of content. Burwood and Milburn schools each used a common planning template for all year groups and subjects. Tadfield had no standard pro forma across all subjects. All required teachers to note how differentiation would be addressed but none mentioned or required SEN-specific annotations. Schemes of work for all three schools were objective based and, with the exception of Tadfield Science, not task-specific. In all three schools there was no requirement for teachers' planning for any given lesson to be written as a formal lesson plan or kept on file. Therefore I did not ask to see examples as this may have created additional work for staff in order to make planning understandable by another person. Instead, issues linked to planning would be pursued in interview.

5.6 Data analysis

All survey, observation and interview data were analysed inductively. As previously noted, there is little research or empirical evidence in this field. Therefore, analysis progressed outwards from each instrumental case, moving from observations to ideas that could be later developed into conceptual categories. To support researcher objectivity and open-mindedness and the robustness of data analysis procedures I referred frequently to two critical friends with background in education and academia.

5.6.1 Coding Process

Survey comments and interview transcripts were first analysed by open coding, valuing spontaneous reactions to the data which might better allow ideas to emerge that did not stem from assumptions and perspectives rooted in my professional background or literature searches. Similarly, comments framed in positive/negative terms and descriptions or observations framed subjectively or objectively arguably make the implicit more visible.

Comments were then coded for gerunds to better help analysis to start from participants' perspectives and aligning with the view that this 'moves [analysis] beyond concrete statements by focusing on actions rather than themes' (Charmaz, 2014, p. 111) and that it has the potential to enable the uncovering of implicit meanings (Carmichael & Cunningham, 2017). Coding for gerunds might better reveal affective aspects of addressing VI inclusion and give insight into participants' identity, values, judgments and how these might conflict with their current practice. It was hoped that gerunds might also give indications of participants' feelings of agency and identity as they approached the teaching of a VIP. This was important given that strength of feeling behind responses to changes would have significance for findings and recommendations.

Comparison of gerunds between the initial survey and end-of-study surveys and interviews might reveal aspects of affective change or the emergence of new attitudes and conceptualisations (Saldana, 2016). This would support any assertions made regarding developments in teachers' personal self-concept, confidence in working with a VIP and how they conceptualised SEND and inclusion.

In both processes, code words were 'translated' using a thesaurus to look for alternative shades of meaning that my own vocabulary might not have allowed for and to potentially highlight any bias in my use of language (see Appendix 8).). Repeated readings might also address the recognition that my own mood and feelings might affect how I determined codes. Comments were re-read until no new codes were forthcoming. A second iteration was conducted after a two-week gap to afford a degree of fresh perspective. At this stage, reference was made to codes from the analysis of pilot study data in case these had any additional themes which might be of value (figure 5.2).

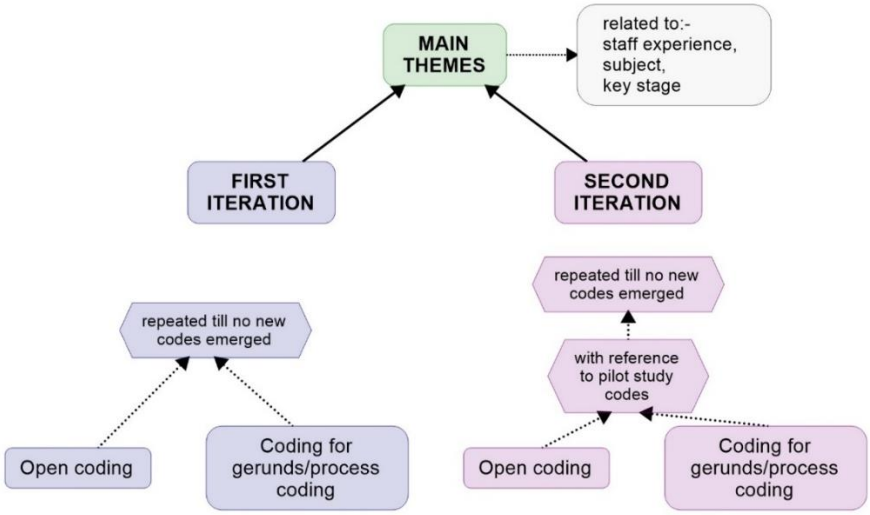


Figure 5.2 Coding process

Categories of open coding were derived primarily from the data, although informed by themes from the literature. The surveys generated codes that were relatively straightforward to place in discrete themes (see Appendices 11 and 12). Open coding of teacher interviews produced codes (n=119) that were less easy to separate from subsidiary/linked themes (n=49 instances) as shown in Appendix 15. In determining categories for gerund codes, care was taken to consider the gerund in the context of the action it had been derived from in order to preserve or enhance its meaning (eg: positive or negative connotation). As noted in the analysis of the nature of teacher changes (Chapter 8 opening paragraphs), participation in interview had been a trigger for reflection and resolving thoughts/feelings and so analysis should aim to preserve this.

Themes emerging were then aligned to career experience and to the key stage or subject being taught to see if any significant patterns or trends emerged. Throughout, attention was paid not only to what was said but what was unsaid (ie: any significance of omission) and to tacit or implicit meanings which might, in turn, reflect participants' assumptions. These codes and themes are discussed in detail in Chapter 6.

5.6.2 Analytical stages for each data collection tool

Data from each source were compared to inform subsequent stages of data gathering, so that any gaps or disparities in the data might be addressed (see figure 5.3)

Initial surveys were analysed in detail when it was determined that no more responses would be forthcoming from the full breadth of settings contacted. In keeping with the flexibility of the research design, end-of-study surveys were first read and compared to the initial surveys in order to better prepare for the subsequent interviews and analysed in depth later. Data from all sources were analysed to better inform interview question schedules.

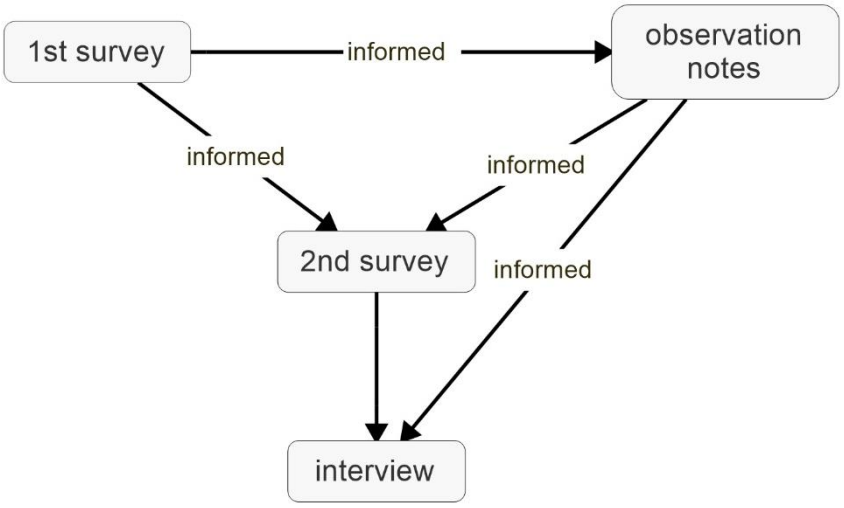


Figure 5.3 Links between data sources

Interviews were transcribed by the researcher within 24 hours of them taking place to ensure that the intent behind comments was better remembered. Transcripts were emailed to participants on completion to promote trust and so that they could make any right-of-reply requests for corrections while they still remembered what they had said. They were, however, able to respond at leisure, thereby offering them time to reflect on what they had said and request that a comment be retracted. Transcription is widely regarded as a fruitful first stage of analysis (ia: Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009) and so thoughts occurring during the transcription

process were added to notes made during or soon after the interview and included as analytic ideas.

Lesson observation notes were first analysed to determine if refinements were needed for the second survey and schedule of interview questions. They were later analysed to look for evidence to confirm or refute assertions made in survey and interview responses, opening up the possibility of seeking additional evidence through further observation visits. Observation notes, by their very nature, represented my framing of events. Therefore coding of these was principally by event rather than line-by-line, still taking an open approach but addressing any in vivo comments documented more closely. Notes from post-observation discussions with staff were coded in the same way as interview responses.

5.7 Rigour, internal validity and transferability

Considerations of trustworthiness and dependability of data collection tools have been thread throughout this chapter. This section will consider broader issues connected to validity and researcher involvement in case study.

It is argued that for case study, validity is not a matter of 'getting it right' as getting it contoured and nuanced (Woods, 2006); that the particularity of the case and the interpretation and analysis is of greater significance (Thomas, 2016). Generalisation in case study is limited because of the variability and unpredictability of the social world. Fluidity of understanding through abduction (judgments of best explanation given the circumstances) arguably eclipses induction (the inference that if something happened in certain conditions it will happen again). Logical connections thus outweigh statistical ones (Stake, 1995). It follows that case study findings will be *a* truth rather than *the* truth (Hayes, 2006), but this is not to diminish their value. This thesis is not presenting cases to represent the process of VIP inclusion, rather to help in understanding the issues connected with that process.

5.7.1 Internal validity and credibility

Internal validity refers to the credibility of findings and the degree to which they are supported by evidence and judged against rival explanations. Research within school settings raised several factors in relation to credibility beyond the transparency and clarity of research conduct and systematic analysis of data.

Data were overwhelmingly rooted in perception and evaluation (eg: what constitutes pupil engagement or teacher change; teachers' self-declarations of knowledge or actions). Additionally, there may have been complex links between a pupil's 'dowry' of characteristics, experiences and prior attainment which must be set against contextual factors within a setting. Analytical judgements therefore needed to be evaluated against rival explanations through aiming to be reflective (on practices) and reflexive (on my perceptions and feelings and any extent to which my presence might affect a situation) in order to recognise and address any potential for bias. Consistency of judgments by a lone researcher can be affected by the co-constructed meanings developed between researcher and participants as the research develops. However, given the research aims, I believe credibility is more significant than reliability.

5.7.2 Ecological validity and transferability

A criticism often levelled against case study is the difficulty of generalising findings. There can be what Bassey (1999) terms fuzzy generalisation; a generalisation that is probable, not necessarily true in every case but equally not likely to be untrue in every case. This study could arguably be situated in all of the four main forms of generalisation described by Simons (2015): process generalisation (able to recognise/translate key processes that led to outcomes), concept generalisation (able to find concepts that have similar outcomes in one's own situation), and naturalistic or situated generalisation (whereby any significance of findings is enhanced the more one identifies with the places and events described).

Flyvbjerg (2001, 2011) argues that the force of example is underestimated in considerations of generalisation. Cases were not chosen as typical examples, so issues of

external validity have little significance. However, people will interpret ideas and ascribe value to them in the light of their current situation and understanding. Therefore, generalisation-in-the-eye-of-the-reader will only have transferability if there are thick descriptions of places and practices to allow the reader to draw on their tacit knowledge of their own context, whether this be someone school-based, considering the immediate meaning in their local context, or a policy-maker linking findings to the bigger picture.

As an overwhelmingly qualitative study, this research cannot claim comprehensive external validity as it cannot be proved conclusively that findings will be applicable in other contexts. However, any findings that are broadly similar in heterogeneous settings should help transference. Generalising even within a setting could not be guaranteed as I worked with a low number of participants who were largely self-selecting rather than representative. Therefore, ecological validity or transferability (synonymous with external validity in more quantitative methods) is more appropriate here, being the extent to which research approximates the real world. As discussed above, it was important for the research question that findings could be transferred to settings with similar characteristics and populations.

Given that inclusion is a process and educational settings a complex web of human interactions, the systematic replication of strategies or ideas from one context may not necessarily replicate success in another. The research activities could only ever get a snapshot of the settings and actors. Further, the context was always subjective, either documented first-hand by me or reported second-hand by someone telling me what they did last lesson or last week.

Of greatest significance, caution must be exercised in declaring that any inclusive strategy has a stated effect. Changes through VI inclusion may not necessarily improve the performance of others since children are differently affected by their schools and life experiences (Harris, 1998). Subjects have other experiences during the period of the study.

There may, for example, be some changes in the Y3 class due to pupil maturation whereas this might be less significant with older pupils in the KS3 classes.

5.7.3 Researcher involvement

The research question is rooted in my professional background and role as a QTVI and practising school teacher. It can be questioned whether an insider can ever be credible and objective (eg: Robson & McCartan, 2016) but the counter argument is that an outsider will be ineffective if research is seeking change. Arguably one cannot be objective unless one can identify and acknowledge the subjective, for which the researcher must be rigorously self-critical in order to expose any biases. We have all sorts of cultural practices, beliefs and norms that could be false. Our frameworks of how the world is are built from our own life histories and contexts (Pring, 2015). Researcher proximity to and participation within a situation should support a greater depth of understanding and generate shared knowledge, which could challenge my preconceptions as much as confirm them (Flyvbjerg, 2004). Careful attention to small details, arguably more difficult to identify as a detached observer, should result in more credible, dependable and representative data. A naturalistic approach is especially valuable for non-verbal interactions (McKernan, 1996), here studying how VIPs interact with fully-sighted others.

An inside researcher may be more alert to mitigating factors of an event or perception but may conversely find it harder to determine where to draw the line when trying to account for underlying motivations. What the insider finds interesting may not be significant, and vice versa. Moreover, they are arguably more likely to develop changes of understanding and perspective during the research process. Researcher reflexivity, as a lone researcher, was especially important. Justifications for choices must be explicit, detailing appropriateness and my position within the choice (ie: interests, motivations, values). This would support the necessary re-calibration of researcher focus and open-mindedness. Reference to my two *critical friends* was supportive here.

Information and consent letters openly stated my teaching career experience and my status as a QTVI. This aligns with the view that '[Y]ou will only bias [participants] if you say what answers or results you expect to find. Telling them your purpose is part of your openness, much of your identity, and it may be helpful.' (Gillham, 2000, p. 53).

5.8 Ethical issues

Full ethical approval was obtained from the university Ethics Committee for all activities connected to the pilot and main studies.

5.8.1 Ethical issues arising from research activities

In all activities care was taken to present a construct of VI in as neutral a way as possible. Survey and interview questions, for example, were ordered to encourage reflection on positive aspects of working with a VIP before asking about any difficulties or perceived negatives. Nevertheless, it was important to recognise that, for staff, being part of the research might raise thoughts not previously confronted, especially given the low incidence of VI and therefore the lack of exposure and experience. Participation could generate reflections on weaknesses, leading them to make changes during the research process. Interviews and conversations might expose sensitivities or be viewed by participants as an opportunity to offload dissatisfactions, though equally participants might be keen to cover up perceived weaknesses. The aim throughout was to develop an 'authentic research relationship' with all participants (Harcourt & Conroy, 2011, p. 49).

Pupils were overwhelmingly passive participants, 'part of the context, but…not themselves…the focus of that research' (BERA, 2018, p. 6). Nevertheless, their comfort in having an additional adult in the classroom (which could, in turn, influence the actions of school staff) needed to be addressed before any meaningful observation notes could be made,

and so that any confusion over roles, power relations or duty of care could be minimised (Harcourt & Sargeant, 2012).

The terms *blind* and *visually impaired* were avoided in the hearing of pupils. Youngsters with a VI might not yet know or understand that they have an impairment (as their sight is normal for them) or not be fully aware of the extent that their visual perception is different to their peers. Further, I did not want to prejudice other pupils or make them think VI was something other than ordinary.

5.8.2 My own status

As someone with specialised expertise in VI, I was alert to ethical issues over my position and role as a researcher, especially as the setting would know that I was a QTVI. If I observed good practice it was arguably unethical not to share it. If I observed something that was not being done correctly or that could be improved to better support a VIP it was arguably unethical not to advise. I believed this would not be interfering with the research process given that, for practical aspects of change, the research aims were to uncover influence, not the origins, of strategies. However, any discussions arising from formal research activities paid due regard to any challenging of a participant's genuine beliefs in the soundness of their practice and any constraints or tensions originating from a setting's norms of practice.

5.8.3 Ethical issues in obtaining informed consent

Given the exploratory nature of the research and the situated judgments that would be made, informed consent was viewed as an ongoing process rather than a one-off procedure prior to commencing research. This was also important if I was going to use informal comments made over coffee or in conversation with youngsters.

Consent was requested from Headteachers, teachers and LSAs, pupils (in an age-appropriate manner) and from parents/carers (see Appendix 18). Information letters were

phrased in general terms to avoid generating any negative prejudice against the presence of a VIP. Importantly, with the parent letter, I did not want to suggest that the presence of a VIP would create differences or difficulties in their child's class, nor to make the parents of the VIP feel that their child would be creating problems. Therefore the phrase 'individual learning needs' was used rather than VIP. School staff were asked to administer pupil consent forms to reduce the power imbalance likely to occur if the researcher was the person asking. A script was provided (Appendix 19) so that school staff could explain the project to pupils in a consistent manner.

The need for parental consent for my presence in the classroom was discussed with the Head of each setting as gatekeeper. In alignment with BERA guidelines that 'opt-in or opt-out procedures of gaining consent could be considered, as appropriate for the context' (BERA, 2018), it was Heads who made the decision as to whether parental consent should be opt-out or opt-in. An opt-out position could be justified as the research would be for the benefit of pupils in the setting as well as for the wider public good and because no child would be required to do anything different to what they would normally be doing in lessons. Further, no data would identify a particular child and all pupils would have been informed about the project in an age-appropriate manner. In all three school the Headteachers chose not to administer the pupil or parental consent request.

The pilot study enabled an indication of the time involved in completing surveys and participating in interviews to be included in information letters given to Headteachers, teachers and LSAs, supportive of the consideration that research activities should pay due regard to additional participant workload (BERA, 2018).

5.8.4 Ethical issues for the VIPs

Informed consent and the right to withdraw, vital for all participants, was planned to be more explicitly explained to the VIP. For example, a blind pupil may not have understood concepts related to data gathering methods (eg: what constitutes secure computer storage).

Care was taken that a VIP did not feel they were the subject of interest nor under any pressure to participate because they were the lone exemplar in their setting, nor that they would be made to feel a representative of the VI community. Clarification of their relationship with the researcher was also an ongoing consideration, not least because their opportunities to interact with a VI-specialist might be limited such that they enjoyed having someone understanding to talk to. Clarity of role and of the end-point of the research process was carefully explained to all youngsters in this event and no promises made as to any follow-up or possible impact.

5.8.5 Ethics in reporting findings

In consideration of the low-incidence of VI, care was taken to maintain anonymity with small or lone examples within settings and over the model of VIP that the analysis would be presenting, given that there is a responsibility to represent VIPs fairly.

5.8 Summary

This chapter has explained the positioning of this exploratory research within an over-arching interpretivist paradigm and case study design frame and has justified the rationale for using an inductive approach. It has shown the value of rich, contextualised data from a breadth of sources and reflecting a plurality of voices in addressing the research questions and in developing co-constructed knowledge and understanding of teaching and learning and the complex relationships between SEN and inclusion. The following three chapters further elaborate on the decision-making processes involved in data collection and analysis in parallel with the presentation of the research findings.

CHAPTER 6 School Contexts and First Survey

This short chapter presents findings on the nature of inclusive provision in the three settings used in the main study and the changes anticipated by staff participating in the research. It thus has a central function in providing a baseline position for analysis and comparison of findings. The chapter describes the overarching school policy contexts for subsequent analysis of any changes to practice and then presents the findings of the first survey, detailing staff preconceptions, knowledge and confidence in addressing the inclusion of a VIP as stated at the start of the study. These data are being considered in a separate chapter in order to provide clarity in articulating the points of conjecture that were used to inform the refining of the subsequent data collection activities.

6.1 Contexts for teaching and learning in the case study schools

6.1.1 School contexts

Table 6.1 shows the profile of each school and the teachers whose practice lies at the heart of the study, having been observed in class and interviewed. The three schools were all LA maintained schools. As such the LA made the final decisions on pupil placement and could override any refusal on the part of a Headteacher to accept a given pupil (UK Government, 2020b). However, there was no suggestion that any of the schools has expressed resistance to accepting a VIP on roll. Pupil placement decisions had been made prior to the start of the research, which might account for why teachers did not comment on the suitability of the VIP's placement but rather spoke in terms of anxieties connected to practicalities of addressing a fait accompli. Nevertheless, no teacher expressed outright negativity or

resistance, nor that they felt under pressure to address inclusion in VIP terms, only concerns on how best to teach the VIP.

SETTING	TEACHER (n = years' experience)	PUPILS IN STUDY	NUMBER OF VISITS
BURWOOD PRIMARY SCHOOL			
350 pupils 2 form entry urban 11% pupil premium OFSTED rated *Good*	Valerie (8) VI-specific LSA support throughout the day.	Y3 class (27 pupils) 1 VI pupil - Tom (low vision)	n = 4 half days
MILBURN JUNIOR SCHOOL			
340 pupils 3 form entry urban 8% pupil premium OFSTED rated *Requires Improvement*	Angela (NQT) *not interviewed due to personal circumstances* VI-specific LSA support (mornings only)	Y5 class (30 pupils) 1 VI pupil - Millie (low vision)	n = 4 half days
TADFIELD SECONDARY SCHOOL			
800 pupils Y7-Y11 5 form entry urban 14% pupil premium Ability grouping for English, Maths and Science. Other subjects taught in mixed-ability tutor groups. OFSTED rated *Good*	Caroline (6-10) English Rachael (6-10) Science Esme (11-20) Humanities Paula (11-20) Maths/IT Jo (20+) English/RE Support from a team of 4 LSAs, 2 of whom were learning braille.	Y7 & 2 x Y8 classes class size 25-28 pupils Y7 - Becky (blind) Y8 - Liam (blind) Y8 - Emma (low vision)	n = 4 n = 4 n = 3 n = 4 n = 3
All identifying details have been changed			

Table 6.1 Settings and participants

All the VIPs in the study were on the caseload of their LA's Sensory Service and had a recommendation for ongoing specialist support in their EHCPs. Burwood and Milburn schools were visited once a month by a QTVI who observed Tom and Millie in class, worked

with them on VI-specific skills according to perceived needs and liaised informally with the class teacher, LSA and, when possible, the SENCO. In Tadfield School, the blind pupils received a fortnightly visit and Emma a half-termly monitoring visit. The QTVI observed them in a single lesson (varying the subject on each visit), gave Liam and Becky a one-to-one braille lesson and liaised with one of the VI LSAs and, when possible, the SENCO. A Habilitation Specialist provided a mobility lesson for Becky and Liam on a fortnightly basis. This was shadowed by an LSA in order that the skills under focus could be maintained between visits. Thus any advice or information gained by Tadfield teachers came second-hand and not directly from a VI-specialist.

6.2 School policy contexts and external influences on teachers' practice

Teachers' practice does not sit in a vacuum, nor is it totally up to the individual how they will approach their role in the classroom. Those in the case study schools should be aligning with the Teachers' Standards (DfE, 2012), although half of them trained before these were introduced, so familiarity may not have been ingrained. Nevertheless school policies should have been written with these in mind. Three requirements might shape awareness or attitudes towards inclusion:

> Standard 1. *Set high expectations which inspire, motivate and challenge pupils*.
>
> Standard 2. *Promote good progress and outcomes by pupils.*
> (through awareness of pupils' capabilities and prior knowledge, and planning teaching to build on these)
>
> Standard 5. *Adapt teaching to respond to the strengths and needs of all pupils*.
> (through effective approaches, understanding of SEN and the ability to use and evaluate distinctive teaching approaches to engage and support them).

Teacher and LSA practice also sits within the context of school policies. By definition, these cannot be considered neutral, although created independently of the study as they were written to reflect a school's aims and vision. The extent to which staff align with these aspirations depends on service history. Angela, for example, had just joined Milburn as a newly-qualified teacher (NQT) and would arguably align well with Milburn's values otherwise she may not have chosen to work there. Longer serving staff may have seen their school's ethos change during their time in the school, although reasons for any teacher's decision to remain or leave will include secondary factors (eg: family and financial). SEN policies for all three settings state that 'every teacher is a teacher of every child' (Burwood) or 'every teacher is a teacher of SEN' (Milburn) and that high aspirations should be shared across all staff and not merely reside in the leadership.

> We are proud to provide a safe, stimulating and inclusive learning environment […] focus on inclusive practice and remove barriers to learning[…] ensure that all children, including children with SEN, are able to engage in all activities. (Burwood)

> We endeavour to make every effort to achieve inclusion of all pupils whilst meeting pupils' individual needs[…] Our school is an inclusive school. We aim to make all pupils feel included in all our activities. We endeavour to make all learning fully inclusive. (Milburn SEN policy)

> The aim of Tadfield School is to see that every pupil reaches their full potential […] We achieve this through the development of intellectual, social, emotional, moral, aesthetic and physical educational programmes [...] in a safe and caring, but challenging environment. It is important that any programme of activity embraces the acquisition of all these skills. (Tadfield SEN policy)

All policies acknowledge the recommended approaches of the SEND Code of Practice (DfE & DoH, 2015) (ie: *quality first teaching*, the *assess-plan-do-review* cycle). However they do not make specific reference to strategies for inclusion within their settings, nor is there any indication of the extent to which policies aim to direct the adaptation of existing

provision for an individual or to position inclusion as changing what is ordinarily available to everyone so that less personalisation is required. In Burwood Primary and Milburn Junior schools, all staff share the responsibility for identification and monitoring of pupil progress. Tadfield Secondary School delineates a hierarchy of Head of Department-class teacher-LSA. All three schools state that the SENCO role is threaded through every stage.

Teachers were also working within a climate shaped to varying degrees by matters identified by OFSTED. Burwood had a high standard to maintain:

> [There is] an unstinting drive for excellence…high aspirations… pupils' learning is analysed carefully… differentiated activities support strong progress. (Burwood OFSTED report 2019)

Similarly, Tadfield is recognised as providing good SEN provision:

> Teachers know their pupils very well and set targets that are usually of appropriate challenge. Leaders have high aspirations for [SEND] pupils.[…] In all lessons observed, learning support assistants made a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. (Tadfield OFSTED report 2017)

By contrast, OFSTED findings set a clear direction for further improvement in SEN provision at Milburn, though it was beyond the scope of this study to determine whether staff were more willing and receptive or felt under pressure to address this given that the drive was external:

> The SENCO has improved provision for pupils with SEND. Their additional needs are more accurately identified, and appropriate support put in place more quickly. However, they are not yet making consistently good progress in their learning. (Milburn OFSTED report 2019)

6.3 Analysis of the first survey

The survey sought to establish an approximate baseline position for staff attitudes towards the upcoming presence of a VIP in their class (Appendices 1 & 2). Analysis compared respondents' perceptions, feelings and attitudes against teaching experience, key stage they were teaching and/or subject being taught. No inference can be taken from the 100% response rate as respondents had already expressed an interest by dint of returning consent forms for participating in the study.

Teachers gave more expansive answers in comments boxes than did LSAs. This may be because they had the responsibility for learning in the classroom, whereas LSAs were working under teacher direction. Equally, LSAs may have had confidence because they were unaware of the underlying considerations of inclusive practices, whereas teachers could think of latent issues that might not spring to mind for LSAs.

All data gathering needed to be open to meanings people gave to events and to their understandings being liable to change as experience of VI developed. Therefore, repeated iterations of both coding processes were conducted, spaced out over a four-week period, to promote researcher reflection and saturation of codes.

6.4 Themes arising from Coding

6.4.1 First stage - Process Coding

The first analysis used gerunds as codes in order to gain a feeling of respondents perspectives, actions, feelings of agency and identity, noting that strength of feeling, rather than frequency of mention, might prove telling. Participants appeared to have a broadly neutral standpoint on the presence of a VIP in their class, with no strong or extreme feelings (eg: resistance, resentment, positivity, enthusiasm). Gerunds produced four over-arching

themes; *practical*, *reflective*, *interpersonal* and *affective* (Appendix 9 and 10). There was no correlation with experience, training or self-reports of confidence.

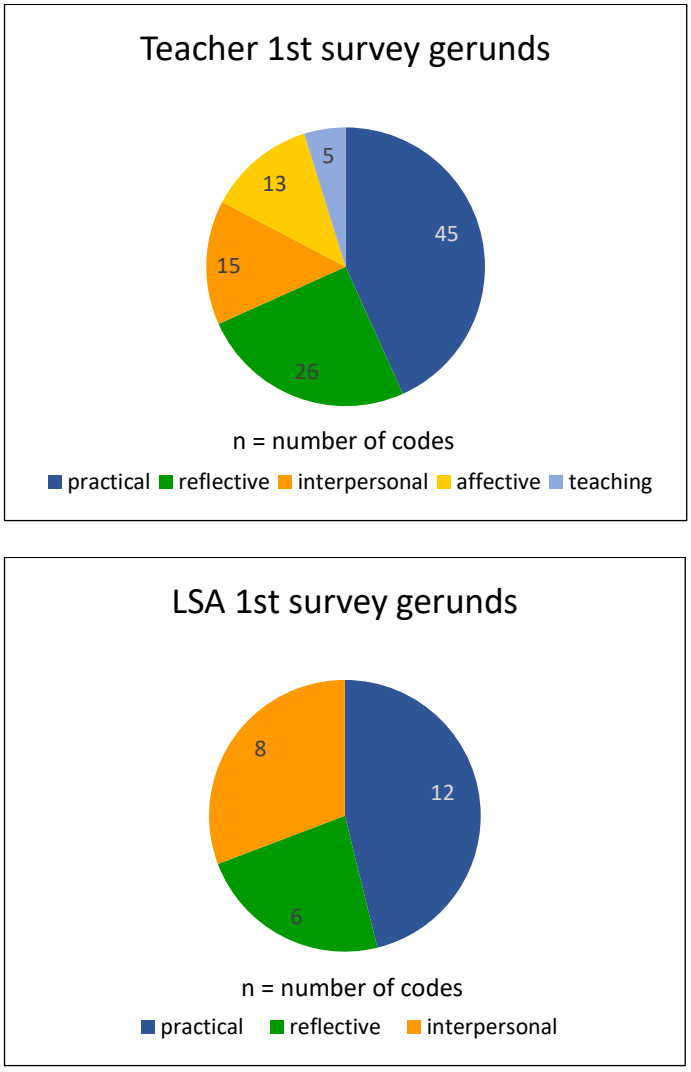


Figure 6.1 Teacher and LSA gerund codes

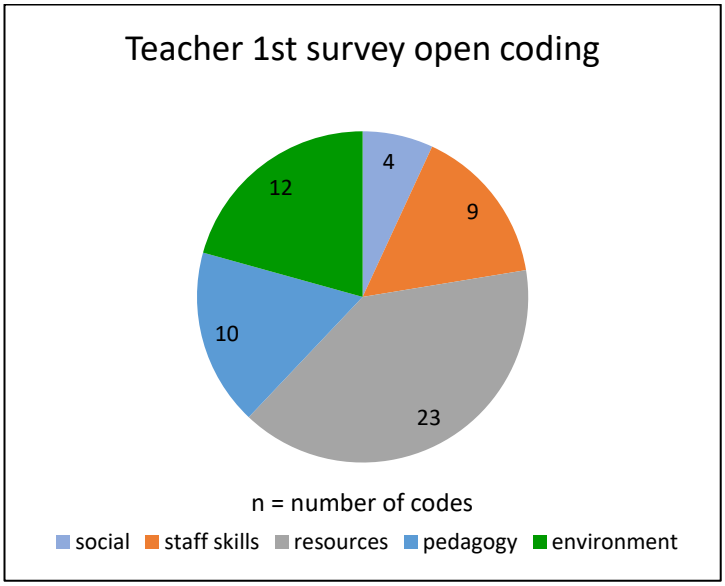
Teachers considerations were overwhelmingly practical, centred on action to change, adapt or replace aspects for the VIP (figure 6.1). The concept of *extension* (ie: that adaptations might be shared by others) at the outset here was mentioned by one teacher. LSA gerunds were broadly divided equally between practical and interpersonal/reflective concerns. This arguably reflects their different role: the teacher is in charge, the LSA is closer to the VIP; the teacher thinks in terms of the whole class, the LSA role is more aligned to individual pupils.

Reflective responses were concerned with respondents' awareness and personal learning and change. Teachers expressed an equal need for and concern over reliance on LSA support. Affective responses expressed by teachers were 'worrying' (n=4), not wishing to limit other pupils and concerns over relying on support. LSA responses created no affective gerunds, possibly because they would be able to focus wholly on the VIP and their pace of learning. By contrast, teachers would be having to familiarise themselves with up to 30 new personalities and learning profiles of a new class. LSA responses were much more concerned with being supportive and being fair.

6.4.2 Second *stage – Open coding*

The second analysis allowed concepts to emerge inductively from the data rather than imposing *a priori* codes. Teacher open coding distilled comments into five broad themes: *social, staff skills, resources, environment* and *pedagogy/teaching style* (see Appendix 11). Again, practical considerations featured highly (in 60% of comments). Social considerations may have been under-represented (mentioned in only four comments) because of ignorance of issues a VIP might encounter or, for LSAs, because they think social difficulties will not arise as they will be on hand, or simply because it was not presented as an explicit category for comment. All respondents rated their confidence in general skills (eg: classroom management) more highly than for making VI changes, unsurprising given their lack of VI experience. Similarly, a KS3 Science teacher's over-riding concerns for health and safety were to be expected.

LSA open coding generated the same categories as the survey had provided: *resources, lesson activities, support style, staff skills,* and *classroom management* (Appendix 12). Support style comprised comments pertaining to personal qualities – to be more patient, take more time and to be willing to learn from the VIP. Similarly, LSAs commented on the social aspects of their skills (to learn from the VIP, to work collaboratively). This contrasted with teachers, who focused on more practical aspects.



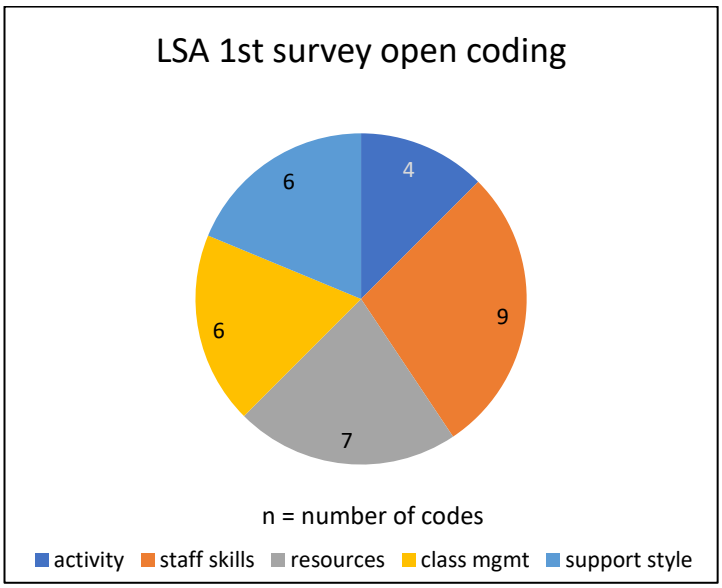


Figure 6.2 Teacher and LSA 1st survey open coding

6.5 Discussion of findings

6.5.1 Staff preconceptions of VIPs

All staff had received some VI-specific training before completing the survey (figure 6.3). Respondents shared the same preconceptions as to the skills a VIP might have (a better memory, better oracy and that their other senses, especially hearing, would be heightened) but did not consider that these would necessarily bring any cognitive advantages. Only one

respondent mentioned personal qualities ("Perseverance and determination due to the things having to be overcome every day; not being afraid to ask for help when needed.").

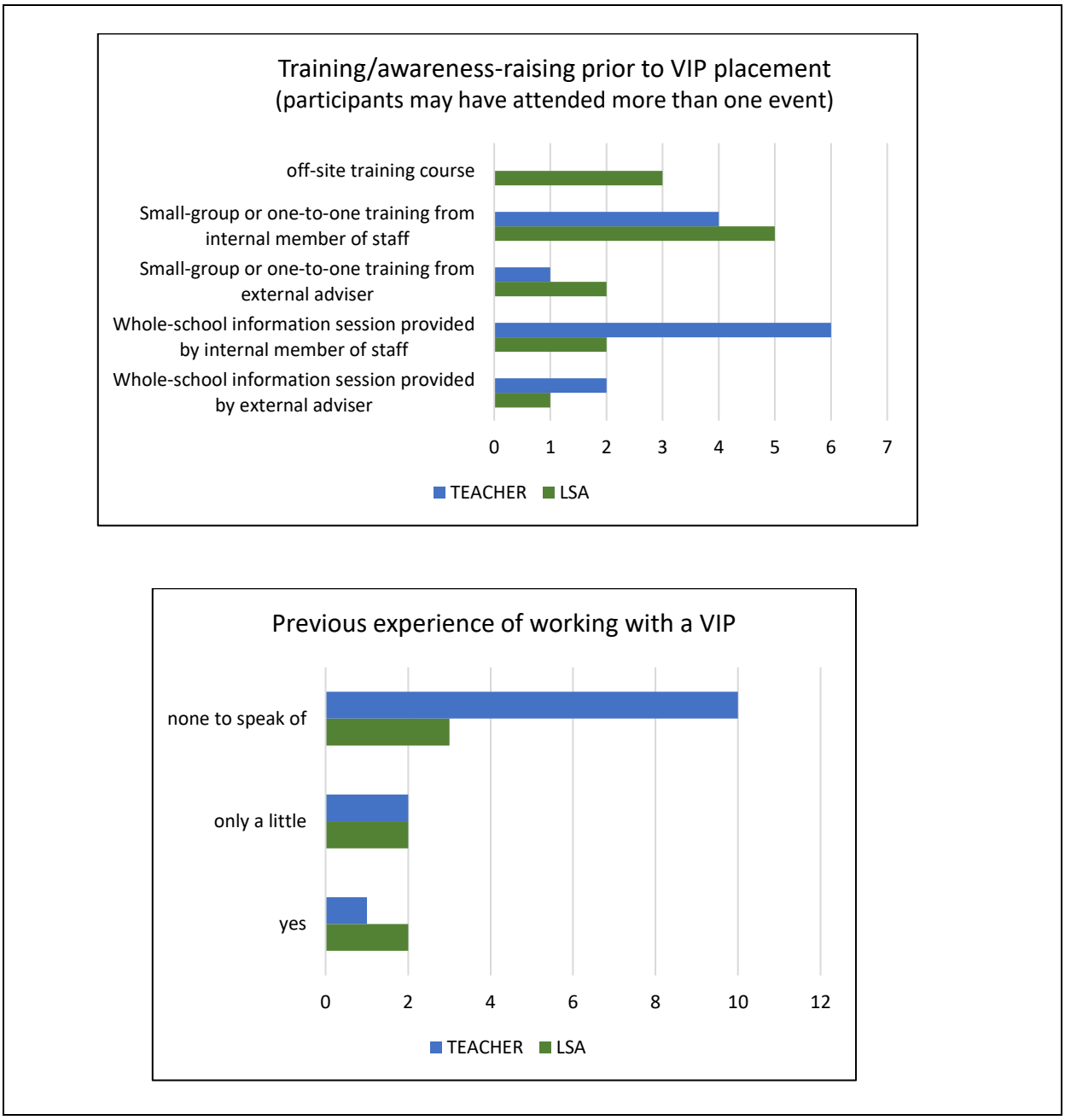


Figure 6.3 Staff VI training and prior experience

When considering potential difficulties a VIP might encounter in school, three-quarters of comments by both groups referred to practical considerations: mobility, access to resources/equipment and the need for support. Only one teacher made any reference to cognitive difficulties:

> We do a lot by discussion. However, I worry about making a reference to something she will not know anything about because she hasn't seen it to experience it. (KS3 teacher)

Three teachers made reference to potential social difficulties (making friends, peer understanding, not wanting the VIP to feel they were missing out) but only one LSA raised social concerns and these were in relation to a blind pupil. It is understandable that teachers might prioritise practical considerations, given their responsibility to ensure access to learning for all. Social considerations may have been under-represented because of ignorance of issues a VIP might encounter or, for LSAs, because they think social difficulties will not arise as they will be on hand to offer support.

6.5.2 Teacher confidence in working with VIPs (1st survey question 5)

Teacher confidence in working with a VIP stemmed from years of classroom experience rather than Key Stage being taught or any VI-specific training. Figure 6.4 offers an indicative overview: a more detailed breakdown is offered in Appendix 16. However, mid-career teachers expressed lower confidence levels. Possibly this stemmed from a greater awareness of potential complexities, better self-reflection, more honest responses or because they were aware of the low-incidence of VI and therefore considered it a significant challenge to practice. The longest-serving teachers should have the greatest hinterland of experience. By contrast, confidence expressed by less experienced teachers might be because they were still in a learning phase of their career and therefore confident that they could learn and change, were more open to challenge, were not set in their ways and not expecting to know but to grow. For them it was inevitable that much would still be new. However, expressions of confidence could be an indication of inexperience.

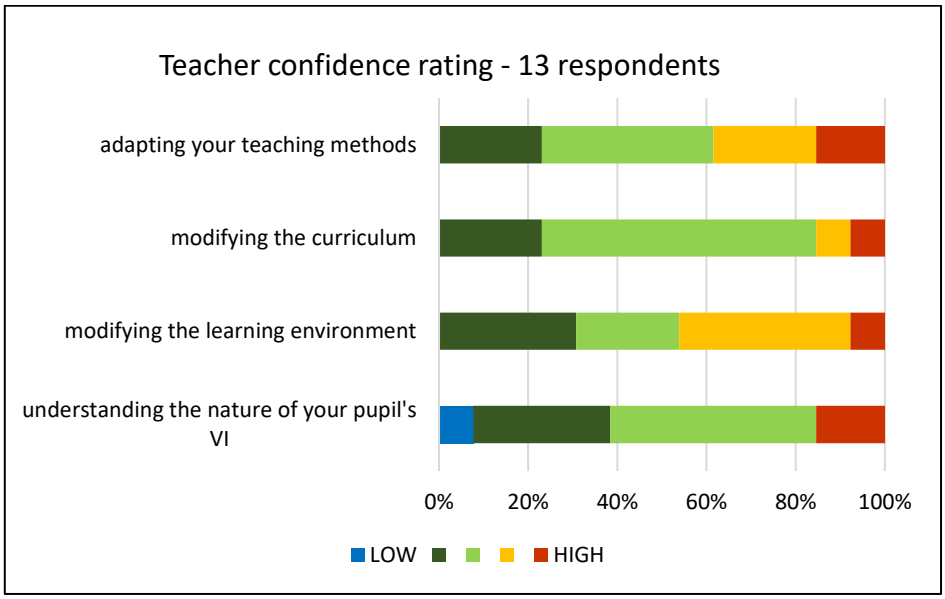
LSA confidence (figure 6.4) was higher for those who had received some training rather than being dependent on years of classroom experience, perhaps unsurprising given they had been tasked with a specific role (VI support). The high levels of confidence they

reported in adapting their support strategies arguably stems similarly from flexibility and resourcefulness being their natural way of working. LSAs reported support style and resources as the key changes required but expressed confidence in these.

> I'm sure she can do all the same things but she might need more LSA support to use equipment (KS3 LSA).

> Just to fine tune and make sure things are tailored to her needs properly. (KS2 LSA)

> If you pay attention to how they are doing then you are always able to step in and help when they need it (KS3 LSA).



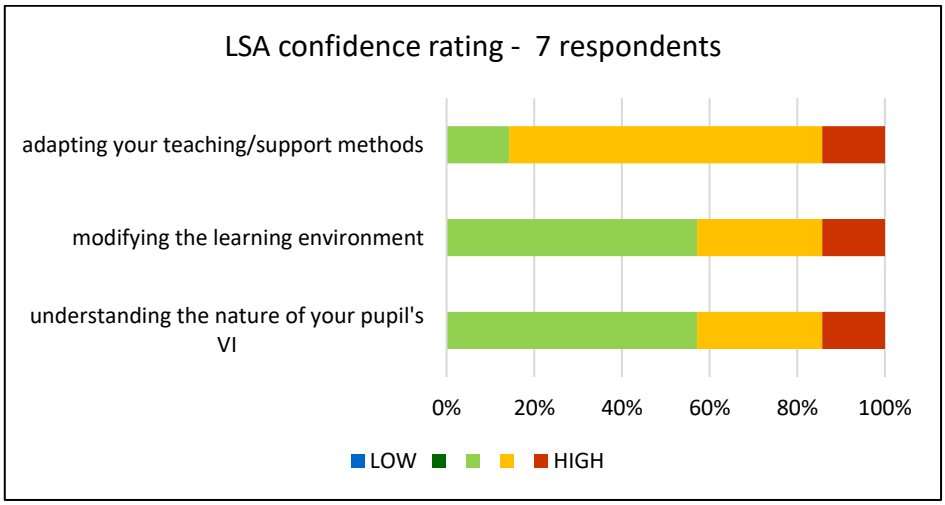


Figure 6.4 Staff confidence as expressed in 1st survey

Concerns expressed by LSAs were connected more to participation than learning; mobility, safety, accessing resources, VIPs keeping up and being independent of LSA help. Possibly this is because, in their role as one-to-one support, they believed they would be able to offer any learning and practical assistance readily in the classroom situation.

6.5.3 Anticipated changes

Suggestions of possible changes were provided on the pro forma to stimulate thinking and were not planned as analytical categories (not least because there was no empirical evidence in the literature on which to draw). Therefore the first coding iteration ignored these themes to see if anything emerged that had not been anticipated. The fact that the emergent themes do not match exactly with the question sub-topics supports the argument that respondents did not feel restricted in what they felt able to express.

Teacher responses (see Appendix 17) were overwhelmingly concerned with *how* to change, not the act of *having* to change.

> How will she access interactive games on the whiteboard? If she is relying on reading words in braille it could slow her up - e.g. when we play card games like bingo the other children use the picture clues which she can't access. (KS3 teacher)

> I usually provide a visual stimulus for a lot of starter activities. It makes a good way in for a lot of our work. If I have got to talk more for her it might become too wordy for some like ADHD or with language difficulties – the ones who need short, explicit instructions. (KS2 teacher)

Making suitable provision for a VIP must be addressed even for the most inclusion-averse if aligning with current policy (Teachers' Standards (DfE, 2012) SEND Code of Practice (DfE & DoH, 2015) and the National Curriculum (DfE, 2014a)). Nevertheless, comments leaned towards inclusivity rather than the provision of 'additional' or 'alternative', being framed as conjectural thoughts on what might be possible rather than in terms of feeling changes as a compulsion or unavoidable inevitability.

> Will need to think about colour sorting activities. Will need to include real objects rather than pictures. (KS2 teacher)

> Consideration of how to effectively conduct paired/group/class activities to enable all students to benefit equally. (KS3 teacher)

There was an equal split between adapting what is ordinarily offered and replacing activities, though it was not clear if respondents meant replacements as an additional adaptation for the VIP or for the wider group.

Many comments reflect the dilemmas of difference both in aspirational terms (offer activities that would include everyone without diluting or complicating the challenge for some) and in practical terms (how to balance an increase in preparation time against the ease of inclusion-in-action). Anticipated changes were to reduce or supplement the reliance on visual and thinking about learning through other senses.

> The use of visuals to support learning doesn't work, explaining unknown vocabulary requires a different approach, as does descriptive writing. (KS3 teacher)

KS3 teacher responses were weighted towards resources, lesson activities and their own skills, with primary teacher responses weighted towards teaching style and classroom management (figure 6.5). This may have been because of different types of activity in the secondary curriculum and the greater expectation of independence. By contrast, KS2 activities are often play-based or experiential. The difference may also be attributable to the secondary setting including two blind pupils. KS3 teachers reported little need for change to pedagogy and classroom management beyond being more aware of their use of language. Whether this stemmed from confidence or complacency, from a lack of attention to or awareness of a VIP's needs or a belief that what is beneficial to SEN youngsters is good for all, might be noted during observations or during interviews.

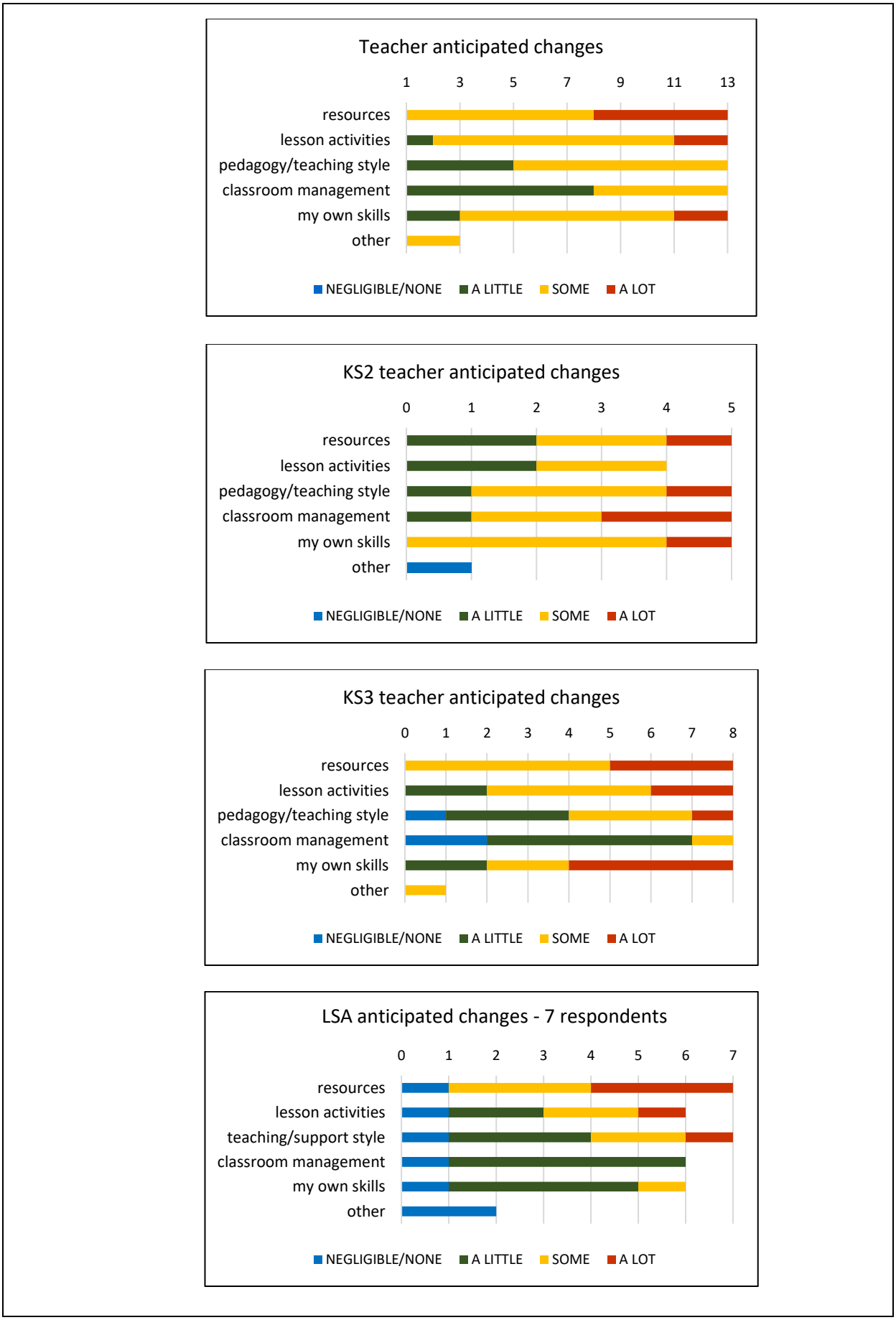


Figure 6.5 Anticipated changes as expressed in 1st survey

Anticipated changes to lesson activities and pedagogy/teaching style declined with teacher years of experience (see Appendix 17). Responses from more experienced teachers were weighted towards resources and indicated a low concern for classroom management (unsurprising as they have experience and confidence upon which to draw). Newer teachers might be more open to changes to resources they use as they are still developing ideas and less likely to have tried-and-tested favourites linked to given learning objectives.

All teacher comments indicated that their intent was to be inclusive. KS2 teachers explicitly stated that there should be equal access for all in group tasks. The short statement by a Tadfield teacher, "I will need to change demos", arguably encapsulates inclusion (*need* implies an intention not to avoid or ignore; *change* implies change for all as opposed to finding alternatives for the VIP). However, for all that responses were anonymous, it is debatable whether teachers would admit to not having the inclination to be inclusive. In doing so they would not only be positioning themselves counter to the aims of the research to which that they had volunteered to contribute but would also be counter to their schools' policies.

All teachers recognised that there would be practical challenges (figure 6.5). One commented that they were unsure if it would be possible to safely adapt Science experiments to support the observation, description and explanation of results, especially if equipment proved to be difficult to use. A Tadfield LSA stated "I'm sure [Becky - blind] can do all the same things but she might need more LSA support to use equipment." KS2 staff expressed concerns over how VIPs would access games on the Smartboard. However, there was no mention that these would not be used anymore, suggesting that teachers would not be allowing the needs of one pupil to distort provision for the rest.

6.5.4 Significance of omission

The word *include/inclusion* did not feature in any comment, nor was there mention of steps to take to positively include a VIP, only negatives to avoid (eg: slowing pace of lesson). This was despite respondents knowing from the consent letter, survey explanatory paragraph

and, for some, informal conversations, that inclusion was the focus of the research. Arguably this supports the view that their replies were honest and that they were not trying to present an ideal or enhanced image or persona.

6.6 Influence of survey analysis on subsequent data gathering

The above analysis, in combination with the pilot study, showed that the over-arching methodology remained appropriate to the data that would be available and of value. However, significant considerations which emerged in addition to those originally anticipated when planning the research were incorporated into the classroom observations and interviews:

- To what extent do teacher preconceptions of practicalities and collaboration/reliance on LSA support play out in how they include a VIP?
- Does teacher confidence depend on the skills of their LSA?
- Is the degree of confidence stated by respondents an accurate reflection of their practice? Have respondents overstated what they think they do or failed to recognise their good practice?

Gaps were revealed that would also be pursued. Little, if any, mention was made of subject-specific considerations (beyond health and safety) or types of learning activity. No mention was made of the type or severity of VI. However, respondents may have been thinking only of their own circumstances and so would not have considered the influence of, for example, a low-vision pupil if the pupil joining their class was blind.

6.7 Summary

This chapter has described the influence of policy at national and school-level on creating an inclusive climate in schools. Findings show that there is nothing inherently

restrictive in current policy for addressing VI inclusion, rather that the philosophy behind policies is supportive of VIP inclusion and can form a framework for teachers to develop their practice and mindset. The following two chapters present the empirical data from the research. They will consider the influence of addressing VI inclusion through two overarching themes: change in practical terms and in teacher conceptualisations of and attitudes towards SEN and inclusion. Observations on the degree of alignment with the three core research questions (RQ) and the sub-questions (SQ) will be threaded through these chapters.

Chapter seven will first present findings on practical aspects of change and will identify the triggers for these. Chapter eight will then address issues of teacher acceptance and response to any drivers of change and any changes there may have been to their conceptualisation of SEN and inclusion. As noted in Chapter four, it is important to recognise that change, especially attitudinal, can present as entrenchment just as much as it can represent difference. It should also be recognised that the division into practical and reflective changes is somewhat arbitrary and that there is a cyclical influence and cross-pollination from one to the other.

CHAPTER 7 Findings on practical changes in the classroom

In this chapter it will be helpful to first consider broad areas of change, namely environments, working practices and classroom management, before presenting findings on more detailed aspects of learning, teaching and social interactions. As articulated in Chapter 5 (Methodology), classrooms are dynamic places where demarcation of events and behaviour is not straightforward. Therefore, some of the distinctions may prove to be somewhat arbitrary. For example, findings concerning the aural environment could stem from considerations of teaching style as well as classroom layout; aspects of teaching style could equally be linked to working practices. Similarly, it is important to draw a distinction between what actually happened and staff perceptions. Perceptions arguably have a stronger bearing on how receptive staff were to VIPs and to inclusion, whatever the truth of the situation (as outlined in Chapters 3 and 4). If change is perceived as positive and easy to manage, staff may be more receptive: if perceived as difficult then they may not be.

7.1 Learning environments

7.1.1 Classroom layout

There was no apparent avoidance or refusal to make environmental changes at whole-school or classroom level. Some changes were as a result of recommendations by a QTVI or Habilitation Officer. This advice stemmed from the perspective of the VIP's needs and from the legal requirement to make reasonable adjustments (*Equality Act*, 2010). However, in the discussion that follows it should be remembered that it would not be in the VIP's best interests to be learning in an environment that did not reflect the low-level risks of everyday life. Teachers' own strategies appeared to be to change aspects of the classroom layout as and when the need arose, aligning with the conceptualisation of inclusion as 'a process requiring

ongoing vigilance' (Ainscow & Miles, 2008, p. 20). Arguably this was to be expected as they had no prior experience upon which to draw to anticipate potential needs.

At the end of the research period all teachers reported that they had reviewed the classroom layout. Tadfield Secondary School had undertaken a specific VI audit with a Habilitation Officer one year previously to identify any issues that might cause problems for Liam prior to his placement at the school. This had resulted in simple, once-for-all, low/no-cost modifications, such as repositioning wall-mounted rubbish bins in the corridors so that they were useful as landmarks. However, none of the KS3 teachers mentioned changing their classroom environment in readiness for their new classes. Valerie (Y3) had thought she would have to "move everything out of the way" (interview comment), but this had not proved necessary. There was no mention of making larger signs and labels, though typically in a primary school these are written clearly already. As the changes identified had been kept in place throughout the term it is reasonable to suggest that it was not difficult nor disadvantageous to the majority to maintain them.

All teachers believed they would need to be mindful of keeping the classroom tidy for the safety and the mobility of the VIP. Consistency of layout was recognised as being supportive of the VIP by half and the majority also mentioned the need for ease of access to resources (physical or easy-to-read labels).

> Spaces big enough for everybody to walk around the classroom and not have to manoeuvre tables etc. (KS2 teacher 1st survey)

> Just to control moving around a little more. I already have zones for each type of activity and well-defined routines (eg: we always start the lesson in front of the smartboard) (KS3 teacher 1st survey)

> Very small classroom and difficult to negotiate easily – so it will be simple things like making sure all access routes are clear and there is consistency in how we lay out the classroom. (KS2 LSA 1st survey)

However, secondary staff reported environment changes as of less significance than primary staff, perhaps because KS3 pupils typically move around less.

> Everyone is usually in their seat all lesson so just to keep things tidy, tuck in spare chairs, keep bags in the corner. (KS3 teacher)

Certainly for Science, DT and HE there would be clear rules and procedures already in place for health and safety. Arguably primary staff had to be more mindful as theirs were multi-purpose classrooms that had to be used for written work, art and craft, as PE changing rooms and as a safe play zone for rainy-day playtime. The incorporation of different modes of learning in KS3 in response to VI inclusion might necessitate more flexibility in room use, although no changes to the layout of furniture were observed or reported. However, there might be practical difficulties as KS3 classrooms had to be used for a range of classes throughout the day.

KS2 teachers reported a greater alertness to general safety in the classroom although they had clearly-zoned rooms (eg: book corner, craft area). Classes observed in all three schools had seating plans, with pupil groupings in KS2 classes being changed for different subjects. Again, no changes has been considered necessary to address the presence of a VIP and so there was no social influence on the majority. However, there was recognition by all of the need for a low vision pupil to be seated at the heart of the action of a lesson, typically front and centre, with peers moving to be where this workstation was; an extension to some degree of the idea of different seating plans for different activities.

> Table position of VIP - front on to the board, with space for slope and tablet etc and also for one-to-one to sit. (KS2 teacher)

Concerns were expressed over cumbersome large-size resources having implications for inclusivity if the VIP had to sit apart. Little could be done to mitigate this. Large print

typically needs to be on larger-than-standard paper or there can be difficulties with page turns and being able to scan a full page in parallel with peers.

> Making sure that despite the increase font size - the work isn't countless pages long that seem hard and difficult for the student to get through. (KS3 teacher)

In the Milburn classroom, pupils sat in horse-shoe rows. Millie was always seated front-row-centre with her box of personal resources, writing slope and A4-size tablet. Although this was potentially socially isolating for her, other pupils were often drawn to the VI LSA as an additional source of help. The onus was then on the LSA to employ strategies to get Millie and her peers to discuss and share their work. In Burwood, the pupils were grouped on tables of six and although Tom's neighbouring seat was kept free to provide table space for his larger-size resources he was still able to engage with peers. In both classrooms the overspill of LSA support to neighbours was observed many times, so that the additional adult helped more than just the targeted VIP, thereby downplaying the effect of the 'velcro-LSA'. The only instances observed of a VIP sitting apart from their peers was to minimise the distraction from the noise when Liam or Becky were using a mechanical brailler.

Angela (Y5) had consciously de-cluttered her display boards and reported that she was using them much more overtly as a tool to encourage independence (eg: flow charts of work activities, how-to reminders of the method(s) being learned in Maths).

> I'm keen they are used as resource to aid independence, not wallpaper. Independence is something I wanted to work on now they are Y4s. (Angela, comment during observation visit)

Although she had to update displays on an almost weekly basis she considered it beneficial as pupils could attempt to find the information they needed on the boards before coming to her with questions. It was noticeable that the displays were fewer in number than neighbouring classrooms but conversations with LSAs and classroom observations suggested the pupils did use them well as a learning resource and aide-memoire. By contrast, the Burwood classroom

had busy displays and it was unclear whether Valerie had been made more aware of the need to consider the visual environment. However, as the majority of wall displays were of pupil work, it would reduce the celebration aspect if less pupil work was put on the walls, although achieving a place on the wall in the Milburn classroom was arguably more prized given the reduced amount.

Findings suggest that there was little need to keep VI concerns at the forefront of teachers' minds, rather that there had developed a subtle change in awareness. Rather than requiring privileged knowledge, most modifications stemmed from staff common sense and possibly a developing VI mindset whereby one become aware of the little things that might frustrate or create difficulties. Clarity and consistency of the environment is regarded as supportive of ASD youngsters and would also be supportive of those with mild sensory impairment as yet not recognised (see Chapter 3). That no comments were made about the classroom environment in the second survey or in interview suggests that any changes made were simple to do and to maintain, and that the initial impact, which had been on time rather than financial, was not an ongoing issue.

Having considered the physical environment and classroom layout we can now consider any influence of addressing VI inclusion on general purpose resources and learning materials.

7.1.2 General Resources

There was no mention in the 1st survey of staff needing or wishing to make provision of VI-friendly resources universally. Arguably, duplicating resources would have been both expensive and impractical. Rather, a teacher noted that "a lot of existing resources will be unusable in current form, will need adapting, but this should not be too difficult for most." Comments centred on adapting things for the VIP, with no mention that they could or would be used by some or all of the others. Concerns were nevertheless expressed over how to find alternatives.

> I use lots of visual resources - card games, PowerPoint presentations, DVD clips, flashcards - lots of pictorial stuff. If we make these bigger they will be quite cumbersome to use. (KS3 teacher 1st survey)

> I use a lot of visuals, which won't be appropriate and teaching traditional reading and writing isn't really relevant, so a completely different approach is needed. The impact will be greater in English lessons, than in PSHE lessons. (Caroline 1st survey)

Harbouring these concerns suggests an intention to be inclusive in accessing learning whilst recognising that a different modality may be required, especially as the these comments were expressed in terms of needing to find another way, not of removing or replacing an activity wholesale, thereby reducing the diet for the remainder. The implied intention was for any changes not to single out the VIP or be non-inclusive.

Accordingly, little specific preparation appeared to have been made prior to the VIPs' arrival, rather several mentions of 'maybe' or 'might need to'.

> Might need to include real objects rather than pictures (KS2 teacher 1st survey)

> Maybe having different tools in practicals (KS3 teacher 1st survey)

Changes were made as and when a need arose, arguably unsurprising given that a lack of experience in teaching VIPs by definition means that teachers could only second-guess what might be needed. There was provision of some potentially useful resources on the advice of a Habilitation Officer, such as talking scales, thermometers and calculators. Financial implications meant that these could not be provide for everyone but talking scales proved supportive of the independence of peers in the primary classes (other talking gadgets were kept only for VIP use). Tactile markers had been used in Tadfield's HE classroom to mark the most-used settings on cookers and microwaves. Whilst these gave reduced options for heat settings they were supportive of better routines for lower-ability pupils across the school (reducing issues finding specific settings for each recipe by adopting 'one size fits all'). Although there was a danger of over-simplification it did not mean that those who wanted

other settings could not still use them. Similarly, the Science department had been advised to mark the rim of beakers and measuring cylinders with a red or black marker pen. Rachael believed this had led to fewer spillages and a reduced need for monitoring everyone during practical work. Again, there was no adverse impact on those who did not need this. Valerie stated that she now often photocopied worksheets on yellow paper for all and Rachael tended to use size N18 font by default, saving them both time by only having to prepare one set of notes, as well as reducing instances where the VIP was noticeably different. Angela also aimed to use large font for everyone unless the quantity of text made larger print unmanageable for the majority or "seem[ed] hard and difficult for the pupils to get through" (survey comment).

In both KS2 classes Tom and Mille's personal VI-friendly resources were kept in the tub of shared basic equipment on each table. Peers were therefore able to use them, whether being resourceful, independent learners in taking a large font ruler when they felt they needed it or 'cheating' by using something they thought made the task easier. At the conceptual level the pupils were working at it could be equally argued that using the 'easier' version of a resource was helping to reinforce the basics rather than making life easier. Nevertheless, it was inclusive in that 'special' resources were not reserved exclusively for VIP use. In Y3 Maths the addition of a tactile marker to a number line was seen as helpful to an SEN pupil who struggled to hold their place when counting along it, helping to reinforce one-to-one correspondence (figure 7.1).

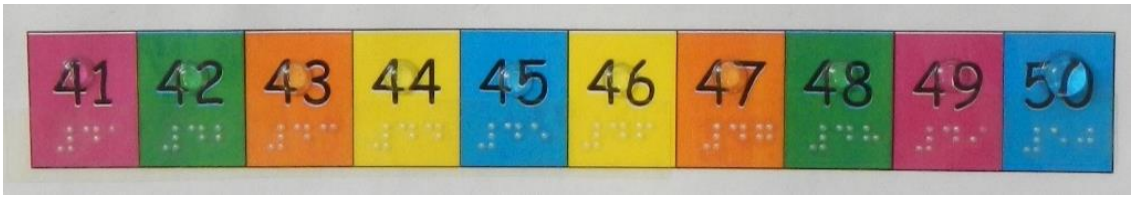


Figure 7.1 Tactile number line

A highly effective yet simple change was observed in the Y3 class. The provision of coloured glue sticks had led to less mess and wastage as it was more apparent to all pupils exactly where they had applied the glue. It also allowed for greater pupil independence as adults felt more able to trust pupils to stick work into their books as there was less likelihood of the glue running over and sticking pages together. It also saved adults time sticking the work in themselves later. Potential was less well recognised in a Y5 cutting-and-sticking activity. Pictures and sentences for matching had been pre-cut for Millie (who struggled with cutting out, especially with unwieldy large-paper versions) but not for the others. She completed the task well ahead of the rest as, unlike her peers, the focus for her was entirely on the learning aspect of the task, not the cutting out and tidying up of the off-cuts.

More detailed, subject-specific examples of the influence of inclusion of a VIP are discussed in Learning Activities (section 7.3) below. The chapter will now turn to findings concerning the aural environment of the classroom.

7.1.3 Aural environment

When making comparisons in the second survey (figure 7.2), it was the aural environment where the biggest changes were reported, despite only Rachael thinking at the outset that "controlling noise levels and minimising distractions" would be something to be mindful of. This may have been because a preconception of the majority, as expressed in the 1st survey, was that a VIP would have better hearing, so arguably staff did not think their hearing would need to be supported by a quiet or consistent aural environment. In the 2nd survey teachers and LSAs both reported a perceived decrease in overall noise levels. LSAs appeared more sensitive to the ambient noise and general classroom talk, possibly because they are more often passive observers rather than in charge, leading the lesson and therefore part of the noise creation. Similarly, if they are 'locked in' to one VIP they might be more perceptive of the impact of noise and so more reliable in observing that noise has decreased.

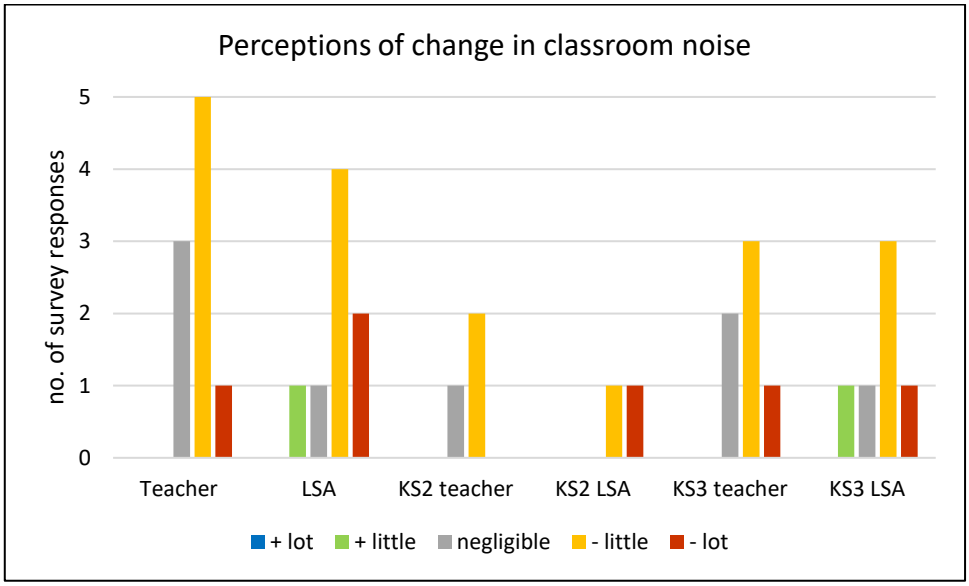


Figure 7.2 Perceptions of change in classroom noise

Teachers were more aware of noise during specific activities, such as Rachael being conscious of pupil noise when playing a video. Any comments on changing noise levels were framed as a positive:

> We try to keep noise to a minimum as she finds a lot of noise difficult to deal with, which is good overall. It means students have to be more descriptive and verbal so that she is included and that is good. (Paula)

> I have to remind teachers - and we did have a battle with one of them at the beginning… about the sensory aspects. She was a very loud, and it was a very loud and stimulating class, overstimulating. And for a few, sort of first few lessons, I'd have to say "This isn't working " and that's had a turnaround. She's thinking more ahead as to how to keep the environment calmer. (Tadfield LSA)

There was no mention of repressing personalities, exuberance or spontaneity by attending to classroom noise, nor that quieter noise levels were stifling natural interactions or reducing pupil conversations while working. Rather, a Tadfield LSA stated that "[the] class has a lot of characters who find it hard to sit still and listen but I think people try harder to get quiet because of [Becky]". No teacher was observed explicitly using the VIP as the reason to reduce noise levels. The only negative comment regarding noise was connected to the distraction coming from a VIP's resources, such as a talking calculator or braille-writer.

> It's a minor point but occasionally the iPad or talking clock Tom needs to use causes distraction for the other children but this has lessened since September. (Valerie)

Observations were not carried out in parallel classes that the KS3 teachers taught so it cannot be determined if any heightened awareness of the role of noise extended beyond the target classes.

Considerations of the learning environment have begun to provide empirical evidence to address the ease and effectiveness of generalising VI-friendly strategies (SQa/b/c). This will be pursued further in the next section, which presents findings on the influence of addressing VI inclusion on the general working practices of teachers and LSAs and findings linked to classroom management. This section will also address the perceived and reported role of additional adults in effecting change (SQd).

7.2 Working practices

7.2.1 Teachers' individual working practices

All teachers mentioned in interview that they needed to be more organised if they were to be fully inclusive of their VIP, although they stated in survey responses that they had made fewer changes to their normal way of working than they had anticipated. They recognised that adhering more closely to plans if they had to have VI resources made in good time could potentially lead to a loss of flexibility and reactive planning based on lesson-to-lesson outcomes. Ad hoc changes could potentially go against inclusivity, though impacting here on the VIP, not the wider learning of the rest, if the VIP did not have optimal learning conditions. Nevertheless, serendipity was still possible. A Y7 Science lesson was observed where the objective was to be able to detect if a chemical reaction had taken place when adding a substance to acid in test tube. The planned adaptation for Becky was to ask her to listen for any fizzing of gas bubbles produced but some others listened ahead of the reaction

becoming visible, suggesting that this idea had captured their interest. Becky detected temperature changes that others missed, which led to an additional learning point that the teacher had not planned to include.

Addressing VI inclusion brought perceived benefits through teachers having to be more creative thinkers:

> I plan ahead in more detail and probably use a wider variety of types of activity. Having to think of new ways to do things has made me think what they are actually for. (Esme)

> I have had to be more creative in my planning of activities and some of the approaches are enjoyed by the other students as well. (Jo)

7.2.2 Teacher-LSA collaboration

The blind pupils in the study were in receipt of dedicated LSA support throughout the school day, shared across a pool of four staff. Support for pupils with low-vision was targeted in response to perceived need. All teachers had recent or ongoing experience of having an LSA in their classroom. For KS2 teachers a general class LSA was always provided for literacy and numeracy lessons and typically available for, at minimum, all of every morning. Tadfield teachers had experienced LSA support when teaching lower-ability classes and Science staff were used to liaising with a laboratory technician in and out of lessons. There was no mention by teachers that they would feel under pressure to 'perform' or feel inhibited with another adult in the room, even though the anonymity of the survey allowed for this to be expressed.

Although no teacher expressed strong confidence in teaching a VIP at the start, all of them commented only on a general reliance on LSA support. The only specific concerns expressed were for health and safety (KS3 Science) and for in-the-moment braille translation (KS3 English). Only one explicit reference to inclusive practice was made:

> My main concern is that I will be unable to teach her and the rest of the class and that we will both end up relying on LSA support more than is ideal. (Esme)

Survey comparisons indicated that overall teacher reliance on LSAs reduced slightly. Stated needs were for VI-specific skills (eg: braille), to ensure the VIP kept pace (4 out of 5 responses) and to support the VIP's independence. One teacher valued the need for support because work during the term was getting more complex, a statement echoed by an LSA. That support was increasing because the work was more involved can be considered a positive in that the presence of the VIP has not distorted the quality or challenge of lesson content.

Teachers comments on the value of LSA support were expressed in strongly positive terms: 'vital', 'essential', 'massive help':

> The two LSAs are absolutely amazing and they make my life as a teacher so much easier because they can sort resources beforehand.[…] They're good at just rolling with the lesson. (Jo)

Jo also commented:

> I think some of the pressure's relieved a little bit by the LSAs. So if I've forgotten to say something then they're next to her to be able to say "It looks like X, Y and Z".(Jo)

Similarly, Paula noted her use of an LSA so that Liam did not monopolise teacher time and Angela recognised that Millie would often get priority of the LSA was not there.

LSA responses reflect this strengthening of being valued: "We are definitely one team but I think we are relied on an awful lot" (Tadfield LSA). LSAs 2nd survey responses reported that they were being relied on similar level/depth as at the start. One respondent express relief that her preconceptions had proven to be unfounded:

> I thought I would end up as a 1-1 all the time but I'm still able to work with everyone. I didn't want to be stuck with one pupil and not know the whole class and I'm glad that's not the case (KS2 LSA)

Nevertheless, there was a recognition and valuing of LSA skills that teachers did not have. A reliance by KS3 teachers on LSAs having specific skills is unsurprising given that teachers were not with the VIP all day like their KS2 counterparts. Thus the opportunity to learn and use these skills resided much more in the LSA role.

> *We've learned better* how to get the best out of her. (LSA2) (emphasis added)

> I will sometimes go to the teachers and say, you know, "I don't think this is going to come out very well, it's going to be too confusing. What do you want me to do about it? Do you want me to take some information out". (LSA2)

There were indications in survey responses that working relationships were strengthened, stated more overtly in interview. Arguably placing trust in LSAs to fine tune, to 'roll with the lesson', reflects a loosening of teacher control, and some dissolving of hierarchy. The Burwood LSA's declaration of her "confidence" to adapt, can be interpreted as an illustration of this and was mirrored in Valerie's valuing of the LSA giving reassurance:

> I do look at the LSA and go 'Is this OK?' And just that reassurance or having someone to take advice from. (Valerie)

7.2.3 Classroom management

All staff had anticipated practical challenges (see section 6.5.3), framed in terms of the VIP's safety and their ease rather than equality of access in the classroom. There were no comments anticipating changes that might have wider benefits. Rather, any comments on classroom management at the outset were expressed in general and neutral terms:

> Just to control moving around a little more. I already have zones for each type of activity and well-defined routines (Valerie)

> Taking extra care with health and safety in practical lessons - DT, HE, Science. (LSA1)

Only one teacher, Caroline, framed anticipated changes in inclusive terms, writing of the need

for "consideration of how to effectively conduct paired/group/class activities to enable *all students to benefit equally*" (emphasis added). She later commented in interview of the difficulty in managing group work effectively, stating that the inclusion of a blind pupil meant that discussion did not flow as naturally because of there being no substitute for eye contact.

Concerns over the influence of the presence of a VIP on classroom management, perhaps unsurprisingly, featured more strongly in initial survey responses from staff with fewer years of experience. However, at the end of the study most teachers reflected in some degree that the presence of a VIP had given rise to little overall need for change. General strategies that already work were observed: echo clapping to gain attention, waiting for silence rather than repetition of the request. Changes identified were essentially neutral but with positive knock-on effects:

> [T]aking that extra bit of time to make sure Liam is on the same page. It gives the others that breathing space and perhaps a little bit of time to think about what HAS been said (Caroline)

Rachael had introduced tokens (a laminated card) to distribute during the lesson in addition to making a tally mark in pupils' books to help Liam recognise when he had received a merit. She considered that all pupils liked receiving something tangible and that it gave her a clear visual indication of pupils or tables she might have overlooked. This strategy had been adopted by the rest of the Science department and by the HE teacher, who said it was a useful strategy for awarding merits in a practical situation where there were no exercise books to annotate.

Changes to the pace of lessons had not been anticipated. However, some instances were observed where the pace of lessons ostensibly slowed because of the desire to ensure Liam or Becky were fully involved (eg: insistence on complete silence before progressing; the zero-tolerance of fidgeting during teacher talk). However, the impact here could be considered as being supportive of instilling and maintaining high expectations of behaviour.

There was only one declaration of over-compensation, when Angela stated that "At times, I think I'm placing more of a focus on the needs of one child than the rest of the class [29]" However, judging the impact here is not straightforward as Angela was in her first year of teaching and so arguably was still learning and developing pupil management skills and strategies. During classroom observations she was observed getting drawn into other individual pupils and then having to regain the focus and attention of the whole class.

Having discussed overarching aspects of the classroom, we can now turn to the influence of addressing VI inclusion on more specific aspects of learning and teaching.

7.3 Learning activities

Findings concerned with changes to learning activities will be central in addressing two sub-questions:

- *How readily and effectively can VI-friendly strategies be generalised without detriment to other learners?* (SQa)
- *Are there any age- or subject-specific considerations related to the need or capacity for change?* (SQc)

This section will also begin to consider what new understandings are needed for the successful inclusion of a VIP. (SQg)

In the initial survey teachers' responses were overwhelmingly focused on *how* to change rather than the act of *having* to change learning activities (see data in sections 6.5.3 and 6.5.4). There was an equal division between comments framed as 'adapt' and as 'replace', though it was not necessarily clear from short statements whether teachers were thinking in terms of changes for the VIP or for everyone.

Any changes to learning modalities had to address the issues of equity and equality inherent in the dilemma of difference and also pupil engagement and motivation if changes led to a reduced diet of experience. There was an acknowledgement by KS3 teachers of restrictions from curriculum content. However, it can be argued that all teachers were equally subject to external drivers. Tadfield teachers may have been mindful of how the KS3 curriculum fed into GCSE courses but Angela may have had a similar eye on Y6 SATs for her class the following year. Nevertheless, all teachers recalled instances when using an additional or alternative modality of learning had better revealed pupils' depth of understanding and the following review of findings will determine whether there is evidence to support this.

7.3.1 Teacher approaches to learning management

Triggers and motivation for teacher change will be described in more detail in the next chapter. Nevertheless, it should be noted that changes observed directly in classroom observations may have been implemented because teachers knew that there would be a researcher present.

There was no indication that the presence of a VIP had necessitated wholesale changes to approaches and only two mentions by teachers of needing to be mindful of their teaching style.

> Ensuring that I'm not moving around from one side of the classroom to the other (Angela)

> I think I refer to pictures, pointing and using gestures a lot. Will need to try not to rely on this. (Esme)

Rather, survey and interview comments reported smaller changes within existing strategies.

> I think we've done things on the Smartboard and obviously [Becky] can't see so we've had to verbally explain what's going on while things [images, labels] get moved around, you know, that kind of thing I suppose. (Esme interview)

> I don't know... maybe I'm being a bit more verbal rather than just quickly pointing to something (Paula interview)

> I probably do describe what's going on in a demo a bit better or set the scene before a practical and introduce them to equipment they'll be using. (Rachael interview)

Overall lesson structure seemed unaffected by addressing VI inclusion. Paula (in Maths) and Jo reflected that shorter, quick-fire, introductory and plenary activities had been hardest to replace with a VI-inclusive alternative. Observations reflected this; for example, when Liam was asked to keep score in a fast-paced grammar quiz where words appeared rapidly on the Smartboard rather than being fully involved in the cognitive content of the game. However, Jo stated that she felt she gave clearer summaries of learning in plenary sessions, the potential impact here being that pupils might leave the lesson with an unambiguous exit message of what they had learned and that the teacher had an opportunity to review immediately what had sunk in.

VI inclusion did not preclude serendipitous, in-the-moment responses to learning difficulties. A positive example was observed in Milburn when pupils were making fraction walls by folding strips of paper into thirds, quarters etc. The LSA drew a black line on Millie's folds to make them easier to see and Angela suggested that everyone do this as it became apparent they would not only see the folds more easily but would still see them when stuck into their books. By contrast, serendipity played out less successfully in a Y3 PSHCE lesson on celebrating differences. A pupil commented that everyone's fingerprints are different, so Valerie asked the class to look at their own fingers. The LSA suggested that Tom took a photograph of his fingertips on his iPad that he could then enlarge. This became a distraction to his peers, who became more interested in the iPad picture than paying attention to Valerie's follow-up comments.

Many examples were observed where simple or one-off adaptions had been made to existing resources for specific tasks which could be used universally without changing the

challenge or ease of accomplishment. In a Science lesson, the planned success criteria for wiring a simple circuit had been to have a working light bulb. Rachael changed this to a buzzer and considered that the pupils found this more fun. There were many examples of sorting/matching cards and simple games being made inclusive through the addition of Braille using transparent labels, so that peers could still see the word or image underneath the label (eg: “Simpsons” cards figure 7.3).

Figure 7.3 Braille and print on flashcards

7.3.2 Influence of VI inclusion on visual activities

The second survey suggested that the amount of visual learning activities had remained unchanged in KS2 but decreased in KS3 (figure 7.4). There was no evidence, however, that activities that relied on the visual mode were not used at all. Arguably KS2 learning is more visual and activity-based as younger children are typically involved in concrete rather than conceptual learning, whereas a reduction of visual learning in KS3 would arguably be easier to manage as pupil maturity means that they can learn and reason more readily in other ways.

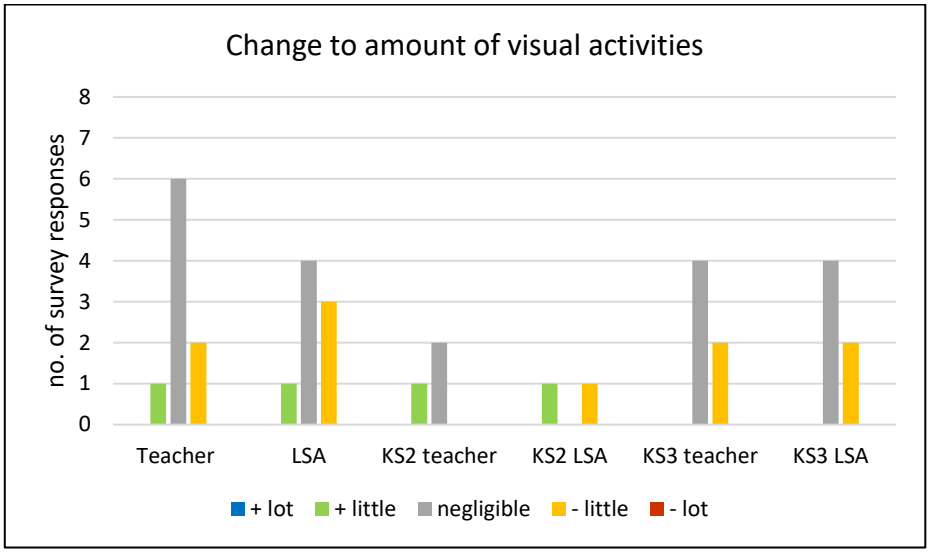


Figure 7.4 Change to the amount of visual activities

It was observed that changes to visual stimuli might impact on pupil decision-making. Esme offered a guided selection of choices rather than pupils searching online for images of geological features (ie: searching was not the task, using the information was). Arguably this avoided them finding irrelevant or inaccurate search results. However, in a more open-ended or creative tasks there is a danger of teacher pre-judgment, imposing teacher prejudices onto pupils, steering thinking a certain way. Caroline stated that she often used images to stimulate creative writing and verbal articulacy (eg: landscapes, lived environments, images of people to trigger ideas of their mood/character) and was concerned that her selection of topics became restricted when she aimed to replace images with real objects. Nevertheless she was aiming to replace visual stimuli where she could, indicating that she valued addressing inclusion. However, she also recognised that drawing was sometimes a "lazy option":

> I wasn't convinced the others were learning a lot from drawing[…] That was in [the scheme of work] purely, I think, to try and give variety rather than having to do written answers all the time. (Caroline - interview)

The removal or reduction of the visual mode places demands on memory, on the use of language and on conceptualising. Three teachers identified the effect of using these

replacement or additional skills. Caroline stated that using sounds (eg: Microsoft start-up theme) instead of pictures as the starter activity for lesson on logos was “more of a challenge” to pupil concentration. In a Geography lesson where the objective was to be able to follow a map of the school, Esme added narration of part of a route to the task to extend the inclusivity. For pupils to be able to determine where in the school a particular location being referred to might be, they had to create their own mental map and retain a verbal sequence of instructions, introducing the additional demands on clarity of verbal communication and memory. Jo recalled an RE lesson where the objective was to be able to order a set of pictures to show the sequence of steps Muslims observe when washing before prayers. To include Liam, she asked the class to mime the actions in order. She believed the class had retained the information better than if they had been sequencing pictures.

7.3.3 Influence of VI inclusion on tactile activities

Every adult reported the introduction of more hands-on, tactile activities in every key stage (figure 7.5). This did not seem to be a sea change for Valerie or Angela, though as previously stated, KS2 arguably already incorporates many practical activities as pupils do more concrete and less abstract learning. There were no mentions of the additional time required to source or make tactile resources, suggesting that teachers did not resent this. Resource preparation by LSAs in all schools was much more focused on adapting pre-existing worksheets or providing braille versions rather than making artefacts. Arguably teachers would not have been willing to spend time making additional resources if they did not consider there would be a wider benefit.

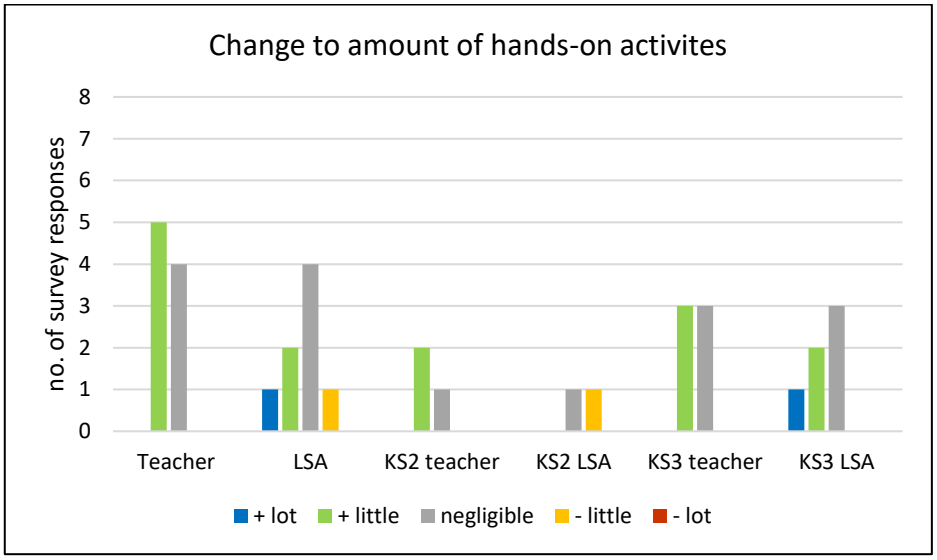


Figure 7.5 Change to amount of hands-on activities

Rachael considered that increasing tactile learning was not a significant challenge or change to her existing practice, as is illustrated in Vignette 7.1. Arguably the nature of learning in KS3 Science lends itself to the use of real-life objects and examples over the abstract, although addressing VI inclusion aligned well with her capacity to think creatively. She believed that the novelty of resources that she had introduced specifically to address VI inclusion had value in promoting the retention of learning for all. A lesson on compounds and mixtures was observed where she gave Lego bricks and Unifix cubes to all the class to represent different atoms whereas ordinarily she would have demonstrated using 'Molymod' molecular model apparatus. In this case, the introduction of a different mode of learning took longer.

Vignette 7.2 offers two examples where teachers considered that extending the mode of learning to address the VIP brought clear benefits to others. Allowing other pupils to use manipulatives to support their calculations revealed to Angela the assumptions she had been making about their capacity to work without them and to see beyond the rigidity of the scheme of work. Valerie's example shows how a VI strategy brought benefits through serendipity.

Vignette 7.1 KS3 Science - Rachael

I already did a lot of verbal and hands on activities anyway, especially with a lower ability group as I think it does benefit the whole class. I try to reinforce concepts with hands on more that I probably would have without Liam. I think this probably does benefit the whole class.[…]

When I'm talking at the front I am aware that I *do* do a lot of visual stuff but I try and give Liam the object, like I'll try and get a physical thing. So when we were doing metals – "What's made out of aluminium? Oh a can's made out of aluminium. Liam - feel this can". The foil. "Feel the foil." It's trying to use actual things and sometimes I forget and it's "Hang on a minute I'll just go and get one" - and he can have the actual object which...surprised me how easy it is to do, because I hadn't really thought about that. I just thought well, if I draw a diagram on the board he can't see it but actually I don't have to draw a diagram I can do it in a different way.

I think it is useful. A lot of the time I will hold up the object and say "this is what I'm talking about", pass it to Liam or to his LSA to talk to him about it and then I'll just talk, but the rest of them, they want to feel it as well and they see that he's got it and they want… It's like when we had the rocks… I'll hold up the rock – "Oh look, This is granite. It's got crystals in it". And he's got his granite to feel but they're all like "I want to feel it as well".

Interviewer: So do you think that makes any difference to their learning?

Yes - and I think they're more interested and it adds another dimension to what they're learning. They learn and remember it better.[…] Like that knitted digestive system. Maybe it's the novelty…or just the comedy value, but they all remember it. Seeing the miles and miles of intestines as they pass it round the room and then trying to stuff it all back in the bag…it really brings it home, I think.

Vignette 7.1 KS3 Science

Vignette 7.2 KS2 Maths

Y5 Angela - Mille
The danger in Y5 is that actually they need to know the column method. They need to be able to add in a column for when they go in to Y6 and for SATs, and normally my head says "but they must get it, you have to get this before you can progress into Y6". But actually there might be some children who need other resources in order to do that. So I'm a bit more lenient. By this point of the year I'd have thought "No, you're not going to have this for your SATs next year so you need to be able... you can't use a number line or what have you". But actually there is that allowance for - others might need other things and more practical activities not just "Let's just practice this method".

Y3 Valerie - Tom
We were doing 3D shapes and they were looking at them but for the next lesson for Tom, because they were looking at all the bits, I got the bits out for him to make them... It was a bit more hands on, but a few of them were struggling so I was bringing out the resources and thinking "actually, this is helping". So it's releasing that a lot of then need that visual support as well, not just Tom.

Vignette 7.2 KS2 Maths

7.4 Communication in the classroom

This chapter section will present findings on communication in the classroom from both learning and social perspectives and will consider the fundamental role of language in classroom interactions and how it lends importance to these findings.

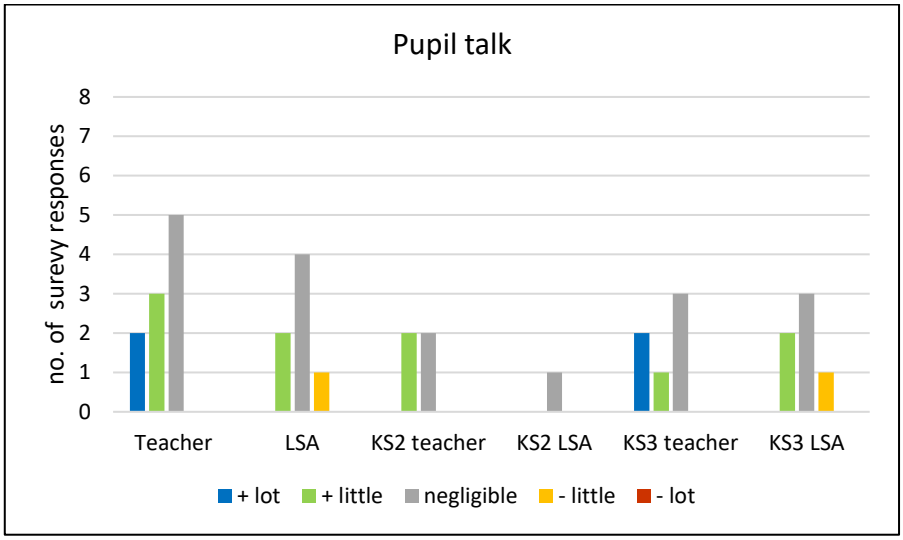
7.4.1 Language for learning

Some teachers anticipated at the start that additional descriptions to supplement or replace visual stimuli might slow down the pace of learning or make things too wordy for pupils who benefit from short, explicit instructions.

> If I have got to talk more for her it might become too wordy for our ASD chap or the ones with receptive language difficulties who need short, explicit instructions. (KS2 teacher 1st survey)

By contrast, it was also noted that explanations might need to be succinct in order to be VI-inclusive.

Second survey data (figure 7.6) indicated participants' perceptions that the amount of pupil talk increased in all settings and the amount of teacher talk increased in KS3. However, negligible change was reported in the amount of teacher questioning, suggesting that additional teacher talk was for explanations or management. No teachers felt able to say if pupils' learning or retention had altered in connection with changes in classroom language and it was beyond the scope of this study to investigate this.



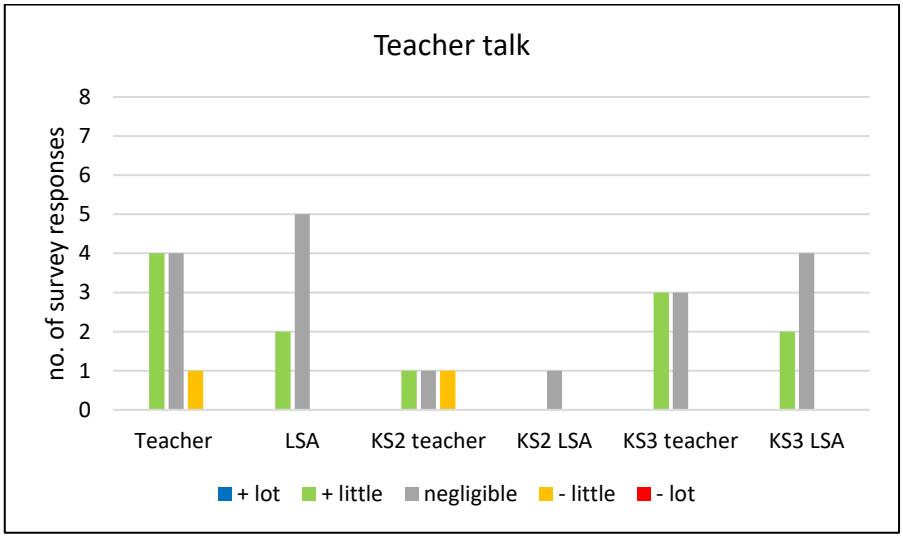


Figure 7.6 Perceived changes to classroom talk

Although teacher preconceptions made no mention of *political correctness,* findings revealed that all KS3 teachers did, however, declare that they were more conscious of their own use of language.

> Trying not to talk to much – it's the classic teacher error, isn't it, talking too much! especially if you're an English teacher, talking too much, interrupting when you need to just be quiet and let them have some time to do it. (Caroline interview)

> You say "Look at this" or something and you think "Oh no"... But I mean not that she'd necessarily pick that up but you are very conscious of what you're saying. (Jo interview)

The Y5 LSA considered a potential positive influence in observing that the teacher tended to use the children's names more: "I wonder if that makes them feel any different?" Caroline stated she had become more aware of when she interrupted when perhaps she could stay quiet. She was also aware of stumbling in her delivery through not wanting to put words in pupils' mouths when trying to allude to a stimulus that she would ordinarily have provided in visual form (eg: deriving a story from a picture). Further, she recognised that addressing the inclusion of VIPs by inviting each person to speak by name, so that they would know whose turn it was, meant that the free-flow of group discussion was sometimes stilted. Nevertheless, other teachers' perceptions aligned with the Tadfield LSA who stated that "students have to be more descriptive and verbal so that [Becky] is included *and that is good*" (emphasis added).

The use of politically correct language in class was far less overt than might have been imagined. During observations there were no explicit mentions of VI in any classroom. Arguably staff were reinforcing helpful VI inclusion by a general good use of language. However, instances when teachers used a pupil's lack of vision as a teaching opportunity were not always sensitively handled and may have marked out the VIP as different in other's eyes. Three staff were observed using the line of questioning (paraphrased):

> How could you explain what this is to [blind pupil] as s/he can't see it?

A better-managed, more inclusive example was observed in Geography:

> Describe this scene as if you were phoning home on holiday. (Esme)

7.4.2 Explanations

Tadfield LSAs all noted changes in teachers' use of instructional language when consciously attending to VIP inclusion. However, they considered that the majority of teacher language was already inclusive:

> For the two teachers I work with outside of with Becky it's not really a lot of difference. When I'm in lesson with Becky they'll probably spend a little bit more time explaining to her than with the other students what's needed but I don't really see a difference. (LSA1)

> I think with any lesson... at Liam's level... everything's explained multiple times anyway. It's got to be, not just for Liam but for all the students...broken down bit by bit. (LSA1)

Slower or repeated explanations were considered potentially beneficial: "I'm quite sure Emma isn't the only one who didn't hear it or doesn't benefit from it being paraphrased!" (Tadfield LSA). Nevertheless, there was a recognition that sometimes teachers became mired in explanations, although no indications were given that pupils ever became inattentive or impatient. One Tadfield LSA noted that when the VIP was absent "the teacher doesn't have to spend extra time describing board work". However, this contrasts with teachers' perceptions of their own use of language, such as Jo's belief (as stated above) that she gave clearer summaries in plenaries or as exemplified by the following:

> I know I give shorter instructions (KS3 teacher survey response)

> I use more waiting rather than repetition – allowing time for things to sink in (Valerie)

Thoughtful, spontaneous use of additional language to clarify learning was observed in every lesson except with Angela (an NQT), suggesting that general teaching experience supports the development of this capacity. Language could provide subtle reinforcement, such as Rachael's indirect comparison: "find your boiling tube – why do we need it bigger than a test tube?". Supplementing an instruction to 'look at' a resource (object, picture) with additional language arguably improves the focus of everyone's looking. Valerie noted that she aimed to describe or narrate what she might be drawing on the Smartboard. In a Y8 lesson on pollution, rather than asking pupils simply to look at picture of a river, Esme described the image from top to bottom. As well as being inclusive of Liam and Emma it would have encouraged other pupils not to miss any details for not scanning it systematically. Similarly,

the resource for a Y3 lesson on dangers in the home was a detailed line drawing of a kitchen. Substituting this for a less-cluttered image would have simplified the learning so the teacher had prepared a short narrative for Tom to supplement the image. By reading it to the class she guided them through the picture before they answered questions on a worksheet.

7.4.3 Questioning

In survey responses, little change was reported in the amount of teacher questioning overall (figure 7.7). However, whilst not directly observed in classroom visits, reports were made of changes to questioning style. One KS2 LSA noticed a benefit in setting up a routine for questioning: "going round the room taking turns rather than asking for hands up or randomly picking on people. I think they all like it when they know their turn is coming." Another stated "I wonder if they are given more time before the teacher chivvies them up for an answer" (Tadfield LSA).

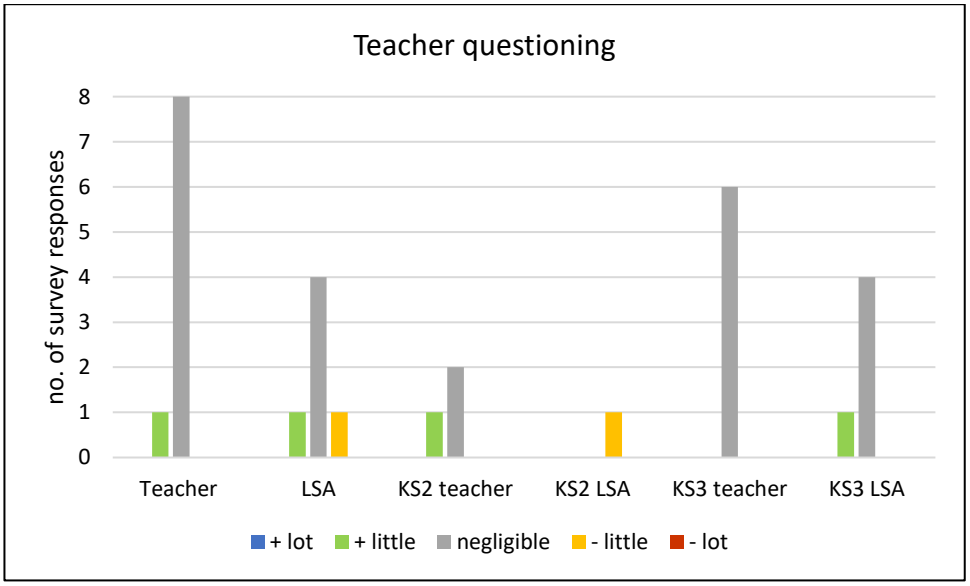


Figure 7.7 Perceived changes to teacher questioning

By contrast, a teacher identified a downside of addressing VIP inclusion:

> Maybe there isn't quite the same level of free-flow questions. I try not to have them interrupt the flow so that Liam doesn't get confused. I do worry sometimes if that means that someone with a spontaneous question who would have just shouted it out never gets

to ask it. I don't think we go down side roads as often as I do in other classes. (Tadfield School survey response)

Similarly, the LSA commented that Angela tended to answer Millie whenever she had a question rather than making her wait, as she would for the others. There could be a social influence here if others considered Millie was getting preferential treatment or that the teacher was unnecessarily over-sensitive in prioritising Millie so that someone else was overlooked.

7.4.4 Listening

Allied to use of language was the potential for changes in demands on pupil listening through greater use of oral modalities of teaching. Perceptions reported in survey responses were of an increase here in KS3 (teachers by a little, LSAs by a lot) but a decrease in KS2 (figure 7.8). A teacher might feel able to include more talk in KS3 because of pupil maturity: it is arguably easier for older pupils to take on the expectation of listening to the teacher. Correspondingly, as the KS2 classes became 'house trained' there may have been a relaxation of the rigidity of 'sit still and listen'.

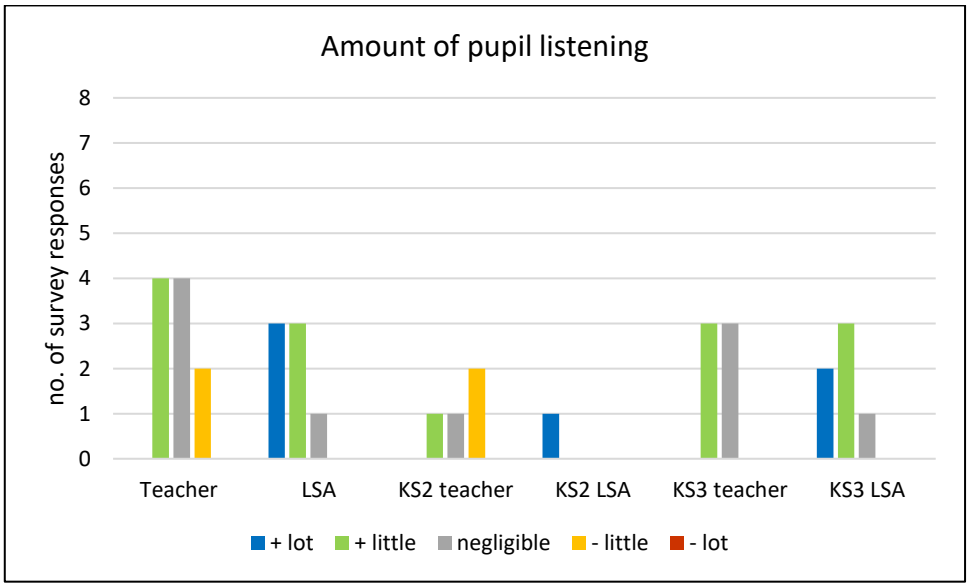


Figure 7.8 Perceived change to amount of pupil listening

LSAs may well have been more perceptive of changes through being spectators rather than the ones doing the talking in teacher/whole-class interactions. However, whilst one Tadfield LSA considered that an increased the focus in listening was a strategy that benefited the rest, another LSA stated "There's more learning by talking and discussion. I'm not sure that works for everyone". Two teachers stated in survey responses that they were generally more aware of thinking about describing what they were doing:

> To describe to the pupil what is going on e.g. in a demo or to set the scene before a practical and inform them of what is available or introduce them to equipment to be used. (Rachael)

> Maybe you're more verbal and explain a lot more, rather than just pointing to s.g. (KS2)

7.5 Social skills

All staff identified a belief that youngsters' social skills had changed or developed because of the presence of a VIP. Social interaction and social skills were mentioned more frequently by LSAs than teachers in survey responses. That they raised social skills as an aspect for consideration despite it not being explicitly referenced on the survey pro forma is arguably an indication that they consider this a valuable part of pupils' development and their LSA role here. However, teachers may have considered they should be thinking about academic aspects whereas LSAs arguably have more of a social role, especially in KS2.

Changes introduced to support a VIP created opportunities for increased pupil self-direction and independence through feeling more secure in their environment, both physical and social (eg: that a routine for questioning reduced potential anxiety about having to provide a response on the spot). However, it could equally be argued that an extra clarity of instructions and a more explicitly defined and information-rich environment, whilst supportive of some, could stifle emergent self-reliance skills in others. For example, a

Tadfield LSA noted that "sometimes the others have to wait or line up when they could be more independent."

7.5.1 Interpersonal skills and relationships

All KS2 staff and the Tadfield staff working with blind pupils noted that inclusion had inculcated a wider awareness of difference and disability amongst the other pupils. There appeared to be a tacit acceptance of difference; for example, no envy but rather an understanding of the need for VIPs to have personal iPads. Further, Rachael noted that classmates were "*surprisingly* patient once they're reminded that Becky can't cope with too many distractions" (emphasis added). The link here to teacher expectations will be pursued in Chapter 8.

There were no comments about peers feeling any injustice, such as perceiving it unfair that the VIP received preferential treatment. Rather, a Burwood LSA commented that "I think it's teaching them that there's a bit of give and take", which aligned with Valerie's interview comments (Vignette 7.3).

Vignette 7.3 – Valerie

So they're really kind and understanding if they've got something I need to share this first before I take a turn and for a child that's quite a big concept, letting somebody else have a look before themselves.[…]

I think it's so important for the other children to see the differences that other people have because in life they're going to experience more differences with other people so I think it's really positive. And as a school as well, even a class that doesn't have a child with VI, they still know about it. they're still aware of it. They still walk down the corridor – "Oh I need to be careful, and I need to do this, that and the other". I think it's really positive.

Vignette 7.3 Y3 social skills

However, when asked to reflect about an observation of her reading a book to the class, when many pupils were becoming restless while she was pausing to show Tom every

picture, she admitted that “they all are usually ‘That's not fair’” if she did this. Her solution to pausing even longer to let everyone examine the pictures was to “purposely put it in the reading corner then so they can all look at it” rather than finding a more immediately inclusive solution.

Several teachers valued the opportunity for social interaction skills to develop naturally rather than through explicit teaching:

> Over time it has ‘clicked’ (Jo)

> You don’t have to target “this is social skills”, “this is what you do”. It's a more natural way of doing it. (Angela)

> It [gives them a chance to] empathise with the fact that when they’re noisy in the classroom - we actually raised this - when they're noisy in the classroom the VI student - if they all shout out at once and they're talking over the teacher - that's really difficult to hear and follow the instructions. (Caroline)

It was observed in one KS3 Drama lesson using social skills games that verbal descriptions of peoples’ expressions and body language reinforced understanding of social cues for an autistic pupil. Here too, this was in a quasi-natural setting rather than an explicit teaching scenario, of value in linking theory to practice, learning to reality. There was also much evidence of how peers showed anticipation of others’ needs (holding doors open, clearing clutter and tucking in chairs ahead of Liam or Becky walking past). An example of a pupil’s resourcefulness in perceiving a VIP’s need was observed in a Y3 Maths lesson. Valerie improvised an extension task for early finishers by handing out a times table puzzle. There was no large print version to hand for Tom so his neighbour independently decided to take on role of Quiz Master and asked Tom some questions derived from the worksheet. Their discussion over whether the answers were correct arguably generated an additional learning path for both children.

Nevertheless, Caroline observed that some instinctive social interactions of necessity became somewhat artificial.

> Although, in a learning context, I can't quite find the substitute for eye contact to let people know when it's their turn to talk. So the group discussion doesn't flow so naturally. You invite each person to speak by name so that they know who's talking and whose turn it is. (Caroline)

This may have been inhibitive in this situation, but in a parallel scenario in Burwood the strategy to ameliorate lack of visual cues proved beneficial to others:

> We introduced a buddy system at break times to make sure Tom doesn't struggle to find his friends and I think that has helped his friends as well. (Burwood LSA)

7.5.2 Peer-peer verbal interactions

There were several references made to the potential for VI inclusion to develop the verbal interaction of the wider peer group in social, unstructured times. Esme was certain that having Becky in class had "significantly improved" the verbal communication skills of two other pupils:

> We have a couple in the class who are quite shy and when [Becky] first joined the group they would rather say nothing and kind of keep their distance because "this is new"…She's quite good at getting people to come out of themselves and they've kind of had not option in it! (Esme interview)

Jo also considered that other pupils had become more aware of the importance of using their words and being more descriptive through being unable to avoid using spoken language to interact with a blind peer. Similarly a Tadfield LSA wrote that:

> I think it's been really good for them because they've had to communicate more vocally and before they may have just sat there and nod their head and it's "You can't just nod your head. You need to speak'." (Tadfield LSA survey response)

Paula described in interview how such verbal interaction could develop naturally in a learning context (Vignette 7.4), enhancing the learning of both pupils as well as their social interaction.

Vignette 7.4 – KS3 ICT lesson – Paula – Becky's class

T2 For example, today was actually really, really nice because we had to join groups and I had to - I wasn't prepared - I had to think on the spot and what I said was, working in pairs to make things easier…and the LSA said that 'Adam' was absolutely amazing with [Becky]. So they had to get information from the internet and they had to stick stuff to create a poster on the computer. But you will read some information so you can work together, the other one can read and explain what's there - and doing that kind of thing they worked together. And yes, so the support said that it was really nice to see. Because normally Adam doesn't do that. And he was, you know, just the way they worked together…because usually for ICT it tends to be individual work and everyone is at their computers. But because they worked together on one computer and Adam was reading information about his monkey that they had chosen and - you know – he had to think slightly differently about what he was doing because he was working with her. That's really good for them - to have to think a bit differently.

Vignette 7.4 KS3 ICT

7.6 Summary

This chapter has addressed the practical changes to teaching and learning that stemmed from addressing VI inclusion and the extent and nature of changes that had to happen, that were chosen and that occurred serendipitously. The empirical evidence suggests that, in all three schools, there were lots of small aspects of addressing VI inclusion that contributed to a larger whole. Some findings show no real influence at all. Some were one-off changes at the start that were easy to maintain, though possibly alerting staff and peers to a slightly different mindset. The majority of changes stemmed from little triggers as and when daily practice was being planned or in-the-moment during a lesson. There were virtuous cycles of noticing positive change and doing something more. Equally there were crises of conscience if staff considered they were neglecting an individual, a group, a learning modality or a learning opportunity.

This chapter has also provided the context for findings concerning teachers' recognition of the need to make these practical changes and their preparedness and

willingness to do so. Data here were concerned with more reflective, less concrete changes. This will be the focus of the next chapter, which will address themes relating to teachers' working practices, indications of possible motivations and changes in their conceptualisations of SEN and inclusion.

CHAPTER 8 Findings on the nature of teacher changes

This chapter will present the findings on the extent to which the presence of a VIP was a trigger for change in teachers' practice and their conceptualisation of inclusion. The focus will be mainly on RQ2 and RQ3 and the related sub-questions. The chapter will also consider what were the triggers for change in teachers' thinking and the extent to which any change might become embedded. It is the attitude and feeling towards such changes that are germane to the findings presented here.

Analysis of the second survey and interview transcripts generated four broad categories for gerund codes: *practical, reflective, interpersonal* and *affective* (Appendix 13 and 14). Open coding of interview transcripts revealed additional categories - *knock-on effect* and *teaching style* - emerging as significant (see appendix 15). A main reason for choosing a semi-structured format for the interviews was so that conversations could reflect the priorities of individuals. Therefore, although the balance appears broadly similar (see figure 8.1), direct comparisons of the prevalence of these themes cannot be made between survey and interview responses, nor between teacher interviews. Caroline gave significantly longer responses to questions than did any other teacher, often pausing to reflect and raise a question for herself ("I hadn't really thought…", "I wonder if I…"), which may explain why her comments show less alignment with *interpersonal* codes than do the other teachers.

It was important in analysis to address any significance attached to things not said in survey responses but said in interview and vice versa. Differences may simply have been due to the format (written/verbal; anonymous/in conversation). The ease of responding verbally in interview (as opposed to writing text) and the free-flow of conversation arguably prompted the greater prevalence of reflective and affective comments. Similarly, more experienced teachers were more articulate in using educational discourse. However, the ready

acknowledgement of perceived difficulties and short-comings in interview comments suggests that participants were offering a genuine perspective. Nevertheless, it would be important to determine if the degree of confidence stated by respondents was an accurate reflection of teachers' practice. They may have overstated what they thought they did or failed to recognise their good practice.

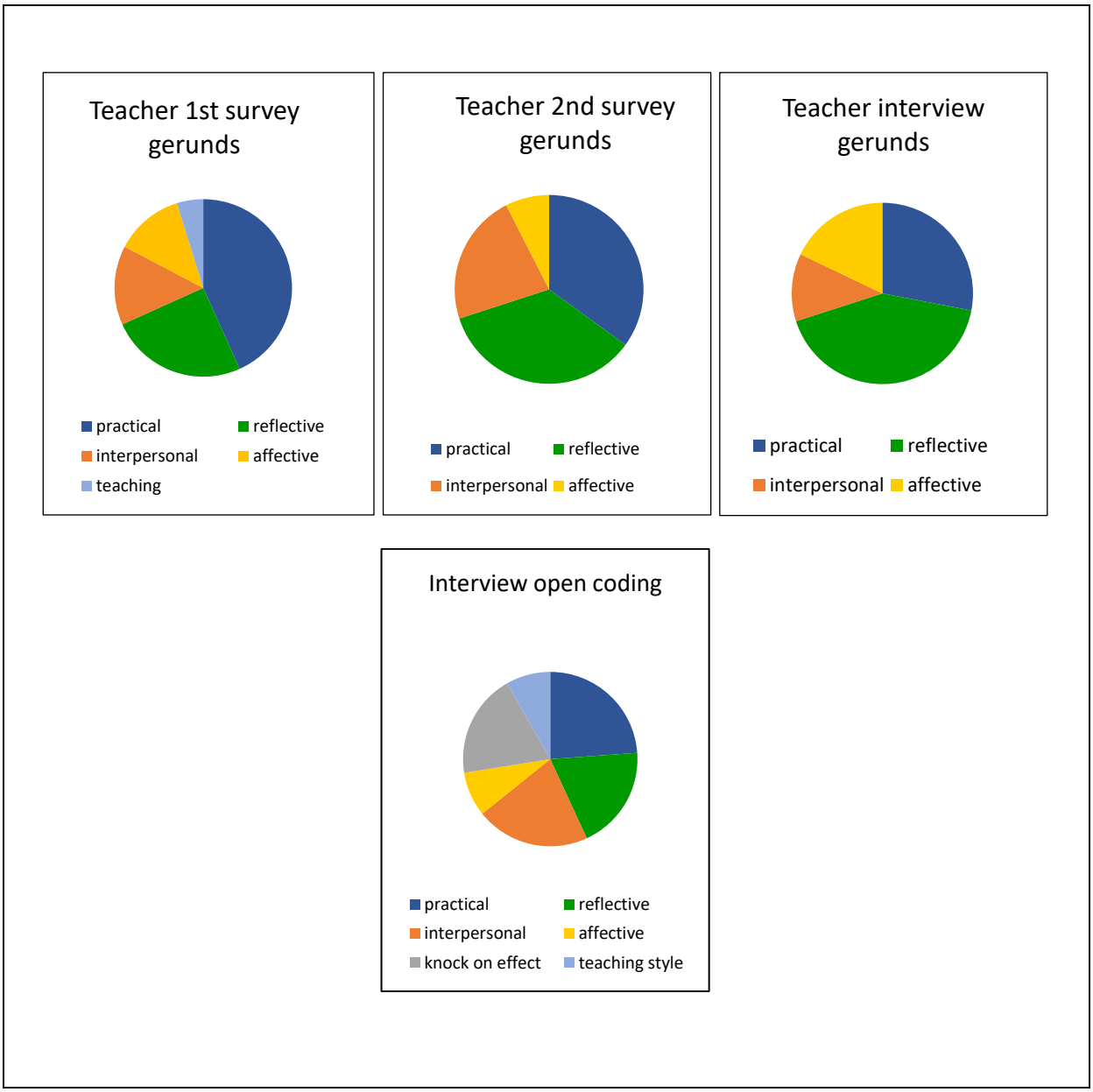


Figure 8.1 Balance of gerund frequency in survey and interview responses

Similarly, the semi-structured format of the interviews allowed for emerging ideas to be developed, through pausing or asking a supplementary question to encourage further thinking. This may explain why *knock-on effect* emerged as a significant category when in the more rigid format of a survey it might have been subsumed under *practical considerations*.

8.1 Teachers' reflections on preconceptions

Survey responses from all teachers reported a change to their initial preconceptions regarding the needs of a VIP and how these might best be addressed in the classroom, inclusively or otherwise. Findings here link to SQf: *To what extent does the presence of a VIP make tacit assumptions by staff explicit?*

Differences in context mean that direct comparisons between teachers are not necessarily possible and may not prove significant. As outlined in Chapter 2, teacher attitudes sit within school policies, and the extent to which staff aligned with these arguably depended on their service history. Milburn's OFSTED report identified progress of SEN pupils as an area for improvement, which may have heightened Angela's awareness of Millie's learning and attainment and potentially diverted her from being more inclusive generally. In the primary classrooms, Valerie and Angela had responsibility for all aspects of pupils' academic and social progress and Tom and Millie were present in class all day, every day. By contrast, in the secondary model teachers may only encounter their VIP once a day or once a week and so, consciously or unconsciously, view some aspects of the pupil's development as 'someone else's problem'. Possibly primary teachers were more aware of social development because the pupils are younger. In the secondary model there is less opportunity to allow matters arising from one lesson to bleed across into another, whereas primary teachers can blur the subject boundaries in response to following up perceived need and can use one subject as a vehicle to support or follow-up what crops up in another (eg: using PE as a practical

reinforcement of symmetry work in Maths). Similarly, subject-specific context may create different priorities and concerns for teachers. For example, Science and DT teachers may have a different attitude towards the degree of pupil independence promoted and expected because of health and safety routines.

Interview gerunds show a similar balance of themes between years of experience (see figure 8.2). Comparison should not seek a close degree of alignment as comments were a personal response to a question stimulus and the ensuing flow of the conversation. Strength of feeling might prove more telling, although returning to a theme might indicate a preoccupation or bias.

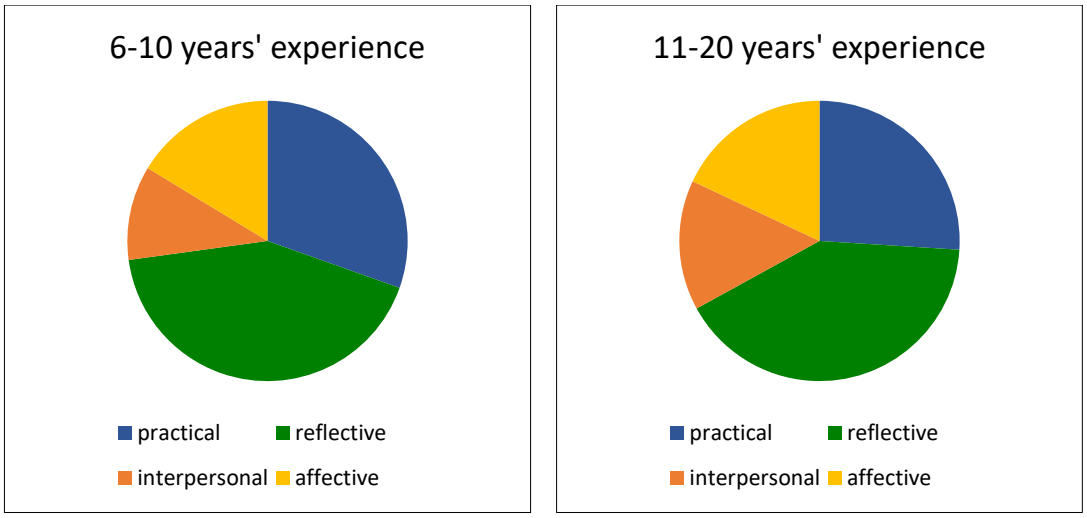


Figure 8.2 Balance of gerunds in interviews by years of experience

Seven of the ten teachers stated they had fewer concerns and two no major concerns at all. Only one had an increased level of concern, and this stemmed from curriculum demands for more text-based work. Angela's comments appeared more aspirational but, as a NQT it could be argued that her inexperience meant she had to maintain a broad approach as everything was new, and also that she had very few tried-and-tested methods and approaches to be reliant upon. Teachers with 6-10 years' experience placed slightly more emphasis on practical

aspects. Tadfield teachers presented something of a paradox, stating that they were confident in being able to adapting teaching methods yet stating a lack of awareness and knowledge of VI in general. Paula recognised a danger in preparing for change from a theoretical rather than experiential standpoint:

> Because there's sometimes too much to do to start with. You know, it's better to be "OK. Well, let's just meet and let's just start". Because I found it was so much that we had to take in because we've got stuff to take from school to bring and then we've got all these machines and then we're learning all these things. Oh and then we might learn the braille… (Paula interview)

Caroline made very few comments on interpersonal themes such as collaboration with colleagues. However, she expressed more strength of personal feeling, talking in terms of aspiring, wating to learn, feeling frustrated and inhibited.

No teacher made mention of any significant or wholesale changes to their teaching approaches (eg: dialogic, student-centred, discovery learning), suggesting that teachers had been unnecessarily cautious or unconfident at the outset. Indeed, there were only two oblique mentions (as survey responses) of needing to be mindful of teaching style:

> Ensuring that I'm not moving around from one side of the classroom to the other. (Rachael)

> I think I refer to pictures, pointing and using gestures a lot. Need to try not to rely on this. (Esme)

Chapter 9 (Discussion) will examine more closely the extent to which this may reflect a changed mindset (ie: the degree to which teachers think in a VI way) and the degree to which they have learned through experience and from colleagues. The remainder of this chapter will consider teachers' reflections on any changes to their teaching and to their working relationships with other staff.

8.2 Changes in teacher knowledge and understandings

Findings presented in this section illustrate the complexity of the classroom such that, as has been indicated in the previous chapter, some of the distinctions may prove to be somewhat arbitrary. Therefore, although findings primarily address RQ2 and its sub-questions, data also contribute to the considerations raised in alignment with the other research sub-questions.

8.2.1 Planning

Some triggers for change were practical and unavoidable if the VIP were to be taught at all (eg: ensuring access to the written word in large font) and addressing these would not necessarily reflect any desire to be inclusive. Aligned to this are constraints stemming from the curriculum. Rachael accepted as inevitable that Liam would not be able to access some aspects of learning, both for health and safety reasons and also through considering that "I think for some [concepts] maybe there is no solution". Paula was similarly accepting of there being no alternative for highly visual aspects of the IT curriculum (eg: using Microsoft Publisher to design posters).

All teachers stated that addressing VI inclusion had made them more organised. However, the content of Science lessons already had to be determined well in advance in order to prepare for the conducting of experiments in class and the sharing of equipment across the department. Arguably this supports why Rachael was the only teacher who did not mention any loss of flexibility or opportunities for last-minute changes in addressing VI inclusion. Nevertheless, Valerie articulated the balancing act required in maintaining inclusivity while making change in-the-moment:

> Tom wants to explore a lot so we try and make his...his size is N48… so trying to make a lot that big is impossible. But [LSA] managed to do it with a big map today but the others were looking at an atlas. So he wanted to look in the atlas with everyone else but then it meant he had to take a picture of each bit [on his iPad] so he was getting frustrated...And

> then I thought, “should I put the atlases out” because that obviously annoyed him, the fact he couldn't have access to it. But the others need to have access to atlases. So it's balancing that frustration. (Valerie)

All teachers spoke of needing time to think of alternatives to what they would ordinarily deliver - “thinking around an activity to make it VI-friendly” (Esme) - although there was agreement that the amount of time and how complicated or straightforward the changes might need to be was topic/content dependent. The fact that all KS3 teachers would be teaching the same lesson content to others classes in the year group is potentially significant here. As well as preparing any given lesson content for teaching across the week they might perhaps be able to think of how to fine tune it based on a ‘trial run’ from teaching another class beforehand.

Nevertheless, teachers were developing a broader palette of resources and ideas and using a wider repertoire of teaching strategies, one survey response stating that this often went against their instinctive teaching style. The primary teachers were in their first and eighth years of teaching and so may not have felt they were ossifying as yet. Valerie stated in interview:

> Every year I've taught I’ve had a different need whether it be autism or something, so it’s almost just in that level of it something you're just used to.....And very often what you might provide for them is accessible for another child, and whether it be, you know, a slight step above or below it's still that challenge or support for another child , so you can use it in another way […] It makes me think that actually everyone might have a level of, not just one size fits all. So it makes me think, OK, let's change things up a little bit as I can, um, to hopefully suit other children. (Valerie)

Jo reflected similarly:

> This is my 5th year here…it’s quite easy to get into a routine…and then someone throws you a curved ball and you actually have to rethink everything, so that’s quite a positive thing. (Jo)

There was no evidence that attitudes towards change were linked to length of service, as the literature on teacher change might have suggested. However, a tried-and-tested strategy might be successful even if not being the optimum way for a VIP to learn and could thereby reinforce a teacher's genuine belief in the efficacy (here, the inclusivity) of their existing practice. There were no mentions of resistance to changing planning or lesson activities. However, this may be because the participants were self-selecting. Teachers who were not open to the aims of the study would not have chosen to take part.

However, teachers may have been entrenched in their existing practice, not bothered to change or choosing to rely on LSAs to address VIP needs. Their practice may already be inclusive (school policies and OFSTED reports suggest that this may be the case) or they may be flexible and willing to change. That they do not consider they have changed very much supports either the underlying argument that VI inclusion is more straightforward than might be anticipated or indicates that teachers were already very good at *quality first teaching* and personalised learning. Nevertheless, it should be remembered that personalised does not necessarily equate to inclusive.

8.2.2 Teaching and learning

All teachers reflected that there had been less change required than anticipated, despite observations and conversations with LSAs suggesting that, in contrast to teachers' perceptions, a lot of small changes were actually being made (see Chapter 7). Rachael, for example, was somewhat dismissive of the extent to which VI issues had contributed to changes in her teaching:

> Quite often it's like "Oh well I did this with the one class but it didn't really work very well so the next time I did that lesson with the next class I changed this and I changed that"... But from Emma and Liam specifically, there's probably not a lot I'd say I've learned. (Rachael, interview)

However, other comments peppered through these findings chapters do show how she has fine-tuned practices and thus has adapted more than she recognises. Her lack of awareness of this can be taken as indicator that, for her, VI inclusion was not a significant issue.

8.2.2.1 *Changes in knowledge and perceptions of the learning of others*

In the initial survey, KS3 teachers made more comments than primary staff about their concern that changes for the VIP would potentially conflict with the needs of the others. However, there were no declarations at the end of the study of making something worse or narrowing learning opportunities or activities, suggesting that teachers appear to be receptive to and saw the value in the changes they felt they needed to make and were actually making an effort to address. However, it could be questioned whether they would want to admit to making changes for the worse. Their responses are nevertheless arguably a true reflection of their practice, given that they were all prepared to say when they could not or were not being inclusive or making a change. The implication here is a recognition of the potential danger of over-compensating in a desire to address VI inclusion.

Nevertheless, Vignette 7.2 in Chapter 7 highlighted how extending manipulatives to others in Maths made the teachers aware of the assumptions they had been making about the capacity of other pupils to work without them. Valerie spoke of recognising that others might "need that allowance […] a quieter, smaller group". Two KS3 teachers believed that, through seeing how the blind pupils were able to learn in spite of their additional difficulties, they had developed higher expectations of the other pupils. In Vignette 8.1 Paula arguably experienced an epiphany when recognising what Emma could achieve unaided: the choice of vocabulary (naïve, shock, striking) indicating the strength of the trigger for change here.

Vignette 8.1 Paula - Emma

Before Becky came to us, with Emma I was completely naive and I thought that she wasn't able to see half the things that she can and I have watched her for so many lessons and I have realised that on the computer for ICT she can see much more and that, for me, was actually a shock. So I could see that when she was tired she was finding it difficult and she was relying more on support but then when she wanted to find a certain picture of a certain something in a certain colour she would see it […] I think it was just because – oh, it sounds horrible – I removed in a way the support a little bit more from Emma just for me to see actually how much more she can do. And it was striking how much more she could see. And then we had this girl that came in with no sight at all, and the difference, it's just a shock. So, I have to admit, Emma now can do a lot more independently.

Vignette 8.1 Re-appraisals of others' learning

Vignette 8.2 – Y8 English – Caroline

I've been experimenting more with different ways of doing things and seeing whether…and some of them have worked really well…I've had the odd one where I'm not sure if everybody got the same level out of that.[…]

I'm finding it harder... teaching certain things...because I don't like to do something that is completely in accessible to the VI student... Sometimes that doesn't seem to make too much of a difference. Other times I wonder if, if I'm almost making it harder for the sighted kids by taking an element out of a lesson. So I tend to… I've tried to remove mages from some of the lessons because essentially I need to do it a different way. But if there isn't a real object then it's going to restrict the theme or the topic we'd be using.[…]

I've removed the images entirely from the lesson and used sounds instead and gone "So listen to the sound - what sort of place do you think this is and what can you hear?" [...] It was just slightly harder for them than I realised it would be is how I'd put it. But it opened up new interpretations because it was a little bit more open to interpretation. So actually, yes, although it was slightly harder just because they weren't so used to listening to things like that, it probably encouraged then to be a little bit more creative.

It's making me put more variety in, how you approach a task, and children love that don't they. They like difference. So yes, there's a place for routines and all of that but different styles of activity and different ways…especially with some children where repetition of the concept or the learning objective but with a different task and style of task is so much better.

Vignette 8.2 Refreshed practice in Y8 English

8.2.2.2 *Changes in knowledge and perceptions of learning activities*

Caroline (Vignette 8.2) provided an illustration of how addressing resources refreshed her practice. She would ordinarily use images to stimulate creative writing or verbal articulacy. Choosing not to use visual stimuli created work for her in devising alternatives but the fact that she pursued this, despite requiring additional thought and, at times, it being difficult, indicates that she valued the trigger for change that VI inclusion represented.

Valerie recognised that "It's made me realise that for years I probably did use too small a font on the ActivInspire flip resources" on the Smartboard, explaining that she believed she no longer needed to point to or read text that pupils were reading and copying to the same extent. She also stated that she now used larger font size as default for all worksheets. Similarly, Rachael recognised that retyping old worksheets to make them suitable for Emma was often a trigger to revise them, most often through sourcing a better image or providing a clearer diagram. Like Valerie, she had also embedded the use of larger size font as her default, believing it saved on preparation time. However Rachael recognised there could be issues if content spilled over onto too many pages. She recognised that providing the larger-sized resource only for Emma went against her inclusive intentions as Emma might need the LSA to help locate content (ie: what is referred to as page 2 for the class may be page 4 for Emma).

Caroline's vignette contains the only teacher mention of a potentially restricted diet. However, a Tadfield LSA noted a trigger for negative change in that a teacher avoided using IT when Liam was in class. The only other negatives reported were in terms of what was being provided for the VIP:

> Some things I do aren't as interesting for Becky (Paula)

> Sometimes I think people resort to giving her a written version of a task when it could be a bit more interesting (Tadfield LSA)

The use of real objects to supplement images or as an additional element was considered more engaging, adding extra dimension to learning by most staff, with only Jo questioning if pupils actually learned any better. Nevertheless, not only was she willing to 'go out of her comfort zone' to get the pupils to mime the Muslim *wudu* washing ritual as an inclusive alternative to ordering picture cards for Liam's class but she stated she had used this with the parallel Y7 classes, when the picture task she would ordinarily have used would have been fine. Esme recalled with laughter a lesson she had taught on Medieval concepts of heaven and hell in which she had supplemented an image in the textbook with a diorama of Lego figures (figure 8.3). It had not taken long for the pupils to pick up the figures and make up dialogue (not always historically accurate or on topic). Arguably these changes had brought enjoyment from the refreshed perspective on teaching a topic.

Figure 8.3 Inclusive adaptation of History image

Adaptations to IT/computing lessons to address VI needs were arguably least likely to affect the rest of the class as here adaptations were centred on findings ways to make inherently visual content accessible to a VIP. As stated above, Paula noted that it could be very difficult to find alternatives for a blind pupil. However, she noticed she made use of more collaboration and recalled an instance where she believed this had made the other pupil work differently:

> I don't think that particular student would have put much thought in to it otherwise. (Paula)

Having considered teachers reflection on their own practice we can now turn to findings on their working relationships with others.

8.3 Reappraisals of working relationships

In addressing VI inclusion teachers were being presented with the opportunity to build new or develop existing working relationships with an additional adult in the classroom. This was more of an alien concept for the secondary teachers, although they had all had experience of an additional adult in the classroom from having taught a SEN child in the recent past. The extent to which VI inclusion triggered any change was clearly different between the primary and secondary settings. Arguably this is unsurprising given the much reduced opportunity for out-of-class interaction between staff in KS3. Valerie and Angela typically had LSA support throughout the morning session and for some afternoons and so were used to the dyad of collaboration. For KS3 teachers this was more of a rarity, as the LSA would be present for one lesson of the secondary model and it was an effort to find time to meet otherwise, especially as LSAs were not paid to be in school after the end of the teaching day.

The high reliance on LSA support anticipated in the 1st survey remained in 2nd survey responses, expressed in quite strong terms - "vital (Paula)", "absolutely amazing…massive help (Jo)", "it would have been really challenging without that support (Valerie)". Almost all teachers valued the LSA in ensuring the VIP kept pace with whole-class learning. However, this was stated as being because of unavoidable things (Tadfield LSAs had braille skills; there was a need for a practical assistant in Science). Esme noted that an LSA was "invaluable" as the Y8 History curriculum was making increased demands on literacy, especially note-taking. Proficient braille readers are still slower than an average print user and there is no equivalent for skimming and scanning a page, so a sighted partner is very beneficial. However, it could be argued that if the teacher were being more inclusive, Liam would not need something additional.

Interview and survey responses suggest that it was LSAs who created the ultimate successful learning of VIPs and there was a recognition that the LSA minimised dominance of VIP needs. KS3 teachers in particular relied heavily on the LSA for this, with comments weighted towards a reliance, devolution or, at times, abdication of responsibility:

> The LSA is good at explaining and adapting. If a non-specialist steps in they mess it up - probably worried about how to support. I take specialist LSAs for granted and let them just get on with it. (survey response)

> I do rely on his LSA to sort of explain things to him sometimes. […] I will say to his LSA "He's got a braille version can you help him read it" whereas the others I'll put it on the board. Sometimes I sort of leave them to it a bit. (Rachael)

By contrast, Valerie and Angela's reflections were phrased in terms of 'collaboration', 'equals' and 'team', and LSAs were valued for the reassurance they gave:

> There are times when I probably do look at the LSA and go "Is this OK?" And just that reassurance or having someone to take advice from (Valerie).

> As a team we know Millie really well.[…] I get great support from my LSA (Angela)

However, the apparent difference between primary and secondary may be in part because the KS3 teachers were teaching blind as well as low-vision VIPs.

No participants expressed any negativity towards there being an additional adult in the classroom, despite this being atypical for KS3 teachers. Rather, KS3 teachers reported enjoying the collaboration whilst KS2 teachers considered that the additional time spent addressing VI inclusion had strengthened working partnerships; sharing the load, dissolving boundaries, engendering mutual respect. This perceived shift in balance was reflected in LSA survey responses. At the outset LSAs spoke of supporting teachers and VIPs: in the second survey they spoke of being relied upon.

> We've learned better how to get the best out of her (LSA1)

> So I think it's just, it's thinking a lot of things through and I think we're really quite good at bouncing off each other (LSA2)

> We are definitely one team but I think we are relied on an awful lot. (LSA1)

> LSA2 We will sometimes go to the teachers and say, you know, "We don't think this is going to come out very well, it's going to be too confusing. What do you want us to do about it? Do you want us to take some information out." (LSA2)

Only Paula identified this reliance in negative terms, saying that she felt guilty for relying too much on LSAs, especially if there needed to be a last-minute change.

> I feel more guilty towards the two support ladies that work with [Becky] because I felt that actually I rely a lot more on them and I definitely think it should be the other way round.[…] And it shouldn't be like that. I think *I* should, *I* should know more and I should be able to direct as a teacher. (Paula)

There are implications here for LSA job satisfaction and self-esteem if they feel more valued.

8.4 The affective influence of addressing inclusion

The final section of this chapter will present findings on the extent to which VI inclusion generated affective, emotional reflections and the degree to which findings can address the RQ2 sub-questions.

When asked to reflect in the second survey, the trend towards a reduction in concerns about teaching a VIP appeared less strong for teachers than for LSAs, perhaps reflecting the degree of responsibility different staff feel for their pupils (figure 8.4). An LSA's role and responsibility was primarily for the VIP and, in working directly with them, they were better placed to develop VI-specific support skills and an in-depth understanding of the VIP. The

class teacher had to maintain the overview of the learning and progress of a class of 25 or more pupils.

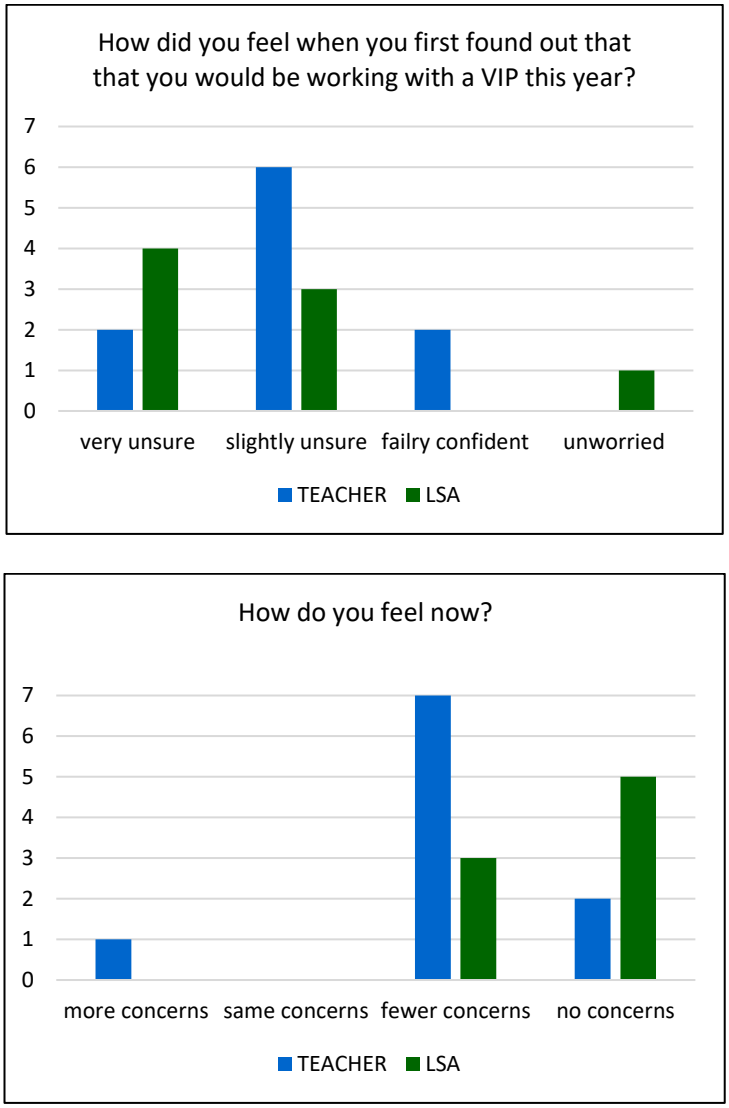


Figure 8.4 Comparison of teacher and LSA concerns 2nd survey

All 10 teacher respondents offered a supplementary text comment and eight of these were linked to the development of confidence through experience and/or familiarity with the VIP.

> I have more ideas of how resources can be adapted and worry less about trying to get him to do the same as the others all the time.(KS2 teacher)

> I do have more confidence but there are still some topics that take a great deal of thought when trying to teach them inclusively. However, I have good support from my colleagues and we can usually come up with a solution together. (KS3 teacher)

> I thought the LSA would end up as a 1-1 all the time but I've been able to get her to work with everyone. I didn't want to her to be stuck with one pupil and I'm glad that's not the case. (KS3 teacher)

The semi-structured format of interviews allowed participants to comment freely and for them to shape the balance of areas of discussion, affording significance to aspects that they considered important. Survey comments were phrased in very matter-of-fact terms, but that is not to say that personal, emotional reflections were not made. However, interviews were a source of most of the reflective comments. Arguably the flow of conversation was significant here: thinking pauses, 'no' that became 'yes' (or vice versa) after thinking through a question (most notably those on teaching style), non-verbal signals that enabled the interviewer to find and develop a shade of meaning that might not come across in a written response.

Affective responses from the primary teachers reflected aspirational themes and a desire to challenge themselves. By contrast, KS3 teachers made more mention of worrying and needing to justify why they were or were not doing something. Beyond a feeling that familiarity had lessened any apprehension and anxieties present at the start of the year, it was only KS3 teachers who stated ongoing feelings of guilt: guilt if not doing something the optimal way, if not including everyone on an equal basis, if relying too heavily on LSAs rather than developing their own skills. Paula's expression of regret at her reliance on LSA support shows a sudden insight into a tacit assumption:

> Paula: [The LSAs] know more and it shouldn't be like that. I think I should, I should know more and I should be able to direct as a teacher.

> Interviewer: Would you say that if you had a deaf child and they had a signer with them? Would you feel that you had to be able to sign fluently to them?

Paula: That's a good point. Um... (long pause).

Teaching inclusively did not have to equate to being in control and in possession of a complete set of specialist skills. By contrast, the value of collegiality was noted in a response in the second survey:

> I was involved with lot of their [LSA] training right from the start so we're actually had very similar types of training so we're all quite close and we all muck in really. We're a family in a way. (KS3 teacher 2nd survey)

Over 50% of reflective comments were expressed in negative terms. However, these negatives were aspirational; wanting to do better and feeling frustrated when unable to. Chapter 7 cited examples where teachers expressed disappointment when encountering aspects of their curriculum that could not be adapted for a VIP. Esme provided a further example in interview:

> There are some activities she can really join in - doing speaking and listening things - where she really does join in, whereas with the dominoes thing the others couldn't play her game and she couldn't play theirs. So that was a bit of a shame really. She could still do the same activity but she had to do it with the LSA rather than with one of the other students whereas I'd have put the students into pairs or threes to do it. (Esme)

Nevertheless, there were comments where teachers felt encouraged and validated by their efforts:

> There's other stuff that I've been quite surprised that "Oh, you can adapt it like that, you can do it like that"… (Rachael)

However, the interview situation may be a factor in the balance of negative affective comments being expressed. The very set-up of a reflective interview arguably tends towards one being self-critical rather than sitting crowing about one's successes.

Valerie articulated something of a paradox when expressing that, for her, addressing VI inclusion had been both ‘wonderful’ and a source of worry:

> It's a wonderful experience in terms of not necessarily adapting what we do but also as a life experience because it's thinking not just of her, it's thinking of the others and thinking of "What else can I do better?", "Am I doing what I'm doing right?" (Valerie)

8.5 Summary

The openness and honesty of teacher reflections has enriched the data in the previous chapter. Addressing VI inclusion provided a reason to re-examine and refresh classroom practice and to reappraise working relationships with other adults. In finding value in different modalities of learning, teachers altered their perceptions of the capabilities and capacities of the wider class. As with the practical changes in the classroom, attitudes and understandings changed in small and subtle ways and teachers were often reassured that they had more skill and capacity to think inclusively than they had recognised.

The next chapter will discuss the implications of the findings: how significant were the triggers for change, what was the true influence and on whom or on what. It will also consider what the findings cannot tell us.

CHAPTER 9 Discussion

This chapter will discuss the findings as they align with the core research questions. Being *instrumental* (Stake, 1995) or *informative* (Swanborn, 2010) case studies, ecological validity, rather than generalisability of findings, is at the heart of the methodology. *How* or *that* the presence of a VIP has had influence may be just as significant as the extent. Data have therefore been analysed inductively to look for significance rather than frequency of exemplars. Nevertheless, some cross-case analysis is possible because of overlap and commonality of themes. However, different issues may make sense in specific cases (Simons, 2015). Care has been taken not to over-emphasise VI as the trigger or reason for an action or event or stated change in perception. There is a danger that, as with data collection, analysis might focus on the new, the strange and the different and neglect the expected or the routine. Non-impact and the lack of change is as noteworthy as change as this would indicate that addressing VI inclusion had not restricted or diminished the diet of experiences for others, one of the key issues in the debate on how the current standards agenda may distort inclusive principles (see Chapter 2).

The caveat at the start of Chapter 7 is also appropriate here, namely that some of the distinctions made between themes are somewhat arbitrary. Equally, the sub-questions (SQ) are threaded through the chapter and some overlap cannot be readily demarcated.

9.1 Significance of triggers for change in the classroom (RQ1)

9.1.1 Overview

Findings indicate that there were no substantial conflicts between the themes identified as contributing to inclusive practice and areas of potential influence in the classroom. Changes that teachers wished to make to teaching and learning were not being inhibited by underlying school (or wider) policies, the classroom environment or available

resources, nor were there any significant financial implications in addressing VI-focused teaching and inclusion. Changes were small scale and the capacity for making them was situated at individual teacher level, with the exception of changes introduced to the physical environment. However, even these were simple to effect by site staff and created no conflict of interest, given that they did not restrict the environment for some in order to support others.

In considering SQc, findings show no obvious differences in the significance of changes according to school phase. The primary teachers made most mention of accommodating, balancing and prioritising differing learners' needs but arguably these are more pressing concerns when working with a class of younger and less self-directed/self-reliant pupils than for the KS3 teachers. It should also be recognised that Tadfield Maths, Science and English classes were streamed by broad ability and so there might be less extremes of cognitive difference, though not necessarily of personality. The balance of overt extension of VI strategies in KS3 classes was towards learning needs rather than social concerns (ie: prioritising understanding of content over incidental opportunities that an activity presented for social skills). However, teachers here have short, concentrated periods of teaching and learning time. Additionally, considerations of social skills learning are more likely to feature in KS2, both because younger children still need explicit guidance and because opportunities to address these are more likely to occur given that staff are with the same pupils all day.

9.1.2 Classroom environment

The placement of a VIP in the case study schools triggered changes to the campus and classroom environment that were straightforward to implement and maintain. Under current legislation (*Equality Act*, 2010) a school cannot refuse to admit a pupil because of a disability or SEN unless the adaptations required go beyond what is considered 'reasonable'. Nonetheless, an environmental audit conducted by a Habilitation Specialist gives a setting the opportunity to ensure that they align well with this legislation by seeing their buildings

through a seldom considered perspective (ie: low incidence of a VIP whose vision is sufficiently impaired to warrant input from Habilitation Specialist). This would be supportive of any campus user with a mild or unrecognised sensory or physical impairment. As with many inclusive adaptations in the wider world (eg: tactile paving, access ramps), the changes made in the three schools did not adversely affect anyone and could be ignored if not needed.

Considerations of the immediate learning environment led to smaller, more subtle changes, the influence of which had the potential to build if these were sustained and which were rooted in emergent new understandings and the reappraisal of assumptions concerning health and safety of a VIP and their capacity for independence. There were instances where changes in what was generally provided promoted pupil agency and pupils as independent learners, supportive of their individual differences and the capability perspective of inclusion (Terzi, 2014). The ready availability of VI-friendly equipment offered pupils an extended selection of resources which they could use if they considered they would be helpful. There was no indication that primary pupils were choosing them on the basis that these would reduce the challenge of a task. Arguably in higher-level work these could increase the challenge; for example if the pupil has to estimate where the millimetres or degrees came in-between the division markings on VI-friendly rulers or protractors (see fig 9.1). However, allowing pupils more choice over what to use to accomplish a task, such as Angela's extension of manipulatives in Y5 Maths, had potential for recognising the need in others and to challenge teachers on how they conceptualised educational difference or failure (Avramidis, 2006). The extension of a print adaptation to all (eg: sans-serif font in larger size) was not detrimental to those who did not need it but may have been supportive of pupils with mild or unrecognised reading difficulties. Subtle changes such as these go some way to align with view that difficulties for anyone can stem from arbitrarily constructed tasks and that pupils labelled as SEN may be 'artifacts of the traditional curriculum' (Skrtic, 1991c)

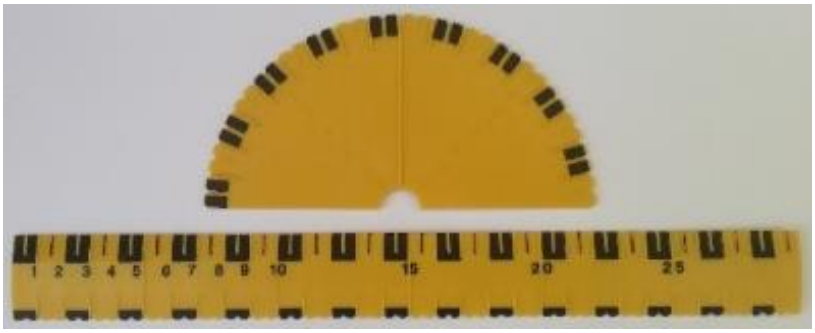


Figure 9.1 VI maths equipment

Changes to the classroom and wider learning environment such as these were rooted primarily in accommodating the VIP rather than in trying to make everything the same for everyone. They were straightforward to implement, aligning with 'minimum effort inclusion' practices as identified by Frederickson and Cline (2015, p. 89). They brought about an expansion of opportunities or choices for others rather than enforcing changes or restricting behaviours.

Turning now to teaching and learning activities, this is where some potential conflicts between the interests of the VIP and the whole class arose.

9.1.3 Classroom management

The presence of a VIP did not appear to necessitate any significant changes to teachers' classroom management or pupil routines and findings provide empirical evidence of changes that were sustained and sustainable (RQ3). It promoted an overall alertness by staff to potential hazards (eg: location of or free access to resources) but did not appear to suppress or inhibit the natural ebb and flow of pupil movement. However, it is not clear whether teachers' judgments on balancing the safety and involvement of the VIP in an activity against providing something separate or alternative were driven by inclusion or practicalities (eg: time, cost implications). That junior school staff reported or reflected more awareness of real and potential issues is unsurprising, given that younger pupils are arguably less predictable and more spontaneous in behaviours and that primary school classrooms are multi-purpose

environments. Tadfield classrooms, by contrast, were subject-specific. However, Burwood and Milburn classrooms were somewhat tight for space so there would have been little scope for moving furniture to suit different activities aimed at being VI-inclusive.

The fact that teachers did not make many changes to layout and routines may or may not suggest that they had already got the balance right, nor does it indicate whether there was more that could be done. As an infrequent visitor to the classroom, I would not have seen the full range of activities and there was always the consideration that teachers were putting on a show for a visitor. Similarly, any impact of any additional strain on primary teachers having to be alert all day every day could only be determined by teacher self-reports. By contrast, secondary school teachers would have a VIP in class for shorter, more concentrated periods. The role of support staff might be significant here. That Valerie and Angela did not speak in these terms may have been because the LSA was already stepping in before an issue arose.

An over-preoccupation with consistency of routines to support the VIP could repress pupils' independence. Clarity of location and labelling removed the need to ask for help, though potentially reduced instances when pupils would need to use reasoning or problem-solving (of more significance for younger pupils). Angela's wall displays were a good example of successful balancing. She had traded the extra work in keeping them updated for how pupils were using them. Striking the right balance is also important because of how peers will view what is being done, linking here to social aspects of addressing inclusion. Preferential treatment might cause resentment, whereas well-managed involvement may promote understanding and tolerance of difference.

9.1.4 Demands placed on learning through changed learning activities

Addressing the inclusion of a VIP had more direct influence on learning activities, offering up many illustrations of the *dilemma of difference* (Norwich, 2013) . The initial surveys reveal concerns about *what* or *whether* everyone would learn rather than *how*. Findings show that teachers had approached lesson content from the perspective of making it

inclusive and available to all before resorting to VI alternatives. No evidence was found to indicate that content was being reduced or the curriculum narrowed in order to achieve this, as research warns against (OFSTED, 2019b). Nevertheless, this gave rise to dilemmas for teachers over how much to change, with the trigger here being stronger for Liam and Becky's teachers. The fact that these dilemmas arose at all indicates teachers' inclination towards being inclusive. However, in resolving them, the balance of decision-making invariably settled in favour of finding an alternative activity for the VIP rather than others being disadvantaged either in terms of modality or content. It was somewhat surprising that secondary teachers were as sensitive as primary to the wish for everyone to have the same learning materials and activities where possible, given that Tadfield pupils were more independent learners, typically with individual work, seated at tables of two, and thus less likely than the primary pupils to be aware of what their peers were doing. Additional management issues could arise if primary peers were to gravitate to what they perceived as the VIP's more interesting modality for learning.

Findings show that addressing VI inclusion resulted in teachers' reappraisal of the core purpose of an activity and the reason for their choice of using a given modality (eg: to provide variety, engage and maintain interest or to support retention). When tasks were broken down more systematically (eg: Paula) there was a positive influence on the clarity of the learning process, in turn creating more opportunity to check understanding at each stage (pupils more able to check their own understanding as well as staff to check pupils) and a reduced likelihood of going off at a tangent. Aspects of teacher motivation to make changes will be discussed in section 9.2 below.

Changes to modality might place additional, different or reduced demands on other skills, such as language, memory or concept-forming (Quigley et al., 2018). There are links here to cognitive load theory (Sweller, 1988). Reducing unnecessary visual or verbal clutter in support of a VIP (the amount and layout of information on a page; the clarity and explicitness

of written or spoken language), is supportive of everyone in focusing on the essential, intrinsic task demands. Equally, the addition of words to images or real objects to a verbal description is supportive of dual channel/dual coding theory (J. Clark & Paivio, 1991). Perhaps unsurprisingly, Caroline, as an English teacher, was more aware of instances where changing the use of language might alter or dilute the challenge of learning. This was not identified as an issue by anyone else. Rather, additional or more targeted use of language was considered supportive of other modes of learning. Explicit language or subtle reinforcers would also be supportive of pupils experiencing difficulties but who cannot or do not like to articulate these. However, this ignores the potential impact on pupil independence and on demands placed on listening and attention. Any reduction in independence or pupil use of initiative if too much is made explicit would need to be balanced by time saved in adults not repeating instructions. This highlights teachers' ease or difficulty of balancing the needs of the one or the few with those of the majority.

Findings support the widely held view that the more varied a diet of learning activities and modalities the better the learning and that there is nothing inherently good or right about any strategy, nor that there is a right one for a given concept (eg: Davis & Florian, 2004; C. Tomlinson, 2014). Findings suggest that a breadth of pedagogy can identify pupils experiencing difficulties or not fulfilling their potential that may not have been apparent until they were presented with an alternative modality. As inclusively-minded staff, teachers and LSAs were arguably less likely to let their preconceptions lead to normative way of thinking (ie: "She's a VIP therefore she'll need this/won't be able to do that") such that the presence of a VIP would produce *dysconscious ableism* (Broderick & Lalvani, 2017) or reproduced the apartness that inclusion should resolve (Black-Hawkins & Florian, 2012). Rather, there were examples where any determinist views of some pupils' capabilities were challenged through seeing how they worked using an alternative modality (eg: Paula and Emma in IT) or when they had choice and agency over their learning (eg: KS2 Maths).

Teachers did not mention any significant difficulties in adapting activities and, after some initial awareness-raising by a QTVI, there was no mention by any teacher of ongoing input. There are implications here for the role of the LSA and effective communication and collaborative working, which will be discussed below. However, it should be recognised that the QTVI's role is to support the VIP's learning, though they might have inclusive ideas to offer, and that distinctive VI teaching approaches need not be effected through inclusive practices. Nevertheless, in addressing SQg and SQi, it does suggest that extensive privileged knowledge is not required in order to be inclusive (ia: Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011; Lewis & Norwich, 2005b), as is expanded upon in section 9.2.1.2. Rather, teachers were gradually becoming aware of what might be possible, making small adjustments such as de-cluttering images or addressing colour contrast. Further, some changes were significant for teachers in revealing gaps or issues with others learning (eg: extension of tactile learning in Science and manipulatives in Maths) or reappraising the extent to which a task addressed the learning point (Caroline stating that PSE drawing was "the lazy option").

9.1.5 Peer-peer social interactions

Although there was no active pupil participation in the research (ie: no first-hand data from formal data collection methods – see 3.5.1) there were nevertheless some data that inform the ideas from the literature on the nature of social interactions and understandings of difference.

The presence of a VIP created opportunities for all pupils to confront, reflect upon and develop their understanding and acceptance of difference in naturalistic ways. The apparent lack of any social discomfort, exemplified by the changes in other pupils' discourse and willingness to become involved in verbal interactions, is supportive of the contact hypothesis (Avramidis, 2009). There was no evidence of VIPs having a reduced or imbalanced social network in the KS2 classes (Banks, McCoy, & Frawley, 2018; Pijl & Frostad, 2010), rather that they were befriended on open and equal terms. However, observations were not made

during breaktimes in Tadfield Secondary and teachers may similarly not have been aware of how social interactions played out during unstructured times such that they did not reflect or comment on this.

Nevertheless, the balance of judgments on including the VIP appeared in all settings to be one of bringing the VIP in to the normality of school and classroom life rather than making conscious changes to prioritise them. It would be undesirable to shelter the VIP (or, indeed, any child) from what they would ordinarily encounter in the school environment, for their own social development and for the tacit message that might be transmitted to peers over attitudes towards impairment. However, the instances where the needs of the VIP were specifically addressed (such as always being at the heart of the action of a lesson, adapting the rules in PE) illustrate that there would always be some need to balance the protection-participation dilemma (Norwich, 2013). The good working relationships between teacher and LSA in the primary classrooms allowed for support to be provided sensitively in this regard, important in avoiding artificial social situations or presenting the image of the VIP as needing adult support (Edwards et al., 2019; Qvortrup & Qvortrup, 2017).

A lack of anything noteworthy from any of the data collection methods or from informal conversations with staff is an indication of the extent of natural interactions existing between the VIPs and their peers. There were no instances observed of direct adult mediation in initiating or maintaining peer interactions, only instances where an adult supported a blind child in finding their peer (eg: if they were in a different classroom room; if they needed a sighted guide to move towards them), not helping in starting the interaction. However, direct data from pupils would be needed to determine if a VIP ever felt excluded or marginalised and to determine the extent to which peers considered relationships with a VIP existed on similar terms to other peers.

Findings show that pupils' naturalistic interactions could challenge staff expectations and preconceptions of pupils' attitudes towards difference (eg: Rachels surprise at peers'

patience). Although staff reported that social interactions were developing satisfactorily with no adult mediation (apart from the buddy system to assist Tom in finding his friends in the playground), it cannot be determined whether the social interactions and relationships between pupils could have been strengthened with some focused input from adults in school. This is arguably of more significance for Tadfield pupils as the secondary model (bigger school, different teaching groups) lends itself to many more interactions than in a primary class where you are with the same group of peers continuously and the risk that these interactions may exist on a more superficial level if there is not the time and opportunity to develop relationships.

However, none of the VIPs in the study had any cognitive difficulties or delays or social communication difficulties related to expressive and receptive language such that they did not engage in general conversations as equals. Therefore findings do not add to considerations in the literature of friendship issues whereby SEN pupils are the 'poor relation' or indulged like a younger sibling (see 3.5.1). Social aspects might have been more significant if the blind pupils were in the primary classes, where pupil immaturity may have brought an innocence in considering difference as unremarkable or in it being more readily accepted.

9.1.6 Summary

Findings support the view that what constitutes *special* might not be specific pedagogical strategies but teacher knowledge about SEN such that they better apply common strategies (eg: Mitchell & Sutherland, 2020; Thomas & Loxley, 2007) and deepen their understanding of differentiation and adaptation. This is not to deny that specific VI knowledge was valuable in informing some pedagogical decisions in working with a VIP (eg: prior exposure/pre-learning of how to use apparatus), aligning with the argument that separation of knowledge and pedagogy can be detrimental to, here, the VIP (Mintz & Wyse, 2015; Rouse & Florian, 2012). Rather, findings support the view that teachers draw on a continua of strategies and that addressing VI inclusion had expanded these and inculcated a

different view of how children learn. Findings support Ainscow et al's (2013) assertion that the SEN/non-SEN distinction is no longer relevant and that any child might have a difficulty with learning a given concept at a given time, as illustrated by the value in extending Maths manipulatives to Tom and Millie's peers and the pair work with Becky that brought on language.

However, findings might have been different with a different severity of VI and with different age groups (ie: if the VIP had milder sight loss teachers may have thought the pupil could make do with the existing resources and tasks as planned). Here again, VI as a physical impairment, rather than having any inherent cognitive or behavioural aspects, makes a difference to impact. For example, it is straightforward to give the same large-font text to everyone but more thought is required to run a whole-class activity with extremes of reading ability and reading comprehension. The reason for someone's inability to see something clearly is easier to determine than someone's inability to understand.

9.2 Change in teacher knowledge and conceptualisations of SEN and inclusion (RQ2)

9.2.1 Teacher knowledge and understandings of practice

The expression of preconceptions and assumptions at the outset was not unexpected as, by the nature of the study, participants had not taught a VIP before. However, it should be recognised that the strength of any apprehension or uncertainty may have been enhanced by the very act of participating in the research, given that the study was identifying and isolating VI as an aspect of significance.

9.2.1.1 *Challenges to preconceptions and assumptions*

Changes and reflections of what might be possible or desirable that were a result of addressing VI inclusion show a clear link to the capability approach and ideas of a growth mindset (as discussed in section 2.3.1.3); in teachers' thoughts of what might be possible for pupils, their interactions with pupils and in teachers' own capacity for change. Any teacher framing of difference as a positive has the potential to reduce stereotyping or 'othering' of any given pupil originating in fixed-mindset, determinist views of pupil capability (eg: S. Hart et al., 2014). It also has the potential to influence over-simplifications and binary conceptualisations, such as those linked to labels of SEN (see section 2.3.1).

The first survey indicated that staff felt a general uncertainty but did not have many specific preconceptions concerning the capabilities or needs of a VIP. It could be argued that staff had a vulnerability in understanding how to effect VI inclusion because they had no preconceptions. There is an important distinction between open-mindedness or inexperience and someone lacking an understanding and awareness of any need to change. It is possible that the presence of an additional adult to whom teachers could delegate responsibility for the VIP's involvement and learning provided reassurance. Equally teachers may have simply been very self-assured of their own capacity to cope. Nevertheless, some assumptions were arguably valid (eg: Caroline's expressed need for alternatives to visual starters in English). The extent to which participants reflect any *dysconscious ableism* (Broderick & Lalvani, 2017) or normative ways of thinking in relation to SEN is not straightforward to determine as they arguably would not have chosen to participate if they were negatively disposed towards inclusion.

Addressing VI inclusion had challenged teachers' assumptions and expectations of what others could do or others' capacity to work using a given modality, arguably supporting the *growth mindset* position (Dweck, 2000) as opposed to determinist thinking. Findings showing several instances where teachers had been given pause to reconsider the choice of

topic, the reason for including a given activity, the scope for learning that it contained (eg: temperature change in Science experiment) and their expectations of pupils, cognitively or socially, leading them to think beyond planning learning according to pupils' perceived capabilities. Instances where teachers expressed the value of a breadth of pedagogy to pick up situations where learning was 'falling between the cracks', align with a central premise of this thesis.

Findings offer many examples of how a teacher's capacity to see the classroom and curriculum through a VI lens brought new insight into how to ameliorate situations that might otherwise create difficulties for other pupils (eg: clarity of teacher language, extension of Maths manipulatives, real artefacts in Science). This aligns with the capability approach, going beyond equality of opportunity to think in terms of maximising agency, and with Florian's view (2005) that to move beyond the dilemma of difference requires new understandings of how to respond to pupils who experience difficulties. Teachers drew on a continua of strategies situated within the *general differences* position (Lewis & Norwich, 2005a), rather than being over-reliant on one 'right' way to address an individual difference.

Addressing the needs of a VIP placed demands on teachers' creativity, whether devising parallel or inclusive alternative resources or activities. Such creativity again links to the capability perspective through being supportive of teachers' recognising that there can be more than one 'right' approach to a given outcome and being willing to explore possibilities rather than thinking along fixed, determinist lines. Change here stemmed from reflection about what was possible, rather than any direct training or specialist input. However, the fact that they did not mention referring to or relying on others for support here (LSA or QTVI) suggest that self-generated new understandings rather than advice or support for others is most valuable (SQd, SQg). This is not to negate teachers' apprehensions or misgivings concerning the impact of making inclusive changes, such as Caroline's concerns that if she did not use a visual stimulus for English language work then it would make the task harder, or

that by replacing topics that relied heavily on the visual mode she would be restricting the diet of pupil experience.

Nevertheless, VI inclusion had been managed with less change than staff had anticipated. Further, the fact that teachers did not recognise some of the smaller or more subtle changes that they had made (these being remarked upon by LSAs) suggests that it was not difficult to assimilate VI inclusion as part of daily practice. Teachers drew on a continua of strategies situated within the *general differences* position (Lewis & Norwich, 2005a), rather than being over-reliant on one 'right' way to address an individual difference. There were no declarations at the end of the study of over-compensating, making learning more difficult or narrowing learning opportunities or activities. Nevertheless, issues of equity and equality inherent in the dilemma of difference would have played out here in situations where teachers were balancing the needs of the majority against the needs of the VIP.

9.2.1.2 *The role of specialist and general knowledge*

The balance of privileged knowledge and common sense approaches was pitched towards the latter, with teachers' intuitively responding to all pupils in using the right strategy at the right time with the right pupil, in alignment with the intent of current policy directives. However, this way of thinking requires a flexible frame of mind and a capacity to tolerate an element of risk or uncertainty, even failure. Findings show that addressing inclusion has been a trigger to loosen any hold of tried-and-tested activities but that teachers often appreciated this, not just because they saw the benefits to pupils but because they themselves enjoyed doing something differently. However, it should be remembered that the pressures of the academic year (eg: assessment deadlines) had yet to accumulate.

Rather than being complacent about addressing VI-specific methods or delegating responsibility to the LSA, teachers seemed keen to address and enact change themselves and recognised that they had developed and extended their toolkit of strategies. To not use specialist approaches is to potentially deny the VIP their right to maximising their visual

skills. However, Tadfield teachers were not learning any specialist skills for Liam and Becky (eg: braille). Rather, they were reliant on LSAs, arguably a realistic situation given that they taught these pupils for at most four or five lessons out of a 35-lesson week and some only once. This, in turn, raises considerations of ownership of Liam and Becky's in-class activity. Further, findings show some disquiet amongst teachers because they thought they should know something or have a skill themselves. The dynamics and implications for skill development would arguably have been different for primary teachers with responsibility for a blind pupil as they would be with the pupil all day every day. Tadfield LSAs did have fortnightly contact as participant-observers when the QTVI was working with Liam and Becky.

A strong indication that changes in teacher knowledge stemmed from reflective practice and a drip-feed of information and experience rather than specialist input is given by the fact that that no mention was made by any staff of any ongoing support or advice being sought from a QTVI or the school's SENCO. At Tadfield there had been whole-school awareness raising prior to Liam's placement the previous year, refreshed in preparation for Becky's placement. Thereafter a QTVI had worked with the team of LSAs or 1-1 with pupils on specific VI skills and had visited Tadfield to observe pupils in a sample lesson from across the curriculum once every two or three weeks. Thus there was no certainty that the QTVI would have observed a given teachers' lesson and given feedback, encouragement and advice.

Tom and Millie had received five visits during the period of the study, though QTVI contact with staff was through informal conversation rather than formal feedback/discussion sessions. Whilst this may have been supportive of an openness of discussions and advice, there is an inherent danger in meeting on-the-hoof that conversations centred on questions arising from what was observed that day rather than targeting deeper understanding. Further, in encouraging VI-friendly approaches to develop through the conduit of a team of LSA colleagues rather than residing in one external expert, there is a danger here that a narrowness

of understanding or expertise could rest in a few key individuals unless there were open and fluid channels of communication.

Although teachers may have been unaware of the limitations in their teaching of the VIP that specialist advice might have highlighted (Porter & Lacey, 2008), the influence here was not on the wider class. Whilst perhaps not ideal, it shows that VI-friendly inclusive practice was still possible without intensive specialist guidance. Additional adults were largely working in line with the Code of Practice (DfE & DoH, 2015), fine-tuning rather than being quasi-teachers, except for when specific skills were needed.

9.2.2 Changes in teachers' conceptualisation of SEN and inclusion

This section will consider of how broad perspectives of SEN inclusion (see section 2.3) and issues around identification and labelling of SEN (section 2.4) have been reflected in the findings.

9.2.2.1 *Understandings of perspectives of inclusion*

No researcher observations or participant-reported findings link with any degree of strength to an organisational perspective of inclusion and an assimilation of VI into existing practice and/or an inflexibility of practice and responses to the VIP's differences. Rather, teachers were showing an intention to move towards strategies sufficiently flexible to accommodate the VIPs differences, rather than fragmentation and individualised planning, which in turn led to enhanced opportunities for all, aligning with Ainscow's (1994, 1999, 2020) transformative approach to inclusion. It is clear that VI creates some dilemmas of difference that cannot be resolved, such as where there is no substitute for a visual source of information (eg; some Science experiments, mime skills in Drama). However, in rethinking and expanding possibilities for differentiation, the study has shown how an intention to ameliorate or minimise difference can be rooted in reality and not merely be aspirational.

When moving away from some of the binary opposites in the dilemmas position, teachers' practice reflects much of what is recognised in the capability approach, not least when recognising that not all individuals will participate or benefit from education in the same way and that similar functionings may stem from different capabilities. Findings show that addressing VI inclusion had been a vehicle for teachers to reflect on who was learning what and how and provide examples of how evaluating only functionings gives too little information about how well pupils are fulfilling their potential or able to maximise agency (eg: extension of Maths manipulatives).

9.2.2.2 *Understandings of identification and labelling*

Issues concerned with labelling have been identified as an obstacle in pursuing inclusive practice (Chapter 2). For SEN and disability, the issue is often narrowed to being centred on a deficit model, whereby specialist knowledge and pedagogies are considered needed to address pupil needs (Terzi, 2010; Thomas & Loxley, 2007), with a discourse of expertism in turn potentially affecting teachers' feelings of self-efficacy. Equally, so much terminology is relative and contextual. What constitutes *additional* provision? What is *generally* available? How do you interpret 'reasonable adjustments' (*Equality Act*, 2010). Findings might be very different in schools with a different profile (eg: level of resourcing, socio-economic profile of intake, size of school). An over-reliance on labelling and the viewing of SEN through an individual rather than a curriculum lens can lead to ideas of a technology of inclusion (Dyson, 2000) and SEN pupils becoming 'the artifact *(sic)* of the traditional curriculum' (Skrtic, 1991c). Experience in working with a VIP showed teachers the value of common sense approaches and helped them see what could be possible, not just for the VIP but for everyone.

VI exemplifies the difficulty of the binary medical/social models of disability. Unlike many other categories of SEN, VI is not discerned purely by subjective observations of cognitive, attitudinal and/or situational factors. Impaired functioning of the eye can be

detected by objective measures (eg: Ishihara colour-blindness test) but impaired functioning of the person can be caused by social-environmental factors (eg: colour contrast of written materials). Whilst it is not possible to remove every barrier (a blind child cannot ride a bicycle in traffic), essential support should not be denied through an interpretation of inclusion as equal provision and sameness.

Findings show that teachers' conception of VI as a category of SEN aligned with the SEND Code of Practice (DfE & DoH, 2015), which states that schools should use identification to determine any necessary action, not to categorise a pupil. Categorisation is supportive here for the medical aspects of VI. Teachers' most pressing concerns at the outset were rooted in the specific needs of the VIP, that they would be able to access their learning materials and move around safely. This is unsurprising given teachers' lack of VI experience and limited knowledge of what might be needed. Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge the argument that pupil needs are relative and that perceptions of 'normal' can vary contextually (eg: Cullen et al., 2020; Florian et al., 2017). For all teachers, by the nature of the study design and participant selection, VI was outside of their existing frames of reference. For Becky and Liam's teachers especially, addressing inclusion required the acquisition of skills and knowledge that do not feature in teacher training courses.

Teacher preconceptions align with the arguments presented in Chapter 2 that labels can lead to unnecessary concerns as to the skills required to address an individual's needs (eg: Florian, 2014; Thomas & Loxley, 2007), supporting the view that it is the meaning that a teacher invests into an identified SEN, not the need itself, that creates exclusion (Hansen, 2012). Findings support the view that an over-emphasis or over-reliance on labelling can lead to convergent thinking (ie: seeking the one solution to a problem) rather than divergent, open-minded, creative thinking. Findings chapters give examples where this was made explicit, such as teacher declarations that addressing VI inclusion had caused them to reappraise the purpose of a given activity or to be more creative in their planning.

9.2.3 Influence on professional and personal self-concept

9.2.3.1 *Influence from changes to practice*

Findings add shades of meaning rather than directly challenging the literature on teachers' personal and practical change processes. Nevertheless, given the consensus in the literature (Chapter 4) that change from personal growth and awareness is more sustainable than change imposed from without, the extent that addressing VI inclusion may have changed teachers' professional self-concept and their beliefs and conceptualisation on inclusion has potential for long-term significance. Notwithstanding the changes to teachers' conceptualisation of SEN and inclusion, due weight should be paid to teachers' genuine belief in the efficacy of their current practice. Equally, it should be recognised that change can present as entrenchment of one's views or practice as well as difference.

Change to practice would have to happen, inclusively or not, if the VIP was to be taught at all. However, it should be recognised that the potential for denial or defensiveness regarding change may not have been represented in the findings because, as self-selecting schools and participants, teachers were likely to be favourably disposed towards inclusion, adaptation and personalisation. Similarly, findings suggest that preconceptions were readily set aside, not least because they proved worse than the reality, and that there was no significant anxiety in asking what the typical traits would be, aligning with the view that experience and learning through practice can militate against labels as self-reinforcing (S. Hart et al., 2004). Rather, teachers' beliefs in their self-efficacy were more significant in teaching the VIP and, by extension, teaching inclusively (see below).

Although teachers and LSAs had given plenty of thought to anticipated changes, they had felt comfortable to make these as and when the need was recognised and to build understanding and expertise over time, rather than feeling anxious that they were stepping into the unknown. This is not surprising given their lack of prior experience. Findings show small and subtle *adhocractic* changes to planning and pedagogy, arguably unsurprising given

that teachers would be unlikely to want to put time and effort into changing things that they did not need to and also given that uncertainty can affect the desire to take risks, especially if this might be at the expense of proven successful practice (Goldacre, 2013; Reio, 2005). Reflections in interview seem to be playing down any additional time as 'money well spent', contributing empirical evidence to address RQ3 (the extent to which changes are sustained and sustainable). Any increased organisation still allowed for change in the moment, though perhaps challenging the equity-excellence balance. Many changes had been maintained across the term; teachers were quick to give examples of where they had perceived a knock-on benefit.

Findings do not readily indicate the extent to which career experience contributed to any mastery of inclusive practice. There was no evidence that early-career teachers did not have sufficient resourcefulness or confidence to accommodate something new, nor that longer-serving teachers were resistant to changing tried and tested planning and strategies, despite the consensus in the literature that this is often the case (eg: EASNIE, 2019 literature review). It could be argued that Angela, as an NQT, had high aspirations but equally that she was comparatively inexperienced. Those teaching mixed-ability groups may have had a broader approach, arguably more so in the primary classes where there would be wider differences in the social maturity of pupils as well as their cognitive development. Additionally, the nature of the VI (ie: blind or low vision) and age of the pupils might have been influential in teachers' attitudes towards change. It would be very difficult to ignore the needs of a pupil with very low or no vision and still address the full breadth of their learning. Nevertheless, as has been recognised above, a VIP's learning could be addressed successfully on an individual basis without teaching being inclusive.

9.2.3.2 *Affective influences*

The role of emotions should not be underestimated (Hargreaves, 1998) and findings show that it could be the strength of feeling associated with an inclusive change that promoted

how it was valued (eg: Paula's shock when reappraising Emma's capabilities; Rachael's surprise at peers' patience). This arguably made teachers aware of tacit assumptions that they held, a consideration of SQf. Feelings of guilt influenced teachers' personal self-concept at times, such as when they stated they felt they lacked the skills to teach the VIP for a given task or topic and placed responsibility for the VIP onto the LSA. Similarly, feelings of risk or uncertainty were ameliorated by effective LSA-teacher dyads. This has implications for the role of support staff and the wider school structure (see 9.2.3.2 and 9.2.3.3 below), both in practical terms (ie: where any specialist skills reside) and in the sense and nature of collegiality, given that teachers may struggle to maintain change in a negative or unsupportive school culture (Fullan, 2016).

Findings align with the view that teachers' willingness to develop inclusive practice is influenced by their beliefs in their competence as well as their knowledge of any strategies or skills. Strength of self-efficacy has been linked to career experience and frames of reference, (here a previously unencountered SEN) and also to the motivation and perseverance individuals demonstrate in dealing with challenges (Bandura, 1997; Subban et al., 2018) Teachers' skills emerging over the period of the study had helped lessen the apprehensions over how to work with a VIP and lessen concerns over the suitability or VI-inclusivity of a lesson/topic or how to approach the teaching of it. Reflections in interviews highlighted the significance of experience; that teachers realised by having done something what the positive or negative outcomes had been. Nevertheless, teacher recognition of the value of changes made was evident in any times that they used the same strategy or activity with other classes or said that they would use it the next time they taught the topic. It is arguably not surprising that they were prepared to invest time at the start of the year as staff are typically refreshed and have a new year's resolve to set and to show high standards of one's practice on starting work with a new class. This would arguably be especially true for Angela as an NQT in her first post. The fact that teachers were still making inclusive changes after a term suggests that

they identified wider benefits. Whilst it was beyond the scope of the study to determine impact on academic progress, benefits to language and social aspects of learning were noted by teachers, LSAs and in observations.

The strength of feeling expressed when teachers recalled being unable to effect an adaptation or avoid a difficult topic for VI inclusion (linked to external pressures from curriculum content) gives an indication of how often they were trying to be inclusive the majority of the time. Some disquiet was expressed when teachers recognised that changes to pedagogy meant a reduction or restriction of using what came instinctively or naturally to them or what they valued as the best way to do things. By contrast, reflection in interview brought recognition of the value of changes for improvement or extension and, with the possible exception of Paula, an acknowledgement that it was admissible not to be in control and to know everything.

9.2.3.3 *The role of the wider school structure*

The practical approaches to VI inclusion in this study follow the linear *identify – address – reflect* model (eg: Kaasila, Hannula, Laine, & Pehkonen, 2008). Pupil placement decisions had been made prior to the start of the research, which may account for why teachers did not speculate on reasons for the VIP having been placed in their school or class but rather spoke only in terms of addressing VIP inclusion at classroom level. Nevertheless, teacher professional self-concept and self-efficacy were supported by the wider school structures (see section 8.4). In alignment with the view that change that stems from personal growth and understanding is most supportive of motivation to implement and maintain changes to practice, all settings allowed staff flexibility of professional judgment in planning and pedagogy. Whilst no teacher has a limitless repertoire of approaches and strategies to match every eventuality, nevertheless it is argued that a higher level of self-efficacy typically generates less negative predictions about pupil ability (Sharma & George, 2016).

It is not straightforward to determine the extent to which findings align with Fullan's (2016) view that the degree of change in education policy and initiatives is such that teachers are resistant to additional effort. Acceptance of change is dependent on a school's ethos and the policies and systems already in place. Staff in Burwood, Milburn and Tadfield Schools all had the opportunity to contribute to policy development, aligning with view that agency supports acceptance and implementation (Reio, 2005; Schon, 1983). Similarly, teachers did not express that they were under accountability pressures, which have been recognised as militating against acceptance of SEN pupils (Runswick-Cole, 2011; Slee, 2006). Rather, teachers appeared well-supported in their freedom to exercise autonomy in the classroom and by the LSA provision available.

9.2.3.4 *Role of additional adults (SQd)*

Findings show that addressing VI inclusion was dissolving aspects of hierarchy. LSAs developed skills teachers did not learn, especially true for any Tadfield teacher who only saw their blind pupil once a week. Arguably this also gave LSAs closer parity of status in eyes of the pupils.

Findings show that teachers' self-concept was strengthened by effective dyads with LSAs that supported inclusion by taking the pressure off teachers and helping the flow and spontaneity of a lesson. They were happy to devolve classroom responsibility and recognised the value of the LSA, typically expressed in strong terms, as noted in section 8.3. The case study schools seemed to have open-minded, flexible and tolerant staff and did not run on rigid hierarchies. This inclusivity amongst staff and blurring of a professional divide might be setting-specific and not play out so effectively in a school or with a teacher that held to a stronger sense of hierarchy. Nevertheless, these findings show the potential and value of recognising the skill, not the job title of the person.

In presuming participants' positive disposition towards addressing VI inclusion, it is not surprising that findings align with the view that teachers with positive attitudes towards

inclusion are more likely to adapt their classroom practice and to work collaboratively with colleagues for the benefit of all pupils (Sharma, Forlin, & Loreman, 2008). Teachers' comments support the argument that, on gaining a broad familiarisation with key knowledge and understandings, a teacher's existing palette of skills can be sufficiently flexible for working with different pupil needs, adding weight to the questioning of the need for a discrete specialist pedagogy for SEN children (Lewis & Norwich, 2005b; Rouse & Florian, 2012). Paula's views (Chapter 8 section 8.1) illustrate Florian's (2014) argument that over-intense initial preparation and information can paint the pupil as a difficulty.

Teachers in all three schools had sufficient LSA support, especially for the blind pupils, that they could have addressed the VIP's learning successfully without making inclusive changes for the majority. That teachers maintained changes for a full school term aligns with Huberman's (1992, 1995) cyclical view that changes in attitudes can trigger changes in practice that in turn lead to change in pupils' learning, thereby reinforcing the attitudinal change. However, it is arguably true that findings support the view that change stems best from first seeing the benefits to pupils rather than requiring an initial change in teacher mindset (eg: Fullan, 2016; Guskey, 2002). Findings show evidence of a virtuous cycle linking positive influence to the perpetuation of a practice and the motivation for doing so, which in turn links to the valuing of mastery as the best source of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997). In addition, Burwood, Milburn and Tadfield Schools all allowed for teacher agency in developing systems and policy and freedom to use professional judgment. This aligns with Ainscow's (1999) valuing of reflective practice and of regarding difference (here VI) as an opportunity not a problem. The research found examples of where teacher change began at all points of the cycle.

9.2.4 Summary

Findings support the view that being inclusive is not a one-off issue to be addressed but rather a point of departure (eg: Booth & Ainscow, 2016), here generating small changes

with ripples that spread out. The maintenance of teachers' intentions was supported by a virtuous cycle of feedback coming not just from perceptions of pupils' learning and seeing value in doing something a different way, but from teachers' own enjoyment of doing things differently and valuing the opportunity to refresh their practice. This more than balanced any increased workload that came from addressing VI inclusion.

Although initial awareness-raising had opened teachers' eyes to some inclusive possibilities, changes in teacher knowledge were gained gradually and through experience rather than from a reliance on formal training. Some VI-specific skills would be required to work with the VIP in a teacher-pupil dyad but not necessarily in order to address inclusion. Rather, working with the VIP led to changes in teachers' preconceptions and assumptions not only of VI but of how addressing a previously unencountered SEN need not be intimidating. Rather than wholesale changes to their practice, they were using their existing capabilities: a balance of *techne* and *phronesis* (Flyvbjerg, 2011), knowledge *of* and *in* action (Schon, 1983). It was reassuring for teachers to realise that they had more skill and capacity than they thought. However, the research did not encounter any who were not well-disposed towards inclusion in the first place. Further, it does not necessarily follow that because you have to do something you will necessarily reflect and reappraise.

9.3 Wider school and policy contexts (RQ3)

The timeframe of the study does not allow for strong assertions to be made as to the sustainability of the changes that were observed or reported (RQ3). Clearly, addressing the needs of a VIP would place ongoing demands on teachers' thinking and planning, whether they were aiming to be inclusive or were teaching the VIP in parallel with the rest of the class. The study did not attempt to measure in quantitative terms any changes to the amount of time taken in reflecting, planning and making new or adapting existing learning materials.

However, teacher perceptions here are arguably as important as quantitative data. If the outcomes were perceived as valuable or enriching for others' learning then it is more likely that inclusive practices would be maintained.

An examination of how the three case study schools were able to work within current national policy is important as this underpins the sub-questions connected to the knowledge and understandings required to successfully address VI inclusion and connected to the degree to which VI inclusion might be sustainable (SQd, SQe, SQg). It has been recognised in the *equity-excellence dilemma* (Florian et al., 2017, p. 14) that the wish to respond to individual pupil needs, inclusively or otherwise, may conflict with principles of equity and equality at systems/wider policy level (Ainscow, 2020; UNESCO, 2017), despite assertions that 'eliminating system level obstacles to equity will improve equity and benefit disadvantaged students, *without hindering other students' progress*' (OECD, 2012, p. 10, emphasis added).

As noted in section 2.5, policy developments have aimed to reform and develop the education of pupils with SEN from the top down, through guidance documents and legislative directives. Study findings show the potential for movement towards greater inclusion originating at classroom level. This aligns with the recognition that addressing the breadth of the learning environment and using strategies that reach out to all pupils can reducing the need for some pupils to be classed as having SEN (DCSF, 2008b; OFSTED, 2010) and with the view that inclusive policies should recognise that educational barriers can arise from the system itself (UNESCO, 2017). Findings show that staff skill and capacity to deal with a low-incidence SEN may already reside in those who are able to be reflective practitioners and who are supported by schools that tend towards being *adhocracies* (Skrtic, 1991a) (see section 2.3.1.1). However, this is not to suggest that schools should bear the brunt of responsibility for change, rather that collaboration within and between settings would arguably better support a movement towards greater inclusivity.

It was beyond the scope of the study to consider the role of local decision-making that sits in-between national and school-level contexts. As noted in section 6.1.1, pupil placement decisions had been made prior to the start of the research. However, there is the potential for the schools in the study to be regarded as centres of specialism or excellence (especially Tadfield, given the emergent success in working with two blind pupils), such that parental or LA preferences might gravitate towards these schools being the preferred choice of secondary placement for a VIP.

The research design means that findings will not show definitively how easily practices might be modified in other settings but do indicate that national policy is not of itself restrictive, supportive of the view that differences in the influence of inclusion on non-SEN pupils may be attributable to local interpretations and implementation (Hehir et al., 2016). The demands placed on teachers to make VI inclusion successful reflect the same overarching tensions and requirements as described in Chapter 2: that performance measures and an over-prescriptive curriculum can place pressure on responding to individuality and on flexibility of professional judgment (eg: Norwich, 2013; Slee, 2013; Winter & O'Raw, 2010). A setting's attitude towards league tables, for example, might affect its capacity for inclusion, as might priorities linked to financial constraints, staffing allocation, the structure of the curriculum, and pupil groupings (ie: setting, mixed-ability).

The intent in all three settings for a whole-school approach, with responsibility threaded through the staffing hierarchy, afforded all staff the opportunity to understand and contribute to policy. This aligns with the view that support and ownership of the process lead to greater acceptance and accommodation of change (EASNIE, 2019; Kin et al., 2017; Tiernan et al., 2018). However, as self-selecting participants in a study on inclusion, teachers were likely to be favourably disposed towards ameliorating and minimising the treatment of individuals as different.

There was no evidence that such a whole-school approach meant staff felt under more pressure to live up to expectations or felt that they were failing to do so, a potential issue for Valerie given OFSTED's recognition of the high aspirations and standard of provision at Burwood. By contrast, for Angela, the fact that SEN provision was a main area for improvement identified by OFSTED may have heightened discussion, mutual support and collaboration within Milburn School, thus creating a favourable climate to address teaching Millie's class inclusively. The research was not able to pursue this as it was not possible to interview her.

Findings do not reflect the reported tensions created by aligning inclusion with standardised curricula or the current emphasis on attainment and standards (eg: Hedegaard-Soerensen & Grumloese, 2018; Norwich, 2013; Slee, 2013). No mentions were made of the potential for the presence of a VIP to affect standards, despite the anonymity of the surveys providing the opportunity for an honesty of responses. It is beyond the scope of this research to ascertain the extent to which the schools were driven by performance measures. However, the VIPs were in non-assessment years (ie: SATs, GCSEs) so teachers may not have been overly driven by data. Moreover, an absence of concerns for an impact on attainment measures may reflect their preconceptions that VIPs would not necessarily have cognitive difficulties, just ones of access to learning.

All three schools allowed teachers flexibility in lesson content within the frameworks of departmental or year group schemes of work. However, curriculum constraints on inclusive practice that teachers identified as inevitable or unavoidable illustrate how the *dilemma of difference* can play out, especially the danger of over-compensating in the desire to be VI-inclusive. The issue was rarely that a VIP would not be able to access learning, as there was nearly always an alternative modality to address the underlying learning objective, rather that inclusion would have to give way to learning in parallel with others. Teachers were pragmatic in accepting this, even if it did cause a certain amount of disquiet at times (eg: Caroline

stating that she felt her choice of topics was narrowed through her desire to ensure that those she used were always VI-inclusive).

9.4 Summary

Findings support inclusion theorists (eg: Ainscow, Dyson, Florian, Norwich) who contend that schools have plenty of existing capacity to be inclusive and that effective inclusion is achieved through the analysis of existing practice and the sharing of staff expertise. In considering RQ2, findings show that only a little new knowledge and understandings were required at whole-school level to address VI inclusion. Equally, there were no conflicts between VI inclusion and school or wider policies that would prevent or inhibit the sustainability of the inclusive changes made. The three schools reflect inclusion as a process, requiring open-minded staff and ongoing awareness (Ainscow & Miles, 2008; Booth & Ainscow, 2016). The flexible, *adhocratic* approach (Skrtic, 1991a) afforded scope for changes to become habitual. After a term, VI-inclusive intent did not appear to have faded nor staff become complacent. Nevertheless, at this stage of the school year some of the pressures (eg: pupil and staff performance targets) had yet to accumulate or might seem a long way off.

CHAPTER 10 Conclusion

Inclusion has featured in UK education policy to varying degrees over the last 40 years. In recent years differing combinations of government policy, financial considerations, teacher training and skills, curriculum requirements and a performativity culture have all placed pressure on schools' capacity and motivation to be inclusive. At the same time, schools and teachers have been charged with delivering a personalised curriculum, responsive to the needs of all pupils, something which is at the heart of the current school inspection framework (OFSTED, 2019a).

This thesis has sought to find empirical evidence to contribute to the debate on inclusion by considering the little-examined perspective of how the inclusion of pupils with SEN might influence the teaching and learning of others, focusing here on a specific impairment. It has interrogated this overarching inquiry through three core questions to determine the influence of the inclusion of a VIP in practical terms and the extent to which there is any change in teacher conceptualisation of and attitudes towards inclusion. The research also sought to determine the extent to which the inclusion of a VIP is a sufficient trigger for change and the extent to which this change is sustained and sustainable. The ecological validity of the research adds nuance to the current discussions as to the desirability and effectiveness of inclusive educational policies.

This chapter will summarise the key findings of the research by aligning them with the conceptual and policy frameworks in the literature discussed in Chapters 2-4. It will consider any implications of the findings for current and future practice. It will also address the limitations of the study and offer recommendations for extending and developing the research field.

10.1 Summary of findings

10.1.1 Policy and context

Rather than highlighting restrictions that can come with internal or external policy, findings suggest that many aspects of inclusive practice might be enacted by fine-tuning and adjusting existing ways of working and do not require significant changes to school or classroom practices.

Findings show that current national education policy is not of itself restrictive of inclusive practice. However, as has been stated often in the preceding chapters, the research was undertaken with inclusively-minded staff and schools. It is also important to recognise that the schools may have been more receptive towards VI because staff preconceptions were aligned to the reality that VI does not have any inherent links to cognitive difficulties. Rather it is situated 'within the person', such that it need not affect anyone else. SEN with accompanying cognitive or behavioural difficulties might not have been so readily accommodated in the three schools.

Burwood, Milburn and Tadfield schools are arguably good examples of an *adhocracy* (Skrtic, 1991b). They were able to follow policy but were willing and sufficiently flexible to adapt to the changes that addressing VI inclusion required as the period of the study progressed. The different foci of the SEND Code of Practice (DfE & DoH, 2015) and National Curriculum Inclusion Statement (DfE, 2014a) were readily resolved in the schools' SEN policies and teachers' daily practice. The Code values a focus on within-child factors and the teacher's understanding of the child and of their diagnostic category: the National Curriculum places importance on external factors, such as the learning environment and teacher high aspirations. Having no prior experience of VIPs, it is understandable that teachers were initially aligned more towards additionality to ensure learning for the VIP but findings show how swiftly and smoothly they become aligned with the Inclusion Statement position.

An important factor in the success of VI inclusion was the status and role of support staff. All three schools allowed for any hierarchy of roles to give way to shared responsibility for pupils' success in a classroom activity. A recognition of an individual's skills and informal opportunities for LSAs and teachers to work collaboratively led to responsive practice 'in the moment'. Where there was delegation, or if a skill rested solely with the LSA, then it was more likely that the VIP was working in parallel with their peers rather than being the stimulus for inclusive practice.

10.1.2 Conceptualisations of inclusion in relation to SEN

The research supports the view that inclusion is a process not a fixed point application of an initiative. It shows that inclusion need not be viewed as a cause for significant change or additional work. Schools did not have to have a full complement of skills and strategies in place from the outset, even for working with blind youngsters. Whatever the range of ages and subjects, teachers were all able to learn as the term progressed. This is not to negate the role of initial training/awareness-raising and attention paid to overarching planning before the start of term. However, the fact that teachers were comfortable in addressing VI inclusion one issue or curriculum topic at a time aligns with the view that schools have a good deal of the necessary expertise to be inclusive and that SEN as a concept only arises when needs exceed a school's capacity to respond (Florian et al., 2017).

Findings offer a nuanced interpretation of *minimum effort inclusion*. (Frederickson & Cline, 2015, p. 89). Rather than reflecting the term in the sense of making little effort (as recognised as a feature of some existing studies in this area), in this study it represents the reduction of teachers' perceptions of effort because much had become habitual, with a VI mindset being developed by osmosis. This was evidenced in teachers not realising the extent of what they were doing until reflecting in interview or informal conversation and in their lack of reference to input from a QTVI or SENCO, suggesting an unconscious assimilation of new strategies and thinking.

Addressing VI inclusively led to changes in the experience of learning for others. Some changes led to pupils having more opportunity for control over their own learning. Others gave pupils a more varied diet of activities through supplementing or changing the learning modality. Findings show that other pupils were not merely passive recipients of change. There were examples of changes in their use of language and changed (often increased) demands placed on them for listening, on their memory and on their collaboration with peers. The presence of a VIP gave peers an insight in to another person's world and naturalistic opportunities to consider and develop acceptance of difference.

10.1.3 Conceptualisations of SEN in relation to inclusion

Findings support Warnock's (2005) reframing of inclusion as allowing children to pursue common goals in an environment best conducive to their teaching and learning. Further, they support the belief articulated in Chapter 2 that this thesis would align most closely with the capability perspective of inclusion and the social relational model of disability, which both frame SEN and disability as being individual and relational. However, VI highlights the reality that not all barriers are removable. Nevertheless, in placing the focus on the purpose and learning objective of a task, the conceptual balance rested with finding what might be creating a difficulty rather than seeking a right way to respond to a label. The loosening of teachers' hold on tried-and-tested or favourite strategies in turn supported an increase in pupils' agency (Y5 noticeboards; free choice of potentially helpful resources, such as maths manipulatives). This again aligns with the capability perspective, whereby equal opportunity is not defined as equality of provision but equality of the opportunity to engage and achieve.

By not individualising the VIP or disconnecting their impairment from the classroom situations that may contribute to it, an emergent awareness of VI issues shed light on others' struggles or where VI strategies would have wider benefits (clarity of instructional language, coloured glue sticks). This did not result in other pupils being aligned to the SEN label,

supportive of the view that there is no clear-cut point where a difficulty becomes an impairment or becomes a *special* need and aligning with non-determinist perspectives of ability (Dweck, 2000; S. Hart et al., 2004). Nevertheless, teacher assumptions about others' capacities were uncovered, as were instances where youngsters were on the edge of struggling. This links to the idea that some children's conditions are rendered invisible through coping mechanisms, conscious or unconscious. A breadth of learning strategies and modalities rather than the 'one right way' is supportive of the undiagnosed, unassessed or those with a difficulty inaccurately attributed. This is especially true for the young, those poor at verbalising their difficulties or those easily influenced by the suggestions of (more senior) others.

10.2 Significance and implications of findings

This research makes an original contribution to the field of SEN and inclusion by extending knowledge of the influence of addressing the inclusion of SEN pupils on the teaching and learning of others. There has been comparatively little research from this perspective and my literature searches have found none that is rooted specifically in VI. In addition to the originality of the topic, by considering influences at the level of teacher conceptualisations as well as classroom practice, the originality of this analytical framework has enriched the methodological approach in providing findings with strong ecological validity and transferability. Further, by adding nuance to existing theory, the research has shown how VI inclusion is a microcosm of the larger inclusion debate.

No education system, by definition of being a system, can be endlessly flexible and personalised. It is equally unrealistic to expect teachers to have specialist knowledge and proficiency in multiple specialist strategies; to be pedagogical polyglots. Again, by definition, specialist is that which is not ordinarily known or provided. However, as widely agreed in the

literature, schools typically have a breadth of staff expertise and to this end the study has been helpful in holding up a mirror to the practice of the teachers in Burwood, Milburn and Tadfield schools.

The research has been the vehicle for a reappraisal of attitudes and assumptions about SEN and inclusion, for reflection on existing practice and the sharing of staff expertise, leading to new understandings for each individual. It can be hoped that the research will serve a similar function to others who engage with the findings. However, the research has recognised the epistemological difficulty of generalising situational knowledge (ie: the extent to which findings can be turned into global advice applicable to all schools). Thus, in the discussion that follows, it should be remembered that the methodology of this qualitative study offers ecological validity or transferability rather than generalisability of findings.

10.2.1 Implications in practical terms – significances for schools

The research cannot claim to prove the aphorism that 'what's good for SEN pupils is good for all'. However, findings show that viewing the curriculum and pedagogy from a novel perspective (the low-incidence of VI) has the potential to enrich practice as well as to draw attention to current weaknesses. The research did not find changes made to include a VIP that were detrimental to others. If not generating a positive knock-on effect, changes were at least neutral. Nevertheless, findings show a need for balance. A VIP (or any youngster with an additional need) cannot be sheltered from the difficulties that their impairment may create for them but must be given skills and strategies to ameliorate these. Equally, where there is a clear disadvantage to others in addressing an individual's circumstances, it is justifiable to provide a parallel, personalised activity (eg: blind pupil listening for a chemical reaction but not removing the colour change test for the others). The balancing of provision of learning resources (eg: the financial considerations of providing everyone with a tablet or talking calculator) allowed peers to experience and recognise that one can be treated fairly without being treated the same.

Inclusion should not be rooted in a focus on the minority but should look more widely at the contexts in which teaching and learning take place. Pre-occupation with individualised responses deflects attention away from teaching that reaches out to all learners (eg: Lewis & Norwich, 2005a; Mitchell & Sutherland, 2020). Focusing on one dimension of difference will discount the complexity of children's learning and social experiences or may lead to assumptions about sameness or otherness of the remainder of the class (Florian et al., 2017). Rather, as the findings here have shown, considering the wider dimension can support those children whose impairments or difficulties with a particular learning concept are unrecognised and who might have been feeling out of step with their peers.

Equally, the presence of a VIP not only provided opportunities for acceptance of difference to develop through instinctive, unaffected, spontaneous interactions but also for the VIP to experience being unexceptional. This unexceptionality may have been 'stage-managed' when adults were consciously addressing the inclusivity of classroom activities. Nevertheless, minimising times when the VIP was noticeably different or side-lined from general activities and the modelling that adult's behaviour presented would be contributing to an undercurrent of difference-as-unremarkable. There are links here to the view that 'inclusion is not a matter of where you are geographically, but of where you feel you belong' (Warnock, 2005, p. 38). This aligns with the view of inclusion as a having a responsibility to the marginalised and ideas of mutual respect; that pupils have the right to be themselves whilst accepting the responsibility for valuing others as their equals (eg: Florian et al., 2017).

As stated above (10.1.2) findings resonate with the view that inclusion is an ideal and a process, not a binary concept or a one-off application of a policy or strategy (see section 2.3.1). If the discussion as to the degree to which extensive privileged knowledge might be required in order to be inclusive (sections 9.1.4 and 9.2.1.2) is to resonate with a breadth of class teachers and school leaders, it is the qualifier *extensive* that has significance. Findings have shown how the move towards greater inclusion can be a shallow rather than steep

learning curve, as is illustrated by Paula's valuing of developing understanding through practical experience over theorising in advance (section 8.1), and that confidence might be determined by years of classroom experience rather than training/awareness-raising linked to a specific SEN or disability (as suggested in section 6.5.2). However, the ease and maintenance of this move is contingent on existing staff skills, collegiality between staff teams and teacher/LSA dyads and support from school management and the broader approach taken by leaders on inclusion (ie: whether inclusion is considered only in terms of SEN and disability or whether perspectives encompass other areas of potential marginalisation such as gender or ethnicity). Whilst there are implications for school structures (such as the role of the SENCO and the deployment of support staff) in supporting an inclusive ethos at whole-school level, the study has shown that it is possible to develop inclusive practices at the level of the individual classroom.

The nature of teachers' emotional responses to change have been shown to be influenced by the nature of collegial support, both at classroom level through effective dyads with support staff and through leaders' attitudes towards contingencies of enacting change. Teachers in this study valued being trusted to trial ideas and approaches as they developed responses to VI inclusion and were working in a culture that valued expertise that resided in the individual, not the job title, and that did not hold to a strong sense of hierarchy.

The empirical data provided by this research may prove helpful in informing pupil placement decisions. The low-incidence, and therefore minimal experience, of VI need not be an influence for decisions on the allocation of VIP to a particular teacher, given that findings show that the ability to address needs individually as well as inclusively is not necessarily dependent on years of experience. Similarly, findings may reduce concerns over class composition as they have shown a neutral or positive impact on peers across a range of ages and curriculum areas. Ainscow (2020) argues that outcomes for vulnerable groups of learners are unlikely to improve without a change in the capacity of policy-makers and practitioners to

address assumptions about their capabilities. The empirical data may be helpful in informing the decisions of school leaders in accepting a VIP on roll or LAs in placing a VIP in a particular setting.

Nevertheless, it should be remembered that the research for this thesis has not sought to present exemplar cases to represent VI inclusion but informative (Swanborn, 2010), instrumental (Stake, 1995) cases to help gain insights into the influence of addressing VI inclusion (see section 5.2). Although findings here show a balance towards common sense approaches over privileged knowledge, this is not to negate the importance of understanding and safeguarding the specific needs of VIPs (or other SEN attribution or educational difference), the importance of ensuring equity of opportunity for their social and academic development and the constraints placed on schools in the provision of equitable learning opportunities to them across the curriculum (see section 2.2).

10.2.2 Implications for ideas about teacher knowledge development and change management

Change that will directly impact on learning usually involves teachers acquiring new knowledge, adopting new practices and modifying beliefs and values (Fullan, 2016). Addressing the needs of an individual pupil will inevitably place demands on a teacher's time, practice and knowledge, whether being inclusive or teaching the pupil in parallel with others. Hence VI was an unavoidable trigger for change to teachers' practice.

Change is rarely a moment of epiphany; rather it stems from exposure and experience (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; Sharma & George, 2016). Traditional teacher development often attempts to change teachers' beliefs and attitudes, with the view that this will lead to changes in classroom practices, although being considered stable traits, such change in self-efficacy beliefs and attitudes towards inclusion can take time (see Chapter 4). Rather, initiatives are only assimilated when teachers perceive their benefits to pupils, with the literature placing value on collaboration to further embed it. In the secondary school model

especially, a teacher may have limited input into pupil placement decisions and so have to adapt to a situation of which they consequently feel they have no immediate ownership. Findings have resonated with the argument that teachers with positive attitudes towards inclusion are more likely to adapt the way they work to benefit all their pupils and are more likely to influence their colleagues to support inclusion, encouraging collaboration and sharing classroom management skills. (Sharma et al., 2008).

10.3 Limitations

It was beyond the scope and scale of the study design to look for longer-term changes that may nevertheless take place in the case study schools. It cannot be determined whether the sustainability of VI-inclusive approaches may be inhibited by practical factors: financial considerations linked to resourcing more complex work as pupils progress through Tadfield Secondary; time pressures during assessment periods. Equally, although inclusive strategies may have become part of a teacher's mindset, there may be a loss of drive and interest once the novelty of the VIP's presence has worn off. The relatively short, focused time period of the study did not lend itself to considering whether any inclusive changes made their way into the year group/subject schemes of work from which teachers made their lesson-by-lesson plans or made their way into school SEN /inclusion policies.

Although there is no empirical evidence, the findings may resonate with and have a degree of transference for teachers of older or younger age groups. Arguably VI inclusion becomes easier the older the VIPs are as they will have developed agency, skills and coping strategies. As stated in Chapter 9 (Discussion) findings might be different if the classes were in assessment years (SATs, GCSEs). Equally, the study cannot readily show if the influence of VI inclusion might be different with a different severity of VI in a different age group (eg: blind pupil in Burwood Y3 class). A less severe VI might not trigger so much change. In the

same way that teachers might not recognise the need for adaptations for a milder VI, findings have shown how the other pupils benefitted from VI strategies but whose need for an alternative or supplementary modality had not been recognised.

It cannot be determined how the influence of a VIP would play out in a school that was not already positively predisposed towards inclusion. Study schools were rated well by OFSTED for their SEN provision, although they had not been chosen on this basis. As was posited in the discussions of methodology (Chapter 5), it may have proved that it had been non-inclusive settings that did not reply to initial requests to take part. Similarly, at classroom level, the participants were broadly pro-inclusion teachers. It cannot be determined how teachers with other perspectives might work with the needs of a VIP in their classroom.

10.4 Next steps

10.4.1 Extending the scale of this research

Although it would still not provide true generalisability findings, there are several pathways for extending the study to provide a more recognisable reflection in the mirror being held up to practice and thereby offer more transferability.

Replicating the study in different settings would contribute further to the findings on the ease of making inclusive changes:

- a setting or with teachers neutral or negatively disposed towards inclusion.
- other types of school – not least academies, given the data emerging about the impact of academisation on SEN pupil placement (Liu, Bessudnov, Black, & Norwich, 2020).
- extend the age range to KS1, KS4 and post-16 settings.

Narrowing the focus could provide depth of understanding:

- a single curriculum subject – to investigate and similarities and differences in the influence of addressing VI inclusion across a breadth of settings and age groups
- an examination or assessment year group (eg: Y6, Y11) – to determine any constraints on flexibility from external assessment pressures.
- compare teachers when teaching similar or parallel classes with and without a VIP

A supplementary visit to the case study schools at the end of the academic year and/or the following year when VIP has moved on could contribute additional data to determining the degree that changes were sustained and sustainable.

10.4.2 Additional and supplementary research

A more quantitative study could be used to investigate the impact of VI inclusion in terms of attainment. Objective measures of pupil performance could then be compared with the subjective teacher reflections and researcher observations on quality of learning and retention.

Research could be undertaken with pupils to gain their perspectives of any influence of VI inclusion. This could contribute to understandings of negotiations of social identity, meaningfulness of relationships, understandings and acceptance of difference, aligned to the contact and homophily hypotheses (3.5.1).

As identified at the start of this thesis, there is little empirical evidence on the influence of addressing the inclusion of specific SEN and disabilities on the teaching and learning of others. The methodology could be adapted to address the influence of inclusion through the lens of a different sensory or physical impairment (hearing impairment, restricted mobility). The investigation of the influence of other categories of SEN (as defined in the SEND Code of Practice (DfE & DoH, 2015)) might require a more thorough revision of methodology in order to fully address cognitive or behavioural aspects of other SEN.

10.5 Personal reflection

When asked what I teach, I have always, somewhat facetiously, answered ‘children’. As a classroom Music teacher I have always encountered a wide breadth of ability in any class, whether it was notionally a streamed, set, or mixed-ability group. In my most recent special school post there was a Y9 class with a non-reader, a child with restricted upper body movement and a pupil who had just passed their grade 5 piano exam. Thus I have never been able to offer a one-size-fits-all lesson. It is beyond my powers of memory to determine whether the chicken of non-determinist thinking came before or after the egg of experience of teaching a subject where diverse abilities of pupils required diverse responses if they are to be challenged and to make progress.

In my own practice I have found that it invariably works to ‘give a little to gain a lot’, whether the little is in terms of time taking to plan and prepare or little steps outside of my comfort zone. I have a weight of reading, and now some empirical data, to support my convictions that the classroom experience for staff as well as pupils is diminished if the group is viewed as a gestalt entity of homogenous learners who will flex to meet the teacher’s modus operandi. The breadth of study through the EdD programme has helped me find my voice. I sincerely hope that, by being rooted in professional practice rather than ‘dusty academia’, that my voice will be more readily received by ‘ordinary’ teachers (of whom I have yet to meet a single example).

10.6 Concluding thoughts

Stumbling blocks to inclusion and participation can stem from a range of factors: national or local policy, the curriculum, pedagogy, staff experience and expertise and teacher self-concept. If inclusion is to be considered more possible and palatable then anything that helps to minimise or remove these obstacles and give settings and staff more confidence

should be welcome. The scale of this research may only provide one tweak of the steering wheel to turn the oil tanker here. Nevertheless, it offers a contribution to Florian's request for examples of inclusive pedagogy in action 'articulated in ways that are useful to other teachers and supportive of their practice' (Florian, 2015, p. 11).

Inclusion as a concept can be narrowed through a focus on deficit, situated in both an individual pupil's needs and an emphasis on specialist knowledge and pedagogy to meet them. Conversely, specialist knowledge and strategies can inform pedagogy in ways that support the wider group and reduce any stigmatising of an individual. This research shows the value of a breadth of pedagogy in identifying those who are experiencing difficulties and yet who slip through the net of current assessment procedures or screening systems, have their needs mis-attributed or who mask them through coping strategies or an inability or reluctance to articulate them. By showing how addressing inclusion from one perspective can extend learning for others, this thesis aligns with Ainscow's assertion:

> [SEN pupils are] the hidden voices that could inform & guide improvement activities
>
> (Ainscow, 1995, p. 75)

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Teacher 1st survey

Baseline survey for teaching staff about to work with a pupil/student with visual impairment.

This is a short questionnaire to find out about your current experience of working with pupils/students who have visual impairment and your thoughts ahead of working with one this coming year.

The abbreviation **CYPVI** has been used to refer to children/young people with visual impairment.

Visual impairment includes those who are blind and those with low vision (such that it is noted on an EHCP). It does not include those whose vision can be corrected through wearing glasses.

You do not have to answer every question. Partially completed forms will still be of value.

All comments will be collected and treated anonymously.

1. How many years of classroom experience do you have (in teaching and support roles)?

- ☐ 0-1 years
- ☐ 2-5 years
- ☐ 6-10 years
- ☐ 11-20 years
- ☐ 21+ years

2. Do you have any experience of teaching or supporting a CYPVI?

- ○ yes
- ○ only a little
- ○ none to speak of

3. What particular abilities or skills do you think a pupil/student with visual impairment might have?

4. Are there any difficulties or issues that you think a CYPVI might have in your school/college?

5. How would you rate your confidence in the following areas (1= low, 5 = high)

	1	2	3	4	5
understanding the nature of your pupil's VI	○	○	○	○	○
modifying the learning environment	○	○	○	○	○
modifying the curriculum	○	○	○	○	○
adapting your teaching methods	○	○	○	○	○

6. Where do you anticipate there might need to be changes in your classroom in order to work with your CYPVI?

	negligible/none	a little	some	a lot
resources	○	○	○	○
Please briefly explain how				
lesson activities	○	○	○	○
Please briefly explain how				
pedagogy/teaching style	○	○	○	○
Please briefly explain how				
classroom management	○	○	○	○
Please briefly explain how				
my own skills	○	○	○	○
Please briefly explain how				
other	○	○	○	○
Please briefly explain how				

7. Have you had any training in working with CYPVI? Please tick all that apply.

- ☐ Whole-school information session provided by external adviser
- ☐ Whole-school information session provided by internal member of staff
- ☐ Small-group or one-to-one training from external adviser
- ☐ Small-group or one-to-one training from internal member of staff
- ☐ off-site training course
- ☐ Other (please give brief details)

8. Are you a:

- [ ] teacher
- [ ] SENCO

9. In which Key Stage will you be teaching a CYPVI. Please tick all that apply.

- [ ] EYFS
- [ ] KS1
- [ ] KS2
- [ ] KS3
- [ ] KS4
- [ ] post-16

Done

Appendix 2 LSA 1st survey

The impact of the inclusion in schools of pupils with visual impairment on classroom teaching and learning.

This is a short questionnaire to find out about your current experience of working with pupils/students who have visual impairment and your thoughts ahead of working with one this coming year.

The abbreviation **CYPVI** has been used to refer to children/young people with visual impairment.

Visual impairment includes those who are blind and those with low vision (such that it is noted on an EHCP). It does not include those whose vision can be corrected through wearing glasses.

You do not have to answer every question. Partially completed forms will still be of value.

All comments will be collected and treated anonymously.

1. Do you have any experience of teaching or supporting a CYPVI?

- ◯ yes
- ◯ only a little
- ◯ none to speak of

2. What particular abilities or skills do you think a pupil/student with visual impairment might have?

3. Are there any difficulties or issues that you think a CYPVI might have in your school/college?

4. How would you rate your confidence in the following areas (1= low, 5 = high)

	1	2	3	4	5
understanding the nature of your pupil's VI	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
modifying the learning environment	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
adapting your teaching/supporting methods	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

5. Where do you anticipate there might need to be changes in the classroom in order to work with your CYPVI?

	negligible/none	a little	some	a lot
resources	○	○	○	○
Please briefly explain how				
lesson activities	○	○	○	○
Please briefly explain how				
teaching/supporting style	○	○	○	○
Please briefly explain how				
classroom management	○	○	○	○
Please briefly explain how				
my own skills	○	○	○	○
Please briefly explain how				
other	○	○	○	○
Please briefly explain how				

6. Have you had any training in working with CYPVI? Please tick all that apply.

- [ ] Whole-school information session provided by external adviser
- [ ] Whole-school information session provided by internal member of staff
- [ ] Small-group or one-to-one training from external adviser
- [ ] Small-group or one-to-one training from internal member of staff
- [ ] off-site training course
- [ ] Other (please give brief details)

7. In which Key Stage will you be working with a CYPVI. Please tick all that apply.

- [ ] EYFS
- [ ] KS1
- [ ] KS2
- [ ] KS3
- [ ] KS4
- [ ] post-16

Done

Appendix 3 Teacher 2nd survey

University of Reading

End-of-study review TEACHER

This is a short questionnaire to review any changes resulting from the inclusion of a visually impaired pupil (VIP) in your lessons. I hope to follow up the same themes with those of you who have agreed to be interviewed.

You do not have to answer every question. Partially completed returns will still be of value.

All comments will be collected and treated anonymously.

Next

1. How did you feel when you first found out that your VIP would be in your class this year?

- ◯ very unsure
- ◯ slightly unsure
- ◯ fairly confident
- ◯ unworried

2. How do you feel now?

- ☐ I have more concerns as to how best to work with her/him.
- ☐ I have the same concerns as to how best to work with her/him.
- ☐ I have fewer concerns as to how best to work with her/him.
- ☐ I have no major concerns as to how to work with her/him.

3. If you would like to explain why your concerns have changed or can give some examples you can comment here. This is a topic I will cover if you have agreed to be interviewed but you may prefer to make an anonymous comment here.

4. How much did you rely on LSA support at the start of the year?

- ☐ I would have found it very difficult to include the VIP without his/her LSA
- ☐ It was helpful but not essential to have 1-1 LSA support for him/her
- ☐ I did not find that the VIP needed 1-1 support very often

5. How much do you rely on 1-1 LSA support now?

- ◯ I find I am using 1-1 support more often
- ◯ I am using LSA support at about the same level
- ◯ I am using less 1-1 support

6. If you are using LSA support differently why might that be?
Here are some possible suggestions, which may or may not not be applicable, so there is space to add your own:

- ☐ In order to make sure that the VIP keeps up with the rest of the class
- ☐ I know the VIP well enough now to plan activities for her/him
- ☐ The VIP works better with their peers now that the class has gelled a little
- ☐ I have received some additional training (formal INSET or informal advice)

Other:

7. Compared to the start of the year, has there been any change in the amount of:

	a lot more	a little more	negligible	a little less	a lot less	N/A unsure
classroom noise	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
pupil talk	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
teacher talk	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
questioning	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
listening the pupils have to do	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
visual activities you plan (eg: pictures, videos, Powerpoints)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
hands-on activities you plan	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

8. Are there any changes you have made or strategies you have used for the VIP's benefit that have worked well with the whole class or that you have taken and used with other groups?

9. Are there any changes you have made for the VIP's benefit that have not worked well with the rest of the class?

10. In which key stage do you teach your VIP. Please tick all that apply

- [ ] EYFS
- [ ] KS1
- [ ] KS2
- [ ] KS3
- [ ] KS4
- [ ] post-16

Prev Done

Appendix 4 LSA 2nd survey

University of Reading

End-of-study LSA

This is a short questionnaire to review any changes since September resulting from the inclusion of a visually impaired pupil (VIP) in the class(es) you work with.

You do not have to answer every question. Partially completed returns will still be of value.

All comments will be collected and treated anonymously.

Next

1. In which key stage do you work with a VIP. Please tick all that apply

- [ ] EYFS
- [ ] KS1
- [ ] KS2
- [ ] KS3
- [ ] KS4
- [ ] post-16

2. Do you work with the same teacher when they have another class?

- ( ) no
- ( ) yes - please state which year group(s) / subject(s)

I also support in:

3. How did you feel when you first found out that you would be working with a VIP this year?

- ( ) very unsure
- ( ) slightly unsure
- ( ) fairly confident
- ( ) unworried

4. How do you feel now?

- [ ] I have more concerns as to how best to work with her/him.
- [ ] I have the same concerns as to how best to work with her/him.
- [ ] I have fewer concerns as to how best to work with her/him.
- [ ] I have no major concerns as to how to work with her/him.

5. If you would like to explain why your concerns have changed or can give some examples you can comment here.

6. Compared to the start of the year, have you noticed any change in the amount of:

	a lot more	a little more	negligible	a little less	a lot less	N/A unsure
classroom noise	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
pupil talk	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
teacher talk	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
questioning	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
listening the pupils have to do	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
visual activities used in lessons (eg: pictures, videos, Powerpoints)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
'hands-on' activities or adaptations	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

7. Do you think the VIP is ever given preferential treatment?

- ◯ no
- ◯ not sure
- ◯ yes

If so, could you give some examples.

8. Do you think the VIP is ever disadvantaged in an activity / classroom situation?

- ◯ no
- ◯ not sure
- ◯ yes

If so, could you give some examples.

9. Are there any changes that you or the teacher have made or strategies you have used for the VIP's benefit that have had worked well with the whole class or that you have taken and used with other pupils?

10. Are there any changes you or the teacher have made for the VIP's benefit that have had not worked well with the rest of the class?

Prev Done

Appendix 5 Teacher interview questions

Commence with general “settling” questions”:

- how has the term panned out compared to what you were expecting before you began working with Pupil A.
- things that have gone better than you expected – concerns that proved to be groundless.

1. What challenges do you face in working with Pupil A?

2. How do you address these on a day-to-day basis?

3. What knowledge & skills do you think you need?

4. What support do you need?

5. How much extra time have you spent because of Pupil A (eg: planning and preparation)

6. How, if at all, has your style of teaching changed when working with Class X?
    - any changes in expectations? – eg: how much/long listening you demand
    - attitude towards/valuing of diff types of task (eg: not seeing ‘academic’ as higher value than hands-on).

7. Do you think you have extended these changes to other groups that you teach? Why? Why not?

8. What changes have you made to lesson content/resources etc. that have had a positive impact on the rest of the class? What makes you say this (ie: evidence)?

9. Can you think of any strategies or activities that were intended to include Pupil A but which did not work well for the other pupils? Why was that?

10. Is there anything you have learned/changed because of Pupil A that you now adopt as part of your general practice? Why?

11. Do you think Pupil A evert gets preferential treatment? If so, could you give any examples?

12. Do you ever think Pupil A is disadvantaged in an activity / classroom situation? If so, could you give some examples?

13. Do other pupils behave any differently when Pupil A is in the class? What makes you say this?

14. Are there things you do differently depending on whether Pupil A is in class or not? Could you give some examples?

15. Are there things you can do now that you previously relied on the LSA to do?

16. Is there a change in how you use the support of the QTVI – amount of direct teaching/input they provide; frequency of contact (for advice etc.)

Appendix 6 Classroom observation nudge sheet

It is anticipated that notes will be made across the following themes:

THEME	WHAT MIGHT BE NOTED
ACTIVITY TYPES	• visual, aural, speech & language-based, practical • individual, pair, group • same for all pupils or different for different groups • closed/open • alternative provision – avoidable or necessary
DEPLOYMENT OF LSA	• one-to-one with VI pupil • with group (including VI pupil) • not with VI pupil • teacher delegation of responsibility
ENVIRONMENT	• consistency of classroom layout • flexibility of classroom layout • pupils independence in accessing resources • effect on transitions between activities
EXPECTATIONS	• equal for all pupils • reasons for any exceptions • success criteria
LANGUAGE	• reframing – done naturally, explicitly, clumsily (ie: highlighting differences) • explanations – clarity, time taken • ways of ensuring pupils are listening
PEER INTERACTIONS	• use of language • degree of adult mediation • degree of inclusivity
PUPIL INDEPENDENCE	
PUPIL GROUPING	• fluid or same for all activities • done by ability, learning preferences, specific needs • buddying • opportunities for peer support
RESOURCES	• use of VI resources by others (some/all) • effect on differentiation • effect on time taken • effect on independence
STRATEGIES	• any differences in teacher modelling • to promote pupil independence • pre-learning/over-learning • use of VI strategy for some/all (transfer or extension) • effect of changes on challenge (reduced/extended) • use of praise and rewards (equity) • recognition & valuing of alternative pupil responses/methods of approaching a task
TIME	• to complete tasks • waiting for VI pupil • transitions

Appendix 7 Lesson observation pro forma

Date: _____ Time: _____

Length of time in lesson: _____ present for START / MIDDLE / END
circle all that apply

Additional adults present (ie: LSA, parent helper): _____

Any changes to usual classroom layout: _____
Make drawing &/or describe if changes made during lesson

Breakdown of activities during observation:
example

Time (in minutes)	*5 mins*	*10 mins*	*20 mins*	*10 mins*		
Activity	*Teacher settling talk*	*Teacher demonstration*	*Group work*	*Plenary discussion*		

THEME	OBSERVATION / DESCRIPTION
ACTIVITIES	
DEPLOYMENT OF LSA	
ENVIRONMENT	

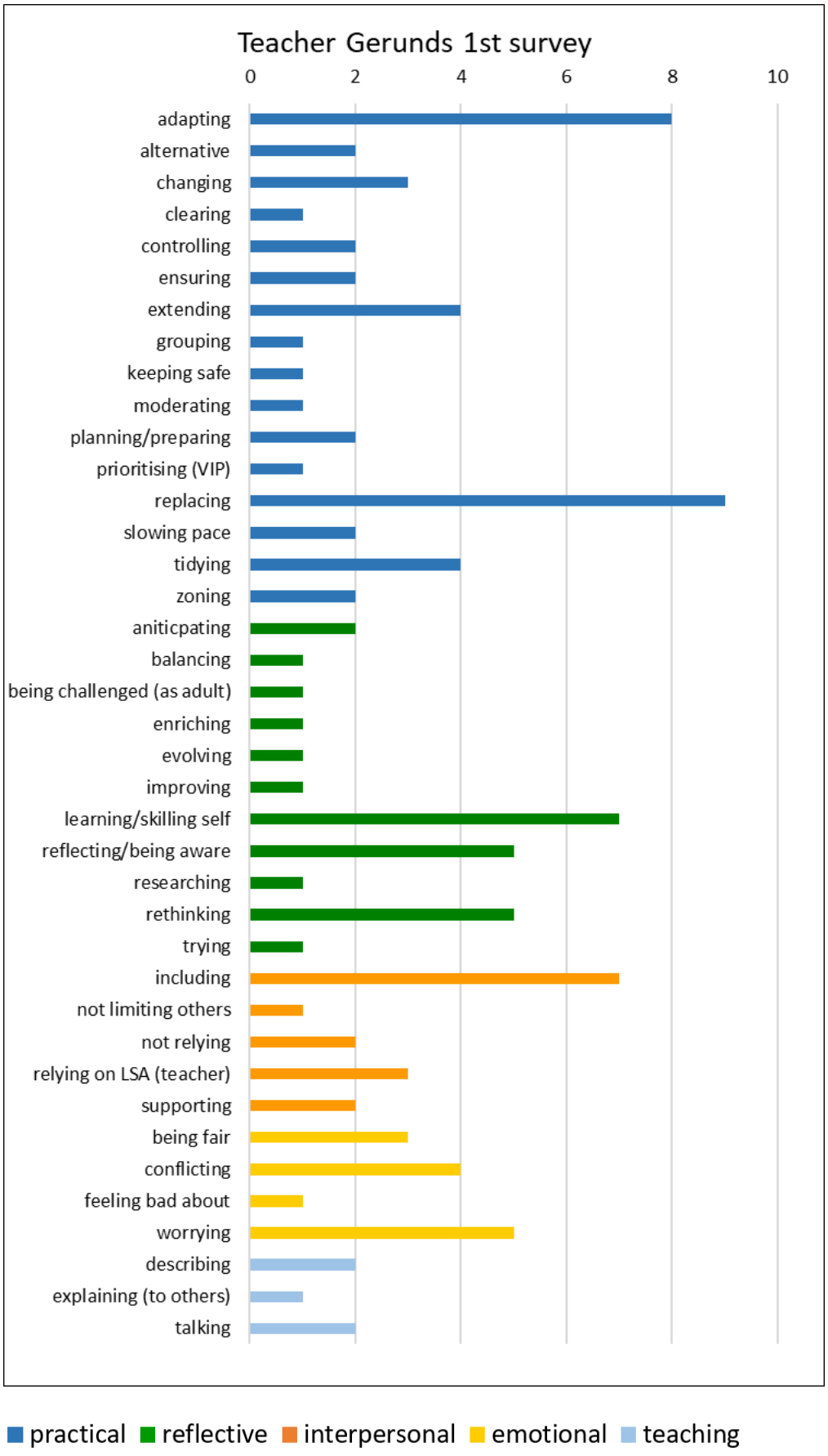
EXPECTATIONS	
LANGUAGE	
PEER INTERACTIONS	
PUPIL GROUPING	

Appendix 8 Gerund codes and Thesaurus alternatives

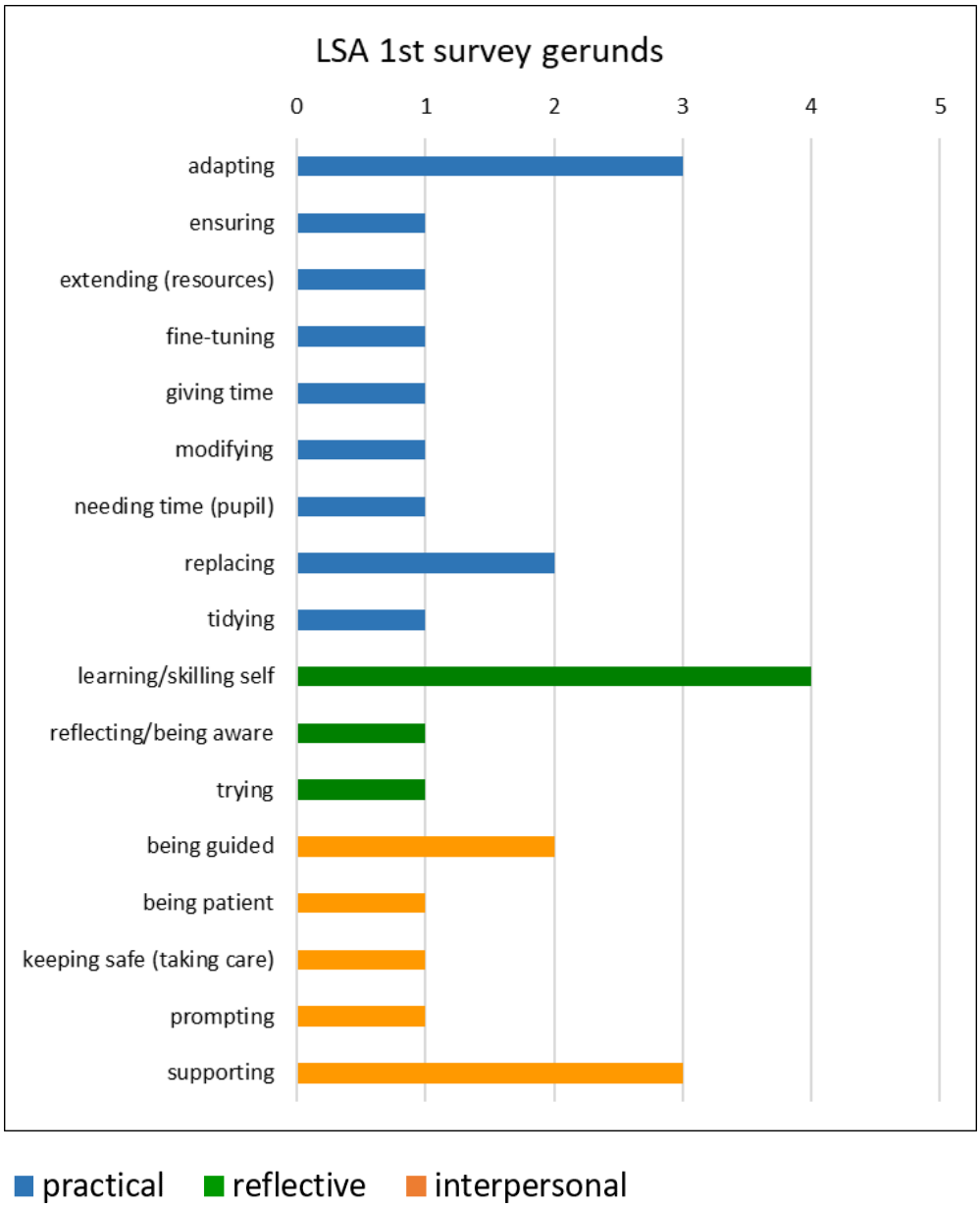
RESEARCHER'S CODE	THESAURUS
adapting	accommodate alter conform modify readjust revise tailor
anticipating	one step ahead, assume, predict
balancing	
being challenged (as adult)	
being fair	equal equitable impartial objective reasonable unbiased
being guided	
being patient	
changing	substitute convert exchange
clearing	
conflicting	incompatible, inconsistent incongruent
controlling (activity & space)	
describing	
enriching	
ensuring	protecting providing safeguarding
evolving	
explaining (to others)	
extending	broaden enhance expand increase widen supplement
extending (resources)	broaden enhance expand increase widen
feeling bad about	
fine-tuning	
grouping	
improving	develop enhance increase reform revamp revise
including	in addition, in conjunction
keeping safe	
keeping safe (taking care)	
learning/skilling self	
moderating	alleviate diminish mitigate modify tone down soften
modifying	adapting adjusting customising revising
needing time	
not limiting others	
not relying	depending hoping trusting
planning	
prioritising (VIP)	prefer
prompting	elicit indicate motivate spur stimulate suggest
reflecting/being aware	consider speculate
relying on LSA (teacher)	
replacing	supplant compensate displace take over from substitute
replacing	changing supplanting compensating redressing substitute
researching	investigate look into
rethinking	
slowing pace	
supporting	assisting encouraging protecting
talking	

thinking	reasoning
tidying	
trying	
trying	
worrying	
zoning	

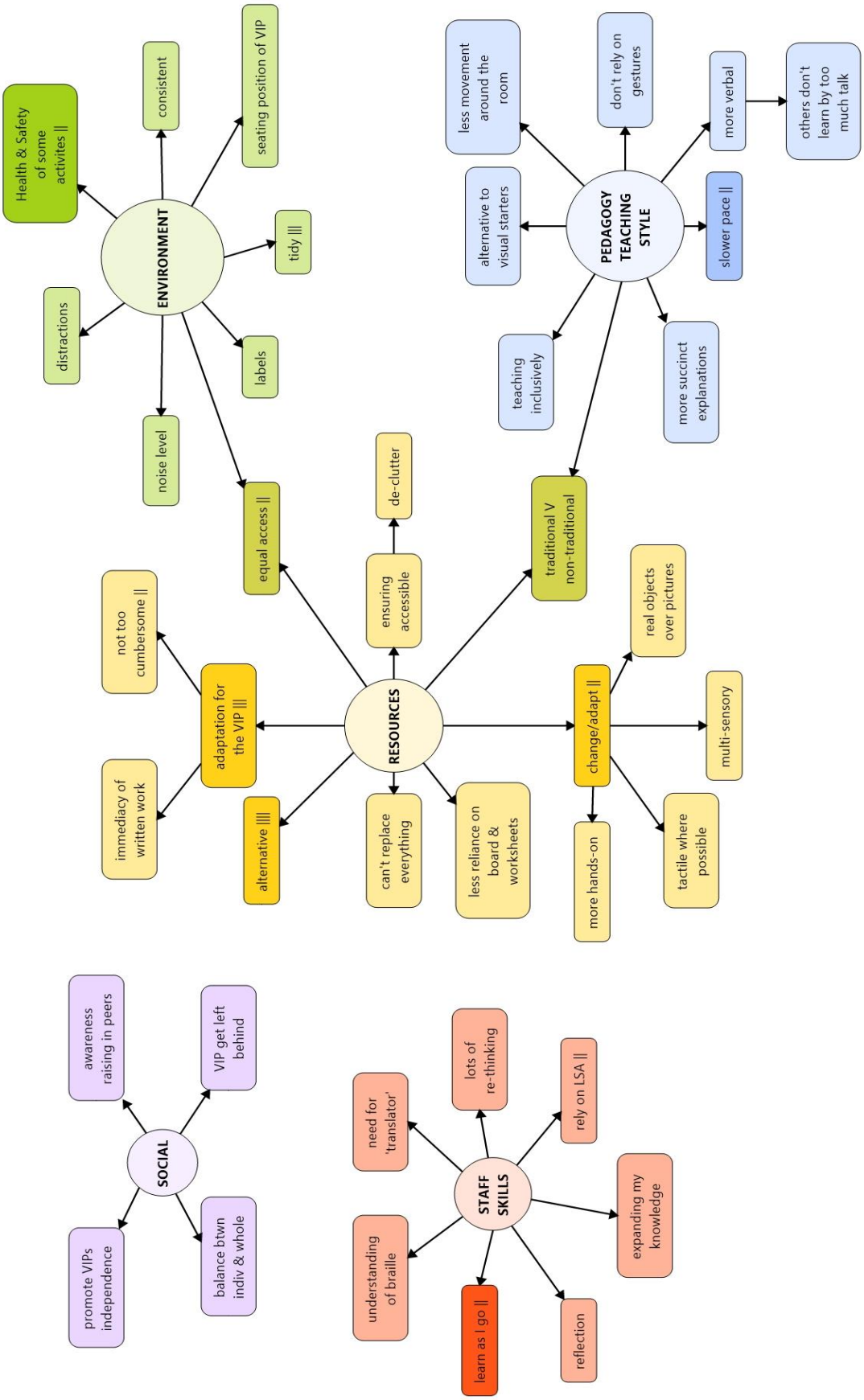
Appendix 9 Teacher 1st survey gerund codes



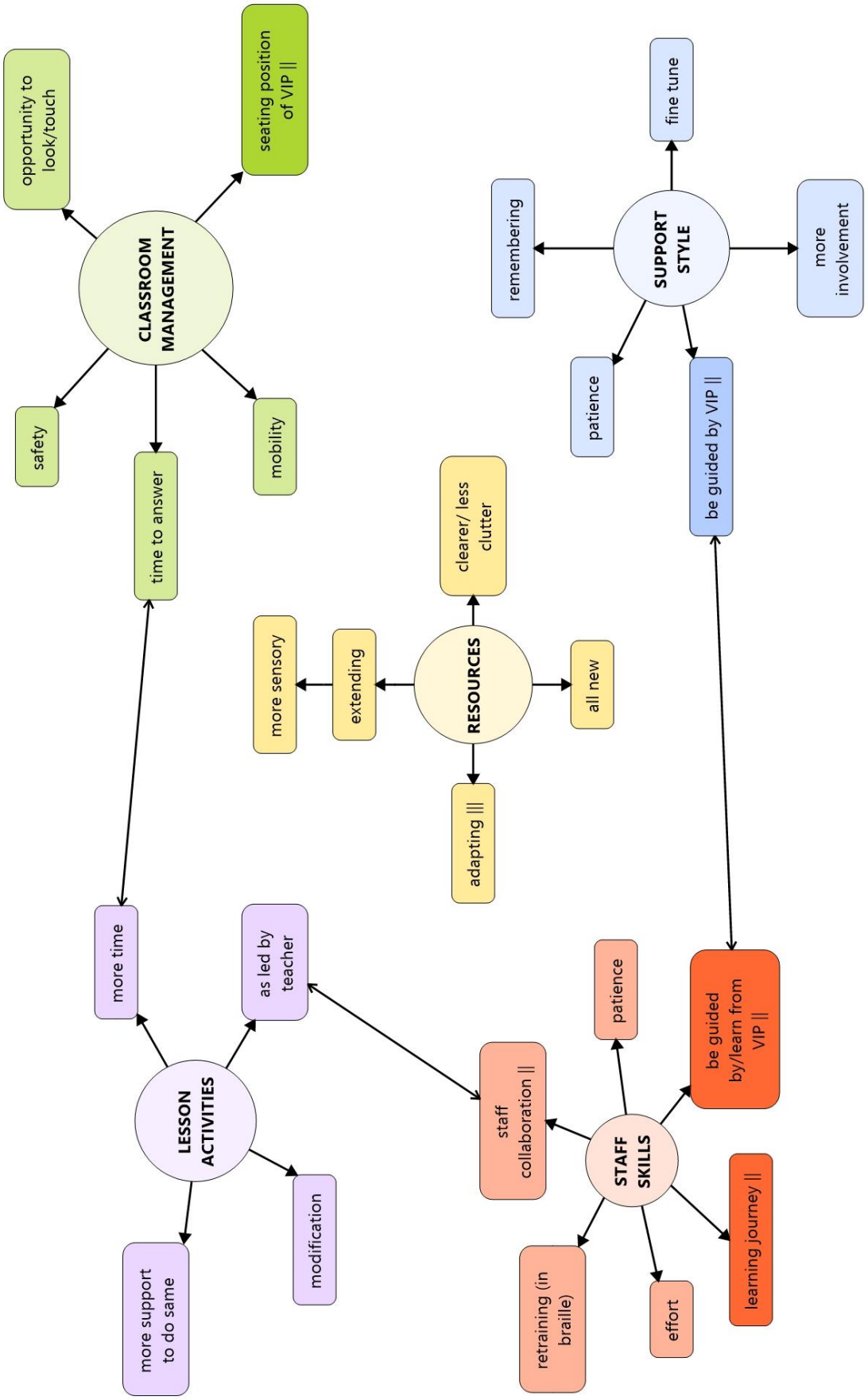
Appendix 10 LSA 1st survey gerund codes



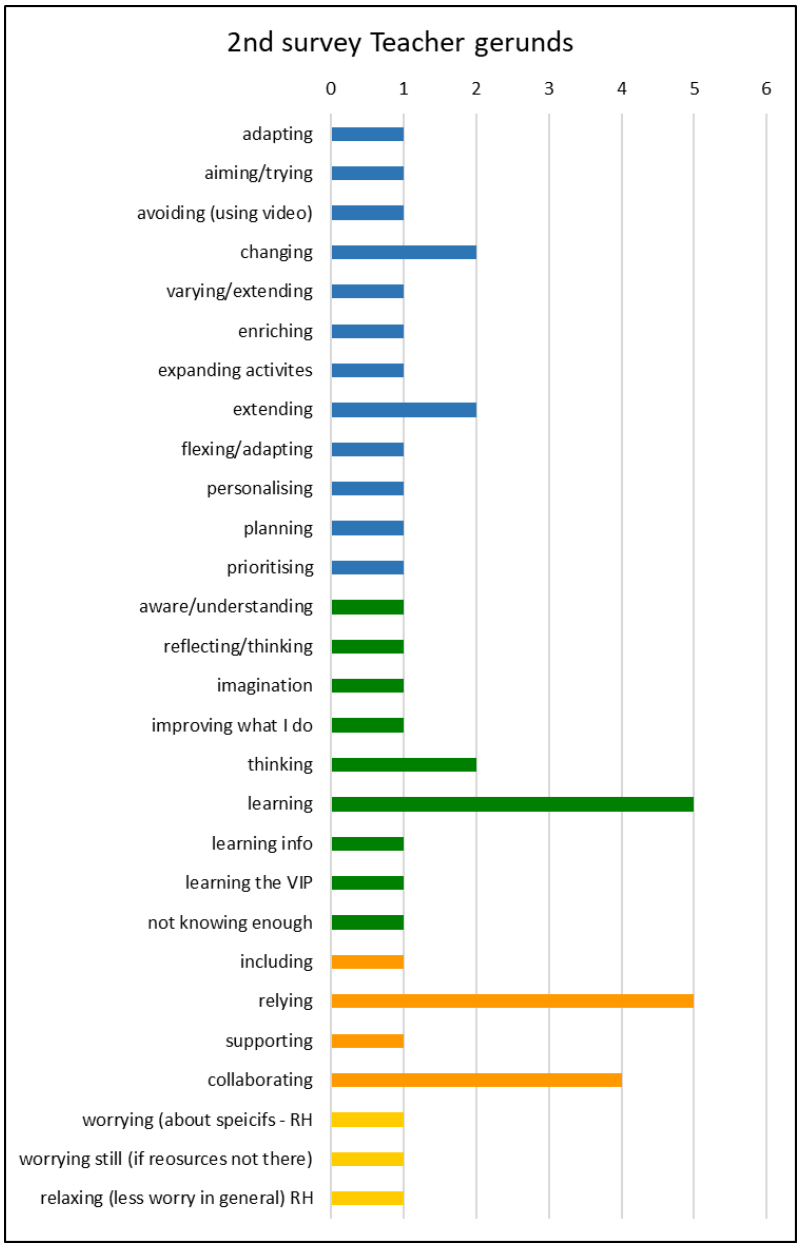
Appendix 11 Teacher 1st survey open coding



Appendix 12 LSA 1st survey open coding



Appendix 13 Second survey gerunds



LSA 2nd survey gerunds
experiencing
managing
planning
taking time
trying
knowing
learning
understanding/knowing pupil
being relied on
feeling guilty
one mention of each

practical reflective interpersonal emotional teaching

Appendix 14 Teacher interview gerunds

PRACTICAL	REFLECTIVE	INTERPERSONAL
accommodating accommodating/absorbing adapting adjusting allowing avoiding being organised changing changing – not changing-improving compensating confirming/coping excluding Expanding explaining extending managing/coping managing/guiding organising personalising planning preparing prioritising prioritising (not) reacting slowing down taking time varying	achieving anticipating awareness balancing being aware being aware/understanding challenging challenging self coping better developing developing – adults developing – pupils enriching enriching – social enriching/improving evaluating/reasoning experimenting going against instinct improving improving self + skills justifying knowing learning learning – from adults realising realising/recognising/aware reasoning recognising reflecting reframing rethinking thinking trying understanding understanding now	collaborating giving including neglecting reassuring relating relying relying less relying on LSA supporting – VIP
		AFFECTIVE
		accepting being lucky being surprised embracing enjoying feeling bad about feeling guilty feeling lucky frustrating hoping/aiming inhibiting irritating (tech issues) learning – wanting to overwhelming/not panicking relaxing-relief rewarding seeking reassurance struggling surprising worrying worrying less

Appendix 15 Teacher interview open codes – main and subsidiary themes

practical		reflective		interpersonal		affective	
knock-on effect		teaching		social (pupils)			

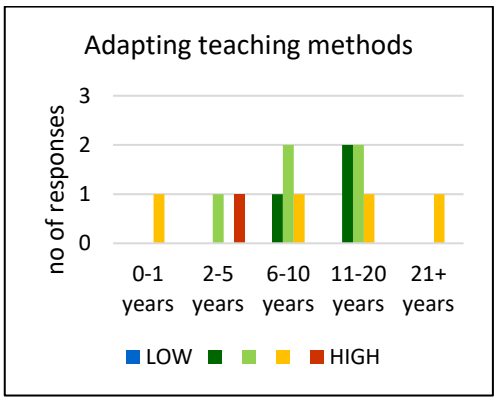
MAIN THEME		SUBSIDIARY / LINKED THEME
adapt day by day		bigger repertoire / palette of resources & ideas
adapt for VIP not removal of activity for rest		clarity of instructions/classroom management
balance of 1-1 help		other dimension / modality
curriculum/exam constraints		support for VIP rather than for teacher
danger of info overload		
diff pace if VIP absent (but health needs)		
environment quieter		
extra planning time		
hinterland of resources there already		
initial prep/info/training		
less change than anticipated		
less flexibility/last minute/plan well in advance		
LSA adapt resources		
LSA fine tuning		
LSA needed for braille		
not much extra time needed		
resources - new needed		
save s.g. for when VIP not there		
be organised		
restricted by exam spec / curriculum		
additional time is topic/content dependent		
no substitute for non-verbal		
not using visual as fall-back		
more time to plan		
more conscious of noise levels		
time to think of alternatives		
additional tactile/manipulatives helps rest		environment quieter
another layer of differentiation		less flexibility/last minute/plan well in advance
aware if all have understood		change things up a little
greater sensitivity to indiv needs		no images didn't hurt - though more demanding
higher expectations, seeing potential in others		other pupils more sensitive to VIP needs
less attention on rest		peer interaction / collaboration
new skills for others - braille		pupil empathy greater, think differently
nothing detrimental to rest, only to VIP		social skills of others
promote independence in others		verbal communication better in ASD
slower pace = consolidation / reflection (+ve not -ve)		helps others feel they haven't been singled out

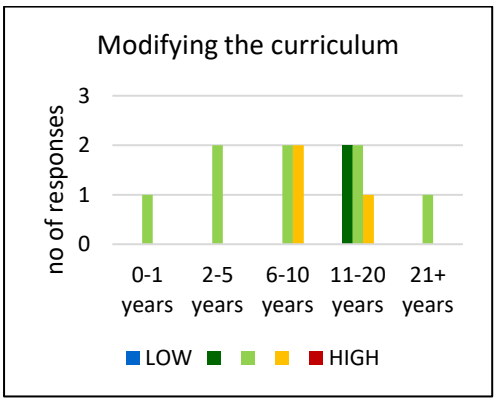
VI strategy will suit other children		
opened up new interpretations of task - more creative		
extending strategy to all		
not changing essential content		
using real object over images = positive		
real object = extra dimension		
others not disadvantaged by slowing down		
danger of over-compensating		
positive impact on others' learning		
not easy to determine impact on learning		
some things don't change		
against instinctive teaching style		balance of 1-1 help
all do same task		save s.g. for when VIP not there
bigger repertoire / palette of resources & ideas		restricted by exam spec / curric
change things up a little		another layer of differentiation
clarity of language		extending strategy to all
more verbal by teacher (eg: description)		danger of over-compensating
rephrasing		some things don't change
no images didn't hurt - though more demanding		balance of support V independence
more effort, more thinking (for teacher)		encourage autonomy
clarity of instructions/classroom mgmt		think of feet
VI = reason to adapt teaching & keep fresh		becoming instinctive/natural
making me put more variety in		already aware of desire/need to vary T strategies
not wanting to single out		more sensitised/perceptive/alert to visual modality
not a lot of additional skill needed		
not removing/diluting for rest - at their expense		
other dimension / modality		
planning, thinking ahead, anticipating		
other pupils more sensitive to VIP needs		more conscious of noise levels
over-reliance on LSA by VIP		promote independence in others
peer interaction / collaboration		
pupil empathy greater, think differently		
social skills of others		
verbal communication better in ASD		
peers not taking vision for granted		
developing peers' verbal communication		
helps others feel they haven't been singled out		
added to peer understanding (why noise not great)		
collaboration/not with peers		LSA adapt resources
LSA gives reassurance		LSA fine tuning
LSA shoulders neediness		LSA needed for braille
pull back support		over-reliance on LSA by VIP
close collaboration		developing peers' verbal communication

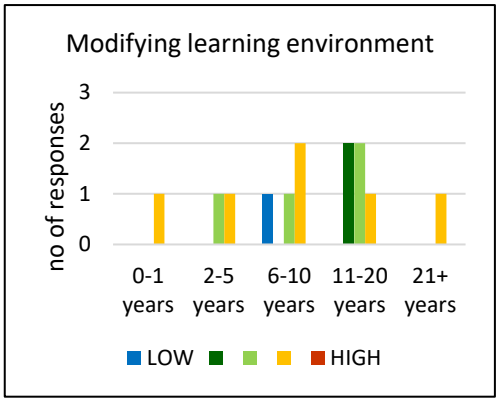
balance of support V independence		
encourage autonomy		
delegation to LSA		
LSA minimises dominance of VIP needs		
wider use of IT sharing btwn pupils & staff-staff		
support for VIP rather than for teacher		
values collegiate support		
reliance on LSA to explain, do braille		
Am I doing it right		aware if all have understood
aware of how speaking (including being PC)		greater sensitivity to indiv needs
draws attention to needs of rest		higher expectations, seeing potential in others
had moved on too quickly to abstract		slower pace = consolidation / reflection (+ve not -ve)
how & whether to change task & by how much,		opened up new interpretations of task - more creative
inclusion as process		clarity of language
learn as go along is OK-journey-		VI = reason to adapt teaching & keep fresh
realising others had similar need		planning, thinking ahead, anticipating
reason to get out of rut, learn s.g. new		have learned - less concerns
reflecting on how/why to do s.g.		
think of feet		
understand VIP's needs		
something I wouldn't normally have thought of		
conscious of environment		
thinking about purpose of task		
realising can learn/teach s.g. in diff ways		
staff awareness		
becoming instinctive/natural		
already aware of desire/need to vary T strategies		
more sensitised/perceptive/alert to visual modality		
not been problem like I thought it would		
balancing VIP need with task		
don't have to be perfect from day 1		
guilt if VIP excluded, not doing optimal way		danger of info overload
guilty for relying on LSAs, I should know more		not wanting to single out
less anxieties, apprehension, familiarity		LSA gives reassurance
what else can I do better		values collegiate support
less worry		Am I doing it right
worried making it harder if omit visual		not been problem like I thought it would
frustrating if can't give immediate feedback (braille)		
bit more relaxed - not that bad- can cope		
have learned - less concerns		

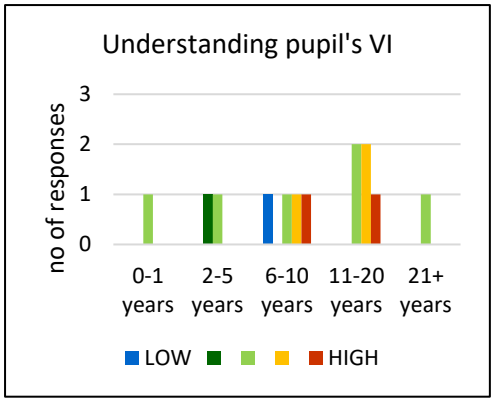
Appendix 16 Teacher confidence for making changes (1st survey)

Teacher ratings of confidence analysed by career experience

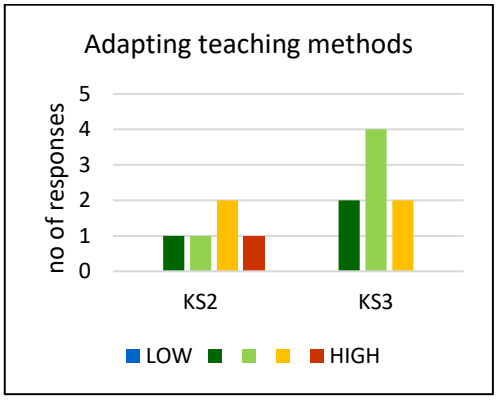


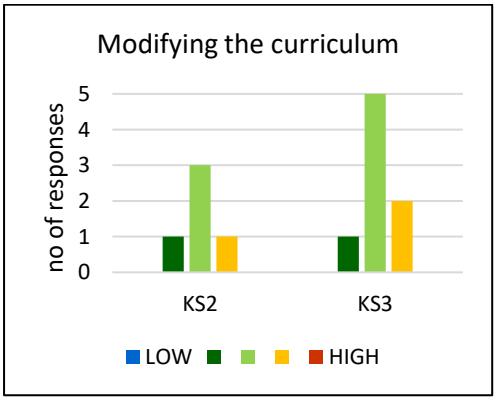


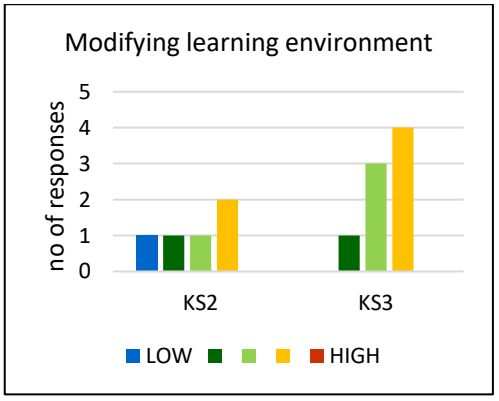


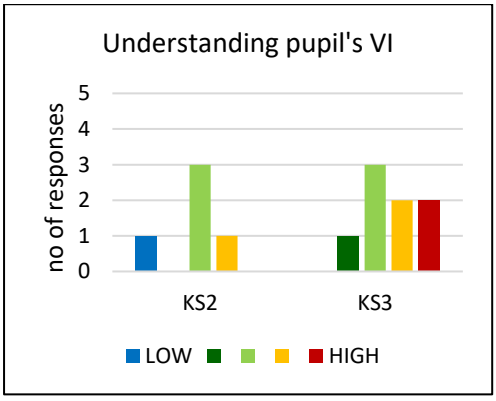


Teacher ratings of confidence analysed by Key Stage taught



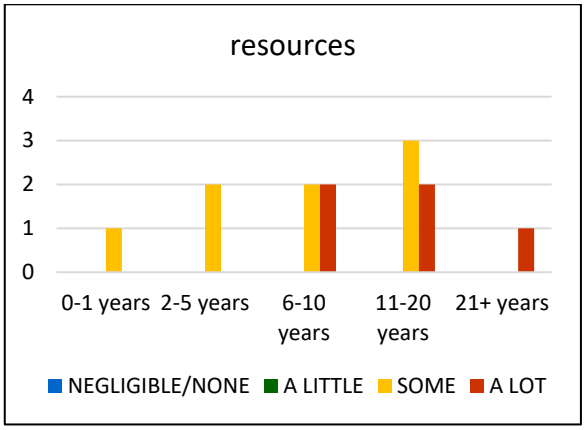


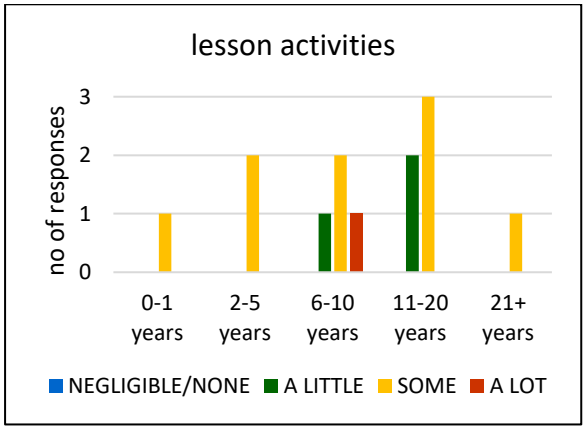


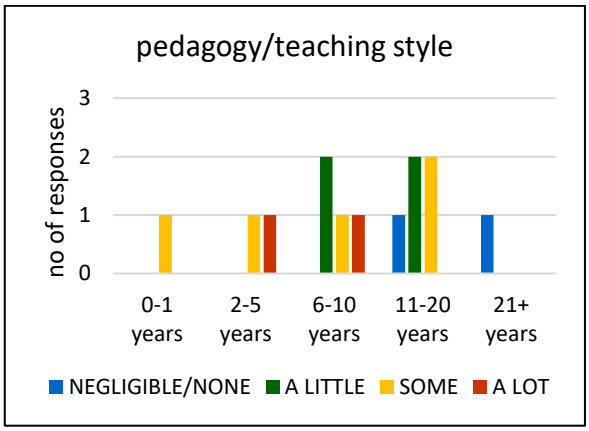


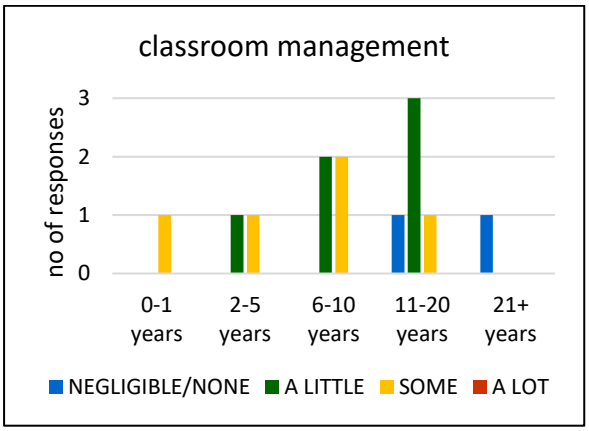
Appendix 17 Teachers' anticipated changes (1st survey)

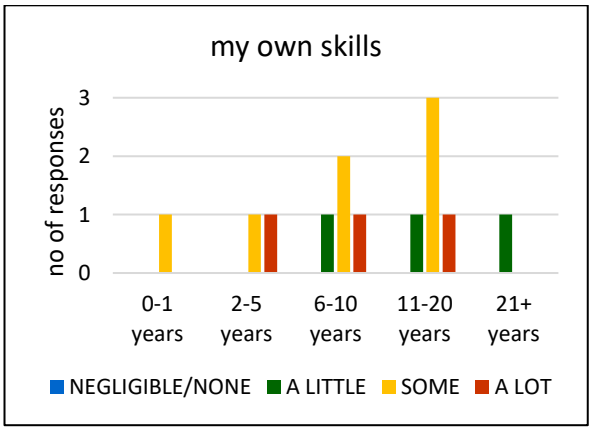
Teachers' anticipated changes analysed by career experience











Appendix 18 Consent forms

Institute of Education

Clare Martin
University of Reading
London Road campus
4 Redlands Road
Reading
RG1 5EX

Email:c.e.martin@pgr.reading.ac.uk

Date

Dear Headteacher

I am writing to ask if you would consider allowing me to undertake some research in your school/college for my doctoral studies at the University of Reading. I am currently a teacher. I taught in mainstream secondary schools for 15 years and have been at my current secondary MLD special school for the past 15 years.

What is the project?

I am researching the impact of the inclusion of children and young people with visual impairment (CYPVI) on the teaching and learning of the rest of the class. I am interested in any changes to planning, pedagogy, use of resources, pupils' social and academic progress and any changes in attitudes amongst teachers and support staff.

Why has my school been chosen?

As VI is a low-incidence disability I am contacting a number of schools, chosen simply for convenience (ie: proximity to where I live and work) and because you may have a CYPVI on roll in the coming year, not because you might have any particular expertise or needs.

What will happen if my school takes part?

I would like to survey and interview key staff that would be working with CYPVI, observe adult-pupil and pupil-pupil interactions in lessons, review curriculum documents and lesson resources and anonymised pupil progress data. This would involve repeated visits over a time period mutually agreeable to all parties. Participation would be entirely voluntary and all adults and pupils/students would have the right to withdraw from the research at any time.

What will happen to the data?
All participants would be guaranteed anonymity and no identifiers linking your school/college to the study would be included in any documentation. I will be undertaking research in several settings. The records of this study will be kept private. No identifiers linking you, the children or the school to the study will be included in any sort of report that might be published. Participants will be assigned a number and will be referred to by that number in all records. Research records will be stored securely in a locked filing cabinet and on a password-protected computer and only myself as researcher will have access. The data will be destroyed securely once the findings of the study are written up. The results of the study

may be presented at conferences and in written reports and articles. I will, of course, share them with you and hope also to be able to keep you updated informally on my progress.

What happens if I change my mind?
You can withdraw your consent at any time with no repercussions. Any data gathered would be destroyed and would form no part of my thesis or any subsequent publications.

Who has reviewed the study?
This project has been reviewed following the procedures of the University Research Ethics Committee and has been given a favourable ethical opinion for conduct. The University has the appropriate insurances in place. Full details are available on request.

What happens if something goes wrong?
In the unlikely case of concern or complaint, you can contact my supervisor, [redacted]

Where can I get more information?
If you would like more information please do not hesitate to contact me by email – c.e.martin@pgr.reading.ac.uk.

If you are willing to grant permission for me to conduct research in your school/college, please complete the attached consent form and return it to me in the pre-paid envelope provided or, if more convenient, you can send me an email acknowledging your consent. Before the project commences I will send a detailed consent request to all participants. This would include obtaining consent from parents of pupils in the class under focus if you consider this necessary.

Thank you for your time

Clare Martin

Institute of Education

Clare Martin
EdD Student
University of Reading
London Road campus
4 Redlands Road
Reading
RG1 5EX

Email:c.e.martin@pgr.reading.ac.uk

Doctoral Research Consent Form
The impact of the inclusion in schools of pupils with visual impairment on classroom teaching and learning.

I have read the letter about my school/college being part of your doctoral research.

I understand what the purpose of the research is and what would be required of me, my staff and the pupils/students. All my questions have been answered.

I understand that participation is entirely voluntary and that adults and pupils/students have the right to withdraw from the research project at any time.

Signed: _____

Print name: _____

School/college: _____

Date: _____

Institute of Education

Clare Martin
EdD Student
University of Reading
London Road campus
4 Redlands Road
Reading
RG1 5EX

Email:c.e.martin@pgr.reading.ac.uk

Date

Dear teacher/LSA

I am writing to ask if you would consider allowing me to undertake some research in your classroom for my doctoral studies at the University of Reading. I am currently a teacher myself. I taught in mainstream secondary schools for 15 years and have been at my current secondary MLD special school for the past 15 years.

What is the project?

I am researching the impact of the inclusion of children and young people with visual impairment (CYPVI) on the teaching and learning of the rest of the class. I am interested in any changes to planning, pedagogy, use of resources, pupils' social and academic progress and any changes in attitudes amongst teachers and support staff.

Why have I been chosen?

You have been chosen because there will be a pupil/student with visual impairment in your class in the coming academic year.

What will happen if I take part?

Teacher version
I would like you to complete a short online survey about any experience you have of working with CYPVI and on how you are approaching the teaching of such a pupil in the coming term. I would them like to observe some lessons to note the nature of activities used and to look at adult-pupil and pupil-pupil interactions. It would be entirely your decision whether I remain a detached observer or, under your direction, be a participant-observer (ie: interacting and working with the pupils/students). I would also like to review curriculum documents (such as schemes of work) and look at lesson resources.
None of these activities will require you to do anything that you would not already be doing and certainly not generate any additional paperwork. Observations would involve repeated visits over a time period agreeable to you.
At the end of this period I would like to conduct a short interview with you, perhaps taking half an hour. With your permission, your interview will be recorded, and then transcribed and anonymized before data are analysed. I will show you the transcription so that you to check its accuracy and to confirm that you are still happy for its contents to be used.

LSA version

I would like you to complete a short online survey about any experience you have of working with CYPVI and on how you are approaching the teaching of such a pupil in the coming term. I would them like to observe some lessons to note the nature of activities used and to look at adult-pupil and pupil-pupil interactions. At the end of this period I would like you to complete a second online questionnaire and possibly to conduct a short interview with you, perhaps taking half an hour. With your permission, your interview will be recorded, and then transcribed and anonymized before data are analysed. I will show you the transcription so that you to check its accuracy and to confirm that you are still happy for its contents to be used.

Do I have to take part?

Participation would be entirely voluntary and you would have the right to withdraw from the research at any time.

What will happen to the data?

Any data collected will be held in strict confidence and no real names will be used in this study or in any subsequent publications. None of the information you provide will be shared within your school. No identifiers linking you, the children or the school to the study will be included in any sort of report that might be published. The records of this study will be kept private. They will be stored securely in a locked filing cabinet and on a password-protected computer and only myself as researcher will have access to the records. The data will be destroyed securely once the findings of the study are written up. The results of the study may be presented at conferences, and in written reports and articles.

Who has reviewed the study?

This project has been reviewed following the procedures of the University Research Ethics Committee and has been given a favourable ethical opinion for conduct. The University has the appropriate insurances in place. Full details are available on request.

What happens if something goes wrong?

In the unlikely case of concern or complaint, you can contact my supervisor, [redacted]

Where can I get more information?

If you would like more information please do not hesitate to contact me by email – c.e.martin@pgr.reading.ac.uk.

If you are willing to grant permission for me to conduct research in your classroom, please complete the attached consent form and return it to me in the pre-paid envelope provided. Alternatively, if it is more convenient, you can send me an email acknowledging your consent.

Thank you for your time

Clare Martin

Doctoral Research Consent Form

The impact of the inclusion in schools of pupils with visual impairment on classroom teaching and learning.

I have read the letter about my school/college being part of your doctoral research.

I understand what the purpose of the research is and what would be required of me. All my questions have been answered.

I understand that participation is entirely voluntary and that I have the right to withdraw from the research project at any time.

I am happy to take a short preliminary online survey. ☐

I am happy for you to observe the teaching and learning in my classroom. ☐

I am happy to be interviewed at the end of the project. ☐

I am happy for you to record the interview for subsequent transcription. ☐

Signed: _____

Print name: _____

School/college: _____

Date: _____

Institute of Education

Clare Martin
EdD Student
University of Reading
London Road campus
4 Redlands Road
Reading
RG1 5EX

Email:c.e.martin@pgr.reading.ac.uk

Pupil Information Sheet

I am a teacher doing a research project at Reading University. I am looking at how pupils with individual educational needs are included in school and I would like to spend some time in your class observing they types of learning activities that you do and the types of resources you use.

I have already asked your Headteacher, teacher(s) and your parents and they have given me permission to come into class.

How will your research affect me?
You will not have to do anything differently to what you normally do in class. I will come into class a few times to observe the types of learning activities that you do and how everyone takes part. I might write down things people say but I will never mention anyone's name, not even yours.

What will you do with the information you get?
When I make notes I will not use anyone's name.
I will not share anything I write with anyone else in the school. I will not show any of my notes to any of the teachers or to your Headteacher. I will not show them to any other pupils either.
I will keep all my records on a password protected computer. I will be the only person who knows the password so only I will be able to read them.
When I have written up my project all my notes will be deleted.
My finished project might get presented at meetings or conferences and it might get published in education journals.

What if I don't want to be involved?
That is absolutely fine. Just let your teacher or your parents know and they will tell me. You can even change your mind once I have started my work. I won't use any of my notes or make any new ones.

If you have got any questions please ask your teacher. They will check with me if they don't know the answer.

Thank you for your time

Clare Martin

Pupil Consent Form – XXX School

The impact of the inclusion in schools of pupils with individual educational needs on classroom teaching and learning.

I have read the letter about my class being part of your research project.

I understand what the project is about.

I understand that I can drop out at any time.

All my questions have been answered.

Signed: _____

Print name: _____

Date: _____

Pupil information (KS2)

Clare/Mrs Martin will be coming in to class to observe the types of learning activities we do and the types of resources that we use.

I won't have to do anything. I will just do what I normally do in lessons.

Clare/Mrs Martin will make notes about what she sees but she will never use anyone's name and she won't show her notes to anyone else in school.

She will keep all her notes on a password protected computer so only she can see them.

If she shares her work in meetings or if she publishes it nobody will be able to tell that it was me, my class or my school that she came to.

If I change my mind about taking part that's fine. I can just tell my teacher or my parents. Clare/Mrs Martin won't use her notes or make any more notes.

Child consent form

Please circle Yes or No for each question

1. I have read the information about the project or someone has talked through with me. Yes No
2. I understand what the project is about. Yes No
3. I understand that I don't have to take part and can drop out at any time. Yes No
4. I agree to take part in this study. Yes No

Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Helper's signature: _____ Date: _____

Institute of Education

Clare Martin
University of Reading
London Road campus
4 Redlands Road
Reading
RG1 5EX

Email:c.e.martin@pgr.reading.ac.uk

Dear Parents/carers

I am writing to ask if you would consider allowing your child to take part in a research study about the inclusion of pupils with individual educational needs and the teaching and learning of the whole class. I am currently a teacher myself. I taught in mainstream secondary schools for 15 years and have been at my current secondary special school for the past 15 years.

What is the study?
The research will form the basis of my doctoral thesis. I am looking at how including pupils with individual educational needs might lead to changes in teaching and learning and pupils' social and academic progress. I will be doing the same research in several schools.

How will my child be involved in the research?
I would like to observe the teaching and learning in your child's class to note the nature of adult-pupil and pupil-pupil interactions and the types of teaching and learning activities that take place. I will be looking what goes on in the class as a whole and will not be focusing on individual pupils. You child will not have to do anything different to what they would normally be doing in class.

What will happen to the data?
Any data collected will be held in strict confidence and no real names will be used in this study or in any subsequent publications. The records of this study will be kept private and will only be seen by myself. Information about individuals will not be shared with the school. No identifiers linking the children or the school to the study will be included in any sort of report that might be published. Research records will be stored securely in a locked filing cabinet and on a password-protected computer and only myself as researcher will have access to the records. The data will be destroyed once the findings of the study are written up. The results of the study may be presented at conferences or in written reports and articles in order to support the work of classroom teachers.

Does my child have to take part?
It is entirely up to you whether you allow your child to participate. You may also withdraw your consent to participation at any time during the project by contacting the school or myself by letter or email. If you are happy for your child to take part then they will have the project explained to them and I will ask for their consent using the form included here.

Who has reviewed the study?
This project has been reviewed following the procedures of the University Research Ethics Committee and has been given a favourable ethical opinion for conduct. The University has the appropriate insurances in place. Full details are available on request.

What happens if something goes wrong?
In the unlikely case of concern or complaint, you can contact my supervisor, Professor Jill Porter, at the University of Reading by telephone or by email (j.porter@reading.ac.uk).

Where can I get more information?
If you would like more information please do not hesitate to contact me by email – c.e.martin@pgr.reading.ac.uk.

I do hope that you will agree to your child being part of the study.

If you are happy for your child to be present in in class during my observations do not need to do anything. If, however, you do not wish your child to take part please complete and return the consent form to the school office as soon as possible.

Parental Consent Form

The impact of the inclusion in schools of pupils with individual educational needs on classroom teaching and learning.

If you are happy for your child to take part then you do not need to take any further action

If you do not want your child to be included then please fill in the form below and return it to the school office (reception)

I have read the Information Sheet about the project and received a copy of it.

I have received a copy of the pupil consent form that my child will be asked to complete.

I understand what the purpose of the project is and how my child might be involved. All my questions have been answered.

I DO NOT give consent for my child to take part in the research. I do not wish the researcher to be making observations that include my child.

Name of child: _____

(please print)

Name of school: _____

Signed: _____ (parent/guardian)

Date: _____

Appendix 19 Script for obtaining pupil consent

Consent Script

This script has been written to help you explain the research project to your pupils prior to them completing the consent form.

You could use it with the whole class or take pupils though it individually, whatever is easiest for you.

Hopefully it will address any questions or concerns they might have. If not, please tell them you will check with me.

You do not have to read it word for word. You can change the wording to better match a child's level of understanding as long as the meaning and information stays the same.

In a few weeks someone from Reading University is going to visit our school. Her name is Clare. She is doing a research project about how everyone gets included in the classroom and she wants to join our class for some of our lessons to see what sorts of activities we do to help us learn.

She is very used to being in a classroom as she has been a teacher for about 30 years. She promises not to get in the way of what we do. She will try to sit quietly and just make a few notes on what she sees us doing. However, if you don't mind, I (teacher/LSA) might let her join in sometimes or I might let her chat to you while you are working. None of us will have to do anything different to what we always do - and Clare will have to do what I say, just like you do.

Clare wants to be sure that you are happy for her to come and spend some time with us, so she has given me a form that we can fill in to let her know if it's OK or not.

She promises to never write anything that's just about you. She will never write your name down and she won't tell anyone else in this school anything that you have said to her, not even me. So, when she's written up her project nobody will actually be able to tell that it was our school or our class that she came to!